

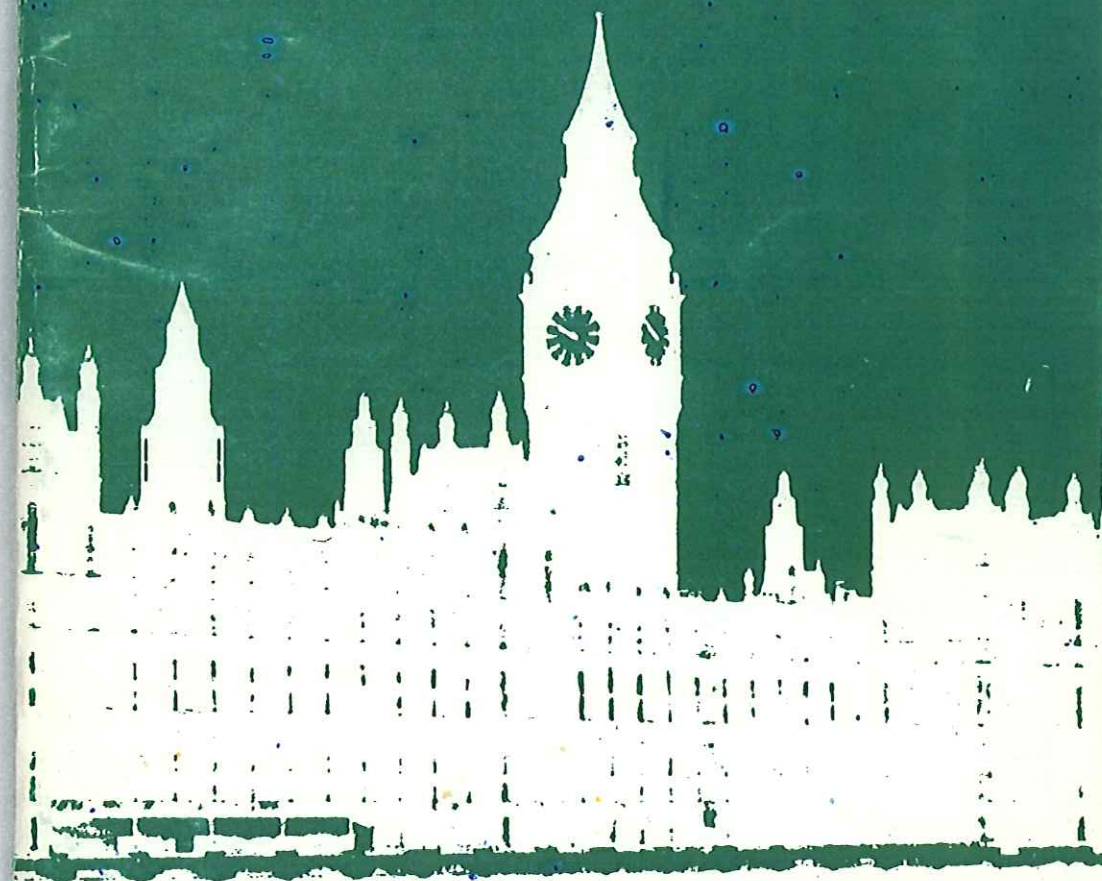


Policy Study No 116

Teachers mistaught

Training in theories or education in subjects?

Sheila Lawlor



CENTRE FOR POLICY STUDIES



Policy Study No 116

Teachers mistaught

Training in theories or education in subjects?

Sheila Lawlor

CENTRE FOR POLICY STUDIES

8 Wilfred Street, London SW1E 6PL

1990

The author

Sheila Lawlor is Deputy Director of Studies at the Centre for Policy Studies. She has previously held fellowships at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge and Churchill College, Cambridge. She is the author of *Britain and Ireland 1914-1923* and has just completed a book on Britain and the politics of the Second World War. Her previous pamphlets for the CPS include *Opting Out* (1987), *Correct Core* (1988) and *Away with LEAs* (1988).

Acknowledgements

I should like to thank Mme. Anne Lewis-Loubignac, Attaché Culturel, Ambassade de France, Mr Harald Seeger of The Goethe Institut and the New Jersey State Department of Education for so kindly answering my questions and for the literature they provided.

My thanks are also due to Shirley Letwin, John Marenbon and Kenneth Minogue for reading and commenting on the text, and to Oliver Knox who edited and advised. I am also grateful to Mrs Frances Hawkins for her patience and help with word-processing the manuscript.

Support toward research for this study was provided by the Institute of Policy Research.

The Centre for Policy Studies never expresses a corporate view in any of its publications. Contributions are chosen for their independence of thought and cogency of argument.

ISBN 1-870265-47-5

© Centre for Policy Studies, June 1990

Printed in England by G. Donald & Co. Ltd.

Unit 2, The Kimber Centre, 54 Kimber Road, London, SW18 4PP

Preface

Warning-bells should have been sounded in the days – not so long ago – when departments and faculties of education began to proliferate in the universities. Yet the likely, or perhaps the inevitable, consequences of their growth do not appear to have been properly predicted.

Perhaps it seemed innocent enough that such departments were given the power to demand standards, to examine and to give degrees and awards to students who wished to become teachers. Perhaps no one realised quite what this entailed.

For Education became a *subject*. Far beyond the perennial fascination which education has for philosophers and historians, it now acquired its own disciplines, its own language, its own theories – many of them of course borrowed from sociology. It aspired to be a branch of learning in its own right. Not much reflection is required to detect the canker in its ambitions, which led, in a very few years, to the present disasters.

As Dr Lawlor says in her pamphlet, at the basis of the present system of teacher-training:

[there] lies a confusion between what can best be learnt by academic study, and what can be learnt only through practice. Whereas the individual subjects which teachers will teach require academic study, the skills of teaching are essentially practical ones. They can be acquired only through experience, trial and error and careful, individual supervision. Who would imagine that a man could learn to act, or play the piano, or swim, or drive a motor-car by studying manuals of acting, piano-playing, swimming or driving *theory*? It is no less foolish to suppose that the study of educational theory will make him able to teach. By contrast, the academic study of his chosen subject is a prerequisite for the good teacher; for how can he teach what he does not himself know?

Is it too much to expect that those who wish to learn to teach, and those who wish to teach to teach, will accept the truth of these words? Certainly it is a *lot* to ask. To abandon, or at least to relegate to one corner of their minds, so much theory

so painstakingly piled up; to take instead to many more laborious days in the classrooms; to acquire, often insensibly, that experience which alone can make a good teacher, the one who imparts knowledge and love of his subject to his pupils – this is a very different sort of training to that which most teachers and their trainers undergo at present in the Departments and Faculties of Education.

An educationalist (the very word a symptom of the disease) might counter that a piano-player does need a certain mastery of musical theory, a swimmer some knowledge of anatomy, and so on. To that extent he would have a leg to stand on, but only one leg. Every great schoolmaster would gladly acknowledge that practice was nine-tenths of his art.

This is by no means to ask the would-be teacher to abandon the continual learning of his subject; it is only to ask him to recognise that *education* is not his subject. A teacher's subject is that which he teaches; and any time spent in developing more depth of knowledge there is well spent indeed.

This pamphlet addresses itself to what should be done. Dr Sheila Lawlor's most radical recommendation is that colleges and institutions of education should cease to have anything to do at all with the training of teachers; and that members of existing educational departments should return to school-teaching or academic life. She suggests that the Post Graduate Certificate of Education which these institutes dispense should simply be abolished. The Bachelor of Education should be replaced by a Certificate of Advanced Study (open to any qualified applicant – whether or not he intends to teach or enter another profession). Teachers would above all be trained 'on the job', in classrooms. Her proposals could lead to the recruitment of abler graduates, with better knowledge and greater love of their subjects. Another, far from negligible, benefit would be the alleviation of the shortage of teachers by the immediate introduction of well-educated men and women (well-educated, that is, in the subjects which they would principally be asked to teach) into the schools of our country.

DIRECTOR OF PUBLICATIONS

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
PART 1 WHAT HAPPENS TODAY	6
Introduction	7
1. Government intentions	9
2. P.G.C.E. in practice	13
3. B. Ed in practice	25
PART 2 BETTER TEACHERS FOR THE FUTURE	31
Introduction	32
4. The overseas examples	34
5. What needs to be done	48
Conclusion	42
Appendix: subject courses	44

PART 1

What happens today

Introduction

Good schools depend on a steady supply of good teachers. Yet in Britain today the existing teacher shortages are threatening to become even worse. Nor is teaching any longer able to attract good graduates from the best universities. At the root of both these problems is the training of teachers. In its present form, and despite the intentions of government reforms, the training discourages good candidates from entering the profession and undermines the standards of those who do.

This pamphlet examines the deficiencies of the present arrangements. It proposes a fresh policy for training, in order both to improve the quality of teaching, and to tackle shortages by attracting more of our able graduates into the profession. The emphasis in teaching must switch to the essential first requirement – that teachers have mastery of the subject to be taught. As with the other professions, learning how to practise can only come on the job, with time and experience. Yet the present system demands, by contrast, that all teachers are trained to teach in the same way, irrespective of subject, pupil and, indeed, teacher – a folly into which no other profession would fall and for which schools and their pupils are now paying the cost.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The good teacher has about him an aura of mystery – remembered with respect, admiration and, at a distance, affection; linked forever with his subject and his singular way of imparting it. Although the good teacher is unique, he shares one characteristic with every capable teacher: a deep knowledge and mastery of his subject. Any plan designed to improve the quality of teachers should concentrate on ensuring that those in the profession have a mastery of their individual subjects.

Indeed, this requirement is at the heart of every profession. Doctors must know medicine; lawyers, the law; accountants, accountancy; pharmacists, chemistry. None could pass his examinations and enter the profession without a detailed and clear knowledge of his subject. Indeed, it is only when he has

satisfied his examiners that he knows the subject, that he may begin to practise. It is taken for granted that he will, indeed must, learn *how* to practise with time and experience.

It was with the object of placing the mastery of the subject at the heart of the teacher's training, as the first prerequisite for good teaching, and of providing some opportunity for practical experience, that the recent proposals to reform teacher training were introduced. Despite such reforms, teaching remains alone amongst the professions in having switched emphasis from mastery of the subject to the practice of teaching. But this emphasis on practice is, in fact, far from practical. Teachers are not encouraged to develop the style of teaching which time and experience prove best for them. Rather, there is imposed on them, in the training courses and later, a single method of teaching, often at the expense of the subject itself. Such a style does not rest on any agreed tradition nor on its having been tested successfully over generations, but rests, rather, on a series of fleeting fashions and accidents.

At the basis of the present, bad system of teacher-training, there lies a confusion between what can best be learnt by academic study, and what can be learnt only through practice. Whereas the individual subjects which teachers will teach require academic study, the skills of teaching are essentially practical ones. They can be acquired only through experience, trial and error and careful, individual supervision. Who would imagine that a man could learn to act, or play the piano, or swim, or drive a motor-car by studying manuals of acting, piano-playing, swimming or driving *theory*? It is no less foolish to suppose that the study of educational theory will make him able to teach. By contrast, the academic study of his chosen subject is a prerequisite for the good teacher; for how can he teach what he does not himself know?

1

Government intentions

By the 1980s it was clear that courses in teacher training had become too bound by theory; with too little emphasis either on the subjects to be taught or on the practical activity of classroom teaching. So the Conservative Government initiated the reform of training, in order to place greater emphasis on the subject itself, on professional competence and on practical teaching experience. Reformed teacher training courses had to emphasise the three areas proposed by *Teaching Quality*¹: subject studies; teaching methods; practical experience. University graduates would continue to take the one-year training course – the Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE), with the fresh emphasis as above. School leavers would train on specialised courses for three or four years to degree standard, (leading to the Bachelor of Education (B. Ed)); the target of an 'all-graduate profession' had already been adopted with the aim of teacher training reaching the same standard as other undergraduate courses. Last November a fresh DES circular proposed to develop and update these emphases although it is too early to assess results.²

Trainee teachers would spend at least two full years on their specialist subject(s) either before PGCE as part of their degree course, or as part of the B.Ed. Both types of course would be accredited by a Council (CATE) of 'professionals' – officials, educationalists and teachers. For secondary teachers one or two subjects would constitute the specialism. For primary teachers the 'specialism' would be the wider area of the curriculum. Teacher training would also include 'adequate attention to teaching methods'; (primary training would also emphasise 'language and mathematics development'). And, finally, teacher training would include 'studies closely linked with practical experience in school'³.

1. *Teaching Quality*, Cmnd 8836, 1983, paras 53-64 and annex B, advice to the Secretaries of State from the Advisory Committee on the Supply and Education of teachers.

2. The threefold emphases of the 1980s' reforms were reiterated, together with the fresh emphasis on the National Curriculum, on strengthening links with practising teachers and local business. DES Circular 24/89, November 1989.

3. *Teaching Quality*, para 64, also DES Circular 3/84.

Courses for trainee teachers have now been re-designed to accommodate these reforms. Both the one-year post-graduate course (PGCE), and the three or four-year undergraduate course in education, reflect the threefold emphasis. So too do the two recently proposed training modes: the Licensed Teacher Scheme and the Articled Teacher Scheme.

There are, then, two main ways in which qualified teacher status (QTS) – a prerequisite for teachers in State schools – can be gained: (a) the PGCE for graduates, a 1-year post graduate course; (b) the B.Ed for school leavers, a 3 or 4-year course. More recently, (1989) (c) two further means to QTS were introduced: the licensed teacher scheme for older candidates with some higher education experience, and the 2-year school-based articulated teacher course for a limited number of graduates. In addition, teaching, or having being trained, in Scotland or Northern Ireland also leads to QTS; and an EEC directive allows teachers from other EEC countries to teach here⁴. All teachers, with certain exceptions, must serve a period of probation of one year – though employers may waive the rule and substitute either a longer or a shorter period.

(a) Post-graduate entry: the PGCE

This is a 1-year course for graduates which leads to QTS. It is taken in university departments of education, polytechnics and other institutions, and involves both practical teaching experience and a considerable theoretical element. Post-graduate entrants must have a degree (or equivalent); the initial degree must relate to the work of primary or secondary schools. In 1988/89 about 10,000 candidates were accepted for PGCE courses.

(b) School-leavers' entry: the B.Ed

The B.Ed is a 3 or 4-year course which leads to QTS. Courses for the B.Ed are offered in colleges, university departments of education, institutes of higher education and polytechnics.

4. The Council of the EEC adopted a directive on 21 December 1988 designed to make it easier for professionals to practise in member States other than their own. This was implemented in relation to teachers in the DES *Education (Teachers) Regulations 1989*.

Concentration may be on one subject or on two or more subjects combined. Admission to the course is on the basis of two (or three) 'A' levels, from five (or four) separate subjects in GCE/GCSE. In 1988/89 10,000 applicants were admitted to the courses.

In addition, a few other first degree courses offered by university departments of education lead to QTS (eg., the B.A or B.Sc in certain faculties or departments).

'On-the-job' entry

In 1989, two further changes in the means whereby QTS is gained were introduced. The Licensed Teacher Scheme (LTS) was introduced to enable older teachers (aged over 26) to secure QTS at the discretion of the employer. The Articled Teacher Scheme beginning in 1990, will allow a limited number of graduates (c.600) to train for a school-based PGCE – which will require two years. The proposals for the two schemes are:

The Licensed Teacher Scheme

The proposals, announced in 1989, are for older candidates with a background of at least two successful years of higher education. They should be at least 26 years old – or be overseas-trained teachers. The employer (the school or the LEA) both applies for the licence, and subsequently recommends QTS to the Secretary of State (the LEA acts for maintained schools without budget; and the governing body acts for grant-maintained schools and schools with delegated budget). Particulars of the proposed training and assessment must be submitted with the application. The candidate will be licensed for two years. Before gaining QTS, the licensed teachers will need to show 'they have the necessary personal qualities, subject knowledge and classroom and other professional competence'. QTS will not be awarded before two years; and teachers will be expected to have certain knowledge and competencies before being awarded QTS. Under the same regulations EEC teachers after three years' higher education and

training would automatically be granted QTS in accordance with the EEC directive of December 1988.⁵

The Articled Teacher Scheme

Beginning in 1990 a new scheme is being introduced whereby a limited number of graduates can train over two years at school, i.e. 'on the job'. At the outset there will be 12 school-based projects, each of which will accommodate 50 students per year. The courses will last two (or three) years, of which four-fifths will be school-based. Training will be in school by institutional staff and teachers. Articled teachers will have their teaching load progressively increased, and will be paid a bursary of £11,000 over two years.⁶

How well do the arrangements for teacher training work? So far as the DES is concerned, the effect of the changes since the mid-1980s has been for the best. The recent consultative document outlining the arrangements for future accreditation of teacher training courses notes improvement in the quality of initial teacher training and refers, for example, to the 'more practical, systematic and relevant educational and professional studies'. And the latest proposals build on that assumption⁷.

But there is reason to question the optimistic assessment. The threefold emphasis – on the subject to be taught, on gaining practical teaching experience, and on the professional side i.e. teaching – may appear to offer sensible direction in which to steer the training of teachers. Nobody would deny the importance of mastering the subject itself; or of having teaching experience in the classroom; or of learning 'the tricks of the trade' – the tips which make for successful teaching. Yet these *apparently* sensible ideas have been put into practice in such a way as to turn the original intention on its head. An examination of how PGCE and B.Ed courses are organised in practice will show how this has happened.

5. DES Circular 18/89, *The Education (Teachers) Regulations*; DES News, 145/89, 260/89 and 346/89.

6. *Ibid*; DES News 176/89 and attached, J Whitaker to Chief Education Officers *et al*, DES, 2716.

7. *Future Arrangements for the Accreditation of Courses of Initial Teacher Training*, para 2.5; DES Circular 24/89.

PGCE in practice

A graduate profession?

By definition, those who acquire the PGCE are graduates. It might seem, then, that those who enter teaching by this certificate are helping the Government to achieve its aim to make teaching a graduate profession. This is so only in a superficial sense. The standard of the degree may vary widely – as may the depth of study and mastery of subject which it represents. A first class honours degree is not on a par with a scrape-through pass. And a graduate whose degree is in one or two subjects on which he has concentrated for two or three years under specialist academic direction – such as physics or history – will have a far surer foundation than one whose degree has been in 'combined studies' or 'education'. In these latter cases, he will not have concentrated on one or two subjects, nor probably will he have been taught by a physicist or historian, but by an 'educationalist'.

There is another, even more important, way in which trainee teachers, though graduates, may lack the qualifications proper to a graduate in the subject they are to teach. While students taking their PGCE tend to concentrate on the principal subject of their degree, they are often encouraged to take a second or subsidiary subject: one which they *may* not have studied before at undergraduate level. In some cases there may be next to no undergraduate foundation; yet on the strength of a course during the teacher training year, they could end by teaching the subsidiary subject to pupils at school. This outcome is further encouraged by specific *conversion* courses. In this way a biologist may 'train' to teach physics or chemistry; and given the reluctance of chemists and physicists to enter the teaching profession he will undoubtedly find himself doing so at school⁸.

8. Under the 1984 regulations, the institution was obliged to satisfy itself that the level and content of candidates' initial degrees were related to the work of primary and secondary schools. Last November's circular further stipulated that, for courses designed to equip students in shortage subjects, candidates' initial degrees should include one year's study in the field. DES Circulars 3/84 and 24/89.

An emphasis on subjects?

PGCE courses rest on the assumption that subjects have been taught at undergraduate level. But the starting standard for trainee teachers will vary depending on the undergraduate course, the subject combination, the degree taken. There may be further discrepancies if the trainee teacher trains to teach a subject which he has not studied to degree level at university, and therefore lacks serious knowledge of the subject. On top of this, there is the overall threat to subject teaching posed by the PGCE courses themselves. Despite the time given to subject studies, this does not mean a concentration on the subject itself. Rather, the aim is to encourage trainees to see the teaching of their subject in terms, almost exclusively, of recent educational theory. Instead of teaching, or deepening knowledge of, for example, English, or history, or physics, the subject studies or methods courses direct students away from their subjects and often undermine the academic basis of the subject itself. For example, emphasis may be on an approach to the subject in its cross-curricular context; or it may be on the *process* and skills to be employed; or on the multi-cultural dimension. Thus the trainee is merely trained in the recent approaches to the subject; the methods espoused by the educationalists; the sociological factors to be borne in mind. The upshot is twofold – not only is the trainee *not* studying, or mastering, the subject he will teach; but he is being trained not to respect the subject with its discrete academic content. Indeed, his own university subject specialism may be undermined by the persistent suggestions that what matters is not the subject so much as the views and approach.

That there are no subject studies, but something much worse, is one of the most disturbing features of the PGCE. This is apparent only when one looks carefully at the courses on offer in a sample of university education departments. Courses tend to be entitled 'subject methods' or 'subject studies'. But even the general statements of principle show how subject teaching is undermined. Here are some examples:

In *Bristol* subject work – alongside educational studies and 'schemes' – is tackled in the autumn term and again in the summer term. This does not mean the

student spends the allocated time studying subjects. Rather, for his main subject, the student will 'be helped to see [his] subject in the context of educational theory and practice, its place and importance in the school curriculum . . .'. The courses will deal with methods of teaching . . .'. Likewise in his subsidiary courses, the student will be given 'an introduction to the methods of teaching a subject'. Not only is the emphasis, therefore, on method and on theory, rather than on knowing the subject itself as the surest foundation to teaching, but students' work will also be affected by their simultaneously following specific courses in educational issues.⁹

In *Birmingham* the main subject method courses occupy three-and-a-half days per week (for eight weeks) in the autumn term or two-and-a-half days per week (for six weeks) in the summer term. The emphasis in the individual courses is not on the academic subject itself, but on introducing students to recent educational trends (such as seeing education in terms of 'practical orientation', of classroom egalitarianism, and of sociological factors). For example, the aim of the biology course is 'to enable students to develop their own convictions on how to teach biology and science, based upon careful examination of the issues involved'; of English 'to introduce students . . . to the theories, materials and techniques'¹⁰.

In *Cambridge* the PGCE secondary courses are divided into two: 'general principles of educational practice' and 'the study of teaching methods' which is for the individual subject. In the first of two courses, students select their degree subject – or a closely related subject. In the second they select two. Concentration is not on the subject; rather upon classroom management, the subject as part of the

9. Postgraduate Certificate in Education, *Handbook*, 1989-90, University of Bristol School of Education, p.2.

10. PGCE, *Education* 1989, University of Birmingham, pp.7-11, 11-15.

curriculum, the preparation of teaching materials.¹¹

In *Durham* the subject course forms one of five components and is concerned, not with the academic subject but – as the title describes – with ‘Principles and Methods of Specialist Subject Teaching’. The principles and methods advocated are clearly set in the context of abandoning traditional teaching. For example, it is claimed that teaching methods must ‘encourage students to question issues and to be independent and flexible in response to incidents, rather than attempt to hand down in didactic manner the received wisdom of the teaching profession’¹².

At the *Institute of Education (London)* the PGCE has four elements, of which one is ‘curriculum subject teaching’. Here the subject itself is not emphasized; rather, candidates will study ‘the methods of teaching their special subject’. Indeed, the five components of ‘curriculum subject teaching’ might be executed without serious mastery of a subject; ‘methods of teaching . . .’, ‘the planning of learning experiences’, ‘classroom management’, ‘the use of educational aids’, ‘evaluation and assessment’. Students will undertake, not to learn or dominate their subject, but a ‘critical analysis . . . of the nature of the subject(s) or of the teaching programme . . . and of the philosophical, sociological and psychological problems involved’. Students are not tested on the basis of knowing the subject. They may submit ‘the equivalent of up to 4,000 words in the form of a project, e.g., a curriculum package, a set of media resources’ as part of a longer submission¹³.

The way in which the general statements of principle undermine the importance of the subject is reinforced by the courses in individual subjects. In PGCE science, the courses have

11. *Secondary Course Handbook 1989-1990*, The University of Cambridge, Faculty of Education, PGCE, pp.6-8, 8-14, 14-19.

12. *PGCE Secondary Course Handbook 1989-90*, University of Durham School of Education, , pp.6, 8-9, 35-51.

13. *Prospectus 1989-90*, Institute of Education University of London, pp.73-8, 80.

moved away from the individual subjects and the emphasis has been placed on current theories of teaching; while individual specialisms have been subsumed into combined courses. One result is that specialists – for example, physicists and chemists – are discouraged from entering the profession, because if they cannot teach their own subject primarily, they do not want to teach any other. In the humanities, too, study of a subject has been turned into study of theory about teaching that subject. Many examples of the ways in which students on PGCE courses are encouraged to neglect content, and concentrate on theory are given in the Appendix.

Second courses and subsidiary courses

Subsidiary or second courses may be taken without an academic background in the subject, yet no effort is made to make up the specialist teaching which the participants lack. Students may have some academic background in the second subject, but not necessarily of a higher standard than, say, ‘A’ level. However, the training may, on paper, qualify the trainee to teach that subject. And certainly the handbooks suggest that it does. The most recent circular stipulates that one year of independent study is necessary only in respect of training in shortage subjects¹⁴. Moreover, students who have no sound academic background will not find that their second or subsidiary courses make up for their lack.

Birmingham, for example, makes no secret of the fact that students with only ‘O’ level maths may have to teach it at school; with this in mind ‘any student ... may attend [its] course’, (i.e. subsidiary maths). Second subject English provides no grounding for those who know little. Its aims are not to introduce students to literature other than ‘children’s and adolescent’, but to ask them to ‘pay special attention to the teaching of English in a multicultural society and to consider the problems of a “Language across the Curriculum” policy in the secondary school’. No academic background is required for the religious education (second subject) course. While students will ‘normally be required to have engaged in some formal study of religion

14. DES Circular 24/89.

... as part of their 'O' or 'A' level work or in their degree courses
... an informed interest in religion and religions from a personal point of view may be acceptable as an equivalent¹⁵.

In *Durham*, students normally register for a main subject and, 'if appropriate', a second. These include: Computers in Education, Drama, Integrated Science, Physical Education'. The 'Drama' course does not require an academic background, merely an interest in drama. The course does not aim to provide students with concentrated knowledge of English (or, indeed, European) drama. Rather, 'It is concerned with the personal development and sense of well-being of each student... It will demonstrate the many new approaches to the use of role-play as a means of learning – to be used in the classroom with most humanities subjects. It will also offer experience of drama as an art form with all that implies of engaging with the deeper issues behind personal relationships¹⁶.

Professional studies/educational studies – the ghost of theory. Educational (or professional) studies are the remnants of the explicit courses on educational theory which were to be challenged by the reforms of the 1980s. They enjoy the same weighting as subject studies – and indeed tend to inform them. Despite reorganisation and restructuring, most courses expressly state that there is, and should be, a link between theory and practice, and that educational theory should be applied to subject courses. The emphasis of much of the theory is on the difficulty which pupils have in learning – whether for sociological, cultural, psychological or other reasons. Indeed, if it were accepted as the basis for teaching, pupils would be seen as incapable of learning very much: teachers as unable to teach very much. The aspiring teacher is trained to imagine that his is a job which, paradoxically, combines a life's work of near unteachable pupils and insoluble problems, and one of inculcating boundless optimism for changing the world and society.

No single or coherent education theory seems to inform the 'professional element'; and students are not taught to follow any given ideology. The context, rather, is that of the contemporary approach: education in terms of a social role. It involves a series

15. *Education*, Birmingham, pp.12-14.

16. *Handbook*, Durham, pp. 6-9, 39.

of courses on contemporary issues in which theory and topic can be blended. For example, most professional/educational studies include a course on the teaching/learning process; and this tends to be discussed in contemporary terms which include 'special needs' (now *de rigueur* in all courses) and multicultural and gender issues. A teacher is seen not as a specialist in his subject but as one who bears responsibility for pastoral/social problems; and the school not so much a teaching institution as one with a community or social function.

Two institutions provide fair examples – Durham and the Institute of Education.

In *Durham* the educational or professional components fall under two headings: cross-curricular issues and option courses. Durham considers that the practical experience of teaching in the classroom ought not to be separate from the theoretical aspects (as taught by the School of Education). 'They are essentially two sides of the same process...' Under cross-curricular issues it is explained that 'it is impossible to consider subject-teaching outside of a complex social, psychological, political and economic context... We would like students... to filter their learning in subject-specialist parts of the course through the perspectives of the social scientists, and... challenge and test those psycho-social perspectives in classroom contexts'. The cross-curricular issues include pastoral care, special needs, health education, multicultural education, learning and intelligence, pupil behaviour and classroom management. The aim of 'Learning and Intelligence' is to 'consider attitudes to learning and concepts of intelligence, and the effects these may have upon the learner and the development of his/her language'. The course examines themes such as 'the nature of intelligence... the experience of being a learner, what helps and what does not... the development of one's own voice as learner and as a teacher'. Recommended reading here includes D.H.Hargreaves *The Challenge of the Comprehensive School* (1986); J. Holt *How Children Fail* (Penguin, 1983).¹⁷

In multicultural education the aim is to 'consider current issues associated with prejudice and discrimination in society with respect to ethnic minority groups, and the way teachers in

17. *Handbook*, Durham, pp.6-9, 13, 29-30, 25-34.

schools can respond to these challenges'. A note adds that 'Both racial and sexual inequalities in society will be considered, if time permits'. The option courses are in addition to the cross-curricular ones; they include similar topics such as Comparative Education, Religious Education, Language in Education, Society, Politics and the Development of Education, Health Education, Counselling: Basic Skills. Assessment is on the basis of three assignments.

Certainly the slant in the topics which make up the cross-curricular issues or the options will not teach trainees how to teach. Rather, it is the repository of a series of random topics chosen, it appears, because of their fascination for educationalists. Many topics overlap. For example, 'Language and the Kingman Report' includes concentration on 'the multi-dialectalism, multi-lingualism, and multi-culturalism of society, the school and individual pupils'. Reading for this topic is shared with the topic of 'multicultural education'; the student may find himself going over the same ground twice or more. (For example reading for both topics includes R. Jeffcoate *Ethnic Minorities and Education*)¹⁸.

In the *Institute of Education's* educational/professional course the 'education component' involves 'a critical examination, based on relevant theoretical disciplines and practical knowledge, of issues concerning the classroom, school and society, in a changing, plural society'. Attention focuses on five chosen areas:

- (i) aims of education;
- (ii) growth, development and learning of children, adolescents and adults, their special needs;
- (iii) educational institutions in terms of history, organisation, administration . . .
- (iv) society in terms of the values which inform human behaviour, the legal and political bases of education, school-community relationships, power and authority, pluralism, work, leisure; and,
- (v) personal and professional development of teachers¹⁹

The reforms of the 1980s were, at least in part, aimed at

18. *Handbook*, Durham, pp. 6-9, 13, 30, 33.

19. *Prospectus*, Institute, pp 78-80.

reducing the emphasis on theory, and increasing the emphasis on practice, in teacher-training courses. Sacrifice of theory was to be made up by more relevance in professional studies. The criterion of relevance, however, in the 'professional' element of PGCE courses has led to teaching in terms of the concerns of the 1970s and 1980s, and not in terms of a subject. Courses now have a great deal to do with recent theories which have undermined the practice of teaching.

School experience: theory or practice?

Much of the declared emphasis in the reforms of the 1980s was on the practical activity of teaching. Students would be sent to the classroom to learn to teach as an essential part of their training. The individual qualities of the teacher would develop as he taught his subject. He would develop the characteristics of the good teacher in the classroom, use his common sense and acquire confidence, rather than be taught generalised theories irrelevant to good teaching and removed from everyday life in the classroom. Each PGCE course is formally obliged to include teaching practice. PGCE students spend not less than fifteen weeks or 75 days in teaching practice. In addition to students spending two weeks at a school before the course begins, a block period is usually set aside during the year for school work, as are other times for day visits.

Paradoxically, school practice has turned out to be far from practical. It is seen by the education departments as an *opportunity to put theory into practice*. Indeed, it is often a tenet of the course, and a requirement for assessment, that theory and practice must be interlinked. This has two results. First, contrary to the intention of the 1980s' reforms, general theory continues to dominate at the expense of individual practice; and students are not encouraged to approach classroom teaching with an open mind, or to develop individually as teachers. Instead, they are expected to bring to the classroom, and to apply to their teaching, the generalised educational theories which they have been taught. These theories tend to be at the expense of individual subject teaching – indeed, many rest on a series of assumptions about the almost insuperable obstacles which prevent children from learning.

In *Bristol*, for example, students are told that although there

are three elements of the course (school method studies, school experiences, educational studies), 'they are . . . interdependent, each element making a contribution to the other two'. School practice in the spring term 'gives . . . an opportunity to put into practice the ideas that have been discussed in the first term'. Students in their first term will be taught to see their subject 'in the context of educational theory and practice'²⁰.

Moreover, the kind of theories taught undermine the idea that a teacher should be in command of his subject. Rather, he is seen as a skills developer. For example, in the Bristol course 'How Pupils Learn', the intention is to show how easy it is for pupils to fail in learning, and students are advised that teaching no longer involves 'passing out knowledge in "edible" packages but rather developing the skills for the acquisition of knowledge'. Not only are teachers sidetracked from giving primacy to teaching their subject, but other, non-teaching roles are specifically given emphasis. The teacher will bring to the classroom the up-to-date theories which inform his 'education' courses – about education and training; the National Curriculum; welfare; personal and social education ('designed to help pupils explore their attitudes to a range of issues . . .')²¹

Another example of how teaching theory has subverted teaching practice is illustrated by the course at Durham.

Durham's course rests on the view that traditional teaching methods are wrong. Its PGCE principles include building on the student's own experience and skills, and treating education as 'basically a controversial subject'. For Durham, it is 'essential . . . that the teaching methods encourage students to question issues and to be independent and flexible . . . rather than attempt to hand down in didactic manner the received wisdom of the teaching profession'. These are the principles to guide the trainee teacher in his classroom. He will also be taught that he is being trained, not principally to teach his subject, but to prepare for five areas of responsibility of which teaching is but one, albeit the first (the others being 'tutorial responsibility within the pastoral care system; participation in decision-making at departmental level; participation in the consultative processes of policy-making for the whole school; taking part in educational

20. *Handbook*, Bristol, pp. 1-3.

21. *Handbook*, Bristol, pp. 1-3, 12-16.

relationships with the wider community'). Teaching practice and school experience include four components: home area; school experience; day visits and day visit practice; secondary school practice (12.5 weeks). Even his approach to discipline will have been informed by vague theory and he will bear in mind that: 'Ideally good behaviour is achieved by good teaching which both respects and interests the children by efficient classroom management which prevents opportunities for disorder'.²²

Durham this year will be offering a second pilot school-based course. But it intends that this too will be informed by theory. The approach will be to invite 'problem solving in realistic classroom settings, thus requiring theory to be directly related to practice, and to ensure that teachers become reflective practitioners whose work is informed by analysis'²³.

The ways in which practical experience has been manipulated so as to provide a vehicle for theory is illustrated by the prospectus of the Institute of Education. The Institute 'is firmly committed to countering racism, sexism and other forms of bias in education' to which end, 'school-based work frequently takes place in multilingual and multicultural settings, which offer opportunities to observe and practise multicultural education'. Such settings 'enhance our understanding of the challenge for teachers of educating for a plural society, in which all cultures are valued'.

'Practical Training in Teaching' is indeed one of four elements in the course. The School Experience includes the continuous block practices in the autumn and spring terms, plus one day a week in schools. Trainee teachers observe teaching; prepare lessons; teach lessons in collaboration, or singly under supervision; train in general duties. They will be assessed on the basis of two reports on their teaching – one from the school and one from the Institute's authorities. Candidates will also be examined elsewhere in the course on their ability to 'make connections between educational theory and the principles and methods of teaching [and] . . . the practical issues concerning the classroom, the school and wider society'²⁴.

22 *Handbook*, Durham, pp.6, 10-12.

23 *Handbook*, Durham, pp. 55, 58.

24 *Prospectus*, Institute, pp. 13-14, 71, 79, 80.

PGCE courses, then, nowadays do include a substantial element of teaching practice. But the periods of training in the classroom are chiefly regarded as providing an opportunity for putting educational theory into practice.

3

The B.Ed in practice

Bachelor of Education courses show, in exaggeration, the same defects as those of the PGCE courses. B.Ed usually follows a three or four-year course, for which entrants should have two or three 'A' levels. The B.Ed is seen and treated as training for primary school teachers (though not exclusively so). Despite the clear essentials of the primary curriculum, trainees do not concentrate principally on the subjects they will need for primary teaching. Indeed, only one element out of three or four will be devoted to *subject* teaching. And the professional and educational studies undermine teaching practice as they do in PGCE – but even more so²⁵.

Some impression of the content and aims of B.Ed courses can be gained by looking at the course at a college (Nene College) and at a university (University of Warwick).

Nene College, Northampton (formed in September 1975 by the merger of Northampton Colleges of Art, Education & Technology) offers a 4-year course leading to the honours degree of Bachelor of Education awarded by the university of Leicester. The course prepares students for primary teaching of either the age range 3-8 or 7-12. Entry requirements are two 'A' levels (five GCE/GCSE grade 'C' passes, of which two must be at 'A' level). The course comprises four components. As well as subject studies and school experience, there are curriculum studies and education studies (more general educational theory). The course aims to give particular emphasis to mathematics – although this is not necessarily a matter of teaching maths to a high academic standard to the trainee teachers.²⁶

Subject studies occupy about 54% of the course time (school experience 20%). Subject studies are, Nene maintains, linked very closely with theory. Theory and practice are seen as one:

²⁵ In 1984 the formal stipulation was that two years be spent on subject studies. The 1989 circular divided the time into one-and-a-half years of subject studies and half a year of subject application. It required in addition that students be prepared to teach the National Curriculum subjects. DES Circular 3/84 and 24/89.

²⁶ *Bachelor of Education (Honours) Degree, Course Handbook*, Nene College, Northampton, p.1; letter from Education Course Leader, Nene.

the 'academic knowledge and skills . . .' and 'pedagogic knowledge and skills in their application' are taught as a 'conceptual unity by the same team of tutors'. Two subjects are taken (one over three years and the other over two), from a choice of six (art & design; environmental and social studies; language arts; movement studies; music; science & technology - only one out of arts & design, movement studies and music may be taken). The course also includes a compulsory element of maths in education. Students may then wish to take a more advanced 'Mathematics in education option in the third stage'.

The curriculum studies component has three emphases - 'the methodology of teaching and . . . the role of curriculum leadership . . . study of a wide range of teaching methods and learning processes . . . development of additional specialism'. It includes therefore some theory and some subject teaching. It begins with 'Foundation Studies where over 60% of study time is devoted to . . . analysis of the primary curriculum and . . . learning difficulties'. Additional options may be chosen in the final stage from such titles as 'Teaching Children with Special Educational Needs, Education in a Multi-cultural Society, Gender Equality in the Primary Curriculum, Economic and Industrial Awareness in the Curriculum and Information Technology in the Primary Curriculum'.

The education studies programme examines 'the psychological and sociological factors which affect children's learning'. In the first stage the focus is on 'children's development . . . a first exploration of egalitarian issues in respect, for example, of differences of gender, race and social background'. The course also considers 'aspects of classroom and curriculum management'. In the final year, a number of options are offered such as: Children with Special Needs; Education in a Multi-cultural Society; Philosophies of Primary Education; Early Childhood Education; Information Technology in Classrooms.²⁷

The Warwick undergraduate 4-year honours course leads to the BA (with QTS) and prepares students for infant-first (ages

4-8) and junior-middle teaching (ages 7-12) and 'includes secondary specialist courses in mathematics and physical education'. Students follow courses in subject studies consisting of a main subject for four years and a second subject for the first two years.²⁸

The course has three elements: subject studies, professional studies; work in school. The subjects are divided into groups: (1) Art, Physical Education, Religious Studies, Science; (2) Biology, History; (3) Drama, Maths; (4) English; (5) Geography, Music. Primary students choose a main subject from the list (not Physical Education or Science) and a second subject from a different group. Secondary students choose maths or physical education as their main subject. As the second subject, mathematicians choose from Biology, English, Geography, Physical Education, Religious Studies or Science. Those who specialise in P.E. choose from biology, English, geography, maths or science as their second subject. Thus neither primary nor secondary students necessarily work on even two academic subjects. Moreover, the overall time devoted to the academic study of a subject is considerably less than that which would be spent by an undergraduate following a degree course in the same subject at a university. Not only is time spent on courses other than the subject, but again the emphasis is on theory, and the object is to put theory into practice.²⁹

According to the time-table in the prospectus, though primary subject studies occupy two-thirds of the time in the first year, they occupy less than half in the second (given that language and maths are included as part of professional training), and one-third in the third and fourth years. By contrast, the professional training element - education/professional/curriculum studies - occupies from under one-third of the time in the first year to two-thirds in the third year (albeit including a language and maths element in years one and two and a literacy and numeracy element in year three). Moreover, imposing theory on practice is the express responsibility of the education department which specifically provides:

27 *Handbook*, Nene College, pp. 11-14; *Train for Primary Teaching at Nene* (B.Ed Hons.), p.7.

28 90-91 *Guide to First Degree Courses for entry October 1990*, The University of Warwick, pp.84, 90-91.

29 *Guide*, Warwick, pp. 84-85.

'... the links between theory and practice in teaching. It helps students to understand when and why children learn and to recognise readiness and achievement. It explores how children behave differently in different groups and situations in and out of school. It considers the powerful influence of social factors such as home and community background, gender, race and culture on the work of children and teachers in schools. Some of the underlying values of our school system are identified, as are its historical determinants.'

Although over-emphasis on theory 'in the early part of the course is not [thought to be] appropriate', in the fourth year students choose from a range of theoretical options, including 'the historical and comparative study of education, the relationship between contemporary thought and schooling, the analysis of schools as social institutions, and educational psychology'.

What about the standards required in subject teaching? Not only is too small a proportion of the time spent on the subjects which teachers teach, but even that small time is ill spent, because of the way in which these subjects are taught. There seems to be more emphasis on the contemporary aspects of the subject rather than on the subject itself.

In English, for example, the course 'aims to develop in students a critical response to reading and an understanding and appreciation of literary growth and traditions'. But in the first year course 'How to read Novels, Plays and Poems' 'critical perspectives on modern literature are developed through the study of texts taken mainly from the twentieth century...' Main subject English students will also have a complementary study in creative writing or Afro-Caribbean Culture and Religion or in an approved option. The second year course 'Context and Form in 17th and 18th Century Literature' 'explores the way in which literature both shaped, and was shaped by, emerging ideas about gender, childhood and the growth of human beings from youth to maturity'. In the third year course 'Tradition and Change in 19th Century English Literature', students 'consider literature in the contexts of literary and social traditions and change. Some

of the literature is studied with reference to specific contemporary issues, including that of gender, in order to develop a sense of literature as a social and historical product as well as a work of art'. The fourth year course 'Shakespeare, Marlowe and Webster' is taught by seminars, workshops, and the study of performances on video and in the theatre.

In the professional section of their history course, students are helped to 'relate their academic study to classroom practice, child development and curriculum planning'. The first year course 'Person, Period and Problem involves a study of the life and importance of one individual and a problem of historical interpretation as well as a particular historical period... the three topics will cover a range of societies and eras.' The Contemporary Study of History will normally be taken the first year. The second year course 'History in the Environment consists of... selected themes from regional history including urban and rural communities and involving both field work and documentary studies. A professional course introduces students to a variety of methods of teaching...' The third year 'Cultures in Conflict is a study of one or two occasions in world history when Western Europeans confronted a non-European civilisation or culture. After an initial survey of the selected era or eras the student chooses a person or theme on which to pursue an individual study... based on primary sources and secondary authorities. The fourth year 'Past into Present explores the relationship between theory and practice in history teaching and so prepares students for their potential role as history consultants in primary school. Specific theories on the nature of history are studied in relation to current practices in school...'³⁰

The B.Ed courses provide minimal serious teaching in the subjects which the primary schoolmaster will come to teach. Valuable time, which might be spent giving future teachers at least a foundation in the subjects of the primary National Curriculum – English, maths, history, geography, possibly a foreign language – is dissipated on curriculum analysis and on non-academic topics like dance or movement. Questionable emphasis is given to 'special needs', 'multicultural' education, 'gender' and so on.

Moreover, the subject courses themselves are infected by

³⁰ *Guide*, Warwick, pp. 90-92

current fashion. Hence the B.Ed student at Warwick will find an English course not based on teaching and knowing the essential foundations of the English language and English literature, but one which applies contemporary interests to selected topics.

PART II BETTER TRAINING FOR THE FUTURE

Introduction

The reforms of the 1980s had the sensible aim of ensuring that teachers knew their subject and had some practical experience in teaching before taking up their posts. These aims, as Part I has shown, have been distorted by the education departments of the universities and the colleges of education. The PGCE undermines the very notion of subject mastery through the relentless application of recent theory to both its subject method course and its periods of teaching practice. The B.Ed courses, too, fail to ensure a proper knowledge of subjects, and instead substitute a set of dubious theoretical assumptions to be applied at every possible instance. While an 'all-graduate' profession remains a noble aspiration, in practice it is being achieved simply by a change of nomenclature. Those trained in the old training colleges are now awarded degree status, without reaching the standard of a university degree and without the essential teaching of their subject. Indeed, in many PGCE and B.Ed courses, it is possible for teachers to train – and be qualified – to teach subjects on which they have not concentrated at degree level.

What, therefore, is to be done? Given the way in which the education departments and colleges have thwarted the intentions of the 1980s reforms, it is of little use to make proposals which rely for their implementation on the existing system. A more radical change is needed, rather than merely attempting to amend courses as they stand. The Government's proposals which involve training on the job – the Licensed Teacher and Qualified Teacher schemes – are a step in the right direction (though they must be protected from the educationalists, as the Durham school-based pilot, which requires theory to be related to practice, clearly shows). However, these cannot remain other than the means for a minority of candidates to achieve teaching status. *Why cannot all teachers be trained on the job?* There is every reason to hope that this method would attract abler people into the profession, and produce better teachers. In France and Germany all teacher training is done on the job, and in New Jersey an on-the-job training scheme has attracted graduates of a far higher calibre than those who entered the profession

through the traditional route. A look at these ways of training teachers provides an example which Britain might follow.

The overseas examples

1. France

In teacher training, France preserves distinctions in academic backgrounds both between primary and secondary teachers, and among the secondary teachers themselves.

Primary teachers are trained on 3-year courses in *écoles normales*. In future they will be recruited on the basis of the *Diplôme d'Etudes Universitaires Générales* (DEUG), taken after two years of university studies. All secondary teachers are now graduates. They include a top stream, the *Agrégés*. These teachers have taken a 4-year university course leading to the *maîtrise*, followed by a further year at the end of which comes the *Agrégation*, a competitive academic examination. The other stream comprises those graduates who have taken a *licence* in the relevant discipline after three years at university. This has been followed by a year's professional training, leading to the CAPES (*Certificat d'Aptitude*) - a competitive examination in two parts: theory and practice.

All trainee secondary teachers become State employees. They are allocated to an *Académie* and paid the statutory salary of a teacher. They are trained for a year by teaching in school, having been allocated to a regional training centre (*Centre Pédagogique Régional*). Central government sets out the rules. The school work has two elements, *en responsabilité* and *en situation*. In the first, which is less common, the trainee teacher takes entire responsibility for teaching a class throughout the year - with a stint of 4-6 hours' teaching per week *stage en responsabilité*. (This was originally to be exceptional, but it has become more frequent.) In the second, he learns from an experienced teacher; and for 14-16 weeks he observes and teaches in that teacher's classes. In both cases, designated teachers in the school (*collège* or *lycée*) are responsible for, or supervise, the trainee. Only a small portion of time, about 20 days per year, are spent in the *Académie* on methodology and theory.

Training therefore involves teaching. The emphasis is academic, and directed towards subjects. Assessment for the

certifiés is on the basis of trainees giving a lesson to the classes taught *en responsabilité* and *en situation*, this being followed by discussion. The *agrégés*, however, are not assessed³¹.

2. Germany

In the Federal Republic of Germany, teachers begin their training in institutions of higher education: universities, art and music academies. All must have obtained the university entrance qualification *Abitur*. The university courses are on the subject specialism (two subjects at least) and include an educational component. Courses tend to concentrate on the type of school in which the teacher will teach and, in some *Länder*, the age group. The amount of time spent at university or training college is determined by the type of school in which the teacher will teach. Those who wish to teach at primary or at the less academic type of secondary schools (*Hauptschulen* or *Realschulen*) have courses lasting at least six-eight semesters. Candidates for *Gymnasien* teaching always take eight semesters. These studies conclude with the First State Examination - which is required for teaching.

Candidates then begin the second phase - which is a matter of practical work or training, with classes at school. They begin with observation and then take a limited number of specific classes, but do not have a full teaching load. The number of lessons may vary in each *Land* but in Nordrhein-Westfalen there are 10/12 lessons (lessons last 45 minutes). Candidates receive an allowance. At the same time they attend seminars at a teacher training centre (*Studienseminar*) which put forward the different theoretical positions. Candidates are assigned to a *mentor* in each subject, at the teacher training centre and at another school. The mentor is responsible for the candidate's training and will come

31 University courses fall into three cycles:

- (i) two years of compulsory and optional studies leading to a diploma, the D.E.U.G. (*Diplôme d'Etudes Universitaires Générales*)
- (ii) two years leading to a *licence* after the first and a *maîtrise* after the second
- (iii) either a one-year diploma, the D.E.S.S. (*Diplôme d'Etudes Supérieure Spécialisées*) or a three-year doctorate.

The entrance qualification to university is the *baccalauréat*; entry to the *grandes écoles* is competitive and entails post-baccalauréat work, often lasting up to three years (*cours préparatoires*). For further details, see *Centre d'Information et de Documentation Jeunesse (CIDJ)*, No 2.42, October 1989, *Instituteur* and 2.43 October 1989 *Professeur de Lycée et de Collège*.

to his lessons to observe, report, assess his teaching. Whereas the mentor at school works closely with and helps the candidate wherever possible, the *Fachleiter* from the teacher training centre sees the candidate at certain intervals over 25-30 visits. On the basis of these visits, a brief report will be written on the candidate's teaching performance and ability. This phase lets between 18 and 24 months (three to four school terms; a term is half a school year), and concludes with an examination: the second State examination, without which one cannot enter the teaching profession³². Once appointed to their first teaching post, teachers undergo up to a 5-year probation period, after which they may be appointed for life (*Beamte aus Lebenszeit*) employed by the *Land* (though not every teacher falls into this category). Pay and conditions – including the number of teaching hours and functions (which depend on the type of school) – are set out by the *Land* in accordance with federal guidelines.

3. New Jersey – the Provisional Teacher Programme

In New Jersey a scheme for on-the-job training was introduced in 1985 for highly qualified graduates whom the traditional entry route failed to attract. It has succeeded. Graduates with good academic records – subject specialists – and also minority group teachers and older people with wider experience have entered the profession. At the same time, the traditional route continues to be available; this is the 4-year liberal arts degree which includes some subject work, an educational element and some school practice. Today, two-thirds of the teachers continue to qualify by the traditional route.

The provisional teacher is employed by one of the 600 school boards on the basis of a letter of eligibility issued by the New Jersey Department of Education. The selection of teachers rests with the school district, but is often devolved to the school principals. After completing a full year of supervised teaching (and the required instruction at a regional centre) the teacher receives a standard certificate.

Provisional teachers are paid a minimum agreed scale of

32 Assessment is on the basis of a piece of written work (produced at home), an oral examination and on classroom teaching.

\$18,500, from which they in turn pay \$1,350 (7.3%) for the year's training (1988 figures).

The Provisional Teacher Programme (PTP) falls into three phases, each of which includes teaching in the classroom and such work as preparation and marking. The introduction to full-time responsibility is gradual, and early teaching takes place alongside an experienced teacher. Two evenings (later one) and a Saturday morning are spent at the Regional Centre on formal education courses. There is no link between the Centre and the school. In the second phase, the head (or experienced teacher) must visit one class each week and observe a lesson. At the end of this, a *formal evaluation* is required. In the third phase the teacher continues to teach and is observed by superiors – with formative assessment after ten months and summative evaluation after 30 months' full-time teaching³³.

In all, trainees have 200 hours of theory throughout the three phases. The content is in outlines provided by the New Jersey Department of Education, designed to answer a series of questions, the Boyer questions: 'What is essential for the Beginning Teacher to know about the Profession?' and 'How do effective teachers teach?' Three areas are covered: the curriculum – what is taught and how it is assessed; the student; the setting – the classroom and the school.

The course therefore consists of separate elements – mainly practical work and some theory – which do not overlap, unless the teacher brings both aspects together.

33.

- (i) The drop-out rate of provisional teachers in three years of the PTP scheme is lower than that for those trained by the traditional route.
- (ii) The amount of support given in the schools varies.
- (iii) There is no requirement for written work.
- (iv) Teachers remain in one school.
- (v) The teachers are paid.

What needs to be done

The examples of France and Germany, and of New Jersey, suggest that a move to *on-the-job* training for all graduates would improve the quality of applicant teachers and encourage good qualified graduates to enter the profession. Such a move has been foreshadowed in the DES' alternative proposals for QTS – the LTS and the ATS³⁴. However, these schemes as they stand will deliberately include only a minority of potential teachers. Since the attempt in the 1980s to reform the teacher training offered by the colleges and institutions of education has not only failed, but its intentions have been perverted, these institutions should have no more to do with teacher training.

The alternative to PGCE

Instead of taking PGCE, graduates would be sent to the schools to train on the job, designated to an experienced mentor – a senior teacher in the subject. Full guidelines for the hours to be spent in teaching; for observing, for taking sole responsibility would be drawn up. The mentor would attend the trainees' classes and guide their preparation and organisation of lessons. The trainee would have a lighter timetable than a trained teacher. One evening each week *could* be spent at classes which impartially presented the different educational theories and practices, along the lines of the NRW/German model. This would be done so as to favour no particular one; young teachers would thereby be able to accept or reject them in the light of their circumstances and aptitudes.

The existing Education Departments should be disbanded. Their members could be offered the choice of going into school-teaching at a senior level; of taking early retirement; or, if they were distinguished academically, of moving to the department of a university where their subject (English, maths, physics etc. is studied. Any saving in public funds might be used to pay the

³⁴ The reconstitution of CATE, and the emphasis on local committees' reporting to CATE on courses are further signs that even the DES is becoming dubious about leaving teacher training entirely to the professionals. Unfortunately, such small changes are unlikely to have much effect. DES Circular 24/89.

school-based mentors (and to pay members of other faculties e.g. history, philosophy, to present theoretical elements of education dispassionately in evening classes).

Training would last one year and the trainee be awarded his QTS, by assessment of his classroom teaching after a given period and of a simple written paper on theory to be set, and marked, by combined university departments. These graduates would choose to train in either secondary or primary schools and would be qualified to teach in whichever was chosen. It might be, for instance, that many married women graduates who had had first-hand experience of raising young children would wish to train to teach at primary school, although their academic qualifications would enable them to have become teachers at secondary school.

Replacing the B.Ed

The B.Ed fails to bring students to graduate standard in the subjects they will teach, and fails to provide the necessary grounding over a range of subjects. It should be abolished. Instead, former colleges or university departments of education should devote themselves to running a two-year course leading to a Certificate of Advanced Study. This would be of a higher standard than 'A' level. A range of central subjects – such as English, history, geography, maths, science, a foreign or ancient language – would be offered and students would choose to study two subjects to the standard of a first-year undergraduate joint honours degree and three subjects to, roughly, 'A' level standard. A non-academic subject, e.g. art or music, could be chosen instead of one of the three lower level courses.

The Certificate of Advanced Study would be a general qualification, not limited to those who intended to become teachers. It would be considered as a suitable preliminary qualification for teaching at primary (but not secondary) schools and would be followed by a year's on-the-job training at primary school (similar to that which graduates would do – see above). It would also offer a course of study to those who wanted to extend the range of subjects taken to 'A' level and beyond, prior to employment; and it would be attractive to those employers who wanted well-educated employees with a firm but broad foundation – and the confidence which that brings.

What such changes would achieve

There is no evidence that the current PGCE training courses serve as other than an impediment to good teaching at school. Good graduates are discouraged from entering the profession. They rightly consider the concentration on 'method' courses and theory to be time-wasting. The bright graduate knows that what is at the centre of teaching is his subject, and the desire to teach it to his pupils. He will be put off teaching by the emphases on the psychological and sociological side issues. Furthermore, he will find incompatible with his subject mastery and professional status the attempt by educationalists to impose one teaching method on all: to reduce the individual subject to the lowest common denominator of *skills* to be shared with other subjects.

In both Germany and France, and the New Jersey programme, graduates learn primarily to teach *on the job* over one or two years. Any theoretical element, or any non-practical training, is relegated either to off-duty hours or is a small proportion of the course – with absolutely no detriment to the quality of teaching. The experiment in New Jersey reveals that for the first time able graduates from the best universities are joining the teaching profession; and that the drop-out rate in on-the-job training is lower than that among those otherwise trained. An on-the-job training scheme would spur academically able graduates and subject specialists to teach, and teach well.

On-the-job training for primary teachers, following their Certificate of Advanced Study, would improve things radically. Primary teachers would spend their training time mastering the subjects which they will teach; and young children would have the benefit of being taught by teachers who themselves are educated. Moreover, the Certificate of Advanced Study might attract many bright students at present unwilling to join the profession: one which, being in no sense based on proper mastery of subjects, seems to be rudderless.

Teacher shortages: advantages of proposals

One advantage of cutting out the year's training course for graduates would be immediately to increase the number of teachers in school since, from the start of their training, apprentice teachers would actually be teaching. And the scheme would

open the profession to another group of potential teachers. Many able graduates wish to teach for a few years before entering some other profession. The need, at present, to spend a year as a PGCE student before they can begin to teach is a great obstacle to them which these new proposals would remove.

At primary level the shorter course, with on-the-job training, would have the same immediate effect – of increasing the number of teachers in the classrooms. More important, the proposals for a course of study for a Certificate open to all (serving as an alternative, shorter higher education) might attract more of our able young people to consider the possibility of teaching. The quality, morale and status of the primary teacher, too, would be enhanced if, instead of taking narrow educational courses in training colleges, which they alone take, their Certificate of Advanced Study was regarded as a valuable qualification both for the classroom and for life outside it.

The problem of teachers' pay

Lengthy, doctrinaire and demoralising training is, of course, only one of the factors which discourage good entrants to the teaching profession. Another is low pay. To some extent, these proposals to reform teacher training will alleviate the problem of teacher shortages, in that as soon as the new graduate or new Certificate of Advanced Study-holder starts teaching, he is paid. This change will not, however, help experienced teachers – many of whom feel that their skills and efforts are not rewarded financially, as they would be in other professions.

Until teachers' salaries cease being set nationally, and until individual schools are allowed to negotiate salaries individually with their staff, it is hard to see how good teachers will be adequately paid. A reform along these lines need not be expensive for the taxpayer (especially if money wasted on local authority bureaucracy and support services was re-directed towards the teachers themselves). This is a further and most important measure which the CPS is set on studying.

Conclusion

One of the principal causes of the shortage of highly-qualified, able teachers, is the present system of training. It deters good graduate specialists from entering the profession, and it undermines the subject specialism of those who do.

Instead of putting mastery of the subject at the heart of the course, as the essential foundation for good teaching, the training courses demean the subject to being little more than a peg on which to hang modish educational theory. Moreover, unlike other professions where mastery of the subject is followed by practice on the job (whereby the individual develops the methods which suit him best), teacher training courses seek to impose the same style on all teachers, for all subjects, for all children. Nor is this method supported by a record of success. On the contrary, it is the legatee of recent educational theories which have contributed much to decline in standards.

Nor has the move to an all-graduate profession ensured that all teachers are of graduate standard. Far from it. Primary training – principally the B.Ed – fails even to provide an adequate grounding in the subjects the teacher will expound in the classroom, and falls far short of the graduate standard one would wish to see for individual subjects. Moreover, like the PGCE, the B.Ed undermines the very possibility of good subject teaching, by its elevation of educational theory over the practice of teaching and the value of the subjects taught.

This pamphlet proposes that both PGCE and B.Ed courses be abolished – and with them the university departments of education. Instead, graduates will, as happens in other professions, train on the job and be paid a salary from the outset. Like the doctor and the lawyer, the teacher will be academically qualified and will develop his own style of practice. In place of the present three- or four-year B.Ed courses, there should be a two-year Certificate of Advanced Study which both extends the range of 'A' level subjects and allows for some further study in depth. The Certificate of Advanced Study would be recognised as an academic qualification for primary teachers – but would also be a valuable qualification for other careers. Those who went on to teach would, like graduates, train for a year on the job.

The effect of such a change on teacher shortages would be dramatic. Instantly the number of graduates reaching the classrooms would be increased. Abler graduates would give serious consideration to entering what is, after all, one of the noblest professions. Quantity and quality of teachers would benefit alike.

Appendix: 'subject' courses

Sciences

The aims of *Birmingham's* biology course suggest that it is very much less concerned with biology *per se*, than with issues such as 'achieving success as a science teacher'. And with other educational issues, too; for example, 'the relationship between biology and health education, the incorporation of social and applied aspects of biology into teaching, and the importance of conceptual development and language in science' – all these receive special mention. Not only will there be next to no instruction in kindred subjects such as physics or chemistry, but even biology will have been eclipsed by social science.³⁵

In the *Cambridge* S2 chemistry course the emphasis is 'not on learning, teaching the knowing chemistry but on 'reinforcing the notion that learning and teaching Chemistry can be fun . . . linked to modes of co-operative learning using laboratory investigations, teacher demonstrations and group seminar papers'.³⁶

The integrated science course in *Durham*, taken as a second subject, does not aim to make sure that students without a degree in each of the individual sciences make up some of the gaps in their knowledge. Rather, it aims to 'increase awareness of some of the main concepts . . . to encourage students to develop a reasoned and positive approach towards . . . "Science for All" . . . broaden their professional horizons and develop expertise in the teaching of science in a wider context than that only of their undergraduate specialism'.³⁷

In *Manchester*, the 'science education' course is designed not to make up the lost ground on individual subjects but 'to reflect the communality of interests shared by the four science groups and complements the subject courses'. The aim of the chemistry methods course is 'to assist students to become effective teachers of science through the acquisition of important concepts, skills and attitudes. The course proceeds by group discussion over two broad areas. The "Science" aspect provides opportunities to consider lower school chemistry . . . The "Teaching and

35 *Education*, pp. 7-9, 11, 13-14.

36 PGCE, University of Cambridge Faculty of Education, pp. 16-17.

37 *Handbook*, Durham, p. 43.

Learning" aspect takes account of such topics as the matching of methods to content, the manipulative skills of pupils and styles of presentation'.³⁸

In *Warwick* the objects of the chemistry course are 'to train students to approach their teaching scientifically, to experience different approaches to different age groups, abilities and multicultural situations, to be aware of the resources of educational technology in relation to their specialist teaching . . .'. The emphasis in maths is on the principles and practice of teaching maths and on showing that the subject 'can be presented in an interesting and lively way'. The subsidiary science course is aimed at 'confidence' rather than knowledge. By selecting 'suitable topics and laboratory work' to 'build up confidence in teaching in fields of science which may not have been included in their degree studies'.³⁹

Humanities

In the *Cambridge* (S1) PGCE, the English main course is based, not on mastering the subject but 'on the principle of workshop activity. Students . . . participate in drama work and personal writing. Skills are developed in education technology'. In classics, students will not principally be prepared to teach the classics but rather to teach classical studies⁴⁰. In the first term, the emphasis is on 'school experience . . . teaching materials . . . audio-visual aids and computers . . .'. In history students acquire, not historical knowledge, or a more extensive knowledge about the past, but 'a range of teaching approaches including the use of source materials, audio-visual aids, the Schools History Project 13-16, computers, work sheets . . . drama and role-play' and, in the final term, 'wider issues such as . . . teaching in a multicultural society'. In S2 music the emphasis is on music 'involving a wide range of styles from a variety of cultures . . . [and] detailed study of such issues as "Curriculum planning", "How children learn music", "Music in a Multi-cultural Society"'.⁴¹

In *Durham*, the history specialist course, based on lectures,

38. PGCE, University of Manchester Department of Education, pp.9, 11.

39. *One Year PGCE 1989-90*. University of Warwick Faculty of Educational Studies and Institute of Education, pp.16-17.

40. Classics graduates need no more than 'A' level Latin!

41. PGCE, Cambridge pp.9,10,18.

seminars, workshop sessions, micro-teaching, role play and field trips, emphasises organisation and artifacts rather than content. It includes topics such as 'role-playing, war-gaming and simulations, fieldwork visits, history in a multi-cultural society, history within integrated courses'. Assessment does not set out to measure whether the student has mastered the subject sufficiently to teach it confidently, or even whether he can manage the preparation and teaching of a history lesson to, say, an average ability class. Rather assessment is on the basis of 'a lesson preparation aimed at slow learning/remedial pupils . . . Fieldwork . . . An evaluation of the GCSE . . . [and] A primary source/detective exercise incorporating GCSE level marking'. One need know hardly any history to appear plausible on such assessment. Moreover, the recommended reading takes no account whatever of the ways in which history has been perceived from the time of Thucydides until the last 20 years. The reading list is one which advocates exclusively the new history – relativist and skills-based – where content and chronology no longer command the centre stage⁴².

There is no suggestion in the *Manchester* PGCE English curriculum and methods course that there is a subject which students should have mastered sufficiently in order to teach. Rather, the course is set in the context of the 'striking contrasts in styles and approaches required by variations in ability, ethnicity and social background [which] have produced almost every educational philosophy and most conceptions of English teaching in the schools and colleges' to be found near to the department. The course aims to provide students 'with the knowledge of resources techniques, practice and informed opinion in English teaching to meet these contrasting demands'⁴³.

In *York*, the Modern Languages course 'aims to develop a critical awareness of theory and practice in . . . language teaching' and assessment is on the basis of 'a critical evaluation of published teaching materials . . . the production of materials ancillary to them . . . an essay and *viva voce* on course reading'⁴⁴.

42. PGCE, University of Durham, pp.41-2.

43. PGCE, Manchester, p.8.

44. PGCE in Education at the University of York. University of York Department of Education, July 1988, pp.12-14.

A selection of recent studies

AWAY WITH LEAs ILEA abolition as a pilot Sheila Lawlor	£3.95
CORRECT CORE simple curricula for English, maths and science Sheila Lawlor	£3.90
AIMS OF SCHOOLING the importance of grounding Oliver Letwin	£3.95
THE CONSERVATIVE COMMUNITY the roots of Thatcherism – and its future Robin Harris	£4.95
SET FOOD MARKETS FREE repeal the Agricultural Marketing Acts Richard Pool and Andrew Threipland	£4.95
CITY TECHNOLOGY COLLEGES potentialities and perils David Regan	£3.50
GIVING ways to encourage charities more Nicholas True	£4.95

A subscription to the Centre

Also available from the Centre: associateship for £35 (or £30 for banker's order). This includes a minimum of ten policy studies published every twelve months, whose average cover price will be £4.95; occasional papers and previous publications (while still in print) at half price; and half-price fees for the seminars, colloquia, conferences etc. which the Centre regularly holds. For full details please write or telephone to the Secretary to the Associates, CPS, 8 Wilfred Street, London SW1E 6PL (01-630-5818).