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## **Professional Knowledge in Initial Teacher Education (ITE): A Preliminary Review of Hispanic Literature**

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*Abstract: The global dominance of English as the principal language of international interchange in the teacher education field has, perhaps, diverted English-speaking scholars from the task of reviewing discourses in non-English languages. Taking as its focus the issue of professional knowledge in ITE, the present article considers scholarship predominantly of Spanish origin – to a lesser extent Portuguese and Latin American also – in an effort to begin to form an understanding of both historical antecedents and more recent approaches to professional knowledge in a Hispanic context. While the remit of the present article is one of introducing the work and ideas of significant scholars, it ends in pointing towards the need for further research in seeking to identify more fully what might be distinctive about the Hispanic contribution to a global discussion in the face of new 21<sup>st</sup>-century realities in teacher education and society more generally.*

### **Introduction**

The advance of more systematic approaches to teacher education in recent decades has seen the emergence of a discipline which is, in effect, the sum of many parts. The examination of the ‘professional knowledge’ of teachers – its nature and development – is a core area of research in the field with implications for all teacher educators. Unquestionably, there is no shortage of contributors to the on-going debate and certain names are generally recognised as pre-eminent: scholars whose work cannot be ignored by any who might follow their lead. Several come readily to mind: Shulman, Eraut, Schön, Goodson. Throughout the world of teacher education, often by means of skilful translations, such names are recognised and their works amply cited. This is certainly true of Spain and Portugal, as well as the countries of Central and Southern America. Is this, however, a one-sided dialogue, weighted in favour of anglophone literature? Not necessarily so – for it is certainly the case that the work of Luso-Hispanic scholars is communicated beyond their linguistic orbit through publication in journals in English (oftentimes in collaboration with international colleagues), and in attendance at international conferences. Consequently, there is already an appreciation of work of Spanish, Portuguese, or Latin American origin amongst the global teacher education community. This article aims to enhance that wider appreciation through a consideration of predominantly Spanish contributions to the field, with particular focus on the issue of professional knowledge. The majority of the material under consideration has not been translated into English. While there is no particular merit in itself in reading the work of these scholars in their original

languages, encountering the thinking of teacher educators ‘in the raw’ before the process of translation can, nevertheless, be revealing and rewarding in bridging cultures and approaches. The article, therefore, makes no claim to comprehensiveness: indeed, rather than attempt a detailed overview of Spanish literature in the field, it aims to highlight the contribution of certain significant scholars in particular. At the same time, while the principal scope of the study is Spain itself, relevant references to Portuguese and Latin American scholarship serve not only to add breadth to the discussion, but also to acknowledge the sheer range of innovative material being produced in Luso-Hispanic faculties. Finally, while the brush-strokes employed here may be necessarily broad, an indication of the next step in the future investigation of this theme will be recommended at the article’s conclusion.

### Historical antecedents

It is important, in the first instance, to gather a sense of historical perspective on the ‘professional knowledge’ debate in Spain. Some significant research in this area has already been conducted in Spain where, as in Brazil, ‘history of education’ still preserves its status as a discrete subject in education faculties. Juan Antonio Lorenzo Vicente’s important doctoral study (1996) of the formation of secondary school teachers from 1936 to 1970 has been instrumental in transforming the interpretation of educational developments in this era. What his important research clearly demonstrates is that Spaniards were already much exercised over the *type* of ‘professional knowledge’ which beginning teachers required even before the period of transition from dictatorship in the 1970s and 1980s. Given the anonymity of Spanish educationalists of the Francoist period beyond their own geographical or linguistic borders, it is not a mere statement of the obvious to declare to an English-speaking readership that these pedagogical developments were taking place. Out of the context of political and ideological constraints which permeated intellectual discourse after the Spanish Civil War, shadows of educationally progressive themes began to emerge: Tomás Alvira on the need to bring balance to the *theory-practice* relationship; Antonio Cristino Floriano Cumbreño effectively outlining an embryonic *pupil-centred* learning in advocating formation in child psychology for beginning teachers; Victor García Hoz arguing for a more integrated approach to the pupil as a *whole person* rather than a mere receptor of subject knowledge; María Angeles Galino advocating the fundamental need for an epistemological grasp of the nature of teacher-knowledge *amongst* teachers themselves (Lorenzo Vicente, 1996, pp. 857-866). While some of these principal players in the field, with hindsight, might be criticised for their closeness to institutions emergent and sponsored under the Francoist regime (Viñao, 2004, p. 65), there can be no denying the fact that, pre-Schön and pre-Shulman, the stirrings of indigenous pressures towards a reforming discourse on professional knowledge in teacher education and its purpose were prevalent. Indeed, Lorenzo Vicente relates in a footnote that a series of ‘pedagogical reunions’ in Santander between 1945 and 1953 must take the credit as the springboard in Spain for the idea that it is not enough for teachers to know *what* is taught but rather to acknowledge that teaching is a task which has a practical aspect which must be studied and acquired with effort (Lorenzo Vicente, 861, n. 129).

It is indubitable, therefore, that in searching for the roots of Spanish perspectives on professional knowledge in teaching, additional research is required in order to construct a more comprehensive and complex understanding of the inter-

weaving of multifarious influences, both indigenous and foreign. Reading Clotilde Navarro García's seminal and highly original study of 'the primary teacher' in the schools of the Second Republic (1931-36), one is forced to think hard about the extent to which scholars in the education faculties of Spain's contemporary democracy look back – however unconsciously and in or out of sympathy in accord with individual political or ideological perspectives - to the 'lost utopia' of liberal ideals as exemplified, for example, in the activities of the *Instituto Libre de Enseñanza* (1876-1936) and in the writings of leading lights of the centre-left such as Pablo Iglesias (1850-1925), Francisco Giner de los Ríos (1839-1915), and Manuel Bartolomé Cossío (1857-1935) (Navarro García, 2002, p. 24; Stoetzer, 1998, pp. 103-110; Menéndez Ureña, 2000, pp. 71-73). The work of Pozo Andrés and Braster has also highlighted the influence of the so-called 'New Education' movement: this too had a lasting impact on the conceptualisation of professional knowledge in teacher education institutions as terms such as 'activity', 'joy' and 'interest' were replaced in the Francoist era with an emphasis on 'effort', 'pain', and 'discipline' (Pozo Andrés and Braster, 2006; Berrio *et al.*, 2006). At the same time, pervading trends in foreign influences are evident from early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century with, for example, the Hispanic world generally responding with empathy and enthusiasm to the educational writings of John Dewey in the 1920s and 1930s (Nubiola and Sierra, 2001, pp. 109-110).

In short, there is great potential for further research: first, in teasing out the strands of indigenous thought which flow in *complementary* rather than contradictory fashion through the Republican and Francoist periods to mould the Spanish discourse of the present democratic age; second, in identifying the wider range of extra-peninsular influences on Spanish educational thought before leadership of the 'professional knowledge' discourse became the perceived preserve of 'Anglo-Saxon' scholars, represented principally by Donald Schön and Lee Shulman. Indeed, the importance of this latter area of research is underlined when one considers the words of Lourdes Montero, author of the most significant work on teachers' professional knowledge published in Spanish in recent years. Writing passionately in promotion of the status of teacher education (conceived generically rather than as a collection of sub-disciplines) as an area of research in its own right, Montero remarks that the impetus towards greater professionalisation in the field has its origins in the English-speaking world:

. . . the impulse for transformation of a practical field into a research field has been provided, in my modest opinion, by the Anglo-Saxons, and the rest of us have quickly got on to the carriage expertly driven by them; . . . in a somewhat surprising manner, we know better what is going on in the USA than what is happening in the many countries of Latin speech and cultures (Montero, 2002a, p. 35).

These words seem to depict an academic context in which Luso-Hispanic scholars, despite linguistic and cultural affinities, are themselves more familiar with the critical discourse initiated and energised by the experience of teacher education in an 'Anglo-Saxon' context than with that emerging from their own milieu. Yet Luso-Hispanic scholars in recent years have also been exceptionally proactive in promoting a dynamic interchange of ideas of which scholars outside their linguistic compass have been largely unaware, such as the collaborative work of José Pereira da Costa Taveres of Portugal and Iria Brzezinski of Brazil (Taveres and Brzezinski, 1999). Moreover, in Spain itself, the activities of networks of scholars, such as GRUPO STELLAE (of which Lourdes Montero herself is Principal Investigator), IRES, and FEDICARIA,

have provided forums for vigorous debate (García Perez and Porlán Ariza, 2000; Amézola, 2004). Indeed, although this article can merely draw attention to the presence of these networks, such is their increasing influence in identifying new paths for investigation in Spain that they are certainly deserving of more focused attention in scholarly literature of non-Hispanic origin. There is a sense in which, if one truly wants to encounter the raw and original vitality of contemporary Spanish writing in education, it is in the exchanges of these networks that it is to be found. It might even be asserted that something of the 'edge' to the networks' debates is lost when some of their members' arguments are eventually articulated in English translation for an international audience. However, this is a generalised and, perhaps, controversial argument which will require re-visiting in a future publication.

### **Luso-Hispanic discourse since 1990**

There is little doubt that the opening up of Spain after the demise of Franco in 1975, the advent of democracy and the commencement of membership of the European Union (EU) in 1986 have had profound implications for the emergence of a vibrant, 'new' Spain, eager to play its part in the prevalent discourses of 'modernity'. In 1990, at a conference in Jordanhill College of Education, Glasgow, teacher educators from throughout Europe gathered to debate the implications for the teaching profession of the fast-paced changes in technological and sociological realities which faced developed – and, indeed, developing - societies of the final decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Of the 31 Spanish and 14 Portuguese scholars in attendance on this occasion, the voice of Teresa Fontan Montesinos stands out. In a paper on 'Initial Teacher Education (ITE) as a basis for Continuing Professional Development (CPD)', this insightful commentator's thoughts clearly reflected the already pervasive influence of the work of Donald Schön in Hispanic circles. (This fact in itself is very interesting, from a historical point of view, to anyone interested in charting the stages by which the 'global dominance' of certain educational thinking is achieved.) In her paper, Fontan Montesinos argued that it was the particular role of teacher educators in ITE to inculcate a reflective attitude amongst their students which should then be nurtured and developed throughout their careers by appropriate CPD. 'We cannot simply continue to impart knowledge, leaving to one side the world of attitudes,' she wrote, adding that 'students arrived in ITE courses with implicit beliefs concerning teaching based, perhaps, on their own experiences (as pupils), and this conditions their teaching practice' (Fontan Montesinos, 1991, p. 96). There was a need to rise above the antagonism of theory-practice dialectic: while it was certainly true that some students fell back on a technical rationality model and adopted traditional modes of exposition, this was mainly due to a lack of confidence. New challenges for a new generation of teachers required new approaches: the use of video-recording, playback and discussion of practice; the encouragement of student-led classes (Fontan Montesinos, 1991, p. 91). In sum, Fontan Montesinos captured the mood of a moment of great promise in teacher education.

#### **Defining 'professional knowledge'**

At the heart of Fontan Montesinos's paper, therefore, lies the issue of 'professional knowledge' in ITE. While the term is neither defined nor addressed explicitly, there is a perceptible understanding of professional knowledge as (a) a

product of a particular socio-cultural context and (b) a dynamic process of constant evolution and enrichment by means of reflection on practice. These insights, which view beginning teachers' knowledge as a product of a complex interaction with surrounding social mores and cultures over many years, has proven to be a recurrent one in Luso-Hispanic treatments. Lorenzo Vicente, writing in 1998 a paper which summarised many of his Spanish contemporaries' arguments, re-emphasised the need to take into account the fact that, given that the teacher *is* a product of particular socio-cultural contexts, he or she is something more than a mere transmitter of knowledge in the classroom (Lorenzo Vicente, 1998, p. 143). Similarly, in a 2001 review of Brazilian research on teacher knowledge, Célia Maria Fernandes Nunes makes much the same point in stressing that knowledge is a social product, subject to revisions and re-evaluations, which finds value in the extent to which it is permitted to remain open to a process of questioning (Fernandes Nunes, 2001, p. 34). For Fernandes Nunes, ITE still does not facilitate effectively the skills of beginning teachers in making connections between their academic formation and knowledge derived from practice in a school context (Fernandes Nunes, 2001, p. 36). It is a perspective with further Spanish parallels. In 1998, José Vez and Lourdes Montero described teacher education as 'intellectually weak' – experience dependent, they argued that it had traditionally failed to construct bridges between theory and practice (Vez and Montero, 1998a, p. 58; Vez and Montero, 1998b, pp. 49-50). The implication was that beginning teachers had for too long felt that their year(s) of professional formation bore too little relevance to actual school experience.

What is noted in examining such writers is the fact that a clear understanding of what constitutes a teacher's professional knowledge is taken as given. Within a Spanish context, part of the reason for this is that a great deal of work on refining this understanding has been pursued by researchers at the University of Seville, particularly the work of Professor Carlos Marcelo García. In a wide-ranging and erudite paper delivered at a conference in Santiago de Compostela in 1992, Marcelo used the writings of Brown and McIntyre, Clandinin, Crocket, Elbaz, Hunt, Schön, Shulman, Leinhardt and Smith, to illustrate 'different concepts employed with reference to teacher knowledge' (Marcelo García, 1992). This synthesis of a discourse originating in the English language, however, formed only the basis for the development of an analysis which gave prominence to the work of Spanish colleagues, mostly based in Seville, such as Mellado (1985), Sánchez (1990), Llinares (1990), Maza (1991), and Lopéz-Arenas González (1991). Marcelo's principal concerns – especially the imperative nature of giving greater conceptual and empirical attention in ITE to the way in which teachers transform academic knowledge into 'teachable' knowledge (i.e. made comprehensible for pupils) – reflected the activity of local networks in Andalusia, with Seville University's *Grupo de Investigación Didáctica* (still in existence) to the fore.

However, the overall impression with which Marcelo's impressive study leaves the reader is a two-fold one. First, there are undeniable indications that, from the ever-increasing body of literature of English-language origin in the field, the work of both Donald Schön and Lee Shulman had by the early 1990s become pre-eminent in influencing the main lines of Hispanic discourse. Second, and of perhaps even greater importance, it is not true to say that such influence has been at the expense of originality of insight in the Hispanic literature: there is surely value in bringing different emphases to mutually shared perspectives in a discourse which aims to be truly global. These two points deserve elaboration.

### Reflecting on Schön and Shulman

At a cursory glance, it would seem that, of the two principal influences previously mentioned, Schön (1983) and Shulman (1986; 2004, pp. 189-215), the former would appear to have been more readily accommodated in Luso-Hispanic treatments of professional knowledge. Indeed, twelve years after the appearance of Shulman's famous 1986 article on knowledge growth in teaching, Alberto Luis Gómez could still draw attention to the comparative neglect of Shulman's writings amongst Spanish educators in the social sciences (Luis Gómez, 1998, p.1). Nevertheless, Shulman has his supporters. While certainly acknowledging the impact of Schön's concepts of 'reflection-in-action' and 'reflection-on-action' in opening-up the debate about skills which should be found in all competent professionals, João Pedro da Ponte of the University of Lisbon is at pains to present Lee Shulman's work as the counterbalance to the 'trends which proclaim the primacy of pedagogical method' in the formation of teachers. Indeed, for da Ponte, a response in the face of Shulman's principal argument (Shulman, 2004, pp. 225-226) that teachers have to know well the *content* they intend to teach is a fundamental requirement of teacher education (Ponte, 1999, p.61).

However, while Maévi Anabel Nono has recently highlighted the fact that Shulman needs to be more broadly recognised for the range of leadership roles he has been engaged in, particularly throughout the 1990s in directing influential educational programmes in the USA (Nono, 2005, p. 23), it is, nevertheless, the influence of his 1986 concept of 'pedagogical content knowledge' which continues to stimulate critical comment. Jesús Estepa Giménez, for example, has noted Antonio Bolívar's reservation that, in part, the response to Shulman's insight can lead to revivification of an academic model of teaching (Estepa Giménez, 2000, p. 5). Indeed, the perceived implications of the implementation of a 'content model' for teacher education have not been overlooked. Juan Manuel Escudero has warned of the danger of reducing ITE, particularly in subject specialisms, to a preparation for a formal, academic relationship with pupils, while José Gimeno Sacristán and Angel Pérez Gómez go even further in declaring that the drive towards 'expertise in knowledge about a discipline and how to transfer it to pupils' leads to 'a clearly academic and encyclopaedic model' of the teacher as expert (Estepa Giménez, 2000, pp. 6, 9).

Of course, it would be wrong to convey the impression that responses to Shulman in Spain have been anything other than subtle in their distinct emphases. Estepa Giménez's paper is itself careful to record that Shulman includes 'reflection' in his 'Model of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action' (Shulman, 2004, p. 236). Yet it is Donald Schön's concept of 'the reflective practitioner' which has resulted in the global identification of the reflective process with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor. However, Schön's analysis itself needs reflecting upon. For Lourdes Montero (2002a, p. 88-91), teaching has emerged from its naïve stage as a *job*, the habitat of the technician, armed with disciplinary knowledge and trained in methods – didactics – for the transference of the knowledge stored in the teacher's mind to the minds of the pupils in his or her charge. Teaching now wants to be taken seriously as a *profession* with similar status to the lawyer or doctor, yet seems to lack the characteristics of those professions, e.g. an agreed, foundational body of knowledge. The challenge in articulating a 'knowledge base', however, lies precisely in what Schön argued – that professional knowledge is dynamic and changing. It is a knowledge which is constantly *coming into being*. It emerges in the classroom

context, in interaction with pupils. 'Reflective teaching' has become, as stated by Fernandes Nunes (2001, p. 30), 'the new paradigm for teacher education'. Estepa Giménez agrees: teachers' knowledge is 'contextualised, professional, practical' (Estepa Giménez, 2000, p.3).

At the heart of all this lies the perennial theory-practice debate. For Antonio Bolívar, scholarly research about teaching now throws up a 'plurality of perspectives, brought into even sharper focus by the crisis of modernity' (Bolívar, 2004, pp. 18-19). As a consequence, teachers' practical knowledge demands recognition as the very essence of professionalism. It is in this context that Hispanic writers – of which Bolívar is probably the foremost example - offer their own incisive contributions in conceptualising the professional knowledge discourse. González Gallego argues that scientific and pedagogical knowledge of each subject fuses into what he conceptualises as *educative knowledge*. Álvarez Méndez writes of pedagogy as a theoretical/practical knowledge which is constantly reinterpreted in response to situations thrown up in daily practice: the teacher 'moves from theoretical to theoretical-practical to practical knowledge' (Estepa Giménez, 2000, pp.11-12).

### **Role of teacher education in relation to professional knowledge**

What, therefore, should be the role of teacher education in addressing the challenges which the charge of delivering professional knowledge to beginning teachers places on it? The answer to such a complex question is of its very nature multifarious. From her Brazilian perspective, Fernandes Nunes is in tune with the principal Spanish interpretation of professional knowledge as the product of a process of reflection and constant reconstruction by teachers in conformity with their needs and experiences (Fernandes Nunes, 2001, p. 27). However, she draws attention to the continuing dominance of the 'instrumental rationality' model in teacher education in her country, as identified by Maria Nobre Damasceno and I. M. Silva in a 1996 article. Indeed, for Damasceno and Silva, teacher education involves the preparation of new teachers to face 'the tension between the diverse knowledge of different social groups in a school and the systematised, historically-situated knowledge which schools propose to transmit' (Fernandes Nunes, 2001, p. 36). Five years after Damasceno and Silva, Nadia Apararecida de Souza was still concerned with the entrenched superiority of the theoretical dimension in teacher education where a new formation is required which will prepare teachers for a life of critical reflection and transformation of practice. For de Souza, there is the added dimension of the need for political will in changing teacher education towards serving a 'new practice' which is grounded in a recognition of the diversity of reality, and with a vision of the type of society and human beings which might meet the aspirations and needs of a new age (Souza, 2001, p. 11).

Though requiring much more investigation, an impression begins to emerge that, like Shulman's, Schön's impact on the Luso-Hispanic world has been double-edged. There is little doubting the positive recognition of Schön's work amongst teacher educators and scholars of educational thought, but the *real* impact on the 'nuts and bolts' of teacher education delivery in institutions charged – usually by the State - with forming teachers has been more problematic. While Schön's 'reflective practitioner' might be lauded as a model for the teacher in the classroom of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, its impact on, for example, the structures of teacher education has remained remarkably static throughout the Luso-Hispanic world (Egido, 2005, pp. 77-78; Pérez



Luna, 2003). There *have* been some voices ‘crying in the wilderness.’ José Vez and Lourdes Montero were forthright in 1998 in calling for an end to the segregation between students of primary and secondary education which has traditionally held sway in Spain (as elsewhere) but the opportunity for innovation was lost (Vez and Montero, 1998b, p. 49). For Vez and Montero, Schön’s ‘reflective professional’ offers a basis for grounding a common identity amongst teachers at all levels. Fellow future professionals in the teaching profession should be working with – and learning from – each other from the beginning of ITE, not later in their careers when Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is, indeed, delivered to a joint audience. Almost a decade later, however, the structures of teacher education in Spain have been slow to change (Montero, 2002b, p. 82; Sepúlveda Ruiz, 2005, p. 89; Bolívar, 2006, pp. 150-151).

### **Lourdes Montero and the UIMP conference 2005: current perspectives**

Against the background of continuing calls for reform of teacher education in Spain, the recent publication of Lourdes Montero’s monograph in 2002 (Montero, 2002a) has made available a timely and, indeed, seminal work of summary and critical commentary on theories of professional knowledge, both Luso-Hispanic and (Montero herself uses the term) ‘Anglo-Saxon’. The fact that the volume was published in Argentina underlines the intended reach of the volume beyond peninsular Spain itself: it is a book which reflects on – and aims to contribute to – a globalised debate. Previously, in 1999, Mary M Kennedy of Michigan State University had already predicated a precarious future for teacher educators given that ‘people who actively and willingly participate in the enormous, complex and expensive enterprise [of teacher education] . . . are [themselves] questioning the value of propositional “expert” knowledge from educational research and are praising the wisdom of teachers’ craft knowledge’ (Kennedy, 1999, p. 34). Is this not a path to oblivion for teacher educators? It is a matter of some import to Montero to demonstrate that the professional knowledge discourse amongst teacher educators can, in fact, progress while avoiding an apparent process of self-immolation as ‘expert’ knowledge gives way to ‘craft’ knowledge which is the product of actual and current experience in a classroom.

### **Lourdes Montero, teacher education and professional knowledge**

Key to Montero’s argument is the *integrated* nature of teacher education. As she relates, it is the *synthetic* philosophical foundations of teacher education which provide the teacher knowledge constructed in ITE courses with a certain *peculiarity* or singularity (Montero, 2002a, p. 43). This is a clear development in thinking from the argument forwarded, with Vez, in 1998 (already referred to above: Vez and Montero, 1998a, p. 58) that teacher education has habitually failed to act as an effective ‘bridge’ between theory and practice. Development, but not repudiation: for Montero is now setting out the challenge for the teacher education of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The challenge consists in teacher educators replacing a strictly demarcated understanding of the relationship between theory and practice with a much more sensitively nuanced appreciation of the overlaps. The articulation of those areas of overlap – the guidance offered to beginning teachers in becoming more aware of how theory and practice can

inhabit some of the same conceptual spaces – is the particular role which teacher education must carve out for itself in the years to come.

Fundamental to Montero's thesis, therefore, is the idea that theory is *implicit* in practice (Montero, 2002a, p. 66). The practitioner in the classroom develops skills in response to everyday realities. This is true: but practitioners form and maintain strands of theoretical knowledge in their minds which, as has been pointed out by Carlos Marcelo, reflect highly *individualised* and *personal* understandings of the school (space), the curriculum (subject knowledge), teaching methods (pedagogy), and inter-personal relationships between colleagues. Teacher education, Montero goes on to argue, is the principal means by which new classroom practitioners are encouraged to take an *integrated* approach to these various areas of knowledge (Montero, 2002a, pp. 40-41). The mere aim of forming 'reflective practitioners' is not enough - for Montero notes the vagueness in the terminology which accompanies the promotion of 'the reflective and artistic model in professional practice.' Such imprecision leads to inconsistencies between teacher education institutions which all claim to be working on the basis of the 'reflective model'. Montero's incisive question – do we apply sufficient theoretical rigour to the rationalising of practice? – is, consequently, designed to shake teacher educators out of any misplaced satisfaction with the *status quo* in their approach to course design (Montero, 2002a, p.54).

Ultimately, according to Montero, ITE develops the skills which teachers need to confront the 'uncertain, complex, singular, conflicting situations' which characterise professional practice (Montero, 2002a, p. 130). The provision of guidance to beginning teachers, as they commence a journey of self-knowledge, is critical at the ITE stage. This is the stage when many professional habits and attitudes evolve during a period of formal reflection on both theory and practice. For Montero, however, such reflection and the consequent need for a high level of intellectual formation during ITE does not represent a throwback to the traditional 'didactics' of the past. A new ITE must facilitate students in unlocking and articulating a knowledge which represents their *own* understanding of their practice (Montero, 2002a, pp. 120, 173-174). Herein lies an example of the transformation in expectations which the 21<sup>st</sup>-century profession will demand – indeed, already demands.

The growing insistence on developing critical practitioners, capable of reflection and self-improvement in the face of the needs of pupils and wider school priorities, has begun to manifest itself in multifarious ways, not least the increasing numbers of practising teachers who are participating in action research projects (Montero, 2002a, p. 52; Gerónimo Tello, 2005). Yet, as Montero herself notes, while the vast majority of practising teachers are responsive students of experience, learning to deal with the complexity of their profession through day-to-day engagement with pupils and colleagues, the 'voice' of the classroom teacher is still too seldom heard (Montero, 2002a, p.71). The formal articulation of teachers' professional knowledge remains largely the preserve of teacher educators in university faculties. Part of the blame for this has been laid squarely at the door of tertiary-level academics by José María Rozada Martínez, a primary schoolteacher in the Asturian region of Spain who, as well as his exceptional dedication to classroom practice, is equally committed to research and publication (Rozada, 2006, p. 213). For Rozada, the failure of institutions to provide – indeed, to encourage – greater numbers of contributions from active classroom practitioners in the delivery of ITE courses is a historic weakness which deprives beginning teachers of exposure to a professional knowledge which is

grounded in a current, lived experience of the interaction of theory and practice (Rozada, 2006, p. 199).

#### **Santander Conference on Teacher Education (2005)**

Rozada presented these ideas at a conference held in Santander, Spain, in August 2005 under the auspices of the Universidad Internacional Menéndez y Pelayo (UIMP). Many leading Spanish educationalists, including Montero (2006), came together to present their views on 'Teacher Education and Improvement in Education' (*La formación del profesorado y la mejora de la educación*). The principal concern of the conference, as set out by Juan Manuel Escudero (2006, p. 37), was the identification of pathways leading to a 'teaching profession at the service of an education of quality for all.' While it is true that such reading of educational runes was precipitated by the particular Spanish context of a debate over the passage of a new (and controversial) law – the *Ley Orgánica de Educación* (LOE) – the discourse engaged in by the contributors to the UIMP conference was international in scope, inspiration, and significance. Indeed, the principal document produced by Spain's *Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia* (MEC) for discussion in anticipation of the LOE, would seem to be yet another striking example of the powerful transference of ideas principally of North American origin. 'The teacher,' declares this official text, 'has traditionally been the transmitter of specific knowledge of the material' while nowadays 'models of more complex and participative relations have come to the fore in educational centres, alongside new types of conflicts, as much between the pupils themselves as between pupils and the representatives of the system and society, namely the teachers' (MEC, 2004, pp. 108-109).

However, it is precisely because such statements, in Spanish or any other language, produce such a strong sense of *déjà vu*, that the proceedings of the UIMP 2005 conference demand more than passing attention. They provide ample and illuminating examples of the way in which such presentations, designed for an almost exclusively Spanish audience, are far from being insular in conceptualisation but reach out to the wider global community of teacher educators through engagement with currently prevalent ideas. Francisco García Pérez addressed the issue of professional knowledge most specifically, drawing partly on material produced collaboratively by his colleagues in the University of Seville (García Pérez, 2006; Porlán Ariza *et al.*, 1998; Estepa Giménez, 2000, pp. 10-11). Professional knowledge, he argued, has its foundations in familiarity with the content of one's discipline, meta-disciplinary beliefs or ideologies, curricular knowledge, and other expertise constructed through experience. The keyword here is *constructed* for García distances himself - as Fontan Montesinos had done 16 years earlier - from the positivist 'didactics' of more traditional models of teaching, arguing for an ITE which promotes research-informed practice in the classroom (García Pérez, 2006, p. 296). 'Teacher education should highlight' he writes, 'that research is the new way of understanding professional activity,' adding that 'teachers should conceive of the great bulk of their work (especially planning, preparation for practice, and considering the principal curricular problems: what to teach, how to teach, what and how to evaluate) as a veritable process of research in action' (García Pérez, 2006, p. 302). It is evident, therefore, where García sees the future of ITE lie: in forming the next generation of teachers in accord with the realities of the world as it is – globalisation, technological impact on knowledge access, and rampant urbanisation – rather than the world as it

once was more than a century ago (García Pérez, 2006, pp. 270-271). The future lies in breaking down subject divisions with the promotion of courses on, for example, environmental issues. The ITE of the 21<sup>st</sup> century must, above all, produce teachers of independent mind, motivated to conceive of their practice as an on-going form of educational research, and to reflect critically on their practice through this conceptual prism.

Perhaps the greatest service which García has performed for the Hispanic discourse on teachers' professional knowledge is his articulation of what will, in all probability, be the defining debate for the next decade or so – if, that is, one accepts that García does indeed have his finger on the pulse of current trends in Hispanic educational writing. Today, his high-minded and challenging ideal of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century professional teacher, so closely identified with an innovative, research-active and reflective model, may not seem to sit easy with the day-to-day realities of hard-pressed classroom practitioners where judgements about the necessary consolidation of curricular structure and delivery are every bit as important as the introduction of novelty. Innovation of itself is not necessarily a means to progress. This is something Montero understood clearly in her 2002 monograph where she argued that innovative practice must not be engaged in for its own sake but, rather, should emerge out of professional frameworks. It is, she continued, the particular role of ITE to provide beginning teachers with critical skills in reflecting on curricular contexts, for such understanding facilitates the discernment of *beneficial* change to the enhancement of pupil learning (Montero, 2002a, p.154). García would agree with these sentiments. Certainly, the years ahead in ITE will be difficult as it tries to respond to a different world. Nevertheless, García has provided a lead in demonstrating fearlessness in thinking the unthinkable now in the sure belief that what is today's radicalism will be tomorrow's orthodoxy.

## Conclusions

Maevi Anabel Nono and Maria da Graça Nicoletti Mizukami declared in 2001 that teachers are valued to the extent that 'they are capable of constructing professional knowledge in confronting problems in the classroom.' They further insisted that, in preparing teachers for their chosen career, teacher educators need to be cognisant of the kinds of knowledge which provide a *basis* for practice in the classroom (Nono & Mizukami, 2001, pp. 1-2). Such observations encapsulate what has become, by the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a recurrent Luso-Hispanic understanding of teacher education as a continuous, career-long process, of which ITE establishes foundations which from the outset rigorously integrate philosophy and theory with practice, i.e. school experience or the *practicum*, as routinely referred to in Spain (Lorenzo Vicente, 1998, p.149; Zabalza, 2006; Montero, 2006).

In global terms, there is nothing particularly original about this insight concerning ITE's purpose in equipping beginning teachers of the modern world with the intellectual tools to relate theory to practice. Even the most cursory review of the work of Luso-Hispanic educationalists reveals the important degree to which these scholars act as conduits of the research and discourse of the Anglophone world. Lourdes Montero's 2002 monograph is but one example of a 'bridge' between distinctive cultures of teacher education. But Montero, García Pérez, Mizukami, Duarte (2003), *et al.*, are not engaged in simple, unmediated transference of theoretical conceptualisations and research methods from an English-speaking to a

Luso-Hispanic context. On the contrary, to read the Spanish and Portuguese literature is to be drawn into a 'value added' discourse which attempts to contextualise the results of North American and British research in accord with national, local and, indeed, personal ideologies, pressures and needs, while adding to the mix a knowledge of other European materials, especially French, German, and Italian (see, for example, Luis Gómez, 1998, pp. 7-8), which the Anglo-American literature often lacks. Consequently, an underlying thought emerges from this cursory examination of predominantly Spanish scholars: namely that to move beyond the evidence of international publications and conferences to consider the thriving teacher education debate within Spain itself is to be confronted not with a *parallel* discourse but with a vibrant contributor to a truly *globalised* debate, properly understood beyond the limits imposed by the dominance of the English language.

And yet, in the final analysis, is it worth the effort of persevering with Spanish texts – linguistic skills permitting – if only in the end to be confronted with echoes of the English discourse? The purpose of this short article, in setting out a range of preliminary reflections on representatives of the Hispanic literature, is to argue strongly in the affirmative. There is surely an impressive *prima facie* case. As the teaching profession develops a much more flexible 21<sup>st</sup>-century identity in response to changing realities, questions concerning the nature of the 'professional knowledge' imparted and constructed in initial teacher education courses will continue to focus the minds of those charged with guiding the development of beginning teachers. Perusing Hispanic voices such as those presented here – Montero pre-eminent amongst them – allows one to re-examine one's own culturally specific understandings and perceptions of *global* or *generic* issues (theory-practice, pedagogical content knowledge, etc). The next stage in developing a greater appreciation of the Spanish literature, however, must be in seeking an answer to the following question: to what extent does the Hispanic contribution to the 'professional knowledge in ITE' discourse offer new ways forward in the field? Providing an informed and balanced response to this question of huge scope represents a real challenge for the future. Nevertheless, seeking an answer must be the immediate next step for any researcher in the field.

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