Initial Teacher Education in Wales – a Rationale for Reform

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ABSTRACT

In March 2015, I published a report, *Teaching Tomorrow's Teachers* (Furlong, 2015), outlining proposals for the reform of initial teacher education in Wales. The first part of the report examined evidence of the quality of current provision as well as the challenges for the future raised by the recent Donaldson Review of curriculum and assessment (Donaldson, 2015). The second part of the report then outlined a series of 'options for change' concluding with a set of nine specific recommendations. These recommendations included proposals for the revision of the legal 'Standards' that underpin initial teacher education, new procedures for accrediting teacher education courses, changes to the undergraduate primary route into teaching and strategies for development of pedagogical research capacity. This article revisits the key arguments of the report and examines both the rationale and the evidence underlying its key arguments and recommendations.

Key words: Furlong review, initial teacher education, QTS Standards, Wales

Introduction

In March 2015, in my role as Adviser to the Welsh Government on initial teacher education, I published a report, *Teaching Tomorrow's Teachers* (Furlong, 2015), outlining proposals for the reform of initial teacher

education in Wales. The report was in two sections. Part A looked at the reasons that reform was necessary. This involved two elements. Firstly, drawing on earlier work by Professor Tabberer (2013), and reports by Estyn (2013) and the OECD (2014), I examined evidence of the quality of current provision at national, institutional and programme level. Overall the views expressed were largely negative. As Tabberer himself concluded: 'The current quality of ITT in Wales is adequate and no better. This judgement does not solely come from the findings of Estyn … This assessment is largely shared by providers, officials and leading stakeholders' (Tabberer, 2013: 36).

In her Annual Report for 2012–13, Estyn's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales expressed similar sentiments when she stated: 'We have not been recruiting enough trainee teachers with the best qualifications and we need more consistency in the quality of what is provided for them in initial teacher education and training in order to give them the best start to their teaching career' (Estyn, 2013: 41).

In April 2014, the OECD, while acknowledging a will to reform, noted that further improvements were required. Particularly important, they argued, was the need to attract and increase the quality of new entrants to the teaching profession and raise the standard of provision on offer to make it more attractive to prospective candidates. Building 'professional capital and collective responsibility' (2014: 66) throughout the system, they argued, was one of the four priority areas that the Welsh Government urgently needed to address.

But, I argued, reform was needed for more positive reasons, too, as a result of the changes to curriculum and assessment in Welsh schools recommended by Graham Donaldson (Donaldson, 2015). When they are fully implemented, these reforms will necessitate greater control over the curriculum by teachers, demanding 'much more than the implementation of a pre-determined repertoire of methods and [requiring] high quality teachers with a sound understanding of the "why" and "how" of teaching as well as the "what"' (Donaldson, 2015: 58). The assessment proposals will require 'a deep and secure understanding of the curriculum and of the roles of both formative and summative assessment together with the skills associated with designing and interpreting the wide range of techniques that good assessment demands' (p. 69). There will also be major implications as a result of the increased focus on digital literacy and the Welsh language. As Donaldson notes, all of these proposals will have repercussions for the teaching force and the type of initial and in-service training teachers will need.

Given the weaknesses in current provision and given the challenges for the future, there was, I argued, an overwhelming case for the fundamental reform of initial teacher education in Wales, an argument that has since been fully endorsed by the Welsh Government (Lewis, 2015). Part B of the report then went on to outline a series of 'options for change', concluding with a set of nine specific recommendations. These recommendations (see Appendix) included proposals for the revision of the legal 'Standards' that underpin initial teacher education, new procedures for accrediting teacher education courses, changes to the undergraduate primary route into teaching and strategies for development of pedagogical research capacity. The purpose of this article is to revisit some of my key recommendations, examining in more detail than is possible in a formal government report, the evidence and rationale behind them.

Revision of the standards

My first recommendation (Recommendation 1) concerned the 'standards' that currently govern initial teacher education in Wales. Why do these need revising and what needs to be different about them? The Standards for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) issued and periodically updated by the Welsh Government play a crucial role in the management of teacher education in Wales. Standards for initial teacher education were originally introduced in Wales in the mid 1990s by the Westminster government prior to devolution and although they have been updated since, they have not been fundamentally reconceptualised. Born at a time of considerable hostility to the whole concept of professional teacher education (Lawlor, 1990) and particularly to the involvement of universities (Furlong et al., 2000), the current QTS Standards in Wales, as in England, remain conceptualised as a set of behaviourally based 'competences': things that newly qualified teachers 'must know and do'. For the Foundation Phase, for example, trainees must 'know and understand the *Framework for Children's Learning for 3 to 7-year-olds in Wales*'; all teachers must 'set challenging teaching and learning objectives which are relevant to all learners in their classes'; and they must 'make appropriate use of a range of monitoring and assessment strategies to evaluate learners' progress towards planned learning objectives, and use this information to improve their own planning and teaching'.

There are a number of difficulties with standards conceptualised in this manner. For example, in contrast with similar standards in use in other

parts of the UK and internationally,[1] the current Standards in Wales do not conceptualise teacher learning in a developmental way. There are no formal links to the *Practising Teacher Standards* (Welsh Government, 2011); newly qualified teachers are simply expected to be fully practically competent on point of entry to the profession. One consequence of this is that the Standards give little emphasis to the contribution of initial teacher education to teachers' long-term professional development. The Welsh Standards also place much less emphasis on 'knowing and understanding' than do those of countries such as Scotland or Northern Ireland. Because of the dominant focus on what newly qualified teachers must be able 'to do' at their end of their programmes, there is virtually no explicit recognition of the role of research or critical reflection in teachers' professional learning. As a consequence, newly qualified teachers are not conceptualised, nor is there a requirement that they are prepared to be active professionals, with their own judgements to make and with their own responsibilities as *leaders* of children's learning. It is hard to overestimate the impact of this overly narrow conception of teacher standards on the provision of initial teacher education in Wales. They form the basis on which Estyn inspections are undertaken; these Estyn reports then become the basis for accreditation and re-accreditation of programmes by HEFCW. A programme's ability to 'deliver' high quality, as defined by the Standards, is therefore exceptionally important.

Given the significance of the Standards, it is perhaps not surprising that they have become a de facto curriculum in many teacher education programmes. As Professor Tabberer commented in his report (2013), in most cases he could establish no rationale for the design of programmes beyond the requirements of the Standards themselves. Standards have also indirectly influenced who universities recruit to teach on their teacher education programmes and how they develop them. If universities are to be assessed, and only assessed, on the extent to which they are able to prepare student teachers for the practical, day-to-day realities of the classroom, then the best staff to recruit are those who themselves have only very recently left the classroom. Moreover, given that there is no reference whatsoever in the Standards to research or the need to develop student teachers as critical consumers of or participants in research, there is little requirement on the part of universities to help their staff develop as research active university lecturers. Again, in other jurisdictions, standards set out a very different vision for the contribution of universities.[2] But, as has already been noted, change is on its way. The conception of the teacher's

role implicit in the current Standards is fundamentally different from that imagined in the Donaldson Review (2015). Here teachers *are* seen as active professionals with major responsibilities for key aspects of the design as well as the implementation of curriculum and assessment. As the Donaldson Review itself argues, 'This high degree of prescription (in the Welsh education system generally) has tended to create a culture in which the creative role of the school has become diminished and the professional contribution of the workforce underdeveloped' (Donaldson, 2015: 9).

If the recommendations of the curriculum and assessment review are fully implemented by the Welsh Government, then that will change. The Donaldson Review necessitates a fundamental re-conceptualisation of all of the teaching standards in Wales – from the Standards for Qualified Teacher Status right through to the Standards for Head Teachers.

A revised accreditation process

A revision of the Standards for QTS in Wales is central to my recommendations. In my view the narrow and behaviouristic Standards originally imposed on Wales by John Major's Westminster government have played a significant part in holding back the development of teacher education in Wales; a fundamental review is long overdue. But equally important is the proposal for a more robust accreditation process (Recommendations 2, 3 and 9). In the future, it is recommended that a new Teacher Education Accreditation Board be set up within the Education Workforce Council in order to accredit both institutions and their specific programmes of initial teacher education. As in other countries, it is recommended that this accreditation process is undertaken on a periodic basis – every five or six years – by the lead professional body in the field – in this case the Education Workforce Council. Once this proposal is fully implemented, it will then put the regulation of teacher education on the same footing as initial education in a range of other professions, such as doctors, lawyers and engineers, where university programmes are accredited by the appropriate lead professional body. Behind these recommendations, as exemplified in accreditation processes in other jurisdictions (most particularly Scotland and the Republic of Ireland), lay views about the need to clarify a distinctive role of both universities and schools in teacher education as well as views about the most appropriate forms of partnership essential for high-quality initial teacher education.

A clear and distinctive role for universities

In my recent book *Education – An Anatomy of the Discipline* (Furlong, 2013) I argued that one of the major challenges for universities' departments and faculties of education is to find a voice – to say what their distinctive contribution actually is – in all aspects of education and especially initial teacher education. They need to be able to state what their purpose should be in the modern world. This world is different from the past: it is a world where our universities are increasingly only one of many authoritative 'voices' craving attention in Wales; where schools are becoming ever more sophisticated, more capable of offering their own training, and where there are multiple other providers, particularly in the private sector, keen to contribute. If our departments and faculties of education are to find a voice, then this is the world in which they have to be persuasive. So what do our universities contribute to initial teacher education? Typically they have a number of functions. Firstly, there is recruitment and selection. Then student teachers are introduced to the practical business of teaching but *away* from the complexities of the classroom; this is particularly beneficial in the early part of their programmes. So, for example, most university-based courses provide opportunities early on for students to look at the National Curriculum in detail, to work on the preparation of lesson plans and to examine different strategies for assessing pupils' work. Next, those in universities contribute to students' learning by modelling good practice. As the MOTE (Modes of Teacher Education) studies demonstrated a number of years ago (Furlong et al., 2000), teacher educators across the country consider modelling as one of their key strategies in professional preparation. Universities also contribute to students' practical professional knowledge by broadening their experience. Through their teaching, through their access to a well-stocked professional resources centre, by arranging visits and speakers, tutors extend students' practical knowledge and skills. One further contribution is of a different sort, in that it involves quality control – monitoring school-based work and making sure that all partner schools are able effectively to perform their role. All of these are essential elements to any well-founded teacher education programme and are routinely offered by universities across Wales. However, we should recognise that none of these functions, essential though they are, need to be taken on by universities alone. Universities may be well placed to take on these tasks, there may be economies of scale in their doing so, and they may have staff with appropriate expertise. However, as

is being demonstrated by the best training schools in England, if appropriately staffed and resourced, there is no reason *in principle* why schools could not take on many of aspects of initial teacher education for themselves.

So what is it that universities can and should provide that is indeed distinctive? What is their *essential* contribution? The traditional notion of a university, derived from Cardinal John Newman's (1853) ideas, is that they are an institutions dedicated to the pursuit of 'truth' – that their aim, in the words of Matthew Arnold, is to disseminate 'the best that has been thought and said' (1869). This idea is hard to maintain in a world of relativist conceptions of knowledge, and yet, as I argued in my book, for me there is still an important and essential truth in Newman's ideas. Universities may no longer be institutions where truths are disseminated; none of us have that confidence in the knowledge that we hold any more. However, universities are, I believe, still distinctive in society, in that they are places that make a commitment to the 'pursuit of truths'; they are institutions that make a commitment to a certain sort of process. And at the heart of that process is a fundamental commitment to what I have called 'the contestability of knowledge'. It is this commitment to the idea that all knowledge can and should be tested through the process of 'reasoning' that is (or at least should be) at the heart of all university teaching, scholarship and research. This is the core of their educative role; this is what makes universities distinct in our society.

So why is that commitment to the 'contestability of knowledge' an important a part of initial teacher education? There are, I believe, two ways of approaching that question. The first derives from the sort of *school* education needed in contemporary society. The modern world is one that is characterised by increasing uncertainty in relation to many things: in relation to rapid changes in technology, in relation to the rapid expansion of knowledge and in relation to our changing society with ever-increasing international mobility, diversity of values and cultural conflict. These are some of the challenges addressed by Graham Donaldson in his report on the future of curriculum and assessment in Wales (2015). More than ever, he argues, because of our changing world, we need to educate young people to think critically about knowledge and about values, to recognise differences in interpretation, to develop the skills needed to form their own considered judgements. This in turn has major implications for professional education. If those who teach are to be 'critical educators', then part of their own professional education must be based on the same approach to teaching and learning. Teachers themselves must learn to take

'the contestability of knowledge' as a core value in their own professional learning.

Winch et al. (2015) have articulated a complementary argument, as part of their contribution to the BERA- RSA inquiry into the role of research in teacher education (BERA-RSA, 2014). Winch et al. begin by discussing two popular conceptions of good teaching. The first approach emphasises the importance of practical know-how or tacit knowledge: the type of knowledge that can only be developed though practical experience in schools. Some describe this as a form of practical wisdom, which denotes the capacity to grasp the salient features of a situation and make sound judgements, without necessarily assuming that such knowledge can always be made explicit. In political and policy debates, however, this type of thinking often appears as a simplified view of teaching, a set of skills of the type set out in Wales's current QTS Standards.

A second approach, which sees the teacher as an 'executive technician', focuses on evidence of 'what works' – a conception of good teaching that reached its ascendancy in England under the New Labour government – most particularly in the literacy and numeracy strategies (Barber et al., 2010). Just as there are problems with assuming that teachers can rely on purely tacit knowledge or intuitive reasoning, there are also problems with assuming that teachers merely need to follow protocols derived from empirical evidence about 'what works' or established 'best practice' elsewhere. Unlike the craft view of teaching, this conception of the good teacher recognises the value and utility of research, but assumes that individual teachers do not generally need to be involved in interpreting those findings for themselves or deciding how best to apply them to their own setting. However, Winch et al. (2015) argue that there are serious problems in assuming that teachers do not need to reflect on what makes for good practice or to try to understand the rationale behind a suggested approach. Thus, far from following simple protocols, teachers, they suggest, need to be equipped to interrogate their own practice in light of evidence from wider research, as well as drawing on new ideas for inspiration and looking to adapt them to their own settings and contexts.

Winch et al. (2015) therefore argue that what is missing from both the simplified craft view and the narrow technical view is the capacity for critical reflection; this, they suggest, is the hallmark of the 'professional teacher'. Good teaching, they argue, develops from interrogating one's practice and making explicit the assumptions and values that underpin it. In contrast to either of the previous views, the idea of the teacher as

professional combines all three aspects of knowledge – practical, technical and theoretical – including knowledge derived through personal experience as well as research, analysis and critical reflection. So professional education, in the fullest sense of that word, does demand that student teachers have the opportunity to reflect and critique their own emerging practice and the practice they see around them. And this is not only good for their own professional development; it also develops their ability to be critical educators themselves. It is this commitment to supporting reflection and critique that is the essential contribution of universities to professional learning; it is this that goes to the very heart of what universities are essentially for in contemporary society.

Such an approach to professional education has major implications for the university sector. It means that universities must maintain their commitment to 'the contestability of knowledge' in all of their teaching. That, after all, is what justifies their contribution in the first place. That in turn means that every lecturer must be a participant in the 'scholarly culture' of the university – able to contribute to the 'conversations at the forefront of their discipline' (Furlong, 1996). And for that to happen, universities need to support and expect all of their lecturers to undertake some form of personal research and/or scholarship – the essential ingredient for maintaining that 'scholarly culture'. However, as my report makes clear, at present this is not currently the picture of teacher education in Wales. Many front-line teacher educators are on part-time, casualised contracts; only a small minority of teacher educators have doctorates or their equivalent; and the research productivity of the sector is at an extremely low ebb, with not one teacher education faculty in Wales being returned in the 2014 REF. It is for this reason that I have suggested that evidence of a flourishing scholarly culture should be one of the criteria for institutional accreditation utilised by the new Teacher Education Accreditation Board. These arguments also underlie my recommendations (Recommendation 8) for a networked strategy to support the development of pedagogical research in Wales. The rekindling of educational research within teacher education is an essential part of reform; it is not an add-on. If university departments and faculties of education do not, over the next five to ten years, re-establish flourishing scholarly cultures, cultures that fully include those involved in the day-to-day business of initial teacher education, then it is hard to see how they can continue to justify any distinctive contribution to initial teacher education.

New forms of partnership schools – the development of 'clinical practice'

I have spent considerable time elaborating the rationale for universities' contribution to teacher education because that rationale is so rarely articulated; moreover, in some parts of the world, particularly in England, that contribution is increasingly challenged. To date, Wales, as indeed the rest of the UK, has maintained its commitment to university-led teacher education. But unless universities themselves recognise and nurture their distinctive contribution to high-quality programmes, then in the future, that public commitment could waver. However, this cannot be an argument for going back to the past where universities remain distant from the world of practice. We do need forms of professional education that are more than instrumental, that, in the words of Marilyn Cochran-Smith, debate 'ends' as well as means (Cochran-Smith, 2005), but if we have learned anything from the last twenty years of 'the turn to the practical', it is that we also need high-quality practical training that is relevant both to the needs of schools and to the country as a whole. The university must be a key contributor to the professional education of the future, but not as it was in the past and not alone. That means we need universities to work closely with schools and on a far more equal footing than is often the cases at the moment in Wales.

At present student teachers spend a substantial amount of their time based in schools – and rightly so. Long-term immersion in the day-to-day lives of schools is the essential core to any initial teacher education programme. It is only by being based in schools that student teachers can begin to gain access to the craft knowledge of practising teachers and to develop their own practical professional skills. However useful preliminary university-based courses might be, they are no substitute for observing and then practising to teach *these* children on *this* curriculum in *this* school. But, as we have already noted, practical experience, though essential, is not sufficient in and of itself. Student teachers also need to be encouraged and supported to analyse and reflect on their own developing practice and that of others they see while they are based in school. And in order to do this they need to be able to draw on other forms of professional knowledge, knowledge drawn from research, from theory and from examples of good practice elsewhere. The nature of this process was articulated over thirty years ago by Alexander (1984) but it is still seldom put into practice:

> Learning to teach must be a continual process of hypothesis-testing framed by detailed analysis of the values and practical constraints fundamental teaching. The

> 'theory' for teacher education should therefore incorporate (i) speculative theory, (ii) the findings of empirical research, (iii) the craft knowledge of practising teachers, but none should be presented as having prescriptive implications for practice; instead students should be encouraged to approach their own practice with the intention of testing hypothetical principles drawn from the consideration of these different types of knowledge. (Alexander, 1984: 24)

But if this type of hypothesis testing, or what Donald McIntyre referred to as 'practical theorising' (1990), is central to learning to teach, then that implies a very different form of relationship between schools and universities from that which is currently common in Wales. At present, most partnership arrangements would appear to be what I would characterise as HEI-led (Furlong et al., 2000). It is the university that prescribes the experiences that student teachers are perceived to need at different stages of their development; it is the university that defines the 'curriculum' of school-based learning and the assignments to be undertaken; and in most cases it is the university that leads the final assessment process. Schools, many of which are a substantial distance from their lead university, are seldom expected to be equal partners in any of these processes. Given these expectations, it is not surprising that many schools in Wales do not see initial teacher education as a core activity. Rather, it is seen as an add-on, where small numbers of students are accepted for 'placements' and where those placements may, from year to year, be withdrawn, depending on changing school priorities.

If teacher education is indeed to be based on McIntyre's (1990) notion of 'practical theorising', with both teachers and university lecturers working together, drawing on different sorts of professional knowledge (practical, theoretical, empirical) to support this process, then both partners need to be equally involved, equally valued. Schools need to be full partners with universities; they need to be part of the planning of programmes overall; they need to see initial teacher education as a core part of their work; and they need to make a long-term commitment to it. But if schools do take on such a role, their contribution needs to be fully recognised by governors, by their LEA and above all by Estyn. That is why I have recommended (Recommendation 5) that Estyn's *Guidance for the Inspection of Schools* be revised to include specific recognition of the contribution of a school to initial teacher education.

However, such an approach probably implies that at least for the core parts of their programmes, universities need to work with fewer schools than at present and with partner schools taking more students than they

currently do. What I am describing here are the conditions necessary for the development of what is termed research-informed 'clinical practice' in teacher education. The principles and the international evidence supporting the value of this approach to teacher education have recently been outlined by Burn and Mutton (2015) as part of their contribution to the BERA-RSA inquiry into research and teacher education. It is these principles that I expect to inform key parts of the new accreditation process referred to in Recommendation 2. In their paper, Burn and Mutton (2015) examine a small number of highly innovative and influential programmes, based in part on a medical model of 'clinical practice', which seek to integrate practical engagement in schools with research-based knowledge in carefully planned and sequenced ways. As Burn and Mutton say,

> Appropriation of the term clinical practice is thus another claim that the school-based elements of ITE programmes cannot be construed merely as providing scope to learn from experience or by imitating experts … for beginning teachers working within an established community of practice, with access to the practical wisdom of experts, 'clinical practice' allows them to engage in a process of enquiry: seeking to interpret and make sense of the specific needs of particular students, to formulate and implement particular pedagogical actions and to evaluate the outcomes. (Burn and Mutton, 2015: 219)

In their review of the evidence about the effectiveness of clinical models, they focus on established programmes in the UK and the USA, notably the Oxford Internship scheme in England and the US Professional Development Schools and Teachers for a New Era (TNE), as well as more recent developments led by the Universities of Glasgow and Aberdeen in Scotland and in Melbourne, Australia. In addition, the authors review the evidence on system-wide approaches in the Netherlands and Finland which are also informed by the principles of clinical practice. In terms of the impact of such programmes, they demonstrate that there is evidence to suggest that clinical preparation helps to raise teacher effectiveness and has a positive impact on beginning teachers' learning and confidence. Graduates of such programmes also appear to be better prepared for their first teaching post. Crucially, however, Burn and Mutton argue that it is the *quality* of the clinical experience that matters. Simply extending the amount of time spent by trainee teachers in the classroom is not associated with improved outcomes.

Raising quality – the undergraduate route into primary teaching

The final recommendation that I want to discuss in this article (Recommendation 6) concerns the undergraduate route into teaching – the Primary BA (Hons, QTS), still colloquially referred to as the BEd. Many teacher education systems around the world continue to offer both undergraduate and postgraduate routes into teaching. Originally developed from the post-war Teacher's Certificate, between the 1970s and the 1990s the BEd degree became the main route into teaching, with the postgraduate PGCE as a minority route. Over the last thirty years, that position has reversed, and in Wales, as across the UK, the numbers entering by the undergraduate route have been reduced substantially. However, in primary education and in key secondary shortage areas, such as technology, the undergraduate route still has an important, if much reduced, part to play in teacher supply. Yet Wales differs in one key respect from practice elsewhere in the UK and Ireland, in that the Primary BA (Hons) QTS degree is only available as a three-year programme. In England there are both three- and four-year programmes; in Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland all undergraduate routes into teaching are of four years' duration.

The fact that those taking the undergraduate route into primary teaching in effect have one year less higher education than those following consecutive routes (undergraduate qualification + PGCE), is or should be a cause for concern in Wales. In three short years, undergraduate students have to be provided with personal and professional education, as well as practical training and experience in schools. This is highly challenging both for students themselves and also for those responsible for designing and teaching their programmes. It is likely to be even more challenging if the recommendations of the Donaldson Inquiry are fully accepted. Inevitably, the short timescale currently available means that undergraduate programmes are open to questions about their quality. There are also questions about the quality of their student intake. As I evidenced in my report, in Wales, the quality of intake to primary BA (Hons) QTS degrees is variable but is overall lower than many other comparable degrees; in some cases entry levels to education degrees *without* QTS are higher than those with it.

In 2011 a review of teacher education in Scotland, also conducted by Graham Donaldson (Donaldson, 2011), raised the question as to whether, even when the programmes are of four years' duration, undergraduate

education degrees are appropriately structured. Donaldson argued that Education undergraduates, taught exclusively by Education faculties, have not fully benefited from being integrated into universities. The result, he argued, is that students' personal education is not developed as fully as it might be.

> Undergraduate teacher education students should engage with staff and their peers in other faculties much more directly as part of their social and intellectual development … The values and intellectual challenges which underpin academic study should extend their scholarship and take them beyond an inclination, however understandable, to want narrow training of immediate and direct relevance to life in the classroom. (Donaldson, 2011:6)

As a result of these recommendations, the BEd degree in Scotland is currently being phased out by all universities and being replaced by education degrees where students spend the equivalent of two years studying alongside students from other disciplines in their university.[3] The aim of these developments in Scotland is to strengthen the *personal* education of prospective teachers on the grounds that in comparison with those undertaking the consecutive route into teaching (undergraduate degree + PGCE), BEd students do not have sufficient opportunities for personal academic development. If that is true in Scotland, where the undergraduate route is already four years, then it is even truer in Wales, with our much more compressed three-year programmes. What is interesting is that, in other ways, the importance of high-quality personal education is clearly recognised by both government and the public as a key strategy in raising the quality of entry to the teaching profession. Substantial financial incentives to graduates with first-class degrees are on offer on all PGCE courses; the highly regarded Teach First programme, extended to Wales in recent years, focuses exclusively on recruiting 'high-flying' new graduates from our leading universities. What these types of graduates offer the teaching profession is the strength of their personal academic education; it is the intellectual attributes they have had the opportunity to develop though the study of an academic discipline at depth.

Although no one would perhaps put it in these terms today, there are interesting parallels between these policies and Cardinal Newman's classic arguments that knowledge, studied as an end in itself, is the best form of professional education. As he explained in his '*Discourse 7: Knowledge Viewed in Relation to Professional Skill*':

> the man who has learned to think and to reason and to compare and to discriminate and to analyse, who has refined his taste and formed his judgment and

> sharpened his mental vision, will not indeed at once be a lawyer (or a teacher) … but he will be placed in that state of intellect in which he can take up any one of the sciences or callings I have referred to … with an ease, a grace, a versatility and a success, to which another is a stranger. (Newman, 1853b:6)

Of course, this is not to suggest (as Newman did) that professional education is not essential: it clearly is. But it is to recognise the importance of that personal academic education, where students have the opportunity to study subjects at depth, where they learn to think and reason and form their own judgements. These are essential qualities that are needed in underpinning all good professional education. My contention is that at present, Wales's three-year undergraduate route into teaching, which is necessarily so compressed, so narrowly professionally focused and which has to be stretched across all twelve subjects in the National Curriculum, simply does not provide these opportunities. Indeed, I would argue that at present, those in Wales on the undergraduate route into teaching are being sold short in terms of the personal educational opportunities offered them. That benefits neither them nor the children they teach.

Conclusion

Teacher education in Wales is today at a critical turning point. When my colleagues and I prepared an earlier report on teacher education in Wales (Furlong et al., 2006), the quality of the system was not a major issue. Certainly there were improvements that could be made, particularly in relation to the contribution of schools, but the system was not in crisis. The real challenge at that time was in the size and distribution of capacity. That problem has, in the intervening years, largely been resolved. But at the same time, there is evidence that the quality of the system has deteriorated. The weaknesses in provision identified by successive Estyn reports, the lack of any effective link between initial teacher education and CPD, and the collapse of research capacity are all serious causes for concern. Even more significant is that fact that, as it is currently conceptualised, initial teacher education in Wales is not appropriate for developing the teachers the country needs for its schools either today or tomorrow. If the teaching profession itself is to make its proper contribution to the raising of standards in our schools in the way that has been set out in the Donaldson Review (2015), then what is needed is a form of initial teacher education that is expansive rather than restricted, one that gives teachers themselves

the skills, knowledge and dispositions to lead the changes that are needed. At present, that form of initial teacher education is not available in Wales. Fortunately for Wales, it does still have a large number of individuals and institutions that remain highly committed to the provision of good-quality initial teacher education. There are institutions with generations of experience; there are individuals with very high-quality skills and great enthusiasm. What has been missing in recent years is a stable and high-quality system in which these institutions and individuals can flourish. What I hope now is that the sector will seize the opportunities provided by these reforms to give Wales the quality of teacher education that it needs for the future.

Appendix

Teaching Tomorrow's Teachers – Recommendations

Recommendation 1: That the Welsh Government, as a matter of priority, revises the Standards for Newly Qualified Teachers in line with the principles specified in Option 9.4.

Recommendation 2: That the Welsh Government establishes a revised accreditation process for providers of initial teacher education as described in Option 9.4.

Recommendation 3: That the Welsh Government establishes a 'Teacher Education Accreditation Board' within the Education Workforce Council for Wales.

Recommendation 4: That the role of Estyn within initial teacher education be reviewed once a revised accreditation process is fully in place.

Recommendation 5: That Estyn's 'Guidance for Inspection' for schools be revised to include specific recognition of the contribution of a school to initial teacher education.

Recommendation 6: That the Primary BA (Hons) QTS in its current form be phased out and replaced by a four-year degree with 50% of students' time spent in main subject departments.

Recommendation 7: That the Welsh Government monitors closely the impact of financial incentives on recruitment, particularly taking into account different funding levels in comparison with those available in England.

Recommendation 8: That Wiserd Education be extended to include a pedagogical dimension linked to a network of five centres of pedagogical excellence across Wales.

Recommendation 9: That the Welsh Government agrees to resolve future provision of initial teacher education through a process of competitive tendering, with the Teacher Education Accreditation Board making the final decision as to how many universities should become accredited providers.

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Notes

[1] See, for example, the equivalent Australian teacher standards issued by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. Available at: *http://www.aitsl.edu.au/australian-professional-standards-for-teachers/standards/list* (accessed 4 February 2015).

[2] See for example GTCS (2012), *The Standards for Registration: mandatory requirements for Registration with the General Teaching Council for Scotland*, Edinburgh: GTCS. Available at: *http://www.gtcs.org.uk/standards/standards.aspx* (accessed 4 February 2015); Teaching Council (Ireland) (2011), *Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers*. Available at: *http://www.teachingcouncil.ie/publications.157.html* (accessed 4 February 2015).

[3] There are interesting parallels here with the recommendations of the James Report (1972) of more than a generation ago. Lord James also recommended moving to a 2 + 2 model, and for the same reasons as those outlined by Donaldson (2011), but it was never implemented on any scale.