# Chapter 9
# Initial Teacher Education Partnership: Bureaucracy, Policy, and Professional Agency


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**Abstract** Initial teacher education partnership as an example of 'educational nexus', often signals particular responses to normative questioning. Set within the 'theory-practice' nexus, partnership is positioned as the interleaving of various pedagogic/didactic D/discourses (Gee JP. Social linguistics and literacies. Ideology in Discourses. Routledge, 2012) to realise systemic development. Since the publication of *Teaching Scotland's Future* (Donaldson G, Teaching Scotland's future. Report of a review of teacher education in Scotland, In Education (Issue December), 2010) Scottish initial teacher education has spent considerable time developing supportive local authority/higher education institution/school partnership arrangements. Problematically, inter-group practice has been privileged over shared theoretical debate. This chapter proposes a 'spatial heuristic' centring on the epistemological matters of 'identifying', 'knowing' and 'doing' teaching. It proposes agency '…in which the agent is clearly decentred, an approach in which the achievement of agency is not an achievement of the agent alone but of the agent-in-interaction-with-others' (Biesta G, Tedder M, How is agency possible? Towards an ecological understanding of agency-as-achievement. 44(0), 1–40, 2006) as a key part of professional development and that partnership, subsequently should be reconceptualised as 'existing' in the overlaps 'between' theory and practice.

Any story of a traveller trying to find their way in a new country often uses the apocryphal phrase 'if I were going there, I wouldn't start from here!' Indeed, such tales might be taken as a metaphor to note thinking inherent in charting progress towards some defined policy goal. It is sometimes all too easy to bemoan current matters and instead highlight the problems inherent in where we are now and that another starting position would be beneficial. It is tempting to wish to change the origins for action rather than chart a path taking current practice as the basis for change. Those working in education, for example might decry the quality of

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resources, partnerships or even student teachers as reasons for lack of progress. In effect, a sense of helplessness may prevail which can stifle progress and development. Alternatively, there are those for whom the current situation provides ample challenge and stimulus for gain. While more realistic perhaps, herein lies the potential danger that romantic notions of what is (and indeed was) and what might be take centre stage so clouding judgement.

Somewhere between these two is a middle ground built on a strong appraisal of that which prevails and that desired. It is not the arena of longed for solutions and dramatic reorganisations, but a space where authentic observations occur and worked through possibilities ensue. Politically, change and growth are sought neither by denying prevailing conditions nor romanticising about possibilities but by being cognisant of challenges born of culture and social constructions and attempts to both work within these and modify them where necessary. Such work can occur individually or within one organisation, but more-often-than-not interagency or interprofessional working is required to sustain and embed change. Partnerships here form a clear part of the development cycle: not only can one group or individual learn from another but, if done well, synergistic outcomes can be forthcoming.

Regarding partnership in initial teacher education, solutions may well point to differing education arrangements for both. However, given the interpersonal nature of collaboration it is propitious to examine how and to what ends all working therein might approach partnership for the development of future teachers and their early career development. Duly, this chapter outlines a partnership heuristic for initial teacher education (and beyond). At its centre is the development of an epistemology for teaching and the development of teachers; that is, the way emerging (and extant) professionals 'identify', 'know' and do 'teaching' (Adams & McLennan, 2021) as the basis for the operationalisation of partnership. By examining the 'spaces' between these three epistemological elements a focal point to supporting beginning teachers can be highlighted. Rather than distinguishing between 'theory' and 'practice' and demarcating roles for those in different organisations, the heuristic's originality lies in its foregrounding of the importance of multiple views of teacher knowledge and skills and how such variety of perspectives engenders innovative solutions that relate to the interweaving of individually generated theory in the form of praxis with widely articulated knowledge forms. Such an approach recognises that agency '…in which the agent is clearly decentred, an approach in which the achievement of agency is not an achievement of the agent alone but of the agent-in-interaction-with-others' (Biesta & Tedder, 2006) is a key part of professional development.

## The 'Problem': Partnership in (Initial Teacher) Education

It could be argued that partnerships across compulsory-age education manifest the view that schools alone cannot solve all problems and that others may provide solutions. Often, Political pronouncements cite the need for education to be, if not *the*

way to solve societal ills, at least front and centre. Such missives often couch education as 'essential' in such matters. Indeed, it is churlish to suggest that partnerships cannot and should not feature in schooling; for example, for English education between 1997 and 2010 during New Labour's Third Way era, collaboration was lauded as the educational future (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009). Problematically, response thereon often reflected bureaucratic professional change alone, stemming from and resulting in linear and rationalist policy orientations (Adams, 2016) with associated reifications of data which often '…turned genuine teacher enquiry into rituals of contrived congeniality' (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009): 92). It is of little surprise that partnership here was mostly directed 'from above' with concomitant requirements that those on the front line 'deliver'. Whether such endeavours are more akin to that which Webb (1999, cited in Hood, 2012) describes as 'routinized coordination' with attached offerings of limited creativity was, perhaps not always explored or realised. Indeed,

> If interprofessional networks are to move beyond functional duties, they will need to develop the capacity to observe their own behavior *[sic]*, challenge their own hypotheses and encourage innovative solutions that accept risk as well as manage it. (Hood, 2012)

Initial teacher education globally holds up partnership as core to its work. That most initial teacher education programmes negotiate between partners lends weight to the belief that working together in the initial preparation of teachers is important. Although in-country mechanisms may differ, here partnership increasingly apportions responsibilities or expertise to agencies and individuals therein. Often set within the 'theory-practice' nexus, professionalism is positioned as the interleaving of various pedagogic/didactic D/discourses (see Gee, 2012 for discussion on the distinction between Discourse and discourse) that seek to proselytise working methodologies and determine ensuing professional action. One outcome is, though the delineation of initial teacher education into 'learning silos' where parts can be learned and subsequently converged into the whole. Here Higher Education Institutions share theory while schools undertake to support initial teacher education students' development of practical skills. There are many who challenge such working, noting efforts such as boundary spanning (e.g. (Fisher & Many, 2014) or third-space working (e.g. LilleJord & Børte, 2016) as responses to such interleaving.

## Partnership Theory and Initial Teacher Education

Globally, new teachers often state that placement was the most important part of their initial teacher education (Grudnoff, 2011). Indeed, this seems to influence facets of teacher life, including job satisfaction and length of service, albeit not always positively (Grudnoff, 2011). It is also argued that placement is crucial in iterative reflective cycles as part of slowly learnt tacit knowledge and competencies specifically by enabling student-teachers to ameliorate unformed and sometimes conflicting classroom knowledge (Ferrier-Kerr, 2009). Collaborative partnership, then,

relies upon different partners across sites to support student-teachers to manage professionalisation synthesis. Successful programmes thus integrate placement experiences to facilitate personal narrative construction that merges theory and practice into a coherent whole (Pridham et al., 2013). For individual student-teachers, this is intended to lead to 'wisdom of practice' while partners likewise co-re-construct shared understanding of what is required to support teacher learning such that development is not seen as the sole responsibility of any one partner (Ong'ondo & Jwan, 2009). More recently and internationally, collaborative approaches to initial teacher education through placement are influenced by debate around teacher knowledge and the purpose of teacher education. The assumption that complex tacit knowledge requires gradual and iterative experiences formed through partnership is particularly challenged in approaches which stress 'training' (rather than 'education') and where the here-and-now of teacher skills is seen as a much less problematic but more important form of knowledge (Ulvik & Smith, 2014). In contrast to collaborative partnership, such a view individualises the student-teacher experience through narratives such as 'survival' or 'resilience'. Tatto et al. (2017) refer to this shift as an international 'placement turn' privileging school experience over other initial teacher education aspects. Advocates highlight similarities to clinical experience models although there is still debate over whether such approaches are reductionist and whether notions of 'best practice' can be mapped across to pedagogy (Burn & Mutton, 2015; McLean Davies et al., 2015).

However, although 'partnership' is an oft used word it is not a universally agreed term. Across the globe initial teacher education deploys a variety of differing approaches that are culturally, socially, and educationally situated. Importantly, but also problematically attempts to instigate a single unified method miss the key point that context not only contributes to meeting need it also defines possibility. The Scottish position highlights tensions often experienced by those seeking to develop partnerships and will come as little surprise to those from other countries. Certainly, there are myriad reasons why partnerships succeed or fail, many of which are pertinent to the context in question. There will be, though, cross-cultural, or cross-country reasons and any examination of these benefits all in the field.

Collaboration is, though much more than administrative for it requires the need to traverse 'boundaries' and engage with significant organisational change including redefining relationships and cultures (Akkerman & Bruining, 2016). Accepting boundaries as 'sociocultural differences between practices leading to discontinuities in action or interaction' (Akkerman & Bruining, 2016) both reflects that the 'work' of schools differs from the 'work' of others in the initial teacher education partnership while simultaneously recognising that partnership must be part of day-to-day practice. Accordingly, 'boundary crossing' positions collaboration as drawing on dialectical approaches to the interface between theory and practice in order to construct and legitimise different forms of knowing (Smith et al., 2006). Such collaborative partnership working seeks to overcome perceived limitations of higher education institution led and complementary approaches (Cohen et al., 2013); respective positions whereby higher education institution staff 'legitimise' school-based staff views (Smith et al., 2006) or where roles are distinct and

demarcated between school and higher education institutions (Furlong et al., 2006). Alternatively, collaborative partnership aims to avoid the dichotomy of theory *and* practice and the risk of seeing teacher knowledge as sequential (first university, then school) or locating responsibility for bringing together the separate worlds of the higher education institution and the school onto student-teachers (Furlong et al., 2006).

Bartholomew and Sandholtz (2009, p. 156) argue that collaborative models 'offer a means to end fragmented approaches to teacher education, professional development, and school improvement'; collaborative models bridge theory-practice divides so strengthening higher education institution/school relationships (J. M. Allen, 2011). One view thereon is that of boundary-spanning: individuals and organisations work to bridge the seeming divide between the oft noted work of the higher education institution (theory-laden, embedded in distance between theory and practice; built on the principles of professional reflection and debate) and schools (where practice takes centre stage through a closeness to the recipients of teacher work (children/young people) and a focus on 'what works'). This is not without problems however, in particular that many teacher educators (be they higher education institution or school-based) are ill-equipped to do such work or are reluctant to do so (Madalinska-Michalak et al., 2012). If, as Pridham et al. (2013) write, '[t]he opportunities for pre-service teachers to develop and practice expertise is likely to be enhanced when they are afforded horizontal, cross university and school-based boundary activity…' then such work would appear propitious.

International dilemmas challenge the success of partnership working often due to time constraints and cultural and traditional differences between partners (Allen et al., 2013). Indeed, it is not universally accepted that partnerships between higher education institutions and schools are altogether necessary for initial teacher education. For example, English policy has criticised higher education institution-led initial teacher education for being too theoretical (Department for Education, 2010) and has opted to move most initial teacher education into schools. Further, and more generally, university can often appear set against school (conceptual Vs practical). If both locations are important for teacher learning then separation is problematic (Allen et al., 2013). While mechanisms should exist to support the development of all, power imbalances often mitigate against effective working and privilege one group over another:

> …most partnerships between teacher education institutions and schools are based on traditional, hierarchical relationships between partners, vertical lines of 'collaboration' and stable ideas of knowledge transfer. In such one-way relations, one partner is normally expected to 'add value', and in teacher education partnerships, this has typically been the university (LilleJord & Børte, 2016, 551).

Developments to boundary-crossing encompass ideas of 'third-space working' in an attempt to occupy the area between the Janus-face of school/higher education institution (Madalinska-Michalak et al., 2012). Third space signals a shift towards that which Bhabha (1990, p. 2) describes as the in-between existing in the 'overlap and displacement of domains of difference'. For student-teacher

learning, such 'both and also' approaches reflect that which Zeichner (2009, p. 89) posits as utilising 'hybrid spaces' which transcend the historic academic-practice divide. Bhabha's work attempts to overcome historic Indigenous-colonising dualities though a rejection of Indigenous need to either assimilate and relinquish identity or alternatively be read as culturally 'Other'. 'Living on the cusp' thus becomes the central domain for action without transcending or repressing noted contradictions. Importantly, actors do not seek to enter third-space but rather understand '…the in-between experience of cultural difference that acknowledges, with-out seeking to unite, multiple and sometimes contradictory identities, knowledges and cultures' (Forgasz et al., 2018). Specifically, Bhabha's third-space notes the dual focus of discomfort and possibilities for contingent, hybrid identities.

Alternatively, drawing not on Indigenous-colonial thinking, Soja's third space uses the work of French philosopher Henri Lefebvre through the idea of 'thirding-as-Othering' (Soja, 1996, p. 5). As a contest to the Indigenous-coloniser perspective, Soja attempts to disrupt conventional binary oppositions through acknowledgement of 'an-Other' which is more than the sum of two parts (Forgasz et al., 2018). Whereas Bhabha highlights a third-space that is neither first nor second, Soja's work creates an alternative space and perspective.

In contrast, Gutiérrezian third-space theory challenges dominant D/discourses though its invocation of a space for improvised, dialogical exchange. Educationally, whereas teachers' official space speaks first with student-teacher counter-scripts possibly providing alternatives, both are dominated by transcendent hierarchical hegemonic Discourses. Third-space, for Gutiérrez, consists of an 'unscripted space' (p. 452) forged between student and teacher that negotiates 'what counts as knowledge' (p. 452). As (Forgasz et al., 2018) write,

> Gutiérrez's approach recognises that… the agency of all social actors participating in the professional experience is determined by a transcendent script that they cannot control, only challenge through dialogue and genuine exchange.

For (LilleJord & Børte, 2016) 'third-space' is where school practice culture meets higher education institution academic culture in joint deliberation and requires the explanation of activities normally taken for granted in their original setting as 'participants become aware of the historical and cultural context of their activities, and when norms are challenged, innovative thinking evolves' (LilleJord & Børte, 2016).

Questions can also be raised through the positing of 'research-turns' which require refocusing partnership and initial teacher education on placements. Here, arguments such as Menter's (2017) that higher education institution input to initial teacher education involves the 'maximisation of reason' through teaching as research activity, are viewed as preferable to those where teachers are positioned solely as practitioners translating theory into practice. Relationships and sharing of power and responsibilities within collaborative partnerships enacted around student-teacher placements can be seen as related to such political and epistemological debates and require an understanding of how conversation acts to constrain or define positions between partners.

## Initial Teacher Education Partnership in Scotland

Scottish initial teacher education prides itself on working within a partnership approach. Since the publication of *Teaching Scotland's Future* (Donaldson, 2010) many have spent considerable time developing supportive partnership arrangements. Such work has been carried out between local authorities (as the employer of teachers and teacher-support staff and the organiser of local educational systems) and higher education institutions who are provided with funds to teach future teachers mainly through four-year undergraduate courses or one-year (post-graduate) Professional Graduate Diplomas of Education (PGDEs). While the framing of partnership arrangements is a systemic and organisational endeavour, operationalisation has an interpersonal necessity: notably the partnership operationalisation usually falls to staff in schools and higher education institutions. Potentially, complications in the ways in which staff in both locations are positioned militate against progress.

At the heart of the initial teacher education experience in Scotland is the provision of such education through partnership mechanisms between various systems actors. It is accepted, globally, across most jurisdictions that the quality of partnership is a sign of a healthy initial teacher education system (Harford & O'Doherty, 2016); indeed, collaboration can be seen to offer mutually renewing opportunities to both schools and higher education institutions where the outputs from one collaborator can assist inputs for the other (Bartholomew & Sandholtz, 2009). An underlying benefit of successful partnerships is that they can help end a fragmented approach to initial teacher education and further professional development and school improvement (Valli & Cooper, 1999). This though, may reflect a utopian view, one stemming from a policy perspective designed for a particular initial teacher education school/higher education institution system. While it may be tempting to judge partnerships and collaborations against 'official' policy explanations such missives are positioned in socio-economic and cultural-political frames which are in turn positioned and 'formed' by small-d/discourses (Gee, 2012) at the local level (Adams, 2016). The Scottish context reflects this: while schoolteachers and higher education institution tutors recognise the importance of initial teacher education partnership and policies thereto, both groups also acknowledge that these stand or fall on interpersonal discursive arrangements (Adams et al., 2023; Kennedy, 2019).

Current policies and approaches to partnership originate in the report *Teaching Scotland's Future* (The Donaldson Report) (Donaldson, 2010). Here collaborative partnership was cited as vital to the development of a sustained approach to professional learning. This report spawned several small working groups, one of which was tasked with outlining approaches to the development of partnership mechanisms between all involved in initial teacher education. This National Partnership Group reported to the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning in 2012 (Edwards et al., 2012) and reiterated Donaldson's view that initial teacher education and the early career phase (the first 3–5 years following full registration) were best seen as one continuum to promote enhanced professional learning to meet the aspirations of Scotland's *Curriculum for Excellence*. The report strengthened

Donaldson's call for collaborative partnerships between all those involved in initial teacher education and early career development and while it stopped short of recommending one countrywide model for partnership it did note the funding implications inherent in developing collaborative models.

The subsequent *Aspect Review of the Education Authority and University ITE* [initial teacher education] *Partnership Arrangements (phase one)* (Education Scotland, 2015) heralded marked improvements in partnership working between national agencies such as the General Teaching Council (Scotland) and the Scottish College for Educational Leadership, and enhancements towards the development of teaching as a masters level profession. Conversely, it also noted ongoing need for partnership actors to understand and share the benefits of collaborative working and the need to share good partnership practices. Similarly, and more recently, (Mackie, 2020) highlights that while collaborative partnerships might seek to break down historic power imbalances and areas of work/responsibility, all-too-often such arrangements lack cohesion between local authorities and schools with the former viewing initial teacher education as the province of higher education institutions alone. Such views reflect a traditional, essentialist interpretation reminiscent of historic theory/practice divides. Although staff in all three locations of local authority, higher education institution and schools desire joint working across initial teacher education and early career development, it is often the case that Scottish education compartmentalises the two phases. Indeed, Mackie's work draws attention to how classroom practice in initial teacher education, although judged as vital was occasionally seen as different to, and only *connected to* theory. This 'difference' aspect may be based on the idea of 'complementarity': schools promote contextualised knowledge while higher education insitutions promote that which is more generalised. Such a position exacerbates the theory/practice duality whereas orienting both theory and practice as intertwined facilitates the student teacher in developing wider appreciation of the complexities of teaching and their own personal/professional development. Such connections are helpful in developing the theory/practice nexus so positioning a holistic approach to teacher learning.

As a small country within a larger 'Union of Nations', Scotland has its own education system including approaches to teacher development and learning. While the initial preparation of teachers seeks to work through collaborative partnership arrangements, the country's geographical size and population spread requires myriad arrangements at both local and national level. The General Teaching Council (Scotland) may decide where initial teacher education students go for their school-based placements through the School Placement System but arrangements between schools, local authorities and higher education institutions are a matter for local deliberation. Specifically, while the organisation of the initial teacher education system requires higher education institutions to liaise with local authorities to determine arrangements for student teachers, such arrangements are enacted through relationships between *teachers* in schools and higher education institution *tutors* and are often built up over time (Adams et al., 2023).

Research for the *Measuring Quality in Initial Teacher Education (MQuITE) Project* (www.mquite.scot) found that while staff in both higher education

institutions and schools were supportive of partnership as a vehicle for initial teacher education, they differed in the extent to which they felt this was achieved in practice, with the latter holding more sceptical views (Kennedy, 2019). Additionally, although higher education institution based teacher educators desired more collaborative working, questions were asked as to whether school-staff have the time, training, or wherewithal to conduct partnership working successfully (Adams et al., 2023). Indeed, higher education institution tutors stated that any calls for collaboration must be met by greater clarity and assurances about the role for both higher education institution and school-based staff and their remuneration (Adams et al., 2023). School-based staff were equally positive about the possibilities of partnership, but their responses drew attention to the need for: a shared conceptualisation of the role and aims for initial teacher education pedagogy; the design of holistic assessment of initial teacher education students, especially school-based components; a reappraisal of power imbalances between higher education institutions and schools; and, in keeping with comments from higher education institution tutors, the need for school-based teacher educators to be appropriately trained and resourced (Kennedy, 2019). These are not wholly contemporary issues though for they form part of the history of Scottish initial teacher education partnership.

Such issues are exacerbated when students are placed outside pre-existing local authority/school arrangements. Often, schools work with several higher education institutions to facilitate student-teachers in undertaking, for example a much-needed rural or remote placement even when the student-teacher's higher education institution is urban-based. Collaborating to facilitate such placements is a good example of meeting partner needs, while delivering policy aims to improve recruitment and retention in rural areas.

Given that each higher education institution approaches partnership, programme design and placement documentation differently, it is little surprise that arrangements outside existing demarcations add to workload and tensions. Moreover, the initial teacher education approach of learning teaching (Mayer et al., 2017) is often replaced by 'teaching here' in the first few years following provisional registration due to a shift in support from higher education institutions to local authorities and early career teachers' employment by the latter. While (Beck & Adams, 2020) note the tangible benefits partnership brought to Scottish initial teacher education post-2010 they also signal the challenges yet to be met resulting from system organisation, role definition, resourcing and recent policy moves towards the standardisation of teacher accountability and student measurement. The Donaldson Report's calls for a seamless early career development experience are it would seem, still some way off. While much good work has been undertaken since 2010 it would not be unfair to state that this view (Smith et al. 2006) in some ways still prevails:

> In Scotland, there have been very significant barriers to any move towards collaborative partnerships. Indeed, it can be argued that Scottish partnership practices have remained trapped in duplication models, despite clear aspirations within the higher education providers from the early 1990s to move towards complementary and ultimately collaborative models of partnership.

If partnership is touted as the mechanism by which various initial teacher education actors and agencies might work together to further student-teacher experience, it is through school placement that partnership is mostly enacted. Across Scotland, the structure of placement across multiple programmes varies between higher education institutions. However, the General Teaching Council (Scotland) determines, to a large extent the length and distribution of student-teacher learning and thus ensures somewhat uniform and perhaps conservative approaches (Beck & Adams, 2020) built around placement requirements of 30 weeks across 4 years of undergraduate initial teacher education where '[m]ore than half of this experience should occur in the final 2 years of the programme, with a substantial block taking place in the last year' (Guidelines for Initial Teacher Education Programmes in Scotland, 2013). On one-year professional graduate diploma routes, placement must last at least 18 weeks and should be at least 50% of the programme. Statutory General Teaching Council (Scotland) guidelines state that placement arrangements 'take full account of the partners' mutual aims and their respective priorities and responsibilities' (Guidelines for Initial Teacher Education Programmes in Scotland, 2013). These guidelines, along with the Donaldson Report, set a collaborative benchmark for Scottish partnership involving managing myriad arrangements including LA mediation. Added to this are Standards for Provisional Registration (General Teaching Council (Scotland) (GTCS), 2021) that each student-teacher must meet before they can be awarded provisional registration. Following successful graduation from an accredited initial teacher education programme which includes meeting such standards, student-teachers then enter, should they wish, into the Teacher Induction Scheme: guaranteed one-year employment as an induction-year teacher.

Scottish initial teacher education is, then, operationalised through three mechanisms. The first, is the establishment of standards for provisional registration and standards for full registration as mandated by the General Teaching Council (Scotland), a body independent of government. The second is the provision of initial teacher education courses by 11 Scottish higher education institutions. These courses are either four-year undergraduate routes or one-year professional graduate diplomas in education, mostly taught at masters level. Third, following success on one of these routes, student-teachers receive provisional registration. Following a successful induction period teaching in a Scottish school, inductees then become fully accredited teachers through the conferment of full accreditation. Figure 9.1 highlights this process, and possible additional steps following full registration.

Across Scottish initial teacher education partnerships, while collaborative models are built on joint planning, joint delivery is somewhat constrained even though all partners are encouraged to consider the epistemological and pedagogical implications of student-teacher learning (Furlong et al., 2006). Whereas intent is mostly on the design and delivery of programmes to draw upon the wealth of knowledge and experience of all partners, it is evident that for those working in Scottish higher education institutions and schools as teacher-educators, partnership presents challenges and issues (Adams et al., 2023; Kennedy, 2019). Importantly, while relations

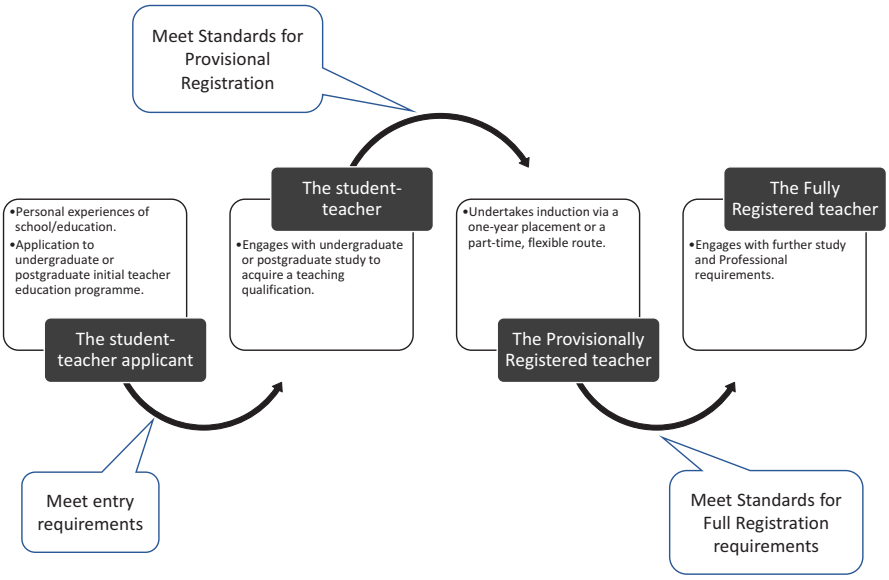


**Fig. 9.1** Process for qualifying as a teacher in Scotland

between higher education institution and school participants may generate myriad opportunities for collaborative work, *Standards for Provisional Registration* and *Guidelines for Accrediting ITE Programmes* (General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS), 2019) provide transcendent hegemonic Discourses. There are those working in partnership seeking to counter these, perhaps through Gutiérrezian approaches, but it is neither clear how such working is to be achieved nor what sorts of conversations might well lead to such challenge.

## Partnership and Quality: The 'Frames' of the Evaluative State

The ubiquity of the Evaluative State (Neave, 1998) embeds matters such as the regulation of initial teacher education partnership within systems of student access, curriculum content, internal governance and associated procedures for system scrutiny and reform. These provide principles which, taken together provide for new thinking (Dill, 1998, p. 361), specifically: centrally identified performance objectives to control outcomes; the delegation of authority over resource inputs and decisions to agencies; and performance accountability thorough competition and privatisation. In those jurisdictions where higher education institution/partner relationships form the cornerstone of initial teacher education it is fair to state that the development of student-teachers bridges an emancipatory/provision-of-labour divide. There exists an ontological/epistemological nexus that requires the

development of both ‘teacher-as-self’ and ‘skills for the classroom’. Tensions are evident though through the ways in which, epistemologically,

> …in most contemporary service occupations, professionalism, rather than being agreed from within, is being imposed from above and serves to promote and facilitate occupational change and as a disciplinary mechanism. (Edmond & Hayler, 2013), p. 210).

For initial teacher education, this contest is often couched in terms of student teachers being ‘classroom ready’ at the end of their ‘education’ or ‘training’ through a desire to ensure that initial teacher education is ‘fit for purpose’. Associated mechanisms such as inspections by external agencies seek to ensure this. Countries have their own mechanisms for assuring and ensuring quality but mostly such mechanisms desire both suitable and sustainable initial teacher education in terms of the development of student-teacher knowledge and skills. Often evident are simplistic ways of judging quality (Kennedy et al., 2021), such as the number of students graduating with certain degree classifications, or the number of hours spent learning key skills (such as literacy).

The Evaluative State is a Political Discourse designed to laud or denigrate provision. It seeks to mirror reality, and both reflect and determine that which is seen to be of worth or value for the purposes of reducing deficit and maintaining control. Stemming from enlightenment desire to understand and control the world, it deploys the Discourse (Gee, 2012) of observation and responsibility: external agencies observe activity within a frame of responsible action. Based on individualism and self-interest it is an operation that pinpoints areas of deficit and apportions blame and responsibility thereby forcing acceptance and provision according to dominant Discourses. Importantly, the Evaluative State’s preferred observation of quality is preoccupied with the here-and-now of provision set against narrowly defined, predordained standards, charters, inspections, and incentives, rigorously managed, audited, and incentivised. Although it may desire personalisation of initial teacher education provision, it does this impersonally and objectively for the purposes of control, often through a concentration on the easily observable, such as student-teacher/teacher/higher education institution tutor/pupil activity. With more than a nod to the Global Education Reform Movement (GERM) (Sahlberg, 2012), this quality position has captured much of the international, political initial teacher education Discourse. Mostly it centres on political party attempts to control social, political, economic, and cultural narratives that lean towards the provision of neoliberalism as a challenge to Welfarism and denigrates historically perceived ‘progressive’ ideas, preferring instead an orientation towards ‘traditional’ mantras, even if such a term is denied. Associated with this definition for quality are mechanisms that, whilst not denying teacher ontology, certainly pay it scant regard. Fulsome in its praise for the identification and realisation of teacher effect, associated forms of student-teacher legitimation centre on observable professional activity: the reification of overt teacher performance through the development of technical skills. In effect, quality is subsequently proved/not proved.

There are those for whom such a position is problematic: what should be of concern are ethical questions concerning how we identify and 'measure' quality to describe success. Such questions are normative and feature strongly in matters where policy seeks to do more than *describe* then *mandate* quality. The provision of guidelines and standards may orient Scottish initial teacher education towards the achievement of pervasive, predefined outcomes (Adams & McLennan, 2021) but as (Gunzenhauser, 2010) notes, such judgements often lead to the elision of alternative philosophies of and for education. Especially notable here is a separation of the ontological and epistemological: a concentration on the *skills* of teaching or *what teachers know and can do* to the detriment of *who teachers are or might be*. This quality position seemingly dominates the Political discourse and has led, in many countries, to the 'farming out' of initial teacher education to schools, NGOs, and charities to side-line higher education institution input and elevate technical aspects so cheapening and quickening initial teacher education.

An alternative political (as opposed to Political) position might be one that considers what *can be* and what *might be* within conversations about *who student-teachers are* and *who they might become*. This is an agentic orientation where collaboration and desire take centre stage in the formulation of student-teacher/teacher epistemology and ontology through the deployment of the language of possibility and potential. More Gutiérrezian in focus, it seeks to negotiate what counts as knowledge through dialogue that challenges prevailing standards-based hegemonic Discourses. Here is a system conversant with the *here-and-now* and *that which might be*. It draws upon negotiated understandings of teacher acts in an interface between action as reflection that at once observes and challenges the reification of teacher activity and assumptions about 'quality teaching' whilst also staking claims for possible future alternatives. It is deeply subjective and human and features elements such as happiness, contentment, and desire. In this regard it considers the development of self as much as knowledge and skills and is politically democratic.

It might be inferred that Political wrangling will always desire to foreground teacher epistemology, for knowledge and skills development can more easily provide evidence about 'provision', 'impact' or 'rigour' as such manifestations of overt activity are relatively easy to observe and comment upon. However, there is a need to identify the ways teacher knowledge can be explained with reference to the ways in which this impacts the ontological. Adams & McLennan (2021) argue for such a position through the deployment of three aspects of 'learning teaching' (Mayer et al., 2017): *identifying teaching*; *doing teaching*; and *knowing teaching*. They argue that such epistemological matters '…provide a foundation for ITE [initial teacher education] quality that explicitly acknowledges the ontological' (Adams & McLennan, 2021).

*Identifying teaching* acknowledges that the Discourses inherent across entry into, progression through and exit from initial teacher education programmes are socio-economic and cultural-political and require adjustments to the demands of varying workspaces (HEI and school).

> Access to, and success in, ITE is judged as a process of responses to occupational demands; but such matters operate within situational constraints: political, social, cultural and historical for example. Ignoring such constraints is problematic for these Discourses position teachers and teaching. For the entrant they are most acute when trying to understand acts and action given the lack of experience which often accompanies ITE [initial teacher education] entrants (Adams & McLennan, 2021).

Student-teachers must work within a variety of professional/educational perspectives to varying degrees. The Discourses of entry into, progression through, and exit from initial teacher education offer positions for individuals to take up, resist, subvert, or amend (Harré, 2004). Teaching is replete with history, culture, and learning: engagement with these is necessary for the student teacher (Dall'Alba, 2009). All teachers are subject to the contradictions of continuity and change, possibilities and constraints (Dall'Alba, 2009) and thus there are instances where entrants may shake up the system. When these are marked as creative, resistant, subversive, or reorienting they may garner either praise and recognition or, alternatively, derision. *Identifying teaching* is not, then, a straightforward matter.

*Doing teaching* recognises that teaching is social. To become a teacher is to be in and act on the world with and for others. Discursive acts define sense making through moment-by-moment interactional events with children, young people, other students, and colleagues. Here, the student-teacher acts on and invites others into her world but is also offered entry into the world of others. Through *doing teaching*, student-teachers engage in and on the world to enter an aspect of the world (the profession). Here matters such as categorisation come to the fore: for example, *pedagogy* and *not-pedagogy* as envisaged by both Big-D and little-d/D/discourses inherent in age and stage, related working, or subject didactics. Standards for provisional registration confer more than simple statements for observation. They engender ways of 'seeing' teaching as a particular type of person through particular lenses.

*Knowing teaching* concerns the development of the enduring as much as the here-and-now and thus sustains *praxis* through the taking up, resisting, amending, or subverting of positions provided by D/discourse. Tensions abound here though, and it is common for student-teachers to bemoan theory as lacking in 'their context' (Roth, 2002). Praxis positions student-teachers to see the world in ever shifting and temporal moments that convey meaning. Theory is not something either useful or not but is, rather, that which might or might not be called to action *in this moment*. To view theory as infallible misses the point that it provides not necessarily answers but, rather, ways of viewing possibility. As Adams & McLennan (2021) note,

> It may well be that race-theory, or social constructivist ideas are not 'held in the moment', but what these form are ways of living with meaning and intent: they call for reflection in/on praxis; consideration of the ways in which locally formed praxis is expressive of wider educative moments. They are not before or after praxis, they are with theory: they garnish personal construction.

## Developing a Heuristic for Initial Teacher Education Partnership Working

Starting from this position for quality as an expression of initial teacher education epistemological development enables consideration of the focus for partnership. Mostly, developing partnership working has involved considerations of how differing professionals and/or organisations might work together. Such work has been systemic and organisational and has sought to define roles, responsibilities, funding mechanisms and ways of acknowledging and celebrating success in such terms. While such methods and judgements might be important, they conceal what is and should be developed epistemologically by members of the partnership. It might be argued in the Scottish context that the Standards for Provisional Registration provide for professional knowledge; indeed, these go far beyond simple statements about planning, lesson delivery, assessment, and behaviour/classroom management. Nestled within statements about the values and ethics of teaching, the standards provide for holistic statements about what knowledge and skills student-teachers need to develop if they are to gain provisional registration.

However, MQuITE research indicates that often those standards that refer explicitly to 'classroom practice' are more readily accessed by school-based teacher educators, while others that relate to matters of theory, ethics, or values are often identified as the province of those in higher education institutions (Adams et al., 2023; Kennedy, 2019). Potentially this exacerbates theory/practice divides and does little to counter the tensions outlined above, cross boundaries, or operate in third-space. Eliminating standards is not something achievable in the current political or educational environment and thus a position that seeks to work within such confines whilst extolling the virtues of theoretical approaches to partnership is required.

*Identifying*, *knowing*, and *doing* teaching can be used as the basis for a heuristic for the development of partnership endeavours. Specifically, they provide two points of debate, discussion, and action. First, while it may be ideal to consider these three epistemological aspects as intertwined, it is certainly appropriate to assume that this is not always the case especially for the beginning teacher. A concentration on *doing teaching* may well prevail in the education of student-teachers which orients the student-teacher towards consideration of and a concentration on classroom activity. As signalled above, *doing teaching* is not a simple matter of overt activity removed from socio-economic and cultural-political matters. Pedagogic forms and didactic operationalisations are as much concerned with the *how* of acceptability as they are the *why* and require understanding not only of what the standards require, but how they were conceived, how they can be realised and, more importantly, how they are perceived and positioned in the local space. *Doing-here* may well be different to *doing-there* and yet both (should be/are) considered acceptable. An intricate relationship with *knowing teaching* thus exists that itself extends beyond matters of standards and overt operationalisation. Personally constructed epistemological

forms are vital for the development of the ontology-of-self. These neither circulate around notions of 'best practice' nor stem simply from 'modelling' but are, instead representative of personally constructed interfaces between the *here-and-now* and enduring *theoretical perspectives* that converge in the space between knowledge and skills. Similarly, identifying teaching is as much about the *is* as it is the *is-not*. For the student-teacher this means understanding the wider Discourses that orient and constrain the work of those in higher education institutions and schools and the discourses that seek to form, at the local level, policy and practice in relation to policy frames and policy explanations (Adams, 2016). For the teacher-educator, this entails understanding and working with various possibilities for the interface between activity and action through the provision and acknowledgement of teacher-acts.

Noting such matters requires consideration of how teacher-educators and student-teachers might jointly talk about and operationalise learning teaching. There is a need for a *language of the act*; that is, a way of understanding and appreciating that *which is*, that *which could be*, and that *which should be*. Thus, partnership moves from the descriptive to the normative but in ways that both work within and simultaneously challenge prevailing orthodoxy and hegemonic Discourse. Here should be noted the differences between *activity* and *action*. The former centres on observable, overt behaviour that might be deemed *teacher-like* or *not-teacher-like*. While activity provides immediate insight into observable pedagogic/didactic forms and is thus relevant to judgements of student-teacher quality, concentrating thereon offers little more than opportunities to develop overt skills possibly devoid of reasoning and understanding. For example, deploying particular methods to bring a class to attention may achieve success in terms of 'behaviour management' but unless the student-teacher understands how and why this works/does not work in this context/more broadly, opportunities for learning teaching stagnate and founder. This is particularly acute when one considers that what works 'here' may not work 'there'.

To counter, many offer reflection (cf. Schön, 1983) as to how teachers might develop deeper understanding and appreciation of teaching. When applied in the context of activity alone this is problematic, for it does little to circumvent the tensions implicit in overt behaviour. A concentration on 'what can I do?' as demonstrated above, orients epistemological reasoning towards 'doing' in a reductive, task-based sense. Rather, what reflection requires is consideration of that which sits outside of activity and which challenges notions of self. The question 'what can I do?' thus shifts to two questions: 'what can I do, given where I am now?' and 'how does this develop my knowledge and skills and my sense of teacher-as-self?' Reflection thus morphs from reflection *in* and *on* action (cf. Schön, 1991) to reflection as an ontological state: the development of understanding of professional acts as positioned in and resultant from prevailing Discourses enacted within local discursive acts.

Finally, teaching requires the teacher to 'animate' learning, that is, bring learning to life within the space occupied by all involved in the process. This requires more than simply activity and reflection. It requires the student-teacher and those supporting her to engage in the mutually reinforcing endeavour that is learning with and for

others who are themselves engaged with learning. It requires the realisation that teachers do not only learn *from*, but also that they learn *with* children, young people, and other adults. While they persuade others to engage with new opportunities, they themselves accept such challenges.

To summarise:

- Learning teaching is more than simply engaging in the development of theoretical knowledge and its application/non-application in the school setting.
- Learning teaching requires the appreciation, understanding, and operationalisation of the interface between identifying, doing, and knowing teaching.
- To achieve this requires an understanding that the simple observation of activity is insufficient as the basis for deciding upon acceptability/unacceptability of student-teacher work.
- Reflection both on and in action is an important part of the development of the student-teacher, but this must go further and begin to question the acts that student-teachers undertake, that is, reflection must seek to support the development of the teacher-as-self. Such reflection must engage with action (the questioning of that directed as personal understanding) in association with activity. To this end, the acts of teaching are questioned through the merging of activity and action.
- Finally, teachers need to bring to life, or animate, their work and that of the children and young people in their care. This means more than simply seeking to reflect on acts as above; is requires the development of professional activity that understands the congruence that comes from *learning with* as opposed to *learning from*.

Taking this as the basis offers a perspective on partnership working in that it offers all a means to operationalise not only the parts but the whole of initial teacher education. It confers on student-teachers and their supporters a framework for understanding how the epistemology of teaching might be realised as both theory and practice. Figure 9.2 below offers a diagrammatic perspective on what this might look like.

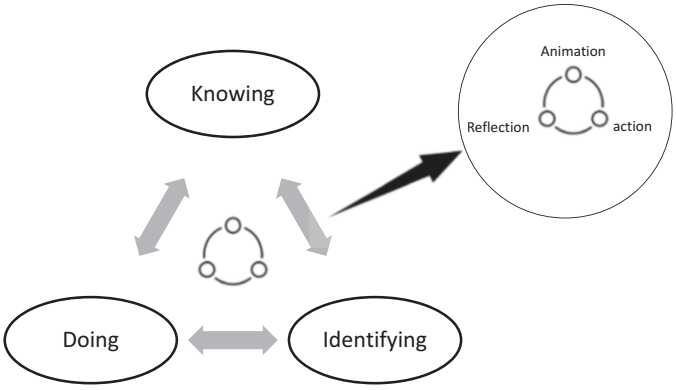


**Fig. 9.2** Heuristic diagram

## Conclusion

If we are to ensure that student-teachers develop more than just the skills to provide activity that seemingly leads to student learning, there is a need to ensure that theoretical approaches to partnership are established in ways that offer mechanisms for their realisation in practice. There is little to be gained by simply developing procedures and activities that seemingly support student-teachers for these will lack and more importantly share insight into what it is that is being developed. Although in the Scottish context General Teaching Council (Scotland) standards offer seemingly obvious messages by which to judge they are, unsurprisingly, generic in their outlook and are written from 'somewhere and nowhere'. They offer the ideal; a way by which all involved in initial teacher education might provide student-teachers education and support. By offering statements about that which should be known and that which should be done, they seek to embed the features of the Evaluative State. As a mechanism for sharing what all student teachers *should* be able to do when they graduate, they may suffice. However, this misses two key aspects. First, learning-teaching experiences may not always be satisfactory. Part of developing as a teacher is identifying one's own identity and this does not involve simply reinforcing and maintaining current practice but rather offering new perspectives on that currently done. In Gutiérrezian terms this signals the need for all involved in initial teacher education to forge improvised, dialogical exchanges that challenge dominant D/discourses. The intertwining of reflection through an appreciation of the pedagogic act and the associated animation of learning teaching offers opportunities whereby the official first space of the teacher and the second formative space of the student might come together to challenge dominant hierarchical hegemonic Discourses that seek to orient teachers' work towards narrow and confining conceptions of pedagogy, didaktik and education. This approach to partnership, embedded in the desire to develop both personalised pedagogic responses and an appreciation of wider socio-economic and cultural-political frames offers all in the initial teacher education partnership the opportunity to develop conversational spaces that challenge dominance.

Secondly, the heuristic shifts conversations away from what has been done and why, to questions about what has been done, why, and how these impact on student-teacher identity. Specifically, it challenges the demarcation between theory and practice and instead calls for a conjoining of the two within a new hybrid space co-created by all involved.

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