

# **Dr Cathy Gower's PhD thesis extract critiquing the policy context in England for Initial Teacher Education**

## **2.1 Introduction**

The following review of literature will build an argument in relation to the need for alternative critical pedagogies in ITE. It will begin with an outline of significant historical and current policy directives in ITE which militate against the development of a critically conscious profession. This will include an exploration of the structural configuration of ITE in England and policy discourses which have privileged technical rationalist ideologies in relation to professionalism and promoted apprenticeship style models of training to teach. Such discourses, the review will suggest, have contributed to a diminished sense of value accorded to reflexive practice in learning to teach which, in turn, results in a potentially reduced understanding and awareness of issues connected with social justice and equity for pre-service teachers. The review will then seek to argue a case for pursuing pedagogical approaches in ITE which create critical spaces of possibility (Ryan, 2011) in the slippage of such policy frameworks (Penney and Evans, 2005), where pre-service teachers can engage in deep levels of critical reflexivity leading to a process of consciousness raising. This is argued as crucial in developing a morally and ethically aware profession for the future who can potentially understand and respond to the diverse needs of learners in a pluralist society. Such approaches connect pre-service teachers back to their own narrative experiences and encourage an exploration of identity alongside an understanding of their position within broader socio-economic and political structures which do not always reach those who are most disadvantaged in society. This is explored specifically within the context of physical education, the subject of study for this thesis, where an analysis of curriculum history and policy development in PE highlights a subject culture that has not always met the needs of the diverse population of young people in schools. The review will then outline the theoretical framework underpinning the critical educational research promoted in this study; a framework which draws on critical ontology, critical pedagogy and the specific concepts within critical pedagogy of conscientization, critical consciousness and

dialogic education. Finally, the review will conclude with a summary of key issues informing the design of the research and its unique contribution to knowledge.

## **2.2 An outline and critical review of initial teacher education in England**

Kincheloe and McLaren (2002) state that, in relation to research drawing on aspects of critical theory, it is essential to acknowledge the social and historical context of both the interpreter and text in order to fully understand the impact of hegemonic and ideological forces which connect the micro-dynamics of everyday life with the macro-dynamics of structures in which they are positioned. This following section of the review will examine the macro-dynamics of initial teacher education in England, which impact directly on the micro-dynamics of the pedagogical and learning experiences of both teacher educators and pre-service teachers, who are the interpreters of policy as text in this specific study.

In England, the training of pre-service teachers is the responsibility of the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL), a government sponsored executive agency. The NCTL works under a remit from the government's Department for Education (DfE) to supply new teachers, facilitate school to school networks for professional learning and support, and shape ongoing workforce reform in teaching. The Government, through the NCTL, trains around 35,000 new teachers every year and the training is provided through an increasingly varied range of routes into teaching (NCTL, 2014). This is as a result of government policy directives, explored later in this review, to significantly expand school-based ITE provision (DfE, 2016). The breadth of routes into teaching include the following:

- School Direct (salaried and training route/non-salaried) where applicants apply directly to schools for their ITE place, although many of these schools then work in collaboration with an accredited school or university provider of ITE to run the programme;
- Teach First, which is a salaried route run by a charity and orientates towards applicants for ITE with higher degree classifications and who would like to work with socio-economically disadvantaged pupils in urban areas;

- School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) where schools as accredited providers in their own right run ITE provision;
- Higher Education Institution (HEI) programmes combining an academic award with QTS e.g. Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Bachelor of Education (BEd), Bachelor of Arts (BA), Bachelor of Science (BSc) ;
- Troops to Teachers where non-graduate applicants who have previously served in the armed forces can apply to ITE providers and are salaried during their programme;
- Assessment only routes which have QTS as an outcome but which do not involve studying for a parallel academic award such as a PGCE;
- Researchers in Schools which is a salaried route for applicants who have or are close to completing their doctorate;
- Future Teaching Scholars which is orientated towards applicants undertaking a maths or physics undergraduate degree but who are considering teaching afterwards.

The recent Carter Review of Initial Teacher Education (DfE, 2015) stated in its findings that it was difficult to draw conclusions about whether one route into teaching was more effective than another and that there were strengths across all routes. This is further supported in a report by the Institute for Fiscal Studies into the costs and benefits of different routes into ITE (Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2014). Despite this evidence, the privileging of school-based routes has been relentlessly pursued in recent government policy. Inevitably, there have also been numerous associated protestations from bodies such as UCET(2010) and SCETT (2011) and the wider academic community that the increasing momentum behind this shift towards solely school-based provision could cause considerable long term damage to ITE in England. Indeed in 2014, from the inspection of 225 ITE partnerships, Ofsted stated that 98% were judged good or better, and none were judged inadequate (Ofsted, 2014) so the arguments for a pendulum swing in policy are questionable with this existing evidence base on the quality of provision.

Furlong *et al.* (2008) describes how ITE has become “intimately bound up with changing national politics and policy priorities.” (p.309). Reid (2000) provides a comprehensive socio-historical analysis of teacher education, identifying it as a

disputed territory which has shifted in time from church, to university and then to state control. Reid argues that the current position, where all aspects of teacher education are under the umbrella of state control, is foreign to British education history and its culture. Furlong's work (2005, 2008) explored the specific impact of New Labour government policies on teacher education in the late 1990s and early 2000s, drawing some interesting comparisons with the two preceding Conservative government's policies on the training of teachers. Furlong (2005) provided a provocative account of how a 'new professionalism' for teaching emerged under New Labour in the late 1990s and early 2000s. He argued that, within this new type of professionalism, individual professional formation was seen as far less critical than it was under the previous right wing Conservative government. At that time, the state assumed even more direct influence on not only what was taught but how it was taught in schools through, for example, a National Strategies framework and network and, additionally, systems for teacher professional development which were increasingly introspective and internally managed by schools. Stephens *et al.* (2004) described New Labour policy on ITE as just a re-packaging of some of the ideas of the preceding Conservative government era. Furlong went on to argue that, under New Labour's obsession with 'managerialism' and the creation of networks to manage teaching and assessment priorities in order to raise standards, education and training for teachers became less of a priority and teacher education, in particular, began to slip off the radar of government policy. Ellis (2010) suggests that this slippage occurred as a result of the perceived success of reform during this period by policymakers. The successes were exemplified by evidence from inspection regimes that: the competence of beginning teachers was now good; universities had become more accountable for provision; the ongoing career structure for teachers was enhanced; and recruitment to the profession improved in most subject areas. The subsequent loss of policy profile was concerning to Furlong in that it represented the Labour government winning their struggle to reduce teacher education to what he describes as, 'an unproblematic, technical rationalist procedure' (Furlong, 2005, p.131). Furlong in previous literature had defined technical rationality as applied in teacher education as:

“Combining an emphasis on utilitarianism with an interest in applying rationalist 'scientific' principles to human affairs such as education. Under the influence of utilitarianism, technical rationalists define the aims of education in terms of what is useful. Children's education should aim to prepare them for the world of work and their other future roles in society. In similar vein, it has been argued that initial teacher education should be narrowly functional, emphasising only what will be professionally useful for teachers. This utilitarianism has gone hand in hand with the application of rationalist and even scientific principles to teaching and learning. As a consequence, the problem for education is seen as how to develop the most effective means to achieve given ends. Very often, in teacher education and elsewhere, this has meant an emphasis on task analysis, skill training and 'scientifically' based testing.” (Furlong, 1992, p.185)

Ellis (2010) supports Furlong's analysis of ITE under New Labour and suggests that the increasing emphasis on one year postgraduate teacher training programmes has actively worked to impoverish the ITE experience, with teachers' learning treated as far less important and significant in policy circles than children's and young people's learning.

MacBeath (2011) reflects upon some of the more recent policy initiatives from the former Conservative and Liberal Democrat Coalition government, under the auspices of the Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove. MacBeath's critique was superseded by the publication of 'Training the next generation of outstanding teachers' (DfE, 2011) as part of the coalition government's White Paper 'The Importance of Teaching' (DfE, 2010). In this policy document, the pendulum swung towards an even more school-led system of initial teacher education, although the basis to support this direction of travel for policy was unsupported by evidence from reports such as the Institute for Fiscal Studies (Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2014) and the Carter Review into teacher training (DfE, 2015). Rather than putting all initial teacher education eggs in the school-centred ITE basket, both UCET and SCETT supported the further development of the concept of partnership between schools and HEIs. Smithers and Robinson (2010) also suggest that this swing of the pendulum towards school-based training should be viewed with caution and continued to support the concept of partnership as central to effective teacher education. Hobby, in his contribution to the SCETT (2010) defence of teacher education, supported the enhancement of collaborative ITE partnership structures:

“Depending on practical experience alone is dangerous. Practical experience learned in one context is not easily generalised to different contexts. This means that concentrating solely on practical experience means we risk creating ‘fragile professionals’, who can work well in only one particular context or else employ a stick range of responses.” (SCETT, 2010, p.12)

The notion of a fragile profession is particularly pertinent in a period of time where there is a recruitment crisis in teaching and significant issues with retention in the profession recognised in the recent Education White Paper *Educational Excellence Everywhere* (DfE, 2016).

In the past thirty to forty years, there has been more legislation and centralised control over education and, specifically, teacher education in England than ever before, where dominant ideologies and associated discourses have become so prevailing that they have stifled critical engagement with and by the profession (Liston *et al.*, 2009). Such discourses have specifically undermined the contribution of HEIs and is exemplified by the Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove’s, article in the Daily Mail (Gove, 2013) where he describes some academics working in education departments and teacher training particularly as part of the so called ‘Blob’ and as being the ‘Enemies of Promise’. Ball (2003) described the impact of changes in education, such as those outlined in the policy document *‘Training the next generation of outstanding teachers’* (DfE, 2011) as resulting in a struggle for the soul of the teacher. A letter from Ball and a group of academics involved in education departments at various Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in England was published in the Independent newspaper in 2008 (Coffield *et al.*, 2008). This letter expressed immense frustration from within the profession with the degree of political influence wielded by the government within education and how this was impacting upon the professional education community. It described the unrealistic demands of ‘permanent revolutions’ in every aspect of the education system emanating from government ministers and agencies, which further demonstrated a lack of trust in the profession. The letter pleaded for a more consultative, democratic and inclusive way of developing and enacting policy and more direct consultation with professionals

and learners before the announcement of policy changes. The signatories were the academics who were subsequently described by Michael Gove as part of 'Blob' and the 'Enemies of Promise', as referred to earlier, suggesting that critique leads to political mud-slinging. Dadds (2001) warned of the dangers in this evolving educational landscape stating that "tight central control is an anathema to the development of a confident and thinking teaching workforce." (p.55). Within this landscape, Williams and Soares (2000) referred to increasingly prescriptive teacher education, which had become 'homogenised' through its uniformity of provision. This study seeks to challenge such uniformity in provision through the promotion of alternative critical pedagogical approaches in teacher education.

However, the origins of the technical rationalist ideology evident in current policy for teacher education (Winter, 2000) can be tracked back even further in terms of the chronology of ITE to the development of the twenty seven competencies for assessing teacher trainees in the right wing Conservative party government White Paper *'Initial Teacher Training (Secondary Phase)'* Circular 9/92 (DfE, 1992). Even the reference to training in this document indicated a philosophical shift in the way in which the preparation of teachers was conceptualised at that time. Beck (2009) questioned how the Standards for QTS used 'professionals' as the mode of address within the document and yet systematically positioned the recipients as 'trainees'. This, he stated, was ultimately paradoxical and deeply problematic. The initial list of Competencies was subsequently replaced by the left wing Labour government's Standards for the award of Qualified Teacher Status in the White Paper *'Teaching: High Status, High Standards'* (DfEE, 1998). What both systems represented was a new 'tick box' culture of teacher education, where politically determined criteria for assessing pre-service teachers were used to prepare them for what Winter (2000) argued was (and remains) a state-driven rather than professionally informed teacher education system. Beck (2009) critiqued the sustained centralisation of power and increasing state control over education and teacher education by drawing on the work of Bernstein's (2000) description of a 'Totally Pedagogised Society' where, in ever-widening spheres of public life and occupational contexts, people (and teaching professionals in relation to this study) are subject to state driven pedagogic interventions. The Competencies and then the Standards are arguably a representation of what Bernstein (2000) referred to as a state funded, state focused

and state assessed pedagogic intervention. Interestingly, Beck drew on Bernstein (2000) in stating that such generic modes of assessment were firmly grounded in the concept of trainability through a passive acceptance and demonstration of what is required, as and when it is required. He described the '*Professional Standards for QTS*' (TDA, 2007) as representing a performative type of pedagogy, stating that:

“The cumulative effect of this form of discourse is profoundly reductive: it suggests that being a professional educator is a matter of acquiring a limited corpus of state prescribed knowledge accompanied by a set of similarly prescribed skills and competencies. The model is a technician one involving the acquisition of trainable expertise.” (Beck, 2009, p.8)

In 2012, the DfE published the '*Teachers Standards*' (DfE, 2012), which set out the minimum requirements for teachers' practice and conduct at all stages of their career. All training routes lead to a possible recommendation for qualified teacher status (QTS). The Teachers' Standards are part of the statutory requirements for ITE outlined in the '*Initial Teacher Training Criteria*' (DfE, 2015). All providers of ITE must comply with these criteria and are inspected against these requirements by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), a government sponsored agency. Compliance with DfE requirements is directly linked to the funding of teacher training in HEIs. In order to achieve QTS, pre-service teachers need to demonstrate that they have met the minimum requirements specified by the Teachers' Standards which fall under the headings of the '*Preamble*', '*Part 1*' and '*Part 2*' as follows:

The Preamble: Teachers make the education of their pupils their first concern, and are accountable for achieving the highest possible standards in work and conduct. Teachers act with honesty and integrity; have strong subject knowledge, keep their knowledge and skills as teachers up-to-date and are self-critical; forge positive professional relationships; and work with parents in the best interests of their pupils.

#### Part 1

1. Set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge pupils
2. Promote good progress and outcomes by pupils
3. Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge
4. Plan and teach well-structured lessons
5. Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils
6. Make accurate and productive use of assessment



7. Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment
8. Fulfil wider professional responsibilities.

Part Two: A teacher is expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. The following statements define the behaviour and attitudes which set the required standard for conduct throughout a teacher's career. Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:

- treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
- having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
- showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
- not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

(DfE, 2012)

However, fragmentation and diversification in the configuration of school status in England has also resulted in some types of schools, such as free schools and academies, having the freedom to employ staff without QTS, which is awarded on evidence of satisfactorily meeting these threshold Teachers' Standards. This negates the notion of the discourse of 'national professionalism' represented in the Teachers' Standards model, as highlighted by Whitty (2014) who goes on to argue that:

"This could be just the start of a deregulation of teacher education, effectively ending even the core national professionalism associated with the pre-service award of QTS, and leaving teacher supply and teacher quality to market forces." (Whitty, 2014, p.473).

Whitty suggests that current government policy on teacher education is “ideologically driven rather than informed by evidence about the quality of training in different routes.” (p.475). Whitty (2014) suggests that the Teachers’ Standards and new Ofsted inspection criteria dictate a narrower prescribed core requirement than ever before, but with even greater prescription and policing of its detail. He describes this as an official national professionalism but also states that, in more recent times, there has been an emergence, through the emphasis on school-led ITE, of local professionalism where valued professional wisdom is perceived to lie exclusively in schools. This, in turn, has led to a diminishing value attributed to the role of University-based research in relation to teaching and learning and its contribution to the “professional formation of teachers” (Whitty, 2014, p.471). This has been further emphasised with a suggestion in the most recent government White Paper ‘*Educational Excellent Everywhere*’ (DfE, 2016) that the actual recommendation for a new revised form of professional accreditation, replacing QTS, will only be made by headteachers once teachers have demonstrated their effectiveness in the classroom, replacing the current ‘Qualified Teacher Status’. Although many accredited SCITT providers are already able to make the recommendation to the DfE for QTS, this represents a complete erosion of authority for HEIs to make this recommendation and a further shift in power towards school-led ITE. However, the White Paper also suggests an ongoing role for the best HEIs in ITE with a more stable allocation of numbers for pre-service teachers than has been the case more recently. There are contradictions here which are yet to play out in the policy arena as the White Paper moves forward for parliamentary consideration.

Aligning with this shift in the professional formation of teachers, Winter (2000) described technical rationalists as viewing education in a functional and instrumental way, serving extrinsic aims such as enhancing national economic status, supplying the demands of the labour market or meeting national targets for numeracy and literacy. Technical rationalists accord limited value to the complex socio-political and contextualised nature of education and its moral and ethical dimensions. Winter went on to state that:

“In teacher education, the move to a technical rational ideology has involved the pre-specification of a large number of selected technical ‘standards’ which serve as the objectives or predetermined ‘ends’ of teacher education courses. Technical rationality represents teacher education as a simple, technical activity which is not complicated by ideology, power relations, vested interests and divergent goals. It is represented as scientifically objective and neutral, ignoring the complex moral, political and social dimensions embedded within the activity of educating students in an environment which is increasingly constrained by the state.” (Winter, 2000, p.155)

In line with structural change in ITE promoting predominantly school-based initial teacher education, the former Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, in his speech to the National College of School Leadership in June 2010, described teaching as “a craft and it is best learned as an apprentice observing a master craftsman or woman.” (Gove, 2010). Ellis (2010) expressed concern over such acquisition views of learning and a view of knowledge as a thing that is simply transferred from experienced teacher to beginner. He described experience in schools as in danger of becoming a process of acculturation into existing practices which result in the reproduction of routinised behaviours. Ellis goes on to question the status accorded to bureaucracy and discourses of compliance which lead to an untenable obsession with the collection and production of evidence. Marshall, in his contribution to the SCETT (2010) defence of teacher education, stated that teaching is far more than a craft skill and that it is, rather, a cultural transaction and a social, political and moral activity. He argued that training is simply not good enough and that pedagogues need to know, for example, what a subject is and is not and that all future teachers require an education in education. Stevens (2010) supports this challenge to the pervading obsession with evidencing the Teachers’ Standards with it becoming “a methodical, incremental, predictable, compartmentalised and easily recorded sense of progress towards becoming an effective teacher.” (p.190).

Stephens *et al.* (2004) refer to the Standards framework as “practice heavy and theory light” (p.113) in a delivery orientated system emphasising technical mastery. It is thus arguable that a PGCE should be regarded as an optional academic qualification, an argument that has been explored in the relatively recent Carter Review (DfE, 2015) of ITE. Evans (2011) describes the Standards as depicting a

professionalism that is focused predominantly on what teachers do, rather than what and how they think and what attitudes they hold. Evans goes on to state that the extent to which teachers are required to “analyse and rationalise their practice scarcely features in the Standards, whereas the skills and competences and understanding that they need, and what they do and how they do it, are the key components of this professionalism” (p.861). Within the context of physical education specifically, Camacho and Fernandez-Balboa (2006, p. 10) highlighted that this dominant technocratic paradigm, which now shapes PEITE courses, has forced pre-service teachers to see and experience PE and the world in very narrow ways and has limited their transformative capacity. He argues that, as a result, the subject status quo is perpetuated and legitimised, an argument explored later in this review in the subject context.

Stevens (2010) argues that in order to mitigate against the aforementioned “methodical, predictable and compartmentalised” (p.190) interpretation of the Standards, it is incumbent on those involved in teacher education to develop pedagogical approaches which still afford time and support for reflective and critical practice. Indeed Stevens (2010) has argued that it is possible to both meet the Standards and also be a reflexive practitioner but that the role of universities is crucial in ensuring this happens. Any government would struggle to present an argument to say there should be no space for reflection and critique in ITE. Politicians might, however, frame such reflection and critique differently to professionals who are routinely immersed in teacher education processes.

Taylor’s (2008) case study explored the various understandings of learning to teach by participants in an ITE partnership. The study identified four conceptualisations of learning to teach from the participants, with a hierarchy of importance and significance attached to these different ways. In discussing the dominance of ‘Cascading Expertise’ and the ‘Developing Student Teaching’ understandings of learning to teach, which are identified as more akin to government policy in ITE, Taylor warned of the dangers of an outcomes orientation in training and, in particular, the way in which the Standards were interpreted by key participants in the ITE process. Taylor (2008) argued for an understanding of learning to teach which positioned the pre-service teacher as ‘Student as Teacher and Learner’, where

principled analysis linked thought and action within wider perspectives and deeper levels of reflection, supporting the development of professional identity and change for the student. Taylor's perspective was further supported by Liston *et al.* (2009) who expressed concern that reflection was represented as "simply another training technique in the arsenal of teacher inculcation" (p.109). They also argued that reflection within a Standards context was employed more readily as a means to evaluate the achievement of pre-specified outcomes, with little room provided in the training process for the pre-service teacher to examine and explore multi-various educational ends and values as well as their own personal engagement with these. In effect they argued that there was a dumbing down of cultural and personal ideological critique and the creation of what Liston *et al.* (2009) referred to as a, "stultifying professional orthodoxy." (p.107). This critique supports an argument for alternative pedagogies which challenge surface approaches to reflection. For Liston *et al.* such pedagogies would encourage pre-service teachers to wrestle with issues such as: the degree to which they want to teach as they have been taught and why; an analysis of the ontological and epistemological agendas underpinning educational reform and curriculum initiatives; the political motives and goals underlying the education system and whether these support universally held principles of social justice; the vocational journey one takes to become a teacher and each individual's educational journey. In effect, they argue a case for pedagogies in ITE which raise 'critical consciousness' (a concept discussed later in this review) and the ethical awareness of student teachers. Such pedagogies should challenge the taken for granted through a deeper level of critical reflection than that afforded through the technical rationalist approach promoted in government policy and constraining and restricting interpretations of the Teachers' Standards. They suggested that, unless the process of teacher education actively promotes a conversation around values, beliefs and ideologies and recognises, "the multiple ways in which teaching implicates the teacher's self" (Liston *et al.*, 2009, p.110), then teachers cannot really regard themselves as a profession.

Concern has been expressed that a move towards school-based, apprenticeship style models has left limited space for critical reflection and limited opportunity for pre-service teachers to develop essential foundations of theoretical knowledge to underpin their professional practice, for example theories relating to child

development and learning and theories of pedagogy. However, the Carter Review (DfE, 2015) recommended a core content for ITE, which includes a focus on understanding professionalism and child and adolescent development and this notion of a core ITE curriculum has been further reinforced in the recent education White Paper (DfE, 2016). Liston *et al.* (2009), in reference to the American system for ITE, state that the gap between university-centred teacher education aspirations and the state school reality needs to be more thoroughly addressed. They warn against any singular framework for teacher education offering pre-service teachers a sole lens through which to view education and its larger social and political context. This could equally apply to HEIs as it does to the school context and further supports arguments for enhancing partnership in ITE rather than polarised provision at either ends of the continuum of provision.

Grainger *et al.* (2004) described the pedagogical dilemmas and contradictions for teachers and lecturers in a policy climate which promotes an incessant drive and demand for measurable standards. They stated that “finding the energy and enterprise to respond flexibly to this working reality is a considerable challenge and teachers need to be convinced that creativity is a critical component in a world dominated by technological innovations.” (p.244). They highlighted the role of university tutors in modelling creative approaches to pedagogy in ITE, suggesting that creative examples of teaching from pre-service teachers are more likely to occur if they have seen such practice modelled by their tutors.

In summary, this review so far has argued that the direction of travel resulting from current government policy in relation to ITE is creating considerable insecurity and uncertainty in the system at a time when a teacher recruitment crisis has been identified as a major threat and a contributory factor in destabilising the profession and indeed schools. This review argues that the policy swing towards a predominantly school-based and school-led system of ITE, which negates the potential contribution of HEIs and positions teacher education and teacher professionalism within an apprenticeship type model of learning and professional being, has no credibility in terms of evidence and research and is potentially damaging in terms of the capacity of future generations of teachers to be critically reflexive at the level of depth required in any given profession. The associated

technical rationalist ideology of learning to teach, which positions future generations of teachers as passive in the process, is in danger of fostering a tick box acquisition attitude and approach to learning which negates the importance of theory and diminishes the space and time and status of the professional relationships needed to reflect deeply on the impact of pedagogy on the progress of learners in schools. Ryan (2011) states that the political conditions surrounding teacher education programmes in countries such as England create real challenges in terms of the possibilities for implementing reflective and transformative pedagogy in ITE and describes how teacher educators who are committed to such transformative practice need to find the slippages between the spaces of university, school, community and political agendas to develop such approaches to learning to teach. This study argues that there is such space, even within this system, to develop and foster approaches to pedagogy in ITE which can challenge the prevailing ideologies of either previous or current government policy discourses in this country. This is supported by Smyth (1989) who states:

“Requiring that teachers develop a sense of personal biography and professional history is one way of having them begin to overcome their inertia and unwillingness to question where particular teaching practices came from, and to that extent, no longer accepting teaching actions as natural or common sense and unquestionable. It is to attune them to the fact that perhaps silences on these matters are perhaps not accidental at all, but may be socially constructed responses to wider societal agenda....our experiences as teachers have meaning for us in terms of our own historically located consciousness; what we need to do is to work at articulating that consciousness in order to interpret meaning. Failure to understand the breaks and the discontinuities in our history makes it difficult for us to see the shifts in the nature of power relationships, with the result that we end up denying their very existence.” (Smyth, 1989, p.4)