EDITORIAL

PREPARING PROFESSIONALS FOR 45 YEARS OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

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Our focus in this edition is Initial Teacher Education / Initial Teacher Training. I have included both terms but would suggest that they are far from being synonyms. The terms 'Education' and 'Training' capture two very different mindsets. The former connects with the journey from initiate through structured professional development creating adaptable, collaborative contributors to the educational enterprise. The latter, and I cannot eclipse this image, seems to connect with the Channel 5 TV series *Dogs Behaving (Very) Badly* with master canine trainer Graeme Hall correcting the challenging behaviours of deviant dogs.

Without wishing to labour the point our world has changed and has done so at an exponential rate. For example, a moment's reflection on the emergence of China as the workshop of the world has huge implications for our society, economy and our schools especially in the area of curriculum design and development. The map of Europe is being redrawn by Putin adopting a policy of lebensraum and we have endured two years of the pandemic. Fifty years ago, 80% of the population made or moved something now it is less than 10%. Most of our workforce are making their jobs up as they go along. Generating workers for the leisure and tourism industry can only soak up so many of the industrially dispossessed.

Much of our current planning in education and this includes how we create sustainable, world-class cohorts of educators is moribund. Policy makers and indeed many theorists still seem to work on the assumption that the future will be a modified version of the past, a version 2.0 of the 1950s. Such a view is a triumph of optimism over reality. The article by Dr. Bethany Kelly widens and deepens this crucial issue of teacher identity.

In a Department of Education statement announcing the establishment of a College of Teaching, Secretary of State for Education, the late (but not always lamented) Rt. Hon. Gavin Williamson, commented:

> When I visit schools around the country, it is clear that the very best combine high standards of pupil behaviour and discipline with a broad knowledge-based and ambitious curriculum, so that every child can learn and flourish (Williamson 2021a).

He reiterated his plans when he spoke in the April of the same year at the 2021 Annual Conference of teaching union NASUWT declaring:

Teaching School Hubs which will be centres of excellence for delivering these teacher development reforms and our new Institute of Teaching will be the cornerstone of these reforms. Together these are going to set up career-long development from trainee teacher through to executive headship (Williamson 2021 b).

He was to add:

More needs to be done to improve teacher training as the 'single most important factor' in schooling is the quality of the teacher (Williamson 2021).

Arguably, at this point his days in this role were numbered. Shortly after this, his partnership with the education recovery commissioner, Sir Kevan Collins, was to end with the latter's resignation. In his letter of resignation Collins focussed on his disappointment of the limited funding being given to the recovery plan. His letter also contained the following illuminating paragraph:

I believe our approach to recovery should also offer children opportunities to re-engage with sport, music and the rich range of activities that define a great education. I proposed extending school time as a way to provide this breadth, as well as to ensure that additional academic support does not cause existing enrichment activities to be squeezed out (Collins 2021)

A previous incumbent of the role of Secretary of State for Education was of course the Rt. Hon. Michael Gove. Gove was a driven man working against the clock, significantly Bennett (2019) entitled his biography *Michal Gove a man in a hurry.* Alongside his velocity were a suite of deeply held convictions allied to a series of distinctive personality traits. I would argue that there was a degree of compartmentalisation in his thinking and that these components showcased a lack of personal integration and in turn created policy that generated a sense bewilderment amongst those who were concerned with implementation.

Consider, by way of illustration, the following three of his initiatives:

- There had been a longstanding political will to create semi-autonomous state funded schools which were excised from the control of local authorities. This had largely ground to a halt under the Labour Party. Gove, 'defibrillated' the

process and increased academisation with considerable success. The management of that change did however create levels of rancour amongst the teaching community.

- At the 2010 Conservative Party Conference he announced a vision for the school curriculum which included an emphasis on pre twentieth century literature. This was for both primary and secondary phases.
- Concurrently, he sponsored legislation which disapplied academies from the requirements of the National Curriculum.

This was a 'tumble dryer' of political leadership, framed around accelerating structural reform whilst concurrently introducing idiosyncratic curriculum change. This suggests a lack of coherence in his reforms and it created both confusion and anger amongst many educational stakeholders.

Taken together it becomes immediately apparent that there is very little consensus by politicians and their associates around the nature of education. Words cascade even in these few quotations they include; training, the rich range of activities that define a great education, schooling, knowledge-based curriculum, pre twentieth century literature, disapplication from the requirements of the National Curriculum, academisation, quality of the teacher, executive headship and teaching school hubs, enrichment activities and ambitious curriculum.

Moving to a wider stage the Organisation for Economic Development (OECD) was a prime mover in the promotion of standardised testing in schools with the creation of models of standardised testing and the development of international comparison tables around educational performance. This project, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), has been very influential in creating national educational policies and often in imparting an unhelpful sense of national shame. Its chief architect is the OECD statistician Andreas Schleicher. Watching his TED Talk (2013) there is a seductive glissando from his rapidly presented and complex data into an education philosophy which is all his own. Goldstein (2014), the respected educational statistician from the University of Bristol, offered this critique of PISA and of Schleicher in particular:

> In fact, as Dr Schleicher well knows but refuses to acknowledge, PISA results in themselves are unable to tell us why particular countries do well or badly, and the results are typically interpreted by policymakers in order to justify their own existing predilections for curriculum reform. As we suggested in our letter, this is a good time for OECD to reflect on its PISA (and similar) programmes by suspending the next round of testing and instituting a global debate that involves all stakeholders.

A couple of years ago I was having a coffee with a former colleague, Dr. Trevor Male at the Institute of Education. We discovered that we both used a variants of the same quiz and asked students on post graduate education courses to name six learning theories, not explain them, but just name them. The results were beyond lamentable. If I had the same low level of responses from a medical doctor around their core practice I would be out of the consulting room as fast as my complaint would allow me. These students were both intelligent and in key school-based roles. It was not their failure, but rather, it reflects the lack of coherent thinking around what makes an effective educator. Teacher training is about developing classroom apprentices. Teacher education generates professionals for the now and the not yet.

This edition does not claim to provide a manifesto for the creating educational professionals but looks at some possibilities, deficiencies, issues and origins. It ranges from a deeply informative overview of teacher education by Dr. Brian Marsh, through to the advocacy of psychologically informed practice by Laura Purser and concludes with a surprising retrospective on teacher standards by Professor Anthony O'Hear. James McBlane provides a window into the world of international education and teacher stardards.

Personally, this edition has a tinge of sadness. It is the last one under my editorship. I am leaving the role to resolve some health issues. However, I am delighted that our assistant editor, Mark Deacon is taking things forward as the new editor. It has been a delight both to work on the journal with Mark, Jonathan Reuvid MA (Editor in Chief, University of Buckingham Press), and Tom Chalmers Tom Chalmers, (Managing Director at Legend Times). Particular thanks must also go to our Dean of Education, Professor Barnaby Lenon CBE for his support and encouragement.

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