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## Pocket Watch – All for the love of teaching?

### Introduction

Is the quality of teaching/teachers becoming the latest battleground for education policy? The last week or so has seen the Education Secretary move a step nearer to announcing a College of Teaching, the Shadow Education Secretary reflect on criteria for teacher licensing and the RSA, Sutton Trust and OU issue Papers on teaching quality and trends. And all this after Ofsted cleared the air on inspections by stressing it was more interested in the quality of the teaching than the paperwork. It's a difficult balancing act for politicians: showing support for the work of a profession that they have variously described in recent months as 'heroic' and 'noble' while continuing to push for higher standards. This is how things stand at the moment.

### The College of Teaching

The case for a professional body for teachers has been around for a while, almost since the demise of the GTC. Quite what shape and role it should have, has been the source of some debate but most supporters agree that it should be led by the profession, should set professional standards, should have some role in professional development and, as Charlotte Leslie MP colourfully put it this week, should not allow "*politicians to get their grubby mitts on it.*" There are plenty of role models out there and the Prince's Teaching Institute drew up a version a couple of years ago but what's been lacking has been political blessing and some start-up funding, both of which it seems the Education Secretary will announce shortly.

### Teacher licensing

Tristram Hunt, the Shadow Education Secretary has been relentlessly pursuing the case for a fully qualified profession for some time, balancing the carrot of support and training with the stick of review and re-licensing. The latter, dubbed as '*Teacher MoTs*' and proposed by a Labour administration before, has not unnaturally proved the most controversial element. In his contribution to the RSA collection of essays, Tristram Hunt argued that reviews could help '*incentivise training, disseminate good practice and encourage the adoption of new learning technologies.*' Developing a '*licensed career pathway,*' could take years but, as Dylan William argued, it increases the potential of considering what teachers do as much as what they know.

### And any other good ideas?

There's a lot in the RSA and Sutton Trust Papers for both traditionalists and progressives alike, as well as good practice tips for practitioners. The Sutton Trust **report** for instance, published with Durham University, looks at what constitutes effective teaching and suggests six components: deep content knowledge; effective classroom practice; good classroom climate; efficient classroom management; strong professional commitment; and clear teacher beliefs. The **RSA Paper**, a collection of essays on teacher quality, offers five proposals: a teacher licensing scheme under a Royal College; building '*disciplined innovation*' into teacher standards; recruiting more teachers with design-related degrees; trialling design thinking in initial teacher training; and developing a more creative professional development offer. **The OU**, meanwhile, outlines ten learning trends, largely around adaptive new technology and ranging from flipped classrooms to so-called '*dynamic assessment.*' As ever, it seems there's no shortage of advice out there.



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**All for the love of teaching November 2014**