

Self-Evaluation Framework for Initial Teacher Education  
Report of the Fourth Symposium

**Enacting the continuum of Teacher Education: the ways in which Initial Teacher Education supports student teachers as life-long learners impacting their preparedness for their professional careers.**

Professor Moyra Boland  
University of Glasgow  
November 2023

## Self-Evaluation Framework for Initial Teacher Education Symposium Report

### Introduction

The symposium on the Self-Evaluation Framework for Initial Teacher Education commenced with warm welcomes from Professor Margery McMahon, Chair of the Scottish Council of Deans of Education, and Ollie Bray, Strategic Director of Education Scotland. Their opening remarks set the context for the online event and the forthcoming insightful discussions aimed at critically evaluating and enhancing the landscape of Initial Teacher Education (ITE).

### Keynote Presentations

**National Anti-Racism Framework for Initial Teacher Education - Dr Khadija Mohammed:** Dr Mohammed's keynote address shed light on the imperative of incorporating anti-racism frameworks within ITE programmes and the symposium saw the launch of the [National Anti-Racism Framework for Initial Teacher Education](#). Her discourse emphasised the need for educators to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to create inclusive and equitable learning environments. The Anti-Racism Framework was commissioned by SCDE and developed and written by Dr Khadija Mohammed who is Associate Dean for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion at the University of the West of Scotland.

**Measuring Quality in Initial Teacher Education (MQuITE) – Dr Denise McGee-Dewar & Professor Aileen Kennedy:** The second keynote by Dr McGee-Dewar and Professor Kennedy explored the significance of measuring the quality of ITE across Scotland and the final report from the longitudinal study. Their presentation highlighted frameworks and strategies for assessing and enhancing the quality of teacher education programmes.

A link to a recording of the opening remarks and keynotes are [here](#).

### Workshops

The symposium comprised twelve workshops covering diverse themes rooted in the enactment of the continuum of teacher education. These workshops served as interactive platforms for discussing innovative methodologies, inclusive practices, and emerging trends within ITE. Throughout the workshops notes were taken, guided by three fundamental questions:

1. What were the key themes discussed?

2. What was reflected on during the discussion in relation to the themes presented?
3. How do these reflections inform the future of a teacher's own educational journey from student to retirement and what is the role of stakeholders and systems in supporting this journey?

This report will explore the emerging themes from the symposium, analysed through the prism of the three reflective questions. It will explore how these discussions inform the future trajectory of a teacher's educational journey and the integral role of stakeholders and systems in supporting this.

### Question 1: Key Themes discussed in the presentations

**Tensions in Enquiry-Based Learning:** There is a notable tension between conducting enquiry-based learning during Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and integrating enquiry as a professional stance. Constraints such as limited time, assessment pressures and discontinuity between placements hinder the development of a holistic enquiry approach.

**Mentoring and Support:** The role of mentoring in teacher education is multifaceted, encompassing professional, academic, and personal dimensions. The importance of mentoring both within university settings and during school placements was emphasized. Effective mentoring involves fostering critical thinking, self-reflection, and professional growth. Discussion around Black and minority ethnic student teachers facing additional barriers and the need to raise the racial literacy across the system to support this and other non-dominant cultural groups was part of the group reflection.

**Reflective Practice:** Critical reflection emerged as a significant aspect across multiple presentations. Encouraging reflective practices among student teachers and developing a deeper understanding of critical reflection's impact on lifelong learning and professional development were common themes.

**Teacher Identity and Values:** Discussions delved into the evolution of teacher identity, self-efficacy, and values throughout the ITE journey and beyond. Examining one's identity as an educator, personal values, and how they align with professional values were focal points.

**Integration of Arts and Science Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM) Education:** Concerns were raised about the adequacy and coherence in the teaching of expressive arts (music, art, dance, drama) in primary schools. Also, a focus on integrating STEM subjects was highlighted, emphasizing problem-solving skills, creativity, and real-life applications.

**Professional Standards and Leadership:** Exploration of professional standards, leadership roles, and preparation for leadership within ITE programs were recurring themes. Understanding leadership, values, and enacting them within educational settings emerged as significant components of the discussion.

**Continuous Learning and Enquiry Stance:** Discussions centred around fostering an enquiring disposition among teachers, facilitating continuous learning, and moving from project-based enquiry to a broader stance of enquiry as part of professional identity.

**Inclusive Pedagogy and Meeting Diverse Learner Needs:** Attention was given to inclusive and culturally-responsive pedagogical approaches, ensuring learners see themselves reflected in curricula and reimagining approaches to meet the diverse needs and identities of students.

**Collaboration and Partnership:** Collaboration between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and educational systems, involving stakeholders, advisory groups, and ongoing dialogue for enhancing teacher education programs and school experiences, was emphasized.

**Assessment and Self-Evaluation:** The importance of ongoing self-evaluation, utilising digital portfolios, and threading theory into practice emerged as crucial strategies for meeting standards and fostering criticality.

### Summary of Question 1

The presentations collectively highlighted the multifaceted nature of teacher education, emphasising the need for a holistic approach that integrates reflective practice, mentoring, inclusive pedagogy, arts and STEM integration, leadership development, and continuous learning. The discussions aimed to address the challenges while fostering an enquiring, reflective, and adaptable teaching profession.

Each presentation contributed diverse perspectives on enhancing teacher education, focusing on pedagogical shifts, the evolution of teacher identity, and strategies to prepare educators to meet the complex needs of diverse learners in dynamic educational landscapes.

### Question 2: Key Themes reflected on during discussion

**Enquiry-Based Learning and Assessment:** There was a call for a more nuanced understanding of enquiry in education, questioning how to assess students' stance rather than solely focusing on the final product of enquiry-based projects.

**Shifting Assessment Methods:** Discussions explored the potential transition from structured enquiry modules towards continual dialogue and reflective journaling as assessment tools. The idea of assessing a teacher's stance in enquiry rather than the completion of a project was discussed.

**Developing Teacher Identity and Values:** Teacher identity and standards was discussed and emphasis was placed on the evolving teacher identity and its relation to professional standards. There was a discussion about shifting towards an inquiring profession and the importance of modelling professional enquiry for aspiring teachers.

**Reflective Practices and Wellbeing:** Reflecting on why poetry and diverse creative artifacts were utilised to foster reflective practices. Questions arose about supporting wellbeing, overcoming imposter syndrome, and building resilience within ITE programmes. Teacher Resilience was discussion suggesting the need to map and to understand teacher resilience, and its importance within the teaching profession.

**Inclusive Pedagogy and Meeting Diverse Needs:** Adapting to diverse learner needs was prevalent during discussion There were reflections on adapting and making connections between Inclusive Pedagogical Approaches in Action (IPAA) principles and ITE inputs, aiming to model inclusive practice explicitly.

**STEM Education and Lifelong Learning:** Challenges in STEM teaching was reflected on. Conversations addressed the challenges of teaching STEM subjects within limited timeframes in ITE programs and stressed the need for continued support for subject and pedagogical knowledge development throughout a teacher's career.

**Role of Systems in Lifelong Learning:** Queries were raised on the role of stakeholders and systems in supporting a teacher's educational journey from student to retirement, especially considering the challenges in teaching STEM through Integrated Learning (IDL) approaches.

**Enquiring Teachers and Professional Development:** Continuum of Professional Learning was discussed as pivotal to the profession and the need for a structured continuum of professional learning beyond ITE was emphasised, contemplating how it would look in different phases of a teacher's career.

**Critical Thinking and Reflection:** There were discussions on supporting students to become critically reflective beyond ITE and fostering a value for enquiry-based approaches among teachers.

**Assessment and Student Learning Outcomes:** Formative Feedback and validity of assessments was discussions leaning towards the importance of formative feedback over binary pass/fail evaluations. There were queries regarding the validity of end-of-placement reports and considerations on evidence usage in evaluations.

### Summary of Question 2

Overall, these discussions highlighted the need for a shift in assessment approaches, fostering reflective practices, supporting teacher wellbeing, and continuous professional development throughout a teacher's career. The reflections aimed to enhance inclusive pedagogy, adapt teaching practices to meet diverse learner needs, and emphasise critical thinking and enquiry-based learning among educators.

### Question 3: The implications for a teacher's educational journey and the role of stakeholders

**Enquiry and Professional Values:** A collective understanding of enquiry among stakeholders needs to be developed to support enquiry-based learning and demonstrate how each can contribute to supporting this approach in teacher education.

Support for values reflection in the system could offer opportunities at different stages of a teacher's career to pause and reflect on professional values and attitudes. Continuous professional learning opportunities should address wellbeing, resilience, and imposter syndrome.

**Mentorship and Lifelong Learning:** Sustaining mentorship relationships can be a challenge within the system. Stakeholders should focus on maintaining and evolving mentoring relationships, acknowledging and addressing breakdowns when they occur, and finding ways to sustain these relationships. Role of coaching is important as stakeholders can explore the role of coaching in developing the capacity of student teachers and teachers for critical self-reflection and lifelong learning.

**STEM Education and Inclusive Practices:** Continued Support for STEM knowledge and understanding is needed. Systems need to ensure continuous career-long support for developing subject and pedagogical content knowledge, especially in STEM education. By sharing inputs and building on ITE work stakeholders could concentrate on sharing inputs from teacher education

programs with Probation Managers to build on initial teacher education experiences, avoiding repetition.

**Expressive Arts (EA) and Teacher Pathways:** Stakeholders could reflect on EA teaching, addressing issues related to continuity and progression within expressive arts teaching, particularly when faced with prescriptive approaches to literacy and numeracy that may impact EA teaching. Rejecting downgrading of EA subjects, the systems and stakeholders should champion the notion of EA subjects teaching other subjects through them, emphasising the importance of EA education.

**Continuing Lifelong Professional Learning (CLPL) and Leadership:** There is a need for a coherent continuum of professional learning that's individual-driven yet coherently supported throughout a teacher's career. Opportunities for leadership development post-qualification need structured opportunities to engage with leadership concepts and opportunities within the school improvement plan.

**Streamlining Partnerships and Placements:** Optimising placement partnerships is important to enhance a quality experience for ITE students. Stakeholders should consider streamlining partnerships between multiple students/ITE curricula in the same schools to improve relationships and coherence in placements.

### Summary of Question 3

In summary, these reflections emphasised the need for continuous support and development throughout a teacher's career, ranging from fostering enquiry-based learning to supporting reflective practices, enhancing subject knowledge, promoting wellbeing, sustaining mentorship, and creating structured opportunities for leadership and professional development. Systems and stakeholders play pivotal roles in creating environments conducive to ongoing learning and growth for educators.

### Overall Conclusion

In conclusion, the breadth of the presentations underscored the intricate facets of teacher education, advocating for a comprehensive approach that amalgamates various elements such as reflective practice, mentoring, inclusive teaching methodologies, integration of arts and STEM, leadership cultivation, and lifelong learning. The focal point remained on addressing challenges of high-quality education while maintaining a nurturing, inquisitive, introspective, and adaptable teaching community.

While some sessions predominantly showcased their methodologies positively, the collective aim was to stimulate engagement with tensions and complexities, a direction that warrants encouragement in the next self-evaluation phase.

On the whole, these discussions illuminated the imperative for a paradigm shift in assessment, the cultivation of reflective habits, fortification of teacher wellbeing, and sustained professional development throughout educators' careers. The reflections mirrored the need to augment inclusive teaching practices, adapt pedagogies to be culturally-responsive to meet the diverse needs and identities of learners, and underscored the significance of critical thinking and enquiry-driven education among teachers.

In essence, these reflections accentuate the indispensable need for continual guidance and growth across a teacher's professional journey. This spans from nurturing enquiry-driven learning and reflective habits to fortifying subject expertise, advocating wellbeing, sustaining mentorship, and crafting structured avenues for leadership and professional advancement. The pivotal role of systems and stakeholders in fostering conducive environments for continual learning and development among educators is crucial and should be prioritised for the holistic evolution of teaching practices and educational ecosystems.

If we look to the future around roles and responsibilities in the new education landscape, in particular reference to self-evaluation and quality assurance, there are some key principles for all stakeholders to consider around partnership and ownership. Another feature worth reflection is duplication of effort across stakeholders and the need to avoid replication of systems and processes.