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LARSON, A., GARLAND, P. and MCCAIG, C. <<http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4364-5119>>

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## **How can the concepts of habitus and field help us to understand the engagement of educational workers in higher Education?**

**Anne Larson<sup>1</sup>, Paul Garland<sup>2</sup> and Colin McCaig<sup>3</sup>**

### **Abstract**

In 'Making a European area of lifelong learning a reality', the EU stressed the role of universities in relation to lifelong learning, a role that entails a need for widening access to universities, particularly for those not coming through the traditional direct route of upper secondary education. As teachers play a significant role in the quality of the lifelong learning as well as in motivating future generations to take part in lifelong learning, education and training for teachers becomes important; not only in relation to initial teacher education, but also in relation to a continuous development of knowledge and skills.

This paper represents the first stage of a larger comparative project intended to examine and compare educational workers' (i.e. professionals involved in teaching in the class room) participation in higher education in England and Denmark, their access and interest. In particular, the paper relates participation and engagement to national and international educational policies and frames this work within an examination of the social background of the professional groups. The key research questions at this stage of the work are methodological and can be summed up by the overarching question, "How can the concepts of habitus and field help us to understand levels of engagement of educational workers in Higher Education"?

The paper reports the results of our review of current policies and our efforts to identify the structural relations within the educational professional fields in each country. To do so we are developing a theoretical model using the relational analytical approach advocated by Bourdieu. As such, our work is an early stage attempt at operationalising Bourdieu's observations regarding the dynamics of field. This seems to us to provide an important conceptual approach to understanding the habitus of educational workers in the context of the dynamics of a fast changing policy arena and the complexities of the backgrounds of individuals working in the educational field. The model attempts to build in the reflexivity that Bourdieu demands for a 'science' that is not weakened by over-emphasis on either the objective structural relations or the subjective phenomenology of experience.

Thus, the paper presents a preliminary contextual analysis of the factors that enable an understanding of engagement or lack of engagement in higher level learning among school-based education workers in the two EU countries and is related to a larger research project that explores habitus (both individual and collective) among these groups of education workers.

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<sup>1</sup> Anne Larson, Danmarks Pædagogiske Universitetsskole, Copenhagen

<sup>2</sup> Paul Garland, Sheffield Hallam University

<sup>3</sup> Colin McCaig, Sheffield Hallam University

## Introduction

In *Practical Reason* (2001: vii) Bourdieu writes that his work is founded on a philosophy of science that is relational in that it attempts to capture, construct and validate “objective relations” between individuals and groups. The fundamental concepts in his work are habitus, field and capital and at the core of his thinking is “...the two-way relationship between objective structures (those of social fields) and incorporated structures (those of habitus).” We are developing a theoretical model using this relational analytical approach advocated by Bourdieu to understand the dynamics of the educational field in relation to the recruitment, formation and further development of teachers and to link these structural features to the construct of habitus as disposition to act in order to understand engagement and lack of engagement of educational workers in higher level learning. The model is being developed in the context of a proposed comparative study that currently includes Denmark, Slovenia and England. The current aim is to arrive at preliminary understandings of the structural relations that affect participation in post-graduate higher education among education workers. What follows is an attempt to operationalise the concepts of field and habitus for the purposes of this study. In doing so it will clearly be necessary to bring in the third key construct of capital, though this will be in relation to the discussion of the two former constructs.

## Field and habitus

Mindful of Bourdieu’s warning that concepts only acquire their meanings within “a system of relations” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 96) we present some understandings of the key constructs informing our theoretical model. The concept of habitus receives extensive treatment in *The Logic of Practice* (1990: 53-58); that of field receives similar treatment in the Chicago workshop (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992) and we use these texts mainly as a basis for this discussion. Bourdieu defines field as “a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions” which have objective existence outside of individual consciousness and these positions reflect the “structure of the distribution of species of power (capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field” (1992: 97). Bourdieu agrees that clarifying the extent of a field is a difficult one:

In empirical work, it is one and the same thing to determine what the field is, where its limits lie, etc., and to determine what species of capital are active in it, within what limits and so on. (We see how the notions of capital and field are tightly connected.) (Bourdieu, 1992: 98-99).

The field is a field of struggles aimed at either maintaining or transforming the existing configuration of power within that field. Agents are positioned within the field according to their possession of different types of capital (economic, social, cultural – all of which having properties of symbolic capital according to their relative perceived values within the field) and to “the perception that they have of the field depending on the point of view they take *on* the field as a view taken from within a point *in* the field.” (1992:101)

Bourdieu’s theory of practice views agents as embodying “structured, structuring dispositions, the *habitus*, which is constituted in practice and is always oriented towards practical functions.” (1990: 52). The habitus reflects an agent’s position within the field and is variously described as “an

acquired system of generative schemes”; a “durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations”; “the principle of continuity”; “embodied history, internalised as second nature” (1990: 53-58). Agent’s aspirations and choices are understood as a tendency to perceive what is possible in relation to one’s position within the field, to reject what is ‘not possible’ and to adjust to a probable future that seems predictable: “Because native membership in a field implies a feel for the game in the sense of a capacity for practical anticipation of the ‘upcoming’ future contained in the present, everything that takes place in it seems *sensible*: full of sense and objectively directed in a judicious direction.” (1990: 66)

Agents positioned in close relation to each other within a field will also exhibit a collective habitus which is the source of common-sense understandings which are self-evident and therefore taken as objectively true. Collective experiences thus tend to reinforce the sense of ‘naturalness’ of individual trajectories.

These principles of continuity, however, are balanced by the openness of practice. To begin with, each individual is unique: “Each individual system of dispositions is a structural variant of the others, expressing the singularity of its position within the class and its trajectory.” (1990: 60) More importantly, practice itself should not be confused with the models and theories used to explain it. The logic of practice should be understood as a ‘fuzzy logic’, subject to a few fundamental generative principles (the task of the sociologist being to identify these), but not always coherent and always selective and subject to an economic logic that is sufficient to the need of the situation (1990: 82-87)

Habitus and field thus represent the contrast between social and mental structures (Bourdieu et al 1999: 512), a contrast which must be understood dialectically in order to understand the relations between “... the regularities of the material universe of properties and the classificatory schemes of the *habitus*, that product of the regularities of the social world for which and through which there is a social world.” (1990: 140)

### **Operationalising the concepts for this study**

In answer to the question of how to carry out a study of a field, Bourdieu identifies 3 necessary and connected approaches (1992: 104-5). Firstly the field must be analysed in relation to the field of power. Secondly, the structure of relations between the agents and institutions competing for legitimate authority within the field must be mapped. Lastly, one should analyse the habitus of the agents, “the different systems of dispositions they have acquired by internalising a determinate type of social and economic condition” (1992: 105). We now take each of these steps and discuss some preliminary steps that need to be taken to form the basis of the study.

This preliminary work encompasses the first two steps: analysis of the field of education in relation to the field of power and of the structure of relations between the agents and institutions competing for legitimate authority within the field.

Each country study begins with an overview of recent policy on teacher education with a view to explaining the current position of the educational field within that country. This overview will deal with the structure of education, the organisation of state agencies and the power structures relating central government and its agencies to local government and to educational institutions. Some

history of political developments will be necessary to understand the differences between countries regarding degrees of political control and autonomy of the educational field in the respective countries. This analysis will include a discussion of current official discourses in the educational field and of rival and competing discourses. Following this we look at the educational workforce in each country and report numbers of teachers and other educational workers by sector; their educational qualifications; the different ways in which educational workers are 'licensed'; career structures and the place of higher education in the acquisition of symbolic capital. We also look at the prestige attached to different positions within the field, looking at salaries, trends, public opinion surveys, entrance levels of recruits to educational positions. This again will help to identify the cultural and symbolic capitals at play in educational careers. From here we look at the actual individuals in education and ask a number of questions. Who enters teaching and related occupations in education? What do we know about their social, ethnic and gender backgrounds? What numbers of educational workers are qualified at postgraduate levels? What is the actual take-up of postgraduate courses by educational workers and what kinds of courses are chosen?

### **Aspects of the educational field in England**

Recent English policy on teacher education needs to be understood within the wider context of the structures and institutions in the educational field and the distribution of power between those institutions. In some respects the English education system is decentralised in nature; in others it has a high degree of centralisation. Responsibility for different aspects of the service is shared between central government, local government, churches and other voluntary bodies, the governing bodies of educational institutions and the teaching profession. The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (DBIS) are the government departments responsible for education. Two other key non-ministerial government departments are OFSTED (the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills), which carries out inspections and monitors standards of achievement and educational provision, and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) which advises on matters concerning the curriculum and assessment.

Maintained schools in England and Wales are funded by local authorities (LAs). In recent years, schools have acquired more autonomy in terms of self-management and control of budgets. Types of school in the secondary sector have diversified and the English system has many of the features of a quasi-market system. In contrast, whilst this market system has developed, there has been a strong centralisation of curriculum, assessment and inspection regimes (the key means of regulating an education 'market'). The diversification of types of school is illustrated below.

Primary schools provide education for children from age 5 to 11 and are non-selective by law. There were just over 4 million children in English Primary schools in 2008. Likewise, the vast majority of secondary schools are comprehensive schools and do not select pupils on grounds of ability. Some cater for pupils up to the age of 16 only; others for pupils up to the age of 19. However, in recent decades there has been a move towards greater diversity of types of secondary schools. These include:

- Grammar schools (164 maintained grammar schools in England 2006/07 academic year).

Grammar schools select all pupils on the basis of their ability and generally operate their own entrance examinations.

- Specialist schools (a programme that began in 1994). Specialist secondary schools may admit a proportion of pupils on the basis of aptitude for the specialist subject. There are now 10 curriculum subject areas for specialist schools - arts, business and enterprise, engineering, humanities, languages, mathematics and computing, music, science, sports, and technology.
- City technology colleges (CTCs) and city colleges for the technology of the arts (CCTAs) are publicly funded independent secondary schools which exist in England only. City technology colleges admit children on the basis of an aptitude for science or technology, but also select children proportionally to reflect the range of ability levels of children in the area which the college serves.
- The City Academies programme began in 2002. Each academy is set up as a company limited by guarantee, with charitable status, and the DCSF meets capital and running costs in full. A board of governors is responsible for the governance and strategic leadership of the school. Academies must be located in areas of disadvantage. They either replace one or more existing schools facing challenging circumstances or are established where there is a need for additional school places.
- Special schools cater for pupils with a wide variety of Special Educational Needs (SEN) and include schools for visually impaired pupils, pupils with speech and language impairment; pupils with moderate, severe or specific learning difficulties; pupils with hearing impairment; and pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD). There were 1006 maintained Special Schools with 84,700 pupils in England and 72 private special schools with 4670 children in 2007.
- Faith schools: there are approximately 14,000 non-religious schools and nearly 7,000 faith schools in the UK (Guardian 2/9/08). Growth in the number of faith schools is the subject of much controversy and there is some alarm that religious groups are using the academy programme to set up such schools.
- Private (Public) Schools: approximately 570,000 children attend some 2,300 private or independent schools in England.

### **The education workforce in England**

The school education workforce in England consists of several layers of professional and para-professionals, from untrained teaching assistants to those holding doctorates. For the comparative purposes of this paper, most of the emphasis will be on those qualified teachers (graduates that have taken some form of post-graduate certification and licensing) that are engaged in study for higher degrees (Masters' and Doctorates); however, to set the current structure in its proper context

we will begin by outlining its historical development along with considerations of the prestige attached to various stages including sub-degree and initial teacher training (ITT) programmes.

### **School Workforce reform**

The incoming New Labour government in 1997 called for a 'new professionalism' for teachers that would herald a new era of involvement and collaboration with government following decades of political confrontation and public derision of teachers. Workforce reform has brought in a new range of grades for teachers, with promotion based upon performance management. Each grade is defined by detailed national standards of competence. In order to reduce the pressure on teachers, contact time has been reduced by 10% so that teachers can devote more time to planning, preparation and assessment, with their time covered to some extent by non-teaching staff (Teaching Assistants).

### **Teaching assistants**

Teaching assistants (TAs), (sometimes known as teacher associates, classroom assistants, classroom aides, general assistants and learning support assistants) form the lowest level of the education workforce. Their numbers have grown steadily since the mid-1990s, increasing almost 100% between 1996 and 2008 (when they totalled 253,900) following the election of the Labour Government in 1997 with an avowedly reforming educational agenda. Among reforms that led to an increase in TAs were: the decision to bring most pupils with special educational needs (SEN) into mainstream schools; the introduction of numeracy and literacy strategies; and the introduction of a National Agreement to reduce the workload of teachers, known as Workforce Remodelling (DCSF, 2009). A Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) role has also been created to allow HLTAs to take whole classes under the direction of the designated teacher. Much individual and small group support is carried out by TAs and HLTAs.

While the increase in TA numbers was across all school types (nursery, primary and secondary) the largest percentage increase has been among secondary schools, but the majority (nearly three fifths) are still to be found in primary schools (Social Trends No. 39, 2008). As a proportion of the whole school workforce, non-teaching staff constitute approximately 40% of those working in the nursery and primary sectors (combined), a quarter of those working in state secondary schools and outnumber teachers almost two-to-one in Special Schools and Pupil Referral Units (Table 1).

**Table 1. Teaching and Non-teaching staff in maintained state schools**

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Teaching staff</b>	<b>Non-teaching staff</b>	<b>Total education workforce</b>	<b>% that are non teachers</b>
Nursery/Primary	212,000	141,000	353,000	40
Secondary	226,000	81,100	307,000	26.4
Special Schools and Pupil	14,786	28,600	43,386	193%

Referral Units				
<b>Total</b>	<b>452,786</b>	<b>253,900</b>	<b>703,386</b>	<b>35.9</b>

Data derived from Social Trends 39 (2008)

The prestige attached to this category varies according to their responsibilities in each sector, to the circumstances of the school and personal factors. Although there are no formal qualifications required, it cannot be assumed that they lack qualifications (for example, some TAs are graduates considering teaching as a career; those wishing to gain classroom experience or are parents of young children taking a break from their careers). Although TAs are not well paid (earning approximately half the starting salary for qualified teachers) they are expected to contribute in a number of ways that make them invaluable to class teachers, for example:

- Supporting children by supervising small groups of children while they work on a task, helping individual children with their work, listening to them read and generally helping them develop their social skills.
- Supporting the teacher by handling routine classroom administrative duties, helping to manage pupil behaviour around the school, dealing with minor accidents and participating in playground/lunchtime supervision.
- Supporting the curriculum which can take the form of supporting children using computers within the school, observing and recording children's progress, or supporting children in specific areas of the curriculum.
- Supporting the school by working with parents and with other professionals.

Some evidence does suggest that, in the eyes of teaching staff, TAs do warrant some prestige. The positive effects of TAs in the classroom were reported to include: bringing specialist help to the classroom; allowing more time for teaching; affecting the curriculum/tasks/activities offered; and taking on specific pupils (often the most disruptive or those at the lower end of the ability spectrum in a given class). Recent research concluded that:

Teachers have a generally positive view about the effects of support staff on their job satisfaction and reduced levels of stress and workloads. Case studies showed that teachers' workloads had been reduced by support staff and teachers' work/ life balance had been improved through the introduction of PPA [preparation, planning and assessment] time. (DCFS, 2008: 1)

This recognition and awareness that some TAs might wish to be certificated for their work and/or progress into the teaching profession has led to the recent introduction of Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs) for those that are recognised by their schools as being of sufficient proficiency. These have a higher entry threshold (they must have Level 2 qualifications in English and mathematics and training in relevant strategies such as the National Literacy Strategy) and are assessed by regional assessors against national standards.

The increased recognition for the work of TAs and the introduction of the new standard of HLTAs is reflected in the Workforce Remodelling agenda, which appears to be based on the twin assumptions

that classroom teachers need to have some free time and that teachers are not the only people that can deliver the curriculum. As one Head teacher noted: "while we need teachers to identify what kids need, I don't believe we have to have the teachers delivering it" (The Guardian, 7th April 2005). Although these developments are welcomed by some teachers, others fear the de-professionalism of teaching as OFSTED (the national agency for teaching standards):

The government claims that both 'standards' and the quality of students' educational experience will improve as a result of Remodelling. OFSTED will guarantee this. David Bell, the Chief Inspector, said: '...it is important that inspectors observe the quality of all teaching going on in schools-whether it is being done by qualified or non-qualified teachers. OFSTED inspects the teaching, not the teacher' (*Times Educational Supplement*, July 8, 2005, p. 1) So the practice alone is what matters; the person is of no account except insofar as they are carrying out the practice to a greater or lesser degree satisfactorily as determined by OFSTED. Yarker (2005: 172)

### **Recent policy on teacher education**

The contextual material presented above should help to understand the situation regarding the formation of teachers in England: there are at least 8 different ways to achieving Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) for UK subjects at the moment (TDA 2009).

The routes include:

- Undergraduate options such as BEd or BA/BSc with QTS – mostly three-year but some four year routes.
- Postgraduate options, most notably the postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE), usually a one year programme, but also school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) and the Teach First programme. As the TDA says, SCITT programmes, delivered by local consortia of schools and colleges are aimed at graduates who would "prefer to spend more time training in the classroom, putting theory into practice and gaining confidence through increased contact with the school environment" (TDA 2009). It is unclear what is meant by 'theory' here, but it seems likely that the commonsense meanings of 'plans, prescriptions or intentions' are implied, as opposed to the application of abstract theories as explanatory frameworks. The place of theory in teacher formation will be returned to later.
- Employment based options such as the Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP) and the Registered Teacher Programme (RTP). GTP offers on-the-job training to graduates and takes from 3 months to one school year to complete. RTP is also employment-based, takes up to two years and is open to candidates who have 240 HE CATS points (equivalent to the first two years of a three-year undergraduate programme). On these programmes, trainees are paid as unqualified teachers normally and are given an additional training grant.
- Variants on the above that add even greater flexibility are part-time and distance learning programmes as well as two-year conversion programmes for students whose degree is not relevant to the subject they wish to teach

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- BA Education Studies courses, which frequently lead to PGCE, but which tend to comprise of a more theoretical content on education issues and less content on subject didactics than BA with QTS and PGCE courses.
- We may also add routes whereby teaching assistants<sup>4</sup> may progress to QTS via Foundation Degrees and top-up courses such as Education Studies or level 6 BA with QTS courses

The diversity of opportunities for achieving QTS in England is a central part of government policy on choice, and is mirrored in policy on schools and parental choice. As the TDA website puts it:

ITT comes in all shapes and sizes, providing options to suit everyone – no matter what your qualifications, experience, preferences or personal circumstances (TDA 2009)

This diversity of provision has developed partly in order to meet teacher shortages in previous years as well as to allow people in very different circumstances, for example working adults who wish to make a career change, to become teachers. However, such diversity, especially when promoted in consumerist language, does alert us to questions about comparability of content and of quality of the learning on different routes.

Recent research into Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) entering the profession suggests that PGCE remains the most common ITT route (61%), followed by undergraduate routes (22%) and employment based routes (13%) (Drew et al, 2008: 28).

### **Post-graduates in the education workforce**

There are three categories of masters-level provision that education workers in England can currently access, and two post-graduate research routes, the EdD and PhD, that are pursued by senior school managers and others involved in educational management (in local authorities, further education colleges and HE institutions for example); currently there are 660 individuals studying education at doctorate level in the UK (HESA, 2007/08).

The most common post-graduate route currently is for teachers to take M-level units as part of their postgraduate professional development (PPD); in 2007/08 the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) had around 25,000 filled PPD places funded by the TDA as part of a development programme begun in 2004, as well as handful of funded doctorates<sup>5</sup>. The TDA has, from February 2009, introduced measures to eventually make teaching an entirely masters-level profession with the launch of its National Framework for Masters in Teaching and Learning (MTL). Both TDA funded PPD and the MTL are school-based qualifications.

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<sup>4</sup> Teaching assistants work mainly to support individuals or small groups of learners, often those identified as having special needs or needing additional help. They are not qualified as teachers. However, they do have their own National Standards for Teaching Assistants and recently, as part of a School Workforce Agreement, those with Higher Level Teaching Assistant status have been enabled to take whole classes for learning, under the direction of a qualified teacher. Another route into teaching has thus become established through the growth in the number of Teaching Assistants, some of whom, with the requisite qualifications and training, can progress to Qualified Teacher Status. For more information, see <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/teachingassistants/>

<sup>5</sup> According to the TDA's Strategic Research Team the academic year 2007/08 there were exactly 24,512 filled PPD places funded by the TDA which also funded seven doctorates

The second category of masters-level education workforce qualifications consists of 5025 students taking masters degrees in education (MEds) at UK HEIs in 2007/08 (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2007/08). The data also has a third category for 'Other postgraduate qualifications' in education (i.e. other than PGCEs) of which there were 9995 in 2007/08 (HESA, 2007/08) which may be specialised post-graduate certificates or masters-level modules undertaken independently.

The propensity for members of the education workforce to undertake masters-level education will inevitably be affected by the pressure that newly qualified teachers will feel on them to enrol on the new MTL, given that the TDA has couched the new qualification firmly within the discourse of improving educational standards:

The MTL will enable participating teachers to become consistently highly effective so that all children and young people realise their potential..... World class teaching is characterised by a sophisticated understanding of effective classroom practice, highly skilled professional expertise and high quality engagement with children, young people and their parents and carers. The MTL will develop and build on these characteristics. (TDA, 2009:3)

The aim is national consistency, based on Professional Standards for Teachers:

The purpose of this National Framework for MTL is to provide the basis on which schools and HEIs, working together as MTL Providers, develop the programme for teachers that will fulfil the vision of MTL. Its use is intended to achieve national consistency and to ensure that the Professional Standards for Teachers and the M-level requirements are addressed, while enabling MTL Providers to meet the needs of their teachers and schools, in their localities (TDA, 2009:5).

At the same time the MTL suggests a shift from academic supervision by HEIs towards the further (albeit collaborative) on-the-job training of teachers in order that they better meet the needs of schools, which may adversely affect national consistency:

This requires a shift from the ways in which schools and higher education institutions (HEIs) work together in initial teacher training to a more collaborative approach with schools and HEIs working together as equal partners, jointly responsible for the development and delivery of the MTL programme (TDA, 2009:4).

The guiding principles for the MTL will be that it is practise-based, assessed by a coach based within the school, personalised to take into account of the student's ITT route and 'align with induction and performance management requirements' of the school (TDA, 2009:6). Further, the MTL is unlikely to incorporate theoretical and contentious issues such as education policy and philosophy; not only will it be so tailored to the needs of schools' management as to question how it can be easily delivered in a nationally consistent manner, but it will spring into life without an agreed knowledge base: Content 'will be developed over time as the TDA, national policy makers and national experts work with MTL Providers to further define the knowledge base for MTL' (TDA, 2009:15). Where Korthagen et al feared ITT as 'guided induction into the tricks of the trade' (Korthagen, 2001:10), at Masters level the 'tricks of the trade' have yet to be agreed on.

All these factors may be assumed to reduce the likelihood of education workers in schools enrolling on more traditional MEds delivered by HEIs, and of course impact on the dynamics of the educational field in relation to the recruitment, formation and further development of teachers who are steered towards the MTL and the relationship between engagement and non-engagement (when the latter is less of an option). Masters' degrees in Education Management have traditionally been taken by more senior teachers, as part of their career development (as a gateway to becoming deputy-headteachers), and these are likely to become less important in a profession where Masters-level qualifications are the norm. Thus the structural relations that affect participation in post-graduate higher education in England can be characterised as in a state of dynamic flux. This provides us with an opportunity to observe the differing formations of 'habitus as disposition to act' where the framework of power relations may also be shifting.

### **Some key policy initiatives having a big impact on schools in England in the last decade:**

#### **Inclusion**

Inclusion is defined by the QCA (see above) as " ... the active presence, participation and achievement of all pupils in a meaningful and relevant set of learning experiences."

<http://curriculum.qca.org.uk/key-stages-3-and-4/organising-your-curriculum/index.aspx>

In education, inclusion websites tend to emphasise having regard to the particular needs of children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities; pupils with English as a second language; gifted and talented children. There is also a strong emphasis on gender awareness. Current policy, as supported by legislation, places emphasis on educating children with special educational needs (SEN) alongside their peers in mainstream schools, wherever possible. In January 2008 some 223,430 (or 2.8 per cent of) pupils across all schools in England had statements of SEN. In 2008 the percentage of pupils with SEN without statements across all schools was 17.2 per cent, which represents an increase from 16.4 per cent in 2007.

#### **Integrated Children's Services**

The Children Act 2004 aimed to develop more effective and accessible services focusing specifically on the needs of children, young people and families. All local authorities (LAs) now have to produce a single, overarching plan for all services affecting children and young people. The 2004 Act also allowed for the creation of an integrated inspection framework and for inspectorates to carry out joint reviews of all children's services, including early years services, provided in an area. In December 2007, the DCSF in England also launched the 'Children's Plan' which sets out the Government's vision for improving the lives of young people and the support available to families by 2020. The plan has ambitious targets for tackling disadvantage and underachievement by improving educational achievement, health, tackling poverty and reducing the number of young offenders. These developments both reflect and herald a growing interest in inter-agency and interprofessional working.

#### **Standards**

There is a long standing debate over whether standards of literacy and numeracy in particular, but also other subjects (sciences for example) are improving or not. Similarly, standards of pupil

behaviour and standards of teaching are the subject of frequent controversy. Government policy has been to set targets against which performance and achievement are constantly measured. OFSTED has boasted that it has access to the most comprehensive database of statistics on schools and on pupils' performance anywhere in the world.

### Discussion

The heterogeneity of English teacher preparation routes mirrors other features of the English educational field that are characterised by diversity, for example types of secondary school as discussed above. The emergence of many ways into teaching has come about largely to address problems of teacher supply, but it is also a feature of the wider 'discursive formation' (Foucault 1972) of education in which choice, diversity and (a recent buzzword) 'personalisation' feature prominently. Yet heterogeneity may also be viewed as a solution to the problems of 'injustice' in rigid, monolithic routes. The range of options, along with the fact that HE-based routes such as BA with QTS or PGCE are dominated by teaching practice, illustrate the intensely pragmatic nature of the approach of government agencies to teacher formation in England. English teacher education curricula (or teacher training as the TDA prefers to call it) is organised with close reference to National Standards and evidence gathering procedures: the emphasis is on demonstration of competence construed largely in behavioural terms. Teacher education based on forms of knowledge such as psychology, philosophy, sociology and history (Peters reference to come) has long disappeared from teacher formation. Teachers arriving into teaching in such different ways are unlikely to share a common base of propositional knowledge enabling them to discuss educational practices in a theoretical mode, such as knowledge of learning theory that attempts to prescribe best practice, or sociological theory that attempts to explain patterns of underachievement. A shared body of knowledge (along with shared ethics and a distinct service orientation) is considered by writers on the professions (eg Larson 1977, Freidson 2001) to be a defining characteristic of the ideal type of the professional, alerting us to one of the consequences of this mix of practice-focus along with plurality of provision.

In an occasional paper for UCET, Bob Moon (1998) highlights the uniqueness of the English education system with its high levels of central government control and bureaucratisation through the National Curriculum and the regulation of Initial Teacher Training (ITT). Whilst accepting that certain aspects of the reforms in recent years, notably partnerships between schools and teacher training establishments, have been a success, have attracted considerable research activity and have been the object of much interest abroad, he regards with envy the two-year postgraduate ITT programmes available in France and Germany, which "*permit a less frantic pace with more time to 'intellectualise' the training process*" (pp 33-4). Godwin (2002) claims education reforms in the period from 1988 have concentrated on introducing

... mechanisms for controlling the system and holding it to account; but there is no attempt to construct consensus over, or even to debate, the purposes and values of education. Instead there is a bustling of initiatives and a militaristic rhetoric of hit-squads and zero tolerance, as the government seeks to dictate how teachers should be trained and how they should conduct lessons.

In addition there has been a high level of bureaucratic control of education by central government agencies, something which government is not embarrassed about:

As a nation, we almost certainly lead the world in the amount of information we hold on school and pupil performance, particularly when the data from national tests are added to that of inspection. (OFSTED 1999, p4)

In England, a performativity regime (Ball 2003, Troman 2008)- of achievement targets, inspections, constant data generation in preparation for inspections by OFSTED, quality assurance systems, appraisal – has developed as successive governments have sought to tighten control over the curriculum. The same regime has functioned in teacher formation, with National Standards for all levels of pedagogical workers from teaching assistants through to qualified teacher status and levels of progression from newly qualified teacher (NQT) to advanced skills teacher (AST). These standards are used by schools for performance review and it is now envisaged that a new masters level qualification – the Masters in Teaching and Learning (MTL) – will ‘personalise’ the learning of teachers on such programmes by defining their learning targets in relation to National Standards through appraisal processes. Much of this accountability architecture was set up in the 1980s and 1990s and has been maintained by New Labour since 1997, with some softening of the ‘discourse of derision’ of teachers that characterised the preceding Conservative era, although the broad thrusts of strong control from the centre alongside the expansion of an education market have been continued by the new administration. The Labour administrations since 1997 have tended to reinstate professional responsibility (though not so much autonomy) in official educational discourse, albeit within the framework mentioned above where consumerist and market-oriented policy has penetrated the educational sphere alongside tight control through standards, testing and targets.

The educational field in England was from the 1960s characterised by conflicts over the forms that schooling should take (selection or comprehensives), traditional versus progressive curricula, and the purposes of schooling (preparation for work, social life, competition, etc). Attacks on child-centred education, topic-based teaching, mixed ability teaching have in recent years been replaced by often dogmatic positions on whole-class teaching, ability grouping and subject teaching. To some extent, Labour policy since 1997 has continued to promote a dogmatic environment, this time on the ‘obvious’ desirability of whole class teaching, particular approaches to the teaching of phonics, homework for primary children, ability grouping, certain constructs of learning styles, and so on. The current approach from government, centred on ‘evidence-based practice’, is geared up to a never-ending pursuit of improvements to standards), with a thrust toward ‘research informed practice’ organised around themes that are

intended to provide practical ideas for teachers, governors etc in response to particular concerns in raising standards e.g. managing behaviour, organising the classroom for best learning and encouraging pupil voice. (see <http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/>)

Commenting on the move from a politics of conflict in educational discourse to one of effectiveness Alexander (1997) characterises the latter as “*purportedly scientific rather than moral or pragmatic.*” And which is based on “*a distillation of research evidence about the capacity of particular strategies, techniques, attributes or circumstances to deliver specific educational outcomes*” (Alexander, 1997:

271) This approach dominated the late 1980s and 90s and continues to do in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, generating a considerable 'growth industry' around educational effectiveness in the educational world. Although he sees crucial weaknesses in the effectiveness approach (over-generalisation of research findings; *"a tempting but spurious absolutism about notions like 'success', 'failure' and 'improvement'"*; little or no account taken of cultural or ethical contexts in which practices are embedded), he accepts that the effectiveness movement has served as *"a significant corrective to the sterility of traditional/progressive adversarialism"* (273).

Korthagen et al's (2001) review of approaches to initial teacher education concludes that teacher education in the second half of the 20th century made the mistake of following a theory-to-practice model in which propositional knowledge or *episteme* was the basis of the input from HE. This text reminds us that issues of relevance are not unique to English discourse on educational practice and that much of what we are describing here with regard to the educational field in England has similarities internationally. The theory-to-practice model they see as having failed for a number of reasons including the difficulty of influencing established patterns in schools and the threat that theory appears to pose to many teachers. They also see the model as failing because it presupposes that teachers need to be developed rather than develop themselves and they blame it for the widespread rejection of teacher education by teachers as too theoretical and of little practical use. The theory-to-practice approach they liken to the technical-rational model critiqued by Schon (1983) and which he argued should be replaced by a reflective practitioner model in an attempt to develop a new *"epistemology of practice"*. Korthagen et al broadly support this move, whilst cautioning against the dangers of more work-based programmes *"in which novice teachers sometimes receive very little theoretical background, and teacher education becomes more of a process of guided induction into the tricks of the trade."* (2001:10) This last point could well summarise the views of those who are critical of the approach to teacher formation currently in England.

### **Aspects of the educational field in Denmark**

As for the English case, recent developments and plans for teacher education must be seen in light of more general changes in education policy as well as the structures and institutions within the educational field. Responsibility for education in Denmark is distributed between the central government and the municipalities with the responsibility for primary and lower secondary school mainly placed at municipal level while the responsibility for upper secondary education and tertiary education being the responsibility of the central government. The Ministry of Education is responsible for primary and secondary education in Denmark while the responsibility for higher education lies with the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation. A few specialised educations are placed in other ministries. Other key governmental agencies are the Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (ACE) under the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, and the Danish Evaluation Institute (EVA). The Accreditation Agency for Higher Education is responsible for recognition of university study programmes as well as other higher education study programmes based on a set of minimum standards for relevance and quality. The Evaluation Institute carries out investigations of the quality of day care centres, schools and educational programmes.

The Danish educational system in relation to primary and lower secondary school is best described as decentralised. Though decision making in relation to primary and lower secondary education is

divided between the Government, the Danish Ministry of Education, the municipalities and the individual school (Larson, A. 2009), the main responsibility for primary and lower secondary school in Denmark is placed at the municipal level. It is thus up to the municipal boards to decide how the public schools in their area are organised in practice, within the regulations put down in the Act on the "Folkeskole". In recent years, however, the primary and lower secondary school has seen an increase in central control of what is to be learned (the curriculum), though how it is to be learned (pedagogy) is still a matter for the individual teacher. General curricular aims and optional guidelines for primary and lower secondary schools have been laid down, and a list of literature that must be introduced during the school years has been created.

The majority of Danish schools at primary and lower secondary level are municipal schools. In 2006, there were approximately 1,600 municipal schools at primary and lower secondary level, compared to 503 private schools (Danish Ministry of Education 2008a). The municipal schools offer free tuition, while those attending private schools must pay a fee. However, the state pays approximately 85% of the costs of the private schools based on the number of pupils (Larson 2009). About 13% of Danish pupils attend a private school. Private schools in Denmark are divided into the following categories:

- small independent schools in rural districts
- large independent schools in urban districts
- religious or congregational schools
- progressive free schools
- schools with a particular educational aim
- German minority schools, and
- immigrant schools (Danish Ministry of Education 2009a).

Alongside municipal and private schools, education at lower secondary level is also offered by continuation schools (private boarding schools typically offering education at grade 8 through 10). In 2006 approximately 25,000 pupils attended a continuation school. Further, the municipal schools include schools offering special needs education. In 2005, also approximately 25,000 pupils attended special needs education (Danish Ministry of Education 2008a).

By law all children from the calendar year of their six-year birthday must receive a minimum of ten years of education. It should be noted that it is education not schooling that is compulsory, though in reality most children attend school. In most cases, education at primary and lower secondary level takes place in the same schools offering education from grade 0 to grade 9 or 10. The Danish primary and lower secondary school is a comprehensive school. Students stay in the same class throughout all years and in all subjects. Further, progression to the next class is automatic and not based on exam results or other measures of academic standard (Cirius 2006; Eurodice 2008). Approximately 713,000 children attended primary and lower secondary school in Denmark in 2006. Of those approximately 596,000 attended municipal schools and approximately 91,000 attended private schools (Danish Ministry of Education 2008a).

Since 2007, the Ministry of Education has become the main agency responsible for upper secondary education. Upper secondary education in Denmark consist of two academically oriented upper

secondary education programmes mainly preparing for higher education (STX and HF) and two vocationally oriented upper secondary education programmes: Higher Commercial Examination Programme (HHX) and Higher Technical Examination Programme (HTX). While the two academically oriented programmes are broad in their focus (including humanities, science and social science), the scope of the two vocationally oriented programmes are more focussed. For the Higher Commercial Examination programmes, focus is on business and socio-economic disciplines combined with foreign language and other general subjects. For the Higher Technical Examination, focus is on technological and scientific subjects combined with more general subjects (Danish Ministry of Education 2009b). In 2007, approximately 72,700 students were enrolled in academically oriented upper secondary education and approximately 33,800 in vocationally oriented upper secondary education (Larson 2009).

### **The education workforce in Denmark**

Focussing on those with direct contact to the students in class room, the education workforce at primary and secondary level in Denmark consist mainly of two groups: Teachers qualified as teachers for primary and lower secondary school at a teacher training college; and teachers in upper secondary education who have a masters degree in the subject they teach as well as a completed course in educational theory and practice (Danish Ministry of Education 2009b). Focus in the following will be on primary and lower secondary school.

In 2006, there were 51,400 teachers employed in the municipal primary and lower secondary schools and 7,500 in the private primary and lower secondary schools. According to the Danish Union of Teachers, 80% of the teacher in municipal primary and lower secondary school has graduated from a teacher training college (Danish Union of Teachers 2009). Teachers in primary and lower secondary school can be responsible for a specific class as 'class teachers'. The role of the class teacher is to be main responsible for the class in relation to monitoring and supporting the subject-specific and social development of the students in the class as well as for the contact between the school and the parents/home. There are no further requirements to become a class teacher compared to teachers in the different subjects, and often it is the teacher in Danish language that is also the class teacher (Danish Ministry of Education 2008c).

In spite of the important role they play teaching the younger generations, primary and lower secondary teachers in Denmark do not have a high social status, and their status has been declining in recent years (Andersen & Aaltonen 2008). Before the present financial crisis, teacher training colleges had problems attracting students interested in becoming teachers.

In 2008 the Danish Minister of Education launched the idea of introducing teaching assistants in Danish primary and lower secondary school, and in November 2008 it was decided to initiate a pilot project with teaching assistants in a smaller number of schools. The planned role of teaching assistants seems to be close to the role they play in England, though the inspiration to the introduction of teaching assistants in Denmark does not come from England but from the Finish education system (Danish Ministry of Education 2008d). The intention is to let students at teacher training colleges work as teaching assistant parallel to their study. The pilot runs from 2009 to 2011.

## **Recent policy on teacher education in Denmark**

There are two ways to become a teacher in primary and lower secondary school of which the first (the Bachelor in Education) is predominant. The ordinary education to become a teacher in primary and lower secondary school is a four year (corresponding to 240 ECTS) professional bachelor education that takes place at eight university colleges. Prior to January 2008 the education was offered by teacher training colleges, however, as part of a major restructuring of the educational system in Denmark teacher training colleges merged with other institutions offering professional bachelors (like nurses etc.) into larger university colleges. Of the four years, six months are spent in practical training in schools. According to the Danish Union of Teachers, 80% of teachers in municipal primary and lower secondary school have graduated from teacher training colleges. Further, approximately two thirds of the graduates from teacher training work in municipal primary and lower secondary school, while the remaining third work in private schools, vocational colleges, folk high schools, adult education, social institutions, private enterprises etc. To enter teacher training, the potential students must have an upper secondary exam (Danish Ministry of Education 2009c; Danish Union of Teachers 2009). Teachers with a B Ed in primary and lower secondary education interested in further education and training can enrol in:

- Courses and subjects on a level with main subjects in the teacher training programme
- Further training as a teaching practice teacher at the teacher training programmes
- A number of educational diploma programmes,
- The Master of Education degree,
- Master's programmes" (Danish Ministry of Education 2009c).

As an alternative to the B Ed for teachers in primary and lower secondary school, adults (25+ years) with a relevant prior education (master, bachelor, professional bachelor or other kind of education at at least the same level as vocational education and training) plus at least two years of relevant work experience can take a bachelors degree in education as "merit"-teacher. The education takes up to three years depending on the individual student's prior learning. In contrast to those studying for the ordinary B Ed, those studying on the shorter course must pay a tuition fee.

Following the PISA studies, it has been discussed whether teacher education in Denmark should become a university programme. In 2008, a couple of universities presented ideas and plans for teacher education at university level. The ideas, however, was not accepted politically.

## **Teachers' access to higher education**

Teachers with a professional bachelor in education for primary and lower secondary education interested in further education can choose between a range of different courses and programmes. Among their options are diploma educations offered by university colleges and master educations offered by universities. Among the master programmes, only those offered by the Danish School of Education at Aarhus University (MA (Ed)) are within the ordinary educational system. The MA (Ed) programme is a post-graduate programme. The programme is scheduled for two years (120 ECTS).

Master programmes offered by other universities as well as other master programmes offered by the Danish School of Education are defined as adult education and requires besides of the teacher education a minimum of two years of work experience. These programmes are scheduled to one year of full time study (60 ECTS), but are most often taken as part time study.

4% of the teachers educated within four to nineteen months were in 2006 enrolled in higher education ([http://www.ug.dk/media/deltaljer\\_udd\\_mvu-humaniora-folkeskolelaerer-prof.ba..html](http://www.ug.dk/media/deltaljer_udd_mvu-humaniora-folkeskolelaerer-prof.ba..html)).

### **Some key policy initiatives having a big impact on schools in Denmark in the last decade:**

#### **Common threshold and final objectives**

By an amendment to the Act of the 'Folkeskole', common binding objectives for all subjects as well as goals and content descriptions in the pre-school class (grade 0) were introduced in municipal schools in Denmark. Until then, the Danish national curriculum at primary and lower secondary level had mainly consisted of more general descriptions of objectives, leaving it very much to the teacher to decide what the students should learn within the different subjects (Bryderup, Larson & Trentel 2009). With the introduction of binding objectives, the Ministry of Education gained increased influence on what is being taught in primary and lower secondary school. The background for the introduction of threshold and final objectives for the different subject was the Danish results in PISA 2000 that was considered not satisfactory by the Danish government (Danish Ministry of Education 2008b). In addition, the Minister of Education stressed that "The students must – regardless of where in the country they go to school - have the opportunity to acquire the same knowledge and skills" (referred from Bryderup, Larson & Trentel 2009, translation by the authors). In addition, in 2004 an OECD report on the primary and lower secondary education system in Denmark recommended an increased focus on learning standards (Danish Ministry of Education 2008b).

#### **Mandatory tests**

In 2006, mandatory national tests of each individual pupil at specific grades were introduced in selected subjects in municipal schools. The private schools are for the time being exempted from the tests. The new tests were partly a result of new PISA results from 2003 considered unsatisfactory, partly a result of the recommendations from OECD mentioned above. The introduction of mandatory national tests was part of a governmental intent to develop a higher focus on assessment in Danish schools (Bryderup, Larson & Trentel 2009; Danish Ministry of Education 2008b). The introduction of mandatory tests in municipal schools was part of the Government's platform in 2005 when the present Minister of Education took office (Danish Ministry of Education 2008b). The tests were planned to be introduced in 2009 but have been delayed due to technical problems. The tests will be computer based and adaptive. That means that the difficulty of the tests automatically will be adapted to the academic level of the student. The results of the individual tests will be confidential; teachers will be able to see their own pupils' results, but school principals will only be allowed to see the results for each class and the school in total. Further, the municipal board will be able to see the aggregated results for each school in the municipality. In addition to the introduction of mandatory national tests, the optional school leaving exam after grade 9 was made mandatory in 2009, as was

the publication of average marks for the exam at each school (Bryderup, Larson & Trentel 2009).

### **Language screening**

In 2008, the Danish parliament passed an amendment to the Act of the “folkeskole”. The law introduced mandatory language screening of children when entering the preschool class (grade 0). The aim of the language screening according to the notes to the proposal of the law is to make it possible already from the beginning in school to base the teaching on the preconditions of the individual pupil (Act L82 on changes in the act on “folkeskolen”, as proposed 2008). The mandatory language screening was introduced in August 2009.

### **Monitoring of quality in primary and lower secondary school**

The last policy initiative in relation to primary and lower secondary school in Denmark to be covered in this paper is an increased focus in monitoring of quality in primary and lower secondary school. Among the topics mentioned in the Government platform from 2005 referred to above was strengthened municipal monitoring of schools and the establishment of a Council for Evaluation and Development of Primary and Lower Secondary Education. In September 2006 the Agency for the Evaluation and Quality Development of Primary and Lower Secondary Education was established; among other things, this agency is responsible for ensuring that the Municipal councils produce annual quality reports that fulfill requirements laid down by the Ministry of Education. In addition, the municipalities have also become entitled to make action plans for quality development in the municipal schools (Danish Ministry of Education 2008b).

### **Conclusion**

This paper has begun the process of outlining the educational and education workforce field (i.e. professionals involved in teaching in the classroom) in two countries with quite different historical and philosophical traditions of education. We have begun the process of examining and comparing the preconditions and propensities of educational workers’ participation in higher education in England and Denmark over and above that which is required to qualify as a teacher. In particular, the paper relates participation and engagement to national and international educational policies and frames this work within an examination of the social background of the professional groups. The key research questions at this stage of the work are methodological and can be summed up by the overarching question, “How can the concepts of habitus and field help us to understand levels of engagement of educational workers in Higher Education”? In the English example we can see how the introduction of M-level credits and the Masters in Teaching and Learning, both of which are assessed in the classroom and largely against criteria set by the needs of the school, may change individual's propensity to participate in more discursive Masters in Education programmes, designed to incorporate the history, sociology and philosophy of education, and note that some authors see this as an example of the centralisation tendency of Ministers. Similarly, the Danish Ministry of Education has, since 2005, begun a process of centralisation apparently driven by quality concerns that encompasses the publication of school examination results and moves to enhance the status and training of teachers, while at the same time introduces, for the first time, non-qualified teaching assistants into classrooms. Having presented a preliminary contextual analysis of the factors that

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enable an understanding of engagement or lack of engagement in higher level learning among school-based education workers in the two EU countries, the authors will use this as the basis of a larger research project that explores habitus (both individual and collective) among these groups of education workers.

Contact details for correspondence

Anne Larson ([anne@dpu.dk](mailto:anne@dpu.dk))

Colin McCaig ([c.mccaig@shu.ac.uk](mailto:c.mccaig@shu.ac.uk))

Paul Garland ([p.garland@shu.ac.uk](mailto:p.garland@shu.ac.uk))

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