The selection and formation of new teachers

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This symposium addresses the implications of recent policy changes for the formation of new teachers and the nature of teaching as a profession. Policy towards teacher formation has followed different trajectories in the UK. Scotland and Wales have resisted the shift towards school-led initial teacher education in England. Moreover, the integration of initial education and first year of teaching in a two year induction is well established in Scotland and the Masters in Educational Practice is leading Wales in the Scottish direction. This symposium draws on contributions from each of these countries using policy differences to reflect on emerging issues.

The first paper by Hordern (‘The Logic and Implications of School-based Teacher Formation’) offers a theoretical perspective on the implications of the roles of HEIs and schools in teacher education for the professional identity of teachers. Drawing on Bernstein’s notions of classification and framing he argues that when leadership of initial teacher education shifts from HEIs to schools there are associated changes in the kind of knowledge that is privileged and the nature of the professional identities which are formed. Knowledge for teaching is defined at school level and the status of subject knowledge rises relative to pedagogic content knowledge. There is also a shift from occupational to organisational professionalism.

The second paper by Kirkman, Davies, Hulme, Baumfield, Connolly and Hadfield (‘Schools as gatekeepers to the teaching profession’) presents and discusses results from in-depth interviews with 20 teachers, 5 local authority officials and 8 HE teacher educators responsible for the selection of applicants to initial teacher education and first teaching jobs in England, Scotland and Wales. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and interpreted through thematic analysis. Schools in England reported using recruitment for initial teacher education as a way of addressing teacher shortages and increasing the likelihood of being able to employ the best new teachers. An implication of this stance - if it is widespread - is that school-led recruitment to initial teacher education will reduce the supply of newly qualified teachers. The two year induction of new teachers in Scotland emphasises professional rather than organisational socialisation. The emergence of academy chains in England may be associated with a much stronger emphasis on organisational than professional socialisation as academy chains develop their brand, Schools in England tended to emphasise expectation that a trainee would ‘fit in’ to the culture of the school.

The third paper by Hadfield, Connolly, Barnes and Snook (‘A systemic approach to enhancing the professional learning of Beginning Teachers in Wales’) examines the design and evaluation of the Masters in Educational Practice (MEP) in Wales. The MEP began in 2012 and some 1,000 Beginning Teachers (BTs) are currently enrolled. The MEP provides masters accredited professional learning for teachers in the first three years of their career. As a key strand of the government’s strategy for professional development and school improvement it aims to combat educational under-achievement. The evaluation aims to (i) explore the implementation issues associated with introducing a national programme of profession learning; (ii) identify those aspects of the programme that were key to supporting classroom-based change; and (iii) assess the impact upon individual teachers and their schools. Three main forms of data collection provide evidence of BTs’ overall experience of the MEP: an annual questionnaire survey and follow up focus groups, analysis of the work produced by BTs’ as part of the programme’s assessment processes and a series of
school-based case studies. This paper reports initial evidence using these sources and discusses the role of the MEP in the processes of professional formation.

**Papers**

1: Hordern, J. 'The logic and Implications of School-Based Teacher Formation'

2: Kirkman, J., Davies, P., Hulme, M., Baumfield, V., Connolly, M. & Hadfield, M. 'Schools as gatekeepers to the teaching profession'

3: Hadfield, M., Connolly, M., Barnes, Y. & Snook, J. 'A systematic approach to enhancing the professional learning of Beginning Teachers in Wales'.

Discussant Geoff Whitty