

Initial Teacher Education in Canada and the United Kingdom

Guest Editors:

[Jon Young](#), University of Manitoba and [Christine Hall](#), University of Nottingham

Abstract

This special issue consists of nine chapter-length articles discussing teacher education in Canada and the United Kingdom. In Part 1, the authors focus on large, fundamental issues of teacher education, especially as seen in the emerging post-modern international context. In Parts 2 and 3, they discuss how these issues manifest themselves in emerging, innovative practices in the two societies.

Introduction: Oceans Apart? Teaching and Teacher Preparation in Canada and the United Kingdom

by [Jon Young](#), University of Manitoba, and
[Christine Hall](#), University of Nottingham

This special issue of CJEAP focuses on the overlapping policy arenas of teacher professionalism, teachers' work and the initial preparation of teachers. All of the articles stem from two symposia on pre-service preparation held at the University of Manitoba, Canada, in February 2003 and the University of Nottingham, England, in May of the same year.(1) The purpose of the symposia was to share and examine changing practices in initial teacher education at both universities and to locate the discussion of these practices within a broader national and international exploration of the changing nature of teachers' work and teacher professionalism.

Framing the discussions at the two symposia was the notion of "educational policy settlements." The notion refers to the belief that in both Canada and England (and many other countries around the world), the last two decades have seen the destabilizing of an existing post-world war two educational settlement and an ongoing and contested effort to establish a new educational order. The new order that has involved a substantial restructuring of both teachers' work and their preparation within a general discourse of "globalization", "a knowledge economy", and, "the emergence of "postmodern" social, economic and cultural conditions".

Jones (2003, pp.8-9), drawing on the work of Taylor et al. (1997) suggests that policy settlements reflect the ways in which competing and conflicting expectations of schools are reconciled, and it is these "settlements" that determine which expectations will receive policy priority at any given time. They are always, he notes, "limited and conditional reconciliations of different interests", and he continues:

settlements are fairly lasting sets of arrangements, but they are never static. They have inherent tensions and limits. They are shaped by conflict as well as agreement. They do not finally endure. (p.9)

The underpinning assumption in the articles in this special issue is that, as existing educational policy settlements are reshaped, teachers' work and concepts of professionalism which frame that work, are necessarily changing too.

The first three articles in this issue, written by Christine Hall, Tony Fisher and Nathalie Piquemal, examine some of these changes. Hall and Fisher's work focuses on ongoing changes to teachers' work that are taking place in England at the present time, drawing on Labour Process Theory (Smyth et al, 2000) and the impacts of information and communication technologies (ICT) on teaching respectively. Piquemal focuses on the increased saliency of ethnicity and diversity on teachers' work. She draws on her own research with Aboriginal people in America and Canada to argue for a relational, cross-cultural understanding of teaching if social justice and social cohesion are to be relevant part of a global and postmodern educational reality/ settlement. Within the context of a destabilized educational settlement, the dual messages given to teachers and teacher educators are 1) that existing practice is no longer adequate for a rapidly changing world, and 2) that there is still no well defined new order to take its place. In this regard, Jones (2003, p.146) points out that "globalization" is a rhetorical term as much as it is an analytic one. He makes a key point with regard to the neo-liberal ideologies that have harnessed themselves to the technological dimensions of early twenty-first century "globalization." The term, he notes, functions not just as a tool with which to theorize emergent social forms but also as a condensation of a number of wider arguments that relate to the possibilities – or impossibilities – of political and social change in the contemporary world. It is thus utilized not only to describe change but to effect it (p. 146).

Yet there are still children to be educated, schools to run, and critically – after decades of a stable and aging teaching force in both countries – a new generation of teachers to be prepared, inducted , and, it is hoped, retained within the profession. The remaining articles in this special issue explore this challenge. They examine some of the ways in which teacher educators in universities and teachers in schools have struggled together to retain a sense of their own agency and principles, and to adapt their practice in an uncertain and changing educational environment.

The article by Young, *Systems of Educating Teachers*, introduces these efforts by locating policy development and the governance of teacher education within three distinct spheres of influence and engagement – the state, the profession, and the university. The relative influence of each of these forces on the development of initial teacher preparation is examined in England and the two Canadian provinces of Manitoba and British Columbia. The argument developed in this article is that ideology, institutions, and practice are not necessarily consistent. Even if ideological discourses which frame national educational policies might already have been globalized (Taylor, 1997, cited in Jones, 2003, p.150), the location of educational institutions and educational practice within national cultural formations has a decisive effect on the actual character of schools and the work of teachers. As a consequence Jones (2003) argues – and we believe the articles in this issue serve to illustrate – "the discourse of educational policy making and change are quite capricious, and allow for differing inflections of social and economic priorities" (p. 151).

All but one of the authors in this issue are full-time university faculty members and are actively involved in pre-service teacher preparation programs (2) . They work at one of two different universities – the University of Manitoba, Canada and Nottingham University, England. Central to the intent of both the symposia and the special issue are the notions of agency and dialogue – that individual faculty members and institutions remain influential in determining actual practice ‘on the ground’ and that there is powerful potential to be found in a dialogue across contexts and jurisdictions.

In this regard, descriptions of context are contained in most of the articles that follow. However, it is worthwhile at the outset to elaborate on two basic issues of context: (i) the structure of pre-service programs at the two universities, and (ii) the levels of government regulation of teaching and teacher preparation that both universities work within. At the end of this introduction, we have also included a number of context-specific acronyms used throughout the special issue. At the University of Manitoba initial teacher education programs take the form of a two -year, after degree, Bachelor of Education degree separated into Early Years, Middle Years, and Senior Years cohorts. On successful completion of the degree graduates are recommended to the provincial government for certification to teach at any level in Manitoba schools. At Nottingham

initial teacher training involves a one-year Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), the successful completion of which leads to national certification and Qualified Teacher Status. Confirmation of this status requires that newly qualified teachers successfully complete a structured induction year within five years of certification.

Manitoba and England are situated at quite different ends of the continuum in terms of government regulation of initial teacher preparation. In Manitoba, despite some efforts by the provincial government to exercise its authority over teacher education more forcefully, Faculties of Education have remained relatively autonomous to define for themselves the content and structure of their programs. Such is not the case in England. Furling et al. (2000) describe the national context for teacher training at the turn of the century as one of homogeneity and central control and note,

What the government and particularly the TTA [Teacher Training Agency], had wanted was a common system with common standards and procedures, no matter who was providing the training or where; this was how the TTA defined quality. By the end of the 1990s this had been largely achieved. (p.149)

These issues of context serve to define the educational space within which, individually and collectively, those involved in the preparation on new teachers must work. They affect the extent to which conversations can go beyond technical issues of effective implementation of a pre-ordained educational order to a deeper exploration of fundamental questions of purpose – teacher preparation for what? It is these questions that this international conversation, begun in the symposia and now extended to this wider forum, attempts to explore.

References

Furlong , J., Barton, L., Miles, S., Whiting, C. and Whitty, G.(2000) *Teacher Education In Transition: Re-forming Professionalism?* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Jones (2003). *Education in Britain: 1944 to the present*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Smyth, J., Dow, A., Hattam, R., Reid, A., and Shacklock, G. (2000) *Teachers' Work in a Globalizing Economy*. London: Falmer Press.

Taylor, S. Rizvi, F., Lingard, B., and Arnold, M. (1997) *Educational Policy and the Politics of Change*. London: Routledge.

End Notes

1. The title of this introductory article, "Oceans Apart," was also the title chosen for the initial symposia from which these articles developed. The intent of the title was to note the potentially large differences in context and educational literatures that existed in England and Canada. One of the significant outcomes of the collaboration, however, was to highlight the many ways in which faculty and teacher candidates were struggling with similar issues in both jurisdictions. They were in fact not "oceans apart" professionally.

2. The exception to being a university faculty member is Melissa Ryz, co-author with Wayne Serebrin of the article *Melissa's Story: Bridging the theory/practice gap in teacher education*. At the time of writing Melissa was a teacher candidate in the Early Years stream of the Bachelor of Education program at the University of Manitoba.

Appendix: Acronyms Used in This Special Issue

ENGLAND

BETT: British Educational Technology & Training
CATE: Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education
DES: Department of Education & Science
DfE: Department for Education
DfEE: Department for Education and Employment
ICT: information and communication technologies
INSET: in-service training
ITT: initial teacher training
LEA: Local Education Authority
MFL: Modern Foreign Languages
NCSL: National College for School Leadership
NGfL: National Grid for Learning
NOF: New Opportunities Fund
NQT: Newly Qualified Teacher
OfSTED: Office for Standards in Education
PGCE: Post-Graduate Certificate in Education
QTS: Qualified Teacher Status
SCITT: School-Centred Initial Teacher Training
TLO: Teaching & Learning Observatory
TTA: Teacher Training Agency

CANADA

B.Ed.: Bachelor of Education
BCCT: British Columbia College of Teachers
BOTE: Board of Teacher Education & Certification (Province of Manitoba)
OCT: Ontario College of Teachers
RCAP: Royal Commission on Aboriginal People
TITEP: Taskforce on Initial Teacher Education Programs (University of Manitoba)
TWU: Trinity Western University