The Future of Teacher Education and of Teacher Education Research

‘Interesting Times’ in Teacher Education
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A Non-Strategic Future for Mathematics in Schools?
TAKING OVER AS PRESIDENT FROM JOHN GARDNER is a daunting prospect. I knew he was misleading me when, on my election as Vice President, he told me that being BERA President might consume the equivalent of half a day a week. Observing all his activity over the past year I know he has given much more than four hours a week in his determination to provide leadership in the creation of more robust structures and processes for conducting BERA’s business.

The catalogue of BERA’s achievements during John’s presidency includes: the creation of standing committees with delegated responsibilities, albeit still accountable to Council which retains ultimate authority; the expansion of our publications portfolio and the negotiation of more favourable royalty arrangements with journals’ publishers which will help to secure BERA’s financial status in difficult times; the establishment of a London office and the appointment of two excellent permanent staff; and the commissioning of a conference provider, a new website and a new visual identity (brand image).

There is still more to be done, especially in co-ordinating capacity building activity across our committees, but the last two years’ hard work has provided a firm foundation on which to build. I am hopeful that, thanks to John’s work, I might realistically expect to give fewer hours than he has. Of course, as Vice President in 2011 to 2012, John can expect me to call on his advice regularly, which I know he will freely give.

The 2011 Annual Conference is now behind us. And a very successful conference it was. Our thanks are due to Danny Durant and his conference sub-committee for arranging it so well, to the conference provider, and to our own office staff who have thrown themselves into support activity with enthusiasm. As always, the London venue, at the IOE, attracted a higher than average number of delegates, of whom about one third were from overseas. Excellent!

The choice of keynote lecturers illustrated the breadth of interest represented within BERA by including an eminent philosopher, Professor Baroness Onora O’Neill, and an economist of education, Professor Simon Marginson of the University of Melbourne. Both brought penetrating insight from their different fields to some of the most pressing issues faced by schools and universities in the UK today.

Of course, one only has a chance to sample a few of the multiple delights of any large conference, but I attended, or was told about, many stimulating sessions in both the main conference and the early career researcher conference. We hope to choose a symposium shortly to represent BERA at the AERA conference next year in Vancouver.

As our new internal arrangements bed down, we will be looking outward again, to build relationships and alliances with groups representing researchers, practitioners and policy makers, at home and abroad, in pursuit of our aim to ‘pursue educational research and its application for both the improvement of educational practice and for the public benefit’.

The theme of this issue of Research Intelligence – ‘The Future of Teacher Education’ – poses crucial questions about the role of educational research in providing an evidence base, ideas and critique within a rapidly developing policy environment. In England, the decisions by the Coalition Government to reform teacher education by changing minimum qualifications for recruits, funding ‘teaching schools’, creating a scholarship scheme for SEN and core subject teachers, expanding Teach First, funding ex-service personnel to be mentors to young people, and reviewing Teachers’ Standards, all have substantial implications for university departments of education, in both their research and teaching roles.

For many years, BERA has shared insights with the Universities' Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET) on such issues. This alliance will continue to be important. The fact we now have offices located in the same building will help. We are currently working together on a response to the Education Bill that is currently going through Parliament. This seeks to implement the English Government’s White Paper ‘The Importance of Teaching’. Its provisions will be far-reaching, as the articles in this issue of RI make clear.

Mary James, University of Cambridge
Working with the new President

The office is delighted to be working with President Mary James in this new period of consolidation as she takes up the mantle from former President John Gardner. In her presidential address, Mary focused on researcher diversity – something which the office is acutely aware of as we plan, strategise and assist in making recommendations to the Executive Council on how best we can serve our varied and diverse members and their interests. We will be working closely with the President in the formative months of her presidency engaging with the Chairs of our key standing committees, in progressing activities and coming up with new innovations.

A role for publicity and marketing

The conference launched the new BERA logo and visual branding guidelines. The office will be taking the lead in ensuring all our collateral documents follow our new guidelines represented by a graphic marque and mission statement that states “BERA’s aim is to encourage the pursuit of educational research and its application for both the improvement of educational practice and for the public benefit.” A new leaflet and pop up banner stands which are both visually striking and succinctly communicate our message to audiences were produced in the first phase of rebranded collateral documents.

The second phase will include the new website, which will feature a fully functional website that serves as the public face of the Association and a secure members’ area which will include collaborative tools such as discussion areas, wikis and blogs.

The office has an integral role in the publicity and marketing of the Association. It will be taking a strategic and operational role with regards to deploying these and will be working closely with the Officers and Council on behalf of the Association.

The office is staffed by Farzana Rahman, Mark Donoghue and temporarily supported by Miriam McDermott.

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Working with the standing committees

The office will be supporting the work of the standing committees throughout the course of the year, but particularly in the delivery of member-facing activities such as events and capacity building. Capacity building is integral to the Association, and it is the intention that a cross committee working group, drawing on the strengths of APC, ENC and MEC will seek to identify ways and means of capacity building for the Association and its members. The role of the office in this important member service will be to aid delivery, and to facilitate and coordinate activities.

Mr Jeremy Hoad left the organisation on 30th June 2011 to pursue other opportunities. As BERA’s first CEO we thank him for his contribution.
BERA's work is managed by an Executive Council, supported by a number of Committees.

**BERA EXECUTIVE COUNCIL** consists of up to 12 elected members (including three elected Officers – President, Vice President and Treasurer) and up to 6 co-opted members. Supporting the work of BERA Executive Council are a number of committees:

1. **General Purposes Committee**
2. **Academic Publications Committee**
3. **Events and Networking Committee**
4. **Membership and Engagement Committee**
5. **Risk Assessment and Audit Committee**

The General Purposes Committee and Officers meet regularly to ensure that BERA's operational and strategic business is on track throughout the year. BERA is a registered charity and the Executive Council members are Trustees of the charity.

**Council Members**

- **Kalwant Bhopal**  
  University of Southampton
- **Hilary Burgess**  
  University of Leicester
- **Donald Christie**  
  University of Strathclyde
- **Mark Connolly**  
  University of Wales Institute
- **Danny Durant**  
  University of the West of Scotland
- **Ross Deuchar**  
  University of the West of Scotland
- **Sean Hayes**  
  Greenwich Council
- **Chris Husbands**  
  Institute of Education
- **Ruth Leitch**  
  Queen’s University, Belfast
- **Gemma Moss**  
  Institute of Education, London
- **Alis Oancea**  
  University of Oxford
- **Sally Power**  
  Cardiff University
- **Pat Sikes**  
  University of Sheffield
- **Pat Thomson**  
  University of Nottingham
- **Peter Twining**  
  The Open University

**President**

- **Mary James**  
  University of Cambridge

**Officers**

- **John Gardner**  
  Queen’s University, Belfast (Vice President)
- **Colin Rogers**  
  University of Lancaster (Treasurer)

**BERA Office**

- **Farzana Rahman**  
  (Office Manager)
- **Mark Donoghue**  
  (Office Administrator)

The BERA offices are based in Endsleigh Gardens, London. The office is run by Farzana Rahman, who oversees the workflow in the office and ensures that the BERA administration is run smoothly and provides value-added service to BERA members. She works in collaboration with Mark Donoghue, who, in his role as BERA administrator, looks after the website, membership support and queries, the membership database and the Special Interest Groups.

To contact the BERA office, please telephone 020 7612 6987 or email enquiries@bera.ac.uk.

Our address is BERA Office, 9-11 Endsleigh Gardens, London, WC1H 0ED
Introducing the Membership and Engagement Committee

The new BERA committee structure consists of three committees: Academic Publications, Events and Networking, and Membership and Engagement. The previous two editions of RI introduced the first two; here I would like to take the opportunity to outline the Membership and Engagement Committee, of which I am Chair. By Kalwant Bhopal

THE MEMBERSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE (MEC) consists of nine members, of which two are doctoral students. The broad remit of MEC includes all manner of membership activities, ranging from membership development initiatives to those associated with diversity and outreach. We have for example recently conducted a survey of all members of BERA. The on-line BERA membership survey was designed to better understand member and non-member needs, and engagement with BERA. We are intending to use the results of the survey to conduct further research around capacity building and targeted membership campaigns.

MEC has also been instrumental in organising the continuation of an annual one-day conference for early careers researchers from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds (in partnership with the Events and Engagement Committee). These conferences have been hugely successful in providing support for BME early careers researchers as well as emphasising the benefits of BERA membership.

Groups which work alongside the remit of MEC include the Website Advisory Group (WAG), the SIG Convenors group, as well as several of the Awards groups (such as Dissertation Award, Brian Simon and Meeting of Minds awards).

MEC also plays a role in carrying out consultations and making links with other academic and non-academic organisations. A recent consultation was a response to the new HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council of Europe) Equality Scheme (2011-2014), which outlined BERA’s response to the scheme, particularly in relation to HEFCE’s role in promoting equality and diversity.

MEC remit
- Consultations
- Links with other associations
- SIG liaison and support
- Website
- Ensuring all activities have due regard to UK-wide contexts/ issues
- Membership services and surveys
- Membership development initiatives
- Recruitment and retention of members
- Maximizing income to support members’ services and the charitable goals of the Association
- Diversity and outreach
- Awards (BERA Brian Simon, Dissertation, Meeting of Minds and BERA/Sage Practitioner)
- Engaging with external initiatives (e.g. ESRC, DTCs)
- Research staff training and support (through career stages) with Events and Networking Committee (ENC)

Part of the new BERA structure

BERA Council

Events and Networking Committee (ENC)
Chair: Danny Durant

Publications Committee (APC)
Chair: Sally Power

Membership and Engagement Committee (MEC)
Chair: Kalwant Bhopal

Conference Committee
Chair: Danny Durant

Training and Support Group
Chair: Pat Thomson
The Membership and Engagement Committee

Chair: Kailwant Bhopal is an elected member of BERA Council (since 2009). She is Reader in Education and Director of the Social Justice and Inclusive Education Research Centre at the University of Southampton. She has published widely on the educational experiences of marginalised and disadvantaged groups. She is author of Intersectionality and ‘Race’ in Education (with J Preston) (2011, Routledge) and is Visiting Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Queens University (Belfast) and Visiting Scholar at the Institute of Education.

Linda Cooper is a second year, full-time student in the Faculty of Health, Social Care and Education at Anglia Ruskin University. Her PhD study is in the area of mothers’ and daughters’ access and aspirations to higher education, looking at gendered and classed narratives. Linda’s previous research interest was young children’s perceptions of their school experiences, which led to presentation at an international conference and two publications. As well as her PhD study, Linda co-convenes a student-led academic and social support network for research students across the university and she is a member of an interdisciplinary academic women’s research group.

Ross Deuchar is Professor of Research in Education at the University of the West of Scotland. His research falls within the intersection between education, sociology and criminology and he is widely known for his work on issues of youth identity and citizenship, with a particular focus on youth justice and crime. His recent work has focused on the sociology of gangs, marginalised young people, issues of territoriality and youth offending. He is the author of the book Gangs, Marginalised Youth and Social Capital (2009, Trentham) and has written numerous articles in academic journals with a particular focus on citizenship and on gangs, sectarianism and youth justice. He is currently the President of the Scottish Educational Research Association.

Frances Gallanagh is a part-time student studying for a Doctorate in Education (EdD) at the University of Manchester. She is currently writing up her thesis, which is a longitudinal study of area-based interventions to address educational disadvantage in one local authority. She has been working as a research associate since 2000, initially in the Special Needs Research Centre at Newcastle University, and, since 2004, mainly with colleagues in the Centre for Equity in Education at Manchester. She came into educational research after nine years as a teacher in mainstream and special education settings.

Ruth Leitch is professor in the School of Education, Queen’s University Belfast, Northern Ireland and former head of the School (2001-2005). She is currently visiting professor at the Universities of Bergen, Norway and Alberta, Canada. Her primary areas of research interest are teacher identity, children’s voice, the impact of trauma on children and young people and research methodologies associated with arts-based educational inquiry. She is a member of BERA Council representing NI as an elected member and also has responsibility as the SIG portfolio holder. From January 2012, she will co-edit the British Educational Research Journal with Professor Joanne Hughes (Queen’s) and colleagues from Glasgow and Cambridge universities.

Gemma Moss is Director of CeCeps – the Centre for Critical Education Policy Studies. Her research interests include literacy and education policy, with particular reference to gender and literacy; children’s informal literacy practices and their relationship to the formal school curriculum; the study of texts in their context of use; and the shifting relationships between policy makers, practitioners and stakeholders that are re-shaping the literacy curriculum. Gemma is also Convenor of the Educational Research and Policy Making SIG. She is Deputy Chair of MEC.

Anna Traianou is senior lecturer in the Department of Educational Studies, at Goldsmiths, University of London. She has carried out research into the nature of teacher expertise, and, in particular, the ways in which knowledge and learning are implicated in educational practice. This resulted in her book, Understanding Teacher Expertise in Primary Science: A Sociocultural Approach (SENSE publishers, 2006). Anna has also worked on the relationship between research evidence and practical wisdom, exploring some of the problems facing any notion that effective teaching can simply be an application of the results of educational research. She has a particular interest in qualitative research methodology and theories of science. She is co-author of Ethics in Qualitative Research (with Martyn Hammersley) (SAGE, May, 2012).

Gary McCulloch is the Brian Simon professor of history of education at the Institute of Education, University of London, and currently also faculty director of post graduate research. His most recent published book is The Struggle for the History of Education (Routledge, 2011). He was a member of the Research Assessment Exercise Education panel in 1996, 2001 and 2008. He chaired the BERA dissertation awards committee in 2011, and is currently lead researcher for the Society for Educational Studies national award for 2011, with a research project on ‘The social organisation of educational studies: past, present and future’.

Dr Peter Twining is a senior lecturer at the Open University and the Director of Vital, an £8.1million DfE funded programme that is supporting practitioners in enhancing their teaching of IT/Computing as specialist subjects and the use of ICT across the curriculum. Peter was the Head of Department of Education at the Open University and then the Co-Director of the Centre for Research in Education and Educational Technology. His career has focused on issues to do with the management of educational change and enhancing education, informed by understandings of the potential of ICT. His passion is scheme (not school – not home – scheme – the education system for the information age). Useful links: the Vital Programme (http://www.vital.ac.uk/); the Scheme Initiative (http://www.scheme.ac.uk/).
Whither the Future?
Teacher Education and Teacher Education Research in the United Kingdom

This issue of RI captures some of the debates among professional communities in teaching and teacher education about the likely impacts of ongoing policy changes.

By Alis Oancea, University of Oxford

RECENT POLICY DOCUMENTS HAVE FRAMED these debates in very distinctive ways in the four countries of the UK.

In England, the 2010 White Paper (The Importance of Teaching, together with the Implementation Plan published in November 2011) used a language of autonomy, empowerment and professionalism to argue for a more school-led initial teacher education (ITE) system. The reforms announced include increased selectivity in ITE recruitment; the application of new performance standards (published by the Department for Education following a review in 2011); and more classroom-based teacher training.

The recommendations of the December 2010 Donaldson review (Teaching Scotland's Future) were met with wide-ranging support in Scotland. They aimed to improve the quality of teaching and of leadership in Scotland, and to develop a model of less fragmented career-long teacher education, through "striking the right balance and connections between university experience and school experience" (p.12) and focusing on high standards of "extended professionalism" (p. 5).

In Northern Ireland, the 2010 government consultation document (Teacher Education in a Climate of Change, DELNI/DENI) proposed streamlining the framework of teacher competences; balancing supply and demand; strengthening school-higher education institution (HEI) partnerships in ITE provision, developing leadership, and ensuring less fragmented early career experiences and opportunities for CPD.

In Wales, the General Teaching Council for Wales's 2011 advice paper (Raising the Bar in ITET and Early Career Development) focused on ensuring higher quality of entrants to ITET programmes; tackling oversupply of qualified teachers; and enhancing opportunities for engagement with research and scholarship during ITE.

The four documents are very different in nature and therefore also different in how they conceptualise the role of research in teacher education and teaching professionalism.

In the English White Paper and associated documents substantive mentions of research are scarce: the word appears twice in the chapter on teacher training, both times in a text box describing the Finnish system. In contrast, the Donaldson report insists upon the importance of research-based professionalism in teaching practice, leadership, teacher education, and educational policy-making. It argues for re-integrating research (skills and knowledge) and engagement with theory within the model of teacher and teacher educator professionalism and in teacher education partnership models and practices (including joint teacher education appointments). Like the documents from the other countries, it also supports knowledge exchange between HEIs and schools, teachers' awareness of research, and teacher inquiry and reflective practice throughout the teaching career. Teaching as "craft" is only mentioned three times in the review report – each time flanked by cautionary remarks.

The papers in this issue of RI unpack the assumptions and principles underpinning these documents and the programmes of reform (nationally and internationally) that frame them, and explore the implications for the current and future state of teacher education and teacher education research in the four countries of the UK. McNamara and Menter open with a discussion of the outcomes of recent policy changes and of future challenges for teacher education. Menter and then Murray explore in detail the current state and likely future of teacher education research in the UK. Saunders and Hamilton discuss the different roles of the General Teaching Council for England and the General Teaching Council for Scotland. Cordingley, Cruice, Ovenden-Hope, Brown and McNamara, and Ellis showcase research that offers teacher and teacher educator perspectives on professionalism and on the policy contexts for it. The pieces by Struthers and Beckett and by Orchard and Foreman-Peck report on initiatives that aimed to harness further perspectives on teacher education – from practitioner research and from philosophy, respectively. The issue closes with Jackson's overview of recent developments and future challenges for teacher education in each of the four countries of the UK.

There are of course limits to the extent to which future developments can be anticipated, balanced judgements made, and prudent action decided. The papers in this issue go some way towards that. Sentence completion homework for the reader: "The way forward for teacher education is...".
‘Interesting Times’ in UK Teacher Education

Those of us working in teacher education seem to have been ‘living in interesting times’ for many years now. For several decades Initial Teacher Education (ITE) has been a conflicted space in which educators have navigated their way through a succession of increasingly radical reforms.

The sites of tension have been variously ideological, strategic or professional, and often a mixture of all three. This has been particularly the case in England as, perversely in this age of globalisation, a marked trend toward increasing divergence of policy-making in relation to teacher education, and education generally, has emerged across the four UK home nations since devolution in 1999.

Developing our understanding
The relation between teacher education and the teaching profession as a whole is also central to developing our understanding of the current state of affairs. The politicisation of teacher education and professional learning, and the move of ITE to a position of such strategic significance, pertains to a conviction on the part of successive UK governments that the effectiveness of the education system (and thereby the success of the economy) is dependent on the quality and training of its teachers. And further, that ITE is an effective mechanism for steering change in the school curriculum and transforming teacher professionalism (Furlong, 2005; Mckinsey, 2007; Menter et al, 2010).

This endorsement of the value of the early stages of teacher professional learning has led to some innovative practice and a welcome investment of resources, including developments of partnership in ITE, the teacher induction scheme in Scotland and the early professional development scheme in Wales. There have been some other less fortunate consequences for the sector, however, particularly in England.

- First, a lack of professional control resulting from the increased level of centralised regulation has left the sector subject to short-termism and resulted in vulnerability at programme level and instability within institutions.
- Second, the degree of the monitoring and accountability, together with the gravity of the penalties for perceived transgression, has engendered a ‘technical rationalist’ approach to outcomes and processes, restricted the nature of professional engagement and created a ‘culture of compliance’.
- Third, developments have at times been subject to contradictory ideological forces in the underpinning educational principles and values. This is particularly problematic when it results in a disarticulation of the theoretical and intellectual foundations of professional...
and pedagogic knowledge leading to a schism between professional and academic qualifications, with implications both for the status of professional qualifications and for the transferability of such credentials across borders (McNamara et al, 2008).

What new challenges face the sector as the decade rolls out?

- First – this is an additional challenge for a training sector in England already endeavouring to reposition itself in respect of the various new initiatives set out in the recent White Paper (DfE, 2010), the discussion document on ITE (DfE, 2011) and the newly released Training our Next Generation of Outstanding Teachers: Implementation Plan (Nov, 2011). Notably the Donaldson Report on Teacher Education in Scotland (Scottish Government; 2011) stands in stark contrast to its English counterpart.
- Second – the challenge from within – the sector is a broad (and increasingly fragmented and selective) church, differently positioned and conflicted in its strategic vision. In Russell Group universities, for example, schools of education are generally small, and not seen as ‘core business’, significant income generators, or high status in terms of research quality. In post 1992 universities, by comparison, education faculties (and in the case of post 2000 universities, sometimes the whole university) are overly dependent on government education-related funding, and seen as potentially vulnerable and in need of downsizing or diversification.
- Third, there is a real threat to the future of educational research, as its infrastructure is so inextricably linked to the sustainability of the university education departments that are currently under such pressures from without and within.

The challenges posed for educational research as a result of the impact of current policies on the sector are the focus of a BERA/UCET working group which is shortly to report. Such challenges make it more critical than ever for the sector to find a united and collective voice and to develop broader alliances with other organisations that are concerned about the future of public educational provision in the UK.

Furthermore, any research agenda that is developed around teaching and teacher education needs to be outward looking and ambitious in order to gain significant insights into wider aspects of educational development, such as the nature of teachers’ work and how citizens of the future are to be educated. At present, however, there is in many quarters a distinct lack of trust in the teaching profession itself and in teacher educators and researchers. As Baroness Onora O’Neill noted in her lecture at the 2011 BERA Conference (O’Neill, 2011), trust is not simply an attitude which is either present or absent. Rather, trust is a social process requiring dialogue, debate and the development of mutual understanding. High quality teacher education research could make a major contribution to the re-establishment of just such trust.

Emerging practices

We are currently seeing a number of innovative models and practices emerging, giving rise to opportunities for teachers, teacher educators and researchers to work together in different ways as the concepts of ‘teaching schools’ (England), ‘hub schools’ (Scotland), and their like, are developed and operationalised. Such ideas are not necessarily new in and of themselves; similar versions exist in other parts of Europe, the USA and elsewhere. Indeed, there have been previous attempts in the UK to bring research and practice in teaching and teacher education closer together (for example, ‘Best Practice Research Scholarships’ and ‘Schools of Ambition’). If the curriculum reforms that are currently occurring around the UK can be coupled with greater engagement between teachers, teacher educators, researchers and the processes of teacher professional learning, then perhaps we could even begin to see a reinvigoration of the kind of large-scale teacher agency envisaged by Lawrence Stenhouse (1975) more than thirty years ago.

References

Teacher Education Research – Past, Present, Future

University-based teacher educators who are also researchers are uniquely situated, as social scientists and subject specialists, at points of interconnection between these disciplines and educational practice (Edwards et al, 2002: 123).

CONSIDERING HOW UBIQUITOUS the practice of professional education for teachers is within schools and departments of education in universities across the world, it is surprising how relatively under-developed it is as a field of research. In this article¹ I offer some brief reflections on the history of the field. I then draw on a database of UK teacher education research as well as on a literature review undertaken for the Scottish government to give an assessment of the present situation. In conclusion I set out some propositions for the future.

UK teacher education research in the Twentieth Century

One characteristic of teacher education research is indeed that it is often conducted by those who are also its practitioners, whether as teacher educators or as managers. The history of research on teacher education is complemented by research in teacher education and intricately related to the trajectory over time of teacher educators as an ill-defined, under-researched and sometimes beleaguered occupational group within higher education (see the recent special issue of Journal of Education for Teaching, 37, 3, edited by Jean Murray and Clare Kosnik, on ‘Academic work and identities in teacher education’).

Histories of particular teacher education institutions reveal that research was being undertaken throughout the twentieth century, but, on the whole, the focus was on curriculum development and, to a lesser extent, on learning and teaching or practices of teacher education. Well researched accounts of the development of teacher education were produced and, during the second half of the twentieth century, important empirical work on the nature of teaching was starting to be carried out.

Teacher research, practitioner research and action research have all been influential in teacher education, although perhaps less consistently than might be expected, given the early emergence of such approaches in the UK through the seminal work of Lawrence Stenhouse in the 1970s. During the 1970s and 80s further attempts were made to learn about effective practices in teaching through empirical classroom-based work (by Ted Wragg, for example). Policy developments in the 1980s and then upheavals in the 1990s gave rise to a new wave of policy-related research

¹ Parts of this article are adapted from Menter et al (2010a), where full references are included. That paper was written by the Teacher Education Group (TEG) whose other members include that article’s authors as listed, joined more recently by Linda Clarke, Martin Jephcote, Jeanne Keay and Trevor Mutton.
McIntyre was particularly significant in this work. A number of important journals were established in the second half of the twentieth century, including, The Journal of Education for Teaching, Teachers and Teaching and Professional Development in Education (formerly The Journal of In-Service Education). While these are published in the UK, they do have an international scope.

Bodies that have been important in supporting teacher education research include UCET (the Universities' Council for the Education of Teachers) and BERA, although it is surprising that BERA only formed a specialist group on teacher education research in 2005 (whereas the European Educational Research Association had a network on teacher education research from a very early stage, and it is still thriving).

In summary then, it is clear that there is a tradition of research in and on teacher education in the UK that has generated several significant studies, and a supportive infrastructure of journals, conferences and networks. The emphasis on reflection demonstrates the large proportion of this work that is carried out by teacher educators themselves and is typically research into their own practices. At the other extreme we see very little material that is quantitative in its approach and hardly any quasi-experimental studies. Furthermore, it is at first surprising how little action research (AR) there is, until one reflects that perhaps such have been the imposed constraints on teacher education practices in recent years, that experiments and AR type interventions may have been judged to be too risky to carry out. The skewing towards interviews, small-scale and qualitative work may be understandable but it does tend to indicate that the field is not yet fully established as a mature branch of the social sciences. The relative paucity of longitudinal work must also be a particular concern given the strong interest in professional learning (as demonstrated in Table 2), which is in essence a long-term process.

The dominance of the first three categories is interesting. Professional learning is at the heart of the day-to-day activity...
Teacher education researchers must also play their part in maintaining critical enquiry into policies, processes and practices, so that they too can develop a much greater contribution to future developments of many of the researchers doing this work, so again this may well reflect the emphasis on research in teacher education. But the interest in national contexts and policy reminds us how much of teacher education is shaped by national governments and the powerful impact of their policy decisions during the recent past. Matters of equity and ethics may well have slipped down the research agenda since the late 20th Century and there continues to be a general dearth of work on the professional development of teacher educators themselves (although with some exceptions).

In 2010, a team at the University of Glasgow undertook a review of teacher education literature commissioned by The Review of Teacher Education in Scotland. One of the tasks set was to ‘explore the relationships between forms of teacher education and the enhancement of teacher professionalism, and between enhanced professionalism and pupil outcomes’. The policy makers’ search for the ‘holy grail’ of ‘what works?’ in teacher education is evident here and reflects similar concerns throughout the world, as governments get increasingly anxious about their PISA results and suchlike. Having reviewed 290 items emanating from many national contexts, our conclusion was that ‘the evidence on linkages between enhanced professionalism and pupil outcomes was found to be limited, contradictory and somewhat inconclusive’ (Menter et al, 2010b: 54). This is as true in the UK as elsewhere.

The future: what is to be done?

While the search for answers to ‘what works?’ will no doubt continue, I would urge that we continue to develop teacher education research in such a way that it can sit with increasing confidence within the wider context of social science.

We need more of it, it should be theoretically informed, and should include work that is large-scale and longitudinal and that uses a full range of methods.

3 Research about teacher education is even rarer. By this I mean research that seeks to understand teacher education in a broader context, for example taking historical, anthropological, political science or social theory perspectives. This is work that will be essentially interdisciplinary and will indeed explore the relationship between teacher education and the wider society.

It also seems important that the development of teacher education research is carried out as an international enterprise, incorporating, where appropriate, carefully worked through comparative research designs. Such research needs to be context sensitive and culturally aware. The kind of simple exemplification of others’ practices (particularly Finland and the USA) seen in recent English government documents on teaching and teacher education is unhelpful and misleading. Indeed, English politicians and policy makers might look a little closer to home to improve their understanding of teacher education, something they seem curiously loathe to do.

But teacher education researchers must also play their part in maintaining critical enquiry into policies, processes and practices, so that they too can develop a much greater contribution to future developments. This is essential if we are to make an adequate response to the challenges to UK teacher education that were identified in the opening article in this issue.
Teacher Education Research in England: Present realities, future possibilities?

At a recent European conference I was talking about the analysis of teacher education research undertaken by members of the Teacher Education Group (TEG) (Menter at al, 2010). The analysis suggests that teacher education research in the UK is under-developed.

At THE END of the presentation I was challenged on our findings by a politely puzzled European colleague who had the impression that teacher education, in England at least, had been extensively researched and that a large database of evidence about it existed.

In the course of the ensuing discussion we untangled the roots of the mis-understanding. Our TEG analysis, detailed by Ian Menter’s article in this issue, looked at 446 studies on teacher education in the UK and disseminated in academic journals between 2000 and 2008 (http://www.bera.ac.uk/teg-bibliography/). Much of this work was shown to be small-scale and qualitative, conducted as one-off, ‘bootstrap’ studies by teacher educators involved as practitioners in the sector. The TEG database is clearly not a comprehensive record of all teacher education research in the UK published during this timeframe, but the scale of the collection and the rigour of its collation make claims to a high degree of representation reasonable. My European colleague was referring to the database on pre-service education, collected by the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) since 1998. In compilations such as Alan Smithers and Pamela Robinson’s ‘The Good Teacher Training Guide’ (2011) this database is also used to analyse the sector and to compare pre-service providers.

In many ways then my colleague and I were both accurate: there is a great deal of evidence about pre-service teacher education in England, which provides what Smithers and Robinson (2010: 30) describe as a ‘numerical landscape’ and ‘an excellent statistical base’ from which ‘sound policy’ (p.34) can be generated. But teacher education is also a ‘young’ field of research with a paucity of high quality research findings. Thus many of the fundamental aspects of pre- and in-service teacher education in England remain under-researched.

As foundations for the further development of the sector, both the government database in its various guises and many of the studies in the TEG database have distinct flaws. The TEG analysis found, for example, that whilst many of the studies in its scope were high quality, others could be accused of deficits, including a lack of generativity (in that they did not always build clearly on previous findings and the literature of the field), methodological limitations or flaws, and limited theorising and contextualisation. Furthermore, the predominance of one-off practitioner research, the paucity of large-scale, longitudinal studies and the dissemination of work across 49 journals makes meaningful collation of findings and identification of collective significance challenging.

Needless to say, this reduces the potential cumulative and developmental impact of this body of research for understanding teacher education.

The government database, particularly when collated by researchers such as Smithers and Robinson, certainly captures something of the ‘numerical landscape’ of teacher education, but such analyses are rooted only in the policy of the moment and fail to engage with the multiplicity of variables in the sector which produced them. Furthermore, by reproducing and sanctioning what Popkewitz (1987) terms ‘the public discourses’ of the sector – for example, TDA and Ofsted criteria about what counts as ‘teacher quality’ or ‘accountability’ – such evidence serves to dull ‘sensitivity to the complexities that underlie the practices of teacher education...by a filtering out of historical, social and political assumptions’ (Popkewitz, 1987: ix).

Questions have been raised about the methodology of Smithers and Robinson’s work, not least by Stephen Gorard who argues that these league tables conflate figures in ‘meaningless’ and ‘pseudo-scientific’ ways (cited in Revell, 2006). The use of the number of students entering teaching as a ‘quality indicator’ has come under particular criticism as this criterion disadvantages university providers, particularly those educating mature students or located in areas of high unemployment (Revell, ibid).
It is also relevant to note that the TDA data is in part a record of the (often strategic) compliance of providers to changing government policy and TDA and Ofsted imperatives. I would add here that, having been involved in pre-service education for many years, I know only too well that acts of provider compliance should be understood in the context of the very high stakes of being judged ‘unsatisfactory’ in an inspection. The improvement in results from successive Ofsted inspections have been celebrated by the TDA, university providers and other stakeholders as evidence of rising quality in teacher education. It might be argued then that the high prices paid for compliance in the sector have at least given some benefits in terms of official recognition of ‘quality’.

Yet, as a further irony, even those who collate these databases now seem to regard Ofsted inspection results with scepticism. Smithers and Robinson (2011:1), for example, commenting on the fast increasing number of universities rated ‘outstanding’ in 2009-10, state that ‘it seems unlikely that this explosion could all be due to real improvement’, although they cite no evidence for their scepticism. Evidence, if needed, of the lack of importance which policy makers give even to government databases can be seen in the timing of the publication of the Schools White Paper (DFE 2010). This document, with its announcement of a radical policy shift away from university-based provision, came out shortly after the publication of Ofsted results celebrating the fact that 47% of university-led programmes were judged ‘outstanding’ in 2009-2010 compared to just 26% of school-based routes (Ofsted 2010). It would seem that, in the policy stated in the White Paper, ideological convictions triumphed even over supposed ‘evidence of what works’ in teacher education, gathered through and sanctioned by a state-run accountability and audit system.

Teacher education in England is clearly a beleaguered sector at the present time, with Coalition Government policy advocating ‘reform’ of the current system through a shift of student numbers from university-based pre-service provision to employment-based routes. This policy, combined with the global climate of economic austerity, the ongoing marketisation of universities and the effects of the Browne Review on higher education, has profound implications for teacher education and the wider field of Education itself. Despite some apparent softening of government thinking around the pace and scale of these ‘reforms’ (DFE 2011), there are still fears that many Schools of Education will be destabilised and that the very existence of university-based teacher education will be threatened. This situation may also undermine the health of Education as a field within the social sciences as the financial well-being of most Schools of Education depends on teacher education revenue. Further threats are posed by the reduction in funding for educational research from many governmental and non-governmental organisations. Policies for growing research selectivity in the university sector are potentially in tension with the dispersed model of research activity that is needed to support high quality research in teacher education. If the current situation continues then the danger is that teacher education will become divorced from the engagement with social science research which should be informing all levels of its work.

Given the seriousness of the situation we face, now may not seem to be the best time to debate our priorities in terms of research. But I would argue that, on the contrary, this is a key time to evaluate the research we have and the ways in which we use it and to identify the research that we need for the future. The rest of this, necessarily brief, article collects some of my personal thoughts on possibilities here:

1 In the spirit of the austerity of the times, how could we draw more systematically on the research which we already have in and on the sector? How, for example, might we be able to draw on the government database in its various guises? As Smith (2011:1-2) points out secondary data analysis is ‘a relatively under-used technique’ in education, but it provides ‘opportunities for the discovery of relationships that may not have not been considered in the primary research.’ What scope is there for using the mass of facts and figures as secondary data to research some of the less obvious – or hidden – aspects of teacher education? For example, Smithers and Robinson (2011:17) identify the ‘considerable turnover’ of School-Centred Initial Teacher Training providers (SCITTs) and suggest that this might indicate that ‘many schools are not ready to take on training responsibilities’. The TDA data on all of these providers since 1998 is available and accessible to researchers interested in investigating the reasons for this potentially very significant turnover and the implications for current policy of creating Teaching Schools.

Earlier in this article I have referred to the once scattered studies which now form the coherent and accessible TEG database. Originally intended as a pedagogical resource for new researchers, the thematic analysis of these articles is already completed and available for on-line searching through the BERA website. The database in its current form could clearly be used for a meta-analysis of the articles to identify their collective findings and significance. The database also needs to be brought up to date and perhaps to extend its remit in terms of the focus journals.

2 How might re-visiting the history of teacher education help us to understand the current turmoil in the sector? Gardner (1993) identifies that attacks on higher education providers of teacher education as remote, limited in the training they provide and overly theoretical have occurred before, notably in the 1890s, 1960s and the mid 1980s to mid 1990s. In the early twenty first century we certainly see a re-turn to the practical, through the formulations of teacher knowledge as experiential and teaching as a craft only learned in schools. What perspectives on the current return to the practical might be revealed by looking at the social, political and educational contexts at those earlier moments in time when the value of higher education’s contribution was contested?

3 What research is needed in the
near future? Since the ‘Modes of Teacher Education’ projects (Furlong et al, 2000) funded by the ESRC, there have been few large-scale, funded studies with a direct focus on teacher education. We do not have a UK equivalent of the research which Pamela Grossman and colleagues conducted in the USA on the effectiveness of various teacher education routes (Grossman et al, 2008). Nor do we have in prospect a study of the scale and imagination of the research which Diane Mayer and colleagues are conducting in Australia on the long term effects of pre-service on teacher development (Mayer et al, 2011). Teacher education in England has been the subject of almost continuous change since 1984, with few of the effects of those changes ever systematically researched. The growth of employment-based routes in the early 2000s, for example, happened without systematic research into the historical roots and rapid development of this phenomenon. But, even in the context of a sector in which rapid change has become the norm, the current ‘reforms’, if implemented on the scale indicated by the White Paper, would represent the most radical shift in provision since the early twentieth century. At the time of writing it does not look as if these reforms will be the focus of large scale, systematic research by academics. I would suggest that we need just such research, perhaps resulting from a collaborative bid by a group of influential teacher education researchers for funding from a non-governmental source. The study should not only result in a high quality study which could stand as an academic and historical record of the often Kafkaesque educational times in which we live. But it should also have a clear public engagement function, disseminating relevant findings to the general public. This is important since radical changes to teacher education will have considerable significance for schools, teachers, parents and children and hence for wider society.

4 How could we increase the quality of research in and on teacher education whilst also building capacity in the sector?

Capacity building in teacher education is important in its own right, particularly for those of us who see teacher education and teaching itself as based on enquiry. Research in and on teacher education, often conducted by its practitioners, is a vital part of that work, and also an important component of any more general research capacity-building initiatives in the field of education, as colleagues and I have argued elsewhere (Murray et al, 2009). But it is important that all teacher education research, of whatever type and scale, should be high quality, that is rigorous, well theorised, well contextualised and generative, in order to help to build capacity with quality and to develop collective understanding of teacher education. Ensuring that this high quality research occurs and is well disseminated to all relevant audiences is the responsibility of individual researchers, supervisors at doctoral level and research leaders, mentors and other senior academics involved in journal editing and reviewing at post-doctoral levels. It will also need to involve collaborative endeavours through organisations such as the BERA SIG on teacher education and development and initiatives such as the on-going Teacher Education Research Network (http://www.tirp.org/term/) to collate these findings and generate new studies.

5 How can we ensure that research-informed innovations in teacher education practice are sustained?

Because much of teacher education in England exists in a culture of accountability and compliance, innovations in pre-service teacher education are not always easy to implement or to research. But it is important that, where innovations do exist in teacher education in England, they are well researched and disseminated by a variety of means to all relevant audiences, not least because such research has the potential to generate new ways of thinking about teacher education and new modes of practice. The work of Liz Taylor and colleagues at the University of Cambridge on the development of subject-specific pedagogic research is important to mention here, as is the Virtual Schools project developed by Kathy Wright at the University of East London. The former work indicates the potential for high quality pedagogic research to include mentors and other teachers in partnership schools; the latter suggests how collaborative online learning can enhance – or even be a substitute for – traditional school experience in inducting students into schools as communities of practice.

References
Beyond Abolition:
The Intellectual Legacy of the General Teaching Council for England

Colleagues in BERA will probably be aware that the Education Bill introduced into the House of Commons in January 2011 proposed the abolition of the first professional regulatory body for teaching in England, the General Teaching Council for England (GTCE).

By Lesley Saunders

CLOSURE OF THE COUNCIL, together with the transfer of its statutory functions, is expected to be completed by 31 March 2012, a little over a decade after its inauguration. Assuming the Bill receives Royal Assent, it will put England in the anomalous position of being the only country in the UK without a professional regulatory body for teaching.

The Council was established through a long and determined campaign by teachers, politicians and many others who sought to promote the profession of teaching. Yet, compared with the GTCs of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales – and with similar professional bodies serving the public interest – the GTCE’s remit was arguably always a restricted one. Its statutory duties included regulating the teaching profession, advising the Secretary of State for Education and others on teaching matters, and contributing to the enhancement of the standards and status of teaching. Omitted from its responsibilities were the powers to set those standards rather than solely to maintain them, to frame the education and qualifications of people entering the profession, and to determine the parameters within which members of the profession demonstrate their continuing good standing and fitness to practise. In other words, the GTCE was working with one hand tied behind its back. Council members and staff attempted to make the best of the situation by initiating and cultivating productive working relationships with their counterparts in the Department for Education, the teacher unions and the other national education agencies like the National College for School Leadership, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and the Training and Development Agency for Schools. A great deal of the GTCE’s advisory work has been accomplished through cooperation, brokerage and joint influence; though it did not hold back from issuing advice critical of government policy when necessary, such as the wide-ranging proposals for reform of the English schools’ assessment and accountability regime.

The GTCE has also been strongly committed to creating and using an evidence base to inform its policy thinking: Council members allocated a generous research budget (relative to its overall resources) early in its history, so that, for example, teachers could be directly and frequently consulted on key issues, including via a large-scale annual survey; reviews of existing research could be undertaken; new research could be commissioned; and the principle of teaching as a research-informed profession could be actively promoted. Services for teachers – including the Teacher Learning Academy, which will continue to offer structured opportunities for professional learning and development after the GTCE closes – were developed based on the best available ideas and evidence about teachers’ learning. Many BERA members, in their role as educational researchers and expert commentators, contributed in various ways, both directly and indirectly, to the GTCE’s policy advice to government and to its support for the scholarship of teaching. Their work is gratefully acknowledged.

In preparation for closure, the GTCE has published a major re-analysis and distillation of its research and policy thinking over the period 2000–2011, entitled Teaching Quality Policy Papers. The publication comprises detailed papers on ten different themes, accompanied by practical proposals for change, and is now available at: http://www.gtce.org.uk/documents/publicationpdfs/teach_quality0711.pdf – downloadable at no charge. Of particular interest to BERA members, perhaps, are the discussions of teachers’ professional learning and development, and of teaching as research-informed practice. The other themes discussed are: standards-based professional practice, entry to teaching, accountability, performance management, pedagogy, innovation, pupil assessment, pupil participation. The GTCE hopes that BERA members, among many groups with an interest in the quality of teaching in future, will make full use of the publication to debate the issues and the evidence, and to ensure that the GTCE’s policy thinking is not lost to future generations of educational researchers, teacher educators and teachers themselves.●
The General Teaching Council for Scotland: Independent status and standards for teachers

Education in Scotland has always had significant differences from the other parts of the United Kingdom and it is arguable that these differences have widened since the re-establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999.

By Tom Hamilton, Director of Education and Professional Learning, General Teaching Council for Scotland

ONE SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE between the Scottish and English systems is the history of, and current approach to, having a General Teaching Council.

The General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) was set up following a 1965 Act of the Westminster Parliament giving the GTCS substantial statutory powers over the registration of teachers, initial teacher education, a probation period for new teachers, and the conduct and discipline of teachers. The GTCS has subsequently twice had its powers increased by the Scottish Parliament, most notably to deal with matters of teacher competence.

Further developments began in 2008, when the Government announced plans to give the GTCS independent status (from that of a Non-Departmental Public Body). The legislation for this change was passed by the Scottish Parliament in March 2011 and from April 2012 GTCS becomes independent.

This is a substantially different story from that of the General Teaching Council for England.

The legislation establishing independence, the Public Services Reform (General Teaching Council for Scotland) Order 2011, gives the GTCS the power ‘to establish (and to review and change as necessary) the standards of education and training appropriate to school teachers’. Scotland currently has four teacher education Standards (all of which can be found on the GTCS website):

- Standard for Initial Teacher Education
- Standard for Full Registration
- Standard for Chartered Teacher
- Standard for Headship.

Each of the first three documents includes a combination of professional knowledge and understanding, professional skills and abilities, and professional values and personal commitment. The inclusion of professional values and personal commitment has been a strong part of why the education system in Scotland has accepted and supported the use of a Standards model. Amongst the potential criticisms of such models is an argument that they encourage mechanistic and technicist approaches, which restrict reflective practice and encourage conformity, but the Scottish Standards are not seen in this way and I would argue that explicitly stating the need for values and commitment has played a strong part in gaining the support of the profession - and developing the model of the teacher that the GTCS presents.

Teaching is a complex process and the GTCS argues for teachers who have professional values, are reflective and innovative, and are agents of change rather than recipients of it. Ian Menter in a recent literature review completed for the Donaldson Review suggests that four different forms of teacher professionalism can be identified in the current literature, including the reflective teacher and the transformative teacher. The GTCS would concur with this analysis and point to one of the illustrations of professional practice in the current Standard for Full Registration, which states that teachers should: ‘productively contribute and respond to changes in education policies and practices’.

It is in that spirit that the GTCS is approaching one of its next challenges, which is to review the current Standards in Scotland.

Following a model that it has successfully used in the past, the GTCS will shortly instigate a wide consultation which will look for the active engagement of all stakeholders in Scottish education, including both teachers and those involved in teacher education. Scottish education is a very consensual system, but consensual does not mean cosy and the GTCS is keen to encourage teachers in Scotland to engage actively in debate.

Contributions and insights from other parts of the UK would of course also be welcome!
Engaging Teachers in and with Research – a Long View

Gramsci says in the Prison Notebooks that “if you want to change the world you have to pay attention violently to the present and hopefully to the Future: pessimism of the intellect and optimism of the will”.

By Philippa Cordingley, Chief Executive, Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education (CUREE)

THIS SEEMS AN IMPORTANT LENS for understanding the environment in which CUREE’s and The National Teacher Research Panel (NTRP)’s research about what teachers want from research now sits.

There are some considerable achievements to register from the last twelve years’ work in supporting teacher engagement in and with research. For example:

- Teacher research has come out of the closet and is recognised and celebrated. Teachers who engage in research do now also engage with the research of others, as shown by our recent systematic review of the evidence about teacher engagement in and with research (Bell et al, 2010).
- Teachers who engage with others’ research now have much more pedagogic research to draw on and, until recently, many more accessible ways of getting hold of it.
- There is a rich supply of high quality teacher research that connects practitioner and academic research that has been quality assured and peer reviewed by expert teacher researchers, available via the Panel’s own web site.
- Teacher research is increasingly popular – a conservative estimate in 2009 was that 39,500 teachers were actively involved in research supported by national agencies and programmes of one kind or another.
- It is no longer possible to dismiss teacher research as relevant only to the teachers involved or as somehow inferior research if it fails to pursue one orthodoxy or another – the panel web site contains examples of good quality teacher research from most methodological stances.
- There are some new opportunities too. The creation of a National Scholarship Fund driven by teachers has the potential to locate scholarship firmly in professional identity. The creation of Teaching Schools and their alliances with a requirement to focus on the contribution of research to professional learning at all levels and to work through partnerships with Universities creates, in principle, an excellent springboard for teacher use of research (although the pressures on Teaching Schools arising from the breadth of their remit and the slightness of the funding model are certainly challenging). The emerging emphasis on networks of schools might increase the interest in and opportunities for teacher research too – certainly a very high proportion of teachers in the survey who were involved in networks were doing this via research. The new Teaching Standards emphasise extending depth and breadth in knowledge and skills and critical understanding, thus also promoting the values of scholarship.
- But there are also very serious challenges to be addressed. Many of the arrangements for securing access to research, which are highlighted as being most useful in the Panel/ CUREE survey, are disappearing as web sites such as the Department for Education (DfE)’s Research Informed Practice web site are reviewed and material is stripped back, disaggregated or removed entirely. A particular source of concern is the removal of sensitive search facilities. Suggesting that lodging material in the Public Archive means it is still accessible is the equivalent of throwing all the books onto the library floor in random heaps and saying you can still come and borrow from the collection! Worse still, no-one is now doing the job the DfE used to do – of ensuring that the outputs from the research journals are appraised for their usefulness and relevance to teachers, and, where appropriate, summarised in teacher-friendly forms. Nor is there any longer the commitment to translating research outputs into teacher-friendly tools and resources that both the GTC Research for Teachers and the ESRC Teaching and Learning Research Programme offered. What’s more, welcome as the Scholarship fund is, it represents a tiny proportion of the research-informed CPD that the previous Post-Graduate Professional Development Programme represented.
- Last, and by no means least, there is a fragmentation of the professional community that championed this work, as support for national advocates and champions like the Panel is withdrawn.
- So pessimism of the intellect highlights serious threats to the promotion of teacher engagement in and with research. It remains to be seen whether the teaching profession, the schools, the research community and those who support them, like CUREE and the NTRP, can translate their “optimism of the will” into the momentum needed to consolidate and sustain the impetus established so carefully over the last twelve years.

References
ON JULY 20TH 2011, the Panel launched its latest, substantive piece of work entitled ‘Habitats for teacher research: Teacher perspectives on research as a sustainable environment for CPD (continuing professional development).’ The publication is an analysis of a survey which the Panel designed in order to understand more fully the ways in which teachers are accessing, using and undertaking educational research in the new policy and practice context.

Prior to the launch event, members of the Panel went to great lengths to ensure that there was a living tree in the conference room, as it is a potent symbol of the personal and professional growth that can develop from engagement in and with educational research. From the roots of well-supported collaborative enquiry may come the fruits of increased motivation, a stronger sense of self-efficacy, depth of knowledge and greater efficiency. However, for such rich fruits to grow, certain conditions are necessary. The launch of ‘Habitats for teacher research’ was an opportunity to take stock of the current environment; and to discuss with a cross-section of interested parties (civil servants, teachers, academics, journalists) whether present conditions are best described as the start of a new Spring or the beginning of a long Winter.

Signs of Spring
Dr Robin Bevan and Katherine Hall, two of the Panel’s longest serving members, opened the event and began by highlighting some key, positive findings from the survey. Over 1,000 practitioners responded to the questionnaire. Of these, over 40% highlighted their regular engagement with research; and a further 50% engaged with research occasionally or when they had a particular issue. Compared to findings from a previous, similar survey in 2002, results show that the percentage of ‘research-free’ practitioners has almost halved over the past 10 years. Moreover, the research highlighted the fact that engagement in and with research led to multiple benefits, not only for school staff themselves, but also their pupils. Practitioners were most interested in research that showed ‘evidence of impact on pupils’ learning’; that was ‘applicable to their own context’ and that included ‘concrete illustrations’ of how ideas may be applied in the classroom.

The survey also revealed that a range of routes are being taken by teachers to reach research. The internet is, unsurprisingly, the single largest route (18%). Internal school CPD (nearly 10%) and external CPD (8%) together support access to research as strongly as the internet. Just over 14% of teachers indicated
that they access research from official publications. It is clear that schools and colleges are reaching varying levels of engagement with research: some schools have an individual researcher; others have a ‘growing culture’ of research; and a third category is described as having a ‘vibrant research culture’. In general, teachers were not accessing research because they were working towards a qualification, but because they were interested in professional development through knowledge. What emerges overall is a picture of a profession which is increasingly willing and able to improve the experience of students as a result of engaging in and with research. Networks within and between schools are providing particularly fertile soil for the creation of research empowered practitioners.

More evidence of a new Spring was provided by the first guest speaker Dr Alis Oancea. In her address, she reported that engagement with research can deepen, even transform “individual practitioners’ thinking and practice”. Echoing the views of the Panel, Dr Oancea claimed that from the roots of research can grow enhanced professional identities and a stronger sense of agency. The final speaker, Philippa Cordingley, a tireless champion of the NTRP, also pointed to deepening roots and green shoots in her speech. She said that teacher research has “come out of the closet” and is now recognized and celebrated. She cited the Panel’s new website, which offers teachers an accessible range of research summaries, as evidence of this and stated that in 2009-10 “39,500 teachers were actively involved in research supported by national agencies and programmes of one kind or another”.

**Winter chills**

Amid many hopeful signs, it is important to acknowledge that chill winds are blowing. The survey found that teachers still feel that, in seeking to engage in research, both time and funding are significant barriers. Furthermore, challenges still arise from teachers’ lack of familiarity with and access to suitable published material. Dr Oancea accepted that although “educational knowledge is essential…its collection and interpretation is fragmented and it remains inaccessible to its many potential users”. She flagged up the tension between, on the one hand, the need to ensure user engagement with practical issues, and on the other, the pressures researchers face to achieve the “traditional markers of academic success.” Philippa Cordingley spoke of the iciest blasts. She noted that many of the arrangements for securing access to research are disappearing as Government run websites are being stripped back or removed entirely. There is no continuing monitoring and appraisal of the research from the journals and creation of bites and digests to summarise the best and most relevant research for teachers and there is little continuing translation of the evidence into tools and resources. Furthermore, PPD (post-graduate professional development) funding is being withdrawn and previously professional communities face extinction as financial support for them is cut.

**The outlook**

It is difficult to forecast the future of what is presently a blossoming tree of professional knowledge. Opportunities for teacher research may come from the new scholarship fund; from the recently created teaching schools with their emphasis on knowledge transfer; from the chance that teachers now have to develop and design the curriculum; or from the new standards which emphasize the importance of ‘promoting the value of scholarship’. Dr Oancea was keen to point out that the wording of the REF now exorts academics to involve themselves in: “a process of investigation leading to new insights effectively shared”, which may encourage colleagues in universities to focus as much on the dissemination of their research as on its creation.

Citing Gramsci, Philippa Cordingley said (this Rf, p.19): “If you want to change the world you must pay attention violently to the present and hopefully to the future: pessimism of the intellect and optimism of the will”. In the words of a teacher who responded to the survey, the present is: “the end of an era of the National Strategies, where teachers have become over reliant on systems and structures and quick fix approaches to teaching. While this is restrictive and disempowering, to many teachers it is very seductive particularly in a high-stakes test-based profession”.

The respondent’s hope for the future: “…a culture change where teachers can see the value of research and the powerful effect this can have on themselves as individuals…[and] a national dialogue around learning that engages school leaders in embracing research and risk-taking as an integral part of school CPD, not as an interesting add-on”.

The Panel members remain committed to such a future and, despite financial constraints, retain a collective optimism of the will.
A Universal Teaching Qualification: Challenges and opportunities for professional convergence in teaching in England

In England, as with the majority of the world, teachers are required to attain different and opposing qualifications dependent on the educational sector within which they want to be employed. It is suggested that this dichotomy in teacher status in England may not be the most effective way to educate and train teachers.

By Dr Tanya Ovenden-Hope, Faculty of Health, Education and Society, Plymouth University

This paper results from an evaluation of a new discourse of integrated education and training for teaching professionals. It challenges current separate, divergent and unequal systems of teacher education and training with their alternative criteria, modi operandi and standards. Findings suggest that political and educational support exists for professional convergence in teaching in England, but that political organisation presents barriers to a universal teaching qualification and status.

"The separate traditions of training school, college and HE teachers appear to be as strong as ever, as is a trend of ever-greater and more complex forms of regulation". (Lucas and Nasta, 2010, p. 441)

Teacher education and training has always had a confused identity, bound to separate systems dependent on the education sector involved (compulsory or further education/lifelong learning sector). However, teacher education and training for schools and colleges has at its core the professional teacher, educated to engage with the pedagogy of teaching and taught the skills of classroom practice by committed teacher educators and school professional tutors and subject mentors. In February 2010 the Skills Commission released a report on 'Teacher Training in Vocation Education' (Skills Commission, 2010), listing a number of recommendations to move towards a more unified system of teacher education for both sectors. The report concluded with a recommendation for a 'universal' teaching qualification to support professional convergence across sectors, thereby ensuring quality outcomes for learners and parity of experience for teachers/lecturers.

Later in 2010 the newly elected Coalition Government presented an opportunity to review teaching, and teacher education, in England. Michael Gove's White Paper 'The Importance of Teaching' (DfE, 2010) presented radical changes that challenged the professional identity of teachers, redefining their profession as a 'craft' with the future training of teachers becoming the responsibility of schools.

Mr Gove was only, however, referring to teaching in the compulsory sector and to the training of teachers for school Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). The consequent green paper focussed on initial teacher training, 'Training Our Next Generation of Outstanding Teachers: An improvement strategy for discussion' (DfE, 2011), claimed a desire to make teacher training more straightforward and with better outcomes: "...to improve the routes through teacher training ... so that the nature and content of the training is more effective in preparing trainees to be successful in the classroom" (DfE, 2011, p. 3).

It could be argued that a professional convergence across teaching, enabling one transferable teaching qualification, could offer this improvement and provide even greater opportunity for "attracting and retaining more of the best graduates, especially in shortage subjects" (DfE, 2011, p. 3).

It is therefore frustrating that the government chose to ignore the recommendations of the Skills Commission (2010) on 'Teacher Training in Vocational Education' when reviewing teacher education and training. The established political separation of schools and colleges into different government departments for governance (DfE and BIS respectively) does little to support the development of a more equal and inclusive approach toward teaching and teacher education in the two sectors. It could even sustain misunderstanding between the sectors.

The Wolf Report (DfE, 2011) recommended that college lecturers...
with Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills status (QTLS) (inaccurately represented in the Report as equal to the QTS held by school teachers) be recognized with parity to QTS for college lecturers seeking appointments in schools. Mr Gove accepted this recommendation for immediate implementation. The question therefore has to be asked, if lecturers with QTLS can now teach in schools, why not offer a radical reform of education that incorporates a universal teaching qualification that equips teachers to teach across compulsory and further education in England? Surely this reform, with a single system of teacher education and training, would offer clarity to parents and potential teachers on what being a qualified teacher means and establish expectations of teaching standards regardless of whether the teacher is working in a school or college?

Rather than undermining the need for consideration of professional convergence, The Wolf Report (2011) highlights the disparity of professional identity, based on different training, reward and social esteem, between the compulsory and further education sectors. In July 2011, I began a primary research project to examine the political and social context of professional convergence through teacher education. The investigation (ongoing until January 2012) aims to present current teacher educators’ perceptions of existing teaching qualifications and of professional convergence, including a universal teaching qualification.

Tentative initial findings have been drawn from 126 responses by teacher educators in primary, secondary and further education in England to an on-line questionnaire (issued to teacher educators through the Universities’ Council for the Education of Teachers). The majority of participants have had over 10 years experience in teacher education and the population surveyed represented an even spread across the education sectors. It is interesting to note that a large majority (82.5%) of teacher educators surveyed believed that the current dichotomy between further and compulsory teacher education and training, in terms of funding bodies, regulatory bodies and government departments, has resulted in a complicated system for training and educating teachers. Nearly 70.6% of teacher educators surveyed would recommend that teacher training and education be reviewed in consideration of the recommendation for professional convergence in the Skills Commission Report on ‘Teacher Training in Vocational Education’ (2010).

The voice of compulsory and further education teacher educators provides expert commentary for developments in teaching and teacher education in England and deserves to be heard. An examination of professional convergence in teaching has not formed part of the government review/consultation on teacher training so far.

Findings from my research suggest that there is support among teacher educators in England for a universal teaching qualification (63.4%) and even greater support for the professional convergence of government departments (82.9%), agencies (85.4%) and funding bodies (86.2%) for all teacher training and education in England (see Figure 1).

This paper argues for integrated education and training for teaching professionals through professional convergence. The Universal Teaching Qualification offers an opportunity for a collaborative learning model (on a non-reductive basis) of academic, professional and vocational strands, which follow approaches and methodologies that can initiate and sustain a learning mentality and trajectories of life-long learning. What it challenges are the current separate, divergent and unequal systems of teacher training and education with their alternative criteria, processes and standards.

**Figure 1. Do you support the recommendation for professional convergence in teaching in England through any of the following:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A ‘universal’ teaching qualification (one teaching qualification for...)?</td>
<td>63.4%</td>
<td>82.9%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One government department for all education sectors?</td>
<td>85.4%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One government agency regulating all teacher training and education?</td>
<td>86.2%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**References**


A Non-Strategic Future for Mathematics in Schools?

In June 2009 it was announced that the contract for the Primary National Strategies would end in March 2011, thus ending over a decade in which they have, in their various formulations, provided an ‘authoritative’ point of reference on how the National Curriculum for Mathematics should be implemented.

By Tony Brown (Manchester Metropolitan University) and Olwen McNamara (University of Manchester and Chair of the UCET Research and Development Committee)

THE WEIGHT OF EXPECTATION and high stakes involved has meant that the very presence of the Numeracy Strategy, although never mandatory, has had a profound impact on how teachers and teacher educators conceptualise and articulate school mathematics and warrant the judgements they make about how to teach it. The axing of the Strategies means that, in the interim certainly, there will be a reduction in the centralised guidance on how the processes of teaching mathematics might be understood, and it is not yet clear if, or how, teachers and teacher educators will become more responsible for deciding in what ways the mathematics curriculum should be implemented. Shifting priorities over the last two decades means that there has been progressive reconstitution and re-positioning of models of teacher education, and it has become evident that there are governmental aspirations to further revise the landscape to give schools an even greater role in the training of teachers (DfE, 2010, 2011).

Reforms to teacher education in the past have resulted in the specific responsibilities of university-based teacher educators being reconfigured, along with those of trainees, teachers, and mathematics itself. In most state schools, however, teachers are still required to have Qualified Teacher Status to demonstrate their functionality in the classroom and their ability to make autonomous professional decisions, or at least, follow centralised guidance adequately. University tutors and school mentors may have different priorities in conceptualising their contribution to teacher education, however, and in deciding how mathematics is positioned within their respective elements of the training. These priorities may relate to different aspects of the curriculum being privileged. For example, aspects prioritised by schools that relate to the immediacy of classroom practice may further marginalise the more intellectually motivated elements prioritised by universities relating, say, to the development of criticality or reflective practice. It is not yet clear how such competing priorities will ‘come out in the wash’.

We have recently published a book, Becoming a mathematics teacher (Brown & McNamara, 2011), about preparing to teach primary aged children in the Strategies epoch. The book asks how trainees, recruited at a time when mathematics was often viewed as an unwelcome element of the primary teachers’ job descriptions, began to think of themselves as teachers, and teachers of mathematics in particular. Trainees who, following many years as pupils where they did not always have a positive image of mathematics, changed how they were, or even who they were, as they progressed through their teacher education programme and finally made the transition into their first teaching post.

The trainees encountered diverse and complex social demands that could not easily be reconciled in a rapidly changing world where a consensus on educational values and objectives is difficult to achieve, and where standards of mathematics teaching are continually lamented. Conflicting priorities resulted in these aspirant teachers being pulled in many directions. Personal aspirations and identity work confronted an official story that seemingly portrayed the journey into teaching simply as a set of standards to be fulfilled and professionalism came to be defined more in terms of compliance in implementing the curriculum. Personal aspirations were re-routed through the
official language, behaviours and activities that came to filter how our new teacher understood and pursued her hopes and desires for her future as an educator. She was recognised only to the degree to which she complied with these role determinations. The working week that she experienced was filled with strategy-related tasks. Lesson planning, for example, was prescribed in detail in policy documents and structured by on-line planning tools such that she generally had little scope for personal input. Notwithstanding an enduring focus on the core curriculum, she was also required to demonstrate expertise in an expanding curricular and pedagogic knowledge base and skill set, the latest addition being modern languages. Our aspirant primary teacher was also required to broaden her key focus on the academic curriculum to encompass an understanding of an extended range of professional contexts, from working with others in the classroom to working in multi-professional teams providing access to integrated and specialist services, including parenting and family support and promoting community cohesion. Her intellectual space was squeezed, and with it the space to develop her personal philosophy of education, to reflect on what it might mean to become an autonomous professional, and perhaps, to consider what policies, practices and pedagogies were sanctioned as legitimate objects for reflection, given the dominant discourses of ‘audit’ and ‘standards’.

Teachers’ accounts of how they were meeting these intensifying demands were generally permeated by the discourse and ideology of the Strategies, but showed little self-awareness of this immersion.

New teachers, however, felt confident working within its guidelines, as they were held in place by the ways in which they were described within the regulative languages that defined their practices. The Numeracy Strategy had the advantage of assisting them in concealing any remaining latent anxieties they had with regard to mathematics. It emphasised procedural approaches, rather than mathematical content, and was popular because of this, and because it had a highly accessible structure and was organisationally effective. In this it was commensurate with the mainstream discourse of management and administration prevailing in primary education.

How might we respond to this state of affairs, now that the apparatus has been dismantled? The lingering normative influence of the Numeracy Strategy on our understanding of how teaching should be conducted, has deflected attention from empirical knowing about how the apportioning of mathematics teacher education, across university and school partnerships, has resulted in new teachers actually understanding and meeting the professional challenges they face in teaching mathematics. This situation is accentuated in the case of models of employment-based initial teacher education, which may result in some new teachers encountering partisan, and even parochial, conceptions of mathematics teaching in specific school placements. Mere compliance does not seem to bode well for longer-term teacher initiated professional development.

New teachers, however, are not wholly susceptible to these conditions and the guidance of the ‘experts’ encountered. Teachers have a voice of their own through which to express their aspirations of what it is to be a teacher, and how they wish to conduct their professional lives. The university element of training, even if it is to be more modest, might be more effectively directed at empowering new teachers to speak more assertively in their own voice, and at providing a critical platform from which to view their experiences in schools and conceptualise their practice according to the circumstances they actually face. Educational research has sometimes been complicit in restricting the trajectories for change that we are able to conceive, by promoting and reifying values that support ideological conceptions of teaching rooted in the ‘what works’ methodology and the prevailing policy apparatus. Research itself in many locations has increasingly been obliged to orient its agenda around state regulation, reflecting the ways in which educational practices can be legitimately described. The current, perhaps temporary, release from more explicit regulation for mathematics classroom practice might provide an opportunity to rethink the task of research, in terms of recapturing the linguistic agenda so as to regain intellectual territory for universities in supporting new teachers.

References
Philosophical Perspectives on the Future of Teacher Education

With teacher education across Europe in a state of flux, the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain (PESGB) has allocated funds during 2011 to a project called “Philosophical Perspectives on the future of Teacher Education” (PPfTE), which seeks to promote dialogue on the theme between philosophers of education and teacher educators.

CHARACTERISTICALLY PHILOSOPHICAL questions lie at the heart of current debates on this matter. While there may be broad consensus that school-based learning is a necessary part of preparation for the practice of classroom teaching, there is no agreement as to whether this is sufficient. Does theory, hence the university, matter in the professional development of teachers? If it does, why is this so? What knowledge, values, dispositions and skills do teachers need to educate others well and how might they best develop them?

An initial research symposium took place in Oxford in May 2011, convened by Morwenna Griffiths (University of Edinburgh) and a complementary research symposium, “What and how do teachers learn from experience”, was convened by Viv Ellis (University of Oxford) supported by the Society for Educational Studies and the Oxford Centre for Sociocultural and Activity Theory Research. Further funds are being set aside for further PPfTE events during 2012. In this brief report we identify key ways in which the philosophy of education contributes constructively to deliberation about teacher education and its future, illustrated with reference to ideas that were shared at the first PPfTE symposium.

Philosophy may be defined as "rational critical thinking, of a more or less systematic kind" (Quinton, 1995: 666) in three broad areas of intellectual enquiry: the general nature of the world, the justification of belief and the conduct of life, morality or ethics. Philosophical thinking may be applied to questions about teaching and teacher education drawing established ideas from the canons of philosophical literature. Thinkers who had influenced papers presented at the Oxford PPfTE symposium ranged from Aristotle and Plato to Hannah Arendt, Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum.

In a more applied form of the discipline, philosophers might pursue general moral or epistemological questions in relation to the future of teacher education, for example with the intention of critically appraising policy and practice in a constructive way. Colin Wringe (University of Keele) was one of many contributors who questioned the representation of teaching as a craft in current policy discourse. There may be certain routine procedures, as well as role-specific skills, which teachers need to acquire and for which a workplace-based training led by practitioners might be most suitable. However Wringe stressed that they also need to be educated, defining education as a reflective and intellectual process through which teachers develop certain attitudes of mind; for example, that while notions of education are contested, some are more valuable than others.

Philosophers of education have a further role to play in providing well argued a priori accounts of what ought to be found in any suitable alternative. Chris Winch (Kings College, University of London) argued that the notion of
teacher judgement often assumed by policy makers in England needs to be extended significantly, with implications for the future of teacher education. Accepting that teachers need good subject knowledge to transmit this successfully to their students, they need also to know the philosophy of those subjects; how they are constituted as well as how and why knowledge and understanding in academic subjects may be contested. Teachers need both situational judgement and a clear conceptual understanding of education so that they can reason about key educational terms, including ‘aims’ and ‘assessment’. Teachers need to be able to interpret the findings of educational research and apply them to their practice, requiring access to key primary sources in educational research, as well as the intellectual tools with which to make sense of them.

Such a priori arguments can be approached in various ways by exponents of alternative traditions of philosophy. For example, Gert Biesta offered three reference points for thinking about the future of teacher education that resonate with some of Winch’s concerns but identify other priorities: a focus on the education of the teacher as a process of formation and transformation of the teacher as a person who is wise; a focus on learning to make educational judgements through experience; a focus on the study of the educational virtuosity of others. For Biesta, teacher education should be an open and creative process, orientated towards the future and its possibilities.

Furthermore, good philosophy of education helps to clarify the use of concepts and ideas, where these become muddled, with a view to evaluating them. Several contributors explored the notion of the ‘good teacher’. Joanna Swann adopted an evolutionary approach of the kind associated with the philosopher Karl Popper; while Chris Higgins (University of Champaign, Illinois) identified teaching as a form of ethical quest in which the personal fulfillment of the teacher herself is bound up with a concern for the well-being of her students. Higgins commended a programme of lifelong liberal education for teachers, one which includes – but is not reduced to – engagement with the intellectual conversations about education which have taken place over the centuries.

Competing sets of values will inform beliefs about what makes a good teacher; philosophy is concerned with the articulation and analysis of these. In his presentation, Trevor Mutton (University of Oxford) invited participants to consider eight different sets of ‘standards’ for teachers taken from different educational contexts over time and place. Comparison of the values that inform teacher education in different parts of the

**Teachers need both situational judgement and a clear conceptual understanding of education**

United Kingdom was a theme of Ian Menter’s presentation (University of Glasgow). Menter identified particular strengths to teacher education in Scotland for fostering what he described as a “democratic intellect” in teachers and in public deliberation about education. Acknowledging the contextual differences between the two jurisdictions, including the size and complexity of teacher education provision in England, he praised the relative stability of the Scottish system, as well as the democratic process through which reforms to ITE have been developed through deliberation between providers, school leaders and Local Authorities as well as the Scottish Government.

Philosophy of education can also contribute to reflection on the future of teacher education when highlighting contradictions in the internal logic of policy and practice. For example, Shereen Benjamin (University of Edinburgh) identified a tension within one specific course between a key aim of the course – to develop teachers as critical thinkers – and its assessment practice which, Benjamin observed, had the effect of undermining the very notion of learning on which the course was based. Benjamin invited philosophers and teacher educators to reflect together at the level of principle on whether or not, and if so, how, that contradiction might be resolved.

In making the case for continuing philosophical reflection on the future of teacher education, philosophers should take great care when claiming to offer pre-eminent or privileged contributions when so many other theorists reflect critically and systematically on issues of this kind. Indeed, examples of philosophical reflection that have been offered in this report come from the papers of contributors who may not choose to describe themselves as ‘philosophers’. Viv Ellis argued that the identification and analysis of problems in educational practice are the concern of educators in general and not exclusive to philosophers. He challenged a conception of the study of education determined by the disciplines, including philosophy, and offered an alternative account of teacher education that is both intellectually engaged and rigorously disciplined in its own right and focused on the concerns of practice.

The contribution that philosophy of education has to make will be explored further in future events along similar lines to the one held in Oxford which will generate new publications. Philosophical perspectives on the future of teacher education have been introduced in a condensed form during workshop sessions at the ICET and UCET conferences during 2011 and other kinds of presentation are also under consideration. We hope that the ideas generated through our deliberations will enrich our understanding of the professional development of teachers in ways that will contribute to educational theory and future policy making and practice.
Practitioners in Dialogue
Locating the significance of research in school-university partnerships

“Research internationally suggests that the quality of teaching is the most significant within-school factor influencing pupil performance ... Research further suggests that engagement in research by teachers has a positive impact on the learning of the pupils in their classrooms.” (Menter et al, 2011 p.14)

While the role of the academic partner working alongside the teacher-inquirer has been a developing part of school-university partnerships, the government's intention to drive school improvement initiatives has linked practitioner research activities across both initial and continuing teacher education. Hence this year our SIG work has reflected differing ways in which teacher educators are working with practitioners in schools. As reported in RI 115, the Practitioner Research SIG arranged twin events in 2011 – one in Leeds, the other in London – both featuring guest speaker Dr Ruth Lupton (London School of Economics).

At both events, this contribution provided a link to some of the leading academic research on the relationships between poverty, place and education, both from England and abroad. Drawing particularly on the work of Martin Thrupp and Pat Thomson, as well as her own, Lupton (2005) pointed to the ways in which material and cultural resources in families and communities shape experiences of school learning, and produce challenges for school organisation and management, pedagogy and curriculum, as well as for individual learners.

Day-to-day life in disadvantaged schools is often unpredictable, emotionally demanding and involves teachers in roles that go well beyond 'curriculum delivery'. Standard pedagogic approaches may not work, leaving teachers investing much time and emotion in managing disengaged and disaffected learners.

These contextual factors can be understood objectively, and in both talks Lupton offered tools for teachers to use in identifying important elements of their local setting; such as housing instability, migration histories, economic histories and change, and levels of family poverty. However, understanding context goes beyond identifying it. Lupton drew on work by Thomson and Carrasco-Rozas to illuminate how engaging more deeply with context can draw teachers into critical reflection on their own practice and their notions of what it means to be ‘effective teachers’ in disadvantaged settings. Providing a good education in poor urban settings demands action from government in terms of school funding and accountability, but it also requires empowered teachers who can understand and articulate context and research nationally and internationally.

References

By d’Reen Struthers (Roehampton University) and Lori Beckett (Leeds Metropolitan University), Co-conveners of BERA Practitioner Research SIG
have the freedom and confidence to adapt their practice.

The first event, in March 2011, co-sponsored by BERA, Leeds Metropolitan University, and Leeds City Council, launched the ‘Leading Learning’ project, a long-term sustained CPD (continuing professional development) program jointly developed by teachers and academic partners and currently being scaled up across the city following successful pilot studies building school-university partnerships in networks of disadvantaged schools. The event, which dovetailed with a meeting of the Leeds Headteacher Forum, provided an opportunity to brief stakeholders about the significance of practitioner research to secure quality work in schools and the university, and to guarantee a professional workforce in schools and the university, and to adapt their practice.

The launch sparked a professional dialogue that strikes at the heart of each school’s purposes, and indeed the purposes of teacher education both pre-service and in-service, as teachers are equipped to serve students, their families and communities, often troubled and with deep needs. In the process, savvy alert teachers are helping to build a fair, just and equal school that reaches out to society, locally and globally. The ‘Leading Learning’ project was formally named by Leeds City Council in its School Improvement Plan 2011-15, *The Leeds Education Challenge*. The Leeds strategy is designed to show a broad approach to school improvement set in a context of partnership arrangements in order to make the most of collective efforts.

Entitled ‘Celebrating Practitioner Research’, the London event, in May, was jointly sponsored by BERA and Roehampton University. The event was held in a local Sutton school, to acknowledge the educational settings where professionals are constantly engaging in reflective and deliberative actions. The occasion offered the opportunity for practitioner-teacher researchers to talk about their work, as well as engage in critical conversations. Attended by Head Teachers, Senior Managers, Advanced Skilled Teachers (ASTs), classroom practitioners and University Tutors and Local Authority representatives, the programme began with a warm welcome from the Head Teacher of Greenshaw High School, part of the Sutton Consortium of schools who together with Roehampton University run an off-site Masters Programme.

Significantly, both William Smith (HT) and Marilyn Holness OBE, Head of Education at Roehampton University, were united in their recognition that practitioner research would continue to have an important place for staff in both institutions, given the 2010 Schools White Paper ‘The Importance of Teaching’, which charted new directions for education in England. As one participant commented, in view of both changing student populations and initial teacher education being located more in schools, “teachers need to be able to question, inquire into, experiment and reflect on their practices so as to ensure the most positive teaching and learning experiences for their pupils.” All groups discussed the stimulating challenge given by Lupton. Her references to ‘Critical Educational Scholarship’ left no doubt that practitioners working in practice contexts should be wary of assuming that the school as an organisation and the curriculum are value-neutral. How teachers could engage critical research perspectives and pedagogies was the challenge.

Finally, these twin events publicised the work of BERA and the activities of the Practitioner Research SIG. With requests to repeat this kind of event, it is intended that similar events be held next year to offer practitioners opportunities to engage in professional and critical dialogue about research practices. It may be timely to consider a series of Practitioner Research Fora in collaboration with other higher education partners. This sits well with the impact of educational research, as articulated in principle by the Research Excellence Framework, to interface with practice and policy. The realities of school-university partnerships endeavouring to build consistency between practitioner research, theory and professional experience, including initial teacher education continuous with CPD, however, requires what Wrigley, Thomson, and Lingard (2011) called hard intellectual and emotional work against the odds and, often, against prevailing policy trends. If you or your university (whether in the UK or abroad) are interested in hosting such a joint event please contact the SIG Co-convenors d’Reen Struthers (dstruthers@roehampton.ac.uk) and/or Lori Beckett (lbeckett@leedsmet.ac.uk).
What do higher-education based teacher educators do? What are the activities in which they are engaged and the institutional traditions within which these activities are situated?

By Viv Ellis, University of Oxford

WHAT ARE THE MATERIAL CONDITIONS of teacher educators' work, including the division of labour between universities and schools and within university education departments? These are the questions that guided the Higher Education Academy funded 'Work of Teacher Education' project just completed by colleagues at the universities of Oxford and Strathclyde (Ellis, McNicholl, Blake & McNally, 2011). In our research, we worked with a sample of 13 university-based teacher educators – 8 in England and 5 in Scotland – over the course of one academic year to study their work on, principally, initial teacher education. Data were generated through interviews, the completion of two sets of work diaries, observation in the workplace and through a participatory data analysis workshop that used the tools of cultural-historical activity theory. Observation of teacher educators at work focused on their interactions with HE (higher education) and school colleagues and their students, and paid attention to artefacts that mediated these interactions. Data were represented and analysed quantitatively and qualitatively.

We found that a cluster of activities that can be described as 'relationship maintenance' was a defining characteristic of teacher educators' work. These activities were directed at partnerships with schools and the insertion of student teachers into these partnerships. Email and telephone correspondence as well as face-to-face meetings in the university and in school dominated days. Sometimes, teacher educators judged their effectiveness by their speed of response. This category of activities specifically excluded academically supervising or teaching students. Relationship maintenance accounted for both the highest maximum allocation of hours as well as the highest minimum across the sample. Although, in England, relationship maintenance appeared to be related to the Ofsted inspection regime, the same level of intensity was apparent in our Scottish sample, suggesting that the broader, cultural-historical traditions of teacher education across the UK are significant.

Our sample of teacher educators represented a range of experience with some having worked in the field for over 18 years and others within the first few years of their appointment. More recent appointees were eager to become research active even when unsure of their precise contractual status (e.g. lecturer or teaching fellow?). These recent appointees, as well as the more experienced in the sample, said they lacked guidance about research activity and inclusion in institutional research cultures. Older and more experienced teacher educators tended to look forward to retirement and, even if they had gained a doctorate while working in higher education, were often 'dormant' as researchers. Indeed, one institution had identified 'the dormant doctors' as a phenomenon.

One of our theoretical interests in approaching this project was in coming to understand the social organisation of the work of teacher education and the norms and conventions through which certain kinds of work become possible and others become relatively more difficult or are ruled out. The concept of division of labour is therefore an important one and we were especially interested in how the work with pre-service teachers was shared out between schools and universities and within the HE education departments themselves. The breaking down of tasks into sub-tasks and the specialisation of workers in relation to these operations is a feature of industrial as well as other types of workplaces. Our analysis of the data is suggesting that it is the division of labour within HE education departments that is formative in structuring the social relations of the work of teacher education, with teacher educators themselves coming to be regarded as a special class of academic worker.

References
Teacher Education Futures

In the autumn of 2010 ESCalate (the Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for Education) posed the question of Teacher Education Futures across the UK at the UCET (Universities Council for the Education of Teachers) conference.

TO FOLLOW UP FROM THE SYMPOSIUM at this conference, ESCalate commissioned TEAN to run workshops to investigate the challenges and opportunities for teacher education in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. During 2011, TEAN invited teacher educators from each region to set their agenda and come together to discuss and collaborate, with the aim of finding positive ways forward despite present uncertainties. At the workshops I have not been surprised to see, as I always am privileged to see, the dedication, commitment and passion for teacher education which teacher educators from all over the UK constantly express. However, despite differences between systems across the UK, I have been most interested to find that fundamentally the hopes and aspirations of teacher educators are not at all at odds. The well-being of our future generations of children and young people and the opportunities that effective education offers them lie at the heart of everything that we do and all our energy within the policies handed down to us is simply, no matter the acknowledged complexity of the educational process, aimed at just that. I set out below some of the findings from the workshops and draw some conclusions from the contributions of keynote speakers and delegates.

England
Colleagues in England met in March 2011 and spoke with great concern of the process of going through ‘a grief cycle’ following the initial suggestions concerning teacher education made in the Coalition Government White Paper issued in November 2010 (DfE, 2010); ‘shock, anger and depression’ possibly giving rise to a great danger of negativity and acceptance. However the feeling of the meeting soon transformed from one of despair to one advocating the need to be proactive and to ‘not sit back’. Many ‘needs’ were expressed as positive ways forward: the need to revisit our ITE (Initial Teacher Education) values and rationale, to be clear about what we want to achieve; the need to find specific roles in partnership with schools; the need to focus on ITE rather than ITT (Initial Teacher Training); the need to engage in professional dialogue, such as that which the TEAN workshop provided. There are many things which Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) provide that make their role unique and powerful: a research based approach to learning and teaching; an ability to synthesise knowledge and experience across contexts and disciplines; an ability to show the bigger picture; an ability to provide partnerships across regions; the ability to take student teachers through their professional journey, supporting them appropriately at different stages of that journey; continuing professional development (CPD) possibilities, including Masters level courses.

Northern Ireland
Colleagues from Northern Ireland met in April 2011 and welcomed the opportunity to debate how to move forward in a region which can feel ‘left behind’ and frustrated that progress is not being made. Again the feeling was to seek solutions, and connectivity was the prime focus for the groups. In the absence of...
a single cohering/strategic reference point, it was felt that institutions and organisations had developed a complex web of connections which was resulting in duplication and replication rather than moving forward. Teachers in Northern Ireland, it was thought, have initially been empowered by policies but without constant movement forward, there has been stagnation; teaching becomes a product based profession instead of an educational journey with relevant content, reflected on, reviewed and, if necessary, changed. Like England, it was thought essential to engage in professional dialogue such as that which TEAN was providing. Too often there seems to be no time for thinking and relevant discussion so that conformity and compliance become the norm. The solutions were beginning to evolve within the workshop, simply because time was there to start to unravel and build: there is a real need for positive connections; joined up thinking, discussion and planning between partners.

Scotland
Colleagues from Local Authorities (LAs) and HEIs in Scotland met in June 2011, focusing on the recommendation from the Donaldson report of a review of teacher education in Scotland (Donaldson, 2010) that it is necessary to build stronger partnerships. Once again the need for professional dialogue, such as that afforded by the TEAN workshop, was seen as essential. Partners – HEIs, LAs and Schools – need to know how each organisation works, to have knowledge of each other. In order for partnership to be strengthened, everyone needs to ‘want to do it’ and ‘tweaking’ it will not work; wholehearted commitment to a significant change of culture over time is what is needed. There were many suggestions of how to effect this: adopt a partnership model which allows scope for local interpretation and variation; look at which priorities can be shared between partners; consider opportunities for reciprocal CPD between agencies; build greater understanding of the big picture; find common ground; in difficult financial times the practical, financial and logistical issues of developing partnerships need to be openly and honestly acknowledged, so build on the strong commitment to partnership evident in this workshop.

Wales
Colleagues from Wales met in October 2011. They discussed some of the recommendations for ITET (Initial Teacher Education and Training) from the General Teaching Council for Wales (GTCW, 2011) following Wales’ performance in the PISA 2009 survey: ways to improve recruitment, suggesting that recognising potential is one of the key elements for this; how to strengthen the continuum from QTS (Qualified Teacher Status) into early professional development, noting that it is difficult to understand why there is presently very limited involvement of HEIs in induction and Early Professional Development activities in Wales; and Masters level, suggesting that HEIs understand Masters level work and thus it is imperative that they are involved in any development of Masters qualifications in Wales. Again the need for joined up thinking and working together were seen as fundamental. The need for seeing education as an investment, not a cost, was a major message they would like to share with government. In agreement with colleagues across the UK, they saw the need for teacher educators to be proactive: to celebrate what they do; to show that they are doing things from their own initiative and not ‘sitting back’; and to be part of the solution to bring about effective teacher education, not part of the problem.

Conclusions
The subheading ‘conclusions’ is expedient, but far too premature. What I present here is rather what I find to be the common ground upon which teacher educators throughout the UK appear to want to forge the beginnings of their respective futures. The overwhelming message is to be proactive and recognise what we offer the sector. Student teachers and practising teachers need to understand ‘the bigger picture’ to appreciate the complexity of the task before them and to understand the professional journey that they undertake in order to become a teacher and to remain an effective one. We need effective partnership working, building bridges, not working in isolation; we need effective transitions and links between ITE, induction and CPD; we need professional dialogue. Above all, amongst the shifting landscapes and financial constraints, we need to think of our moral purpose; what we do, we do ultimately and most importantly for children and young people and this should be our main driver.

Full details from the workshops can be found on the TEAN website in the Teacher Educators’ Storehouse/ Sharing Ideas: www.tean.ac.uk and the ESCalate website: http://escalate.ac.uk/7513.

References
I THINK THE ANSWER IS ‘YES’! Did we get it all right for everyone? No, there were a number of areas where we could have done better and during our planning for next year, Conference Committee will try and address these to everyone’s satisfaction.

Thank you to those delegates who provided online feedback. Figures from the online evaluation have been incorporated into this report and all your comments will be considered when planning future conferences. There were over 800 papers presented during the three days of BERA 2011 to over 900 delegates at the Institute of Education, University of London. This is a very encouraging situation and reverses the declining trend over the past few years. 70% of the delegates were BERA members, but for 42% of the delegates, this was their first BERA Conference. If this was you, I hope you enjoyed the experience and that we’ll see you at future conferences and other BERA events.

As an academic conference, it is continually gratifying to see that the quality of papers remains high. Unfortunately not all abstracts that look good actually develop into good papers. It is the abstract that is reviewed in January/February preceding conference and there is always a degree of travel between the reviewed abstract and the final presented paper. Nevertheless 65% of responses rated the quality of papers as ‘Good’ or ‘Very good’. The comparable figures for 2009 and 2010 were 53% and 64%.

A successful innovation for 2011 was the introduction of a panel session where the speakers had provided their papers beforehand which allowed much more time for debate. Thanks to Stephen Gorard and Daniel Muijs for speaking at this session.

In an attempt to broaden the conference experience for delegates we’d offered two pre-conference events at the Tate and the British Film Institute. They were free of charge and 30 delegates had signed up for each event, but on the day only 4 turned up to each event. This was very disappointing. Enormous effort had been made setting them up and both venues had prepared handouts and presentations. The sad thing is that those who didn’t turn up missed a treat. For example, Tate now has without doubt the most radical learning approach of any gallery anywhere in the world and what they are trying to do is nothing less than to revolutionise gallery education.

In response to the consultation with members in 2009, BERA 2011 was a shorter conference than in recent years and it also avoided weekends. Feedback suggested that the 3-day midweek format was successful and that the programme offered a good balance of keynotes, panel discussions, symposia and parallel sessions. However, in terms of programming, we tried to fit a quart into the pint pot and there were particular programming consequences:

1. We were not able to maintain our policy of only having 3 papers per session.
2. The 8.30 start on Thursday was not universally popular.
3. There were occasions when sessions from the same SIG were happening at the same time.
4. We were forced to hold some of the SIG Forum meetings during lunch hours rather than during Parallel sessions.

For 2012, we can address items 1 and 2 by reverting to only 3 papers per session and starting morning sessions at 9am. There appears to be some flexibility to address item 3 (this is not a new issue, but Conference committee will examine the programme and look at increasing the number of parallel sessions from 6 to 7, but even this may not provide a complete solution). In the case of item 4, there were simply not enough hours in the programme.

Hope to see you at BERA 2012 in Manchester.
I have pleasure in inviting you to attend and submit a paper to the 2012 BERA Annual Conference, to be held from 4 to 6 September 2012 at Manchester University.

By Danny Durant, Chair, Conference Committee

IN 2009 WE HELD A SUCCESSFUL (although it was a little damp!) conference at University Place, which is situated in the centre of Manchester. For further information about visiting Manchester, see www.visitmanchester.com.

We have four distinguished keynote speakers;

- Jean Clandinin is Director of the Centre for Research for Teacher Education and Development (CRTED) in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta. She is a former teacher, counsellor, and psychologist. Professor Clandinin is part of an ongoing inquiry into teacher knowledge and teachers’ professional knowledge landscapes.

- Zeus Leonardo is an Associate Professor in the department of Language and Literacy, Society and Culture at the University of California, Berkeley. His current research interests involve the study of ideologies and discourses in education with respect to change. In particular, he engages critical theories to inform his analysis of the relationship between schooling and social relations, such as race, class, culture, and gender.

- Jon Coles is the Director-General for Education Standards at the Department for Education. He has been Director-General since May 2008. Before then, he spent three years as director of 14-19 Reform. A qualified secondary teacher, his previous posts have included Director for the London Challenge, implementing the infant class size pledge, developing future strategy for ICT in schools and a strategy for e-government, on secondment to the Cabinet Office.

- Stephen Heppell is Professor in New Media Environments at Bournemouth University. He is also Emeritus Professor at Anglia Ruskin University, Visiting Professor at the University of Wales, Newport, CEO at Heppell.net and Executive Chairman at Learning Possibilities. He is internationally recognised as a leader in the fields of learning, new media and technology.

Take the opportunity to consider how you and colleagues might present your work at BERA 2012. Conference committee would like to encourage innovative formats for sessions (e.g. demonstration/performance sessions, discussion, workshop, working group, roundtable) and sessions could be ‘cross-SIG’ or contain emergent or blue-sky thinking. Please include Conference Committee in your planning so that decisions can be made in good time.

The key dates are;

- Keynote symposia submission deadline 9th January 2012
- Main and Student Conference submissions deadline 23rd January 2012
- Authors notified of acceptance 9th April 2012
- Authors notified of time and date of presentation 14th May 2012

Conference committee would like to encourage innovative formats for sessions e.g. demonstration/performance sessions, discussion, workshop, working group and roundtable.
Notes for Contributors

Disclaimers
In the interests of professional and academic dialogue, RI will occasionally publish articles that deal with controversial topics. Publication of any article by RI should not be seen as an endorsement by BERA or by the RI/Editor of the views expressed, but as an attempt to promote academic freedom.

The acceptance of an advertisement to appear in RI does not constitute a guarantee or endorsement by BERA or by the RI editorial team of the quality or value of the advertised products or services, or of the claims made for them by their advertisers.

Articles
Each issue of RI aims to capture a range of perspectives on a topic of current relevance to the wide range of sites for the generation and mobilisation of education research. We would like to receive articles relevant to the themes announced in the calls for contributions to each issue of RI. If you have some recently completed research that you feel is relevant to the theme and likely to be of interest to BERA members, please summarise it in approximately 1200 words and send it to the Editor.

Opinion
Brief opinion pieces of relevance to the theme of each issue OR addressing other current critical issues affecting education research and its stakeholders are also welcome. Material should not exceed 600 words.

Members wishing to respond to an existing piece or to suggest topics for future issues of RI should contact the Editor.

SIGs, awards, events
SIG convenors can use the medium of RI to update all BERA members of their activities or open up a particular issue for debate. Contributions should not exceed 600 words and be sent to the Editor.

BERA members who are recipients of BERA awards or are engaged in BERA-supported initiatives are invited to submit brief outlines of the work so supported (600 words).

600-word accounts of events supported by BERA are also very welcome.

In all types of submissions please avoid the use of footnotes and keep the number of references to a minimum. Please refer to articles in recent issues for examples of acceptable formats.

Mobilising research
We would like to receive brief pieces relevant to agencies or individuals who use educational research. We would particularly welcome contributions sharing news in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Material should not exceed 600 words and should be sent to the Editor.

We also encourage members to submit contributions discussing initiatives of strategic importance to education research from any sector of activity.

Editor
The Editor encourages electronic submission of articles etc.

Please send your contributions to Ails Oancea: alis.oancea@education.ox.ac.uk.
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<tr>
<th>Conference</th>
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<td>AARE International Education Research Conference 2011</td>
<td>27 November – 1 December 2011</td>
<td>Hobart, Australia</td>
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<td>Association for Science Education Annual Conference 2012</td>
<td>4 – 7 January 2012</td>
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<td>30 March – 1 April, 2012</td>
<td>New College, Oxford, UK</td>
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<td>DPR 12: Discourse, Power, Resistance: Impact</td>
<td>2 – 4 April, 2012</td>
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<td>BERA 2012</td>
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**Note**

Please check relevant associations’ websites for submission deadlines.