A Cross-National Study of Initial Teacher Education in England and Pakistan

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ABSTRACT This paper provides a comparative analysis of the development of initial teacher education and training in England and Pakistan. The aim of this research was to investigate initial teacher education (ITE) in both countries to gain insights into two initial teacher education systems with a view to improving ITE in Pakistan. To achieve this aim, a cross-cultural study using a multi-method approach was adopted. A qualitative field study on ITE systems of both countries found some significant factors which may be improving or hampering efficient and effective delivery of teacher education. This paper is also based on a review of international and national research literature. Findings from this paper showed how perilous and complicated it is to state definitely what the similarities and differences actually are between two ITE systems. The main issues addressed in this article are: governmental regulations and institutional provisions; ITE curriculum, policy and delivery; selection criteria of trainees; the quality of ITE; effectiveness of ITE programmes.

Keywords: Teacher Education and Training, Comparative study, England, Pakistan, Quality, Effectiveness
Introduction

There is little doubt that initial teacher education and training can make a positive contribution to the teaching profession. This is the field which attracts much attention, doubts, criticism, reviews and challenges (Cameron and Baker, 2004; Hobon, 2004). The primary purpose of pre-service teacher education/training is to provide a supply of high level qualified teachers in sufficient numbers to meet the needs of every school in the country. Therefore, the type and level of the teacher education institutions depends on the structure of school education system. Many countries have accepted the idea that teachers’ education and teachers’ professional development are keys to any national reform on education. It is important to recognise that, despite the familiarity of these ideas, there are important differences between England and Pakistan in the way in which these processes of reform have been constructed. While there is convergence in the nature of the challenges in teacher education, the solutions to these challenges are different according to the cultural tradition of both countries.

Development of initial teacher education in England

Conservative government initiatives

Teacher education in England has undergone tremendous changes over the past three decades. In the mid 1980s, teacher training was not at the top of the public policy agenda, although recent reforms had been imposed on providers of teacher education. The Conservative government has increased its control over colleges of education and universities and over the content of teacher training courses. The creation of the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE) set up in 1983 was intended to monitor teacher education in England and Wales, and had responsibility for ensuring that certain standards were maintained. Since the late 1980s, changes have occurred that have had a fundamental impact on ITE in England. There has been a move from a model dominated by the higher education institutes (HEIs) to a school-HEI partnership (King, 2004) and now school based apprentice model. In 1989, a number of steps were taken to strengthen central control of training courses and challenge the autonomy of higher education institutions (DES, 1989a) which extended the powers of the CATE and added a new layer of bureaucracy to the accreditation system (Furlong et al., 2000). Other more radical innovations launched at the end of the decade included the development of new (largely school-based) ‘articled teacher’ and ‘licensed teacher’ routes
The Articled Teacher Scheme, which ran from 1989-1994, was an entirely new form of school-based teacher training model. The intention of this scheme was to extend student teachers’ time in schools and to involve schools more fully in their training (Clayton and Pearce, 1993). The schools in this scheme had a greater responsibility in educating student teachers into the profession (Barton, 1996; Tomlinson, 1995). The Licensed Teacher Scheme, also, launched in 1989 (DES, 1989b), allowed mature entrants with a minimum of two years of higher education to be recruited directly to positions in schools and provided with any necessary training by their employers ‘on the job’ (Furlong et al., 2000). This scheme was different from the Articled Teacher Scheme in that the former was school-based teacher education and this route provided a legitimate way to gain qualified teacher status without a degree and without taking part in a training programme organized through higher education (Furlong et al., 2000). The relative success of the National Curriculum for schools and other initiatives from the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) had given policy-makers confidence that reforming teacher training to improve standards was achievable. Therefore, during the late 1980s, higher education institutions were encouraged to develop a range of new course models to complement the traditional four year undergraduate and one year postgraduate courses.

In the 1990s, there was an important policy change towards structural reorganization and increased central control (Gardner and Cunningham, 1998). The Department of Education (DFE) introduced regulations that required all existing teacher training to be delivered through partnerships between teacher training institutions and schools (Furlong et al., 2000; Wilkin, 1996). The ITE courses were tightened with the emphasis on shifting more responsibility for training teachers into the schools (Barber, 1995). The training was clearly presented as involving only two elements: subject knowledge, which the students were to learn in higher education institutions and practical teaching skills, which the students were to learn in schools.

In 1994, CATE was replaced by the Teacher Training Agency (TTA). The move from ‘Council’ to ‘Agency’ signalled a change in governance as well as change in designation of ‘teacher education’ as ‘teacher training’ [with competence/standard-based assessment] indicated a reflective ideological shift (Wilkin, 1999). The agency was intended to contribute to raising standards of teaching and promoting teaching as a profession.

New Labour government initiatives

In 1997, there was a change in political power, after 18 years of Conservative gov-
There were radical changes in ITT during New Labour government. The government’s commitment to ‘improving’ ITT was shown immediately by the launch of Standards for Initial Teacher Education (1997). The TTA has assisted the government in the development and codification of the earlier lists of competencies into a detailed set of ‘standards’ for the award of QTS, creating a national curriculum for ITT (Whitty, 2000). The adherence to TTA curriculum and assessment requirements is now monitored by a non-ministerial government department called the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) which developed a new inspection framework for initial teacher education (Furlong et al., 2000). TTA and OFSTED together immediately exercised a powerful control over teacher education whereby TTA applies financial control of quality through evaluation of the Office for Standards in Education reports and OFSTED is responsible for academic quality control.

To develop professional practice and policy, the General Teaching Council for England (GTC), a quasi-independent professional body for teachers, was introduced in September 2000. In 2002, a new version of the training standards ‘Qualifying to Teach: Professional Standards for Qualified Teacher Status and Requirements for ITT’ was launched jointly by the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) and Department for Education and Skills (DfES), as an attempt to put forward a more holistic vision of teacher professionalism through the introduction of a section on ‘professional values’ which was requested by the teacher education profession (DfES and TTA, 2002). The 2005 Education Act morphed the TTA into the TDA [Training and Development Agency for Schools] (DfES, 2005), which was charged with raising standards of achievement in schools by improving the training and professional development for the teaching workforce as well as for the creation of a coherent framework for teacher professional development beyond ITT. The 2007 Education Act revised the existing standards and set the new requirements, which must be met by trainee teachers before they can be awarded QTS and for training providers and those who make recommendations for the award of QTS (DIUS, 2007).

New coalition government initiatives (2010)

The Coalition government came into power after the general election of May, 2010, after 13 years of Labour government. The new White Paper, ‘The Importance of Teaching’ was published in November, 2010 and sets out a radical reform programme for the school system and initial teacher training. The document appeared to be all about promoting good teachers. Teachers will be given more control and freed from constraint to improve their professional status and authority.
Discipline will be restored to classrooms. The document also proposed to reduce the role of universities in initial teacher training. The government will continue to raise the quality of new entrants to the teaching profession, by:

- ceasing to provide funding for initial teacher training for those graduates who do not have at least a 2:2 degree or equivalent from September 2012;
- expanding Teach First, from 560 new teachers to 1,140 each year by the end of this parliament [in 2014/15];
- offering financial incentives to attract the very best graduates in shortage subjects into teaching;
- enabling more talented career changers to become teachers;
- asking Teach First to develop Teach Next, a new employment-based route to attract high fliers from other professions. Encouraging armed forces leavers to become teachers, by developing a ‘Troops to Teachers’ programme, which will sponsor service leavers to train as teachers;
- reforming initial teacher training, to increase the proportion of time trainees spend in the classroom and improving and expanding the best of the current school-based routes into teaching. There will be a focus on core teaching skills, especially in teaching reading and mathematics, managing behaviour and responding to pupils’ special educational needs (DfE, 2010).

The White Paper (DfE, 2010) proposed two main aspects: first, to introduce additional measures to increase the recruitment of teachers in shortage subjects such as maths and science; and secondly, to reduce the role of universities in teacher training. In the late 1980s, the previous Conservative government reduced the control of higher education institutes (HEI) to a school-HEI partnership. After coming into power in 2010, the current Conservative-led government seemed willing to marginalise the important contribution of universities.

Development of initial teacher education in Pakistan

After independence in 1947, several education reforms were launched in order to bring about qualitative and quantitative improvements in the education sector. A number of education policies along with five-year plans, ten-year perspective plans and Education Sector Reforms (ESRs) were formulated and implemented, due to the rise and fall of different governments and political changes. From time to time, committees and commissions constituted by government have recommended major changes in the education system. Some have been implemented, but tradition
has been so strong that in its essential aspects the system tends to be resistant to change. The situation did not improve appreciably in the first ten years after independence, because reforms and development efforts were haphazard and uncoordinated due to unsettled political conditions of the country (Ahmed, 2009).

All previous education policies talk about the role of education as a social reform and social development but have been unable to significantly contribute to social inclusiveness by ensuring social mobility through education and training (MoE, 2009a). The policy documents in Pakistan were the result of extensive research but their implementation left much to be desired, so that not one policy achieved its declared goals nor the targets of time set for realizing these goals. Firstly, there was no genuine widespread ownership of policy goals by the majority of stakeholders and secondly, the strategies and plans developed to achieve the policy goals were unrealistic and did not have the support of identified and dedicated resources required to achieve the targets. Nor was there any tailoring of goals to relate to maximum resources available. Moreover, weak and defective implementation mechanisms, financial constraints, absence of public participation, lack of political commitment and absence of incentives were the main causes of failure (Ahmed, 2009).

In the last decade, there have been continuing improvement in initial teacher education. In order to strengthen the quality of teacher education, in 2001, Pakistan implemented a teacher education reform. Under this reform, admission to primary school teachers’ institutions would require 12 years of schooling. Students who had passed Grade XII would be required to study for one and half years (18 months) for the Diploma of Education. The government also focused on curriculum reforms and improvement in teacher education and training. In order to achieve this target, the government has taken initiatives such as upgrading teacher qualification linked to higher pay scales, in-service training of teachers at all levels of the education system, continuous curriculum reviewing and updating in collaboration with provincial counterparts and through public-private partnerships, and encouraging the multiple textbooks option (MoE, 2001).

After a lengthy process of consultations the new Educational Policy 2009 introduced a new reform agenda to improve ITE system and recommended that teacher education curriculum will be adjusted to the needs of the school curriculum and scheme of studies. The curriculum will include training for student-centred teaching, cross-curricular competencies, and an on-site component. The policy also suggested developing a separate cadre of specialised teacher educators. Moreover, teacher training arrangements, accreditation and certification procedures will be standardised and institutionalised. A Bachelor degree, with a B.Ed., is the requirement for teaching at the elementary level, a Masters level for the
secondary and higher secondary, with a B.Ed. Will be required by 2018. Primary Teaching Certificate (PTC) and Certificate of Teaching (CT) are to be phased out through encouraging the present set of teachers to improve their qualifications, while new hiring will be based on the advanced criteria (MoE, 2009a). The policy also recommended providing the opportunities for professional development through a training programme to all teachers and training needs will be assessed on the basis of research and training programmes. The provincial governments will aim to draw upon resources from the private sector through public-private partnerships in the areas of teacher education and professional development programmes (MoE, 2009a). As a signatory of the world initiative on ‘Education for All’, the Government of Pakistan launched a project ‘Strengthening Teacher Education in Pakistan’ (STEP). Its prime objective is to improve the quality of teacher education through policy-formulation, dialogue with stakeholders and strategic frameworks focusing on standards, certification and accreditation procedures for teachers. Under the STEP Project, ‘Professional Standards for Teachers’ have been developed in consultation with stakeholders in all provinces; the STEP project was launched in 2009. Although, the professional standards are aimed at primary level beginning teachers, these standards can be adapted and used for secondary level teachers and teacher educators (MoE, 2009b).

This standards-based movement in education is the development of international, national and regional agreements to improve the professional knowledge and skills of teachers to enhance the student learning. A national system of accreditation for all teacher education programmes based on the proposed standards needs to be implemented in all the provinces. This will homogenize curricular content, critical pedagogic learning outcomes, performance skills and dispositions of teachers (MoE, 2009b).

Empirical research

The main questions posed in this research were: 1) To what extent does the initial teacher training programme in England and Pakistan provide an adequate preparation for needs of teachers? 2) To what extent can a comparative study of these issues between two countries help to identify the problems involved? To answer these questions field research was conducted in England and Pakistan during the period of June, 2007 to April, 2008. The major participants of this fieldwork in England were TDA, a Higher Education Institute, a teacher training institute, and two primary schools. In Pakistan, the fieldwork was conducted in the Ministry of Education, two teacher training institutes, and two primary schools. Selection of these sample institutions was based on sampling techniques, which enabled the
author to make the most thorough collection of data related to research questions. The fieldwork consisted of many different forms of data collection but the present article is primarily (but not exclusively) based on semi-structured individual interviews. Qualitative research is concerned with the relationship and the interaction between the researcher and the research participants in such a social context, which helps them to understand the world from their viewpoints and elaborate or generate theory (Cohen et al., 2007). Qualitative data tends to provide the researchers with rich descriptions of the events that are investigated. Often qualitative research uses multi-methods to gain a thorough understanding of context. The elementary concept shared by comparative educationalists about this approach is that, ‘education cannot be de-contextualised from its local culture’ (Fairbrother, 2007, p.46). This argument can well be applied to the question of validity of attempting to understand different locations. A comparative approach is used in the analysis of the data gathered so as to enrich the outcome and understanding of both case studies. There were fifty in-depth individual interviews with policy makers, principals, teacher educators, mentors, and student teachers in both countries.

### Table 1: Distribution of interviewees in England and Pakistan

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>England</th>
<th>Pakistan</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>Policy Makers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>03</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher Educators</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentors</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>08</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Teachers</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
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Four interview schedules were developed, each designed for specific people related to the ITE. Each schedule consisted of six questions with related potential follow-up or sub-questions, derived from the research objectives and literature review for each category. The majority of interviews in Pakistan were in Urdu (the national language) and required translation into English.

All interviews were conducted in the workplace of the respondent. The interviews took an average forty to sixty minutes—depending on the subjects’ responses to individual question/s and also on the researchers’ probing. The data
derived from the semi-structured interviews were based on the respondents’ perceptions. Perceptions are, by their very nature, subjective. All interviews were tape-recorded but permission was sought before taping the interviews. Ethical aspects were considered throughout the study and pseudonyms were used to protect the anonymity of the participants. The participants were asked to sign an informed consent form which described the purpose of the research, its procedures, risks and discomforts, its benefits and right to withdraw. This clarified the situation for the participants and also provided a degree of proof that the participants had agreed to take part in the study on their own free will.

Towards a comparison of initial teacher education

The history of ITE in England is a long and continuous sequence of measures but in Pakistan it is short and relatively disorganized (Lo, 2006). The differences between the two initial teacher education and training systems are clearly greater than the similarities. The comparison was affected through a modified version of the method proposal by Bereday (1964), discussion of which is beyond the scope of this paper. It is therefore a complex and challenging comparison to attempt.

Government regulations and institutional provisions

Over the past decade, the system of teacher education in England has become increasingly decentralised in some of its features and increasingly centralized in others. On the one hand, ITE providers have been given autonomy to create their own curricula according to the overall standards required. On the other hand, ITE is monitored by Office for Standards in Education (OfSTED) and, as Furlong et al. (2005) argue, in England today teachers’ professional identity formation is so powerfully controlled by the government through its regulation of the school curriculum, school practice, and teacher professional development that initial teacher preparation is largely sidelined.

National standards of assessment in teacher training were introduced in 1998. The Teacher Training Agency (TTA) devised and implemented the accountability procedures to increase the regulation of teacher education in comprehensive inspections by OfSTED. According to policy makers, these school-based teacher training reforms brought greater diversity and provided an incentive for improving the quality of teacher training. However, evidence shows that the English authorities planned and formulated a clear philosophy of ITE informed by an explicit philosophy of teacher education. Consequently, there is little dislocation between the planning and implementation of policies. This quick implementation tracks the
quality of ITE in England and helps to make it more uniform.

Whilst teacher education and training in Pakistan is primarily a provincial responsibility, Pakistan’s federal government also plays a role through its Curriculum Wing, which is responsible for teacher education institutions. Each province has a distinct centralized organizational structure to prepare teachers for primary, middle and secondary school levels, either through policy changes or donor interventions. Currently, in Pakistan, 275 teacher education/training institutes exist of which 227 are run by the government sector and 48 are operated by the private sector (AED, 2004). These teacher training institutes are under the administrative and curricular control of the provincial Departments of Education. Primary school teachers seeking employment in government schools are trained in Government Colleges for Education (GCEs); Government Colleges for Elementary Teachers (GCETs) and Regional Institutes for Teacher Education (RITEs). These institutions are supervised by the provincial Bureaus of Curriculum in Balochistan and Sind. In the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhawa the Directorate of Curriculum and Teacher Education (DCET) is responsible to provide pre-service teacher education through RITEs. In Punjab, since 2004 Directorate of Staff Development (DSD) is accountable to design and implement both pre-service education and continuous professional development (CPD) programmes for primary school teachers in all 35 Government Colleges of Teacher Education (GCTEs). However, common provincial features include the pre-service curriculum and a provincially centralized structure with most of the institutions functioning under Education Departments rather than the provincial governments.

Policy documents indicated a lack of a sustained governmental philosophy and understanding concerning the field of ITE. The problems of education policies in Pakistan have three main causes. First, Pakistani policy interests have followed international trends without considering the local implications. Second, the policies have focused on restructuring the system without a distinctive vision and philosophy. Third, there is a massive gap between planning and implementation (Ahmed, 2009).

The ITE systems of England and Pakistan are controlled by the governments or state run organizations and the level of organization is hierarchal. The responsibility for training is shared equally between partnership schools and higher education institutes in England, which is quite different from Pakistan, where the responsibility is positioned in teacher education institutes. Furthermore, the relationship between teacher educators, subject mentors and trainee teachers is collaborative in England but on the contrary, this relationship is hierarchical in Pakistan. Nevertheless, it could be argued that the operational model is more centralized in Pakistan and more diversified in England.
The curriculum of initial teacher education and training

According to an official, in England the word ‘curriculum’ disappeared in 2002 with the introduction of standards in ‘Qualifying to Teach’. Currently, there are two documents: ‘The Standards and ITT Requirements’ both are set by the government. Standards and ITT Requirements (2002, 2007) for initial teacher training (ITT) programmes identify and exemplify the standards that must be demonstrated by a trainee teacher in order to attain Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). As well as setting national standards for trainee teachers, the TDA sets out how teacher training providers should organise their training programmes, but it is for the teacher training provider ultimately to determine the content of their provision. In particular they require universities and other higher education institutions to work in partnership with schools. The system of university and school partnership is working well in many parts of the country. The responsibility of providers includes course planning and management, recruitment of applicants, training and assessment of students. The standards for the award of QTS are outcome statements that set out what a trainee teacher must know, understand and be able to do to be awarded QTS. To achieve the QTS level the trainees must have proficiency in literacy (English), numeracy and ICT (TDA, 2007). A teacher educator stated [in an interview with the author], ‘The curriculum we designed has to be able to enable the trainees to teach the school curriculum’. English ITE provides training in the practical skills of teaching. On a postgraduate programme, trainees can expect to spend 18 weeks in schools for primary school teaching and 24 weeks for secondary school teaching (TDA, 2008). The English student teachers spend two-thirds of the time allocated for the course practicing teaching in more than one school. Moreover, there is emphasis on independent learning, creative thought and critical analysis. However, there is more focus on English and maths teaching but very little focus on the other curriculum subjects such as music and drama that schools need. There is not enough emphasis on the importance of preparing trainees in terms of the wider school curriculum which would include things to do with emotional support and spiritual, moral and cultural development.

In Pakistan, a large proportion of student trainees perceived that the pre-service programme at their institutes adequately prepared them to plan their work and build their personal confidence. To some extent they have received adequate preparation in the pedagogical aspects of the subject taught at primary school level, but there is no attempt to integrate subject knowledge with pedagogical skills. Not enough emphasis is given to learning practical teaching skills. Instead, in Pakistan the emphasis remains on theory (UNESCO and USAID, 2006).
were other aspects that student trainees reported having very little preparation for, such as performing administrative duties. Unlike England, there is no separate cadre or any special qualification or training for primary school headteachers in Pakistan. Trainees are supposed to learn about administrative duties after they qualify. Including some such training in ITE would help them contribute to the effective running of their schools in support of their headteachers.

Moreover, there is little emphasis on independent learning, critical analysis or creative thought to exercise professional judgement. The beginning teachers did not get sufficient opportunity to reflect on their practices during practice teaching sessions due to their short duration which is only four weeks in schools and two weeks in ITE institutions. The majority of ITE institutes have no adequate facilities for practice teaching or laboratory schools attached to the institute. In many of them even minimum facilities are not available due to the location of training institutions away from the neighbouring schools. On the basis of the amount of time for practical teaching experience, which is 6 weeks, it can be concluded that practicing teachers and schools currently play a minor role in the professional preparation of teachers in Pakistan. As things are, there is no strong link between the teaching practice period and the rest of the training programme.

In England, ITE providers are free to develop their own curriculum and there is more emphasis on practical aspects. On the other hand, in Pakistan the curriculum is more theoretical with very little emphasis on practice teaching. ITE providers are forced to teach the prescribed textbooks and do not have any freedom to develop their own curriculum. The textbooks are recognised as ‘the curriculum’ by teachers and students alike. In England, the teacher education curriculum has adjusted to the needs of the school curriculum but in Pakistan still there is a need to adjust the teacher education curriculum to the needs of the school curriculum.

**Selection criteria for student teachers**

In England access to all initial teacher training courses is restricted and subject to a preliminary selection process, including an interview, to determine the applicant’s suitability for teaching as a career. Trainees are required not only to provide documentation to confirm their ICT capabilities but have had to reach certain standards in national literacy and numeracy tests (Furlong, 2002). Particular attention is paid to their command of spoken Standard English. Candidates are also assessed on their ability to read effectively and their attainment in Standard Mathematics and Science. Admission is also subject to physical and mental fitness to teach (DfES/TTA, 2002). Universities must also check that applicants do not have a criminal background which might endanger employment as a teacher, especially with chil-
dren or young people. The ITT entry requirements have improved their competence to undertake the challenges ahead in the teaching profession.

The intake at Pakistani ITE institutes is generally based only on prior academic achievement. Students may be academically well qualified but not attitudinally fit for the teaching profession. Teachers need not only to portray academic excellence but also moral suitability (Brock, 1999; Lovat, 1998), especially in terms of working with young children. In Pakistan the selection process includes only an introductory interview so that important personal attributes cannot be properly assessed. The whole package of attributes of trainees have an impact on their ability to profit from their professional preparation, and subsequently their ability to meet the demands of work in the field (Cairns, 1998). The minimum qualification for entry in ITE programme is Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSSC).

The selection criteria are much higher in England than in Pakistan. The selection of entrants should not be based solely on academic results and an interview rating as in Pakistan. Character references, aptitude tests, practical skills tests or even records of practical experience in primary teaching could also be incorporated. This could help maintain the very high standard of ethical behaviour within the teaching profession that is expected.

**Quality: a prime concern of any initial teacher education programme**

When schools fail, the cause is often seen to lie in the quality of the teaching which they provide which, in turn, is seen to reflect the quality of the training that the teachers receive and, finally, the quality of those who provide the training (Poppleton, 1999). The commonly held belief is that teacher education is too complex a phenomenon to be successfully analysed, but quality of ITE can be defined in different ways. Both nations have adopted different preferred paths of educational development and they have their own goals, specific aims and objectives. ITE and assessment of its quality therefore exist within specific contexts.

The Pakistani and English centrally-set frameworks for initial teacher education courses differ in the key areas of educational and professional studies, subject studies and experiences in the schools. There is significant structural difference in respect of curricula and cultures of teacher education. In England, ITE for primary teachers takes place in universities, a few higher education colleges and partnership primary schools. In Pakistan, ITE for primary teachers takes place in Elementary Colleges or Regional Institutes of Teacher Education. There is a clear difference in academic status both in terms of the quality of the institutional environments within which the two processes of ITE occur, and the likely richness of the overall experience of the trainees. However, the provision of ITE relates effec-
tively to the current and likely future needs of schools differently as between the two countries. While the learning environment offered in the English context is more ‘positive’ than in the Pakistani case, the student teachers in Pakistan acquire self-confidence through frequently presenting materials and lessons in different languages. Given the multicultural and multilingual contexts of many schools in urban England, this dimension may need more attention.

In England, the educational reforms in teacher training were triggered by the Educational Reform Act of 1988. Two successive governments, Conservative and the New Labour have progressively increased their control through the introduction and assessment of standards and curriculum content in school. These changes may have improved primary ITE in a practical sense. OfSTED carries out rigorous inspections of schools as well as of pre-service training. An increasingly wider range of applicants are being attracted into the profession. They are not necessarily as well qualified as those seeking other professions although, due to the global credit crunch obtaining at the time of writing, with its associated professional redundancies, seems to be reverting in a new, if temporary, source of teachers in the public sector. This is especially so in respect of male applicants, there being a problem of lack of male role models for young children in England.

In England, schools are encouraged to be centrally involved in all aspects of training and both schools and universities are encouraged to be flexible. The national standards set out what a trainee teacher must know, understand and be able to do in order to qualify and gain QTS, which works as safeguard to protect the quality of those entering the profession. There is a strong partnership between the course providers and the training schools. School teachers are involved in the course through participating in planning, admitting the students to the course and sometimes they give lectures in the university on topics related to their professional practice. Some also engage on higher degrees with research topics relevant to their schools. This helps to improve the quality for both schools and the training. It is evident during the initial interviews the majority of student teachers valued the guidance and advice they received from experienced teachers.

The quality of general education with which trainees in Pakistan enter teacher training follows from the relatively low standards of most schools in the public sector. Due to demographic pressure the government is constantly trying to meet the needs of an expanding system of primary education and it is not sufficiently concerned with the quality of it. Another issue with regard to quality assessment of teacher education is that the principals of teacher training institutes have the primary responsibility to monitor trainers but in practice, they hardly have time to devote to fulfilling their assessment responsibilities. The controllers of teacher training institutions are also responsible for this task but in practice they never
engage in such assessments. Their visits to institutes are strictly for administrative purposes (AED, 2004). The quality of teacher training programmes has an imbalance as they lack harmony with the school system. A teacher educator stated that: ‘Teachers’ performance in schools and the way they do their work were an indication of the quality of what they have got during their training. What teachers have in their training is different from what they practised in schools’.

So while in England a significant, albeit centralised, system of quality enhancement for ITE has progressed in harness with school reform, in Pakistan the massive pressures of demography, poverty, fragmentation and external imposition have left the country struggling to keep up with the quality of ITE even at its present low level.

**Effectiveness of the initial teacher education programmes**

In this paper a report of comparative research raises critical issues regarding the importance of having a relevant and effective pre-service teacher education and training programme, one which enhances the initial professional preparation of teachers for the diversity of their commitments. The effectiveness and impact of ITE must depend on the interplay of the quality of the teacher education programme and the calibre of each trainee teacher (Challen, 2005). The evaluation of effectiveness in teacher education and training in this paper aimed to reveal to what extent objectives have been achieved, and to identify some of the main constraints to achieving improvements. To measure the effectiveness of teacher training programmes is difficult and the findings of this study were no exception. Moreover, the findings also recognised that the effectiveness of teacher education is multifaceted. ‘No research data show the graduates from teacher education programmes are over the longer term stronger in teaching than those who graduate from other programmes’ (Zhou, 2002, p. 214).

In England, ‘surprisingly in these days of increased accountability, no single organization is responsible for publishing and collating such data in order that policy decisions can be informed and cost effectiveness evaluated’ (McNamara et al., 2008, p. 1). In England, teacher training has been successful in many respects, but there are some critical points which require revision. The majority of respondents shared the view that generally ITE programmes are very effective and the institutional and professional cultures in teacher training institutions and schools have a strong influence on the effectiveness of teacher education. In the words of a policy maker [in an interview with the author]: ‘As the quality of ITE has gone up, which is a big improvement to the quality of teaching in schools, and OFSTED reports of the schools have confirmed that English teachers are now better trained than ever
before and many schools and head teachers would confirm that the teachers coming into the profession now are much better prepared for the classrooms than ever before.

According to McNamara et al., (2008, p. 14), the evaluation of ‘training sessions and OfSTED inspections concerning the ITE programme in England shows to some degree of how well it is performing, but real ‘effectiveness’, ‘impact’ and ‘value for money’ of the various training routes in the UK are unproven, and in some cases unresearched.’ However, as this study indicates, the English student teachers spend most of the ITE course time in schools. Teaching training programmes concentrate more on the practical element and on providing student teachers with the professional skills needed for classroom management. There is evidence that such theory as the students learn in the university could be applied in different situations in the classroom, but there is variation in preparation of trainees as between the different ITE routes in England. Hobson, et al. (2006) stated of the content of primary courses that the students, especially SCITT trainees, were very clear about the links between theory and practical elements of their courses and thought the balance to be about right by a significant margin. According to a policy maker [in an interview with the author]: ‘Teacher trainees learn a lot from the pre-service and there is initiative concerning learning in-service programme. They do learn a lot but a lot of their learning is very focused on the needs of the schools rather than on the needs of the teachers. Our programme is fulfilling the needs of student teachers in real life because our QTS survey shows that new teachers are very satisfied with the quality of training they get.’

In Pakistan, there a disjuncture between beginning teachers’ professional preparation and the demands of their work, as well as an absence of both broad academic support and essential policies and programmes for pre-service teacher education. These have impeded the provision of an effective, adequate and enriching professional preparation for beginning teachers. Consequently, teacher training programmes provide little opportunity for teachers to develop the kind of skills that can make them more successful in their practice and build their confidence and motivation. The pre-service programme at Pakistan’s initial teacher training institutes is only moderately successful in terms of providing professional preparation to teachers, preparing beginning teachers to adequate levels only in certain areas of their work. As well as the gaps identified, there is little exposure to emerging international trends and developments, and current policies and practices do not measure up to new developments and global trends. Most pre-service teacher programmes have added little value to trainees, and directly reflect on the poor level of instruction and curriculum of the pre-service programmes. No province has yet managed to successfully implement any indicator-based system to
evaluate the quality of teacher education. Approximately 75 per cent of teachers [in Pakistan] are provided outdated and largely irrelevant training through the Primary Teaching Certificate or Certificate of Teaching (Khan, 2004).

There are therefore a number of weaknesses, as well as a few strengths, in the professional preparation of beginning teachers in Pakistan. Although beginning teachers are not expected to graduate as finished products, certain weaknesses in their preparation could have been avoided to make them better informed and equipped for the work required of them in the field. These weaknesses are largely the result of deficiencies in the policies and programmes of pre-service teacher education. In some cases the stakeholders, especially the Ministry of Education, have ignored certain policies which it formulated itself, such as greater financial support and improvements to the selection criteria. These, together with an outdated curriculum of pre-service programme and the lack of appropriate resources and facilities, have inhibited the provision of an adequate and enriching professional preparation for teachers.

Conclusion

Many researchers (e.g. Thomas, 2000; Hatano and Inagaki, 1998; Freedman and Hernandez, 1998) have argued that the purpose of comparative research is not to arrive at conclusions about whether one system is ‘better’ than another but to enhance understanding and reassess strengths and weaknesses so as to find ways to improve them. Without some knowledge of at least one other system this is very difficult to assess. In addition, the research revealed that comparative study is more multifaceted than home-based. A foreign researcher faces many difficulties including getting to know an unfamiliar education system and environment, cultural differences, language problems and, of course, financial constraints.

This paper has illustrated the realities of initial teacher education and training systems in England and Pakistan. Thus, the article focused on the five-dimensions, which are first analysed in sequence and then in order, to engage in simultaneous comparison. Consequently, there are five integral aspects of adequacy, governmental regulations and institutional provision, curriculum, selection criteria of trainees, quality and effectiveness recognised as key components of the ITE programmes. It does not reveal, for instance, the different way in which the preparation of prospective teachers was found to be operating in both cases. However, it does not mean that any identified dimension is absent in the other country, simply that it appears to be less influential. Both countries, to some extent, have different ITE systems in terms of curriculum delivery, the selection criteria of student teachers, university-based and school-based studies and relationship between
teaching practice schools. This is due to moving of Pakistani teacher education from a postcolonial period of historical development which is seeking to achieve a balance between localization and globalization. Both systems are organized differently for historical, cultural and political reasons and there is also a difference in research culture between the countries, but both lack the necessary injection of an understanding of the importance of ongoing professional preparation and development.

To some extent the modern focus on standards, inspection and accountability in England may have forced a kind of improvement in professional performance and outcomes in terms of pupil examination results. These are driven by the pressure of quality assurance systems. This is only one aspect of the professional preparation of teachers. There needs to be a creative dimension encouraged and supported. In Pakistan, the very low level of the resource base, fragmented organizational structure for ITE and lack of a national political will to co-ordinate across a four province multi-cultural system, make for a much more difficult situation. Here, education is a more vital and direct component of economic development where teachers are more on the front line and may have a wider community role than in England.

This research was an active process that developed continuously. The changes in the education policies of both countries, especially in England, were very difficult to describe and interpret what was happening in the complex field of ITE.

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