A study of innovation in teacher education

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Chapter 7: A Study of Innovation in Teacher Education

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This chapter reviews three studies of an innovative teacher education program (Bachelor of Learning Management, BLM) for implications about how to proceed with pre-service teacher education. It concludes some researched-based propositions for improving the learning success of students in formal learning settings.

The education literature indicates that what teachers do is fundamental to students’ success in learning (Hattie, 2009; Fullan, 2007). Many commentators (such as Smith and Lynch, 2010; Fullan, 2007; Hattie, 2009; Hargreaves, 1997 and 1998) argue that schooling and teaching require major reforms given the radical changes that have occurred in society in the past twenty years and the increasing learning-based research that is now available (see Fullan, 2007; Hattie, 2009. Hargreaves (1998) for example states that “reflecting upon the research basis of teaching, much teaching, specific lessons and acts of individual attention to students are nothing more than face saving disguises for pedagogic incompetence”.

He goes on to say that the “dominant models for creating, disseminating and applying professional knowledge for teachers are now almost entirely inappropriate and ineffective, a serious waste of material and human resources and add to the low morale and the serious shortage of teachers” (Hargreaves, 1998, p.17). If Hargreaves is only partly correct, the pre-service and continuing professional education of teachers is an enormous strategic task for the formal education sector.

This paper is about one such enormous strategic task. The paper argues that if the teacher is the key to improving learning success, then the point of innovation for learning success has to occur in their initial preparation. To investigate this proposition the paper investigates the Bachelor of Learning Management (BLM) approach to achieving these ends. The BLM is selected because it specifically set out to achieve such outcomes. If “improvement” of the quality of learning in formal education is the goal, then the context of formal education today must be explored before moving to other matters.

The Knowledge Economy

Since the early 1970s, the “de-industrialisation”, “de-nationalisation” and “deregulation” of national economies have become characteristic features of life. Technological developments have accelerated to affect every aspect of the home and workplace. Developments such as these point to the emergence of a “new world economy”: an interconnecting and interdependent arrangement that generates unprecedented international economic and cultural competition through the exploitation of “know how” (OECD, 2006; Beare, 1995). Moreover, the core centres of this shift are increasingly in China especially as the traditionally dominant European countries and the USA struggle with national debt and declining economic competitiveness. This new work economy is known as the Knowledge Economy (OECD, 1996). The key commodity
in the Knowledge Economy is knowledge and its use to create new products and services (Donkin, 1998; Gibbons, Limoges, Nowotny, Schwartzman, Scott & Trow, 1994; Moser, 2003; Doyle, Kurth & Kerre, 2000).

It is now established in the education reform literature that schools today, as the fundamental formal education unit in most societies, face a different kind of world to that of the past (Fullan, 2007). For example, in the West, the structure and character of families has changed from the nuclear family of the “home” and the nurturing family assumed in much curriculum development. Similarly, in China, the “one child” family is significantly different to previous generations of larger more cooperative units on which Chinese society depended. Furthermore, there are new patterns of employment and underemployment, greater mobility and new concentrations of poverty in both rural and urban settings as these changes become entrenched (Hargreaves, 2003; Edgar, 1999).

Employers seek different kinds of education outcomes in their employees. The outcomes referred to are ones that place great importance on the diffusion and use of information and knowledge as well as its creation. The associated skill-base, it is argued, allow incumbents to gather and utilise knowledge, where strategic “know-how” and competence are developed interactively and shared within sub-groups and networks. Continual innovation and learning is and will be driven by a hierarchy of networks (OECD, 1996).

School systems everywhere are thus under increasing pressure to meet these new challenges and to prepare students for a globally competitive and technologically driven world economy (Schofield, 1999; Kovaes, 1998). These circumstances are highlighted in Australia by the concept of schooling that has changed little from its Nineteenth Century roots, (Edgar, 1999; Connell, 1998; Ryan 1998b).

Given the school sector’s charter to prepare the next generation for living and work in Knowledge Economy circumstances the need for change cannot be dismissed as just another lunatic “economic rationalist” ambit claim. On the contrary, it has broad social justice implications for individuals, families and society. School systems now have a policy role and an imperative to participate in the emergent society that requires school graduates to have new skill and knowledge repertoires and conceptual toolkits (Smith and Lynch, 2010). This is quite a new role compared to the recent past.

Given this context some fundamental questions should now be asked of schools. What should teaching look like? How should schools be organised and managed and how will teaching be done? What will mark off the old from the new? What will teachers in the most “out-there” schools (if there are any) be doing or not doing that would stun today’s teachers and administrators? What will be different in the way teachers are recruited, prepared, perform and managed?

But consider another proposition. Maybe teaching has not reached the zenith of its potential and, given the present historical circumstances characterised by rapid social change of a global nature, it isn’t even in the right ballpark. Maybe the existing model of how we prepare people to do schooling and teaching — developmental psychology, constructivism and all the other fads of
contemporary schools — has reached its limits? Rather than being at a pinnacle of achievement, maybe schools and teaching have a long way to go.

We do not wish to suggest that there have not been any advances and achievements in schooling and teaching. The concern with the individual, the advent of specialised schools, the expansion of the curriculum to account for all rather than a social class-defined segment of students, the focus on “learning” are all enlightened moves. Further, over several decades now, the value of education has moved to centre stage for individuals, communities and nations.

As John Naisbitt (1998), author of *Megatrends* observes, education is now the number one economic priority in today’s global economy and is in the same family as economics, social class and international sport as a core concept of the 2000s. It is there on the backs of great educators like John Dewey, Pestalozzi, Piaget, Gagne and Jerry Bruner to name a few, along with the countless teachers and administrators who have toiled to make a contribution for a better society.

The development of mass education and ferment in teaching are nearly seventy years old. The list of educators above dates back two centuries. Now, if we think about the last five to ten years, it is difficult to identify innovations of the same grandeur and impact as those of these people and those like them who laid the foundations of schooling and teaching. Maybe there are not any more things about schools and teaching to be discovered? The foil to the idea that the model is perfected lies in whether we or others are really happy with what we have in schooling and teaching. The institution would need to be fulfilling for parents, teachers, students, employers, commentators and ourselves, and be producing graduates whose capabilities are so impeccable that there would not be any point in seeking something else.

That is, it would be presumptuous to assume that schools and teaching developed in previous centuries remain adequate for another historical age in the form that is presently familiar. The reality is that there are numerous criticisms of schools and teaching from multiple sources, based on the fact that schools and teaching continue to do what they have always done rather than being bold and taking fresh directions. Also, there are increasing operational problems in the education system as it adjusts to both national social issues and shifts in the geopolitical state of the world. Governments and commentators point to the need to overcome old, well-tried solutions that worked in the past but now reveal the limits of the present models and practices.

Education systems are efficient at processing students but there is little evidence that the outcomes of schooling are more equitable despite the expenditure and rhetoric. Moreover, there are now doubts that the preparation of students is appropriate for the conditions that the young will face after school. Perhaps the time has come to rethink the whole offer so that the school and teaching legacy is not maintained by short-term trade-offs that favour the system and status quo rather than individual students, families and the national interest.

**Changing How Teachers are Prepared**

In the following section we identify features of the Bachelor of Learning Management (BLM)
program and how this approach to teacher education appears to contribute to successful learning in formal education settings.

Prior to 2001, teacher education programs were predominantly the 4-year Bachelor of Education (BEd). The program that preceded the BLM included studies in sociology, psychology, curriculum planning and a conventional “practicum” regime. In general, the program focused on what students know, rather than how they use that knowledge.

The BEd program was “Faculty centric” in that its content and delivery were determined by the university and local schools accommodated student teachers for a program of practical experience. While some academics established strong relationships with individual schools, university-school collaboration was largely tokenism in the sense that its structure and content had already been decided in absentia.

One of the most obvious features of the existing BEd program was its relative disinterest in outcomes in a time of speedy social change (OECD, 2002). While there had been the occasional cosmetic revision, the Bachelor of Education (BEd) program had changed little since the 1980s so that it hardly fitted the 1970-80s social ethos. Given the social movements of the late 1990s, its social relevance shortcomings were obvious. It was subject to the OECD generic point that the time was right for new solutions rather than re-runs of flagging remedies.

For the development of the BLM, that meant a search for new solutions and strategies to replace the existing system of producing teachers. Smith’s 2000 article and his appointment to the Central Queensland University Education faculty to undertake that task proved to be a catalyst because it coincided with system-level determination to rethink and rework the education arrangements in Queensland Australia.

In 1999, Queensland State Education: 2010 (or QSE2010) was published (Education Queensland, 2000). It documented changes taking place in Queensland society and economy in the context of broader social change in Australia. It introduced the local education community to the term “Learning Society” and argued that policy change was required so that students were prepared for membership of a learning society (Education Queensland, p.11). In later iterations of QSE2010, policy was established for the transformation of teaching and curriculum and its infrastructures to ensure pre-school-to-adulthood education and training pathways for all students. In addition, teachers should be “managers of the learning experiences of children” rather than being gatekeepers of knowledge (Education Queensland, p.8) and that “teachers must continually renew their pedagogy and skills” to meet rapidly changing student and social needs (Education Queensland, p. 9).

Furthermore, and reinforcing some core elements of Smith’s (2000) argument, the QSE2010 policy stated that graduate teachers should be supported “by innovative pre-service training that prepares teachers to teach in the new economic, social and cultural conditions” in order to prepare younger generations for their respective places as contributors to the global “learning communities” (Education Queensland, p.10). It is not difficult to see that this fortuitous policy blueprint endorsed Smith arguments and provided a powerful mandate for education change.
Education Queensland’s stance was especially important when it came to mobilising industry support for such changes in teacher education.

**The Bachelor of Learning Management Program (BLM)**

By 2001, Smith, Lynch and Mienczakowski argued that the BLM no longer prepared “teachers” but was intent on graduating “learning managers” (Smith, et al, 2003). This publication signalled the significant changes in the rationale, content and delivery model of the program. The core premise of the program was that graduates would graduate “workplace ready”, with capabilities including specialist knowledge and skill relevant to the school as a workplace, yet be “futures orientated”. This latter characteristic, the capability to initiate and achieve alternate teaching and schooling futures, represented the continuation of Smith’s “critical” perspective re-worked for an entrepreneurial and innovations culture. It embodied personal characteristics such as courage, planned risk taking, imagination, intuition and creativity (Lynch, 2004) and was aimed at halting the much discussed reproduction function of teacher education.

The original conceptual basis of the BLM degree, was anchored in four concepts namely: *Futures, Networks and Partnerships; Pedagogy; and Essential Professional Knowledge* (See such background examples as Hargreaves, 2003; Marzano, Gaddy, Dean, 2000; Topper, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 2000; & Wehmeyer, Palmer, Agran, Mithaug, & Martin, 2000; Reigeluth, 1999; Shulman, 1986a and 1986b). Program unit titles signalled the purposes of the degree and included Learning Management, Futures, Networks and Partnerships, e-Learning Manager, Entrepreneurial Professional, Essential Professional Knowledge in which Dimensions of Learning became the core, and Portal Task, amongst others. The first BLM graduates entered the workforce in 2003, following a compulsory internship.

The BLM represents a change of balance in teacher preparation between “curriculum” and “pedagogy”, or the “what” and the “how” (Smith, 2000). Smith believed that a BEd tendency to emphasise curriculum development encouraged the postponement of the moment of implementation so that the doing teaching element of the process is left to the devices of the individual teacher, later. In that conception of preparation, the “how to teach” element is in danger of being thought of as a matter of subjective preference on the part of individual teachers.

That is, each teacher graduate can make up their own pedagogical practice by drawing on a host of other BEd program elements such as multiple intelligences, coloured hats, Productive Pedagogies and New Basics, whole word approaches and so on. Such a model mirrored the practices of teacher education staff, each of whom had their own favourite theories and approaches. This double fragmentation forms an important BLM critique of the BEd.

Fragmentation encourages a vast proliferation of teaching approaches amongst teachers and it relegates core principles and theory of pedagogy — teaching — to the realms of mystery. It is

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1 In line with the regulatory agency of the time: Queensland Board of Teacher Registration.
2 For details see McREL. located at [http://www.mcrel.org/dimensions/whathow.asp](http://www.mcrel.org/dimensions/whathow.asp)
not difficult to see that if every teacher has a few favourite, unique approaches to their work, the number of pedagogies in use across a school or system reaches astronomical proportions. It is not too fanciful to propose that fragmentation goes some way to explaining why there are problems of consistency in what and how areas like literacy, numeracy and science are taught. In short, the practice of locating teaching skill in the creative minds and actions of talented individuals is analogous to the work of poets but is also an indicator of an immature profession. Any semblance of professional coherence based around professional teaching standards is an oxymoron in this radical individualistic approach. It is perhaps an explanation of why accreditation bodies champion “teaching standards” as aspirational outcomes but opt for lame procedural “standards” that almost anybody can fulfil.

The original BLM game plan had four distinctive elements that define what it means to graduate from the program. These elements are: the idea of Learning Management; the new content indicated earlier; a move from knowing a lot about a few theories (“illumination”) to being able to apply theories and undertake teaching that has definite outcomes (“performativity”); and significant decision-making and resource-based partnerships with the teaching industry. We briefly discuss each in turn.

1. Learning Management
The BLM program is underpinned by the concept of Learning Management. The concept has little to do with the bureaucratic notion of “management” in that it was derived from the architectural term “design” ---an artful arrangement of resources for definite ends--- and is best rendered as “design with intent” (see Fletcher, 2001). Learning management then means an emphasis on ‘the design and implementation of pedagogical strategies that achieve learning outcomes.’ That is, in the balance between and emphasis on “curriculum development” and “pedagogy”, the emphasis is definitely on pedagogical strategies (Smith and Lynch, 2010).

While clearly anchored in pedagogic strategies, the term also serves another purpose. It attempts to sign-off what is called “teaching” from its past and to reposition teachers as knowledge workers who have a key role in preparing the next generation for work and life in the 2000s Knowledge Economy. This concept is explored in greater detail in subsequent chapters. Learning Management should therefore be viewed as being disruptive to the traditional notions of education and schooling in that it aims to transform the role of teachers and teaching. The term learning manager, the practitioner of learning management, signals this change in the teacher.

Underpinning the learning management premise is a new set of knowledge and skills---collectively referred to as a “futures orientation” in the comparative study that follows. It attempts to prepare the mindsets and skill sets of graduates for conditions of social change that pervade local and global societies in the 2000s. The BLM architects were aware of a prevailing “traditions” of teaching in schools. They realised that graduate teachers had to fit such a profile, at least in the early stages of their careers before a change to a “futures orientated” practice of teaching could occur.

They also realised that in the interregnum, new teachers are bound to be socialised into the traditions of schools. It follows that while graduates have to be “work place ready” on
graduation, it is hardly enough for the circumstances of the 2000s. The program was then designed to overcome this conundrum. Put simply, the BLM is aspirational in that it seeks to disrupt the current teacher education paradigm and in doing so, intervene in the conventional teaching practices of schools.

2. New content
In line with learning management, the BLM syllabus centred on four knowledge clusters: Futures; Pedagogy; Networks and Partnerships; and Essential Professional Knowledge. These clusters arose in collaboration with classroom teachers and various industry stakeholders as well as being scoped by a trans-disciplinary literature. The content was heavily influenced by research and theory to avoid promulgating yet another “good idea” and to ensure that the professional knowledge BLM elements had substantive intellectual support.

3. From “illumination” to “performativity”
The BLM utilizes a device known as Portal Tasks. Portal Tasks are not practicums in a conventional sense, but designed experiences with stringent in-school requirements linked to on-campus courses structured so that students cannot escape the requirement of demonstrating their understanding and application of really important knowledge, especially pedagogical strategies. Portal Tasks cannot be successful if the classroom teacher mentor (the BLM student’s learning manager) is not fully aware of the overall program agenda and committed to it professionally. Without Portal Tasks, the BLM model is radically insufficient and would resemble the conventional BEd.

The Portal Task model is illustrated in the assessment algorithm developed for each unit: one piece of assessment for the conceptual issues and the second piece for the demonstration of performance in the portal tasks. In short, the assessment regime intentionally sets out to ensure that student teachers get to know the field and are able to demonstrate applications of core concepts and procedures. Such an outcome is a necessary condition of the BLM model.

4. Partnership
In order to achieve the intentions of the BLM, the approach relied on partnership arrangements with employers and schools. The reason for this is that if the brand name is the detailed specification of pedagogical strategies that achieve learning outcomes, then all participants in the production of graduates must know and be able to work with the same agenda. There is no advantage in the on-campus programs championing the design of pedagogical strategies while school-based staff do “curriculum development”, for example.

Moreover, in keeping with the BLM program objective of reducing the number of personal, folk pedagogies teacher educators, teachers and schools use, aligning students and participating teachers both on campus and in schools was and remains a priority. In order to do reach this

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3 Notice the wording: ‘committed to it professionally’. Having a ‘business-to-business’ partnership is not necessarily the same as teachers and university staff liking it or believing in it. The message is that CQU pays its permanent casual staff and school-based mentors and supervisors to teach and support the BLM rather than personal views of what comprises teacher education.
end, the conceptual and procedural knowledge that is taught on-campus must be demonstrated by students in real-life settings such as schools and supported by in-school staff. Accomplishing this outcome goes some way in reducing the theory-practice gap so often attributed to teacher education programs.

The partnership concept is fundamental to all of these aspirations. It implies that employers and schools are “partners” in a strong, substantive sense in so far as they jointly conceive ideas and policies, together with the provision of necessary resources. An important new element is that partnership entails the deployment of mentors from the employing agencies. These people work side by side with Faculty staff so that the division between “us” and “them” is at worst minimised. The “we” in this model are all part of the community of learning that is the BLM culture and program. To reiterate, a serious partnership with employers, schools and with each teacher mentor, is the core of the BLM, and the model will not function without it.

The overall aim of the BLM is captured by an expectation that BLM graduates are both workplace ready and futures-orientated when they graduate, namely that they:

1. can perform the role of teaching to a professional standard guaranteed by the experiences that they have had in the four knowledge areas;
2. have a futures-orientated mindset and demonstrated capability to be enterprising and contributing to making a real difference in learning outcomes in clients no matter the level or who they are;
3. can demonstrate know-how in the workplace that has few divisions between theory and practice;
4. have received mentoring from classroom teachers who know the logic and content of the BLM and pursue both; and
5. have successfully completed a compulsory internship undertaken in the last year of the degree in which they perform as practising, in-service teachers.

The approach contrasts with the idea that schools or indeed employers must, by definition, have “induction”4 programs for new teachers to ensure that they can do the work for which they are paid to do and that teaching prowess and expertise can only accrue over a long period of experience.

What Research Says about the BLM

Having discussed the aspirations of the BLM, aspirations that many may (and do) find hortatory and unrealistic if not dangerous, we outline the findings of three studies of the BLM. These studies, while small scale and fragmentary, go some way towards illustrating the possibility and efficacy of the BLM concept and, importantly provide an empirical platform for a further rethink of an expansion of BLM principles in a concluding section of this paper. Moreover, to our knowledge, the ACER study is the only systematic, independent evaluation of a teacher education program in Australia.

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4 We do not oppose induction in programs that are premised on performance and development, but we have strong reservations about the taken for granted assumption that newly graduated teachers must be shown how to teach in real life teaching settings. This to us seems to be a faulty conception of pre-service preparation and a politically unwise position for an erstwhile profession to adopt.
The first study was conducted by Ingvarson et al. (2005) of the Australian Council for Education Research (ACER) in 2004 and published in 2005. The remaining two are doctoral studies by Lynch (2004) and Allen (2008) respectively. Lynch compared BLM and BEd program graduate teachers’ perceptions about teacher preparation with those of their practicum mentors, while Allen investigated the capacity of the BLM to bridge the theory-practice gap between the university and the workplaces in which BLM students operated. We now outline the findings of each, beginning with the ACER Study.5

The ACER study was commissioned by the then Australian federal education minister, Dr Brendan Nelson. While CQU BLM developers were consulted, especially on the “futures” element that was completely unique to the BLM at the time, they were not involved in the ACER study.

The study had two parts. The first was a Lickert scale survey of graduates from teacher education programs across Queensland in 2004 (n= 536) and of school principals of these graduates (n= 324). The response rate was 26% for teachers and 40% for school principals. The survey questionnaire generated data about the following questions.

1. What are the perceptions of beginning teachers about the effectiveness of current teacher education courses in Queensland?
2. To what extent were teacher education courses effective in preparing teachers for their initial teaching roles?
3. How did BLM graduate perceptions about course effectiveness compare with graduates with perceptions of other graduates?
4. What factors characterise effective teacher education programs?
5. What distinctive qualities of the BLM were most effective in preparing teachers for initial teaching roles?

The second part of the ACER study was an observational phase conducted in October and November 2004 with 31 teachers who had graduated in 2003. Eighteen of these teachers were BLM graduates from the Noosa or Rockhampton campuses of Central Queensland University. Thirteen teachers had graduated with a BEd. qualification from other Queensland universities. Observers were trained by ACER to use interview and observation schedules adapted from the Queensland Professional Standards for Teachers until they attained a high level of reliability (Ingvarson et al, p.18). Pairs of these trained observers interviewed and observed each sample teacher twice, during a literacy-oriented classroom session and a numeracy-oriented session respectively.

The observational study sought to determine whether, given the hype around the BLM, the classroom performance of graduates from the Bachelor of Learning Management (BLM) course at Central Queensland University (CQU) could be distinguished from graduates from other teacher education courses.

5 In 2004 Dr Brendan Nelson, then Australian federal minister for education, commissioned a study into the BLM. This study can be located at [http://www.acer.edu.au/documents/BLM_280905.pdf](http://www.acer.edu.au/documents/BLM_280905.pdf)
The ACER study concluded that Learning Management approach, that underpins the BLM program, has empirical evidence for claiming that it achieved outcomes consistent with the rhetoric of the program. Thus:

The BLM approach is producing graduates who believe that they are better prepared for the first year of teaching than are graduates from other Queensland universities. This belief is supported by observational evidence that showed a sample of BLM graduates taught at a significantly higher standard than a sample of graduates from other Queensland universities. School principals also believed that BLM graduates were better prepared than other graduates (Ingvarson et al, p.78).

Ingvarson et al. (2005) found that definite components underlie the BLM’s apparent success. We briefly outline these now.

1. Emphasis on training in a *core model of effective pedagogy*

The BLM program requires university staff and teacher mentors to present students with a basic architecture common to effective learning management, no matter what is being taught. This architecture is found in the BLM Learning Design Process (8 Learning Management Questions) and in the Dimensions of Learning. It provides students with a common framework for designing pedagogical strategies that achieve learning outcomes in students. The framework puts high priority on linkages between outcomes, pedagogical practice and assessment. The program that actively promotes a “consistently applied, ‘deep structure’ model of pedagogy, based on standards for effective teaching, appears to have born fruit” (Ingvarson et al, p. 79).

2. Active engagement in *learning how to use* the model

Students are regularly placed in workplace situations from the beginning of their program. Work placements provide the opportunity and responsibility to apply the principles of effective pedagogy as defined in the program. This element of the BLM requires that teachers in schools understand and apply the same, agreed model and have the capability to mentor and coach students. The university and employer partnership plays a strategic role in achieving this outcome.

3. Strong *linkages between theory and practice*

The assessment algorithm noted earlier ensures that all BLM graduate teachers not only get to know the field but are able to demonstrate applications of core concepts and procedures *in situ*. This *essential* element in the BLM links university units to workplace experiences in what is called the Portal Task. Teacher professional accountability is enhanced in a regime that requires student teachers to demonstrate that they can promote student learning on the basis of expertise.

4. An authentic *partnership between schools, employing authorities and the university*

The partnership concept between stakeholders in which equal but different contributions are recognized and valued lies at the heart of the learning management concept.

5. *Standards-based* teacher education
According to Ingvarson et al., the BLM program is a thoroughgoing example of standards-based teacher education. This means that the criteria for judging the success of the program are external to both the graduate performances and the program itself. The emphasis on instructional rather than learning theory assists in achieving this outcome.

Having now elaborated the ACER study and its findings we now review two further studies into the BLM. In his doctoral study, Lynch (2004) found, through an attitudinal survey of final year BLM students (n= 221; response rate of 37%) and their final practicum mentor teachers (n= 153; 25 % response rate), and through a series of focus interviews with mentors, (n = 85) that program outcomes across all the CQU BLM campuses varied. Some were little different from the BEd offered by the university previously despite lexicon changes in course names etc while in other campuses, there was a process of transition from the BEd to the premises of the BLM (Lynch, 2004).

In general terms, Lynch found strong outcomes in achieving “workplace ready” graduates across all six CQU domestic campuses, but strikingly less evidence of a “futures orientation”. He argued that unless mentors of BLM students (teacher-in-schools) were accomplished in exercising a futures orientation, rather than assuming that mentors would be prepared to teach it, this aspect of the BLM would not be fully realised. For example, Lynch did not find any schools or teachers in his study that were attuned to the global social changes taking place around them. Consequently, there was little reason to account for them in the preparation of teachers or presumably, their own students in any of Lynch’s sample schools.

Allen in her doctoral study conducted at one of CQU’s campuses compared the logic of the BLM with the effects of university lecturers and school mentors on the teaching practice and beliefs of recent graduates employed in a school system. Her results indicated a number of important points. First, where there is a weak partnership between schools and the university, the logic of the BLM breaks down and often becomes non-existent as the “BEd” mindset and practice dominates both university and school staff. This gap shows itself in such things as failure by university staff and in school mentors to establish and nurture the required relationships with schools, principals and teachers.

While pressure of work and other factors play a part, some university and in turn school staff do not comprehend the fundamental importance of partnership for the achievement of learning management outcomes or do not see it as a worthwhile exercise. This finding suggests that the “us and them” mentality of conventional school - university teacher education programs is exceedingly resilient, despite efforts by both the university and employers to initiate a different relationship and practices.

Second, as with Lynch’s findings, where the logic of the BLM is unknown to or is not sustained by either lecturers or mentor teachers, the logic is undermined and has little effect on the graduate teacher. Here Allen provided evidence that university staff either ignored the BLM theoretical framework or actively undermined it by substituting idiosyncratic, alternative, interest-based content in their teaching. Allen’s data show clearly that the school ethos of every teacher doing “their own thing” was shared with university-based staff. Similarly, teacher mentors
required student teachers and later graduates to conform to school practices whether they fitted
the formally agreed model or not. For others, there were both misunderstandings and often little
understanding at all of BLM concepts and practices.

Allen’s study shows that amongst both university and school staff, the appreciation of the BLM’s
avowed intention to develop a “consistently applied, ‘deep structure’ model of pedagogy, based
on standards for effective teaching” (Ingvarson et al, p. 79) was weak, in spite of several years of
professional development and learning, with university-based staff and in the school system.

Third, where lecturers and teachers insist on teaching their own knowledge components outside
of the BLM curriculum, such as substituting constructivism and learning theory for elements of
instructional theory or Dimensions of Learning, or requiring student teachers and new graduates
to conform to school practices that run counter to learning management precepts, the BLM
model collapses.

To be fair, our own experiences in higher education indicate that there are few rewards in
universities for the conduct of programs like the BLM that are heavily “professional” and are
time-heavy in the development stages. Similarly, if the BLM model is poorly understood and
implemented, it appears to have few upsides for schools as the different demands of the BLM
are perceived and interpreted as “additional work” when viewed from the old “prac” model
context.

This is especially so when key players constantly reinforce the term “prac” in face-to-face
discussions and in written communications between the university and schools. Under these
conditions, preparing the next generation of teachers is more a chore for schools rather than a
core part of the professional work of certified teachers with definite positive spin-offs for
teachers, schools, universities and communities.

In short, the studies by Lynch and Allen show that the very elements lauded by Ingvarson et al.
as the drivers of a successful pre-service teacher preparation are paradoxically the ones perhaps
most likely to generate resistance in university Schools of Education and in schools. This university and school
co-production of the status quo by self-generating mindsets and interpretive frameworks remain
as fundamental reasons why it is difficult to change the practices of schools and Schools of
Education. The next round of learning management implementation then must take these
politico-contextual conditions into account.

On yet another front, over a decade has passed since the initial development and inception of
the BLM program concepts. There has been an explosion in the science of learning and in the
interim period developments in domains such as Web 2.0 have shaken the orthodoxy of
traditional schooling by introducing many new potential teaching and learning media. While such
emergent trends formed the content in BLM courses over a decade ago, they did not constitute
core knowledge competencies and importantly they were not modelled for program delivery.

Further, both university teacher preparation regimes and the schools are faced with quite far-
reaching effects on teaching practice by these developments that in the BLM model can only be
resolved collaboratively in real-time. Given these findings we suggest that it is time for a further change and updating of BLM precepts.

The Implications for the Future of Teacher Education

The research evidence reported here provides pointers for what needs to be changed if graduates are to be better prepared for work in an emergent world because it identifies areas of constraint and restraint in teacher education context. More specifically, we can conclude that the foremost ingredient required in teacher education is a university-school partnership that is effective not only because it is sustainable in respect to performance but also as having real mutual benefits. Put simply, unless teacher education gets partnership right, all other attempts to re-engineer teacher education will be defeated by different logics in the various sectors.

It is reasonably clear in the ACER evaluation (Ingvarson et al, 2005), in Lynch’s work (Lynch, 2004) and especially in Allen’s study (Allen, 2008), that an agreed agenda across the university teaching staff, the school-based mentors and the students, prevents significant break downs in understanding and purpose across participants in teacher education. It confirms research findings in other fields where merely fostering customer orientations in order to guide innovation and research is insufficient to guarantee quality outcomes (Wagner, 2009, pp. 8-9). Lynch’s findings about “futures-orientation” for instance shows that waiting for the university, individual schools and their staff to make the required changes is unproductive. Put simply, partnership and mutual benefit are the sine qua non of change processes in teacher education that overcome differences in sector logics.

Allen’s work provides specific insights into why breakdowns occur. They include:

1. The unequal contributions made to successful graduate outcomes by the workplace and university and the need to coordinate them;
2. The need to manage real or potential fragmentation in the on-campus teaching, workplace performance and mentoring that supports the performance stands of the program; and
3. the effects of hierarchy where the responsibility for program design and development lies with the university but the workplace has greater responsibility for implementation than ever before.

We should add that the requirements of teacher accreditation agencies also act to stifle innovation in teacher education programs. Teaching “standards” for example are in reality descriptors of practice in selected theoretical models. They are so mundane, inert and removed from the outcomes of quality teaching that they lack credibility. The application of one such “standard” to fighter pilot training illustrates our point, namely: “F-18 pilots continually improve their professional knowledge and practice.”

Such a standard says nothing about the knowledge and skills base required of combat airmen. Yet, teacher graduates are being trained to use such generic, contrived words as if they will improve teaching practice. In reality, they can mean anything, thus reinforcing the idea that teachers devise pedagogy in unique ways. Such risible approaches defeat the purpose of a standard-setting project that sets out to ensure exemplary teacher practice and support of quality learning.
It follows that significant input into the conceptualisation, planning and implementation of a teacher preparation program must originate from stakeholders defined more broadly than university committees, “prac” consultative groups and registration agencies. The university-school-employer nexus needs to be seamless so that teaching staff and students experience continuities in curriculum, responsibilities and obligatory procedures, desired outcomes and purposes. Compared to the present model where not all collaborators are treated equally, these are new contexts for teacher education and the other learning industries (Wagner, 2009, pp. 8-9) with new opportunities.

These attributes in turn demand a different mode of relationship management compared to what we argue are the now obsolete hit-and-miss “prac” model monopolised by school settings. In the case of the BLM, the effective partners are those schools and organisations that can be described as innovation suppliers, or those that orchestrate what happens in the workplace in ways that are usable for the BLM’s assumptions and underpinning knowledge sets to produce teaching graduates. The relevant players are those that understand the positioning of the “student teacher” and “graduate teacher” in the emergent education market and the social trends that shape the capabilities required by graduates. In contrast to the conventional teacher education model, it is no longer valid or indeed possible to see innovation as just the more effective transmission of the teacher education curriculum to student teachers.

The present and future context comprises disparate constituents with interests in the outcomes of the schools and training organizations, that “speak back” (Nowotny et al. 2003). That is, there are additional, competing claims on schooling and learning, and in turn, teacher education that arise from outside education institutions. Moreover, the realisation is growing that learning and teaching no longer refer exclusively to the work of traditional teachers or university lecturers. Learning, and in turn people who can manage learning, are demanded more generally. The challenge for schools and teacher education is to get their respective practices synchronised with social conditions and new expectations for learning and schooling, and in turn “teacher” (sic) education.

It follows then that the rhetorical reliance on “partnership” and collaboration in teacher education requires a re-assessment of “collaboration for what?” If university staff and schoolteachers are “symbolic analysts” (Reich, 1991) who take professional pride in their capability to achieve agreed outcomes, and who network widely in order to ensure that the appropriate learning service is enjoyed by clients, then they are knowledge workers.

In the knowledge-creative society, the corollary is that, compared to the teaching/teacher mindset of conventional teacher education, knowledge workers celebrate the capability to reach mutually agreed goals in a collaborative context rather than prizing unique approaches and individual preferences, despite their individual excellence in being creative, innovative and entrepreneurial. This change of mind and skill set or needed make-over for teachers and teaching (Ministerial Advisory Committee for Educational Renewal, 2004, p. 9), we have repeatedly referred to as learning management, a concept that goes well beyond merely tweaking conventional teacher education programs.
From ‘Partnerships with Schools’ to ‘University - Learning Industry Syndications’

Bauman, like Nowotny et al. (2003), indicates that learning occurs in an increasingly unpredictable and irregular social world in which supply and demand is neither linear nor stable, and labour is shaped by complex patterns of anticipations, time and space. The implications of Bauman’s observations are that there is a need to shift from content delivery to capacity building, from supplying curriculum to co-creating curriculum, from supplying education to navigating learning networks (McWilliam and Haukka, 2008, p.663).

Taking these implications one by one, it is apparent that: (1) capacity building has intent, namely the capacity to use particular capabilities that enable the “teacher” to operate in a knowledge-creative society; (2) co-creation clearly implies more than mere collaboration with people and things beyond the classroom and the school. Strategic alliance for mutual benefit is a more appropriate term; and (3) navigating learning networks refers to the capacity to mobilise resources and make extensive use of face-to-face and the Internet with the implications such shifts have for teachers, schools, schooling and teacher education (Awazu et al. 2009, pp. 51-58).

Moreover, taking the core elements of the research into the BLM as a benchmark for progress towards such ideals, the key driver of an effective teacher education model is a university-school partnership that is focused on performance and mutual benefit. This proposition implies an emphasis on developing a performance and development model of effective pedagogy that is reachable only if there is agreement across all sectors about the efficacy of the model and its outcomes. A spin-off from these imperatives is that theory and practice are linked in action-oriented ways to reach agreed ends in what we referred to earlier as “standards-based” teacher education.

Our argument is that the conventional partnerships between schools, employing authorities and the university are unlikely to achieve these outcomes systemically if left to individual universities, employing authorities and states. To reiterate, it is paradoxical that the very characteristics that our research has shown to contribute to a successful program are, we think, the ones most likely to generate resistance in university Schools of Education and in schools.

In order to deal with this minefield, our view is that the preferred arrangement for strategic alliances with the producers, orchestrators, brokers, disseminators and users in teacher education—what used to be called collaboration or even partnerships – is “syndication” (Smith and Lynch, 2010, pp. 230-241). Using the research presented earlier as the theoretical platform, the underlying premise of syndication is the co-creation of what might be loosely called a maturing of the community of practice concept in contemporary society.

Syndication goes beyond what is currently understood by partnerships and alliances to an agreement about making available relevant services, resources, capacities and content to other players “in the game” to use for agreed ends and mutual benefit. Put simply, a syndicated partnership is developed without the impediment of traditional employer or university boundaries and lines of demarcation that rely on “us” and “them” distinctions.
For illustrative purposes, we envision a syndicated model for teacher education analogous to the “teaching hospital”, so that there is a physical synergy between local schools, community bodies and employers and a university faculty. The resulting “syndicate” develops collective goals and language sets that authorise the co-opting of members’ businesses in order to harness knowledge, skill and resources for mutual benefit, namely highly accomplished graduates and constantly up-skilled teachers (Smith and Lynch, 2010).

The core contribution of syndicated business is that purposes, outcomes and procedures are agreed in advance and subsequent operations are made seamless across each participating organisation so that the syndicate marches to its own collective drum. As the research showed, while the BLM was an attempt to reposition teacher education for a changing society, it did not go far enough in taking on the politico-contextual conditions of the various systems that make up teacher education and their competing purposes. Syndication means that boundaries between university, school, college and community organisations blur for the purposes of teacher education outcomes. Moreover, once syndicate agreement is reached about purposes, outcomes and procedures, participants are responsible and accountable for delivering them. In this way, syndication adds depth and immediacy for users across agencies and organisations and operates for the mutual benefit of all players (Smith and Lynch, 2010).

Syndication has definite benefits for shifting school, schooling, teachers, teaching and teacher education into the 21st Century. It depends for its success on real-time social collaboration that is at the heart of all professional activity. It is not difficult to see how syndicated arrangements offer potential advantages to schools and universities as they struggle to improve teaching and learning practice and reach performance targets.

A syndicated agreement then is the core element in our envisioned teacher education program compared to the more traditional matters such as the fleeting moments of “prac” teaching arrangements, school visits and so on (Smith and Lynch, 2010). Our view is that if governments, universities or school systems want to intervene in the teaching practices of schools or the “quality” of teacher graduates then there is little choice but to syndicate the whole operation. Other approaches have proved ineffectual against legacy and boundary-riding factors in universities and schools.

**Conclusion**

The “message” of this paper is that the very elements lauded by Ingvarson et al. in their independent study as the drivers of a successful pre-service teacher preparation are paradoxically the ones most likely to generate resistance in university Schools of Education and in schools. This is perplexing to us even if we can appreciate that individual university and school staff and the public servants who staff accreditation agencies have their own views about teaching and teacher education. We can also appreciate that committees will have a Group Think flavour to them that tends to extinguish unconventional ideas and approaches. Nevertheless, as Godin (2011) puts it: “How dare we, then, decide to just wing it? To skip class. To make up history. To imagine that science is a matter of opinion, something optional, a diversion for the leisure classes...”
In short, on the basis of our research, operational experience and socio-cultural conditions, we propose that teacher education in the form and function that it is undertaken in Australian universities has reached its use-by date. There are research-based options for significantly altering that prognosis. Now is the time to do it if there is sufficient political will to make it happen.

Reference List


Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training tabled its report on the inquiry into Teacher Education entitled *Top of the Class*. (2007).

