

A SUSTAINABLE WORKFORCE THROUGH INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION (ITE)

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THE MQUITE PROJECT

- MQuITE is a collaborative project
 - Across Scotland's ITE-providing universities
 - Funded by the Scottish Government through the General Teaching Council
 - Tracking two graduate cohorts (2017/8 & 2018/9) through to 2023
 - Using mixed methods to develop a context-appropriate understanding of quality in initial teacher education.
- Key response items related to teacher supply:
 - **“Where do you see yourself in 5 years?” (multiple category response)**
 - **“If you could go back to the start of university and start over again, would you become a teacher or not?” (numerical rating)**

WASTAGE, RETENTION, AND SUSTAINABILITY

- Post-qualification attrition contributes to a teacher supply ‘crisis’
 - Most attrition occurs in the first 5 years, and can be up to 50% - though data is incomplete and often poor quality (Weldon, 2018)
 - 2018 teacher census: 87% of Scotland’s post-probationers are employed in state schools the next year, dropping to 76% after 5 years
 - ...but this is a narrow definition of employed in state-funded mainstream schools within a national system.
 - This makes sense where teaching is one of the only professions with government-funded training (as in England), but may be less appropriate in Scotland where ITE is publicly funded for most students
- Scottish pension data adds some detail – 70% of the 2012 cohort remained in state schools in 2018, but 46% of these had gone to England & Wales

WHAT WE FOUND

- Wider range of career intentions than are currently accommodated within the “induction year structure”, incl. intention to return

On graduation	At end of induction
Teaching in Scotland: 72%	Teaching in Scotland: 68%
In a leadership role: 36%	In a leadership role: 33%
Teaching elsewhere: 24%	Teaching elsewhere: 19%
Not teaching at all: 6%	Not teaching at all: 9%
Studying for Masters/PhD: 45%	Studying for Masters/PhD: 32%

- “If you could go back and start over...”
- 4.5/5 end of ITE
- 4.1/5 end of induction

This is higher than most other OECD countries

- 8th out of 48 ranked countries
 - OECD mean 3.7
 - Sweden 3.9
 - England 3.8
 - Finland 3.8
 - Norway 3.8
 - Netherlands 3.8
 - Denmark 3.6

HOW WHAT WE FOUND COMPARES

- ‘Wastage rate’ reflects the primary aim of ITE as supplying teachers to state schools
- Fails to account for teachers intent on weathering short-term problems: drop-outs vs. stop-out
- Career intentions and longer-term satisfaction support the view that the first year is an important experience for retention
- Ability to return to the classroom remains under-researched

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 190/270 day registration requirements exacerbate the ‘wasted’ rhetoric
- Need to consider the way we let teachers back in
- Challenge the implication that retention is a measure of the quality of ITE – it’s more nuanced than ‘push factors’
- Wastage rate is too blunt for the Scottish context
- ‘Graduate level employment’ may be a more optimistic figure, though the profession may still face supply crises
- A range of data is required for informed policy-making: career intentions, graduate-level employment, education-related employment, pensionable educational service, etc. could all give more appropriate information

SUMMARY

- A range of teacher supply measures takes greater account of teachers' career intentions
 - Problematically, 'Wastage' assumes that ITE (or ITT) followed by induction year should be enough to sustain engagement in the profession.
- If, in the contemporary, globalised world (Covid-19 notwithstanding), *learning teaching* (Mayer, 2017) is much more than preparation for one policy or geographical context:
 - Returns us to normative questions such as 'what should ITE seek to achieve?' and 'what is ITE for?'
 - How we construe 'teaching' and 'teacher' is important.

REFERENCES & FURTHER READING

BERA annual conference symposium (Sept 2020): Understanding the complex determinants of the teacher shortage in England and Scotland (Morris, See, Gorard, Sims, Carver, and Perry).

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