

**Educational studies and teacher education**

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## 1. Introduction

From the earliest days of university involvement in the training of teachers, in the 1890s, a range of different views have been set out concerning the content of initial teacher training (ITT) courses, specifically in relation to the balance between school-based teaching practice and the complementary course components provided by higher education institutions (HEIs) (Thomas, 1990). Allied to, and sometimes inseparable from these debates, has been another relating to the legitimacy of education departments within the academy.

For most of the first half of the twentieth century the Scottish universities and Queen's University, Belfast uniquely taught academic education degrees, but they maintained no close association with the colleges that trained teachers. This approach was little admired in England or Wales. Here, it was widely felt that separating the study of education from ITT would lead, on the one hand, to 'tricks of the trade' training programmes and, on the other, to unrealistically impractical courses of educational theory (comments by Professor James Duff, Vice-Chancellor, University of Durham, Conference of the Home Universities, 1946, pp.56-57). But the English and Welsh UDEs were regarded with suspicion. The vocational nature of their graduate teacher training work and, more particularly, their links with the non-graduate work conducted by the teacher training colleges was widely thought to be a menace to academic standards and autonomy. After the Second World War many UDEs were symbolically located – or re-located – in buildings away from the main campus (Taylor, 1965, p.200), a reminder of the peripheral importance of these departments to the scholarship and life of the university.

The *British Journal of Educational Studies (BJES)* was founded by the Standing Conference on Studies in Education in 1952 for the purposes of strengthening and improving the research culture of education and its various sub-disciplines. One of the journal's founders and an original editorial board member, R.A.C. Oliver, professor of education at Manchester University, wanted the UDEs to train research workers capable of producing 'original work which will make a new contribution to knowledge . . . whether historical, sociological, psychological or statistical' (Oliver 1951, p.52). During the past 50 years this has been an important function of this journal, not least during the long editorship (1952-74) of A.F.C. Beales (Aldrich, 2000, p.68).

The next section of this article provides a commentary upon the development of British ITT. The third section looks at the rise of educational studies and the foundation disciplines, while the fourth charts their decline. Finally, some conclusions are offered in respect of previous writings, national and international trends, the current state of the disciplines and the future of educational studies.

## 2. Policy overview of ITT developments

When the *BJES* was launched, in 1953, optimism about the future of ITT and about the possibility of raising the status of education as an academic subject were both high. In the wake of the McNair Report (Board of Education, 1944), the relationship between English and Welsh UDEs and teacher training colleges became closer than ever before and post-war plans for the reform and strengthening of the teacher training colleges of Scotland

and Northern Ireland were meriting serious attention (Sutherland, 1990, p.113). The teacher shortages that had precipitated emergency training schemes in each of the home countries had now eased, improving the general climate for new initiatives and reviews of course content. From the early 1950s UDEs increasingly moved to replace their one-year diploma courses for graduate student teachers with the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) award. Meanwhile, the training colleges, which trained non-graduates seeking posts in the primary and secondary modern schools, were poised to extend their courses from two to three years. This did not happen, in fact, until the start of the 1960s, which proved to be a decade of massive expansion and rethinking in British ITT.

The 1963 Robbins Report (Ministry of Education, 1963) supported the development of an all-graduate teaching profession throughout the UK, heralding the re-designation of training colleges as degree-awarding 'colleges of education' and the launch of the new, university-validated – initially so, at least - BEd degree. At first, only a small handful of universities were prepared to offer the BEd as a four-year honours degree (Hilliard, 1969, p.94), but by 1970 when 21 of the 23 English and Welsh universities had adopted the BEd, only three did not provide any kind of honours route (Browne, 1980, p.72). In Scotland and Northern Ireland the BEd (or EdB, as it was known at the universities of Aberdeen, Dundee and Glasgow) was not a new award. Scottish university undergraduate degrees in education, heavily biased towards child psychology, had been established after the Great War and provided the model for the BEd launched by Queen's University, Belfast in 1948. Clearly, the Robbins recommendations that the BEd should be a concurrent degree combining academic and professional work had implications for these BEd/EdB degrees. In both Scotland and Northern Ireland, therefore, these established degrees were now re-styled as MEd awards with courses now more closely resembling the English and Welsh MEd model (Bell, 1990, pp.98-103; Sutherland, 1990, p.109). Nevertheless, the Scottish universities were resistant to the spirit of the Robbins BEd and the degree quickly gained an unfortunate reputation for being over-academic and unhelpful to the needs of prospective teachers, so harming recruitment (Marker, 1996, p.73). This situation was later stabilized by the tendency of the Scottish colleges to seek ITT course validation from the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) instead of the universities, in line with the practices of many English colleges and polytechnics during the 1970s (Silver, 1990, pp.79-81).

The BEd's difficulties were not confined to Scotland. In spite of the fact that four-year honours courses became the norm, rather than the exception, they attracted criticisms in respect of course content and quality. The James Committee's recommendation that the award should be transformed into an in-service degree for teachers (Department of Education and Science, 1972, paragraph 2.17) was overlooked and the colleges turned instead to the CNAA. Even so, the BEd was in decline before the end of the 1970s. The requirement for all graduate teachers to undergo a training course created opportunities for the colleges to run their own CNAA-validated PGCE courses in competition to those offered by the UDEs. In consequence, the BEd lost its market share and the perception grew that it was a second-class ITT route for less-academically qualified students who were forced to commit themselves to the profession at too early a stage in their lives (see Sutherland 1997). In the early 1990s several English HEIs abandoned the BEd in favour

of other bachelor degrees carrying qualified teacher status, but the undergraduate ITT route continued to struggle for parity with the PGCE model. The BEd reached its nadir in May 2000, when the then Secretary of State, David Blunkett, described it as ‘a sub-degree, undergraduate course’ (*Hansard*, House of Commons, 16 May 2000).

Competition from the CNAA forced the universities to review their own ITT work, particularly in relation to the organization and quality of school teaching practice arrangements. From the mid-1970s several university PGCE courses were characterized by longer periods of school-based teaching practice, a model that won favour with the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers long before government regulations insisted upon it. Throughout the UK, the 1980s and 1990s witnessed the introduction of longer PGCE courses, extended periods of teaching practice in both concurrent and consecutive courses, the specification of trainee ‘competences’, the identification of ‘partnership’ schools and, with the exception of Northern Ireland (Moran, 1998, p.456), the principle of money following student teachers into the schools.

In England, however, reform has gone much further since 1993, when the more powerful Teacher Training Agency displaced the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE). English ITT pathways have multiplied and diversified to include wholly school-based options, while HEI course accreditation, student numbers and funding are now subject to formulae derived from inspection data. Even these measures failed to dislodge the perception that qualified teacher status was an academic, rather than a professional qualification in the mind of Gillian Shephard, Secretary for State for Education and Employment between 1995 and 1997 (*Times Educational Supplement*, 21 June 1996). Accordingly, ‘standards’ replaced ‘competences’ and a national curriculum for ITT was introduced which led to courses becoming even more tightly specified in respect of content and length. By contrast, during the period of the TTA’s existence in England, Scottish ITT (which is less heavily weighted towards school practice) included the expectation that trainees will acquire ‘underpinning knowledge’ about education (Moon, 1998). Northern Ireland has followed a distinctly different path, too. The competences specified in 1993 were linked to a three-stage model of teachers’ professional development, recalling the ‘three cycles’ recommended in the James Report (DES, 1972). These comprise ITT, induction in a first professional post and a period of ‘early professional development’ (Department of Education Northern Ireland, 1993).

### **3. The rise of educational studies and the ‘disciplines’**

The first British university chairs in education were established in Scotland in 1876 at Edinburgh and St Andrews, but the professors and their UDE staffs played no part in the training process, which was the responsibility of specialist colleges. By contrast, the first Welsh and English professors of education were more centrally involved with ITT, holding appointments in the university day training colleges, the forerunners of UDEs. Aberystwyth and Bangor appointed their first professors of education in 1893 and 1894 respectively, while the first English chair was established at Newcastle in 1895.

The field of educational studies – and the content of university ITT courses - developed from the research interests of the first British professors of education. During the inter-

war years, for example, psychology was the dominant discipline of education, heavily influenced by the writings of Godfrey Thomson (Newcastle, 1920-25 and Edinburgh, 1925-51) and C.W. Valentine (Queen's University, Belfast, 1914-19 and Birmingham 1919-46) (Simon, 1983, pp.6-7). The scholarly thrust of this period influenced 'general principles of education' courses for student teachers in both the UDEs and the colleges. Surprisingly, perhaps, the Training College Association was the joint publisher (with the British Psychological Society) of the *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, founded in 1930 and edited by Valentine (Browne, 1979, p.8).

When the *BJES* made its debut, some formidable professors, representative of education's 'foundation disciplines', were in post. Among those holding chairs in 1952 were the psychologists R.A.C. Oliver (Manchester, 1938-70), E.A. Peel (Birmingham, 1950-78) and P.E. Vernon (Institute of Education, London, 1949-64), as well as Godfrey Thomson, while professors of history of education included Eric Eaglesham (Durham, 1947-66) and A.V. Judges (King's College, London, 1949-65). The leading philosopher of education of his generation was Professor Louis Arnaud Reid, (Institute of Education, London, 1947-70), while C.H. Dobinson held a chair at Reading (1951-68). Sociology of education was not yet institutionalized, a situation that might have been different had Karl Mannheim, the German refugee sociologist appointed in 1946 to the Institute of Education, University of London, lived longer. Upon his death, after just one year at the Institute, no successor was appointed although W.O. Lester Smith's chair (1949-53) was designated a sociology of education chair in 1953 (Thomas, 1990, pp.193-204).

The dominance of the foundation disciplines upon the work of UDEs in the early 1950s is clear from institutional histories. At Manchester University, for example, students on PGCE courses were assessed by three-hour examination papers in the history, philosophy and psychology of education. They were additionally required to complete coursework essays in curriculum and methods, pass a further examination in health education and successfully complete a period of teaching practice. This was a pattern that 'was to become typical of university training departments for the next twenty years' (Robertson, 1990, 90). 'Principles of education' courses, encompassing elements of history, philosophy, psychology and sociology, also became a feature of non-graduate ITT courses in the training colleges. More time became available for educational studies once college courses were extended from two to three years in 1960 and subsequently, with the introduction of BEd honours programmes from 1965, to four years. A hierarchy of further study opportunities for serving teachers, college lecturers and their own staff was provided by the UDEs. Advanced diplomas and the MEd or MA in Education degrees provided an introduction to the research methodology required of MPhil or PhD students. These developments were both causes and consequences of the broadening of education interests and of opportunities to publish in the extended range of commercial and UDE education journals. The 1960s witnessed many new professorial appointments in the UDEs, most spectacularly in sociology of education, an area that was invigorated by the scholarship of Jean Floud, Basil Bernstein and J.M.B. Douglas. In 1963 there were only two British professors of sociology of education, but the number had risen to 23 within two years (Simon, 1983, p.9).

As scholarship in the individual disciplines flourished, doubts grew about the quality of teaching in principles of education courses (Vaizey, 1962, p.61). This was a matter of particular concern to Richard Peters, who had succeeded Louis Arnaud Reid as professor of philosophy of education at the Institute of Education, University of London in 1962 (where he remained in post for the next 20 years). Peters sought to replace what he termed 'undifferentiated mush' with a more structured approach to educational studies through the 'four disciplines' of educational history, philosophy, psychology and sociology (Simon, 1983, p.8). Other 'disciplines' also staked a claim to be 'foundational', including comparative education and curriculum studies.

This approach to the academic study of education received an important boost in 1966 when the publisher Routledge and Kegan Paul decided to commission leading figures from the four disciplines to launch their Students Library of Education series, under the general editorship of J.W. Tibble, professor of education at Leicester University (1946-66). Tibble was served by an editorial board that comprised four other professors: Richard Peters, William Taylor (sociology, Bristol, 1966-73), Ben Morris (psychology, Bristol, 1956-75) and Brian Simon (history, Leicester, 1966-80). Another professor of philosophy of education, Paul Hirst (King's College, London 1965-71 and Cambridge, 1971-88) subsequently joined the board (Simon, 1983, p.9). The generally accessible style of writing in the books was ideal for those studying for examinations or preparing coursework in the UDEs and colleges, where the teaching of the disciplines became a *sine qua non*. The series sold very well. Many were reprinted and some were revised during the early 1970s. The total print run for Brian Simon's *The Evolution of the Comprehensive School, 1926-1969*, first published in 1969, exceeded 15,000 copies (Simon, 1998, p.105).

With the benefit of hindsight, some of the writing in the Students Library of Education series now looks complacent (McCulloch, 2000, p.2), but this was also a characteristic of similar work published outside the UK at this time. In the United States, for example, H.R. White asserted in a 1968 textbook that 'education is a set of problems to be solved and the disciplines are a set of tools waiting to be used' (quoted in Wright, 1999). The study of history, White claimed, acquainted teachers and researchers with 'what was', sociology revealed 'what is' while philosophy encouraged thinking about 'what should be' (Wright, 1999).

Other developments consolidated the influence of the foundation disciplines in the UK. During the late 1960s learned societies for the study of history and philosophy of education were founded and interest in educational psychology was ignited by Piagetian studies in child development. There was also a strong measure of confidence, not least from governments, that sociological enquiry could explain relationships between social class and educational opportunity and, thereby, make a real contribution to the policy-making process. (Simon, 1983, pp.9-10). Even before his promotion in 1967 to the Karl Mannheim chair in sociology of education at the London's Institute of Education, Basil Bernstein 'had to balance requests for more sociology at all levels of study with massive research programmes', including a number of government-funded projects (Dixon, 1986, p.239). In 1969-70, when there were some 169 full-time students (and many more part-

timers) enrolled in the Institute's sociology of education department, funded research was generating £20,000 a year (Dixon, 1986, p.283). At the same time, Richardson has shown that the profile of history of education was raised by the launch of three specialist academic journals. He notes, however, that increased opportunities to publish in the field precipitated tensions between university history and education staffs who contested the relative merits of pure and applied educational history (Richardson, 1999a, p.25). While educational studies continued to be a major component of BEd and PGCE programmes history of education - and the other foundation disciplines - were relatively immune from attack. But all this was to change during the 1970s.

#### **4. Crumbling foundations**

Anxieties about the relevance of some aspects of ITT courses were voiced as early as 1944 by the McNair Committee (Board of Education, 1944, paragraph 216) and subsequently by Her Majesty's Inspectorate in the 1950s (Patrick, 1986, p.254). The BEd provided a new focus for scepticism about the relevance of educational studies within ITT programmes, especially so in Scotland where the academic and professional dimensions of ITT were institutionalized. At Jordanhill College, for example, it has been suggested that:

. . . the introduction of the BEd perhaps sharpened the dichotomy between teaching practice and academic work since it led the college to recruit a number of academically able members of staff with very little experience of the schools. More seriously, on completion of the programme, students received two awards, the degree from the university and the teacher's certificate from the college, symbolizing in that arrangement that performance as a teacher was an appendage to the degree programme.

(Kirk, 1996, p.111)

The quality of student work, especially in the colleges where the possession of school-level public examination passes did not always feature prominently in selection criteria, was often undistinguished. In a 1970 article for the *Times Educational Supplement* Harry Rée, professor of education at York University and an experienced external examiner for the colleges of education, expressed his dismay at students' 'unconscious misunderstandings and misinterpretations; the huge unqualified generalizations; the repeated presentation of undigested and inert ideas; and the sloppy and uncritical use of language.' He continued:

For every student who has understood Peters or Piaget, Bernstein or Bloom there are surely 10 or even 20 who have memorized the notes they have written under these dutifully underlined names, but have failed entirely to receive their messages. For some, memorization is based on hearing about not on reading the work done by those names: thus we read of 'Gene Flood' and of 'Froballs'. Sometimes there is an accolade: 'Professor Peters is a man of great statue as an educational philosopher'.

(quoted in Hyndman, 1978, p.188)

Student quality was part of the problem, but in many instances students with pedagogical potential were baffled by courses taught by college staff who were 'not just concerned to emphasise their ability to teach university type disciplines but wanted to show their particular excellence and emphasis' (Browne, 1980, p.70). A foretaste of difficulties to come was apparent in an early 1970s interview with a student teacher:

No I've never been interested in history, not even at school . . . but I couldn't see what else to do. . . . Philosophy? I hardly know what it is. It's an awful thing to admit I know . . . but I just don't understand it. . . . I've no interest. . . . Well, I just sit there in psychology lectures and it just goes over my head. I don't know what anybody is talking about at all . . . no interest.

(quoted in Lomax, 1971, p.33)

The James Report agreed with its student witnesses that 'Many courses place too much emphasis on educational theory at the expense of adequate preparation for students' responsibilities in their first professional assignments' (DES, 1972, paragraphs 3.6, 3.7). There was a place for theoretical work, the report argued, but this should be undertaken later by practising teachers in the context of further professional development (DES, 1972, paragraph 2.7).

From this point in time a voluntary trend saw the theoretical content of the ITT curriculum diminish in favour of subject studies, professional studies and teaching practice. But the nature of this change was piecemeal, rather than wholesale. In 1978, for example, Butterworth found that education studies still typically accounted for between 25 and 40 per cent of course time for BEd degrees. Courses were now less likely to bear such titles as 'philosophy of education' or 'history of education', but the disciplines were still clearly identifiable (Butterworth, 1978, pp.5-6).

As HEI-school partnerships developed during the 1980s, such courses disappeared altogether from the PGCE course and were relegated to options, if they continued to exist at all, in the colleges. A number of leading figures from the 'disciplines' movement retired during the decade, while others, especially sociologists, migrated into such emerging areas as school effectiveness and 'policy sociology' where they did not encounter trainee teachers. Some abandoned scholarship to focus exclusively upon ITT, while rather more found themselves trying to satisfy university and national demands for research publications while engaged in mostly professional, rather than academic, work. Paul Hirst, meanwhile, shifted away from his commitment to the 'forms of knowledge' epistemology which had previously underpinned the justification for educational theory within ITT (Lawton, 1992, p.141). If these developments were noticed at all, then they were ignored by the New Right, which was now targeting the UDEs and colleges of education (O'Hear, 1998; Hillgate Group, 1989). One 'think tank' pamphlet of 1982 suggested that:

Teachers with a Cert Ed after their names have studied nonsense for three years. Those with BEd for three or four years. Those with PGCE have had a



rest for one year studying nonsense after doing a proper subject and those with MEd or AdvDipEd have returned for super nonsense.

(Social Affairs Unit pamphlet, quoted in Ball, 1990, p.50)

In 1989 an already-shut door was locked when CATE published its revised criteria for English and Welsh ITT courses. They were to focus upon 'subject studies', 'curriculum studies' and 'subject application', but there was no mention of wider educational studies. Some subject-specific elements of psychology were absorbed into the methods components of ITT courses, but educational psychology now seized the opportunity to reconfigure itself for new audiences, notably special educational needs teachers and educational psychologists. Master's courses in this area sought recognition from such professional bodies as the British Psychological Society and the discipline became substantially disengaged from the other foundation areas. With the exception, perhaps, of an annual keynote lecture or two, the history, philosophy and sociology of education vanished from PGCE courses, although they sometimes still featured as options on undergraduate courses leading to qualified teacher status. Some possibilities for studying the disciplines at higher degree level have continued, but the continuing professional development market has been volatile. Prospective Master's students, usually practicing teachers, have found it harder to obtain financial support from employers than their contemporaries pursuing more vocationally-oriented in-service programmes, with inevitable consequences for cohort numbers and the viability of modules and courses.

The recent history of educational studies in Scotland and Northern Ireland has been rather different. In the former country it has continued to feature on undergraduate and postgraduate ITT courses (McPhee and Humes, 1998, pp.166, 169). Northern Ireland, meanwhile, adopted a competence model that specifically included an 'understanding of social, psychological, developmental and cultural influences on children's attainment', an 'awareness that there are differing views about the aims of education', an 'understanding of the relationship between the education system and other aspects of society' and a 'general knowledge of the history and context of education in the UK and particularly in Northern Ireland since 1947' (Department of Education Northern Ireland, 1993).

It is a curiosity that, even after theoretical aspects had all but disappeared from English ITT, 'on the job' training was championed by many (including Lawlor, 1990) as a means of training teachers in an environment free from the 'spurious forms of academicism' (Kelly, 1993, p.132) and 'modish educational theory' (editorial, *The Times*, 11 June 1990) which HEIs were alleged to impart. Melanie Phillips condemned 'trendy' teacher trainers for shunning 'proven' methods of developing literacy (Phillips, 1996, pp.39-42), while Lord Pearson of Rannoch described HEI-based ITT staff as the 'soldiers of political correctness, the gender, race and class brigade' responsible for introducing the 'cancer' of politicized teaching into schools (*Hansard*, House of Lords, 5 July 1996).

One interesting consequence of the disappearance of educational studies from the majority of British ITT programmes, and also of the early 1990s expansion of higher education, has been the growth of non-ITT undergraduate education courses and options. In Scotland, such courses mark the continuation of a tradition, but they represent a new

departure for English universities whose vice-chancellors remained sceptical of education's place in the academy throughout most of the twentieth century. Such programmes were not always established 'for the noblest of reasons' (Tubbs and Grimes, 2001, p.4), but they have offered a lifeline for the teaching of educational studies, including the foundation disciplines, at undergraduate level. At Glasgow University, for example, current modules contributing to the university's first degree in Arts and Social Science include 'Theoretical and philosophical issues in education', 'Social and political aspects of education' and 'Twentieth-century educational thought' ([http://www.gla.ac.uk/faculties/education/newweb/ed\\_site/ugradcourses.html](http://www.gla.ac.uk/faculties/education/newweb/ed_site/ugradcourses.html)). The BA combined honours programme at York University also offers a range of historical, philosophical and sociological modules, as well as options in 'Psychological aspects of teaching in schools' and 'Social psychology of education' (<http://www.york.ac.uk/depts/educ/ugrad/single.htm>). By contrast, the teaching of Education Studies at King Alfred's College, Winchester, has a more postmodern flavour, having shifted away from a disciplinary model towards one that seeks to represent education as 'more than the sum of its parts' (Tubbs and Grimes, 2001, p.5). Such courses typically present themselves as 'a preparation for general employment . . . not tied to any particular industry, occupation or profession' (<http://www.strath.ac.uk/edstudies/ug-info/edstudies.htm>). Ironically, BA(Ed) students who find that their enjoyment of studying education in an academic way develops in them a desire to teach find it difficult to gain places on PGCE courses. Education is neither a National Curriculum subject nor is it recognized by the undergraduate course descriptors operated by the Quality Assurance Agency (Tubbs and Grimes, 2001, pp.3, 13).

## 5. Conclusions

This first issue of this 50<sup>th</sup> volume of the *BJES* has a commemorative purpose, but this may also be the time and place to frankly acknowledge that, as an academic subject, education has failed to make the kind of progress that was widely expected of it in 1952. Robert Skidelsky has attributed this to education's 'relative inability to generate uncontested propositions', 'its paucity of testable hypotheses' and its tendency to turn questions of fact into questions of interpretation (quoted in *Times Educational Supplement*, 4 February 1994). Commentators have offered various reasons for the displacement of educational studies from teacher education programmes. For example, Richard Pring, currently a co-editor of this journal, identified three reasons in 1996: the philosophical defects of educational theory, the political bias of educational theorists and the irrelevance of theoretical training to professional practice (Pring, 1996, p.12). To this list might be added the development of a consensus view in favour of prioritizing the place of teaching practice, ahead of all other elements, on ITT courses.

There is much to support Pring's conclusions. No uncontested 'general theory' emerged from studying the foundation disciplines and, while legitimate objections can be raised against recent analyses of educational research (Hillage, 1998; Tooley with Darby, 1998; Woodhead, 1998), criticisms have emerged from within the academy too (for example Mortimore, 2000, pp.14-15). As for political bias, Lawton has acknowledged that some have suggested that 'there are more important things in life than learning to read', but

adds that such theorists ‘have always been sharply criticized by other educationists and very rarely been taken seriously by practitioners’ (Lawton, 1992, p.142). The ‘new’ sociology of education of the 1970s, which ‘focused empirically and theoretically on wider questions of power, hierarchy, social control and cultural reproduction’ (Shain and Ozga, 2001, p.113) provided a major focus for discontent. But political bias was always a two-way process. In England, ITT personnel were widely accused of indoctrinating students and neglecting ‘essential knowledge’ long after the introduction of student teacher competences and predominantly school-based courses. Continued derogatory references to ‘teacher training colleges’ provide a subtle, but interesting, example of the ‘discourse of derision’ (after Ball, 1990). This term ought to have become redundant during the 1970s when these institutions were expanded and rebranded as ‘colleges of education’, yet it continued to have a currency in the context of attacks on ITT providers (see, for example, former Secretary of State Gillian Shephard’s comments in *DfEE News* 39/97, 18 February 1997).

It is an irony that, during the late 1960s and early 1970s, when the study of education as an academic subject in HEIs was being pursued with greater rigour and discipline than ever before (Aldrich and Crook, 1998, p.131), this was at the expense of professional work. This had been widely recognized long before the establishment of CATE, and a strong voluntary trend witnessed the downgrading of educational studies in favour of longer periods of teaching practice. Was the content of these courses irrelevant? Indeed so, according to Hargreaves. After qualification, he has argued, ‘teachers largely abandon these academic influences and the use of social scientific terms within their professional discourse declines: the disciplines of education are seen to consist of “theory” which is strongly separated from practice’ (Hargreaves, 1996).

But Hargreaves was setting out an English (or perhaps English and Welsh) view about ITT. As this article has shown, the competences or standards that have been introduced in different parts of the UK contain quite different messages about the usefulness of educational studies and, more generally, about the value added by HEIs to the training process. Potential students considering a four-year ITT course at Stranmillis University College, Belfast, for example, are told that:

Education Studies encourages teachers to evaluate practice and formulate their own philosophical positions on schooling and the education of children. The study of education is a fundamental part of a teacher’s professional preparation and is based . . . upon the development of a personal philosophy of practice. The purpose of Education Studies is to assist teachers to reach a high level of professional understanding. . . . [Students] have the opportunity to adopt critical stances within the study of the foundation disciplines and in the implementation of them in practice.

(<http://www.stran-ni.ac.uk/Pro/Education.html>)

How should we interpret this? First, of course, this extract provides a useful reminder about the dangers of confusing Englishness and Britishness. It also presents an opportunity, though not one that many would seem to relish (see Totterdell and Lambert,

1998, p.366), for those working in English ITT to revive the debate about the relationship between theory and practice, as Ivor Goodson has sought to do (Goodson, 1997). During the 1990s English ITT headed in the opposite direction of trends in her European Union partner states, where training typically become more closely associated with the universities (Poppleton, 1999, p.240). A sideways glance reveals, for example, that Finland, France and Germany have retained a strong belief in providing theoretical perspectives upon pedagogics and didactics, asserting also the relevance of research methodologies to student teachers (McPhee and Humes, 1998; Moon, 1998). When the Irish government drew up the terms of reference for a review of ITT in November 2000 the inquiry was asked to balance 'the theoretical and practical aspects' involved in professional preparation and to ensure that student teachers would develop 'a firm understanding of the foundation disciplines of modern educational theory and practice' (Government of Ireland Department of Education and Science, 2000).

The current state of the disciplines is variable. Educational psychology has, relatively successfully, been ploughing its own furrow for the past two decades. Richardson's comprehensive, though gloomy, health-check for history of education barely found a pulse (Richardson, 1999a, 1999b), but overlooked historians' conspicuous successes in obtaining substantial and prestigious research grants during the 1990s. His doubts about an audience for history of education (Richardson, 2000) are also partially countered by the fact that there has been no shortage of quality copy for the leading British journal in the field, the commercially-run *History of Education* which became bi-monthly from 2000. The *Journal of Philosophy of Education* has also recently expanded (to four issues a year) and the official line from the national society is bullish (Blake, 1999), but there have been few silver linings for British sociology of education. Shain and Ozga have commented that 'the intellectual health of the field has inevitably suffered from the squeezing out of sociology of education from programmes of training for teachers in England' (Shain and Ozga, 2001, p.110). While rejecting the view that sociology of education no longer has anything to offer (Hammersley, 1996; Woodhead, 1998, p.52), Geoff Whitty, who succeeded Bernstein in 1992 as Karl Mannheim professor of sociology of education at the Institute of Education, University of London – where he is currently Director - observed that his colleagues had 'become more isolated in the academy', were 'increasingly disengaged from wider social movements' and had vacated the space into which social theorists such as Anthony Giddens had moved (Whitty, 1997, p.128).

Educational studies is 'not dead yet', and still has a central place on ITT programmes in some parts of the UK. There may even be growth points for disciplinary specialists in the shape, for example, of taught doctoral studies programmes and the EdD degree. Although uncertainty reigns, the words of Chris Woodhead, a most unlikely champion of educational studies, offer some encouragement for the next 50 years:

. . . the future lies, if it lies anywhere, in the rediscovery of the importance of historical perspective; in the patient application of disciplines such as economics and philosophy to the understanding of our education system; in the suspension of political and professional prejudice; and above all, in a

return to what was once the classical terrain, issues, that is, concerning social class and educability and schools as social systems.

(Woodhead, 1998, p.52).

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