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3.2 An alternative route to qualified teacher status – collaborative partnerships with the licensed teacher scheme (a personal view)

d'Reen Struthers

Introduction

The Licensed Teacher (LT) Scheme, introduced in 1989 by the Conservative Government of Britain was a new initiative that was intended to give more power to schools and assist with staffing problems in shortage subjects. If over 24, and with two years of higher education or the equivalent, with GCSE maths and English (or the equivalent), instructors in schools could become 'licensed to teach' if an appropriate training plan were submitted by the recommending body. After a training period of up to two years, the recommending body can apply for qualified teacher status (QTS).

The Government in 1987 used the words 'freedom, choice and responsibility' to characterize its vision for education in all public speeches and papers. With particular reference to initial teacher education (ITE) routes, it is evident that the LT Scheme was to honour this view – seen as one 'alternative route' into teaching which would give new

freedoms (and responsibilities) to schools, and offer choice for entrants to the teaching profession.

This chapter begins with an historical overview, followed by the voices of two LTs from secondary schools. What were their experiences of the scheme at Middlesex University in 1996? Arising from their stories, I shall begin to tease out some of the issues which the LT Scheme raises for the teaching profession, before looking in more detail at the scheme which is now run at Middlesex University. Reference will also be made to the LT route available to overseas trained teachers (OTTs) to gain QTS.

From the 'Middlesex Experience', I will then consider some of the implications for the future of this 'alternative route' into teaching, with reference to the now tabled consultation document from the Department for Education (DfE) on the Graduate Teacher Programme and its proposals to 'reform' the LT, OTT and Registered Teacher Programmes.

Historical overview

When the Green Paper on the LT Scheme was published in 1988, the main teaching unions came out strongly against the proposals. The National Union of Teachers (NUT) deplored the development and argued that 'the absence of a professional qualification for all teachers cannot maintain, let alone improve standards in Education' (McAvoy, 1988). The National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) described it as 'an attempt to get around the problem of shortages by dilution instead of responding to market forces by increasing pay to attract better teachers' (de Gruchy, N. 1988). The Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association (AMMA) suggested that the use of the licensed teachers represented an admission that the National Curriculum could not be delivered without a reduction in the quality of the teaching profession (*Times Educational Supplement*, 1988).

Indeed by July 1989, as the local education authorities (LEAs) made explicit their concerns about the scheme and the additional costs involved, more governmental money was made available through the LEAs training

grants schemes. The draft regulations had also addressed LEA concerns about entry requirements, duration and nature of the required training and the QTS recommendation procedure.

With this context, Middlesex University began negotiations with LEAs, who in turn were looking at local agreements with the teaching unions. Sharing similar concerns, Middlesex University formed a consortium with LEA partners who endorsed the notion that only graduates would be considered for the LT route.

By 1992 Middlesex University staff had developed a unique ITE course for graduate LTs, which was validated in 1993 as a *classroom-based* Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). The design of the course was heavily influenced by the Oxford Internship Scheme (1990). As part of the overall course design, the final module was to function also as a 'stand alone' module to be taken by OTTs. The first group of OTTs came on the two week course in the summer of 1992.

LEAs at this time were still involved in managing the employment of all teaching staff. It was, therefore, easy for the LEAs in the consortium, to monitor those teachers employed without QTS.

Similarly with close school links, the LEAs were involved in working with schools to agree appointments of graduates to shortage subject posts, knowing that they would be eligible for the LT Scheme with Middlesex. This liaison role which LEA staff performed, was very important. Not only were they able to influence the selection of graduates to school positions, but Link Advisers and Inspectors were able to support the LT and the school, with LEA-provided in-service education and training (INSET) programmes. Their role also involved observing and assessing the LTs, as at this time, the LEA was recognized as the recommending body for QTS. Funding for the scheme was done through the Government Education Service and Training (GEST) budget which included funding for the LT scheme.

Peter's story

During my combined sports and science degree I worked with young people in various summer camps here and in the USA. On completion

of my course, I continued working as a sports coach and instructor in various contexts in England, USA and Europe. Throughout this time I was told frequently 'you should go into teaching'. So I looked at various options to become qualified – from the Open University route, the one year PGCE route to the LT Scheme. I thought the idea of 'training on the job' was appealing, especially as I heard Middlesex offered a course for graduate LTs that led to a PGCE anyway.

I found a school that was not closed to the idea of the scheme, but who first wanted to give me a trial period. After a term, the school made connections with Middlesex who worked closely with the school to draw up a programme that had both a school and university element. My mentor went on a training course. Mondays were timetabled as free – so in the autumn term I was able to go and watch other teachers, work in other departments and watch colleagues in my own department. When the course started at Middlesex in the spring term, I was surprised how different the other school contexts were to my own. This helped me understand how supported I was, and indeed to appreciate my school context more. Being with other LTs is also good because you get to hear about other situations, far broader than your own situation. I think this broader perspective is important, especially when considering becoming a true professional. As part of the course, I have to write a journal. I sometimes look back on what I have said and it is good to feel as if I have moved – 'Gosh did I used to think that?'. It helps you feel as if your ideas are changing and something is happening. I have talked to other PGCE students and I am still glad I am on this course. At least my experience is consistent and happens daily rather than in blocks of time. It is easier to step back from your experience perhaps once a week with others in the same boat than having to jump in the deep end and sink or swim.

Nicole's story

After my high school in Germany I attended a university course for three years as part of a programme to gain a degree and teaching qualifications in Germany. The opportunity for me to work on an exchange programme

in England looked attractive – I could improve my English and work as a German teaching assistant in an English secondary school.

For personal reasons I decided to stay in this country and eventually had a full-time assistant's post in a school in Essex. Keen to stay and having heard about the LT Scheme, I approached the school. A training programme was developed with Middlesex University on the understanding that my German qualifications could be transferred to a British work-based learning degree.

My mentor is head of a shrinking department, which has failed to maintain a consistent level of staffing for the past two years. He has not been trained as a mentor. Although I have been given some free periods (part of the Middlesex requirement for the course) my shift from 'assistant' to 'licensed teacher' has been very traumatic because of almost non-existent support within the school. Suddenly I find myself teaching 10 different classes, including the requirement that I teach French (not studied since my own high-school days) to a year nine class (GCSE) and most recently, being expected to take on even more classes with the sudden resignation of another teacher from the department. So, I have been 'teaching' 7 weeks, have not had one visit from my school mentor and the school now seems more concerned with 'crowd control' than my ability to 'class-control and teach'. My tutor at Middlesex is trying to negotiate with the school that the situation changes. Meanwhile, I enjoy the university sessions – having the chance to talk with other LTs, to get ideas about classroom approaches and to begin to contemplate why and how I am doing things. As part of the course I am required to write a journal – a time-consuming activity, which at first I resented. However, I am beginning to appreciate that while the school gives me no support, my own journal acts as a reminder of how I am improving. I read back over past week's entries and I have to laugh. Did I really think that? This helps reminds me that yes, I am developing and indeed I am able to make sense of both the practice and the theory.

I am still awaiting the start of the school-based sessions. I gather Middlesex will have to step in, to ensure the joint programme as agreed by both partners is carried out. Thank goodness the university is keeping an eye on the school! I wonder what it is like for LTs who just have a

school programme – who checks the school is doing the job it said it would do? If nothing gets resolved at the school, I think I will lose my motivation. How can Middlesex give credit for a school-based programme that is missing? What will I gain at the end? The school will, I think, try to exploit the situation, but hopefully quality control measures from Middlesex and the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) will save me. But I want to become a teacher.

Both of these stories highlight some of the very real dilemmas and concerns about the LT Scheme. Peter is a graduate, working in a school department with a trained mentor who not only participated in the preparation of the training programme, but who, as a senior manager in the school, has been able to advocate on Peter's behalf for timetable space, etc. Nicole on the other hand, is a non-graduate, with very little 'teaching experience', who is now facing the reality of full teaching responsibilities, within a department where there is limited support and an inexperienced mentor. Both, it is hoped, will receive QTS. Peter is on the PGCE route for LTs which Middlesex offers, and Nicole is more than likely (with the accreditation of her previous studies in Germany, her experience and the course credit gained on the LT course at Middlesex) to receive a Work-based Learning Degree (Education/German). The recommendation for QTS is made by their respective schools.

For both of these LTs, their needs were assessed and, together, the respective school and I (as the university tutor) drew up a training plan. Both parties identified what they felt their strengths were in terms of provision. The school offered on the spot 'craft knowledge'¹ about the job. What Middlesex offered was a structured developmental course programme into which this craft knowledge could be easily placed. Both parties realized that their instructors would be able to experience broader aspects of teaching with the involvement of a higher education institution (HEI). The LT would be learning alongside others, while at the same time being able to have a distance from his or her immediate context within the school, to contemplate other alternative approaches teased

out during the Middlesex programme which would complement the school. In this way, the collaborative partnership ensures that the LT's school-based experiences and training are integrated with the university course.

In both of the above instances, the school considered the scheme as a way to meet staffing shortages and retention problems in the subjects these particular LTs both offered. The Modes of Teaching in Education (MOTIE) Project commissioned to survey the LT Scheme throughout the country, reported that from the 1990–1 figures, 'the most frequently reported reason for introducing the LTS was to reduce teacher shortages ... reflecting the traditional problem of recruiting and retaining teachers in particular subject areas' (Barrett et al., 1993:15).

However, in addition to this with inspections by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) prompting schools to look at the qualifications of all staff, schools are now approaching Middlesex University with stories of 'teachers' who have been working in the schools for many years, but often with no formal teaching qualifications. These schools are keen to show that all their staff, if not trained, are attached to training programmes. Some of these 'instructors' (not fully qualified teachers) may have two years of higher education, others may not.

The Middlesex Scheme can accommodate such demands

Phil's story

Phil has been a PE instructor in a school for six years – having left school at 16 to become a professional footballer for Millwall. He had no formal qualifications whatsoever, apart from GCSE English. However his many years of experience working within the sports area and with young people meant that he was able to submit a profile of his experience, learning and sporting qualifications to Middlesex University for accreditation. The head of the school of education, who assessed his portfolio was 'impressed not only with Phil's breadth of experience, but also with his insightful understanding of what was involved in teaching

and learning'. Initially of course, he first had to complete an equivalance test for GCSE maths. (One of the basic entry requirements for teaching in England.) In Phil's case, the school was very concerned to promote this 'wonderfully dedicated teacher', who was clearly an asset to the profession.

Selection criteria for the Scheme

Because the Scheme is now under TTA authority, and totally school-driven, I am (as an ITE provider), very conscious of a whole number of issues around selection. Of course what I perceive about a candidate, might not be wholly visible to the school and vice-versa. The school might want to promote someone into the Scheme because 'he or she fits' into the culture of the school. Yet I have to address a broader issue of 'a new entrant for the teaching profession'. How would this person measure up in another context? Is the recommendation based solely on how the school perceives the potential LT's *relationships with pupils*, with no account of the quality of his or her professional approaches, which may be inconsistent?

As part of our approach, the programme leader will always interview the candidate in question, and for some, an observation of his or her teaching will be made. A professional dialogue between all participants is then entered into, which develops mutual trust between the school and Middlesex. For example, the educational language we are using is clarified. In this way, the personnel from both institutions involved in the partnership, begin to create a relationship that is transparent. Therefore, when dilemmas arise, we have mutual grounds to raise questions. This approach is important because both parties have significantly different roles to play in the ITE of an LT.

When describing the Middlesex LT Scheme to the schools, the potential LT is always asked what he or she hopes to be doing in five years. If he or she is keen to pursue a career in teaching, the school is encouraged to consider the award-bearing course – pointing out the implications of how a potential new employer may view a totally school-based route to QTS. The Middlesex experience is that no graduates have rejected the offer to gain a PGCE with Middlesex, as well as QTS via

the LTS. Indeed, some schools and instructors who initially imagined this was an 'easy route', have expressed their gratitude to Middlesex University for the rigour and challenge they experienced which helped to ensure the quality of the school-based component, and provided the successful LT graduate with the status of a PGCE award which is acknowledged as the professional qualification for teaching in England.

This has been a very important factor for ethnic minority teachers, entering the teaching profession through this route.

Changes to the scheme

With the take-over of the GEST² budget by the TTA, many changes occurred. From the TTA literature, the scheme allows maintained schools and non-maintained special schools to appoint individuals with suitable qualifications who, after a period of employment and training under license, can be recommended to the DFEE, where appropriate, for the award to QTS.³

Effectively therefore, in keeping with other Government legislation, LEA participation has been significantly reduced. LEA involvement is now initiated by the school, who might seek the advice and support of such Link personnel.

Change in legislation has also had an impact on the functioning of the Middlesex Scheme. In the past, the LEA approached Middlesex about potential LTs or OTTs for the scheme. It was the LEA which completed all the necessary qualification and background checks. Checks still need to be done however, and from experience, we have learned not to assume that the individual school has looked into these thoroughly. Thus, to ensure our own standards and quality control at the point of entry, Middlesex staff have often been involved in time extensive checks, especially for OTTs.

Similarly, in the absence of LEA liaison, all paperwork is the domain of the schools, an intimidating reality for some schools, although Middlesex staff do their best to assist.

However perhaps what is most significant, is the additional monitoring role the Link adviser/inspector used to offer. As part of a school visit, the LEA adviser might discuss the progress of the LT, classroom

observations would take place and the school-based programme (mentor discussions, induction programmes, etc.) would be reviewed. Indeed, although Middlesex tutors would only visit twice a term, Link Advisers would be frequently in the school and be able to report back to Middlesex when necessary.

Although we at Middlesex hold tightly to our mission to uphold rigorous quality assurance procedures and standards, given the award-bearing nature of our courses, what now happens in schools is often out of our hands. The Memorandum of Co-operation between the school and the HEI may be a point of reference for us both, but timetable constraints, staff shortage and quality of 'in-house' delivery within the school, all impact on the equality of opportunity which the Scheme theoretically tries to promote. After all, we, as the HEI partner, are really employed by the school to provide just one or two aspects of the training programme – course design and input and assessment of teaching.

The context for the shift away from HEI and LEA involvement has been described by McCulloch (1993), according to whom over the past decade there has been the evolution 'of policies designed to limit the influence of higher education institutions on initial teacher education programmes'. In a consultation document (DES, 1992), the then Secretary of State for Education and Science announced that 'schools should play a much larger part in initial teacher training as full partners of higher education institutions' (p.1, para.1). In that same year Circular 9/92 (Department for Education, 1992) gave schools a much stronger voice generally in partnership training, arguing for joint responsibility for course planning and management, selection, training and assessment of students. The IT Scheme however, was still an alternative because, joint responsibility under the Scheme was not considered necessary. Elliot (1991) suggested that the IT Schemes were precursors of this school-based thrust of ITE and argued that the schemes produce 'a craft model of the occupation, and an apprenticeship model of training' (1991:310).

Thus, with policy initiatives that implied a transfer of power from HEIs to schools, there was an underlying implication for what should be taught and how learning should take place. Now situated in schools, the term 'apprenticeship' was being used. Students would learn from experts

on the job, practical experience being preferable and certainly more likely in schools, than the more reflective, awareness-raising practices provided by HEIs. The underlying question was about the relationship between theory and practice. The new Government initiatives seemed to be promoting the importance of practice at the expense of theory and demoting the place of theorizing about practice.

The course at Middlesex University however attempts to address this dilemma. In the first term, the focus is on classroom perspectives. The second term takes a step back, looking at whole-school issues. The aim of the third module is to 'enable students to gain theoretical perspectives for their own classroom practice'. Almost everything we call teaching is underpinned by theories of how human beings learn and what constitutes human knowledge. However, because we are part of a tradition of schooled learning which has developed over the past century, much of this remains implicit. In this module, entitled 'Theoretical Underpinnings of Classroom Learning' we make explicit some of the main theories which have informed those traditions. We ask LTs to relate these to their own classroom strategies as well as examining the theories themselves, in order to assess their relative strengths and limitations from practical perspectives. The final module, 'Historical Perspectives and Recent Developments' addresses the English educational context. Possible to be taken as a 'stand alone' module for OTTs, this module also offers an opportunity for beginning teachers to talk with OTTs about their experiences and understandings of the profession and is always very illuminating.

Running concurrently throughout the year is also an Information Technology (IT) strand and a generic curriculum module, along with blocks of assessed teaching. There are three major assignments expected across the 18-month course and students are also required to keep a journal throughout the duration of the course. They will frequently call on these journal reflections in specific workshop/dialogue sessions, where students are encouraged to share their contemplations with colleague, teasing out themes, issues and professional dilemmas that have arisen.

The school-based programme, which is drawn up by the school and Middlesex staff, takes account of the individual's needs and the

opportunities for the school to contribute to the professional education of the LT. Sessions are arranged to integrate the student's learning. From mentor sessions within the school, the LT is able to raise issues discussed with other LTs during their one-day-a-week release to attend the Middlesex course. Similarly, ideas and strategies discussed on the course are taken back into the school and deliberated and contextualized.

The true collaborative partnership?

McIntyre (1991) argues that for a collaborative partnership to be effective, there should be a commitment to developing a training programme where students are exposed to different forms of educational knowledge. Certainly, in the Middlesex Licensed Teacher Scheme, the opportunity for schools to work alongside an HEI and indeed involve other agencies is possible. Many of our schools work in consortiums which provide NQT induction programmes – the sessions being conducted by a range of teachers from the consortium. Some will make use of LEA personnel (advisory teachers, inspectors and subject consultants). Others will make use of LEA induction programmes (where they are still available). In this way, the students are expected to make use of a range of different learning opportunities and perspectives, reflecting on their own growing body of professional knowledge.

Planning and monitoring are certainly a collaborative effort. Initial planning is concerned with the preparation of the training programme for the TTA. Once the framework has been agreed, the school is then expected to organize the detail of the school-based sessions and collaborate with other staff where appropriate. The Middlesex course documentation is shared with schools and meetings are held for LT mentors and Middlesex tutors to get together at least once a term to discuss any concerns about the course and the various roles of people involved. These mentor clinics have proved a very valuable way for those involved in the programme to discuss professional questions, for example the frequency of mentor meetings, ways of monitoring progress and issues about giving feedback to students.

The assessment of the LTs is covered from three different angles. School mentors regularly observe the LTs and will make two assessed teaching visits a term. Middlesex tutors will visit at least once a term and there are two periods of assessed teaching where two visits are made within a six week period. Finally, triangulation is completed with an external assessor, often from an LEA, coming to visit the LT three times across the six terms. Each term, reports from each are circulated and the dialogue continues. In addition, the school has an assessment portfolio for each LT where reports are made of the LT's competences – both his or her general competence as a teacher and also subject-specific knowledge and subject application as per DES Circular 9/92.

In this way, at the end of the LT course, evidence is available to support the school's recommendation for QTS from Middlesex University, the school and an external assessor. The mentor training course the University offers, complements the collaborative partnerships we hope to be able to develop with schools. During the course, mentors are encouraged to talk about their views of good practice and to make explicit their own understandings about their personal professional knowledge. Ways of observing colleagues and working to promote change are also included in the course along with other issues relating to the role of mentor. The university staff who work on these courses are also tutors on the LT Scheme. In this way too, mentors attending who will be working with LTs have an opportunity to participate in professional dialogue with HEI staff. Mutual trust and personal relationships are established which is vital not only for successful collaboration, but for the individual LT.

A future way forward?

What has been presented in this chapter is a personal view of one scheme which has successfully been running in the south-east of England since 1992. The quality of the course has become well respected by the TTA. All partners benefit from the scheme, not least the graduate LT who has the opportunity to gain a classroom-based PGCE or for non-graduates, a Work-Based Learning Degree. The OTT Package has also gained

recognition within and around Greater London. Students come from as far afield as Kettering, Northamptonshire, and Clacton, Essex. Numbers are modest, 8-10 per year on the longer LT course and 10-15 teachers twice a year, for the OTT course. Hardly a challenge to the present forms of ITE in England.

However, the TTA has recently tabled a consultation document which looks set to challenge not only the above model, but also to potentially threaten the existing PGCE routes led by HEIs at present. The proposed Graduate Teacher Programme it is claimed, will provide a new employment-based route to QTS, alongside the LT and OTT Schemes which will be 'merged and reformed'. In actual fact, it would appear that the proposals are to offer two different routes for graduates and non-graduates. With the underlying assumption that there are many potential teachers out there who would prefer to join the teaching profession via these alternative routes, the possibilities look set to again threaten standards and professional training and education of teachers. Rather than making the existing pathway more flexible, the suggestions promise to throw all those involved in ITE into another round of defending strategies to protect the rigours of the professional preparation of teachers. Further, this new Graduate Teacher Programme assumes that many more schools than are now participating are eager to be involved in the professional preparation of teachers. From my experience, this is not true. Indeed, when challenged to consider the impact of having unqualified staff, who often have very limited experience of schools and classrooms, schools have expressed their concerns about the amount of support they would need to give. So although at first it might appear that this option will relieve the pressure on overburdened staffing budgets, the rest of the staff are often called on to add the support of an instructor to their job descriptions. You can imagine the resentment and the consequences!

Personally, I think there are lessons to be learnt from the LT Scheme. As the New Right are pursuing their policies with rigour, ITE providers must themselves reassess the traditions and authority they have enjoyed in the past. Perhaps there are ways in which both schools and HEIs could benefit from considering more truly collaborative partnerships? I believe

the profession as a whole needs to respond to the challenges of the new Government initiatives. Rather than defending existing traditions, we should all be exploring ways to increase open dialogue about what we consider is important in the preparation of teachers. In the process, colleagues in schools may begin to have ownership over their own needs for reflection, critical thinking and continued 'professional' development. For those of us in HEI, we may begin to respect the reality of class and school demands – so different from our own working environments. Certainly, I feel very privileged to work closely with schools involved in the LT Scheme. The mutual respect and understanding of our different skills, knowledge and experience can only lead to a greater unity in the teaching profession.

Of course we need unity not only about our professional views and standards, but also about the resourcing of education generally. Under threat, no-one feels open to reframe their ideas and visions. Could responding more openly to new initiatives, while not losing our professional integrity actually provide opportunities to bring more capital, resourcing and creative energy to a tired and demoralized teaching profession? The future is perhaps more in our own hands than we realize?

Notes

- 1 A term used to describe what teachers actually do in the classroom and referred to in McNamara and Desforges (1978).
- 2 GEST budgets were delegated to LEAs when it became apparent that there would be little support for the scheme from unions and LEAs unless reasonable funding was available.
- 3 TTA Licensed Teacher Schemes: Recommendation Pack for Teachers 1995.

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3.3 Aspects of the mentoring process within a secondary initial teacher education partnership

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Introduction

This chapter uses data gathered during the first phase of a study of mentoring to generate an agenda of questions about the process. The work described here represents the first steps in the development of a theory of the mentoring process which seeks to inform effective practice through a better understanding of how mentoring style relates to learning needs. The chapter will outline the context for the research, summarize the findings and discuss a possible model for mentoring styles. More detailed accounts of the findings from this project may be found elsewhere (Williams, Leach and Marr, forthcoming; Williams et al, forthcoming).

The importance of an improved understanding of mentoring as a process lies in the potential significance of a match between mentoring style and the learning needs of individual beginning teachers. This has implications on two levels. First, a serious mismatch may lead to the withdrawal of a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) student from initial teacher education (ITE) altogether. Second, it may limit opportunities for beginning teachers to reach an optimum level of competence which is clearly of significance in the context of a perceived