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**TITLE**

**Mainstreaming the European Dimension into Teacher Education in England – enabling and disabling factors**

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## **Abstract**

*This paper examines the failure of initial teacher education in England to take full account of the European dimension and the Bologna Process within their programmes. It aims to consider the extent to which Faculties of Education, in which initial teacher education programmes lie, are subject to the same global challenges that are experienced by higher education institutions. Since the 1994 Education Act, areas of professional teacher training in England have been driven by the 'Standards' agenda of the Teacher Training Agency (now the Teacher Development Agency). They are therefore subject to local and national demands, which place them outside the growing global agendas. This paper examines the question of perceived constraints of the national standards and requirements and argues that while individual academic staff in faculties of education in England, have been engaged in some European focused and international academic activity for many years, the impact on the life of education faculties, and initial teacher education itself, is minimal. When education is considered as the flagship of national identity it raises questions as to what extent it stands in the way of Europeanisation and internationalisation.*

## **Introduction**

The internationalisation of teacher education or initial teacher training, as it is known in England, is a key strategic challenge for education the coming years. It is changing the way we think about education and the impact it has on curriculum and the student experience, for what we do in our day-to-day working with potential teachers is not '*an isolated moment separate from the real world*' (Freire & Shor 1987: 25) rather a '*complex interplay of policies, structures, cultures, values and pedagogies*' (Alexander, 2001:4). With Bologna set for 2010 the tensions between ideological and market agendas across higher education, impact both positively and negatively on initial teacher training to varying degrees. Unfortunately the impetus to 'raise standards' in English schools has led to the training, rather than education of teachers, thus narrowing the scope for international engagement. The processes involved in the promotion of positive engagement with the European dimension, enhancing knowledge and understanding, and policies and practices, contrast sharply with the economic drive for European and international student recruitment, and competition for international education business.

Fielden's research (2007) into global horizons for UK universities highlighted the continued demand for quality higher education, alongside enthusiasm from other European and international institutions to promote partnerships with UK universities (2007:14). In 2007 Bill Rammell, the Minister for Higher Education, wrote to Vice Chancellors of all universities in England promoting student mobility and the Europeanisation and internationalisation of university programmes. This illustrates the British Government's inconsistency in commitment to the European and global agenda for higher education as institutions active on the world stage, while at the same time limiting initial teacher training directives to national and local demands. The process of Europeanisation and internationalisation of universities is seen as a key strategic challenge for the coming years.

Universities by their very origins and nature are international. Academic institutions are international and connected by an '*international knowledge network*' (Altbach 1998:147). However in many ways faculties of education in England are on the periphery of internationalism due to perceived national constraints placed upon them by national standards and policy. The internationalisation of an education faculty therefore is a very complex process for development due to, not only the perceived national constraints, but also the juxtaposition of values, interests, perspectives and influences inside and outside the faculty and the institution in which they lie. The complexity is compounded by the tensions between ideological and market agendas across higher education.

European and international education involves engaging with issues which cut across national boundaries and about the interconnectedness of educational, social, cultural, ecological, economic, political systems. It also involves learning to understand and appreciate '*our neighbours with different cultural backgrounds from ours; to see the world through the eyes of others; and to realise that people of the world need and want much the same things*' (Tye 1999: 17 cited in Holden and Hicks 2007:1.2). The perceived inflexibility of initial teacher training programmes which inhibit the setting up of joint programmes. We are therefore reliant on individual faculties of education curricula content and the development of mobility opportunities for tutors and students. These decisions for these are based on the knowledge, understandings, attitudes, values and beliefs of the people involved, and for many the European dimension lies outside their mainstream initial teacher training focus.

### **European and global agendas for higher education**

Globalisation as a concept is based on a capitalist notion of free-trade as an economic, business led activity. Within this, the European Union and governments are driving HE teacher education to become more international, and at the same time the academic world is becoming more international

within a global labour market. As a result the way that an institution chooses to locate itself in today's global environment, is a defining moment within the contemporary world.

Higher Education is not exempt from the impacts of globalisation and trade liberalisation (Barrow 2003:235). The commodification and marketisation of higher education services are promoted through the world trading system as other industries (Barrow 2003:229; Hayes 2002), and it is now recognised that the concept of globalisation is also related to influences on contemporary educational trends. Dale (2000, cited in Crossley and Watson 2003:51) looks positively on globalisation suggesting that we need to look beyond the nation-state as the principal unit of analysis towards the inclusion of a broader vision for the construction of purpose and value in education (Little et al 1994) such as generic education policies, as set out by UNESCO (2000) for example. Barrow (2003) discussing higher education and globalisation, raises issues of concern about these processes, but argues that globalisation is driven by policy which has liberalised trade with globalisation being '*a set of agreements and decisions about how citizens and business will interact with each other across national boundaries, and these agreements are institutionalized in international organizations*' (2003:48)

The World Trade Organisation (WTO), the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are international political organisations and are key in driving globalisation policy. Bilateral and multilateral trade agreements have established '*international legal frameworks*' (Barrow2003:235), such as the General Agreement on Tarriffs and Trade (GATT) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). These organisations, along with others, drive and monitor international trade in commodities and services including higher education (HE), which is one of the five education categories in the WTO and national industrial classification (WTO 1998; National Statistics 2003:44). Trade policy has targeted HE services as a growth area (Blair 2006), which, Barrow would argue, is developing national policy in a '*stateless context*' (2003:245).

In a paper presented to the Philosophical Society 2006 Susan Harris identified three aspects of European and internationalisation in HE in England: the rise in numbers of international students; international reputation as a benchmark of excellence; and globalisation and the emergence of 'global citizenship' (2006:1). These phenomena are explained as features of universities as 'neo-liberal' institutions, with the emergence of instrumentalist approaches to academia, and the 'economic imperative' brought about by competing in the global market. This restrictive view of HE focuses on performance and accountability, and uni-directional programmes of study dictated by the market (2006:2).

Equating internationalisation with globalisation, Harris critiques the dominance of the economic rather than the intercultural imperative (2006:2), and identifies 'ghettoisation' and 'exoticisation of difference' as worrying trends: while at the same time acknowledges that progressivism embraces notions of social justice, participation and diversity. However, Harris argues that the neo-liberal and progressive universities have led to the prioritising of product with an '*an impoverished view of education, informed by a view of life ....in which preservation and survival are central.....*' (2006:6) whereby the intrinsic value of education has diminished, and the role of HE to question and critique self and society has disappeared. This '*intrinsically relational*' perspective embodies culture as central. She puts forward a case for introducing the international dimension into all of the work of universities, rather than designing programmes merely to meet national standards and attract international students, and argues that academic literature from different traditions and perspectives would be embedded in academic study (2006:7), and cultural development of the university should be promoted by international exchange and collaboration.

## **Bologna and the European Dimension in Higher Education**

Since its launch in 1999 the Bologna Process has called for structural change including curriculum development, inter-institutional cooperation, mobility schemes and integrated programmes of study, training and research to add a European dimension to higher education across Europe (DfES 2007). The overriding purpose of the Bologna Process is to form a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2010 for economic and social benefit. This initiative is based on Article 149 of the EU Treaty (2006) which charges the European higher education community to develop quality education through cooperation and collaboration. Developing opportunities for personal growth and cooperation between individuals and institutions is seen as a key element of enhancing the quality of higher education and research, and giving substance to the European dimension to our work. To this end a range of action lines have been in place with each member state working towards 2010 with the aim of promoting the EHEA to the outside world.

There are a range of Action Lines that underpin the process and promotion of the European dimension in HE, including the adoption of joint programmes and comparable degrees, which include two cycles (undergraduate and post-graduate) and the introduction of European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and the Diploma Supplement to aid mobility. Progress in introducing the ECTS and Diploma Supplement has been slow in England. This has mainly been due to cost, but there is growing awareness that students graduating in the UK should be able to benefit from the enhanced recognition and mobility that the Diploma Supplement brings (DfES 2007). Student mobility is also a key feature of Bologna encouraging students to engage in study in a European setting other than their own. Unfortunately the recent study by the Council for Industry and Higher Education (Fielden et al 2007) shows that the number of UK students travelling on Erasmus study exchange programmes has fallen by over 30% in the last 10 years, in contrast to other European countries where numbers are rising. Currently there is no data directly linked specifically to initial teacher education students. While the influence of Bologna in initial teacher training is seen as important and has taken

roots in many parts of Europe they are not necessarily being monitored systematically or coordinated to any significant extent (CHEPS 2006:4.5).

### **Initial Teacher Training in England – constraints and inconsistencies**

Initial Teacher Training in England is increasingly subject to conflicting arenas. The study of education and the training of teachers alongside the rhetoric of accountability, performance and measurement has resulted in a restrictive and instrumental approach to what should be the most important and enlightened area of higher education.

In 1994 the Conservative government created the Teacher Training Agency. Its responsibilities and duties were to include; the diversification of routes into teaching, the recruitment of student teachers, advice about student teacher selection criteria, the allocation of funding to universities engaged in teacher education, policy development and a concern for quality matters. At the time many concerns were put forward, *'I estimate that this Bill and accompanying measures are of major importance. It is a crucial part of centralised control over all aspects of education and. In particular, to destabilise and threaten the role of the universities within that system...I see it also as another attempt to destroy what the government are pleased to call the 'education establishment'; that is , those who know about education'* (Baroness David 1993:919 cited in Mahony and Hextall 2000). Illustrating the degree to which the state, the universities, or the profession dominate the governance of initial teacher preparation is directly related to different notions of teachers' work and the nature of the teaching profession. ((Young et al 2007:4).

The 1994 Education Act took responsibility for the funding of initial teacher training away from the Higher education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) which funds teaching and research in universities, and gave it to the Teacher Training Agency (TTA), now Teacher Development Agency

for Schools (TDA), thus establishing the link between teacher training and schools rather than university education. Prior to this the content and structure of initial teacher education and training courses in England were regarded as principally a matter for universities and colleges themselves, and subject to normal university academic recruitment and requirements. Through this legislation the government sought to change the arrangements for the education and training of teachers, setting out the competences that had to be met by students before qualifying to teach (DES, 1984, 1989; DfE, 1992, 1993; DfEE, 1997a). This had obvious implications for the professional autonomy and academic freedom of those in higher education responsible for what was initial teacher education. (Whitty2005). The process for recruitment is now dependent on demand and supply and to *'secure an effective school workforce that improves children's life chances. We do this through helping to secure the supply of the school workforce, supporting in-service school workforce training and development and supporting wider school workforce modernisation'* (TDA 2007).

In their recent paper on teacher education Young, Hall, and Clark (2007) outlined current government controlled procedures for recruitment and allocation of places for teacher training, lying outside the normal HE undergraduate recruitment procedures. Each year all accredited providers of initial teacher training are invited by the TDA to bid for student allocation for the forthcoming year. After the Department for Children and Schools (DfCSF formerly the DfES) has set intake targets based upon an assessment of the national demand for new teachers, the TDA allocates places among the higher education applications received (Young et al 2007:3.1). As a result of the 1994 Education Act, centrally devised 'standards' and materials have been developed and imposed by government (Wilkin, 1996) and university-based initial teacher training programmes have become subject *'to a range of accountability mechanisms which operate within a university tradition of academic freedom and institutional autonomy'* (Young et al 2007:2.1.2.3). The instrumentalism of these mechanisms can be seen as constraints to both the Europeanisation and internationalisation, with the TDA 'Standards'

being a *prescriptive practise designed to properly prepare new teachers to effectively implement a provincial or national agenda for schooling—where government control and supervision would logically prevail.*' (Young et al 2007:2.1.2.3). In a sense we have lost the commitment to the intrinsic value of education and are locked into an increasingly instrumental view (Corson 2000:111).

In England we have a wide range of flexible routes into teaching but little flexibility within programmes as meeting 'the Standards' dominates, with over thirty routes into teaching, the range of structures is complex, for example undergraduate ITT degree programmes vary between two and three years following both the TDA Standards for ITT alongside the QAA academic degree level qualifications; post graduate ITT programmes vary in length from school-based, some with only a few days academic input, to one year programmes all working towards the TDA Standards. It is understandable therefore why establishing the European dimension and mobility is difficult with the domination of the 'Standards' which have no reference beyond classroom competencies, some of which are nation specific and some would argue limiting to student opportunity to study overseas.

The lack of consistency across education policy in England adds to the existing complex system. The TDA Standards are arranged in three inter-related sections, professional attributes, professional knowledge understanding and professional skills. There are thirty three standards in all, covering classroom practice, none of which refer to European or international dimensions/standards. Ironically the international dimension is encouraged explicitly in government documentation for schools, specifically in the 2004 International Strategy for Schools 'Putting the World into World Class Education'. Once again the emphasis is on the economic but which does encourage '*a change of mindset: thinking globally in all that we do nationally and locally*' (2004:6). The introduction Charles Clarke the then Education Minister identifies the important link between education and the international dimension: '*One cannot truly educate young people in this country without the international dimension being a very significant and real part of their learning experience. .... We can*

*and should be collaborating for mutual benefit in the hope that not only UK citizens but all people across the world will have the educational opportunities,' (DfES 2004).* European objectives and the role of universities are specifically referred to in the Strategy goals including

- To instil a strong global dimension into the learning experience of all children and young people.
- To develop our capacity to engage strategically with a wide range of partners across the world.
- To work with our European partners to realise the Lisbon goal that the EU should become “the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world”.
- To promote the role of our universities as international hubs for learning and research.

In 2005 the government published *Developing a Global Dimension in the School Curriculum* ([DfES, 2005](#)). It's purpose is to '*show how a global dimension can be incorporated into both the curriculum and the wider life of the school. This means that the content of what is taught is informed by international and global matters, so preparing pupils to live their lives in a global society.* The document promotes interdependence and social justice, based on knowledge and understanding and the development of positive attitudes.

Note that none of the goals in either of these documents are evident in the past or current TDA Standards, and as such does not seem to have had a consistent impact on ITT curricula. This could be due to the short time available on some ITT courses which focus on the acquisition of national curriculum subject knowledge and on the basics of planning, assessment and classroom management. Since 1998 particular emphasis has been placed on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Programmes for Secondary trainees focus on learning to teach their national curriculum subject and are unlikely to cover global issues unless they are geography or citizenship students;

primary students are similarly unlikely to find such a European or international focus on their short and tightly defined courses. (Holden and Hicks 2007:2).

However England is not alone in this, Holden and Hicks (2007) also highlight a lack of European or international perspectives within initial teacher training programmes across the world. This is due in part to the structure of teacher training in all European countries being strongly bound and shaped by national and historical contexts. With the state as the main employer of teacher training graduates there is a strong policy influence on the structure and content of teacher training, and the related local and national requirements generally tend to lower flexibility. The Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS 2006) identified the main constraints across Europe as being due to different degree structures and competencies:

- different types of programmes – undergraduate and postgraduate
- different levels of the educational structure: pre school, primary school, secondary education, with all kinds of national variations
- programmes are offered by different types of institutions - universities, non university institutions and specialised teacher training colleges
- some teacher training programmes focus on one or two school subjects (e.g. history, mathematic) with related disciplinary programmes
- the prominence of the discipline of education (pedagogy) is realised in very different ways, largely dependent on structural features of the national educational system. (CHEPS 2006:39)

Tight state regulation in initial teacher training, where teacher qualification requirements are dependent on national contexts will continue to be a *'weak point'* (CHEPS 2006: 4.5.5) in the two cycle structure envisaged by Bologna. More flexibility in teacher education policy is needed to take the agenda forward.

### Looking beyond the constraints

For the education of teachers of the future it is important that we engage them in looking beyond the competencies of the 'Standards' and engage in defining and redefining their own concepts of education by '*subjecting our own way of viewing the world to careful scrutiny*' (Booth 2003:261). European and international dimensions encourages us to use the perspective of others to challenge what is taken for granted in ones' own educational policy and practice, we are offered insights into another way of seeing education, and our work within it. This interplay is fundamental to our attempts at internationalising our work and professional experiences. As such it is important to openly acknowledge and raise awareness of the 'global nature' (Scurati 1995) of education. For moral, academic and quality reasons, the Europeanisation and internationalisation of education faculties is key to moving away from the parochial and transforming education culture for the future.

The dominance of the Teacher Development Agency, rather than the normal higher education authorities has led to the continued focus on controlling competencies and training rather than promoting academic quality, is problematic when developing processes that encourage and enable European and international education. This issue outlined clearly in the *Magna Carta Universitatum* (1988:1), universities from across Europe agreed that they had an important role in a '*changing and an increasingly international society*', looking to the social, cultural and economic future. The *Magna Carta* sets out key principles for universities across Europe. The principles identify the importance of university teaching and research being morally and intellectually independent of political authority alongside maintaining the European humanist tradition of collaboration and cooperation (1988:2).

Nothing within the TDA Standards as such inhibits the development of the Europeanisation/internationalisation of initial teacher training programmes or mobility. Rather it is the perceptions, knowledge and attitudes of those with teacher training departments that determine the content and approach to ITT programmes, and that curriculum design is the embodiment of

institutional/faculty values and beliefs Mohrman (1994:123). We need therefore to be cognisant of our responsibilities as teacher educators, knowing that some of the students and teacher that we are working with today will be still be involved in education in 2050, in a world very different from the one we know today. The 'Futures Agenda' suggests that it is difficult, if not impossible, to predict what life/education will be like in 2050. What indications there are signal an increasingly global concept of what education is for and what education can do. For example projections indicate that continued development in electronic communications could enhance the growth of transnational education, with students able to access and study on programmes from anywhere in the world. We need to ensure that teachers and teacher educators are able to adapt to meet the demands of the future. It is therefore important to develop our own and students' international and intercultural competence and understanding, as European and global citizens.

For many years faculties of education have been involved in European and international collaboration at various levels: academic staff have attended conferences, meeting new colleagues and developing collegial and research networks. Small groups of students have had European and international experiences of various kinds such as Modern Foreign Language student; visits to schools in developing countries etc. The experiences are undoubtedly of value to those concerned:

*Tutor comments – 'Raising my expectations...until I'd gone with students into a different setting I had underestimated their ability to reflect on a much higher level'*

*Students comments - 'It improves my teaching and understanding. Emotionally I have benefited. I now have true empathy with children who feel unsure and sometimes alone'*

*'It is learning another way of life'*

*'This is something you cannot learn from reading a book'*

However the impact on the life of faculties of education and ITT is minimal in terms of embedding experiences and outcomes across and teacher education programmes. To overcome this some faculties of education have taken a strategic decision to embed the European and international dimensions across their programmes. The need for flexibility and creativity when validating and managing programmes has been recognised. The encouragement of ITT staff to experience Erasmus tutor exchange as part of professional development has encouraged a wider more reflective approach to planning ITT programmes. The impact of including international electives has been identified as a key element for increasing mobility of students across many English universities. Opportunities to study European and international education modules are growing, particularly with the emergence of Education Studies degrees. What has happened over time is that staff and students' expectations have been raised and their horizons widened. They have come to realise that education does not necessarily mean the same thing in all societies, and that this diversity of policy and practice is a strength. In universities where this European and international development is embedded, staff and students now ask for and plan for opportunities that will be open for them, but more importantly they are increasingly considering educational issues from European and international perspectives.

## **Conclusion**

The internationalisation of teacher education is a key strategic challenge for the coming years. It is challenging and changing the way we think about education and the impact it has on curriculum and the student experience. However strongly the Bologna Process promotes development in HE it will not have an impact on ITT until it is explicit within education programmes. We should not wait until different government departments have consistency across their demands.

It is the responsibility of ITT providers, as academics in teacher education, to harness out understanding and enthusiasm for education that is outward looking, democratic and cognisant of diversity. We need to look beyond training and return to teacher education ensuring that we are

providing the very best experience we can for our students in terms of ideology, curriculum, social and cultural understandings. The Europeanisation and internationalisation of our programmes and approaches are key to enhancing student learning and producing teachers with both the global competency and cultural intelligence required for success and well-being in a diverse democracy and an increasingly interconnected world.

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