A NAPCE Policy Statement on The Initial Training of Teachers

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Introduction to the Statement

The stimulus to develop a policy statement came from a number of connected events at a critical time for teacher education. With greater involvement from DES, and the publication of circular 3/84 giving criteria by which initial teacher training courses will be evaluated, the topic has been under discussion for some time. It was one item on the agenda of a meeting between

NAPCE Executive and HMI in March. An associated item referred to the NAPCE survey on training in which teachers said that their initial training on pastoral themes was too little, too late, and of the wrong sort.

In this context there have been developments among those involved in providing some of the training for pastoral care. A national group 'Tutors in Pastoral Care' has started to meet, bringing together colleagues from uni-

versities, polytechnics, and colleges who are mainly involved in running award-bearing courses. At their first meeting it was strongly felt that the topic of initial training deserved urgent consideration. The urgency is in part created by the fact that many training institutions are reviewing their initial training arrangements in anticipation of the new Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE).

There are a number of encouraging signs which suggest a policy statement could be useful. For example when the DES produced their draft for circular 3/84 there was no explicit mention of pastoral care considerations. Responses by at least some of the training institutions, and perhaps the NAPCE meeting with HMI, could have helped towards the final version containing explicit reference to pastoral work as one of the professional studies elements in training courses. Another encouraging example may be found in published HMI reports on schools. There seems to be an increasing concern to evaluate seriously the pastoral aspect, to make positive suggestions for development where necessary, and to give credit when pastoral systems operate well. In comparison it is rather disappointing to note that in the first five published HMI reports on teacher training institutions there is almost no reference to pastoral care issues in the content of courses. Many of the courses had a primary bias, but in the others if a lack of treatment in professional studies is identified, it seems

likely to be special educational needs or administrative frameworks rather than pastoral care.

How was the statement created? A sub-group of the Executive was set up, received various drafts and produced a result available for amendment by all the Executive, with representation from all regions. The major aim was to portray the school perspective on the issue, and to this end a main focus is given to the role of the form tutor. In making the case for greater, non-optional treatment in training it was felt inappropriate to be too prescriptive. The message is intended to be that there is much to be done and much which can be achieved.

How will the statement be used? Circulation to the 'Tutors in Pastoral Care' has already taken place at a special meeting on initial training. This meeting soon progressed to the point of setting up a further meeting to examine resources and materials for such training. Multiple copies of the statement have been requested by some institutions as a stimulus for discussion, and all teacher training organisations will be circulated. Circulation, and meetings where appropriate, will also be directed to HMI colleagues and members of CATE.

It is hoped that the policy will attract support and that the possibility for change will be taken. It is also hoped that members will use whatever openings may arise for them to press for improvements in training towards more effective pastoral care.

Initial Training for the Pastoral Aspect of the Teacher's Role:

A statement by the National Executive Commitee, National Association for Pastoral Care in Education

1. The Context of this Document

This statement is presented at a time when considerable discussion on initial teacher training is taking place. Decisions made at this time could generate significant changes in the way new members are prepared for the teaching profession. Such an opportunity for development has perhaps not existed since the publication of the James Report. In such a context the National Association for Pastoral Care in Education, with its membership both in teaching and in the training institutions, is enthusiastic to contribute positively to the debate.

It is recognised that some of the stimulus for change has come from central government, and NAPCE welcomes the intention in DES circular 3/84 'Initial Teacher Training: approval of courses' to give significant attention to the professional studies element of courses (paragraphs 10–12, annex). More specifically, NAPCE supports the direct reference (para 12) to the pastoral aspect of the teacher's role, which had not been so clearly stated in the draft circular, and is pleased to note that such an addition had been suggested by some training institutions. This stands alongside our National Executive's meeting with senior HMI colleagues in March, 1984, where HMI confirmed that in their view the pastoral aspect was firmly encoded in other parts of the content of the circular.

In future months we look forward to the deliberations of the Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, with regard to how such aspects of initial teacher training should be assessed.

2. The Justification for Training and Education in Pastoral Aspects

The very many schools which are members of NAPCE would be surprised at having to justify initial training in pastoral aspects. New teachers come to school unprepared for this crucial work, and improvements have been wanted for some time. Their perspective is confirmed by other sources of data.

In the HMI Report (1982) 'The New Teacher in School' a clear finding emerged that new teachers felt much less well prepared for pastoral work than for most other features of their role. 56% of the respondents in secondary schools described themselves as 'not well prepared to undertake pastoral duties'. This was a greater percentage than regarded themselves unprepared on any other aspect of their training. In comparison to those other important aspects, HMI conclude 'Lack of preparation for the pastoral role which all teachers have to fulfil is an even more serious omission'.

More recent data (Best and Maher, 1984) paints a similar picture. Of teachers surveyed '87% argued that their initial training contained either a negligible amount of work on pastoral care topics or simply nothing at all'. A few positive comments were recorded, mainly referring to optional elements in courses.

Although little initial training has been provided in the past, *NAPCE believes that an important contribution can be made, and would argue that such a contribution should be a central, non-optional feature of initial training.*

Further, this claim for time to be spent during what are already busy courses is seen as superordinate to the many other worthwhile and competing claims.

There are many reasons why pastoral considerations cannot be viewed as optional. In the most concrete terms, new teachers are given responsibility for tutor groups when they take up first posts. In more general terms it cannot be accepted that the pastoral aspect is an optional aspect of the teacher's role — to do so would be to imply that concern for the pupil and the climate of the school is separable from concern for growth and achievement. It is pleasing to note that many young teachers do not adopt this view — the Hargreaves' committee report on London secondary schools (ILEA, 1984) showed that young teachers regarded pastoral work as of significant importance to the central role of school: over 80% were of the opinion that improved pastoral care would lead to improved pupil achievement. In the most general terms, the goals of effective pastoral care cannot be divorced from the goals of education, nor can a pastoral 'side' of school be divorced from an academic 'side'.

Also, there are important reasons why significant preparation for pastoral work should appear in the initial phase of training. NAPCE recognises, and indeed its members contribute to, induction and in-service training. However, such provision is patchy and our evidence (Best and Maher, 1984) is that little attention is given in schemes of induction. Yet the effectiveness of pastoral systems depends on skilled tutors who have first contact: their training needs to be distinguished from, and be previous to, that for teachers with middle-management responsibilities (on which posts in secondary schools the country invests hundreds of millions of pounds a year), whose role is to manage and support the tutors.

3. Developing Goals for Training

The aim of this document is not that of making specific prescriptions for training. The aim is to contribute to extending debate and through the vehicle of a professional association to give voice to the perspective of teacher and school members. To this end it may be appropriate to describe a possible focus for training, and thus indicate what it is felt can be achieved. Accordingly, the remainder of this paper will give a general outline of the role being prepared for, followed by some of the issues in planning such a preparation.

From this point onward, some of the terminology to be used may suggest a concern with secondary schooling alone. This is not the case. The same considerations apply to primary and further education (see for example Sisterson, 1980, Galloway, 1981, Miller, 1982 and Miller et al. 1983) and to other educational settings. Indeed, it may be argued that there is greater potential for overlap between phases of education on pastoral issues than on many others, and NAPCE is concerned with all phases.

The following sections will consider:

(a) *The Role of the Form Tutor*, and
(b) *Training Toward the Role of the Form Tutor*

The role of the form tutor as a primary agent of pastoral care in school has already received professional consideration in the literature (Blackburn, 1975, Marland, 1974, Hamblin, 1978, and many others). What follows can only be a summary outline, cast in a hopefully useful format (derived from Owens, 1981). It is suggested that a full role description will need to cover:

(i) Goals: what the role is created to achieve
(ii) Structure: how the role relates to other roles
(iii) Tasks: what is to be done by the role-holder

(iv) Skills: expertise which the role-holder needs to engage

(v) Resources: materials and technology required to achieve the goals.

These headings inter-relate to a marked degree. Indeed, their interrelation is crucial to success, and to ignore some of these facets is often a recipe for failure.

A preliminary analysis suggests the following general items:

(i) *Goals*

— to provide a personal contact with each pupil in the tutor group
— to monitor the progress and achievement of each pupil across the whole curriculum
— to provide 'first-line' support and guidance to pupils on any issue which affects their development and achievement
— to provide teacher colleagues with relevant knowledge of pupils so that teaching efforts can be adapted for greater success
— to promote social skills within the tutor group and foster the development of a caring climate.

(ii) *Structure*

— the composition of the tutor group
— the maintenace of contact between tutor and group over successive years
— the structuring of timetabled teaching contact between tutor and group
— the link between form tutor and Head of Year/House/Section
— the link between form tutor and Heads of Subject Specialisms
— the link between form tutor and other specialists in guidance (e.g. Careers, Health, Social, Religion)
— the structural links between form tutor and parents
— the link between form tutor and other agencies

(iii) *Tasks*

— communicating with members of the tutor group and facilitating their communication with each other
— monitoring pupils' attendance, achievement and response across situations they meet
— implementing the tutorial programme and its relation to other parts of the pastoral curriculum, in conjunction with the tutor team
— interpreting school to pupil and vice versa
— communicating any aspects of concern, to pupils, colleagues, parents, others as appropriate
— keeping professional records
— providing informal guidance and support, together with other interventions in the tutor group

(iv) *Skills*

— first stage counselling skills, to assist effective communication between tutor and pupils
— skills of observation, and making sense of changes in pupils' patterns of progress and behaviour
— skills of using activity-based teaching methods appropriate to the tutorial programme
— skills of analysing causes of success and failure, and for proving support to achievement
— skills of communicating with parents, colleagues, and others (including written records and reports) and of handling conflicts which may arise through these communications.

(v) *Resources*

— time and space in which to meet the tutor group
— materials for guidance programmes
— a recording and retrieval system
— appropriate channels for communication
— sources of advice and support

4. Training Toward the Role of the Form Tutor

Given the description above, it would be

necessary to consider that the ideal objectives for initial preparation could be:

(i) an appreciation of (and commitment to) the goals
(ii) an understanding of the structure and its use
(iii) a recognition of the nature of the tasks
(iv) a training in the skills
(v) a knowledge of the resources required

Further, when planning the means for realising such objectives, a string of logistical and other decisions raise themselves to colleagues in the training institutions. Among others, planning needs to address the interconnected issues of:

(a) How to distribute treatment of such content within a course
(b) Implications for pedagogy raised by the various objectives
(c) The use of different locations for learning

The distribution of content raises questions both across time and across the staff of the training institution, and doubtless there would be as many answers to these questions as there are training courses. In over-short courses such as the PGCE there exists an extra burden of planning for new central components with a reasonable time allocation. In all courses the point in the overall experience where the pastoral themes would be most effectively raised, deserves detailed thinking through, alongside the decisions concerning block or serial periods of time.

The distribution of content across staff raises vital issues which reflect on the perception of pastoral care and the status afforded to it by the training organisation.

If the content is treated in a central and integrating manner there would be important parts to be played by the specialist in pastoral care, counselling

and guidance (where such appointments exist), for small group work by education studies tutors and for the exploration of overlap with the work of subject method tutors (where such distinctions prevail). In direct parallel with the experience of schools, the most effective situation will be that where tutors operate well in teams and the pastoral effort is not confined to small timetable slots but finds expression in the main body of educational experience. In such a situation pastoral care shows itself to be a support to the primary task and not a separatist enterprise.

Implications for pedagogy may follow from the objectives, in that their variety may call for a variety of teaching styles and approaches. For example, analysis of the goals of pastoral work may call on a discussion group approach, understanding the structural issues would call on a school investigation, whereas training in skills will call on more active approaches such as simulations, role play and case studies. Especially in the area of pupil-centred group guidance skills, experiencing the methods and activities can prove of great value.

A further point follows: that a variety of locations can be used for the learning outlined. The 'college-based' element and its staff team are important, as are the possibilities raised by the use of school observations, investigations and other tasks. On 'teaching practice' much can be gained from a well-supported attachment to a form tutor and direct work with a tutor group. Such an attachment should not be viewed as a means for learning transferable practices, but more an experience where student teachers can develop a creatively critical stance on practice, in conjunction with their colleagues in school and in the training organisation. Finally, there are some learnings which may appropriately wait for on-the-job training if initial training is short: these include aspects which are regularly and routinely carried out in the job (the classic example here

is how to fill in an attendance register).

Resources for the development of training such as described above are also developing. The professional literature is advancing, in both its reference to technique and to research on current practice (Ribbins and Best, 1985), teaching resources such as videotapes are more in evidence, and increasing numbers of practising teachers are beoming skilled in passing on their expertise as a result of the training activities for organisations such as NAPCE. Further, tutors in teacher education who are concerned with training for pastoral care now have their own meeting 'Tutors in Pastoral Care', supported by NAPCE, and initial training is firmly on their agenda.

Conclusion

This paper has intended to show that there is a need and a justification for greater attention being paid to initial preparation for the pastoral aspects of the teacher's role. In initial teacher training courses it has been argued that such attention should be central and non-optional. With the focus on the role of form tutor the intention has been to indicate some of what could be achieved in such a preparation. Issues in the implementation of such a training are recognised, and it is NAPCE's hope that by outlining broad principles some support will have been given to the implementation.

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