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## Foreword

In Andrew Davies's comic novel *A Very Peculiar Practice*, one Trimble, an education lecturer described as a 'miserable derelict', seeks advice from his university medical centre. He is in despair at being told he must gain 'classroom credibility' – the official term was 'recent and relevant experience' – by going back into school teaching as a result of the strictures of CATE, the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education. The doctor he consults realises Trimble teaches for what he calls the 'Mickey Mouse' degree, discovers he has not set foot in a school for 15 years, and concludes 'some would say you've got it coming to you'.

Encapsulated in this uncomfortably amusing vignette are some familiar problems: the negative perception of the teacher trainer ('those who can, do', etc.); the dilemmas surrounding 'recent and relevant' experience (how recent? how relevant?); and the patent scorn in universities for education as a subject ('aren't we all educationists?'). So: Who should train teachers? Where should the training take place? What sort of qualification should the training result in? These and other questions are the concern of this new collection of papers on teacher education.

Initial teacher education is complex and contested territory. As a branch of higher education it is both theoretical and practical – 'pure' and 'applied', as it were – but fully satisfies neither theorists nor practitioners. It is susceptible to political demands, to carping criticism from all sectors, and to the weakness of its institutional insecurity. And yet it is of central importance in the business of education and deserving of full scholarly inquiry, as the contributions to this present book, individually and collectively, clearly demonstrate. They should be of interest to policy-makers, to university teachers (not just those specialising in education), and to headteachers and others engaged in the important business of training in the classroom.

A particular interest in the collection is the comparison throughout between approaches to teacher education in Germany and England. Many of the themes covered resonate with my experience of schools and teacher education in the two

countries over a long career. In the German context education as an academic subject has its foundation in the Humboldtian tradition – in *Wissenschaft*, in ‘science’ in the sense conveyed by *scientia*. Of course trainee teachers should be exposed to the major contributing disciplines of philosophy, sociology, psychology, history. How can a teacher be properly trained without such intellectual underpinning? In the English context pragmatism prevails. Courses might well draw upon psychology and sociology (principally), but of course the dominant focus should be on application, on preparation for the classroom, in part on what Andrew Davies’s sceptical doctor refers to dismissively as ‘lectures on how to control the seething masses’. The result, however, is on the one hand criticism of the first phase of teacher education in Germany for being too remote from practice, too unashamedly abstract and theoretical; and on the other criticism of what is taught in England as being too intellectually undemanding, too focused on practical pedagogy, on the what and how of teaching rather than the why. With the diminishing role of universities in teacher education in England, this is likely to be an increasing problem in terms of the way the intellectual quality of training is perceived.

In the early 1970s I was a teacher in a Bavarian *humanistisches Gymnasium*. The professional standing of my colleagues there was demonstrably high and the teaching was both formal and intellectually rigorous. What stood in stark contrast to my previous experience as a teacher in an English grammar school and in a comprehensive school, however, was the legal framework within which the day-to-day activities of the school were framed. This ‘juridification’ (*Verrechtlichung*) of provision in education is not a phenomenon with which British teachers (at all levels) have traditionally had to cope, though since the late 1980s more and more has been required by regulation and statute, and of course inspection and evaluation have become major industries which affect all institutions in the public sector and beyond.

There is much in this volume on governance and structure, and the coverage includes a rich variety of themes of importance to an understanding of the many challenges confronting teacher education in the two countries: among them the legal framework, reform initiatives, interpretation of the Bologna Process, partnerships, employment and teacher status and professionalism, the role of the university, the tensions between theory and practice, evaluation, inspection, and accountability, and standards and quality issues.

In early 1991 I was appointed as a member of a commission of the *Wissenschaftsrat* which reported on the future of teacher education in what were then the new *Länder* of re-unified Germany. One of the particularities of teacher education in the German Democratic Republic had been its one-phase structure (*Einphasigkeit*) in contrast to the two-phase approach in West Germany (*Zweiphasigkeit*). And

yet it seemed that decisions had already been made – at an early stage – to move to the western model. I recorded in my notes: ‘The threatening *Zweiphasigkeit* ... will probably remove from [the teacher trainers] that close contact with school practice which they consider to be the great strength – rightly so – of their contribution to teacher education’ (Phillips 2000, p. 119). That close (*praxisnah*) relationship with the classroom was evident during the work of a later commission of which I was a member, when it investigated education (*Erziehungswissenschaft*) as an academic subject in higher education in Baden-Württemberg, the only *Bundesland* to retain the separate identity of its teacher training institutions (*Pädagogische Hochschulen*). The *Pädagogische Hochschulen* struck this observer as egregiously successful in what they were achieving; the monoculture in which they were operating facilitated a focus that would have been dissipated if they had been incorporated into universities as institutes or departments with a denigrated status.

In England I experienced as a teacher trainer the changes which followed the requirements of CATE and I took part in the lengthy discussions in Oxford which resulted in its renowned ‘internship’ model of teacher education, a model based on the very closest co-operation between the university and local schools. That model, masterminded by Harry Judge, the inspirational director of the education department, led the way for other universities anxious to develop essentially school-based styles of postgraduate teacher education. Its strengths lay in co-operation between the local education authority, the schools, and the university, with the understanding that the university-school relationship was an equal partnership, each side contributing from its agreed strengths. This was in obvious contrast to the previous model – effectively comprising a first term (*Trimester*) in the university, followed by a term of ‘teaching practice’ in a school and a final term in the university again. When I was a Diploma in Education student in Oxford in the mid-1960s the schools to which students were attached were spread across the country and were almost exclusively grammar and independent schools. In retrospect this seems extraordinarily anomalous, given the fact that England was rapidly dismantling the grammar schools in favour of comprehensive models: it took until the 1980s for substantial changes to be introduced that placed the school attachment at the centre of the training process, with students spending two-thirds of a 36-week year teaching in schools.

The notion of partnership between institutions seems to me to be the most promising way forward in both countries. There is also scope for increased collaborative research and discussion in the hope that each country can learn something of value from the experience of the other, an aspiration evident in the aims of the established Anglo-German Educational Research group (see [aerg.org](http://aerg.org)). This important collection of papers from experts in both countries provides a valuable base for further such collaborative inquiry and debate.

## References

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