

Teachers in England: their education, training and profession

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INTRODUCTION

This paper is divided into four sections. The introduction provides definitions of such terms as 'England' and 'education and training', and some background statistics. The second examines developments in teacher education and training; the third the particular issue of a profession. Finally some conclusions are drawn.

This paper is concerned mainly with England, which is but one part, albeit the largest, of the state called the United Kingdom. Both teachers, and education more broadly, have occupied different roles in the cultures of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Though it is highly dangerous to generalise, it may be argued that in these smaller countries education has been more important in preserving national identities, and that in consequence education (and teachers) have assumed a more important role.

English education, on the other hand, has been characterized by its social divisiveness. The English state was essentially formed in the sixteenth century, when its educational system reflected local priorities and local foundations. Modern English education is a product of the imperial state formed in the nineteenth century when boys' independent schools produced a race of leaders who guided the destinies of the largest empire the world had ever seen, while other schools produced a population of followers.

Training, like indoctrination, may be defined as conveying information and values to another person so that they are received and learned without question or amendment. Education is generally considered to be a larger process, one which involves the use of a wider range of faculties, and allows the recipient to engage in the process, to modify the

agenda, and to reach different conclusions from the educator. Common usages help to explain the differences of emphasis. For example it is commonly held that people can be self educated, but not that they can be self trained. This distinction is important both in respect of what goes on in schools, and in relation to the education or training of teachers.

There are two traditional routes into teaching in England. The first, involving a four year degree in education (B.Ed), includes both education and training. The second, and now the majority route, involves students taking a degree course in a subject other than education, to be followed by a one-year postgraduate course in education (PGCE), which is now largely devoted to training.

The application of the terms education and training to institutions for the initial preparation of teachers is itself of interest. In the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century such institutions were called training colleges. Even when from the 1890s the preparation of teachers began in universities, these institutions were called day training colleges. In the second half of the twentieth century the training colleges were renamed colleges of education, while the day training colleges had become university departments of education. In the 1990s that approach has been firmly reversed. Central government no longer talks about the education of teachers but rather of the training of teachers. The new quango established in 1994 to oversee teachers is called the Teacher Training Agency, not the Teacher Education Agency. The latest initiative for preparing teachers in schools is called School-centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT), rather than School-centred Initial Teacher Education. Education as an area of knowledge has lost status and been widely denigrated. One of the consequences of this is that the degree of Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) has become unpopular. Students and colleges now prefer the award of a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science with Education attached. (BA[Ed] or BSc[Ed])

At the time of the last major school census in January 1994 there were some 7.9 million pupils in 26,400 schools in England. Of these, 92 per cent attended maintained schools, 7 per cent independent schools, and 1 per cent special schools. The maintained sector employed 390,400 full-time equivalent teachers, of whom 180,600 were in primary, and 178,900 in secondary schools. Independent schools employed 52,600 full-time equivalent teachers, with a further 15,900 in special schools. The overall pupil-teacher ratio in maintained schools was 18.1 (22.7 in primary and 16.4 in secondary) and in special schools 6.1.

Comparable figures for January 1993 were 17.8 and 6.0. This raising of pupil-teacher ratios in maintained schools contrasted with the situation in independent schools where the figure of 10.3 for January 1994 represented a slight decrease from the 10.4 of the previous year.

Average class sizes as taught by one teacher in maintained schools also rose during the year. In January 1994 the average size of a class stood at 26.9 for primary and 21.4 for secondary. The percentage of classes with more than 30 pupils is steadily rising. This is justified by the government by reference to other countries which, it claims adopt whole class teaching methods and are more successful, and by reference to studies which show no correlation between class size and pupil performance.

The statutory age range for pupils in England is from five to 16 years. In January 1994 some 727,900 were below statutory age - 56 per cent of three and four year olds had some schooling - while 352,600 were above statutory school age. This latter figure does not include those pupils who attended sixth form colleges, colleges which cater solely for the 16-19 age range. The total number of full-time pupils and students aged 16-18 is 924,000, an all-time record.

Until recently, one of the most distinguishing features of education in England was the very low percentage of its pupils who continued in full-time education past the statutory leaving age. In January 1994 nearly 73 per cent of 16 year olds were in full-time education, as opposed to less than 50 per cent in 1984. (DFE *News*, 192/94, 204/94) Over the same period participation in higher education more than doubled to some 30 per cent and, in so doing, ensured that Britain had one of the highest, rather than of the lowest, participation rates in Europe.

TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Three basic models of teacher preparation may be identified in England, both in a conceptual and an historical sense. These may be called: apprenticeship, theory before practice, and reflective practitioner.

Apprenticeship implies training rather than education. The apprentice learns a skill or craft

from the master or mistress. Inasmuch as teaching is a craft or skill, it is perhaps best learned by doing. Just like driving a car or playing the piano, there is no substitute for actual practice. In England from 1846 there was a government financed pupil-teacher apprenticeship system. Young people aged between 13 and 18 served a five year apprenticeship. During the day they taught in schools; in the evening they received lessons themselves from the school teacher. Upon completing their apprenticeships, some pupil teachers proceeded to training colleges for further study, others entered directly into teaching, others again left teaching altogether. In 1900 pupil teachers constituted nearly one quarter of the teaching force in elementary schools and the apprenticeship system lasted well into the twentieth century. It continued as an element in college courses in the shape of teaching practice.

A second concept of teacher preparation may be described as theory before practice. The logic of this approach is that one should study a subject before practising it.

Historically in England this approach was associated with the development from the 1890s of university departments of education. In these departments education became a matter for academic study. At first, general theory, history and psychology formed the core. By the 1960s other disciplines of education - comparative, philosophy and sociology - had established separate identities.

The academic study of education might be counted as a worthwhile activity in itself, not least for intending teachers. Where such teachers were intended for secondary grammar or independent schools, with their traditional teaching methods, theory before practice was deemed to be appropriate. When, however, the three year certificate (later four year Bachelor of Education degree course) was supplanted as the major route into teaching by the one year postgraduate course, now to be taken by many of those intending to teach in primary or secondary comprehensive schools, the concept of theory before practice came into question. Courses on the history and sociology of education were not seen to be of particular relevance to the range of activities that the new teacher would be required to carry out in the classroom.

In the 1980s growing criticisms of initial teacher education led to a third concept, that of the reflective practitioner, embodied in a book of that name written in 1983 by Donald

Schön. According to this approach, students in initial training should spend much of their time practising teaching in schools, but should also be provided with substantial opportunities to reflect upon that practice.

In 1984 the government appointed a Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE) which laid down criteria that had to be met before courses of teacher training would be approved. The main thrust of CATE criteria and of subsequent government pronouncements has been to increase the practitioner as opposed to the reflective element of teacher training, and to diminish the power of institutions of higher education.

The CATE criteria, themselves, went some way towards establishing a national syllabus for teacher training, and were coupled with a requirement to establish local committees for teacher education. These committees included representatives from local education authorities, practising school teachers and others from outside the education service. Furthermore, all tutors concerned with pedagogy had to demonstrate recent success as teachers of the age range to which their training courses were directed, and were required to maintain regular and frequent experience of classroom teaching. School teachers were to be fully involved in the selection of students for training, and in the assessment of their competence. Indeed, teacher training became a partnership in which a substantial proportion of the money given for training was to go to the schools, rather than to the institutions of higher education. In current one-year courses of teacher preparation, students are required to spend a minimum of 24 of the 36 weeks in schools.

One of the major goals for education in the second half of the twentieth century in England has been that of an all-graduate, all-trained teaching profession. By 1985 this had been achieved, but government interventions in the field of teacher education since 1990 have undermined this principle. The situation has been compounded by the introduction under the Education Reform Act of 1988 of the National Curriculum. One of the great arguments for the need for autonomous, educated persons as teachers (and hence for trained graduates) was the freedom (whether real or supposed) enjoyed by teachers in England in respect of such areas as syllabus construction, teaching methods and assessment. The advent of a national curriculum, with its closely prescribed syllabuses and associated national testing, means that there are fewer choices to be made, and less time in which to make them.

Four government initiatives in teacher training in the 1990s are examined here: articulated teachers, licensed teachers, nursery and infant, and school-centred initial training.

The articulated teacher scheme was announced in 1989 and the first cohort of 410 students (3.5 per cent of the 11,956 recruited to PGCE courses in that year) began in September 1990. The scheme was intended, in part, as a forerunner of the move to make initial training even more school-based. Training courses were organised by consortia - Local Education Authorities (LEAs) together with one or more higher education institutions providing initial teacher training. Students underwent a two-year postgraduate initial training, but spent 80 per cent of their time in schools. They received a bursary, rather than a means-tested grant. This made the scheme more attractive to older students. Places were available in both primary and secondary schools, but in secondary schools there was particular concentration upon the teaching of shortage subjects, for example, mathematics.

An evaluation of the first two years of the scheme (OFSTED, 1993a) showed that the levels of competence displayed by articulated teachers after two years of training and a much longer period of time spent teaching in schools, were similar to those of students who had taken a one-year PGCE course. Although some 10 per cent at the top of the range were performing very well, better than the best conventional PGCE students, some 25 per cent failed to achieve a satisfactory level of teaching competence.

Some of the weaknesses in the scheme - for example variability in the quality of school and teacher support for students - might be common to any method of training. Two particular weaknesses of the articulated scheme, however, when compared with the conventional PGCE route, were the poor quality of the arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the training, and the lack of opportunity and resources for students to develop their knowledge of the subjects they were to teach. Major conclusions drawn from the Office of Standards in Education (OFSTED) evaluation of the articulated teachers scheme were: school-based training must depend on sound partnerships between schools and higher education institutions; articulated teachers must have time to acquire essential subject and professional knowledge; the roles of those involved in training need to be both clearly defined and appropriate to their expertise; students need experience in at least two schools and to see examples of good practice; all staff in schools should be prepared for contributing to the training process, it should not be left simply to designated mentors.

By 1994 it was decided that no further recruitment under the articulated teacher scheme would be made. It would appear that costs lay at the heart of this government decision - two years of bursary being more expensive than one year of grant. A second factor was that the scheme was being used by some students who had been unable to secure places on the normal PGCE courses, and was thus being seen as a second-class route.

The first licences under the licensed teacher scheme were granted in spring 1990, but numbers rapidly increased with the beginning of the school year in September 1990. Some 650 licences were issued in the first year, with a further 1000 in the second, so that by July 1992 500 teachers had achieved qualified teacher status through this route. (OFSTED, 1993b).

The licensed teacher scheme allowed non-graduates back into English schools. The basic qualification was a minimum age of 26 (in September 1991 reduced to 24), two years of successfully completed higher education, and the basic standards in mathematics and English required of all entrants to teaching. The licence to teach was granted by the Department for Education at the request of employers - LEAs, or in the case of grant-maintained schools, school governors. The period of the licence is usually two years. Unlike the articulated teachers, licensed teachers are appointed to specific posts in the school, count against school staffing ratios, and may be paid either as qualified or unqualified teachers.

Originally the licensed teacher scheme was also seen as a means of allowing overseas teachers to obtain qualified teacher status, and at the start of the scheme more than half of the licensed teachers were already qualified as teachers overseas. Many of the others also had some kind of teaching or instructional experience. From 1991 a separate category of Overseas Trained Teacher was established.

One of the main purposes of the licensed teacher scheme was to enable schools, particularly in the London area, that were finding difficulty in recruiting teachers of such subjects as craft, design and technology, mathematics, science and modern languages, to fill such vacancies. In many cases the only alternative to recruiting a licensed teacher was to leave the post vacant. Since 1992 the teacher shortage has eased and LEAs no longer have to

hunt for overseas teachers in their own countries. This easing was prompted by general problems of unemployment. There is a vast residue of trained teachers in England who, for a variety of reasons, do not actually teach in schools. In June 1992 it was calculated that there were 442,100 active, and 350,000 inactive school teachers in England and Wales! Recent projections, however, suggest that schools will soon be facing a shortage of teachers once more.

Overall, the licensed teacher scheme has not been seen as a good means of recruitment to the profession. Some of the early licensed teachers soon proved to be unsuitable to teaching, and schools that took licensed teachers often did so because there was no one else, rather than because they were interested in teacher training. Some LEAs, indeed, provided no training course whatsoever after appointment, simply requiring licensed teachers to join the induction course already in existence for probationary teachers. Many training arrangements and means of communication were poor. Indeed, since the licensed teachers were often appointed by LEAs and assigned by them to specific schools, in some instances schools did not realise that teachers were licensed rather than fully-trained graduates. Although most licensed teachers had mentors many LEAs failed to provide the mentors with proper training. Indeed the OFSTED report on licensed teachers advised that 'Generally, the training of mentors got off to a poor start in almost all the LEAs and it was the weakest link in most schemes'. (OFSTED, 1993b, 15) One interesting finding was that graduate licensed teachers performed better than non-graduates, with the greatest difference seen at secondary level. There was little difference between male and female performance. The largest proportion of unsatisfactory teachers was in the 31-40 age group.

Since 1995 the Licensed Teacher Scheme and the Overseas Trained Teacher Scheme have been administered by the Teacher Training Agency. Currently some 170 school governing bodies have recommended the granting of a licence (or authorization, in the case of the overseas trained teacher) to teach. A training plan for a licensed teacher is normally two years, but for an overseas licensed teacher is more typically just one term. At the end of these periods the school has to decide whether to nominate the licensed or overseas teacher for Qualified Teacher Status.

A third government proposal, for training teachers in nursery and infant schools, and one that was roundly rejected by teachers, parents and public alike, was announced in June

1993. A draft circular expressed the government's belief that there should be a variety of high quality routes to QTS [Qualified Teacher Status], reflecting the different backgrounds and qualifications of candidates and responding to the increasingly diverse needs of schools.

One of the new routes announced was of a one year course of teacher preparation for those who had only completed secondary schooling themselves. It was specifically targeted at parents and other mature students with considerable experience of working with young children...who have the necessary academic qualifications for entry to higher education but who wish to train to teach nursery and infant pupils only. (DFE *News*, 188/93)

This proposal, damningly dubbed a 'Mums' Army' by its many opponents, was never put into operation.

The fourth initiative, school-centred initial training was introduced in 1993. Schools took full control of training and received government grants for so doing, though they might also purchase some services from higher education institutions if they wished. From 1994 schools were allowed to train teachers without any reference whatsoever to institutions of higher education, and without the need for any university validated qualification.

School-based teacher training, which appears to be a return to full-blown apprenticeship, is now the main thrust of government policy. In September 1994 the Schools Minister, Robin Squire, in launching the third round of bids for new initial teacher training course in schools stated that:

Under the school-centred initial teacher training scheme, schools will have real power to decide how new members of the teaching profession should be trained. It will help ensure that the next generation of teachers are even better prepared to meet the demands of the classroom.

We are inviting groups of schools - primary or secondary, maintained or independent - to offer postgraduate initial teacher training courses starting in September 1995. This third round will enable yet more schools to take part in this expanding opportunity.

I am very impressed with the first group of schools which started courses in September 1993. They have successfully completed their first year and produced many well-motivated, fully qualified teachers. The second wave is due to start training this month and this will double the number of student places to nearly 450.

Bids will be assessed and approved by the new Teacher Training Agency as part of its remit for initial teacher training as a whole. The Agency is charged with funding high quality and cost-effective training and will support the best courses offered by schools and higher education.

We have been impressed by the interest shown in this initiative and by the standard of bids submitted in previous rounds. I am confident that this will be continued as yet more schools look to take up this opportunity. (*DFE News*, 215/94)

While the need for substantial school practice during training has long been acknowledged by teacher associations, schools, and students and institutions of higher education alike, there has been a general feeling that qualified teacher status should depend upon a teaching qualification awarded by an institution of higher education. Nevertheless, in spite of this belief, and the concern of members of the House of Lords who inserted a clause to this effect in the bill, the Education Act of 1994 now permits schools to train teachers without any reference to institutions of higher education whatsoever, and without the need for any university validated teacher qualification. Whereas, from the 1890s, institutions of higher education came to play an increasingly important role in the education and training of teachers, the new scheme passes control to the schools, and gives them 'the opportunity to design courses, recruit students and train them' (*DFE News*, 215/94) without any reference to outside bodies, provided the government's general criteria are met. In 1993-4 some 200 teachers were trained in this way, a further 450 were in training in 1994-5. The current figure is some 600.

Courses are monitored by the Office of Standards in Education (OFSTED) which in 1995 issued a report on secondary School-centred Initial Teacher Training.

This showed that standards of lessons seen were at least satisfactory in 74 per cent of the

lessons and good or very good in 34 per cent. This compared with 84 per cent and 42 per cent for secondary PGCE courses. Almost 86 per cent of SCITT students showed a level of subject knowledge that was at least satisfactory, compared with 91 per cent of students on PGCE courses. Standards of lesson planning and adoption of appropriate teaching strategies were satisfactory in 80 per cent of cases, while for those on PGCE courses it was 87 per cent. Access to good library collections on the SCITT schemes was poor.

Although it would be unwise to make too much of these comparisons, given that SCITT was in its early stages, it was clear from the OFSTED report that by most measures PGCE training was superior to that carried out in schools. (OFSTED, 1995)

Four motives may be adduced for these central initiatives, initiatives which may be interpreted as a shift from teacher education to teacher training. The first is to provide a variety of different routes into teaching, a policy which is entirely consistent with the competitive philosophy of the Conservative government, and its educational theme of 'Choice and Diversity'. If any new method can be demonstrated to produce better teachers than the existing routes, then a genuine reform will have been achieved. If a new method is shown to be ineffective or unpopular then, in common with some other recent government initiatives such as city technology colleges, it will remain in a tiny minority, and perhaps be abandoned altogether. Competition between teacher training institutions, and particularly between different types of training is seen as healthy and a means of raising standards.

A second motive is to reduce costs. The new Teacher Training Agency is charged with funding 'high quality and cost-effective training' (DFE *News*, 215/94). One of the major attractions of the 'Mums' Army' scheme from the government viewpoint, was that teachers of young children could be trained in one year, rather than educated and trained in four. The main reason for the demise of the articulated teachers scheme was that it cost more than the normal PGCE route. To train teachers entirely in schools is to remove the necessity for expensive university plant and substantial libraries, redolent with books on the sociology of knowledge. It may also make school-trained students available (much as the pupil teachers were in the nineteenth century and junior doctors and nurses are today) as substitute teachers. One of the great advantages of the nineteenth-century pupil teachers was that they cost considerably less to employ than 'proper' teachers.

A third explanation is that there is a long standing belief, or possibly prejudice, amongst the English that theory and practice are separate and opposed rather than complementary, and that practice is superior to theory.

Finally, there has been a desire to reduce the influence of higher education in the training of teachers, particularly the influence of certain university departments. There is a belief (or prejudice) in some quarters, that such institutions are peopled by 'ageing Marxists' who are totally opposed to Conservative reforms, both in education and more broadly, and who encourage among those entering the teaching profession a culture of enervation rather than action, and of trendy progressivism rather than attention to basics.

Although there may be disagreements about the purposes and results of such reforms, two points are clear.

The first is that teacher training and education is now firmly under central control, such control being exercised by yet another government quango, the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) established under the 1994 Act. The Agency accredits and funds schools and higher education institutions which provide initial teacher training courses. It also controls funds for higher degrees and research work in education.

The second is that further initiatives are being undertaken to bring teacher training under even tighter control. One of these is the introduction of a national curriculum for teacher training - a logical development, perhaps, of the national curriculum for schools. A second is the establishment of clearly defined national standards of knowledge, understanding, skills and abilities required by newly qualified teachers. A third is the introduction of teacher profiles. From 1997 all newly qualified teachers will receive detailed career entry profiles outlining their competencies and strengths. A fourth is the introduction of a national professional qualification for headteachers.

TEACHING PROFESSION

The relationship between government control of teacher training, and of teachers more generally, and of teacher professionalism is a complex one. In England the concept of a profession and of professional behaviour has been largely construed within the context of

autonomous professions - free from government control. That is not the only model, however. For example Richard Lynn observed that there was a very strong connection between the 'high degree of professionalism and commitment' observed in Japanese teachers and 'the detailed specification of the curriculum by government'. (Lynn, 1988, 96-7)

There is no absolute definition of a profession, but a number of characteristics or attributes may be identified. The term profession is usually applied to an occupation which involves some use of the brain, as opposed to a purely manual role. A profession is frequently concerned with a defined area of knowledge or expertise. Medicine, priesthood and the law are three of the classic learned professions in English history; accountancy and engineering two of the more recent arrivals. Entry to a profession requires a specialized training and, at the end of such training, the granting of a universally accepted qualification for entry and practice. Many professions also maintain a code of ethics which governs the relationship between the members of the profession and their clients, a type of private law that gives additional protection to the consumer. Finally professions have a controlling body, a body which is concerned with defining and developing the area of knowledge, with training, qualification and codes of behaviour.

Teachers in England have considerable problems in approximating to this model. The area of knowledge is not closely defined, and although this difficulty as to what is education may be universal rather than particular, in England there has been a particular suspicion of pedagogy and of pedagogues. Specialized training and recognized qualifications exist (though as the previous section showed both are under scrutiny and perhaps attack) but teachers in England, unlike teachers in Scotland, have no controlling body which might influence or control, training, qualifications and ethics.

Since 1966 there has been a General Teaching Council (GTC) in Scotland; no such body yet exists for other parts of the United Kingdom, even though in 1990 the House of Commons Select Committee for Education, Science and the Arts recommended the establishment of one for England and Wales. The present Conservative government fiercely opposes such a move, though the two major opposition parties, Labour and Liberal Democrats, are both committed to the principle of a General Teaching Council. Nevertheless teachers in England have had (and internationally have been perceived as having had) a considerable amount of professional freedom, particularly in the years 1920s-1980s, to determine what

was taught and how it was taught.

One major reason for the failure of teachers in England to achieve a greater professional status has been their many divisions. These divisions originate from the divisive nature of nineteenth-century English society, in which schools were sharply distinguished on grounds of wealth and social class. As with the schools, so with the teachers. While the headmastership of a major boys' independent school was a post of great consequence, equivalent to a mastership of an Oxford or Cambridge college or a bishopric, teachers in elementary schools were largely recruited from the working classes. They occupied a low place in local society, and were the undoubted intellectual and social inferiors of the Anglican priest.

These school divisions were reflected in the teachers' associations.

The oldest extant association for school teachers is the College of Preceptors, formed in 1846 by a group of private schoolmasters, and accorded a royal charter in 1849. The National Union of Elementary Teachers (NUET now NUT), formed in 1870, was the union for those working in elementary schools, in contrast to the four associations of masters, mistresses, headmasters and headmistresses, established between 1874 and 1891 to represent the interests of teachers in secondary grammar schools. These associations worked together as the 'Joint Four' and currently form an association known as the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL). In the early twentieth century the Union of Women Teachers broke away from the NUT over the issue of equal pay for women, while the National Association of Schoolmasters was another NUT splinter group formed to safeguard the interests of the male career teacher. They exist today as the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers (NAS/UWT). Another group is the Professional Association of Teachers (PAT), formed in 1970 by teachers who were opposed to strike action under any circumstances.

Virtually since its foundation the National Union of Teachers has been the largest single union, indeed it boasted many more members than all the others together, but in recent years that domination has much declined. Membership figures in 1993 were: NUT, 182,644; NAS/UWT, 138,381; ATL, 136,645; PAT, 40,223. This situation may be sharply contrasted with that in Scotland where the majority of teachers are members of the Educational

Institute of Scotland (EIS).

Of course there are two views about independent professions. The one sees them as noble bands of people who dedicate their lives to worthy occupations, who give of their skills in dedicated fashion, prompted by altruism and a concern for the greater good. The other sees professions as groups who come together for their mutual benefit, to corner an area of knowledge and to raise the price of their services in a conspiracy against the consumer.

Since 1979 Conservative governments led by Margaret Thatcher and John Major have made the weakening of trade union and professional power one of the cornerstones of their social and economic policies. They have championed the private as against the public, and the consumer as against the producer. Conservative governments have remained consistently suspicious of teachers' associations and unions. They have resisted the creation of a General Teaching Council for England as an attempt to create a 'super union'. In the 1980s, following a series of teachers' strikes, minimum hours of work were laid down by the government, and teachers were deprived of their traditional negotiating rights over pay and conditions.

One of the consequences of the erosion of teachers' rights and professional roles was the formation of a General Teaching Council Company for England and Wales, with a board of directors chaired by John Tomlinson of the University of Warwick Department of Education. Although teachers were naturally to the fore in this initiative, the GTC Company has the support of some 30 associations, including those of parents and churches.

In 1991 Tomlinson outlined his vision of a statutory General Teaching Council. He rejected the notion of the GTC as a conspiracy against the laity, and made an important distinction between the customer (the state) and the consumer (children and parents). He argued that a partnership between state, profession and children/parents would be much preferable to a situation in which the state controlled 'all the essential dimensions of policies and relationships'. (Tomlinson, 1991, 4).

The main tasks of a General Teaching Council would be to take professional responsibility for: standards of entry into teaching; recognition and registration of those entitled to teach; agreeing and applying codes of conduct; research and development of professional practice.

It would also act as the body to advise the government and employers on: the future supply of teachers; initial education and training of teachers; good practice for probation and induction; professional development and re-training. A GTC would not be concerned with contracts and conditions of employment for teachers, salaries and pensions. These items would remain the legitimate interest of the teachers' associations.

In September 1992 proposals for a statutory General Teaching Council were laid before the National Commission on Education, and the establishment of such a GTC was one of the recommendations included in the Commission's report, *Learning to Succeed*, published in 1993. In the meantime the GTC Company has continued to assume some of the functions of a statutory body, for example by such publications as: *The Induction of Newly Appointed Teachers* (1992); *The Initial Education and Training of Teachers for Primary Schools* (1993); *The Initial Training and Education of Teachers* (1993); *The Continuing Professional Development of Teachers* (1993). It has also sponsored a study of the production of a code of ethics and of professional practice.

CONCLUSIONS

Since 1979 the United Kingdom has undergone a transformation from the radical right. At first education was largely exempt from this transformation. Governments concentrated instead upon reducing trade union power, for example that of the mighty National Union of Mineworkers which had brought down the Heath government in 1974, upon the sale of council houses and the privatisation of public utilities.

With the Education Reform Act of 1988, however, education was brought centre stage. British failings in economic matters and in social stability were increasingly laid at the door of schools which, it was alleged, had become too producer dominated. Accordingly the LEAs, teacher associations and teacher training institutions were all subject to attack. Indeed the largest LEA, the Inner London Education Authority, was simply abolished.

The process whereby government has established powerful central bodies to control the school curriculum, assessment, inspection, and teacher training, and to leave ultimate financial decisions to the governing bodies of schools and colleges, has been described as one of centralising power and devolving blame. The government has tried to create a

market in education, in which schools must publish brochures and examination results, so that parents will choose successful schools, which will prosper and expand, while unsuccessful schools will wither and decline. The GTC Company has argued, however, that

The market and controls, alone or together, cannot of themselves, however, ensure improvement in the quality of learning. Teachers play a part in creating quality...

The consumer cannot always know the nature or extent of his or her own needs or potential... Thus for an essential part of the transaction of education the learner must be dependent on the teacher...

The real concern is with quality not standards, because 'standards' can be set at any level those inside or outside education may choose. By quality we mean the diagnoses, processes and outcomes which as nearly as we can judge meet the needs and realise the potential both of those learning and of society. These lie in the hands of teachers in the final and most important respect. (GTC, 1992, 1)

This judgement must be balanced against the type of analysis produced by Lynn.

In *Educational Achievement in Japan: lessons for the West*, published in 1988, he concluded that three factors were responsible for the high level of professional commitment among Japanese teachers. These were: 'detailed specification of the curriculum by government'; 'competition between Japanese high schools for public esteem secured through good examination results'; 'the large private sector in Japanese education'. (Lynn, 1988, 119)

These are not the only factors which have been adduced in the United Kingdom for Japanese educational achievement. Others have included the longer school year and greater incentives for pupil and teacher success. Essentially, however, since 1979 these three elements of specified curricula, competition and privatization have underpinned educational reform in England, including reform in teacher education and training.

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