

Measuring quality in initial teacher education: conceptualising the field

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Scotland has seen a renewed emphasis on teacher education, with recent calls from the Cabinet Secretary for Education for ITE university providers to propose new routes into teaching. In this vein, new routes into teaching were proposed and operationalised across Scotland. In part such moves rest on a need to get more teachers into the classroom more quickly. However, they also refer to ideas about the quality of teachers entering the profession and the quality of initial teacher education (ITE). In this latter regard, a consortium of Scottish universities are engaged in a Scottish Government funded project to consider the vexatious question of 'quality' in ITE –MQuiTE. This paper reports on this project by examining the ways in which policy imperatives drive theories of quality in initial teacher education. It uses Positioning Theory (Harré, 2004) as the theoretical lens through which can be identified and debated the differing positions for quality and its relationship with and to ITE. It outlines the multifarious foregrounding of quality and then demonstrates how such imaginings create position calls (Drewery, 2005) for the profession and government. The paper then deploys Policy as Positioning (Adams, 2011) to signal possible ways forward for deliberations about quality that rest not on simplistic notions of the professional-preparation nexus but rather methods that work with complexity and a lack of guarantee. The paper concludes by outlining the ways in which such possibilities imbue the profession with mechanisms for a wider and newer understanding of policy articulation.

Keywords: Education in Scotland; teacher education; quality of education

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