A 'quiet revolution'?

The impact of Training Schools on initial teacher

training partnerships

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1. The evolution of a 'partnership' approach to initial teacher training in England

The notion that initial teacher training (ITT) should involve a partnership between schools and higher education institutions (HEIs) is not new. As early as 1928, one commentator reflected: 'I have often wondered why teachers, as a body, in elementary and secondary schools alike, do not demand a larger share in training. The trained teachers are to join their staffs … yet, in effect, they are content to entrust the training to persons who, however skilled, are at the time outside the schools' (Ward in Gardner, 1994, p.32). There were calls for greater collaboration between HEIs and schools throughout the twentieth century. By the 1980s, the professional literature was characterised by: 'the almost total dominance of the … "collaborative" model' (Furlong et al., 1996, p.48) of ITT and pioneering courses such as those offered by the Universities of Sussex, Leicester, Oxford and Cambridge were implementing this approach. It was in this same decade that partnership emerged as a key element in government thinking with the issue of a white paper, Teaching Quality (DES[i], 1983). The following year the government acted, issuing Circular 3/84 (DES, 1984) which made partnership mandatory and stipulated that ITT courses should be

developed and run 'in close working partnership with... schools' (DES, 1984, para. 3). For the first time, government also specified the minimum amount of time students should spend in schools during training. Five years later, these requirements were strengthened by Circular 24/89 (DES, 1989) which took further steps to encourage collaboration, including an increase in the amount of time students were expected to spend in schools.

Despite government measures designed to precipitate the slow, evolutionary growth of collaboration taking place in academic institutions, the formation of effective *working* partnerships proved to be a challenging and elusive goal. As early as the 1920s, this had been recognised as a stumbling block: 'The plea for closer association of schools with university training departments… will doubtless be accepted in principle. The practical application of the principle offers endless difficulties' (Ward in Gardner, 1994, p.34). In fact, schools played only a marginal role in ITT for much of the twentieth century. In 1975, Webster noted that teachers were 'often thought of as not having a role at all, except to protect the student from the supervisor!' (1975, p.145). Sixteen years later, despite the requirements of Circulars 3/84 and 24/89, the situation appeared little changed. A survey by Her Majesty's Inspectorate (DES, 1991, para. 56) found that most teachers were acting as an 'informal guide and friend' to students who completed teaching practices in their schools. On most courses, it was still the university tutor who would 'arrive, observe, feed back and depart' (Edwards and Protheroe, 2004, p.194), who remained the linchpin in the training and assessment of student teachers. Alexander (1990) explained the discrepancy between policy and practice by arguing that partnership functioned

at two levels. There was an enabling level which involved those with a managerial or liaison role and focused on formal structures, roles and procedures. He contrasted this with the day-to-day interactions of those involved at the action level – HE tutors and school teachers. Disjunctions between these two levels ensured that HEIs remained the 'dominant partner' (Furlong et al., 1996, p.39) in ITT up until the early 1990s. 'Collaborative training partnerships' (Furlong et al., 1996) remained exemplary exceptions rather than the rule.

Finally, government acted decisively to curb the dominance of HEIs, thereby instigating a particularly turbulent period in the history of ITT. Circular 9/92 (DfE, 1992, p.1) introduced a more exacting set of requirements designed to ensure that secondary schools became 'full partners of higher education'. There was a substantial increase in the amount of time that students must spend in schools and teachers were expected to exercise 'a joint responsibility' for the planning and management of courses as well as being actively involved in the selection, training and assessment of students. Similarly exacting requirements for primary courses were published the following year (Circular 14/93, DfE, 1993). Both circulars were accompanied by timetables for implementation. An additional factor in the 1990s was the introduction of a rigorous inspection system, placed in the hands of a new body: the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED). OFSTED not only monitored the overall quality of ITT – it also checked compliance with government requirements and its evidence was used in the allocation of training places. This combination of more prescriptive circulars and more rigorous inspection procedures forced the pace of change.

New training partnerships were hurriedly put into place as courses scrambled to meet the deadlines set by the circulars. The funding of ITT – only ever barely adequate (Wiliam, 1994, p.85) – became the breaking point for some courses once schools required a bigger share to reflect their increased responsibilities. Some HEIs withdrew courses and, in others, posts were lost. One HEI commentator described the changes, initiated in 1984 and culminating in Circular 9/92, as the 'political rape of initial teacher education' (Gilroy, 1992, p.5). Schools were equally dissatisfied with new arrangements, regarding themselves as inadequately recompensed for the scale of their involvement (Barker et al., 1996).

Although ITT circulars had become increasingly prescriptive, the first Modes of Teacher Education (MOTE) project found considerable latitude in the interpretation of new requirements when it investigated their implementation:

> All courses would currently claim to have achieved or to be aiming for partnership but has that resulted in [a] revolution in the content and structure of initial teacher training? .... our evidence would suggest that the answer to those questions depends to a considerable degree on what partnership has actually come to mean in any individual course. For despite the fact that in many respects the Government circulars were highly specific in their requirements, they were silent on the central issue of what actually constituted partnership in teacher education. As a consequence, partnership has come to mean rather different things within different courses. (Furlong et al., 1996, p.42)

For the MOTE team, an ITT partnership: 'necessarily involves some degree of joint responsibility for course provision' (Whiting et al., 1996, p.17). Working empirically, they derived three 'ideal typical' models of partnership from their surveys of courses in England and Wales (1991-1992, 1993-1996) (Furlong et al., 2000). Two of them – collaborative and complementary partnerships – represented opposite ends of a training continuum. As its name suggests, the collaborative model was based on a close working relationship between school and HEI staff. It was resource-intensive, requiring frequent opportunities for mentors and tutors to meet to plan and deliver provision which integrated school-based training with that provided by the HEI. This model dispensed with the need for consensus about good practice, acknowledging that what students learnt in school may differ from what they learnt in a HEI. The heavy demands on time made by this model probably explain why the MOTE team encountered few examples of collaborative partnerships.

At the other extreme on the continuum, the complementary model gave schools and HEIs separate and complementary responsibilities. However, responsibility for synthesizing the different elements of training fell upon students as there was no attempt to integrate provision. In the final model, HEI-led partnership, HEIs assumed the lead although they were sometimes supported by small groups of teachers acting as consultants. HEIs determined what students should learn in school and then adopted a quality assurance role to monitor whether schools actually delivered agreed learning opportunities. Although the MOTE project found that an individual course may embody aspects of all three

models, it concluded that the complementary and collaborative models 'only seemed relevant to a small minority of courses' (Furlong et al., 2000, p.116) and that the HEI-led model 'does serve to illuminate the reality we witnessed more closely than the other ideal typical models we presented' (Furlong et al., 2000, p.117). This was ironic: 'Given the almost total dominance of the very different "collaborative" model within the professional literature' (Furlong et al., 1996, p.48).

The MOTE project's conceptualisation of partnership into three discrete 'ideal typical' models (collaborative, complementary and HEI-led) begs the question about a fourth model. What of school-led partnership? Isn't this the missing model in this schema? School-led partnership was the goal for those who hoped that Circulars 9/92 and 14/93 would pave the way for schools to grasp the initiative. Circular 9/92 (DfE, 1992, p.4) itself set the tone by declaring that schools should take the initiative in the formation of new partnerships: 'schools interested in partnerships should approach HEIs'. Shaw (1992, p.374), a headteacher, went further, arguing that the new arrangements created conditions which would enable schools to develop the muscle to exercise real power: 'Schools are now in a position either to form consortia or clusters which will give them a stronger base from which to insist on a full role in determining resourcing levels and planning courses'.

In practice, few schools gained the level of initiative and control envisioned by Circular 9/92 and Shaw. Usually, they achieved this by opting for forms of ITT outside the mainstream. Indeed, the overall topography of ITT during the 1990s

was complicated by a host of government schemes which vested primary responsibility for ITT in schools, for instance, the now defunct Licensed Teacher Scheme and School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT). These schemes were excluded from MOTE's modelling exercise on the grounds that HEIs had no formal responsibility for them even though they may be bought in on an ad hoc basis. They did not, therefore, satisfy MOTE's criterion that partnership necessarily involves 'some degree of joint responsibility for course provision' (Furlong et al., 2000, p.78). Thus, the absence of a school-led model from MOTE's schema reflects the absence of partnerships in which this was the defining feature. Despite the introduction of government-sponsored, school-led schemes, and the requirements of Circulars 9/92 and 14/93, HEIs maintained their traditional sway over ITT, albeit through HEI-led, regional partnerships, and the majority of new teachers continued to train in this way.

Until 2005, the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) was the government body responsible for raising standards in schools in England by attracting able and committed people to teaching and by improving the quality of teacher training. Various TTA initiatives nurtured partnership, including the Partnership Promotion Schools Network and the National Partnership Project. More than ever before, teachers have become actively involved in ITT. They contribute to the design, management and quality assurance of courses. They also participate in the recruitment, selection and assessment of students and in the external examining process. Mentors deliver training, both within their own institutions and centrally to entire student cohorts. They also train and recruit each other, visiting neighbouring schools to share good practice or to recruit

schools that are uninvolved by persuading them of the benefits. Some mentors remain school-based whilst others are seconded to HEIs or furnished with contracts that allow them to work part of the time in school and the other part in a HEI. Thus, teachers have moved a long way from the peripheral figures depicted by HMI (DES, 1991, para. 56), their role confined to offering 'informal support and guidance'. However, initiative and control of key elements – such as funding and the appointment of staff – have continued to be exercised centrally and not at the level of individual schools. Moreover, those in higher education have maintained their position as ' "the experts" and the guardians of the quality of contributions made by schools' (Furlong et al., 2000, p.23).

It is onto this scene that the Training School initiative was launched.

2. The Training School project

The Green Paper, <u>Teachers – meeting the challenge of change</u> (DfEE, 1998), introduced a new designation for schools in England as Training Schools. The original aim of this project was to identify a small number of schools which were already successful providers of ITT. These schools would receive up to £100, 000 per annum direct funding which was intended to act as a stimulus to innovation and to the further development of expertise. In return, these schools should strive to become training beacons, disseminating their good practice and innovation to others. The Green Paper was followed by a circular letter (DfEE, 1999a) addressed to HEIs and other ITT providers, asking them to nominate schools from within their own partnerships which were providers of 'high quality

ITT'. It was from this pool of recommendations that the first cohort of Training Schools was selected.

The initial phase of the project had a three-year life span. In the first year, 2000 - 2001, 54 schools were accredited. A further 28 received accreditation for the final two years of phase 1. At the time of writing, the total number of Training Schools stands at 244, with the government having expressed its intention to introduce new Training Schools each year. Although the funding available to individual schools has been reduced as numbers have expanded, in 2003-2004 Training Schools shared total funding of £7.5 million. The Training Schools page of the Standards website declared that: 'expansion of the Training Schools programme is an important part of the next phase of the Government's plans to improve standards in education'
(http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/trainingschools/what_are/?version+1). In his keynote address to the National Training Schools Conference in 2003, the Minister for Education spoke of a 'quiet revolution' taking place in education (Milliband, 2003 http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/trainingschools).

The notion of Training Schools contributing to a 'quiet revolution' in education is an interesting one. It hints at the capacity of an ever-expanding number of Training Schools to alter the dynamics of partnership and disrupt the status quo. This is not simply because of the potential scale of this initiative nor because of the amount of resource that may be devoted to it, significant though both of these are. As important is the capacity of this initiative fundamentally to alter the dynamics of HEI-led partnerships, challenging traditional power bases and

leading to new ways of initiating and managing change. Development and change have traditionally come from the centre – albeit with the support of centrally convened teacher panels – but the Training School project places the locus of control within individual schools. These schools enjoy an unprecedented level of control over matters like the deployment of funding, the choice of new initiatives and the management and dissemination of innovation.

The full implications of devolving these matters down to the level of individual schools are far from clear. What is clear is that a traditional, hierarchical model of management, which HEI-led partnership represents, will be required to work alongside a new, bottom-up approach emanating from schools. This represents a fundamentally different arrangement from the status quo and may be regarded as a stride in the direction of the school-led partnership that has eluded policymakers for so long. That this was the intent behind the introduction of Training Schools seems likely despite the conflicting messages conveyed to different stakeholders by project documentation. For instance, the circular letter addressed to HEIs (DfEE, 1999a), asking them to nominate schools, stressed that the programme was designed to 'strengthen existing partnerships' and drew attention to 'Ministers' intentions that Training Schools should become an asset to a partnership'. However, the Green Paper (DfEE, 1998) had struck rather a different note. In fact, it made no mention of the contribution that Training Schools should make to existing partnerships, announcing instead the creation of: 'a network of schools to pioneer innovative practice in school-led teacher training' (DfEE, 1998, p.43). Later it asserts: 'We believe that further change is needed' (DfEE, 1998, para. 105).

One key change involved the promotion of collaboration with new partners including other schools and SCITTs (DfEE, 1999b, p.3). Arguably the most important change involved alterations to funding arrangements for, as Tett et al. (2003, p.50) observe, 'generally the partner that controls the funding is dominant'. The project required each application for Training School status to nominate a single school as: 'designated funding recipient' (DfEE, 1999b, p.5) thereby enabling individual schools to be funded: 'directly rather than channelling funding for partnership schools through higher education institutions' (DfEE, 1998, para. 110). The significance of this measure is that it allows schools to remain within existing partnerships whilst achieving a degree of autonomy through direct funding of some of their ITT activities. Thus, Training Schools may be regarded as one of the vehicles through which government is seeking to redress the balance of power between schools and HEIs and foster a 'school-led' approach. Penney and Houlihan (2003, p.242) locate the Training School initiative within a broader policy context which points to similar conclusions:

> For New Labour partnerships are also about challenging the existing assumptions about organisational remit and professional roles, about, for example, the role of schools and HEIs in providing initial teacher training ... and the responsibilities of successful schools towards other schools in the locality. The New Labour view of partnership is that it is, at least in part, adversarial and iconoclastic… much partnership working appears to involve 'a process of partial displacement and recombination, wherein

there was an attempt to decentre some existing "partners" in educational governance, to increase the importance of others and to install new ones (p. 504)'.

3. Appraising the contribution of Training Schools

The first OFSTED survey (2003) revealed the range of activities that had been undertaken under the auspices of the project. Different schools had elected to focus on an array of topics including Special Educational Needs, assessment, cross-phase training in Modern Foreign Languages, the teaching of Citizenship, support for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL), the use of interactive whiteboards, the use of video conferencing, providing increased access to post-16 experience for students and staff visits to increase awareness of alternative practices in other schools. OFSTED noted that Training Schools were promoting flexible ITT routes through their involvement with the Undergraduate Credit Scheme, the Flexible PGCE and the Graduate Teacher Programme. It also pointed to work focused on improving recruitment and retention of teachers. Overall, the survey concluded that Training Schools 'represent good value for money' (OFSTED, 2003, p.5) and listed a number of positive effects, including:

- increases in the number of trainee teachers taken by schools

- increases in the numbers of staff involved in mentoring them

- improvements in the quality of school-based training

- successful collaboration with, and support for, other schools.

It did, however, sound a cautionary note about the capacity of this initiative to achieve one of its key policy aims – that of adding 'value over and above ... existing activities' (DfEE, 1999b, p.7) by encouraging the emergence of training beacons, capable of disseminating their initiatives across their own partnerships and beyond. The capacity to disseminate effectively is a critical measure of any initiative designed to have a wider impact, especially when development takes place at the microcosmic level of individual schools. OFSTED judged that dissemination of research outcomes was a weakness in over a fifth of schools. It also suggested that there was scope for 'a more co-ordinated approach to dissemination across the Training Schools network, with the potential to draw together the diverse work being carried out by schools' (OFSTED, 2003, p.11). Similar concerns were voiced by one of the contributors to the 2003 National Training Schools Conference who: 'warned against the collaboration and work with partners that led to a lot of disjointed initiatives which would have little long-term effect' (Bowman, 2003, p.9). Bowman's misgivings echo those of the Performance and Innovation Unit (2000) which suggested that a proliferation of small projects is potentially inefficient.

Reservations such as these suggest that the capacity of Training Schools to 'add value' to existing provision may be compromised if the project leads only to an ever-expanding patchwork of small-scale initiatives devoid of a strategic overview and coherent planning. If the choice of the individual school as the unit for innovation and dissemination makes it difficult to achieve a wider impact and long-term effects, the efficacy of the project cannot but be compromised. Thus, the extent to which the flurry of activity unleashed by the Training School project

signals the start of a 'quiet revolution', a fundamental paradigm shift in ITT, remains to be seen.

The following sections focus on the work of a specific school, described here as School C. It is an 11-18, mixed, comprehensive school with beacon status which was part of the first tranche of Training Schools to receive funding. This project is worthy of consideration because it chose to interpret the Training School remit in a distinctive way, forging an unusually close working relationship with a large regional provider of ITT. The analysis provided below is based on an evaluation of the project undertaken by the author of this paper. It is not the intention here to provide the results of the evaluation in detail as this is the subject of a future paper. However, an overview of the evaluation – its design, methods and findings – is pertinent to the arguments and analysis being pursued here.

4. A partnership within a partnership

Better Training (DfEE, 1999b, p.7) posited that Training Schools should 'add value over and above ... existing activities' by innovating and further developing existing good practice and by disseminating initiatives across their own partnerships and beyond. School C set about achieving these aims by espousing collaboration with an HEI-led partner. Its application to the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) was designed by the headteacher working in co-operation with the HEI's Director of PGCE. It made provision for staff from both institutions to collaborate at every stage in the project's development and for funding to be shared between them. An

ambitious, three-year project with five separate strands for development was proposed:

- Effective teaching in data dense settings (using data)
- Developing and disseminating excellent practice in working with learning support assistants (working with LSAs)
- Enhancing mentoring and classroom observation skills (observation)
- Enabling continuity of learning from Key Stage 2 to 3 with a focus on literacy
- Identifying models of excellence in classroom practice in an ICT rich environment (ICT).

These topics were chosen because provision on the PGCE, a postgraduate-level initial teacher training qualification, was deemed capable of improvement. Each institution nominated a strand co-ordinator, thereby allowing the project to capitalise on the complementary expertise of school and HEI personnel. For instance, the using data strand was led by the school's data manager and a tutor with expertise in quantitative techniques. Strand co-ordinators were required to work collaboratively throughout the three-year life span of the project, meeting to undertake joint planning of each year's initiatives and working together to research and develop new materials which were trialled with students and/or mentors and then evaluated. Overall project management became the responsibility of a Deputy Headteacher and a colleague from the HEI. The entire team met once each year to review the current year's work and embark on forward planning for the next. Thus, Training School funding had

allowed a new model of partnership to take shape – a 'partnership within a partnership'.

5. Evaluation design and methodology

Better Training's requirement that Training Schools should 'add value over and above ... existing activities' (DfEE, 1999b, p.7) suggested that 'additionality' should become a principal criterion for evaluation. It was, perhaps, serendipitous that the design of the project made it possible to use a quasi-experimental approach to its evaluation because experimental research is an established means of producing measures of effect. At its simplest, it entails spitting subjects into two groups: a treatment and a control group. Care is taken to ensure that groups match, as far as possible, in all respects but one: the treatment group is exposed to the treatment but the control group is not. The aim is to ensure that any measurable differences in outcomes between the groups can be attributed to the treatment with reasonable confidence.

The project's modus operandi lent itself to this approach. New materials/approaches were developed and trialled inside the school with the small group of students who were on placement there at the time and/or their mentors. Appropriate innovations were subsequently adopted by the mainstream PGCE where other students and/or partnership schools would experience them. This meant that only students on placement at School C were exposed to project materials at the outset. In all other respects, they were similar to other PGCE students, each group containing students of both sexes, a range of ages, different ethnic backgrounds, different subject specialisms and

so on. Thus, it was possible to view students who completed a placement at School C in Year 1 as a treatment group (i.e. the only group exposed to the project) and remaining students as a control group. In subsequent years, when project materials were disseminated, the entire PGCE cohort became part of the treatment group (see figure 1). Thus, the key features of the evaluation were the identification of several treatment groups and a control group plus the use of Year 1 data as a baseline against which results for subsequent years could be set to judge the value added when materials were disseminated.

[insert figure 1 about here]

A number of universally relevant, core questions was developed. These questions focused on students' perceptions of their own skills and practice <u>before</u> and <u>after</u> exposure to project training, as well as evaluating the training itself. The rationale for developing core questions was that the same questions could be applied across the board, irrespective of strand, and with different groups of respondents, to provide standardised, comparable data. This, in turn, made possible year-on-year comparisons without which the attempt to discern additionality would be difficult. Quantitative data were collected by means of questionnaires. A generic questionnaire containing the core questions was developed and, where necessary, adapted for use with different groups. Quantitative data were supplemented by qualitative data derived from semi-structured interviews with students who completed a placement at School C and project personnel.

'Real world research' (Robson, 1993, p. x) does not take place under laboratory conditions and rarely replicates optimum conditions for measuring effects. Several features of this evaluation may have compromised the dependability of its findings, for instance, the sizes of groups involved. Although PGCE groups comprised 200+ students, the School C groups were much smaller with fewer than 15 students on placement at the school on any one occasion. The size of the PGCE groups made their questionnaire results suitable for presentation as percentages, but treating the small numbers from School C groups as percentages would have been misleading because the addition or subtraction of one response would have had a disproportionate effect on resulting percentages. Moreover, the number of students in School C groups varied from year to year further complicating any attempt to use raw results to make comparisons and identify trends. These were amongst the confounding variables which meant that findings would need to be treated with caution. Notwithstanding these drawbacks, it was felt that a quasi-experimental approach would provide a useful indication of whether the project had added value to existing provision.

The design of the evaluation made it possible to examine the project's impact on two separate occasions, using Year 1 PGCE students as a control group each time. The first occasion was in Year 1 when School C students became the first treatment group, providing an initial indication of impact. Year 3 was the second occasion on which impact was examined by comparing results for the final PGCE group with those for the original PGCE group. Although analyses

were based on raw results for School C groups and percentages for PGCE groups, the main trends did emerge clearly from the data.

6. Main findings

On both occasions, treatment groups rated their training more favourably than the control group. Sometimes the differences were marked. For example, in Year 1, only 16% of the PGCE students found their using data training 'very helpful' while 25% declared it 'not very' or 'not at all helpful'. In contrast, over half of the School C group found their data training 'very helpful' and remaining students considered it 'fairly helpful'. In other instances, the differences were more modest. For instance, the percentage of students expressing a 'limited' or 'no need' for further training in working with LSAs did increased between Year 1 and Year 3, but only by 8% (from 37% to 45%). To gain an overview of the magnitude of the project's impact, a 15% difference between ratings in Years 1 and 3 was used to distinguish modest from more pronounced effects. This analysis produced an equal number of effects falling into each category. Overall, findings across the various strands of the project and in each table of results pointed consistently to the conclusion that the project had successfully identified areas where existing provision was capable of improvement. Moreover, project materials had enhanced training not only for the small groups of students placed in the Training School but for the entire PGCE cohort.

Beyond students' ratings of their training, the evaluation identified other advantages to this model of partnership. First, the micro-partnership was able to work strategically, addressing weaknesses that had been identified in the wider

partnership's work, rather than developments taking place in an ad hoc and piecemeal fashion. The sharing of funding allowed the project to benefit from the complementary expertise of staff from the school and HEI. Arguably the project's most important attribute was its ability to disseminate initiatives to large numbers of students and schools across a broad geographical area. There were several stages to this process. Initially, School C became a centre for innovation and a 'test bed'. New materials and approaches were developed and then trialled inside the school. This pilot phase was used in preparation for disseminating materials in subsequent years – either to other partnership schools or to the HEI's own teaching programmes. For instance, materials developed by the working with LSAs strand were initially trialled with students on placement at School C but the following year they were incorporated into the teaching programme at the HEI where all students were exposed to them. Likewise, the observation strand developed new observation instruments for use by mentors during lesson observation. Initially, these were piloted by School C mentors but subsequently they were adopted by the partnership for use in all schools.

An advantage, therefore, of collaboration with a large regional provider was that it obviated the difficulties that individual schools invariably face in disseminating their work. Because the work of the project fed directly into that of a regional provider, it had ready access to dissemination channels, reaching a far larger number of schools and trainee teachers than it could otherwise have hoped to engage. The imprimatur of the regional provider was important in ensuring a genuine impact on practice. Embedding a collaborative micro-partnership at the

very heart of an HEI-led macro-partnership proved to be an effective means of stimulating innovation and dissemination. The project also avoided shortcomings identified by OFSTED (2003) in the national project.

Although this 'partnership within a partnership' was well-suited to achieving the national project's key aims, it would be misleading to suggest that it was an unqualified success. For instance, the ICT strand was dogged by staffing difficulties, losing no less than three strand co-ordinators who obtained promotion in other institutions. This delayed and fragmented the work of this strand because the imperative to collaborate with staff from another institution made initiatives more susceptible to disruption than they would have been if working independently. With hindsight, it was also recognised that the scope of the project was ambitious and that energies may have been more profitably focused on fewer strands rather than being dissipated across so many.

Another issue concerns the extent to which materials/approaches developed in one setting are amenable to adoption by others, a process that has been described as 'transferred innovation' (Hargreaves, 2004, p.12). The national project was founded on the assumption that additional funding could be targeted at already successful institutions to stimulate dissemination to others involved in the same enterprise in order to improve their practice. The School C project did provide instances of this working well. For instance, one outcome of the observation strand was a booklet offering guidance to student teachers on observation techniques accompanied by a selection of observation schedules. This was a free-standing resource, suitable for use by trainee teachers in any

school setting and as such it was eminently suited to dissemination. However, dissemination was not always so straightforward. Institutions tend to acquire expertise in particular areas precisely because conditions are favourable. For instance, a school which enjoys an abundant supply of information technology (IT) hardware or of EAL pupils is well-placed to become a centre of excellence in the use of IT or in the teaching of EAL pupils. Other schools may find it difficult to replicate conditions which occur naturally in the original setting thereby compromising their ability to benefit from transferred innovation. The receiving institution may lack essential equipment or its human resources of staff may lack the enthusiasm and expertise to take advantage of what is on offer. Materials developed by the using data strand illustrate this point. They worked well when delivered by the small group of experts who had developed them but they demanded a level of background knowledge and technical expertise which was not shared by all of the tutors who eventually found themselves delivering these materials. In practice, it was found that whilst some initiatives transferred readily to new settings, others were more context-dependent.

Clearly, it would be misleading to suggest that this project was an unqualified success. However, the balance of evidence suggests that locating a collaborative micro-partnership within an HEI-led macro-partnership is an effective means of generating the additionality to which the Training School project aspires. In their study of collaborative innovation, Glatter et al. (2005, p.396) distinguish between 'specific' and 'strategic' innovations which they describe 'in terms of parts and the whole'. Strategic innovations are 'extensive

in terms of size, scope and scale'. Their objectives, however, are largely brought about through a host of: ' "specific innovations" which are much smaller in scope, often focusing on one or two of process, provision or organization' (Glatter et al., 2005, pp.389-90). Although each type of innovation is potentially valuable, the whole should 'amount to more than the sum of the parts and lead to sustainable qualitative change' (Glatter et al., 2005, p.396). Applying this distinction to Training Schools, it is possible to argue that the national project provides many instances of specific innovations but that it is less well-adapted as a form of strategic innovation. In contrast, the work of School C suggests that, working at the macrocosmic level of regional partnerships, strategic innovation becomes a more attainable goal. HEI-led partnerships may become vehicles for promoting 'sustainable qualitative change', developing new management structures and novel ways of working and transmogrifying specific innovations so that they become more than the sum of their parts.

7. Concluding observations

Following the upheavals of the early 1990s, ITT has entered a period of relative calm and stability. This should not be allowed to obscure the 'quiet revolution', aimed at unseating HEIs and supplanting them with school-led training, which appears to lie at the heart of initiatives such as the Training School project. These policy initiatives run counter to the consensus in the professional literature which suggests that ITT is at its most effective where students are able to benefit from the collaboration of those in schools and HEIs who seek to train them. This paper's analysis supports the view that ITT policies based on the promotion of dominance are unlikely to yield the improvements in ITT to

which 'collaborative training partnerships' (Furlong et al., 1996) are conducive. However, collaborative partnerships are resource-hungry and, in cash-strapped ITT, they have emerged only rarely. Where they have thrived, it has almost always been in an environment characterised by additional resourcing. For instance, McIntyre (1990, pp.114-115) stresses that the achievements of the pioneering Oxford internship scheme 'would not [have been] possible without …substantial financial support' from Oxfordshire LEA.

As the sands of policy shift, the role of Training Schools is being re-written with a view to integrating them with the Specialist Schools network. Nevertheless, ITT remains a principal component of the Training School remit. Only Government is able to offer collaborative partnership the level of support it requires to flourish. It is possible that a quiet revolution aimed at overthrowing one dominant partner only to replace it with another is not the most profitable route forward. It may be that the promotion of more imaginative forms of collaboration between schools and HEIs offers a more profitable target for funding and that the project described above provides just one example of how this might work.

Endnote

[1] Department of Education and Science (DES), Department for Education (DfE) and Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) are the names of the same government department at different points in its evolution.

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