

## **Towards the re-articulation of the work of teacher educators in Higher Education institutions in England**

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In recent years, teacher educators in the Netherlands and the USA have developed professional standards for their occupational groups. These standards have been used to identify the professional expertise of teacher educators, to analyse their professional development needs, and to provide assessment mechanisms for accreditation. This article begins by outlining the impact of changes in pre-service work on teacher educators' work in England and arguing that a re-articulation of the work of this occupational group is needed. It then analyses the Dutch and American initiatives, and, drawing on discussions at the Association for Teacher Educators in Europe conference in 2005, debates the potential and relevance of drawing on these models for developing a similar framework with teacher educators in England. The article concludes that, whilst developing rigidly defined standards would be inappropriate, considering the intra-professional development of a broad professional framework would facilitate the identification and understanding of teacher educators' complex work, and provide a springboard for providing enhanced induction and professional development opportunities.

Ces dernières années, les formateurs d'enseignants aux Pays-Bas et aux Etats-Unis ont mis au point des critères de compétence pour leur corps professionnel. Ces critères ont été utilisés pour identifier l'expertise professionnelle des formateurs d'enseignants, analyser leurs besoins en matière de développement professionnel, et permettre d'établir des mécanismes d'évaluation de leurs compétences afin de les accréditer. Cet article débute par une analyse des initiatives hollandaise et américaine. S'inspirant des discussions qui ont eu lieu à la conférence de l'ATEE de 2005, il se poursuit par un débat sur le potentiel et la pertinence d'élaborer à partir de ces deux modèles une structure semblable pour les formateurs d'enseignants d'Angleterre. L'article conclut que, tout en reconnaissant qu'il serait inapproprié d'établir des critères rigidement définis, l'existence d'une structure générale de critères professionnels permettrait de mieux identifier et de mieux comprendre le travail complexe des formateurs d'enseignants, et fournirait une base pour un meilleur système d'intégration et de développement professionnel.

In letzter Zeit haben Lehrerausbilder in Holland und der Vereinigte Staaten berufliche Normen für ihre Berufsgruppe entwickelt. Diese Normen sind um die Fachkenntnis der Lehrerausbilder zu feststellen, die Bedarfe ihre berufliche Weiterbildung zu analysieren und um die Beurteilungsmethode der Zulassung zu versehen benutzt worden. Dieser Artikel fängt mit einer Untersuchung den holländischen und amerikanischen Initiativen an. Sie zieht an Gespräche der Association for Teacher Educators in Europe Konferenz 2005 heran, und berät das Potenzial und die Bedeutung die Benutzung der zwei Ausführung um ein ähnliches System mit Lehrerausbildern in England zu entwickeln. Die Artikel kommt zum Schluss dass, obwohl klar abgegrenzt Normen zu entwickeln wäre

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ungeeignet, der Betracht der Entwicklung eines breiten beruflichen System würde die Erkennung und das Verständnis der kompliziert Arbeit des Lehrerausbilder ermöglichen und ein Sprungbett für die Besorgung eine erweiterte Einleitung und berufliche Weiterbildung Möglichkeiten anbieten.

En los últimos años, los formadores de profesores de Holanda y EE.UU han creado normas profesionales para sus grupos ocupacionales. Esas normas se utilizan para identificar la cualificación profesional de los formadores de profesores, así como para analizar sus necesidades de desarrollo profesional, y proporcionar mecanismos de evaluación para la acreditación. Este artículo comienza analizando las iniciativas holandesa y estadounidense. Tomando como punto de partida los debates que tuvieron lugar en la Conferencia de la Asociación para la Formación del Profesorado en Europa (ATEE, por su sigla en inglés), celebrada en 2005, el artículo discute las posibilidades y la importancia de usar esos modelos con vistas a crear un marco similar para los formadores de profesores en Inglaterra. El artículo concluye que, mientras la creación de normas definidas rígidamente sería inadecuada, la creación de un amplio marco profesional facilitaría la identificación y la comprensión del complejo trabajo que realizan los formadores de profesores, además de servir de trampolín para proporcionar integración y oportunidades de desarrollo profesional.

**Keywords:** teacher educators; professional standards; professional development

### **Teacher education in the university sector**

Teacher educators based in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in England play central roles in the professional formation of intending and serving teachers, influencing their future practices, values and attitudes. As Furlong et al. (2000, 36) state in discussing pre-service education,

what student teachers learn during their initial training is as much influenced by *who* (my italics) is responsible for teaching them as it is by the content of the curriculum.

Yet for many years teacher educators were an under-researched and poorly understood occupational group (Maguire 1994; John 1996), with little explicit consideration given to their professional knowledge and skills. There is now, however, growing interest in this occupational group, reflected in a new body of literature on teacher educators (Korthagen et al. 2005). This article aims to make a contribution to that literature, at the same time as debating how existing developments in other national contexts could contribute to a proposed professional initiative to re-articulate the work of teacher educators in England.

Teacher educators are often positioned as 'uneasy residents in academe' (Ducharme and Agne 1989, 312), with their academic and professional identities located across both Higher Education (HE) and school sectors (Ducharme 1993; Maguire 1994, 2000; Day 1995). Their knowledge bases are complex and difficult to define, characterised in part by the 'endemic uncertainty' of professional knowledge (Furlong 1996, 154) and the pedagogical expertise of teaching teachers (John 1996; Loughran 2006). These factors affect the work and status of teacher educators in many countries, often enabling them to be (wrongly) positioned as only 'semi-academics' (Murray 2002).

The place of teacher education within the university sector in England has long been recognised as an uneasy one (Taylor 1969). The origins of ITE in England can be traced back to the poverty of the nineteenth century elementary school system.

From these origins, the teacher training colleges were established, and became the major providers of ITE courses from the early twentieth century until approximately the mid-1960s. The legacies of this history still resonate in the sector. Whitty et al. (1987), for example, identify the low status and isolation of teacher education in English Higher Education (HE), and term this the ‘Cinderella’ syndrome in which teacher education is measured against conventional academic disciplines and found wanting. Teacher education departments have also been identified as sometimes insular and on the periphery of their universities (Maguire 2000). Again, there are some clear commonalities here between the position of teacher educators in universities in England and in other countries, including the USA (see, for example, Clifford and Guthrie 1988). But this article argues that major changes to the field of teacher education in England over the last two decades, whilst widely acknowledged as achieving ‘reform’ of the sector (TTA 2002; Ofsted 2005), have had a significant and detrimental impact on HE-based teacher educators. These changes are seen here as having damaged the distinctiveness of teacher educators’ professional identities, weakened the confidence of the occupational group, and resulted in a poor communal articulation of expertise. The article asserts that an intra-professional re-articulation of the distinctive identities and expertise of teacher educators in England is needed, alongside a re-evaluation of the contributions which they are able to make as ‘change agents’ (Day 2004), knowledge producers and public intellectuals (Cochrane-Smith 2005) to the benefit of schooling and the field of teacher education.

The origins of this article were in the Association of Teacher Educators in Europe (ATEE) 2005 conference at which the key theme was ‘Teachers and their Educators – Standards for Development’. One keynote speech (Koster 2005) described the Dutch initiative by the Association of Dutch Teacher Educators (VELON) in developing standards for teacher educators, and using these to inform professional development and accreditation (VELON 2005). The discussion article for the conference (ATEE 2005, 5) suggested that ATEE should focus explicitly on the quality of teacher education and teacher educators’ work in Europe by developing appropriate standards for this occupational group. Throughout the conference, Research and Development group (RDC) 18 continued to work on this theme, discussing, in particular the feasibility of following the Dutch initiative in other national contexts. This article extends that work by considering the issues relevant to developing either standards or a professional framework for the work of teacher educators in England. It is written from my dual perspectives as a teacher educator engaged in working on teacher education courses from pre-service to doctoral levels, and a researcher in the field. In the latter role my particular interest is in teacher educators, exploring their identities and professionalism, alongside the institutional and national contexts within which they work.

The article focuses unapologetically on teacher educators based in HEIs. Although, as I discuss later in the article, some teacher education in England now occurs only in schools, the majority of pre-service preparation (called Initial Teacher Education [ITE] or Initial Teacher Training [ITT]) is still based in the HE sector<sup>1</sup> and students are taught there by HE-based teacher educators, working in partnerships with schools. As this article will explore, it is this particular group of educators whose position in teacher education in England has been made uncertain in the last two decades.

The structure of this article is as follows: the first section gives a brief overview of the multiple changes in teacher education in England in the last two decades in terms of their effects on teacher educators' work and the specifications of the knowledge, skills and roles required of them as a professional group; the second section then gives an overview of the initiatives to create professional standards for teacher educators in the Netherlands and the USA. These two overviews, together with a discussion of the uniqueness of teacher educators' work, are then used to explore some of the social, political, historical and linguistic issues which might be involved in working from the initiatives in the Netherlands and the USA to acknowledge and accommodate the diversity of contexts within which teacher education in England operates. The article concludes that, with some basic 'ground rules' in place, developing, not defined standards or competencies, but a broad professional framework for teacher educators would facilitate the identification and understanding of their complex work, re-articulate their expertise and provide a springboard for providing enhanced professional development opportunities in HE.

### **Standards and the reform of initial teacher education: the English experience**

The changes to the field of teacher education in England over the last 20 years have been extensive, and this is necessarily a brief and selective overview (for full accounts see Furlong et al. 2000; Mahony and Hextall 2000; Furlong 2005). In England, as in many other countries, (OECD 2004), reforming teacher education and improving its quality has been a key strategy in government policy to reform schooling and to change teachers' professional work. As Furlong et al. (2000, 15) identify, the reform of teacher education in England was driven by concerns throughout the 1980s about the quality and effectiveness of ITE, particularly in terms of the adequacy of the practical training provided.

A key part of the reform strategy has been establishing central control of teacher education. Since 1984, there have been seven government circulars specifically on pre-service provision (DES 1984; DES 1989; DfE 1992; DfE 1993; DfEE 1997; DfEE 1998; TTA 2002). Central control was also strengthened in the mid-1990s through the establishment of a government quango, The Teacher Training Agency (TTA) (now the TDA, see below), to monitor and fund ITE, and the introduction of systematic inspection regimes for all pre-service courses conducted by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), the same regulatory body which conducts school inspections. Together the TTA and Ofsted established a 'national framework of accountability' (Furlong et al. 2000, 15) and a 'culture of compliance' (Menter et al. 2006, 50) for ITE providers. Whilst this regulatory framework has certainly addressed some of the concerns about quality assurance in ITE, it has also had other, far reaching effects on teacher educators, as discussed in more detail later in this article.

The use of standards which student teachers must meet as the outcomes of their ITE has had a central role in these government 'reforms'. In one past government circular (DfEE 1998), these standards for primary (elementary) schooling consisted of a long list of different statements which student teachers should achieve, many with sub-statements or curriculum specifications attached, (DfEE 1998). The current standards (Training and Development Agency [TDA] 2007) are in many ways less prescriptive, but can still be accused of being atomistic, often repetitive and serving to deflect attention from the holism of good teaching in schools and from the broad

social and moral purposes of teacher education and schooling (Murray, John, and Davison 2006).

The ITE programmes resulting from this raft of legislation are now routinely described as ‘teacher training’, and characterised as ‘demanding, relevant, and practical’ (Furlong et al. 2000, 144). The changes to ITE since the early 1990s are widely celebrated in the ‘public discourse’ (Popkewitz 1987) of teacher education in England for bringing about improvements in the quality of provision and the standards achieved by trainees. (TTA 2003; Ofsted 2005). Whilst there may have been some clear gains from these reforms (Furlong et al. 2000), debates also continue about whether they have brought about an inappropriately narrow re-casting of teacher preparation as merely training and the de- or re-professionalisation of teacher’s work (see, inter alia, Furlong et al. 2000; Mahony and Hextall 2000; Menter, Brisard, and Smith 2006). As the next part of the article argues, the devaluing of HE-based teacher educators’ work and the marginalisation of their influence in the 1990s, together with an on-going lack of confidence and cohesion in this occupational group, have been further effects of the reforms.

### **Teacher educators’ work in the era of accountability**

Prior to 1984, HEIs defined the form and content of their pre-service courses; they also set the recruitment and retention criteria for the teacher educators they employed (Furlong et al. 2000). Two broad criteria – the level and form of academic qualification and knowledge, and experience of school teaching – were used in employing teacher educators (Taylor 1969; Shipman 1983; DES 1989). In 1984, a government circular (DES 1984) specified that all teacher educators must have up-to-date and ‘relevant’ knowledge of the school sector in order to work on pre-service courses. This ‘recent and relevant’ criterion in Circular 3/84 (DES 1984), and the extended requirements in Circular 24/89 (DES 1989), had significant effects on teacher education: school experience became the major factor in the recruitment of teacher educators from the mid-1980s onwards (Fish 1995); the staffing bases of the HEIs altered considerably, with large numbers of teachers entering HE work straight from schools (Furlong et al. 2000); and teacher educators already in post were required to return to the school classroom to ‘refresh’ their knowledge of teaching pupils (Beattie 1991).

In 1992–1993 partnership with schools became mandatory in the ‘delivery’ of HE-based courses (DfE 1992, 1993). One immediate consequence of this partnership legislation was that for many teacher educators a large element of their work came to involve a ‘pedagogy of guidance’ (Guile and Lucas 1999, 212) in managing the differing roles and responsibilities of school-based tutors and mentors in ITE. Explicit ‘recent and relevant’ requirements for teacher educators disappeared from these two government circulars and from all subsequent pronouncements. But the central place of school experience in teacher educators’ expertise continued to be emphasised by the hegemonic and largely uncontested discourses of partnership (Wilkin 1996). The ‘populism of being an experienced teacher’ (Whitty et al. 1987, 169–70) had become a defining aspect of teacher educators’ professional experience and knowledge by the mid-1990s. And resonances from this ‘discourse of relevance’ (Maguire and Weiner 1994) are still strong in teacher educators’ identities at the present time (Murray 2006).

The historically low status of teacher education in the university sector has been cited in the introduction to this article. In many ways then, teacher education's hold in HEIs has long been tenuous, but by the mid-1990s the commitment to maintaining teacher education in HE at all was seen as under threat (Barber 1996; Furlong 1996). HEIs and organisations such as the University Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET) were engaged in 'vociferously, if ineffectively' (Menter, Brisard, and Smith 2006, 33) attempting to defend the sector. This failure of HE-based educators to present their case 'effectively' needs to be set in the context of the overall changes in the balance of power between education professionals and the state during this decade. But these defensive activities, together with the intensification of work brought about by funding cuts and the sharp growth in student numbers across the HE sector in the 1990s, undoubtedly impacted adversely on many teacher educators and the teacher education departments within which they worked (Judge et al. 1994; Furlong et al. 2000).

Various commentators (see, for example, Maguire 1994; John 1996; Wilkin 1996; Furlong et al. 2000) have argued that, as result of these changes in education policy in the 1990s, the professional autonomy of HE-based teacher educators was eroded (Hoyle and John 1995) and that their professional knowledge bases and identities were changed – and in some cases – narrowed (Fish 1995; Furlong 1996). As an occupational group, their professional identities became indistinct and ill-defined; they could be, and sometimes were, positioned as having no particular expertise and as 'marginalised if not dispensable' (Wilkin 1996, 114) in ITE. In particular, there was a blurring of the boundaries between this group and the school-based educators who acted as mentors and tutors to students on field experiences (Maguire 1994; Fish 1995; Furlong et al. 2000)

In the first seven years of the twenty-first century the field of teacher education in England has seen demographic changes requiring sharp increases (and subsequent decreases) in teacher supply. Teacher educators have also had to negotiate the impact of New Labour education policies on schools and HE (Furlong 2005) and further changes in government requirements for ITE courses (TTA 2002; TDA 2007). At the same time, the changing and increasingly differentiated HE context has involved enhanced pressures to meet the imperatives of that sector (Furlong 2005). These pressures include managerialist practices such as appraisal and development audits (Morley 2003), quality assurance mechanisms for teaching, and the production of publications meeting the criteria for the Research Assessment Exercise<sup>2</sup> (RAE) of 2008 (Bassegy 2003).

A further factor in the field has been shifting patterns for the allocation of core research funding to English universities from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HECFE). Between 1992 and 2001 many of the new universities and Colleges of Higher of Education (CHEs) – which provide the majority of ITE places – received some central research funding from HEFCE. This funding enabled education departments to establish 'fledgling research cultures' (Dadds and Kynch 2003, 14) within which teacher educators could function as scholars and researchers. Following the RAE of 2001, much of this funding was withdrawn, however, and the maintenance of these emerging research cultures became increasingly tenuous (Bassegy 2003). Approximately 80% of all ITE students are now taught in teacher education departments which have no central research funding. There is now the very real prospect that the production of education research will become dislocated from ITE

and from teacher educators' work in many of these settings. There is also mounting evidence (Bassey 2003; Dadds and Kynch 2003; Whitelaw et al. 2005; Murray, Davison, and John 2006) that the effects of preparations for the RAE are acting to re-define what 'counts' as research in teacher education and who is judged to be a researcher.

There is only a small body of research on how these recent changes in teacher education have impacted on teacher educators' understanding of ITE and their knowledge bases and senses of identity. Three themes emerge from the available studies. Firstly, both the work of Menter, Brisard, and Smith (2006) and the KITE study (Murray, Davison, and John 2006) indicate the ways in which the 'culture of compliance' (Menter, Brisard, and Smith 2006, 50) continues to affect teacher educators. Menter, Brisard, and Smith, for example, discuss the ways in which senses of competition and vulnerability mark the ITE system in England. They also cite the ways in which the discourse of the English teacher educators in their study emphasised adherence to the Standards and the then Teacher Training Agency's guidance and indicated strong senses of anxiety around inspection regimes (51). Secondly, the work of Whitelaw et al. (2005) and the findings of the KITE study (Murray, Davison, and John 2006) indicate the diversity of ways in which the field of teacher education in England is instantiated into differing university contexts and the heterogeneity of teacher educators as a professional group. In the KITE study, for example, whilst teacher educators shared some common understandings of what it meant to be teachers of beginning teachers in HE, they also constructed differing shades of academic and professional identities for themselves. These identity constructions could be related, in part, to different patterns of engagement in the research / scholarship / teaching / service nexus of academic life (Murray, Davison, and John 2006). Thirdly, the studies of Boyd et al. (2005) and Murray and Male (2005) on new teacher educators indicate the newcomers' perceptions of entering an occupational group in which expertise is ill-defined and induction provision is sometimes poorly articulated (Murray 2005). The overall picture of teacher educators which emerges from this small body of research is that of a fragmented and uncertain professional group. Reiterating this analysis, Menter, Brisard, and Smith (2006) comment that HE-based teacher educators in England showed less self-confidence than the Scottish educators in their study.

Teacher education is by no means the only professional field which has experienced the impact of public sector reforms in the UK. Changes to the HE sector, including the erosion of traditional academic models of autonomy and professionalism across all disciplines, are also widely documented (Morley 2003). But, following other commentators (see, for example, Furlong et al. 2000), this article argues that the changes of the 1980s and 1990s hit teacher education particularly hard for a complex mix of reasons. These include the use of ITE as a key strategy in the reform of the school sector, the concerns about quality assurance in pre-service courses, the historically low status of teacher education in the university sector and the uncertain and contested knowledge bases for intending teachers. However the results of these reforms are now seen in terms of improving the quality of ITE, this article argues that their other, and largely unacknowledged, effects include the weakened confidence of teacher educators as an occupational group and a damaged sense of the distinctiveness of their professional identities.

This article asserts that the legacies of this contested history are felt to this day and have contributed to a poor communal articulation of teacher educators'

expertise and the contributions which they can make to the epistemology and pedagogy of teacher education and schooling. As has been indicated in the introduction, a central argument of this article is that an intra-professional re-articulation of the distinctive aspects of HE-based teacher educators' work is now needed, alongside a re-evaluation of the contributions of this group to education. The following sections of this article begin to address the issue of how this re-articulation could be achieved, including a consideration of whether or not the standards for teacher educators, already developed in the Netherlands and the USA, could contribute to it. In the next section these two sets of standards and their aims and achievements are briefly reviewed.

### **Standards for teacher educators: initiatives in the Netherlands and the USA**

Standards for teacher educators have been developed in the USA by the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE 2003, 2007) and in the Netherlands by the Dutch Association of Teacher Educators (VELON) (VELON 2005, 2007; see also Koster and Dengerink 2001). Both sets of standards were developed collaboratively within the respective teacher education communities. In the Netherlands the first set of standards, initiated in 1998, have now been replaced by a revised version; in the USA a similar process of revision is in process, with a second set of standards in draft form at the time of writing in 2007. Both sets of standards now provide the criteria for national accreditation processes: in the USA the ATE standards are used as criteria for achieving the award of 'Master Teacher Educator'; in the Netherlands the VELON standards have provided frames of reference for the development of learning goals and for self-assessment (Koster and Dengerink 2005), resulting in individual accreditation as 'certified teacher educator'. Both sets of standards have also informed the analysis of teacher educators' work in other national contexts, the US standards in Israel (Shagrir 2005) and the Dutch standards in Belgium (Aelterman et al. 2000, cited in Koster and Dengerink 2001).

The two sets of standards position the original development processes as part of teacher educators' moral responsibilities to schooling, to teacher education as a vocational field, and to the development of their own occupational group (Koster and Dengerink 2001; ATE 2003). As the original version of the American standards expressed it:

Teacher educators have an obligation to be precise about what is entailed in being a teacher educator. To do less at a time when the quality of children's education weighs so heavily in the balance is indefensible. Not only will the standards of teacher education provide a vehicle for being precise; it will also provide the opportunity to coalesce a knowledge base that will make public the characteristics of the specialization. (ATE 2003)

The current version of the ATE standards (ATE 2007– in draft at the time of writing) consists of nine statements, together with supporting rationales, indicators of potential sources of evidence, and examples of artefacts to be used for assessment purposes. The standards stress the following aspects of teacher educators' work: pedagogical roles in modelling professional practices (S1); systematic reflection on personal practice (S4); emphases on service in the development of high quality education (S1, 2 and 7); and teacher education programmes (S5); and focuses on collaboration with other stakeholders (S6) and on responsibility to the teacher

education profession (S8). These draft standards place an explicit focus on teacher educators' 'service' roles within the field of education, stressing, for example, the need to serve as 'informed, constructive advocates for high quality education for all students' (S7) and to promote social justice in teacher education (S2). Involvement in research and scholarly enquiry (S3) and the production of new knowledge are also explicitly stressed. Research-based practice is seen as informing all aspects of work, including the

modeling of behaviour (*which*) relates to teaching, service and scholarly productivity. Teacher educators must use research-based, proven best practices in order for those behaviours to be appropriately applied. (ATE 2007, S1)

The revised Dutch standards (VELON 2007, 1) start by spelling out the fundamental aspects of the work of teacher educators. These are defined as working 'simultaneously on three levels' as 'the teacher educator understands the development of pupils, facilitates and supervises the student teacher's development and takes charge of his or her own professional development'. The teacher educator's main focus is clearly stated as 'the development of participants' (*in teacher education programmes*). Further standards relate to pedagogical and interpersonal skills, self-development and working in organisations, with colleagues, and in broader contexts of education. The standards emphasise the extended range of knowledge, skills and understanding required for good teaching, including interpersonal and organisational skills. They also give a grounded and detailed sense of the importance of teacher educators' work with their students and colleagues, particularly in terms of being good role models and facilitating learner autonomy. Research engagement is not mentioned explicitly, but teacher educators are required to 'contribute to the production of knowledge about teaching and teacher education' (S6, 3). Systematic enquiry into teaching, maintaining and increasing professional knowledge and skills and 'translating' new developments in the field into teaching are all stressed. These emphases on a particular type of scholarship reflect the intra-professional 'audience' for the standards, and the location of a significant proportion of Dutch ITE in institutes of teacher education where research engagement, as it is conventionally understood in academic work, is not required.

Reflecting differences in the cultures and structures of teacher education in the Netherlands and the USA, the two sets of standards differ in the ways which they describe teacher education and in the degrees of emphasis placed upon the various aspects of teacher educators' work. But both sets of standards provide powerful communal and intra professional statements of the expertise, knowledge and functions required of teacher educators and their contributions both to teacher education and to the broader field of school education. Both sets give a broad overview of teacher educators' work as teaching, working with a variety of partners across school and HE contexts, scholarship-research, service to the school sector and service to the employing teacher education organisation. In both countries commentators have argued that teacher educators as a professional group benefit from the fact that they have standards that were developed within their own occupational group and which articulate the complexity of their work. As indicated earlier, both sets of standards are used for assessment and accreditation purposes. Again, the processes involved in this assessment are seen as bringing benefits to teacher educators. In the Netherlands, for example, Koster and Dengerink (2001), Koster (2005) and Swennen (in Murray, Shagrir, and Swennen, forthcoming) have

all indicated the professional development benefits for individuals in becoming a registered teacher educator with VELON.

In both the Netherlands and the USA then the intra professional development of standards would seem to have brought benefits to teacher educators as an occupational group. In order to discuss if either of these sets of standards – or an English version of them – could contribute to a re-articulation of teacher educators' work in England, the next part of the article aims to raise questions about HE-based teacher educators' identities and professionalism.

### **Identities, expertise and distinctiveness**

The following questions are designed to consider the uniqueness of teacher educators' work in more depth and to continue to explore some of the social, political, historical and linguistic issues around any proposal to develop standards for teacher educators in England. The questions are as follows:

- What makes an HE-based teacher educator different from other seemingly similar professional / academic groups (for example, school teachers acting as mentors and tutors on ITE courses, or academics and professional educators in other university disciplines)?
- What is distinctive about teacher educators' identities, their areas of expertise and their practices?
- What are the professional responsibilities of teacher educators? How do these relate to the purposes of teacher education, and how are they understood individually, communally and nationally?
- How are these professional responsibilities played out in the practices of teacher educators?

One way of 'answering' such questions is to understand teacher educators as *second order practitioners* (Murray 2002), involved in the processes of both producing and reproducing the discourses and practices of schooling with and for their students *and* the producing and reproducing of academic discourses about education as their discipline or subject in HE. They may once have been school teachers (or *first order practitioners*) working in the first order field of schooling, but their work has changed; they have become teachers of teachers operating in the second order field of teacher education and the different pedagogic settings offered by HE institutions. Clearly, having experiential knowledge of teaching in the school sector is important for many teacher educators, particularly those working on the practical preparation elements of ITE courses. But second order practice demands new and different types of professional knowledge and understanding, including extended pedagogical skills, from those required of school teachers as first order practitioners (Koster, Korthagen, and Wubbels 1998; Smith 2003; Murray and Male 2005).

Whilst, legally, it is the role of the General Teaching Council for England to monitor entry to and development within the English teaching profession, teacher educators also have considerable power and professional and social responsibilities as gate keepers. In pre-service programmes in particular, they have central roles in the selection, recruitment and retention of intending teachers. On most ITE routes HE-based teacher educators, in partnership with schools, continue to design, implement and evaluate pre-service programmes. They also provide pedagogical role

models, influence the future practices, values and attitudes of their students as intending school teachers and assess their teaching abilities in schools against the Standards (again in partnerships with school-based teacher educators or mentors).

Because teacher educators work across both school and HE sectors in these ways, they hold unique positions. As Taylor (1983, 41) has identified:

Teacher education is of its very nature Janus-faced. In the one direction it faces classroom and school, with their demands for relevance, practicality, competence, techniques. In the other it faces the university and the world of research, with their stress on scholarship, theoretical fruitfulness and disciplinary rigour.

Day (1995, 359) comments about teacher educators that ‘they are neither fish nor fowl, neither “academics” nor “practitioners”’. This comment has definite power, but it re-emphasises the dichotomy between academic and professional in a way which does not help to elaborate on teacher educators’ unique position as teachers of teachers. One way of re-casting this statement would be to see teacher educators as both teacher-practitioners *and* scholar-academics because their work involves service to teacher education and the school sector through teaching, scholarship /research and other ‘outreach’ activities. What makes teacher educators unique among other groups of academics and professional educators is that teaching and learning are the essential focuses of their work in both the first order and second order settings. The scholarship and research involved in their knowledge of their ‘discipline’ or ‘subject’ of education and the pedagogical awareness of how to teach that ‘subject’ in HE are, in many ways, inseparable. Taking this view of teacher educators’ work then involves seeing teaching, scholarly and research activity and service as integral and synergistic.

Previous research into teacher educators’ work and professionalism emphasises the centrality of two factors. Firstly, teacher educators’ constructions of their professionalism are determined in part by the ways in which they understand the processes of production and reproduction of the knowledge and practices of schooling during teacher education programmes (Atkinson and Delamont 1985) and their understanding of their own roles in these processes (Maguire 1994; Hatton 1997; Murray 2002). Secondly, within these constructions, the importance of service is an integral part of how teacher educators see their professional missions (Carter 1984; Ducharme 1993; Murray 2007). How teacher education is understood and lived, as a social and moral enterprise which ‘serves’ the school sector, is then seen here as an essential part of the confirming strength of teacher educators’ identities.

As has been discussed in earlier work (Murray 2005), teaching as a teacher educator involves identifying the inter-relationships between *what* is taught (the ‘content’) and *how* (the pedagogical modes used). It requires from the teacher educator an overt knowledge of how one teaches and why (Loughran 2006); it requires a self-consciousness of pedagogy, including a consideration of not only the inter-personal and inter-professional dynamics between students and teacher educator in the university, but also the messages which those experiences communicate about the nature of teaching and learning to the students as future practitioners in schools with their own pupils. In short, practising as a teacher educator demands an engagement in teaching about teaching through the medium of personal pedagogy. At its best this aspect of teacher educator practice can be about enabling students to ‘see inspiration’, as a model for their future practice. Such teaching is complex, uncertain and often idiosyncratic; it draws on the professional

*habitus* (Bourdieu 1987) of the individual, and can involve ‘pedagogical vision’ (Furlong et al. 2000, 143). At its best, it is in Schon’s term (1987) ‘professional artistry’. It is difficult to atomise such teaching and to reduce it to a list of standards or competencies without producing reductive statements which downplay individual or communal excellence.

Scholarly and research activity is seen here as an integral part of the complexity of teacher educators’ work and their professional expertise as second order practitioners. As Cochrane-Smith (2005) in a discussion of teacher educators’ roles asserts ‘part of the task of the teacher educators is functioning simultaneously as both researcher and practitioner’ (219). She refers to the ‘reciprocal, recursive and symbiotic relationships’ between scholarship/research as ‘working the dialectic’ (220). From her perspectives such symbiotic relationships have ‘fed’ and enriched teacher education.

But this stance does not mean that all teacher educators need to be involved in the production of conventional, published research in education. The distinction which the first version of ATE Standard 2 (ATE 2003) made between ‘inquiring into’ and ‘contributing to’ areas of research relevant to teacher educators’ work is useful here. This formulation can be seen as corresponding to Boyer, Altbach, and Whitelaw’s (1994) definitions of the *scholarship of discovery* (similar to conventional definitions of research as contributing to the field through the creation of new knowledge) and the *scholarship of application* (in which existing research is ‘related’ to practice). In an extension of this work on behalf of the Carnegie Foundation, scholarship becomes the active link between research, teaching and service in educational work (Boyer, Altbach, and Whitelaw 1994).

In order to see teacher educators as scholar-academic-teacher in this way, the full spectrum of scholarship and research and different models of individual and departmental engagement in that spectrum need to be acknowledged. Scholarly and research activities have a multiplicity of forms including: engagement in the field of enquiry through sustained reading and reflection; systematic enquiries into personal practice, informed by research; involvement in individual practitioner research and action research which is reported in academic theses; communal participation in small-scale studies published in professional journals; writing books and teaching materials for practitioners in the school sector; and involvement in large national research projects with internationally disseminated outcomes in academic journals. The teacher education communities need to resist the current narrowing of ‘what counts’ as research activity, and clearly acknowledge that many teacher educators who may be scholar-academics are not necessarily engaged in published research which meets the criteria set by research audits such as the RAE in England and a similar research audit proposed for universities in Australia (the Research Quality Framework, see [www.dest.gov.au](http://www.dest.gov.au)).

### **Standards or a professional framework for teacher educators’ work in England?**

Drawing on the various analyses already presented, this article argues that there are significant issues to be addressed in considering how the work undertaken in the Netherlands and the USA might be relevant to teacher educators in England. The first of these issues centres around the use of a standards-based approach. As the brief account of teacher education above indicates, there have been debates around

the extent to which the standards-led government reforms of ITE have achieved improved quality and a re-professionalised teaching force or have imposed inappropriate levels of conformity and de-professionalised teachers (see Furlong et al. 2000; Mahony and Hextall 2000; Menter, Brisard, and Smith 2006). For some in the teacher education communities then, the word 'standards' will also have negative associations of government imposition and control, of measurement of students' professional practice, and of the loss of teacher educators' autonomy (Mahony and Hextall 2000). This means that any proposals to develop 'standards' for teacher educators might well be met with apprehension or scepticism within the teacher education communities. For this reason it would be advisable to create an alternative language of professionalism with which to describe teacher educators' work. This point is discussed in further detail below.

Secondly, any initiative would need to take into account the diversities and differentiations within the English teacher education sector. As indicated earlier, the HEIs providing ITE in England vary greatly and teacher educators working within them may face varying imperatives for teaching and research engagement and perceive their work in differing ways (Davison, Murray, and John 2005). To add to this complexity, a growing body of research indicates that it is the micro communities of practice within these already varied departments which are central in forging teacher educators' identities and work (Boyd et al. 2005; Murray 2005; Whitelaw et al. 2005). Any initiative would therefore need to acknowledge these diversities, as well as accommodating the centrality of partnership in both pre-service and in-service provision.

Both pre- and in-service teacher education in England can now take place largely within schools. In pre-service education, for example, a range of new school-based routes into teaching including School Centred Initial Teacher Training schemes, the Graduate Teacher Training Programme and Teach First have been developed in recent years. These routes have opened up new career opportunities for school-based teacher educators, tutors and mentors. It has been clearly acknowledged in the introduction that the main focus of this article is on HE-based teacher educators, but it would be difficult to analyse their work without acknowledging the growing importance of school-based teacher educators. Any initiative to re-articulate the work of teacher educators would need to consider these stakeholders and the ways in which their work had commonalities and differences with that of HE-based educators.

As I have described earlier, the standards in both the Netherlands and the USA are used for explicit assessment and accreditation purposes. In England, the Higher Education Academy (HEA) and its partner organisations have now introduced a generic 'Professional Standards Framework' for academics teaching and supporting learning in Higher Education (HEA 2006). More significantly, as indicated above, teacher educators are also subject to the audit cultures of their HEIs and, for ITE courses, to Ofsted inspections.<sup>3</sup> Many features of these audit and inspection regimes have little in common with the collaborative, intra-professional and self-regulatory frameworks offered by the standards in the Netherlands and the USA, but it could still be argued that the last thing teacher educators in England need is more forms of professional assessment.

Many of the factors outlined above make the development of a rigid set of standards to assess or accredit teacher educators' work in England inappropriate. But devising an alternative language in which to describe the second order practices of teacher educators within a broad professional framework could provide ways of

making explicit the sophisticated, but often tacit, practices, principles and values which inform work as teachers of teachers and scholar-academics (Loughran 2006). Using the term ‘professional framework’, rather than ‘standards’ or ‘competencies’, is a starting point for avoiding the negative connotations and associations of those words. It has the additional advantage of implying the development of a vision of teacher educators’ work which is broad enough to consider the considerable diversities within the teacher education system in England. Such a framework could provide the starting point for generating an intra-professional re-articulation and recognition of expertise. Whilst it would be naïve to suggest that the development of a professional framework could provide the means for recovering lost professional autonomy, it could well facilitate much needed analysis and re-articulation of teacher educators’ work. It could also provide a springboard for developing enhanced induction and professional learning opportunities for this professional group in HE.

Current projects within an Association for Teacher Educators in Europe (ATEE) Research and Development Centre (RDC) on teacher educator induction and professional development offer support in developing any initiative. The professional framework from the HEA, mentioned above, would also provide a possible starting point. In addition, a number of ‘ground rules’ for working on such a professional framework for teacher educators in England would need to be established, some with clear precedents from the initiatives in the Netherlands and the USA. These ground rules for the framework might include: firstly, recognising and acknowledging the various ways in which the social purposes and values of teacher education are understood and played out in the diversity of teacher educators’ work in HEIs and schools in England; and secondly, recognising the notion of ‘service’ to education as being at the heart of teacher educators’ work. In addition, drawing on the analyses above, it is suggested that this framework should:

- see teaching, scholarship-research and service as integral and synergistic within second order practice;
- be flexible enough to accommodate the variations in work across and between HEIs (and other training routes in England);
- allow for individual excellence and innovations in practice as a teacher, researcher and education developer within the distinctive micro communities of practice which exist within those HEIs;
- be a springboard – rather than a strait jacket – for professional practice as a second order practitioner;
- be the result of a dynamic development process, owned by all of the teacher education communities, including those operating in school-based settings and working on school-based routes;
- be used only on a voluntary basis for intra-professional development and self-regulation, and not for any overt assessment or accreditation purposes;
- be clearly acknowledged as requiring regular reviews and updating so that it reflects changing contexts for teacher educators’ work.

## **Conclusion**

This article has argued that an intra-professional re-articulation of the distinctive identities and expertise of teacher educators in England is needed, together with a

re-evaluation of the contributions which they are able to make to education. For the reasons outlined above, this article concludes that the use of ‘standards’ *per se* to re-articulate the work of teacher educators in England would not be productive. But it also argues that considering the intra-professional development of a broad professional framework could have significant potential and relevance for re-articulating the work of teacher educators. As indicated above, working from the starting points of previous work in other national contexts, alongside aspects of the HEA Framework (mentioned above), could offer valuable perspectives and ways of working, and avoid the danger of becoming too anglo-centric.

One of the main tasks in considering the viability of such a framework would be generating intra-professional support within the teacher education communities. This would be the starting point for the kind of collaborative processes which Koster and Dengerink (2001) describe in the development of the Dutch standards. Devising the kind of synergistic professional framework indicated in this article – one which explores and attempts to describe the complexity and diversity of teacher educators’ work as second order practitioners, as well as taking into account the explicit and tacit contestations about the nature of teacher education and training found within the sector – would be challenging. But it could be an important intra-professional task for an occupational group whose communal voice has been too often devalued in teacher education policy in England in the last two decades.

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### **Notes**

1. Pre-1992 or ‘old’ universities in the UK were established by charter prior to 1992 and tend to be more research-intensive. Post-1992 or ‘new’ universities were established by statute in or after 1992. Many were previously polytechnics, with traditions of concentrating professional and vocational courses. Most Colleges of Higher Education (CHEs) were originally teacher training colleges but are now diversified HE providers, all with close affiliations to the university sector.
2. The Research Assessment Exercise is an audit of the quality and quantity of research activity within disciplines and institutions in British Higher Education. The audits take place approximately every five years.
3. Ofsted (the Office for Standards in Education) is a regulatory body conducting regular cycles of inspections of ITE provision within HEIs in England.

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