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**School Direct, a policy for Initial Teacher Training in England: Plotting a principled pedagogical path through a changing landscape**

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## **School Direct, a policy for Initial Teacher Training in England: plotting a principled pedagogical path through a changing landscape**

### **Abstract**

This paper explores the role of teacher educators in schools and universities in England and the changes that have arisen within the field of Initial Teacher Training (ITT) as a result of the Coalition government's (2010 onwards) School Direct initiative. The discussion which follows and the conclusions suggested are live, current and of pivotal interest to all universities with ITT programmes, as well as all schools involved in the delivery of ITT, and all parties with a policy interest in the supply of effective teacher education. After setting the context, the discussion starts with a critical examination of ITT policy in England over the course of the last 20 years. We then consider troubling binaries inherent in teacher education and go on to explore insights from research: the importance of beliefs; the problem of enactment; the theory/practice divide. These are then used to craft the enabling constraints for third-space activity designed to set in motion a hybridisation process from which a new breed of teacher educator could emerge. We suggest that university and school colleagues working together in collaborative partnership can provide a principled pedagogical path through a changing landscape of education policy.

**Keywords:** teacher educator; School Direct; enabling constraints; third space; collaborative practice

## **Introduction**

The present situation in England (2015) presents a complex landscape of many different routes into teaching. This paper looks at aspects of the effects of recent (2010 onwards) government policies on ITE (Initial Teacher Education) in England and, in particular, in the context of the Secondary school PGCE (Postgraduate Certificate in Education) route. It will be noticed that the term ITT (Initial Teacher Training) is mainly used throughout the paper, not because of the authors' predilection for this term but because it has been the favoured way of describing the preparation for the teaching profession by the Coalition government which came to power in England in 2010. Following the UK General Election in 2010, no party had an overall majority of the votes and a coalition composed of members of both the Conservative Party and the Liberal Democrats was formed. The difference between the education of teachers and the training of teachers is of vital significance to the arguments presented here, as are the role of the university, the need for effective partnerships between universities and schools, and indeed the very notion of teaching as a profession at all. The catalyst for the paper is School Direct. School Direct (SD) is a government initiative within the field of ITT in England (Department for Education, 2012). It is an approach to ITT which gives schools control over recruiting and training their own teachers (National College for Teaching and Leadership, 2014) and invites them to bid directly to the government for training places. With the allocation of a place comes the funding that would previously have gone to a university. However, to be able to train, schools are required to work in partnership with an accredited ITT provider (Teaching Agency, 2012); this is likely to be a university, especially if Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and a Postgraduate

Certificate in Education (PGCE) are the intended target awards (Department for Education, 2012). Such a change entails not only a much reduced income stream for universities, but also places schools in the role of principal course designers and deliverers of ITT programmes in what will become a school-led, rather than a university-led training system.

By diverting the flow of ITT funding from universities to schools, the SD programme potentially represents the most far-reaching change in ITT in England since Circular 9/92 (Department for Education, 1992) which not only required universities to pay schools for placements, but also stipulated that students spend two thirds of their training in school. From a university's standpoint, the current SD context is even more complex and demanding than in 1992, particularly with respect to financial viability and high-stakes Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education – in England) inspections. Unifying the university and the school consortia (associations of partner schools) is the same award, namely the university's PGCE, but there are also some divisive forces, some of them market-led; for example, the consortia and the university are all fishing in the same pool for their supply of PGCE students and each consortium has a different preference for the level of university involvement in their training, if indeed any. To compound an already complex situation, the university is held responsible, in inspection terms, for the quality of the training leading to the award of its PGCE (Ofsted, 2011a), regardless of the context and its level of involvement; furthermore, this is an inspection regime where the former 'outstanding' grade is now 'good' and the former 'good' is now 'requires improvement' (Ofsted, 2011b). But the university does not only face formidable challenges over high-stakes inspections and the resulting performance tables (Smithers and Robinson, 2011);

there is also a clear-cut financial threat: 'If schools don't rate their provision, they [universities] will go out of business' (Gove, 2012). Thus the combination of the SD allocation methodology (Teaching Agency, 2012) with the shift in finance and control to schools, together with a more rigorous inspections methodology (Ofsted, 2011b), has the potential to produce a changed landscape for university ITT providers, making it very difficult to ensure quality of provision and plan for the longer term.

In what follows we propose a developmental framework that is designed to plot a principled pedagogical path through this changing landscape. The drawing up of the developmental framework comprises four distinct, but cumulative stages. First of all, we examine the current context of ITT policy in England utilising a metaphor from Trowler (2003) of policy having a career that is shaped by the different actors involved and 'who exist in a matrix of differential, although not simply, hierarchic power' (Saunders, cited in Trowler, 2003, p.129). To facilitate insights into the power relationships at play in ITT, we use the lens of what Haggis (2009) terms 'troubling binaries' such as theory/practice, university-led/ school-led, and training/education to help to frame the current policy context in the light of ITT's career path over the last 20 years. We then go on to explore some key findings from research into ITT over the past 35 years. The aim is to provide a basis for 'principled practice' (Kubler LaBoskey, 2005); that is to say, an approach to the training of teachers that is based on research, rather than on political whim or pragmatic expediency. These research findings not only provide a compass to help plot a principled pedagogical path through SD, they also give a strong indication of the type of guide required in order to negotiate the new terrain of ITT. We then explore this point further by narrowing the focus of the research findings onto the 'trials of transition' (Field, 2012) from

school teacher to teacher educator. Here we outline some of potential challenges facing school teachers who, as a result of the SD programme, will now be undertaking a more thoroughgoing role in the training of teachers than has hitherto been the case. This section ends by making the case for the development of a hybridisation process for school-based and university-based teacher educators. Finally, drawing on activity theory (Y. Engeström, R. Engeström and Kärkkäinen, 1995; Engeström and Sannino, 2010), we suggest a framework for collaborative activity in which all involved in both SD and the current conventional PGCE based in the university can work together in a 'third space' (Zeichner, 2010a) to secure high-quality training whilst, at the same time, honouring the diversity of the partners and their contexts, as well as the policy constraints. At the heart of the proposal is what, at first sight, might appear to be an oxymoron; and that is the concept of 'enabling constraints' (Davis and Sumara, 2006, p. 147). Once the limiting framework – the constraint - has been set, then anything is potentially possible, allowing new understandings to emerge. So the task is the skilful crafting of constraints (Davis and Sumara, 2001) to set up an SD framework in which the sum of the parts is greater than the whole.

### **The Career of ITT in England**

The process of 'being' and 'becoming' a teacher has changed dramatically over the course of the last decade (Max, cited in McIntyre, 2009. According to Ball (2003) the public sector is immersed in a culture of 'performativity'. Inspection, league tables, national frameworks and compliance – all underpinned by large doses of 'political realism' (Furlong, McNamara, Campbell, Howson and Lewis, 2008) – do not sit easily with professional autonomy and discretion. Furthermore, with the

commodification of teacher education (Zeichner, 2010b) the impression left is that it is all about value for money and not values. The ideology of new managerialism with the emphasis on accountability and target setting, not to mention cost-effectiveness which tends to override values, can have a corrosive effect on one's professionalism and, above all, on one's pedagogy. Furthermore the notion that 'Teaching is a craft and it is best learnt as an apprentice observing a master craftsman or woman' (Gove, 2010) raises the fundamental question of what a teacher is.

Is there a future for university-led teacher education in England? On the basis of Ofsted's inspection findings for ITT in the period 2008/11 (Ofsted, 2012), then the answer is an unequivocal 'yes'. Here the headline finding was of more outstanding practice in HEI (Higher Education Institution) -led provision (47% of providers) than in the school-centred partnerships or employment-based routes (23%); furthermore, 78% of all teachers trained during this period (2008/11) were in HEI-led provision. For the House of Commons Education Committee the loss of university involvement in ITT would impoverish provision because, in their view, evidence from the UK and abroad suggests that deep school/university partnerships based on theory and research produce the best training outcomes (House of Commons Education Committee, 2012, p.9). Unfortunately, these findings have had no impact on government policy in England; the ITT-specific implementation plan (Department for Education, 2011a), which followed on from the government's White Paper, The Importance of Teaching (Department for Education, 2010), is uncompromising in the direction of travel towards school-based and school-led training.



All of the above ITT-related developments are tethered to the assumption that school-based and school-led is best, despite the evidence to the contrary from Ofsted. Here is an example of what Ball (1994) calls 'policy as discourse' that not only represents reality, but starts to create it as well, a controlling voice where 'only certain voices can be heard as meaningful or authoritative' (Ball, 1994, p. 23). In the 2010 White Paper (Department for Education, 2010) from which many of these developments flow, it is possible to discern what Evans (2011) describes as a 'lop-sided approach' that places the emphasis more on teachers' behaviours, for example certain strategies they must adopt, rather than on teachers' attitudes and what she terms their 'intellectuality'. Many key texts on the pedagogy of teacher education underscore, certainly over the last 35 years or so, the complexities of teaching, learning and, above all, learning to be a teacher (see for example: Beck and Kosnik, 2006; Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2005; Korthagen, 2001; Lortie, 1975; Loughran, 2006; Russell and Loughran, 2007).

So the question of which pedagogical path to follow in this political landscape arises. How do we build awareness that one of the great deceptions of teaching – as indeed is the case of any highly-developed skill – is that the easier it looks, the more complex and refined the underlying skills are likely to be? How do we deal with what Bruner (2001, p.49) describes as the 'folk theories' of education?

To attempt to answer some of these questions it is necessary to come to terms with what Haggis and other proponents of complexity theory would describe as 'troubling binaries' (Davis and Sumara, 2001; Haggis, 2008); school/university, complex/simple, formal/informal, uni-vocality/multi-vocality, linear/non-linear,

theory/practice and teacher training/teacher education. The last binary contains within it the embers of the smouldering debate mentioned above as to whether to train or educate teachers (Mansell, 2010). We suggest a need to look towards promoting more collaborative provision rather than cooperative provision (Edwards and Mutton, 2007); that is, schools and university may work 'with' each other, but not 'together' in the sense of designing, developing, delivering and evaluating programmes together in deep and meaningful ways. The challenge is to find a pedagogical path between government policy, the latest inspection regime and the wash-back effect of these on university in-house quality assurance regimes. Here there is danger that the latter not only privilege uniformity, compliance and control over diversity, professional discretion and autonomy but also tend to view professional development as a transmissive product rather than a transformational process. These practices hinder more than help the promotion of a truly collaborative provision. Drawing extensively on Fenwick, Nerland and Jensen (2012, p.11), the challenge, in the midst of market and managerial discourse relating to standards and quality, is how to exploit the 'messy multiplicities' of professional learning for the benefit of all in our school/ university partnerships – pupils, school staff, student teachers and university staff – in such a way that the sum of the parts is greater than the whole. How can we convert a 'working with' situation into a 'working together' one in which complexity is not flattened and teacher education not reduced to technical rationalist tasks (Furlong, Barton, Miles, Whiting and Whitty, 2006, p.43)? To avoid a reduction to technical rationalist tasks, then it is vital to have a shared understanding amongst SD partners, student teachers and university staff of some of the key research findings relating to the complexities and challenges of becoming a teacher. In what follows we isolate out key issues - the role of beliefs, the

theory/practice divide and the 'problem of enactment' (Kennedy, 1999) - and then return to them later to discuss how they can be used to frame subsequent third-space activity.

### **Beliefs: Limiting or liberating?**

Borg (2011, P.370) suggests that beliefs are 'propositions individuals consider to be true and ... often tacit'. Beliefs are significant, not only because they form a prominent part of the teacher education literature, but also because it could be argued that beliefs have featured tacitly in the discussion thus far in the form of beliefs masquerading as propositional knowledge; for example the tactical ignoring of Ofsted's evidence-based findings by the English government, highlighted above. The significance of beliefs is further emphasised by Borg (2011) who goes on to suggest that they 'provide a basis for action, and are resistant to change.' If this is so, then, their influence in the sphere of teacher education is arguably profound. As with most aspects of teacher education, there is a direct correlation between teacher learning and general learning (Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2005); and beliefs are no exception in this respect in that they can limit or liberate the learner (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Yet whatever the role of beliefs, there appears to be one clear conclusion: they are omnipresent and omnipotent, often without our registering their presence in the form of what Brookfield (1995) calls 'paradigmatic assumptions'. The result is that our paradigmatic assumptions can either inhibit or ignite the learning; one's personal learning as a teacher, as well as pupil learning. Pajares (1992) provides a powerful description of beliefs that

would seem to suggest that they could be described as the ‘Scarlet Pimpernel’ of teacher education, due to their elusive nature:

They travel in disguise and often under alias- attitudes, values, judgments, axioms, opinions, ideology, perceptions, conceptions, conceptual systems, preconceptions, dispositions, implicit theories, explicit theories, personal theories, internal mental processes, action strategies, rules of practice, practical principles, perspectives, repertoires of understanding, and social strategy, to name but a few that can be found in the literature. (p. 309)

A key danger is that beliefs masquerade as knowledge in the form of Brookfield’s paradigmatic assumptions. Parajes (1992) argues strongly that beliefs, because they are so deeply ingrained, are not changed by theory and counter arguments but by a ‘conversion or gestalt [sic] shift’ (p.311). There is also evidence to suggest that student teachers’ beliefs about teaching and learning are predominately that of a transmission model (Wang and Odell, 2002, p.487). Pre-course beliefs are also not only powerful predictors of course outcomes (Hollingsworth, 1989), but also have a strong impact on future career development (Hagger, Burn and Mutton, 2008; Mutton, Burn and Hagger, 2010).

### **Theory and Practice: Mind the gap!**

The literature on the theory/practice divide is as legion as the literature on beliefs. (see for example, Bronkhorst, Meijer, Koster and Vermunt, 2011; Cochran-Smith and Power, 2010; Darling-Hammond, Newton and Wei, 2010; McIntyre, 2009). In its

purest form the theory-practice divide entails learning theoretical approaches to teaching in the university and then trying to put them into practice in the school context. The university provides some sort of idealised vision and students attempt to enact it in the classroom. Although idealised visions of teaching underpinned by the latest research can act as an engine for change and inspiration (Rosaen and Schram, 1998), if this idealised vision is not shared, designed and developed with the schools then the student teacher ends up playing pedagogical piggy-in-the-middle, buffeted by the waves of methodological dissonance. Such an approach often entails internalising a highly cognitive model that needs converting into very practical activity. This is flawed in terms of issues concerning the much debated issue of 'transfer' which Philpott (2006) explains by saying that, within a situated learning paradigm, it is not clear how easily learning that takes place in the HEI transfers to enhance performance in the school setting - and the related development of teaching expertise. The challenge is to combine theory and practice into a coherent whole so that 'enactment' can occur; that is to say, apply in a classroom setting, the strategies and techniques that form part of the ITT Programme, regardless of whether their provenance is school or university.

### **The Problem of Enactment**

We have already examined some of the issues surrounding the theory-practice divide. Residing at the heart of that debate are two concepts that are often presented as dichotomies: knowing about something and knowing how to do something. Knowing about something does not necessarily ensure that this knowledge is made a reality in one's classroom teaching; in other words, it is not enacted. Darling-Hammond and Snyder (2000, p.525) remind us that 'the problem of enactment,

especially in the light of current expectations of teaching, is not trivial'. Ball and Forzani (2010, p.42) describe such a scenario as the 'endemic gap between knowing about teaching and doing teaching', indicating there are lots of potential pitfalls on the path to pedagogical enactment. Borrowing heavily from Philpott (2006, p.298), many of our current practices are based on a cognitive model of transfer in which de-contextualised knowledge and skills are learned in the university ready to be utilised in school at a much later date. Lampert (2010) refers to such an approach as 'learning to teach' rather than 'learning teaching'. The reason for this is that the infinitive form suggests the action is to occur in the future, after something has been learned; whereas learning teaching, as a present participle, conveys the idea of learning occurring continually; the theory and practice happen synchronously, rather than asynchronously as in the example above. Indeed, one could maintain that teacher educators are the architects of our own asynchronicities because of the *a priori* decisions (Korthagen, 2011) they make about what theories to teach and when. However, with more training being school-led and school-based, perhaps there is an opportunity here to do away with the troubling binaries outlined above, together with the disturbing dichotomies, considered above, in ITT's policy career. To do this will require a special type of teacher educator whose expertise means that every moment is potentially a teachable moment out of which relevant theories can be drawn, as and when they are relevant. Thus there would be a confluence of theory and practice with theory being simultaneously the servant of practice and practice the servant of theory by providing a real-life context for real-time, reflective exploration. At the heart of this process would be skilful contingent interaction on the part of the trainer and the ability to articulate practice from a range of perspectives, which is the hallmark of Masters-level work (Jackson, 2009; Sewell, 2007). Such a

scenario suggests a 'hybridisation' (Margolis, 2012) of the university teacher educator and school mentor role. But is this possible? To attempt to answer this question it is useful to consider the research into becoming a teacher educator, a process that Field (2012) terms as the 'trials of transition'.

### **A New Breed of Teacher Educator: Hybridisation**

Recent studies on the transition between being a school teacher and a teacher educator at university, suggest that there are some key challenges, especially those relating to identity (for example, Boyd and Harris, 2010; Field, 2012; Murray and Male, 2005; Swennen, Lunenberg and Korthagen, 2008). Murray and Male (2005, p. 126) draw a distinction between the *substantial self* and the *situational self* when making the transition from one professional set of activities to another. The argument here is that the situational self is shaped through interaction with others and the substantial self, because it is underpinned by deeply-held, self-defining views, is more resistant to change. The latter is akin both to Brookfield's (1995) paradigmatic assumptions, which are so deeply engrained that we are not aware we have them, and Rudduck's 'hegemony of habit' (Rudduck, 1985, cited in Murray 2011). In particular, one's prowess as a professional in one context may count for little in another. For example, the instinctive and skilful teaching that motivates hard-to-reach learners, and which contributes so much to a teacher's substantial self in the community of a particular school, may count for little when the task in question is the fostering of pedagogical criticality that is the *sine qua non* of Masters-level work on a PGCE. Here we encounter what Loughran and Berry (2005, p. 193) term the 'articulation of knowledge of practice' which they describe as 'a difficult and complex task that demands considerable awareness of oneself, pedagogy and students'.

With respect to the last point and the term 'awareness', there are similarities with Trowler and Knight's (2004) study of new entrants to a faculty where the new faculty members do not necessarily know what they do not know and where the creation of shared meanings is not a straightforward affair. The challenge is how to 'become engaged with the common sets of understandings and assumptions held collectively in the community of practice; that is, to establish intersubjectivity' (Trowler and Knight, 2004, p.159). An additional challenge is how to make the constant switch between what Murray and Male (2005) term 'first-order' teaching, namely teaching one's subject to pupils, to 'second-order' teaching by which they mean teaching others to teach. Furthermore, there is the danger of the assumption that school teaching can be equated with university teaching through a failure 'to recognise the skills involved in teaching adults' and 'the uniqueness of teacher educators' pedagogy' (Murray, 2005, p.10). Margolis (2012) captures this dilemma succinctly with the use of the metaphor of a hybrid teacher educator; however, it is important to be careful with hybridisation metaphors because in nature an outcome of hybridisation is often sterility. So whatever the hybridisation is, there needs to be an abundance of vitality and vigour with unlimited generative potential, as well as an in-built capability to cope with the trials of transition. An optimal context for the necessary cross-fertilisation must occur; and that is where the concept of a 'third space' comes into play as the breeding ground for this new species of educator that SD and the PGCE Programme will require.

### **Third Space: Hybridisation through boundary crossing and the crafting of enabling constraints**



Davis and Sumara (2010, p. 859) remind us that ‘Somehow dissenting voices and the jagged edges of contrasting opinions lead to collective products that are far more useful and more insightful than the lowest-common denominator solutions that seem to spark little disagreement (and, consequently, limited engagement).’ We have already met the jagged edges of contrasting opinions in the review of the career path of ITT policy with its potentially divisive dichotomies and, at best, troubling binaries. We have also noted the either/or situation surrounding some key aspect of educational research into the pedagogy of teacher education, especially in relation to the theory-practice divide and the trials of transition from school teacher to teacher educator. With the introduction of the SD programme there are clearly great professional sensibilities at stake regarding the alignment of the substantial and situational self; and this obtains for all parties concerned, be they university or school staff. To this end ‘boundary crossing’ (Akkerman, 2011; Akkerman and Bakker, 2011; Engeström and Sannino, 2010; Tsui and Law, 2007) and the creation of a ‘third space’, sometimes also referred to in the literature as a ‘hybrid space’ (Cuenca, Schmeichel Butler, Dinkelman and Nichols Jr, 2011; Martin, Snow and Franklin Torrez, 2011; Zeichner, 2010a), have the potential to provide a really constructive collaborative framework that harnesses the jagged edges of contrasting opinions in productive, meaningful and possibly even transformative ways.

Akkerman and Bakker (2011, p.1) define boundaries as ‘...socio-cultural differences leading to discontinuity in action or interaction’. They further explain that by crossing a boundary participants are encouraged to reconsider their assumptions and look

beyond the known and familiar. The 'third space' is what Zeichner (2010a, p.92) describes as a 'transformative setting' which is less hierarchical in nature. In essence, this is about the skilful 'co-ordination of diversity' (Davis and Sumara, 2001) within a context of working together, rather than merely working with (Burch and Jackson, 2013) and doing so in a way in which each constituency's views are respected and in which there is a common moral purpose and joint responsibility for the improvement of both student teachers' and pupils' learning. However, coming together does not automatically imply progress and new insights. As Douglas and Ellis (2011) suggest 'connection does not mean learning'; and in order to learn there often needs to be preparedness to put aside certain 'core concerns'; for example long-cherished approaches to teaching, and also be prepared to relinquish some aspects of power.

There are also further issues to consider in the form of what Davis and Sumara (2006 and 2010) describe as 'discontinuities', which are akin to the dichotomies in ITT policy's career path and the troubling binaries discussed elsewhere. They maintain that these discontinuities are often viewed as being in balance, thereby bringing a 'zero-sum way of thinking: if one goes up, the other must go down' (Davis and Sumara, 2010, p. 858). They advocate an alternative way of thinking involving creating the conditions in which 'very different contributions, sometimes even seemingly discordant ones, can blend together into richer, co-amplifying possibilities' (2010, p.858).

In the section that follows we outline a process for crafting the enabling constraints for third-space activity on the SD-PGCE Programme. Enabling constraints are

interpreted in this context as ‘a set of limiting conditions that is intended to define the field of play in a collective engagement’ (Davis and Sumara, 2010, p. 859) but with the caveat that ‘...the crafting of constraints that enable is among the most challenging tasks educators encounter. It is easy to leave things too open or to impose structures that are too limiting’ (Davis and Sumara, 2010, p.859). The intention behind this process is to fashion a framework for third-space activity that furnishes an informed and principled starting point. From that point on we shall see what emerges. There are two parts to this process. First, drawing on the insights from research above, we frame a series of enabling constraints for beliefs, theory/practice and enactment. These constraints can be described as process-related constraints since they provide the ‘how’ of any professional learning, irrespective of content. Then there is the content element, namely the ‘what’ of professional learning. Again the focus here is a research-driven one and entails so-called high-leverage strategies that aim to maximise learning potential for student teachers and pupils alike.

### **Beliefs: Enabling constraints**

Because of the strong affective dimension contained within beliefs, it is unlikely that forceful cognitive arguments will bring about long and lasting change; indeed, if that is what is required. In the light of the above, a suggested starting point for third-space activity would be a consideration of how to create the potential conditions for change by:

- Creating a vision of what is possible as the first step in the process of eventual enactment of a particular practice (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2005);

- Creating 'multiple entry points' (Gardner, 2006) to open up many windows on the same example of practice, thereby avoiding a single-perspective approach;
- Engendering, as part of the above, powerful experiences that assault both the senses and the mind;
- 'Unpicking' and reflecting on the experience(s) so that the meaning is not missed (Ellis, 2010)
- Listening to and challenging underlying assumptions that arise from the above by working with existing beliefs, rather than setting out to change them in an explicit, up-front manner (Wideen, Mayer-Smith and Moon, 1998, p.144), which is akin to Brookfield's concept of going 'assumption hunting' (Brookfield, 1995);
- Keeping to a minimum the time lag between all of the above and opportunities for multiple acts of enactment.

In summary we are looking at teacher learning that is 'informed by a richer, more complex understanding of experience' (Ellis, 2010, p.111) through the creation of meaningful and meaning-full experiences; that is to say, understandable and striking an affective and cognitive chord with the learner.

### **Theory and Practice: Enabling constraints**

To combine theory and practice into a coherent whole, the crafted constraints will be those of 'principled practice' (Kubler LaBoskey, 2005) combined with 'practical theorising' (Hagger and McIntyre, 2006). Thus all educational decision-making will be guided and informed by principles 'derived from and well-grounded in the

theoretical and empirical literature' (Kubler LaBoskey, 2005, p.29), hence 'principled practice', which in turn will be used to examine and critically evaluate practice-focussed issues in real-life contexts through a process of 'practical theorising'. Borrowing from Lampert (2010) slightly then, this is critical reflection 'in, on and for practice'. The theoretical has been made more practical and the practical more theoretical. Theory serves practice and practice theory, thereby serving to help close the theory-practice divide by promoting co-emergent possibilities in a hitherto troubling binary. The practical theorising is essential because having an experience does not imply learning. It is the reflection on that experience that brings about the learning (Loughran, 2002). It is in this context that there is a need for an experienced or knowledgeable 'other' to provide the necessary reflective stimulus. But that can only be done if the 'other' is of a critically aware disposition. Bullough (2005, p.144), drawing on Feiman-Nemser (2001) reminds us that 'good teachers are not necessarily good teacher educators' and goes on to suggest that 'good teachers may know remarkably little about beginning teacher development'. It is for these reasons that the combined concepts of principled practice and practical theorising are therefore key enabling constraints in the hybridisation process outlined in the previous section.

### **Enactment: Enabling constraints**

Two key concepts that could form the principal content focus of the SD-PGCE Programme third-space activity are: high-leverage learning strategies for student teachers and, as a natural corollary of this, high-leverage learning strategies for pupils. At the heart of this is the concept of 'ambitious teaching', which Lampert and Ghouseini (2009, p.492) define as 'teaching that deliberately aims to get all kinds of

students—across ethnic, racial, class, and gender categories—not only to acquire, but also to understand and use knowledge, and to use it to solve authentic problems’. They then consider very carefully what teaching strategies are required in order to produce such outcomes. These strategies are called ‘high-leverage strategies’ because of their impact on pupil learning. To do this they ‘decompose’ (Grossman et al., 2009) the teaching, meaning that complex teaching strategies are broken down into their constituent parts to enable student teachers to see the strategies involved and they then receive intensive coaching and other forms of training ready to enact the strategies, under expert supervision, across a range of contexts, some of which are real and others which are as close to the real setting as possible, i.e. so-called proximal settings.

High-leverage strategies can also be explored from another dimension; and that is from the perspective of the student teachers and what will give them the greatest return in terms of teaching skills, especially since the training is so short. Essential in this process is the maintenance of a balance between discrete parts and the overall integrity of the activities. Thus once the ‘anatomy of practice to be learned’ (Grossman et al., 2009, p.2060) has been worked out, it is time to devise the different activities required to enable student teachers to learn and practise, in multiple settings, these high-leverage strategies. It is here that the ‘pedagogies of enactment’ (Grossman, Hammerness and McDonald, 2009) are designed and implemented. In summary, this is what Loewenberg, Ball and Forzani (2009, p.504) refer to as a ‘practice-focused curriculum for learning teaching’ because it ‘would emphasize repeated opportunities for novices to practice {sic} carrying out the interactive work of teaching and not just to talk about that work’.

So what could this mean for potential third-space activity and the hybridisation process that is being advocated for the development of a new breed of teacher educator? The proposal is that within the SD-PGCE Programme each consortium releases a key representative from each subject area to take part in third-space activity centred upon a self-contained area of teaching that is considered to have high-leverage potential for both pupil learning and student teacher development. Thus with a clear-cut focus on high-leverage strategies, together with the process elements relating to beliefs, theory-practice divide and enactment, there is hope that a hybridisation process can take place that merges in a principled and practical way the best elements of university and school practice whilst, at the same time, avoiding the troubling binaries that have existed hitherto. In short, if the constraints have been skillfully crafted then it may be possible to achieve a situation in which the proposed hybridisation process emerges naturally, bringing new insights to all parties involved; and that includes, of course, university teacher educators. We suspect that as part of this process we shall start to convert a whole series of unknown unknowns into at least known unknowns, as teacher education practices are explored within the third space. And it is here that the dynamism of the process could reside.

The ideas presented here do not aspire to present a readymade package to be used in every situation. Rather they offer a framework for school and university colleagues to work together and formulate their own principled path through what seems to be an ever changing landscape of Initial Teacher Training. The strength of these ideas lies in the adaptation of them to individual needs and circumstances. As such they transcend the boundaries of any one country or its transient education policy.

However, as an experimental pilot of the feasibility of these ideas, the authors undertook a year-long longitudinal study of third-space activity undertaken within the conventional PGCE Programme involving a small group of mentors and university staff (Burch and Jackson, 2013). This research aimed to explore and evaluate the strategies employed to develop collaborative provision of teacher training between one HEI and its partner schools and to investigate the notion of the use of 'third space' to bring about effective collaborative provision. The interview participants (school teachers and HEI tutors) had been immersed in Third Space philosophy and remained committed to it despite any difficulties encountered in practice, such as geographical distance between people, shared understanding of terminology, reluctance to embrace change, financial constraints. All suggested that patience was indeed a necessary virtue; effective third space activity requires 'gradual process over several years of schools and HEIs drawing closer together to bring about more effective partnership' to bring about a 'noticeable difference' (Burch and Jackson, 2013, p.65).

## **Conclusion**

One can perhaps be cautiously optimistic that the proposed development framework will help us to plot a principled pedagogical path through the changing landscape of Initial Teacher Training alluded to at the start of this paper. The only caveat would hinge on whether schools will see the value of such an approach. However, in this respect one may also be optimistic. Despite the limited nature of the authors' research mentioned above (Burch and Jackson, 2013), the findings of that research offered cautious grounds for optimism that the pedagogical path plotted in this paper is appropriate. We suggest on the basis of that cautious optimism that developing



partnership through third-space activity requires a form of vision that requires an enhanced and deeper interpretation of working together rather than working with. Benefits can be transformative to all stakeholders – school staff, university staff, student teachers, pupils – despite any difficulties encountered when attempting to translate the vision into practice.

The above project spanned just one partnership and not a large number of loosely-connected consortia working with a university as an accrediting body. The challenges facing the SD-PGCE Programme are formidable, as is the on-going intensity of change. Furthermore, as Ellis (2009, p.170) reminds us, teacher education is a ‘humane and relational activity as well as a professional and practical one’ in which we should perhaps best regard ‘teacher development as something complex, personal and conceptually involving the sometimes painful remaking of worlds and crossing of borders rather than the simple ascent of the ladder having successfully avoided the gaps’. We suggest that if the developmental framework proposed here is successful, then the processes of ITT will not be reduced to a ‘guided induction into the tricks of the trade’ (Korthagen, 2011, p.45) and the university tutor will have a greater role to play than that of a ‘disenfranchised outsider’ (Slick, 1998) peddling PGCE certification. University tutors and school colleagues, working together in effective partnership have the possibility of offering a truly beneficial epigenetic effect on the lives of countless PGCE students and, through them, the pupils in their care.

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