INTRODUCTION: EXPLORING THE DISTINCTIVE CONTRIBUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

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The summit’s State of the Nations papers presented by Furlong, Gerwirtz, McNamara, Murray and Whitty on supporting scholarly, research informed teacher education provide a broad outline and set some important parameters around the problems, opportunities and challenges facing teacher education in the nations of the UK. In this paper, key themes identified during the HEA summit on university-based teacher education are discussed within the parameters set by papers in Learning to teach Part 1 (2013). The aim of Learning to teach Part 2 (2013) of the publication was to add further detail to the discussions initiated at the summit and detailed in Part 1 that might help to identify and target areas for the HEA’s strategic project.

Four themes identified during the HEA summit on university-based teacher education are discussed. These are:

· access and engagement with scholarly and disciplinary literature and knowledge/participation in the scholarly communities;

· the questioning of accepted ways of doing things, developing independent views on alternatives based on the theoretical perspectives and systematic ways of thinking;

· the space and time for reflection away from the busyness of school; and

· the role that higher education can play in supporting the development of new practice in response to the changing world in which we live.

The paper synthesises the key points and comments on the summit themes, drawing on relevant international literature. The commentary then draws the discussion into three strands of higher education’s distinctive contribution to teacher education, including research and scholarly engagement, professional reflection, and preparation for inclusion and diversity. The publication also serves to introduce three case studies, which illustrate some of the work currently underway at higher education institutions in the UK in each of these strands which subsequently went on to form the basis of the 2013 HEA call to the sector for interesting and innovative teacher education projects which could be commissioned by the HEA.