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

• “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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>On graduation</th>
<th>At end of induction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching in Scotland:</strong></td>
<td>Teaching in Scotland:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In a leadership role:</strong></td>
<td>In a leadership role:</td>
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<tr>
<td>36%</td>
<td>33%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching elsewhere:</strong></td>
<td>Teaching elsewhere:</td>
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<tr>
<td>24%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Not teaching at all:</strong></td>
<td>Not teaching at all:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Studying for Masters/PhD:</strong></td>
<td>Studying for Masters/PhD:</td>
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<tr>
<td>45%</td>
<td>32%</td>
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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


