Teacher education in Australia: investigations into programming, practicum and partnership

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Teacher Education in Australia
Investigations into Programmes, Practices and Partnership

David E. Lynch and Tony Veigh

This book examines the questions of promoting and embedding teacher education practice into the future.

The book includes a study of teachers, curriculum, ideas and principles that were implemented and reported among the National Education Ministers (NEM) Conference in the Great Wall region of Eastern China (Shandong) in 2015. The NEM remains a strong challenge to any future teacher education model. It was released in time for the 50th anniversary of the school teacher education leading into the 21st century.

Foreword by Robert Gershman, Head of Teacher
Education, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia

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Lynch and Veigh
Teacher Education in Australia: Investigations into Programming, Practicum and Partnership.
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Dr Tania Broadley is Senior Lecturer in the Teaching and Learning team at the Curtin Business School at Curtin University. Previously, Tania was Lecturer in Educational Technology for the School of Education. Within this role, Tania was unit coordinator for the educational technology core units across undergraduate and postgraduate courses, which were offered face-to-face, online and blended. Tania's broad range of educational experience includes research and teaching within the higher education sector, teaching within the early childhood and primary school context and research within secondary schools. Her current project is a Department of Education (WA) competitive tender through the National Partnership for Improving Teacher Quality: Training School Project, in collaboration with the co-authors of this chapter.

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Liz Toohey is currently a lecturer in Education at the University of the Sunshine Coast in the areas of professional engagement, alternative pedagogies and vocational education and
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Mr John Ward
John Ward commenced teaching as an English/History teacher in south western Sydney during the 1970s. He gained a position as History Head Teacher at Sarah Redfern High School in the Campbelltown area in 1981 then promotion to Deputy Principal at Ashcroft High School followed by Crestwood High School in Sydney. Moved to the mid north coast as Principal of Woolgooolga High School in 1998 and is now Director, Secondary Studies at the Coffs Harbour Senior College. John is a passionate supporter of public education and is focused on the need to support students to achieve to their full potential.

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Jon Hart is an English and History teacher at Coffs Harbour Senior College. He has taught for 33 years in the NSW public education system in a variety of schools including a senior college, a central school and comprehensive high schools. He is a passionate advocate for quality teaching and the need to fully develop effective teacher education programmes. He has been recognised for his teaching with a Ministers Award for Excellence in Education, a Premiers Modern History Scholarship, HTA Fellowship and as a participant on one of the Premier's Gallipoli Scholarship tours. He believes that all teachers have more to learn just as their students do.

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Ms Kathy Jenkins
Kathy Jenkins began her career as a secondary teacher of English and History in Queensland and New South Wales. She now lectures in the core areas of Learning and Teaching (pedagogy), School of Education at the University of New England. Kathy’s research areas include teacher education, as well as issues that surround casual teaching and rural/remote teaching. Subsequently, she has been researching the challenges and supports involved in casual teaching within two Australian states – NSW and QLD. As a result of this work, Kathy has initiated one of the only units within a pre-service teacher education award that helps prepare future teachers for the reality that they may begin their careers as casual or temporary teachers, which is on the increase throughout Australia.
Foreword

Adrian Piccoli MP

In July of 2012, Southern Cross University hosted the 2012 Teacher Education Dialogue in Coffs Harbour and invited the NSW Minister for Education, The Hon Adrian Piccoli to deliver a key note address focused on the theme of “Innovation and New Ideas in Teaching and Teacher Education”. This address is reproduced here as the book’s foreword.

The conference title - Innovation and New Ideas in Teaching and Teacher Education – grabbed my attention, because this is exactly what my Government in New South Wales (Australia) is looking for. In this foreword I will elaborate the things that I am doing to ensure that NSW students consistently achieve world quality outcomes. In summary they are:

- Listening to our community about their priorities and issues in education;
- Reforming the NSW education system so that principals can make decisions at the local level for the benefit of their students;
- Encouraging a debate in our community about the things that we can do to make education an inspiring experience for all our students in all our schools.

What Do NSW Communities Want From Their Schools?

The current government in NSW was elected in 2011 with a mandate to do things better for the people of NSW, to make NSW number one. Our NSW State Plan was developed in 2012 after consultations right across the state. In education, people told us that one of the key things NSW needed to do was to improve education and learning outcomes of all students….students in rural and regional areas as well as in the metropolitan area. As Minister
for Education, I am personally committed to ensuring that the learning outcomes of all NSW school students are the best in Australia and up with the best internationally. Our State Plan for 2021 includes the specific goal of “improve education and learning outcomes for all students”. Additionally, there are clear targets we are aiming for:

- Improving student achievement in literacy and numeracy;
- More students finish high school or equivalent;
- Improve the quality of all teaching
- Public schools have more options for local decision making.

And there are clear measures in place so we know how we are performing against those targets.

**How Is Our School System Currently Performing?**

International and local research is providing some important facts. The overseas research is telling us that we are falling behind in international education comparisons. Whilst performing well internationally, Australia is not in the top tier of the high achieving systems – those being Shanghai, Finland, Hong Kong, Singapore and Korea. Our own Australian Council for Educational Research tells us that between 2003 and 2009, Australia as a whole declined in reading literacy when looking at the OECD Program of International Student Assessment (PISA) results.

In NSW, we slipped back about half a year against international standards and there was an increasing proportion of low performing students. Locally, our own results in the Australian National Assessment Program in Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) between 2008 and 2011 show that there has been little improvement in the results of NSW primary school children, and numeracy results for secondary school students are declining. Another worrying statistic is that just under one third of our Aboriginal students across Australia who began high school in 2003 completed the full 6 years of secondary schooling (about half the rate of non-Aboriginal students from the same year).

This is not good enough. This needs to change but it’s not just a matter of spending more money. We need to do things differently and do things better. As the 2012 Teacher Education Dialogue conference title suggests, *it's all about innovation and new ideas.*
What Has Government Done Already to Improve Things?

A lot has already changed over the last few years and we have made some significant recent achievements. NSW led the push nationally for a strong framework of teaching standards, for a strong and transparent system of accrediting teaching degrees, for a system of recognising highly accomplished teachers, and for a strong national curriculum. Some of you may know about my initiative Local Schools, Local Decisions. It is local schools that are best placed to understand the needs of their students and the strengths of their school communities; to be able to fine tune the allocation of resources and support for the benefit of their students, to know whether they have the right mix of high quality teachers.

The central elements of the **Local Schools, Local Decisions** initiative include:

- introducing limits on central staffing appointments and transfers and significantly increasing the capacity for each school to select the teachers they need;
- introducing vastly improved processes to enable school leaders to swiftly identify and respond to teacher underperformance;
- enabling schools to be responsible for the procurement of resources and to have more say over school maintenance.

It’s time schools were in the driver’s seat on decisions that affect their school, their students, staff and communities. And there are other things in the pipeline.

What More Can We Do To Improve?

A number of countries and governments around the world are currently looking at strengthening teaching and teacher education, and we can look at why places like Finland and Shanghai are the leaders in student outcomes. We can learn from these successes. We can also see what other countries are doing, like England, Hong Kong and some states of the US, and consider whether their initiatives would work here in NSW. But, we need solutions that genuinely meet local conditions, local issues.

So I asked Dr Michele Bruniges the Director-General of the NSW Department of Education and Communities, Mr Patrick Lee the Chief Executive of the NSW Institute of Teachers and Mr Tom Alegounarias the
President of the NSW Board of Studies, to write a discussion paper. The name of that Discussion Paper is “Great Teaching, Inspired Learning” and it was released in July of 2012. The aim of this paper is to challenge everyone’s thinking and to get some innovative and new ideas on the table.

The Paper was informed by initial discussions with many people in the education community on what needs to change in teaching and teacher education in NSW so that we have world class educational outcomes for all our students in all our schools. We need to ensure that the needs of all students are really being met: students in rural areas and regional areas like Coffs Harbour, Aboriginal students, students with disabilities and learning difficulties, students who have language backgrounds other than English, the talented and gifted students who continually need challenging.

What’s in the Discussion Paper?

The Discussion Paper focuses on four key issues about what we might do, across all our schools in NSW, to improve things. Firstly, I am interested in hearing and talking about inspired learning. What makes a teacher inspiring? What should students and parents expect from teachers? How can we work together to raise the expectations we have of students? Next comes the issue of teacher education. What do we need to do to attract the best and brightest? Is it just about academic excellence or do we want something more in terms of personal qualities? Is it just about students out of school or do we want to attract a more diverse workforce, people who have had experience in other industries? How should we attract people in the skill shortages areas: maths and science teaching?

There are also sections that deal with the issues surrounding the entry of new teachers into schools, developing and maintaining professional practice for those already in the system and recognising and sharing outstanding practice. Each section takes a snapshot of the current situation in NSW, looks at what is happening internationally and then encourages you to have your say. The Discussion Paper is not about giving answers: it’s about asking the questions! At the conclusion of the consultation, the aforementioned authors reviewed all the submissions made and determined what they are chiefly telling us. I plan to further see what the research has to say about what really works in schools and in classrooms. The results of this process can be found at [http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/news/greatteaching/index.php](http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/news/greatteaching/index.php) .
know that we can make some short term changes, but many of the changes will need to be locked in over time. My final words are that I want ‘us’ all to be bold in education: it’s time for a fundamental reassessment of where we are and where we need to go to get the absolute best outcomes for all the students in our schools.

I trust the collection of lead articles in this book from the 2012 Teacher Education Dialogue goes some way in us achieving great teaching and inspired learning.
Chapter 1: Dealing with Teacher Education

Tony Yeigh & David Lynch

Teacher education research has a patchy published history in Australia. The problematic nature of the current model, which is illustrated by the predominant Bachelor of Education (BEd), has been the subject of much media attention in recent years. In this chapter the state of teacher education in Australia is presented by a series of introductions to the nine teacher education related chapters in this book.

This Book in Context

In recent times in Australia teacher education has come into criticism from government, the media and various teaching commentators (See for example; Dillon, 2011; Hattie, 2011; Jensen, 2011). Governments at both state and federal level have responded by commissioning various reviews, most recently ‘Great Teaching Inspired Learning’ (Piccoli, 2012) and ‘Top of the Class’ (Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training, 2007). While the outcomes of such reviews have been mixed, the predominant model of teacher education, with its 1960’s and 70’s hallmarks, remains largely unchanged. This is despite significant changes having occurred in society as a result of a convergence of technological innovation, and numerous studies citing the need for an overhaul of teacher education (See Lynch, 2012; Smith and Lynch, 2010; Fullan, 2007; Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2005).

So what do we make from all this and what might the way forward be for teacher education in Australia? This book seeks to answer these questions and many more.

The chapters presented in this volume provide a series of themes, concepts, ideas and principles that were formulated and reported during the 2012 Teacher Education Dialogue (TED) Conference staged at the Coffs Harbour campus of Southern Cross University. The TED conference was
convened in order to provide a platform for practising teachers and teacher educators to come together and explore innovative ideas about education leading into the 21st century. In this spirit, the conference invited broad participation from teachers and academics, to jointly explore the theme of “innovation and change” in education and teacher education. Innovation and reform go hand-in-hand however, and a common denominator for the various ideas and principles put forward in this volume is that the innovations of tomorrow are clearly linked to the reforms needed today. In this chapter, we briefly outline the contributions that each chapter makes in relation to the 2012 TED conference, under the theme of ‘investigating programming, practicum and partnerships in teacher education’. You are therefore invited to explore for yourself the depth and quality, and also the passion for change, which each author or set of authors has contributed according to her or his unique perspective. Good reading!

The Chapters Outlined

Taking a somewhat larger view of education, Lynch and Smith, in Chapter 2, emphasise the extent to which change has struggled to occur in education, despite clear imperatives from governments, teacher educators, technological innovation, and the imperatives arising from social change. They call for a “disruptive” model of teacher education, in order to overcome the largesse that has characterised various efforts to change over previous decades.

Offering an insight in this direction, Lynch and Smith argue on the basis of social and technological change that greater accountability is needed to re-position pre-service teacher education in relation to 21st century teaching and learning. In this respect they discuss the necessary changes that are required to three areas of teacher education as currently operated in NSW, namely university based teacher education (which tends to emphasise theoretical concepts in lieu of teaching practice), evidence-based teaching (which tends to lack the necessary data), and effective educational partnerships (which tend toward disconnected practicum programs that are unable to integrate learning across the partnership).

The authors then present two essential attributes of effective pre-service teacher education: an integrated, coherent approach to “teaching”
throughout the program, and graduates who are able to empirically demonstrate effective teaching capability on graduation. In light of these attributes, they go on to posit a teacher education reform agenda that is based on five necessary pre-requisites: agreed teacher preparation content, an emphasis on pedagogy, extensive pre-service support mechanisms, practicum evaluations that are grounded in measures of effective teaching, and clear evaluation outcomes that account for the quality of teacher graduates.

Lynch and Smith also set a more specific agenda for change, in the form of particular reforms to the teacher education accreditation process in NSW, the wording and tenor of accreditation policies, the specificity of accreditation standards, and the untenable nature of current university/school partnership models.

As stated by the authors, this chapter provides a realpolitik critique of what could be termed an existing culture of teacher education. The juxtaposition between existing teacher education practice and what is needed for teaching into the future is clearly delineated here, and specific recommendations are made concerning how to begin an authentic process of reinvigoration for education are made.

In Chapter 3, Lynch and Yeigh report findings from a study which examined the attitudes of mentors (classroom teachers who supervise teaching students whilst on practicum) towards the pre-existing Bachelor of Education (BEd) at one Queensland university. This is an interesting study following on from Lynch and Smith in Chapter 2 in that the BEd program’s efficacy is examined.

Their findings indicate a number of key failings in the BEd program regime. The most fundamental involves the imperative of changes required in teachers and teaching and what this means in terms of a sufficient model of teacher preparation. Issues of better preparation in time management, behaviour management, communication skills, and an expanded role in supporting the needs of their learners predominant mentor attitudes. On another plane it becomes apparent in their study that the main frameworks for preparation are being influenced and thus have to be focused towards ongoing changes in society and subsequent changes to the accreditation
Lynch and Yeigh signal the need for further ongoing research and development in teacher education utilising an identified taxonomy for change, wherein the relationships between accreditation requirements and technology are delineated with respect to an authentic model of teacher education that focuses specifically on the “future skills” needed for teaching into the 21st century. They argue that important questions relating to this development will include how the requirements of accreditation require or affect the need for authenticity, how technological change is opening up new means of affording authenticity, and how the expanded support roles required for teachers can be incorporated into the preparation they receive prior to professional workforce entry. Overall, this represents a new paradigm for teacher education, yet they conclude it is a paradigm that seems replete with possibilities and opportunities.

In Chapter 4 authors Knight, Turner and Dekkers address the “knowing/doing” gap that often occurs in pre-service education, albeit from a different perspective. Noting that addressing this gap can create “powerful programs”, these authors are particularly interested in how the elements of such programs can support both in-school functions of the practicum experience for the pre-service teachers, and also across-schools learning for the mentor teachers who supervise and support the practicum experience.

One of the “gap” issues identified by Knight, Turner and Dekkers is the power imbalance that too often characterises the relationship between universities and schools when it comes to pre-service teacher training. The issue here is that universities commonly claim a level of control over the pre-service learning program which precludes the ability of schools to influence the training that takes place. The end result of this is that a dichotomy is created between university learning (seen as theoretical) and classroom practice (seen as the “real world” of teaching), leaving pre-service teachers to compartmentalise the practicum experience and separate what they “know” from what they “do”. The knowing-doing gap thus initiates significant problems in terms of preferred teacher-training outcomes for schools and universities alike. Indeed, an important point made in this
chapter is that the knowing-doing gap inherently produces a performance gap, and this is oppositional to the betterment of teaching as a professional endeavour.

The authors argue that a further problem in relation to the knowing-doing gap also occurs in the form of a “disconnect” between evidence-based knowledge that is generated outside of the school sector, and the application of this knowledge within school settings. In this respect they present study findings that relate to the Teaching School Model (TSM), a partnership model involving the university and a school, where the school is empowered to play a structured and critical role in the development of future teachers, rather than merely provide an ad hoc availability for practicum placements. Central to this model is the use of structured learning tasks (known as portal tasks), which are designed to demonstrate that the pre-service teachers have traversed the theory-practice divide.

The authors go on to report on research involving key personnel in the TSM. These include the in-school coordinator - who coordinates the activities of the teaching school as well as conducts learning sessions in the teaching school akin to university tutorials; and a university teaching school coordinator – a university staff member who coordinates across schools to build relationships with school personnel. The perceived roles of principals, in-school and across-school coordinators, and mentor teachers are examined in this study, in order to ascertain the overall functionality of the TSM, that is, does the TSM enable pre-service teachers to integrate their university “knowing” with their practicum “doing”.

Knight, Turner and Dekkers suggest that their findings indicate three elements as being critical to addressing the knowing-doing gap: a commitment to the philosophy behind the TSM amongst all participants, the use of tasks that specifically link university learning to “doing”; and the roles of the in-school and across-schools coordinators in establishing and maintaining the partnerships between schools and the university. Of interest is that the use of the TSM portal tasks seemed to provide coherence as well as collegiality to the goals of the research, and suggests additional roles for university staff in relation to effective teacher training. Overall, this chapter posits further opportunities for the development of effective teachers. It also calls for new arrangements between schools and universities.
In Chapter 5, Ambrosetti, Knight and Dekkers contrast the traditional model of supervision - where one experienced teacher mentors one inexperienced teacher within an essentially hierarchical relationship; with alternative peer and group-based mentoring models - which provide for greater reciprocity and mentee development within the relationship. They then provide the rationale for a new, research-based approach to mentoring that integrates elements from both traditional and alternative mentor models. The authors suggest that a triadic approach, emphasising collaborative peer-mentoring in conjunction with the leadership of an experienced teacher, provides comprehensive support for the learning and professional development needs of all triad members, albeit at differing levels of interaction. The driving principle for this approach is inclusion, which in this case involves the inclusive inputs and support from all triad members.

Ambrosetti, Knight and Dekkers view the triadic mentoring model as particularly beneficial to the early pre-service level of training, because it establishes clear indicators and expectations for early (1st year) teacher training. Final-year training teachers received benefit in the form of the mentoring itself, whereby they developed increased professional skills precisely because they were teaching the early level teaching students. The mentoring teacher, because she or he is leading the discussions, planning, teaching and assessing what takes place, also receives a form of professional development that includes reflective self-appraisal. Importantly, the triadic form of mentoring is seen as facilitating a discrete community of practice. The authors recommend this form of mentoring, in lieu of the more traditional, dyadic approach, on the basis of the progressive and developmental learning outcomes which the triadic model provides.

While Broadley, Sharplin and Ledger in Chapter 6 agree that mentoring approaches provide good models for pre-service teacher training in general, they also point out that current teacher education courses do not adequately prepare pre-service teachers with the requisite skills and knowledge for rural, regional and remote locations. They present initial findings from the West Australia Combined Universities Training School (WACUTS) project, which is also designed to reduce the gap between theory and practice that exists in many current pre-service training models. The WACUTS project addresses
this gap by emphasising the importance of building partnerships between schools and universities. At the heart of this approach lies the notion of a collegial and collaborative internship arrangement between school-based teachers and university teacher educators. The underlying assumption for this partnership is that it takes both schools and universities, working together, to train teachers.

WACUTS provides a particular structure and set of relationships for this partnership, in which a project coordinator works to interface the participating universities with the supervisors and mentoring teachers in specific schools, in order to implement an organized and supportive internship model of pre-service training. Importantly, the WACUTS project includes regional schools and universities as part of the overall project design, ensuring the relevance of the program for rural and regional areas.

Key to the connectivity needed to create the partnership community is WACUTS’ use of a Professional Portal. The use of an online portal provides for collegiate networking and support across all key stakeholders, including university lecturers, Department of Education central administration staff, school principals, school co-ordinators, practicum supervisors, mentor teachers and pre-service teachers.

Another important part of the WACUTS project is that it integrates university assessment tasks with the in-school practicum placement, contextualizing and authenticating the tasks for the pre-service teachers. It also allows the pre-service teachers to apply for a Limited Authority to Teach (LAT) with the Western Australian College of Teaching, in order to enable employment within their school in term four. This is viewed as a highly motivating aspect of the project for the training teachers, and in particular for those interns assigned to more rural and isolated settings, which tend to entail greater cost issues for the interns.

Overall, a positive appraisal of the WACUTS project is presented in this chapter, with initial indicators suggesting that the partnership/internship approach does appear to address the theory/practice gap, create collaborative learning situations, provide high motivation for teacher training, and apply technology in a relevant manner.
In Chapter 7 Elizabeth Toohey discusses research designed to examine the processes involved in supporting the professional learning of pre-service teachers and determine the strengths and the challenges involved in the mentoring support process. Her primary aim is to paint a clear picture of how pre-service teachers perceive the mentoring relationship, what works for them, and how best to develop their competence and confidence.

Examining recent changes to teacher accreditation, and an increased use of standards to accredit and employ teachers, Toohey notes the need for greater responsibility and accountability in relation to the teaching profession. She also links the process of mentoring to an essentially constructivist pedagogy, in that more accountable mentoring encourages the learner (in this case, the pre-service teacher) to make personal meaning of the learning process. This approach also allows for customisation of the mentoring experience, in order to meet the pedagogical, personal and employment outcomes associated with the teaching profession.

The research presented in this chapter involved session one Graduate Diploma in Education students, who responded to a series of online posts asking them to describe the relationship they had with their mentor teacher (what did it look like, sound like and feel like?); and to discuss the impact this relationship had on their own professional learning experience. From the information gathered, Toohey posits a series of challenges that concern the current mentoring model, including competing obligations that seem to exist for the mentoring teacher, the types of mentoring approaches taken by the mentoring teacher, and challenges that relate to the pre-service teacher.

The author also notes important positive dimensions that seem to emerge from the mentoring relationship, in particular many positive behaviours observed on the part of the mentor teacher, the development of proactive relationship priorities such as trust, collegiality and open communication, and a support dimension that encourages and rewards the efforts of the pre-service teacher.

Overall, Toohey reminds us that the mentoring relationship is complex and deeply connected to social/emotional dimensions, to the teaching and learning process, to being part of a team, and to connecting with all the
stakeholders involved. In effect, mentoring is about connecting with and contributing to the culture of a school. In keeping with many of the other authors represented in this volume, the imperative of this chapter is that teachers and teacher trainers work together to form partnerships, but Toohey also makes it clear that the inclusion of all stakeholders in the learning process is crucial to the ultimate success, and usefulness of, mentoring for the future.

In Chapter 8 Hart and Ward report on the development of a Centre for Excellence (C4E) program that has been designed to form a community of practice in the Coffs Harbour area of NSW. The C4E program seeks to inter-connect local schools, teachers, and the nearby regional university (Southern Cross University), in order to assist with the professional development of the school teachers, and to provide quality mentoring for pre-service teachers coming from the university. Having originated from the Federal Government’s Centre for Teaching Excellence project, the C4E program is an initiative of Coffs Harbour Senior College, which was one of thirty-six NSW schools to be designated as a Centre for Excellence in Teaching (C4E) in connection with the Commonwealth Governments’ National Partnerships Smarter Schools Improving Teacher Quality Program (2010).

Based on the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (2009), the C4E program is highly future-focused, and seeks to emphasise the sorts of attributes and professional developmental outcomes that are required for teaching in the 21st century.

In Chapter 9, Johnston notes that calls for change and revitalisation of teacher education in Australia fail to acknowledge the complexity and diversity involved in pre-service training. Johnston points out that we must initially recognise that the problems and issues involved in teacher training represent a “wicked problem” that is pervasive and entrenched within both the paradigm (an industrial revolution, market-based model) and program of teacher education (involving the quality of entrants, how technology is used in the training and issues relating to practicum). Johnston stresses the need to ignite passionate debate, re-visit the accreditation process, benchmark teacher training programs against successful programs elsewhere, and encourage generally “big” thinking, in order to address the breadth and scope of the “wicked problem” and enact genuine change.
In Chapter 10, Smith and Lynch provide an insight into a teacher education program, the Bachelor of Learning Management (BLM,) which they developed in early 2000 at Central Queensland University. The program is unique to teacher education in Australia because it represented the first major review and redevelopment of teacher education in 25 years and it was designed on elements that are fundamentally different from those of the pre-existing Bachelor of Education (BEd) program regime. In effect, this chapter provides an insight into what teacher education reform means for student teachers, teacher educators and the teaching profession as a whole.

In the concluding chapter, Chapter 11, Kathryn Jenkins investigates how new teachers are increasingly joining the ranks of the profession as casual and/or temporary teachers, rather than as permanent teachers. The itinerant nature and subsequent alienation of this work, plus the lack of systemic support received by the majority of these beginning casual teachers, Jenkins argues, appears to have ramifications for graduate job satisfaction, professional development and longevity within the profession. Some major research findings are highlighted in this chapter concerning the nature of casual teaching and the contradictions with which casual teachers struggle in schools.

Taken together these eleven chapters provide an insight into teacher education in Australia and the implications for teacher education programming, practicum and partnerships, circa 2013. Chapter contributions have been peer reviewed.

Reference List


Chapter 2: The Challenge of Changing Teacher Education

David Lynch & Richard Smith

This article is about the challenges of changing teacher education in Australia. While the ‘problems’ of teacher education have been well documented for over 30 years in the literature, they constantly re-emerge in reports and academic papers globally. This chapter unravels some of the real politik that confront change agents. The examples are drawn from both New South Wales and the Australian government levels.

In the last decade in Australia, teacher education has undergone numerous critical reviews (See for example Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training 2007; Committee for the Review of Teaching and Teacher Education 2003; Skilbeck & Connell, 2003; Ramsay, 2000). Despite these reviews, however, little on the teacher education front appears to have changed. On a related front the teaching profession’s struggles to cope with a changing world have been documented (See Smith & Lynch, 2010; Fullan, 2007; MACER, 2004; Hargreaves, 2003; Marzano, 2003), and an increasing push from Australian governments for improved school outcomes at both the state and federal level are regular pieces in the national press (See for example: Dillon, 2011; Hattie, 2011; Jensen, 2011; Ferrari, 2007).

A cadre of teacher education commentators call for a rethink on teacher education (See for example, Smith & Lynch, 2010; Hattie, 2009; Dinham et al., 2008; Fullan, 2007; Korthagen et al., 2006; Sachs & Groundwater-Smith, 2006; Darling-Hammond & Bransford-Snowden, 2005). Most pointedly John Hattie, an educational researcher, argues: “the current teacher training model is bankrupt and a disruptive model is needed to show a better way” (2011, p 1). He goes on to say:
... there is a need for more exciting and effective ways to educate teachers across their teaching life. After school sessions, warm tea, and cold seats are a poor basis for learning. Perhaps those claiming to be involved are funded only if they can show, with the teachers that they have demonstrable gains on the students’ learning from the professional development provided.

Parallel to this, technological innovations have affected social communications so that many teachers struggle to stay up to date (Rudd & Smith, 2007; Florida, 2006). It seems somewhat ironic that schools, given their nineteenth century hallmarks, and society form a distinct contrast of life forms, yet the former are supposed to serve the latter (Smith & Lynch, 2010; Hattie, 2009; Fullan, 2007). Commentators offer solutions to such discontinuities by providing a different concept of the teacher’s role: ‘The Learning Manager’ (Smith & Lynch, 2010) and ‘The Teacherpreneur’ (Berry, 2011). Others signal the need for a different education system altogether: ‘Student-centric Technologies’ (Christensen et al., 2011) and ‘One Stop Schooling Shops’ (Fullan, 2007; Cole, 1999). Taken together, these are perhaps canaries for a system of education that is now past its use-by-date.

Broadly speaking, teacher educators and the teacher profession have continued to do what they have always done despite calls for fundamental change (See Hattie, 2011 and 2009; Fullan, 2007, p. 264, Hargreaves, 2003). At the political level and in the bureaucracies that surround education, systems have either ignored or been timid about the need to reform teacher education and teaching. They rest comfortably on the conundrum that schools and teachers, and in turn teacher educators are able to generate social value and productivity by doing what has always been done (Fullan, 2007). For their part, universities play the game of enrolling yet more undergraduates in conventional largely ineffective programs because they generate enrolment statistics and revenue (Smith and Lynch, 2010). Thus, “graduates are still being hired: if they (teacher education faculties) are failing they are doing so quietly” (United States Teaching Commission Report, cited in Fullan, 2007, p. 275).

Over time, education systems and teacher education have been able to resist or dilute pressures for change by such things such as producer capture, industrial agreements and the nature of the associated reward systems. It appears to us that the teacher education industry is living on borrowed time.
As Hattie (2011) and Christensen (2011) argue, a disruptive teacher education model is needed to show a better way.

In 2012, the New South Wales Australia State government launched yet another review of teacher education and related matters under the title of ‘Great Teaching Inspired Learning’ (GTIL) (New South Wales Government, 2012). In his introduction to the discussion paper, the Education Minister queries how well initial teacher education prepares teachers for 21st century classrooms (New South Wales Government, 2012, p. 2). Leaving aside the inherent issues of ‘21st century classrooms’, this query is no stranger to the many commentators and researchers who have examined teacher education during past decades (See Lynch and Smith, 2012; Lynch, 2012; Fullan, 2007; Ramsay, 2000).

While we applaud the NSW minister for his desire to change teacher education and to focus attention on teaching, we are well aware of the many hurdles that such an agenda will encounter. What follows offers an insight into what will constitute the necessary conditions for changing teacher education in NSW.

**Teacher Education in NSW**

In our view, one of the strongest claims for re-shaping schooling and teacher education is the social change argument. Any number of commentators has remarked on how the worlds of life and work have changed dramatically over the past forty years, and that technological innovation coupled with human creativity and entrepreneurial flair, have radically altered domestic and international relations. The digital world has enormous effects on social relations, culture, politics, and of course economic relations. In such conditions, education is a key to being able to live and work in a global society as well as providing opportunities for improving the well being of people in less advantaged locations and environments. Consequently schools and teachers, and by direct association teacher education, come into sharp focus according to international criteria, whether they want to or not (Lynch, 2012).

Despite these environmental changes, which frame every aspect of life and work in Australia, teacher education has remained largely unchanged. There
are few rewards or incentives for those involved in teacher education to change what is largely an efficient model for grinding out graduates and creating a lucrative revenue source for universities. There are no formalised feedback mechanisms or accountability measures that check the quality of teaching graduates or of programs that have real teeth. Moreover, these programs represent the supply side economics of higher education, a mode that is increasingly compromised in a highly digitised and global economic environment (Lynch, 2012).

In the context of these remarks, we discuss three aspects of teacher education in NSW as sites for reform: university-based teacher education, an evidence base to teaching and effective teacher education partnerships. We discuss each in turn.

(1) University based Teacher Education
Australian universities over past decades have demonstrated neither the desire nor the capacities to change their approaches to teacher education. This is a reflection of the current university funding model, accreditation body requirements and the lack of accountability in the teacher education industry for the effectiveness of programs to graduate effective teachers. To reiterate, the system lacks either incentives or criteria for universities and teacher educators to change their approaches to teacher education. We can site only one known example where graduates of a teacher education program were evaluated and compared to others from different programs in the entire history of teacher education in Australia (Ingvarsen et al, 2005).

To be fair, the reward system for university-based teacher educators is tied to the competitive university research output economy. Research interests and procedures rest with individual teacher education faculty. Arguably, the bulk of the research produced by educational researchers has marginal relevance for the advancement of teaching or teacher education, in spite of its excellence according to disciplinary, peer and other criteria. It is not surprising then that teacher education is heavily concerned with theoretical discussions drawn from disciplines such as sociology that severely chastise attempts to focus on teaching and improving school achievement outcomes. This environment can and does lead to an over emphasis on the theorisation of teaching and associated ideologies at the expense of the practice of teaching (Smith and Lynch, 2010).
In summary, teacher education is a seemingly impregnable fortress tenaciously defending its ground without the reflexivity to appreciate its diminishing status as the new conditions demand new solutions to old problems.

(2) An Evidence Base to Teacher Education

It is apparent from the teacher education literature that much of what constitutes teacher education in Australia is devoid of an evidence base about what actually “works” when the aim is to graduate expert teachers (Smith and Lynch, 2010; Fullan, 2007).

There is an accumulating database of well-researched teaching strategies that can be properly called essential professional knowledge for teachers. It is analogous to the knowledge that nurses, doctors and pilots use to prepare for practice. The important point here is that this accumulating knowledge is generated by theory-based research on how people learn best as an effect of skilful teaching (Hattie, 2009).

With all of the dangers of over-reaching the point, teacher education staff model work in an environment where approaches and content are determined by individual lecturers. While degrees are stringently structured by external criteria prescribed by accreditation agencies, the four-year undergraduate BEd program for example can have as many approaches to teaching and education as there are faculty. Some see this proliferation as a rich, educative environment.

Others, particularly reformers, see it as a wasted opportunity for faculty to present a strong emphasis on teaching and a language of instruction that graduates can carry as evidence of their expertness in teaching. The common research finding that teacher graduates find little of value in their university education studies has to interpreted against a four year experience of grand social theories, ideological standpoints on such things as race, class, and gender, learning and teaching and ‘old-hand’ teaching tricks, offered in fragmented programs (Lynch, 2012).

This enormous set of bits and pieces is reinforced by school practicums that reflect the view that every teacher has their own approach to teaching. New
teachers are compelled to adopt a *bricoleur* approach to teaching, where double guessing the assessment system is the paramount concern (Hatton, 1989). Rarely are student teachers or their in-school supervisors made accountable for the new teacher’s capacity to teach. Handelsman et al. (2004, p. 521 cited in Kirschner et al, 2006, p. 84), who, when discussing science education, asked: “Why do outstanding scientists who demand rigorous proof for scientific assertions in their research continue to use and, indeed defend on the bias of intuition alone, teaching methods that are not the most effective?

In this respect, teacher education unwittingly operates in a data-free zone shaped and driven by folklore and sustained by mirror-image thinking about teaching in the schools. The images later appear in the accreditation documents used by state and national authorities as they tap into the ‘experience’ of classroom teachers and teacher educators (Lynch, 2012).

(3) The Teacher Education Practicum

Like all vocational courses, teacher education relies on employers and the associated profession to provide the practical experiences required for graduation. At the centre of such a circumstance in teacher education is ‘the practicum’. The teacher education literature is rich with findings about the problematic nature of ‘partnering with schools’ to deliver teacher education programs (See for example; Moran, et al, 2009; Fullan, 2007; Smith, 2000). As Spendlove, Howes and Wake (2010, p. 67) note, “Generally a polarised view exists where school experience focuses trainees very much on day-to-day pragmatics of working in school classrooms while staff in HEIs attempt to provide the theoretical basis to underpin and interpret these school-based activities”.

This kind of situation is prevalent, indeed conventional, in the Australian context, where most university/school-based teacher education arrangements today are primarily managed by a university ‘teacher education faculty’. The schools in this model are recipients of already digested policies and procedures that, at the local school level, have token validation by committees consisting of academic and school staff. Teacher education accreditation agencies provide the authority for such arrangements through the tiers of compliance procedures now required by governments at both state and national levels. The management of teacher education programs, the maintenance of the ‘school-university relationship’ and the
organisational logistics fall to the university alone (Moran, et al, 2009; Fullan, 2007).

An effect of the highly theorised and disconnected nature of teacher education is that the practicum comes to be viewed as an ‘add-on” despite its arguably important role in the preparation of teachers. This ‘add-on’ effect means the practicum is often disconnected from the real industrial and educational life of schools and other places of teaching. Student teachers struggle to “survive” rather than mastering a pedagogic framework endorsed by their university lecturers and school mentors alike. “Partnerships” with schools are more often than not token arrangements to enable a teacher education faculty to gain practicum entry in schools for student teachers. This situation reflects the logical dislocation of conventional teacher education programs that lack priority for the in situ aspects of teaching. The over-arching tragedy is that while teacher education is not accountable for its graduate outcomes, there is an unchallenged and near universal belief that new teachers learn how to teach when they begin work as teachers. Teacher education research agendas fail to ask critical questions in this area that would lead them to alternative framing of old obstacles (Lynch and Smith, 2012).

What Needs to Change
Drawing on our previously published works into what works in teacher education (See Lynch, 2012; Smith and Lynch, 2010) there are two essential attributes of an effective pre-service teacher education program: (i) An integrated, coherent approach to “teaching” throughout the program and (ii) Graduates who are able to demonstrate effective teaching capability on graduation. We argue that all else is commentary. With these points in mind a teacher education reform agenda emerges that has five necessary pre-requisites:

(i) An agreement on the contents of the teacher preparation program and how it is implemented by university, school leadership and teaching staff. Minimally, there must be a shared language of instruction and a shared mode of implementation for which all parties are responsible and accountable.

(ii) A program-wide course content emphasis on “pedagogy”. That is, curriculum matters such as converting knowledge to teachable chunks,
assessment, reporting, generating and interpreting student achievement data, progress, performance standards, codes of conduct and so on should be premised on optimising school student achievement outcomes by effective teaching.

(iii) Support for pre-service teachers by coaching, mentoring, and guided implementation provided by skilled professional educators who are part of the agreed program (as in i). Proliferation of approaches should be on the ‘risk’ list rather than being applauded.

(iv) Student teacher performance evaluated by teaching standards that mandate effective teaching in contrast to those which set out the attributes of the ideal teacher. Similarly, teacher performance should be framed in the same way.

(v) Pre-service teaching programs should be based on “effective teaching outcomes” in contrast to prescribed time periods for accreditation purposes. This would allow institutional partnerships (i. above) to implement programs that meet prescribed outcome requirements without being placed in an artificial straitjacket drawn from a particular ideological perspective on teaching education and teachers. There is no evidence that “doing time” for instance contributes to a prospective teacher’s knowledge and skill base for effective teaching performance. An accreditation agency should have mandatory quality checks on the graduates of programs rather than insisting on front end busy-work that requires enormous energy and resources to provide.

In coming to the point of setting an agenda for what needs to change in teacher education in NSW, it becomes apparent that a number of governmental constraints are exerted on the above prerequisites and which, ironically, have the capacity to significantly impede a government’s own agenda, not to mention those of reformers. In our estimation the teacher education accreditation process in NSW is a good place to start.

**Teachers Education Accreditation in NSW**

The development of teacher education programs in NSW and elsewhere in Australia is wholly controlled by the accreditation process established by law (New South Wales Institute of Teachers, 2006). We have no argument about such a mechanism “in principle”. However, if it is believed that university teacher education programs are a fundamental mechanism for improving student outcomes and boosting Australia’s current international education performance trajectory, and in turn, that reform in this arena could be scaled across the education system to achieve a wide scale shift in school
outcomes, then the content of the accreditation requirements need urgent attention. For example, the following statement of intent in our view misses the point.

The Institute supports quality teaching in all NSW schools. Its charter is to advance the status and standing of the teaching profession.¹

That is, the intent should properly be “Its charter is to optimize student achievement levels in NSW schools by continually improving effective teaching performance”.

The importance of such a shift in emphasis can be identified throughout the Policy and Procedures for the Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs in NSW document. All such programs need approval to operate and must conform to a set of standards, viz:

An approved course means an initial teacher education program approved by the Minister under the professional teaching standards (Section 28). (Emphasis added)

Again, there is no argument here in principle, but consequent statements constrain the degrees of freedom of program developers. They also ensure that every program has the same look and feel, a joy for the regulators, but one would have thought a threat to the program content proliferators in university-based teacher education programs.

Approval of an initial teacher education program is based on an assessment that the program’s structure, curriculum content, assessment and professional experience components enable graduates to meet the professional teaching standards as approved by the Minister (Sections 19 and 20). (Emphasis added).

the Graduate Teacher Standards are an essential component of curriculum for all initial teacher education programs approved by the Institute; (Emphasis added)

and,

all significant curriculum development processes relating to initial teacher education programs to be approved by the Institute, include input from practising teachers; (Emphasis added)

The “standards” to which the policy refers are set out by AITSL. Under “Graduate Teacher Standard #3—Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning”, “teaching” or the “how” of teaching, is left untouched. Almost anything that describes “teaching” would pass muster in wording that conceals while endorsing the “thousand flowers” approach to teaching. This is the very approach that leads to unsystematic, ineffective teaching and ordinary student outcomes, despite the accumulating body of knowledge about teaching strategies that work best.

The accumulating research on effective teaching shows that not all teaching approaches used by experienced teachers are equally effective in achieving desired student achievement outcomes. Teacher education programs ought to ensure that their graduates know and can use such strategies as minimal requirements.

Under Program Standards #4 and 5, programs “must be sequenced coherently to reflect effective connections between theory and practice” and “Providers have established enduring school partnerships to deliver their programs, particularly the professional experience component” respectively (Emphasis added).

These requirements effectively reinforce the conventional teacher education model by raising the long-standing “theory-practice gap” but doing nothing about it. There are no substantive suggestions about what is meant here. However, the “their programs” inadvertently exposes the underlying ideological position and acknowledges the “us” and “them” relationship between universities and schools that has been a source of constant criticism for decades. 21st partnerships do not work with top down prescription. The “partnership” concept without a working partnership between all interested parties is at best, token.

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The research-based knowledge is that successful teacher education, the graduation of effective teachers, is no longer possible in the token model. School leaders and teachers do not like it. In increasing numbers, school leaders, as their power and authority build-up, will make strategic judgments about whether or not to enter lop-sided pseudo partnerships with universities for practicum purposes. Their concern will be “What is in this for my school and my strategic plan” (Turner, 2012). Universities will have to think hard about they can contribute to such challenges.

Moreover, Program Standard 5.6 states that:

Providers require that the supervised teaching practice:

• mandates at least a satisfactory formal assessment of the program’s students against the professional practice elements of the Graduate Teacher Standards as a requirement for graduating from the program (Emphasis added)

“Satisfactory” is clearly a category that has numerous meanings. The standard would be more pertinent if it specified what was required of graduating teachers in respect to effective teaching. As already indicated, there is no guarantee that graduates in such a regime can demonstrate effective teaching capacity and it follows, schools may have to retrain “satisfactory” graduates who are unable to do what they are employed to do, namely teach effectively.

The real politik though, is that Schools of Education and Vice Chancellors can justify “satisfactory” teacher graduates because they apply for university places, graduate and some get jobs irrespective of their exit quality. Universities receive commonwealth funding for them irrespective of the outcomes. Teacher education is therefore inextricably implicated in the slipping NAPLAN and PISA performances of schools and teachers, yet deny accountability.

The point of these details is that the entire edifice of state and commonwealth accreditation reinforces the conventional teacher education model in a watertight regime that links a conventional program model, to standards which do not prioritise “teaching” or specify research-based
knowledge about teaching, and in which the criteria for graduation avoid a requirement for demonstrated teaching performance.

This edifice is reinforced by the requirements of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) that places a time-based structure on university qualifications that is heavily weighted to research and academic career tracks culminating in the doctorate. This constraint does not necessarily contribute to the production of quality teachers.

**Solution**

The accreditation edifice is, in our view, *important and should be retained*. However, if the goal is to lift school performance, it will take a reform of pre- and in-service teacher education. It will take more than money. It requires a thorough reform of “what” teacher education priorities are and “how” they are implemented.

1. The initial starting point is a *complete review and re-write of the “standards” framework content* so that the standards place high priority on effective teaching rather than the attributes of the ideal teacher. Such an approach *includes a robust model for university-school partnerships* that embody real-world criteria for how professional partnerships operate. The Teaching Hospital model, reflected in a “Teaching School” approach offers a major turn-around for preparing effective teachers. Reform of the required standards alone would *radically alter what the NSW Minister signs off on when being advised by the NSW Institute of Teachers*.

2. The membership of the NSW Institute and its network in teacher education institutions and schools represent the conventional model. In parallel to the reform of standards, *this membership and its networks require replacement or at least a majority membership* by those who understand the world from a “teaching” perspective and are actually interested in raising the standard of school student achievement by changing the priority given to teaching and the preparation of teachers.

3. There are some IR issues to do with the coaching, mentoring and role of student teachers in Teaching Schools that need attention. It is important that student teachers undergo an internship in Teaching Schools and that their status is one of “Permission to Teach” or
similar and that they are paid for their work (e.g. .5 of a beginning teacher salary).

It is also desirable for the status of the profession and for the development of an effective teaching culture that practising teachers have a Masters Qualification Bar somewhere near the middle of their salary scale. The uplifting and refreshing of teacher professional knowledge could be directly influenced if the Masters is required of teachers and if they could undertake the qualification in a work setting. There are implications for the salary scales and position descriptions of school leaders and expert teachers here.

So what do we make from all this?

It is clear from our discussions that teacher education appears an intractable problem for Australian society. Coupled with this, there are few rewards for teacher education academics to pursue whole scale reform, which further exacerbates the problem of teacher education. The system of university-based teacher education also comes into focus, as does the Government’s role in how teaching and teacher education is organised and regulated. However this does not mean all hope is lost. As indicated, previous strategies such as reviewing the content and structure of teacher education program accreditation, which puts a clear emphasis on ‘teaching’ and ‘teaching performance’, appear to make sense, and we believe such strategies form a realistic beginning to the generation of authentic and relevant change.

Reference List


Teacher education in Australia has been the subject of numerous reviews over recent decades. Each report has highlighted the problematic nature of the current model of teacher education in Australia. In this chapter mentor attitudes to the Bachelor of Education program are examined for points of reference.

Over past decades there have been countless inquiries conducted and numerous articles written, each questioning the efficacy of teacher education in Australia (See for example: ‘Top of the Class’, 2007; Committee for the Review of Teaching and Teacher Education 2003; Sachs and Groundwater-Smith, 2006; Lynch, 2012; Smith and Lynch, 2010). Notable is an article published in 2000 by Smith (2000) and his various follow-up pieces since (See Lynch and Smith, 2012; Lynch and Smith (2011); Smith and Lynch, 2010). Smith’s central proposition is that the university-dominated pre-service teacher education model in Australia had served its historical life. His assertion reflected the central premise of previously cited inquiries.

More specifically, Smith argued for a rethink of the prevailing teacher education rationale, content and delivery model so that there was a better fit with the demands of an emergent society. A problem remains, however, in that despite such critiques the predominant model of teacher education—the Bachelor of Education (BEd) - albeit with some periodic tweaks in response to various government agency attempts to refocus or reform teacher education over past decades, continues largely unchanged (See Ashenden, 2013; Smith and Lynch, 2010; Lynch and Smith, 2011). As the chapters in this book highlight, teacher education, with its 1960’s and 70’s hallmarks, is problematic in a number of ways!
On another front the performance of Australian school students is being called into question as reports such as PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) indicate that the relative performance of Australian students on the world stage is slipping. Teacher education once again is implicated as various commentators call for an overhaul of the current regime of teacher education (See Thompson et al, 2009; Jensen, 2011). In Australia the predominating model of teacher education is the four year Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) degree, and this chapter will focus on this model as providing the elements for necessary change. In relation to this, we examine the results of a study into the attitudes of classroom teachers who acted as practicum ‘mentors’ for their final year teaching students in a Queensland BEd program. First, however, we need to outline the Bachelor of Education program concept for points of reference.

The Current Model of Teacher Education

Pre-service teacher education was born during the early 19th Century as “on-the-job” training regimes, where teaching skills were mastered mainly through practical experience, without any specific training criteria (Lynch, 2012). The ‘new teacher’ learned their trade after a study of subject matter, and while acting as an apprentice teacher. Psychological and pedagogical knowledge began to develop during the late 19th and early 20th Century leading to a ‘professionalising’ of teaching and, consequently, the formalising of teacher training programs through teacher training colleges (Fullan, 2007; Korthagen, 2001). During the second half of the 20th century a growing professional knowledge base, spurred-on by a political desire within western countries to educate students of all abilities, created knowledge domains which became central components of formal courses in teacher pre-service education; firstly within specialised teacher training colleges and later as education faculties in university (Korthagen, 2001; Furlong, Barton, Miles, Whiting & Whitty, 2000).

Since the 1960s teachers were elevated to professional status and teacher-training colleges were progressively incorporated into universities and colleges of higher education, and teacher training became ‘degree worthy’. The courses comprised sociology, history, psychology and philosophy, and theory associated with these disciplines became the universal basis of education degrees (Furlong, Barton, Miles, Whiting, & Whitty, 2000). In this
respect Wilkin (1996) suggests that the 1970s entailed a period of ideological confusion in teacher education, as there was no consistent ideological context or influence inside or outside governments, as well as no coherent presentation of principles or priorities upon which to base educational training. Further, education employer groups, together with classroom teaching practitioners, became critical of teacher training courses, believing they were based too much upon theory that had little or no connection to practice. Of importance to this discussion, the same concern has continued to the present day (See Smith and Lynch, 2010; Ramsey, 2000; Smith, 2000).

By the 1990s teacher education programs comprised two key organisational components: a course of formal university study over four years (course work) and in-school practicums known as ‘fieldwork’ (up to 80 days of required practice in a classroom in a school) (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Furlong, et al., 2000). Course-work is the main component of a contemporary teacher education program and is typically prepared by ‘faculty-based specialists’ and then presented to students ‘on-campus’ through a lecture/tutorial configuration (Hagger & McIntyre, 2000; Tom, 1997) and organised around the same professional knowledge domains as attributed to the 1960s. It is of interest that this approach represents the profile of the BEd at the university under focus.

Tom (1997, p.48) cites four common criticisms of teacher education programs throughout the western world (See also Ashenden, 2013; Hattie, 2009 and 2011; Smith & Lynch, 2010; and Fullan, 2007): ‘The programs’… ‘are vapid, impractical, segmented and directionless’. Specifically Tom (1997) contends that courses are often superficial and fail to embody the practical knowledge and skills needed by beginning teachers, tending instead to cover pedagogical material that could be better learned in an apprentice situation, an approach to teacher training covered in several other chapters in this volume. Further, courses tend to have little relationship to each other, often because they have been developed and delivered in separate ‘schools’ or areas within an education faculty and delivered by specialists in equal isolation. As well, much of the content of teacher education course-work is aligned to the research interests of university academics, as promotion is tied to the necessity to ‘publish’, and that “the conventional teacher education model’ has largely managed to avoid accountability for specific
developmental sequences and particular kinds of course-school linkages, except at a global, program level” (Lynch, 2012; Smith, 2000; Tom, 1997).

Given this segmentation, courses are often not grounded in a common set of educational purposes, themes or assumptions, leading to a program that becomes a collection of disconnected theoretical components (Lynch, 2012). Lyndaker (1990) cited in Tom (1997, p.50) concludes that “most of these courses had nothing to do with survival in a classroom and many [courses] were taught by professors who had grand theories but little or no teaching experience”. Even with the pressures arising from social and economic changes discussed earlier, few teacher education courses in Australia have been restructured and revised to address these concerns (Hattie, 2011; Smith & Lynch, 2010; Smith, 2000), and such programs can be classified as ”conventional BEd programs”. Thus, there are problems with current educational training that stem from the historical design of teacher education degrees, and yet have not been addressed by the calls for reform (Smith & Lynch, 2010).

While the vast majority of teaching academics emerged from classrooms as teachers, their focus tends more on the theory for preparation than practice regimes, and thus the BEd has tended to have a predominance of theory over practice in its structure. As also noted in the other chapters of this volume, the literature confirms that the current practicum arrangements with schools and classroom teachers all too often operates as another impediment to preparing teachers (Lynch and Smith, 2012). In simple terms, this is largely the result of the differing teaching world views as represented by ‘university faculty life’ and the realities of modern classrooms. Consequently the logistics involved in maintaining a faculty-school relationship that best supports teaching students whilst on practicum is complex and time consuming and requiring much problem solving for effect. Limited funding is another oft cited reason for the practicum having a lower priority and thus minimal numbers of contact days. Regardless of the rationale presented, however, classroom teachers all too often view ‘hosting’ a student teacher for the BEd practicum as an inconvenient and one-sided (i.e. for universities) chore. Clearly the existing training model does not provide the basis for a viable and sustainable relationship upon which to prepare teachers (Lynch and Smith, 2012; Lynch, 2012).
On yet another front, the BEd now operates in a changed socio-economic circumstance, one that is a significant departure from the 1960/70’s when the conventional BEd model was conceptualised and developed, and when most teacher educators underwent ‘training’ themselves. In specific terms, the emergence of a Knowledge Economy in the 1990’s has fundamentally changed society, due mainly to: (1) a rapid, ongoing and increasing pace of technological innovation and shorter technology and product life cycles (Freeman and Soete, 1997); (2) new economic communities, whose prime function is the distribution and exchange of goods across national and continental borders; and (3) a market that is increasingly technical and with consumers that are more informed (Freeman and Soete, 1997; Robertson, 1993).

Consequently it is argued a ‘worker’ in the ‘Knowledge Economy’ will require characteristics including: an ability to adapt to constant change and uncertainty; capacity to work in knowledge and service-based economies; and participate as a constructive member in cohesive social communities (Edgar, 1999; Education Queensland, 2000). Accordingly, these arguments suggest such social changes and the emergence of the Knowledge Economy will entail a different education and schooling system to that which presently exists. The main premise of the proposition being put forward in this chapter is that current schooling and teaching reflects the features of an industrial society, and, because society has changed, the education and schooling system, including primarily teacher training, requires significant change and restructuring (Bentley, 1998). This brings the focus of these discussions directly onto the efficacy of the predominant BEd program regime, to which we now turn.

In line with the mentoring and partnership models of teacher training promoted widely throughout this volume, we now turn our attentions to a study of mentor perceptions concerning the Bachelor of Education program at one Queensland university. In presenting this study we seek to position the BEd in terms of how it performs and how it is viewed by involved mentors as primary points of reference. To this purpose the study asked in-school teaching mentors (classroom teachers employed by the BEd program to ‘supervise’ and ‘mentor’ teaching students during a final program practicum) their perceptions of the BEd program they were involved with.
Methodology

The study used a mail-out Likert scaled questionnaire and semi-structured interviews to determine the attitudes of school-based mentors towards the Bachelor of Education program offered at one university in Queensland. The particular context of these teachers was that they had ‘hosted’ a final year (thus near to graduation) BEd teaching student, as part of their mentoring involvement. There were 153 mentors who completed the questionnaire and 96 mentors who were interviewed, and participant characteristics appeared normally distributed, with no statistical differences between the teachers in terms of location, age, gender, age or degree. Mentors were asked questions about their experience with the BEd program by reflecting on their allocated teaching student, all of whom were on their last practicum and thus ready to graduate. For clarity, we refer to these final year students (i.e. those who have completed their final practicum and thus ready to graduate) as “teaching students”, and the children learning in classrooms as “pupils”. A number of results of interest to this chapter were found. Data reported is part of a larger study conducted by Lynch in 2005.

The Results

Working on the premise that the BEd is designed to prepare teachers for work as ‘teachers’ on graduation mentors were first asked to define what they thought ‘workplace ready’ meant for a new-to-service teacher. In other words, what are the things the new to service has to know and be able to do to successfully work as a teacher from day one of graduation? Three distinct themes emerged following analysis of the mentor’s responses:

1. Elements of teacher work that are associated with relationships to students and others,
2. Professional knowledge sets associated with teaching, and
3. Personal attributes that underpin a teacher.

Specifically, we interpreted these themes to mean a student teacher’s ability to ‘get on’ with pupils, staff members and parents in the school context, the ability to plan and ‘deliver’ the school curriculum with sufficient knowledge and expertise, and the display of personality factors commonly associated with being a “teacher”. Mentors also identified the notion of having
‘confidence’ and a ‘flexible outlook’ as important attributes of a graduate teacher. Respondents 1-22 and 1-23 made comments typical of such:

*Workplace ready* is someone who is ready on day 1 to meet and greet parents, knows what to do with all the books that are brought in with the children, how to set the classroom up, how to find help, if they need help. (1-22)

Globally it means, that they’ve got a good strong sense of their identity and where the school fits in as an organisation, know their own strengths and those of the people in the school, how they can relate to students. Initiating, engaged in partnership, connected classroom to the world out there. (4-11)

Mentors were asked to identify the specific capabilities that a new to service teacher needed for work in today’s schools. Responses comprised lists of skill attributes centred on four domains:

1. Skills that are associated with cognitive/academic ability
2. Technical skills associated with teaching
3. Inter-personal skills, and
4. A professional knowledge base associated with teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive / Academic Skills</th>
<th>Technical Skills</th>
<th>Inter-personal Skills</th>
<th>Professional Knowledge Base</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Reflect on practice</td>
<td>• Manage behaviour</td>
<td>• Communicate with various stakeholders</td>
<td>• Curriculum knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Intellectual capacity</td>
<td>• Plan lessons</td>
<td>• Work as a team player</td>
<td>• Pedagogic strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Organised</td>
<td>• Use ICTs</td>
<td>• Accept advice and guidance</td>
<td>• Child development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Apply critical thinking</td>
<td>• Manage / use resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Flexible attitude</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Table 1: Mentor Identified Workplace Ready Capabilities

A review of the literature confirms these identified ‘elements’ are referred to as ‘teacher centred activities’ (See Lynch, 2012; Dimmock, 2000; Hargreaves, 2003; 1998; 1997; Hood, 1999; Ryan, 1998). These data suggest that specific elements of workplace readiness, as detailed by the mentors, mirror those of
‘teacher centred’ activities. Table 1 provides a sample of the skill attributes identified by mentors.

Mentors were asked for the three most common problems that they faced as a teacher. Responses to this question were extraordinarily similar. Managing behaviour, dealing with time constraints and dealing with change and its ramifications were the typical responses given by the majority of mentors. Mentors 3-4 and 5-3 made responses that were typical of other mentors:

> There is a lack of time in the school day to cover the things that need to be covered…. subject content and the ongoing curriculum changes and additions. We have a lack of resources such as material and human support resources. Finding a balance for all the students and their needs is a big problem. Coping with change as we are in a new world with new stuff to learn for a changing world, such as ICT skills, solving emergent ever changing problems and the pressure to achieve defined learning outcomes for all learners. (3-4)

> Behaviour management is a big issue today: different children, different likes and we are expected to have the answers. (5-3)

Mentors were asked to detail any ‘new problems’ they faced that challenged their ability to ‘cope’. By ‘new problems’ we meant teaching related problems that were only emerging now and thus not a concern when they were trained as a teacher. Their responses mirrored responses previously. There was nothing in the data to suggest that these problems were ‘new’, however.

Mentors were asked to think about the directions social change might take in the future, and to detail what they thought teachers must be able to do better in order to deal with such social change. The majority of mentors thought teachers would have to be; ‘better communicators’ and develop skill sets associated with counselling students, use various information communication technologies and associated technological advancements; and be prepared to take on differing roles as families ‘broke down’ and society ‘turned to schools and teachers’ for ‘answers’. One mentor offered this advice to members of the teaching profession, and this typified other mentor responses:

> Teachers must be able to speak-up, get a voice to express their concerns, so they are not just victims of the change…. that they have opportunity to initiate and make
suggestions for change. An awareness of one’s professional skill profile as things change - more ongoing PD required. Skills to manage the diverse behaviours of students will become critical. How one gets time to do this is anyone’s guess (3-4).

Again, these interview data reveal that, like the previous interview questions, managing behaviour, dealing with time constraints and constant change, are recurring themes in mentor responses.

In summary, mentors had a clear idea about ‘workplace readiness’ for new to service teachers, and the themes of workplace readiness identified by the mentors were associated with cognitive skills, technical teaching skills, inter-personal skills and a professional knowledge base associated with teaching children. Underpinning these themes, as we indicated earlier, is the notion of ‘teacher centred’ activities. Given these elements, it can be hypothesised that (near to graduate) teaching students require a knowledge and skill base associated with teacher centred activities. Specifically, this means capabilities that enable a teacher to manage the behaviour of students, to work in a context of time constraints and to deal with constant change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentor Defined Attributes</th>
<th>Example of Attribute</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developed and maintain effective relationships with students and others</td>
<td>Easy to get on with Approachable Liked children Good communicator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had professional knowledge sets associated with the business of teaching</td>
<td>Planning skills Assessment strategies Delivery strategies Knowledge of curriculum and its content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had personal attributes that underpinned the work of a teacher</td>
<td>Listened to advice Had a ‘presence’ in the classroom Organised and reliable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Students who Excel in Workplace Readiness Capabilities

Given these insights the questioning required becomes one of how well prepared were ‘their’ BEd teaching students and thus the readiness of these students for work as a qualified teacher, following their final practicum?
The interview recommenced with a pursing of the concept of student teacher readiness. We asked mentors to identify the specific ‘workplace ready capabilities’ in which their student teacher excelled. Three themes emerged: develop and maintain effective relationships with students and others, professional knowledge sets associated with teaching; and personal attributes underpinning teacher work. Table 2 contains the attributes of graduate students who excelled in workplace ready capabilities.

Mentors who considered they were workplace ready, made comments such as:

_The student excelled in planning and implementing the planning. Their assessing of the needs of the children and catering for individuals as well as their behaviour management techniques were good. Built relationships with all stakeholders (1-6)_

_organisation, communication with parents, willingness and enthusiasm; good knowledge (1-9)_

Mentors, who thought their teaching student was workplace ready, generally commented that short term planning and knowledge of curriculum content were good. In comparison, some mentors felt that knowledge of curriculum content was lacking in some teaching students. Many mentors commented that student teacher contact with the school for practical teaching sessions was limited for most BEd students. Mentors of BEd students with limited final practicum days (i.e. 3 or 4 weeks), who also had a perspective on ‘other’ teacher preparation programs that had longer practicum arrangements, such as an internship of 10 consecutive weeks, were critical of the BEd student’s building of relationships with students, as illustrated by three comments that follow:

_In regard to the BEd student’s interpersonal skills.... it seemed an effort to build a relationship with others in the school (3-1 – experienced mentor and primary school teacher)_

The second comment is from a secondary teaching mentor who was in her first year as a teacher. She used her own experience of the BEd preparation program to support comments of her BEd student:
The teaming stuff……working across subject areas, out of the department…not there, not seen. As an undergrad I never was given opportunity to focus on relationship building (4-21)

…relationships building with parents; interviews, interactions, not evident with [the BEd student] (1-17 – first time BEd mentor)

Comments typical of these BEd mentors with respect to the workplace ready capabilities of their BEd students are given below.

The BEd student knew how to cry when things got too much…. and how to download from the internet (1-22 Experienced BEd mentor)

We asked mentors to make comments on the graduate workplace readiness capabilities that student teachers lacked. Most mentors felt their teaching student lacked behaviour management skills and specialist content knowledge to teach certain subjects. Mentors commented that some teaching students could not make the theory to practice link, despite having a sound content knowledge. The two mentor comments that follow illustrate this:

Theory to practice,… making the link. Student would say they learn such and such at university and how they had to bring it across in prac. and this was quite difficult for them. Didn’t link theory to practice well. Could self evaluate well (5-4)

Didn’t know how to access resources or plan and prepare, or much about levels of learning (1-24).

We asked mentors to judge their graduate student’s capability to deliver key outcomes that underpin the role of teacher: that of achieving learning outcomes in pupils. More, we asked them to specifically judge the overall performance of their student teacher in reference to a variety of teaching attributes (See Table 3). Note that overall, an average of 61.42% (range as low as 17% for one element-Interview Question [15G], which dealt specifically with Achieving learning outcomes for all pupils) of BEd students (mean score of 1.27 indicating a low response to yes on average) were rated as being able to deliver on such outcomes, with 38.5% rated as not able to deliver on these outcomes. Importantly, only 17% of teaching students were considered capable of ‘achieving learning outcomes in all
learners’, with 83% considered as not capable. When mentors were asked about the teaching student’s capability to deliver outcomes for ‘learners who find school easy’, 54% of BEd students were deemed capable, and 46% were not. Overall, these findings indicate that the student teachers were not perceived, on balance and in total, as well prepared for post-graduation teaching. However, these findings may also indicate that mentors believe teaching skills are honed post-graduation, because no mentor appeared to think this circumstance alarming or out of the usual.

### Table 3: Graduate student’s ability to implement workplace ready capabilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>BEd Students</th>
<th>Graduate Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15A Analyse student data collected from various sources and make professional judgments?</td>
<td>Yes 66% No 34%</td>
<td>15B Develop learning plans to meet identified needs? Yes 60% No 40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15C Evaluate the effectiveness of developed learning plans? 86% 14%</td>
<td>15D Communicate the outcome of such plans to various stakeholders? 80% 20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15E Recognise likely consequences of developed learning plans? 40% 60%</td>
<td>15F Make professional judgments concerning aspects of their practice? 89% 11%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15G Achieve learning outcomes for all learners? 17% 83%</td>
<td>15H Achieve learning outcomes only for those pupils who find school easy? 54% 46%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Response Ratings</td>
<td>61.42857</td>
<td>38.57143</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It will be recalled that mentors were asked to identify the three most common problems they faced as a teacher. This was revealed as themes associated with: managing pupil behaviour; dealing with time constraints; and dealing with change and its ramifications. We asked mentors to rate the performance of their graduate student with respect to the student teachers ability to deal such problems. Few mentors of BEd students considered their student capable with respect to the three identified problems. Most mentors commented that BEd students were seldom in schools resulting in little
scope to learn the practicalities of dealing with such problems as the following example illustrates:

*Melissa (BEd student) only completed a three week block. By the time she finished she had just remembered the kids’ names, so how could she? (1-12-1)*

We asked mentors to rate how prepared their student teacher was for work as a teacher in the future. Themes such as; *solve problems in a school situation; initiate change in a school situation; envisage different education programs outside of traditional schooling; and do their work outside a school situation* were elicited from mentors as to what they thought a ‘futures orientated’ graduate teacher would have to be prepared for. Few BEd mentors considered their graduate student to be prepared for work as a teacher into the future as per. Mentors generally commented that BEd students did not have a detailed understanding of the future or future issues for teaching, with some mentors feeling this was reflected in the lack of “futures orientation” courses in the BEd program. The two mentor comments that follow illustrate this point:

*(the student) did not understand where research and professional information came from. (1-24 – primary teacher)*

Mentors were asked to provide a reason for the judgment they had made about their student teachers’ aforementioned futures orientation capabilities. Mentors were reluctant to offer a reason for the ratings they gave their BEd graduate student teacher. However those who had mentored both a BEd and ‘another type of graduate’ (i.e. teaching students from another teaching program or another university’s BEd) made comments typified by the following:

*The BEd student lacked confidence overall (1-24)*
*This really depends on the individual student and in this case (BEd) they had no idea (4-22)*
*The BEd student hadn’t heard of QSE 2010, so not at all (5-4)*
*There was a lack of professional independence [BEd], (2-2)*
It might be argued that mentors lacked ‘yardsticks’ for judging students against orientated capabilities. This is perhaps because mentors did not fully appreciate the characteristics of future-orientated capability as such terms are not part of the lexicon of current teaching philosophies (Smith and Lynch, 2010).

Of particular note is that when mentors were asked to comment on their graduate students’ university program, with respect to what students learnt at university and what was needed in classrooms, no mentor praised the BEd program. Overall, mentors tended to say that fieldwork for BEd students was ill-conceived and that taking a BEd student was generally a burden because it impacted on regular classroom work. When further clarification was sought about this, mentors made comments about the knowledge and skill base held or not held by their student and the lack of input into their program. The following three comments were typical of those made by BEd mentors:

*There was not enough emphasis on the practical day-to-day routines of running a classroom. To learn how to cope with the day-to-day routine needs constant classroom practice. I felt that the university had, although it had a good understanding of philosophies, curriculum and BM issues, had lost touch with classroom practice. (1-17-1)*

*Some elements a bit inadequate and the outcomes focus provided a narrow view … I always provided the ‘starting point’ for lessons (1-13-1)*

*Behaviour Management inadequate – (BEd student) would not cope with worst case scenarios in a classroom (1-13-2)*

The data indicates clearly that mentors value close contact with university in the form of: visits and meetings with university staff; increased time spent by the student in a school; and student knowledge and skill base reflecting workplace readiness. Mentors were asked how beneficial to the development of student teachers’ capabilities were the fieldwork tasks completed during the teaching practice. No BEd mentors commented that the BEd program’s tasks were beneficial. They believed that the BEd was too theoretical and had lost touch with modern day classrooms, as indicated by the mentor comment that follows. Most BEd mentors made regular comments during interview that indicated the BEd was too theoretical and that it had lost touch with modern day classrooms. The mentor comment that follows was made by an experienced
classroom teacher, who has coordinated the placement of BEd students in her school over many years, illustrating the previously mentioned finding:

There was not enough emphasis on the practical day-to-day routines of running a classroom. To learn how to cope with the d2d (day-to-day) routine needs constant classroom practice. I felt that the uni had, although it had a good understanding of philosophies, curriculum and BM issues, (the BEd) had lost touch with classroom practice. (1-17-1 – experienced teacher who has coordinated BEd student placement in her school over many years)

As a follow-on question, we asked mentors whether they had to modify their classroom program to fit their BEd student teacher. It seems notable that all mentors indicated they had to make modifications. Most said significant changes to what they had planned to teach in response to what the ‘student teacher’ had to practice and thus be assessed on. This finding might be interpreted as being evidence of how out of step the BEd program is with what teachers do in their classrooms. There is a long history of such preparation problems in the teacher education literature. It is interesting to note that if the mentor had the opportunity to contribute, by way of being part of ‘program working parties’, such as the development of practicum handbooks, which was the case with some mentors, they tended to rate the program highly and were reluctant to critique.

The majority of Mentors however said the BEd needed revising. Comments made about what distinguished the BEd, such as those comments below, were themed around the relatively short time BEd graduate students were in schools and the lack of fit the BEd fieldwork program had with classroom demands:

Not long enough (BEd practicum) – not having the contact at the beginning of the year made the BEd program inadequate. (1-22 – new to service primary teacher)
Confusing handbooks and a lack of contact with the university (1-5-1 – experienced BEd mentor)

Very prescriptive tasks; not much scope to be flexible. (5-4 – experienced BEd mentor)
The BEd student could have had more time in a school; prac. blocks too short. (3-1 – experienced BEd mentor)

Study Summary

The interview data revealed that mentors had a clear idea about what they thought constituted workplace readiness for new to service teachers, and themes of what readiness is were strikingly similar. These data suggest that workplace readiness is constituted by mentors to mean that (ready to graduate) student teachers require knowledge and a skill base associated with ‘teacher-centred activities’ as defined in the literature (See Lynch, 2012; Berry 2011; Fullan, 2007) This concerns things such as; planning what is to be taught, ‘engage in the act of teaching’, managing students in a variety situations, liaising with various stakeholders, dealing with tasks associated with being a teacher in a school.

On balance the preparation of BEd students can be considered sub-optimal. While the student teachers’ capacities to plan ‘teaching units’ and the like was rated as ‘good’, the student teachers content knowledge and their capacities to achieve learning outcomes in their pupils were mixed. In terms of their actual teaching capacities only 17% of pre-graduation teaching students were considered able to achieve the key capability of achieving learning outcomes in all their pupils. Further, no mentor praised the BEd program, indicating instead that fieldwork for BEd students was ill-conceived and that taking a BEd student was generally a burden because it impacted on regular classroom work. When we sought further clarification about this, mentors made comments about the knowledge and skill base held or not held by their student and the lack of input into their program as contributing factors. This indicates that the preparation of teaching students, and in particular the cross-correspondences between university mentors and schools, was not as collaborative as it should be.

The majority of mentors consider preparing teachers a joint responsibility and these data suggest more university contact with ‘the university’ and mentor opportunity to input the program will strengthen a school-university partnership. This could have the added benefit of improving school-university relations and the enhancement of student teacher performance. Despite this assertion, it is clear from this study that work needs to be done on the BEd’s program content as well, because the findings suggest it is out
of step with the demands and contexts of modern classrooms and the work that is teaching into the 21st century.

**Recommendations**

In-line with the major themes of this volume - that the problems involved in teacher education are complex and diverse, that mentoring is superior to traditional supervision programs, that school/university partnerships are preferred, and that it takes both schools and universities working together to train teachers sufficiently - this chapter has indicated that basic problems exist with respect to the more traditional models of teacher training currently practised across the Australian education system. These problems appear systemic and broad, involving both universities and school systems, teachers and teacher trainers, governments and the societies they govern. Yet the very fact that there are clear indicators of where to go, how to change things and move education in a more positive direction, as well as which aspects of teacher training require address, are to be viewed as encouraging.

Various considerations concerning what to address and how to address them have been presented here, but perhaps the most fundamental considerations involve the imperative of change and what this means in terms of a sufficient model of teacher training. All things occur in a context, and within the context of the research presented in this chapter it appears that, as stated by Johnston, the need for “big thinking” is required, in particular ideas about how to train teachers authentically and in partnership. The areas for training focus will need to include how to prepare teachers in relation to time management, behaviour management, communication skills, and an expanded role in supporting the needs of their students, but the main frameworks for training will be the ongoing development of technology and changes to the accreditation process at both state and national levels.

In light of this, a key direction for ongoing research in this area will be the development of a taxonomy for change, wherein the relationships between accreditation requirements and technology are delineated with respect to an authentic model of teacher training that focuses on the “future skills” needed for teaching into the 21st century. Important questions relating to this development will include how the requirements of accreditation require
or affect the need for authenticity, how technological change is opening up new means of affording authenticity, and how the expanded support roles required for teachers can be incorporated into the training they receive prior to professional workforce entry. Overall, this represents a new paradigm for teacher training, yet it is a paradigm that seems replete with possibilities and opportunities. Exploration of the paradigm is encouraged for both teachers and academics, with the common need to innovate and integrate offering the basis for an integrated training model. The future, it seems, is in our hands.

Reference List


Chapter 4: The Future of the Practicum: Addressing the knowing-doing gap

Bruce Knight, David Turner, John Dekkers

This paper presents a model that addresses the problem of the knowing-doing gap in the pre-service teacher education practicum. Addressing this gap is important because it is an enduring problem in the teacher education literature and provides benefits to pre-service teachers undertaking the practicum. It also has the potential to facilitate improved pedagogical capabilities of graduates and learning for their in-school mentors. The model is underpinned by research that found tasks requiring pre-service teachers to apply knowledge presented in the university program while they were placed in the school addressed the knowing-doing gap. Two key roles are presented in the model that provide coordination of the “in-school” functions of the practicum and the “across-schools” functions of the teacher education program.

Introduction
Evidence of the problems associated with the gap between theory and practice in the teacher education practicum can be found in a range of recent reports and policy responses. The report into teacher education, which lists over one hundred teacher education enquiries conducted in Australia since 1979 (House of Representatives, 2007) highlights examples of the problem and the need to rethink the practicum.

The problems with practicum have been outlined in nearly every report addressing teacher education in the last decade. The fact that these problems have still drawn so much attention in this inquiry indicates the need for major reform in the area involving all players and all aspects of the system (House of Representatives, 2007, p. 73).
International reports also raise concerns about linking theory to practice through the practicum in teacher education with the need for “stronger partnerships between schools and teacher education institutions” (OECD, 2005, p. 30). Darling-Hammond (2010) cites the lack of connection between on-campus learning and in-school practice as a problem and highlights what she calls “powerful programs” as having strong “interwoven coursework” (p. 40) making explicit links between what is learned on campus and professional practice.

This paper presents elements of a practicum model that address the theory-practice gap. It utilises research undertaken in a unique approach to the practicum developed in a small geographic area of Queensland. A partnership between schools within a state education district and a university now offer a way forward in addressing the gap between theory and practice.

The practicum
The practicum, the overwhelmingly dominant approach to professional practice in Australian teacher education programs, is often the focus of critique about problems with teacher education programs (House of Representatives, 2007; Richardson & Knight, 2011; Knight & Moore, 2012).

The amount of time undertaking professional practice in a teacher education program varies greatly in Australia (House of Representatives, 2007, p. 67). While the authors acknowledge the argument of quality and not quantity, we also argue that the variations across Australia in the amount of professional practice required in pre-service teacher programs should be considered. In Queensland, a related problem is the financial cost to universities in terms of payments to supervising teachers. Confining professional practice to the minimum of 80 days avoids cost increases for universities.

The availability and suitability of supervising teachers is also an issue identified in the House of Representatives inquiry (2007). Finding enough places, rather than securing places with high performing teachers, is a problem for universities.
Again solutions are present in the literature. For example Eyres (2005) identifies a range of features of a high quality practicum. They include building the practicum around a partnership between universities and schools and schooling systems; articulating within the program clear developmental stages that detail the knowledge, skills and attitudes teacher education students should demonstrate at each stage of the program; and finding ways for the program to actively link theory and practice.

**Partnerships**

Partnership arrangements between universities and schools that meet certain criteria, including genuine engagement in the learning process, deliver the most positive results to pre-service teachers (Allsopp et al, 2006; Ingvarson, Elliott, Kleinhenz, McKenzie, 2006; Richardson & Knight, 2011; Zeichner, 2010). However, there is a lack of partnership in Australia between universities and schools in pre-service education (House of Representatives, 2007), which this chapter views as forming the basis for both gap problems and gap solutions.

In most university-school partnerships there is a power imbalance in which the school is not party to decisions about the program. The resulting separation of responsibilities means, at best, the function of the school is to merely provide a place for pre-service teachers to “practise” what is taught at university. However this practice is often done without the supervising teacher having knowledge of what has been taught on campus. At worst, pre-service teachers just spend time in schools observing what teachers do, reinforcing a dichotomy between theory and practice.

Implementing strategies to improve the theory-practice gap in the professional practice element of teacher education programs requires significant change (Darling-Hammond, 2010). To achieve a connection between universities and schools entails a shared obligation on the part of all involved in the program (teachers, lecturers, casual lecturing staff, principals, system executives) for collaboration and shared decision making, as well as a commitment to shared vision and outcomes.
The knowing-doing gap

There is a substantial body of research that confirms the existence of a gap between theory presented in pre-service teacher programs and practice in schools (Allsopp et al, 2006; Churchill, 2007; Cochran-Smith, 2009; Valencia, Martin, Place & Grossman, 2009). The theory-practice gap in schools and school systems has been identified in a number of reports in the state of Queensland. For example, the Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study (The State of Queensland, 2001), New Basics (The State of Queensland, 2004) and governmental responses to improve school performance in literacy, numeracy and science, (Masters, 2009), provide evidence of where the “known” is not being “enacted” in schools.

Three matters concerning the theory-practice problem are relevant. Firstly, the translation of theory (what is taught at the university) to practice (how this is applied in the teaching setting) is not evident in teacher education. Secondly, the professional practice component of teacher education programs is about practised experience, and not the use of theory-based practice (Fitzclarance, 2003). Thirdly, there is a disconnection between evidence-based knowledge generated outside of the school sector through research and its application in school setting by school leaders and teachers (Butler and Schnellert, 2008).

The culture of an organisation also plays a part in maintaining the status quo. Organisations, including schools, have an “amazing capacity” (Sparks, 2009) to maintain beliefs and practices despite efforts to change them. Sparks suggests there are two factors that need to be addressed before pedagogical practices are to be improved. These are that teachers actually know more about effective teaching than they practice, and that exposure to research through traditional in-service programs, that should improve practice, rarely does (Sparks, 2009).

In management literature the theory-practice gap is referred to as the knowing-doing gap (Pfeffer and Sutton, 2000). In essence, the knowing-doing gap emphasises that people who work in an organisation may well know what needs to be done to achieve desired outcomes, but there is often a gap in performance that results in this work not being done. The knowledge is not put into practice.
Pfeffer and Sutton (2000) refer to the phenomena as the “knowing-doing problem” (p. 4). They argue that a successful business strategy can be identified and should be easy to emulate, but rarely is this done successfully. In the business context, this gap suggests a significant difference between what is known to be successful in organisational practice, and the action of what is actually done, resulting in underperformance of a business. While the phenomenon can be described differently, a gap between ‘knowing’ and ‘doing’ results in a performance gap.

DuFour & DuFour (2007) identify closing the knowing – doing gap as the most pressing issue confronting educators. The problem is not a lack of knowledge but the taking of “purposeful steps” to implement that knowledge. Smith & Moore (2006) describe a similar situation of “theory–practice divides,” “knowing-doing gaps” and “performance plateaus” in examining the history of teacher education (pp. 9-12).

Zeleny (2008) states that, while Pfeffer and Sutton properly identify the gap between action and the description of action, the gap is based on a misunderstanding of knowledge and knowing. Zeleny (2008) asserts there is a gap between having information and acting upon it, or transforming that information into action. Importantly, this “gap,” no matter how it is described, is an issue across many aspects of human endeavour that results in less than optimum performance.

The literature reveals that the knowing-doing gap is a problem evident in organisations including schools, schooling systems and teacher education faculties. It is also apparent that, where knowing does not translate into doing, steps are required to overcome this gap. According to a number of studies, (for example Hattie, 2010; Levin, 2010; OECD, 2009) strengthening the connection between research, policy and practice offers a way to address the gap.

**Context of the Study**

The teacher education program that was the basis of the research was the Bachelor of Learning Management at Central Queensland University. The Teaching School Model (TSM) is the basis of a partnership between the university and a school where the school provides the real life setting for
teacher learning under the expert guidance of practising professionals. The teaching school represents much more than the notion of a traditional ‘prac school’ in traditional teacher education, as it plays a structured and critical role in the development of future teachers, rather than in the ad hoc availability of “placements”.

In this model, pre-service teachers are attached to schools for a minimum of two university terms. The attachment is made up of day visits run concurrently with the university term, as well as “block” periods. The extended period of time the student is in contact with the school is important, as it counters the detached experience a short practicum offers the student and establishes a learning community around its outcomes required for the stage of the program. The teacher education students must complete structured learning tasks (known as portal tasks) whilst attached to the teaching school to demonstrate that they have traversed the theory-practice divide (Smith, Lynch & Knight, 2010).

Key personnel in the TSM include the in school and across school coordinators. The in school coordinator, in addition to coordinating the activities of the teaching school, conducts learning sessions in the teaching school akin to university tutorials. A university teaching school coordinator is an across school coordinator who as a member of the university staff builds a relationship with school personnel.

**Methodology**

The aim of the research was to examine the functional characteristics of the TSM in addressing the knowing-doing gap by exploring the perceived roles of principals, in school and across school coordinators as well as mentor teachers.

A sequential mixed method approach was used to collect quantitative data from a survey and detailed explanatory qualitative data from focus group interviews. The eight knowing-doing gap guidelines (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2000) provided the basis of the on-line survey questions with semantic differential scales used to measure the perceptions of practitioners involved in the TSM. The survey was open to TSM practitioners in thirty-six teaching schools, with SPSS (Version 17) used to obtain descriptive statistics and to undertake a factor analysis of the data. The participants were drawn from those
performing one of four roles in the teaching school, including principals (33 invited - 7 responses), in school coordinators (35 invited – 11 responses), across school coordinators (8 invited – 7 responses) and mentor teachers (2 groups - 166 invited – 46 responses). Sixty-one percent of the participants had between 2 years and 5 years’ experience with the TSM, 25% greater than 5 years’ experience, with most participants from the primary school sector.

Recorded data from five focus groups was collected through the development and use of questions related to the TSM and the knowing-doing gap guidelines. Participants in the focus group interviews were principals (5), in school coordinators (6), across school coordinators (6), mentor teachers group one (6), and mentor teachers group two (5).

Key findings
The intent of the research reported here was to establish if any of the characteristics of the Teaching School Model (TSM) contributed to addressing the knowing-doing gap (Turner, 2006). The findings suggest that three elements are critically important to address the knowing-doing gap: a commitment to the philosophy of the model amongst all participants, the tasks pre-service teachers are required to do should link on campus learning to “doing”; and the roles of an “in school” coordinator, and an across “schools” coordinator are important for establishing and maintaining the partnerships between schools and the university.

1. A commitment to the philosophy and approach of the teacher education program

The research indicates an alignment and close working relationship between teaching schools and the university. Evidence of this is seen in the alignment of perceptions between all involved in the TSM from survey data, regardless of their role, or whether employed by the school or the university.

Results from focus group sessions point to a consistent approach within teaching schools.
The value of the portal task, an assessment requirement that links all university courses to the school experience, is captured in the following quote from a school principal:

… if we want our pre-service teachers to be what we call “work ready” (there are) critical knowledge and skills that they’ve got to have. (I)f it is not through a structured expectation like (the task) it’s not going to happen. … at least with the portal task, despite the knowledge and the skills of the mentor, these guys are still tasked to go away and develop the knowledge and skills and I think it is very positive.

The “despite the skills of the mentor” suggests that the portal task mitigates variations in regard to mentors and their professional skills. This is again confirmed in the following remark by another principal:

We have a lot of variation in teacher ability at the moment ... and we are spending a lot of money and time in a meaningful and reasonable way of bringing our teachers up to speed… So if we can say that that is a bottom line competency that we’ve got with new (graduates) then I think that (the) university that is taking that view is going to have more teachers employed.

2. The portal tasks

The research findings suggest that the portal task underpins much of the activity in the TSM and the model’s intent to address the gap between knowing and doing. The results indicate that the portal task establishes the “action” required of school staff and pre-service teacher education students. Results from the focus group sessions established the importance of the portal task. Principals reported its benefits as being the capacity the task has for better preparing pre-service teacher for entering the profession, the contribution the completion of portal tasks can make to the school and the learning that is facilitated for the school’s mentor teachers. Likewise, they articulated that the portal task framed the activity of the teaching school. The results of a factor analysis indicate the portal task as being concerned with “Action,” “Application,” “Performance” and “Mentoring.”
The portal task proved to be a feature of the TSM referred to in very positive terms in focus groups sessions. This is reflected by comments made by participants in the research about the capacity of the portal task to address the *knowing-doing gap*. Principals used words such as “fantastically” and “absolutely” to describe this capacity, and in-school coordinators also saw the portal task as important to the Teaching School Model.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 1: The central role of the Assessment (Portal) Task**

Figure 1 illustrates the relationship the task has with the “on campus” university program and practice in schools. The “university” component contains all the experience of the university program and encompasses course content, underpinning knowledge and research and theory that the pre-service teacher is exposed to through lectures, workshops, tutorials, online activities and readings. The “teaching school” component encompasses observation of practising teachers and school activities; reflection on that observation; practice teaching; participation in school activities including staff and team meetings and professional development offered by the school. The figure highlights the central importance of the task in the TSM, as represented at the intersection of the university on campus learning and the in school learning facilitated in the teaching school.
3. The in school and across schools coordinator roles

The research findings indicate the key roles in the practicum are that of the “in school” coordinator and “across schools” coordinator. The results suggest that the efficacy of the TSM “hinges” on these roles and the relationship established between them.

The in school coordinator may be employed by the university or school, or through a joint appointment resulting from the shared commitment to the program. There was agreement from principals that the “in school” coordinator provided quality control for the program, and the support from the university ensured consistency in the program as summed up by one principal:

*I think that having (the “in school” role) really does pull (the experience) together… if they…. understand very clearly what the expectations (are). I think it brings that consistency and quality control into it (School Principal).*

![Figure 2: In School-Across School Coordinator Relationships](image-url)

Ongoing professional support should be provided to the in school coordinator to ensure a commitment to the program’s philosophy is maintained; and that a deep understanding of the tasks to be completed by pre-service teachers and of the university’s policies and processes is achieved. The individual performing this role also works with mentor
teachers and school administrators to ensure a level of consistency in classrooms across the school.

Based on the results from the research, it is possible to articulate the relationships between the four TSM roles considered in this research and three additional roles within the university. Figure 2 shows that the key relationship, as demonstrated by the thick arrow, is between the “in school” coordinator and the “across schools” coordinator. This relationship is appropriately envisaged as a conduit between the university program and the activity of the teaching school.

This finding was supported by focus group comments that highlighted that the ‘in school’ coordinator is the ‘go to’ person within the teaching school, and is the one point of contact within the school for mentor teachers. Furthermore, focus group results indicated mentor teachers look to the “in school” coordinator to coordinate teaching school operations and solve problems as they arise.

**Conclusion**

There are a number of limitations of this research investigation. Firstly, the research involved only one university campus, and teaching school personnel in the educational district are influenced by local factors and by the relationship they have with the campus. Whilst the TSM may be having an impact upon pre-service teacher education practices in teaching schools in the chosen geographic area, the research has not drawn conclusions about the wider impact of its implementation.

Secondly, this research is limited to the perceptions held by those involved in the TSM. The research does not examine the outcomes for teacher education students or make comparisons between the TSM and other approaches to the practicum. In addition, measuring perceptions is not without its problems. The measurement of individuals’ perceptions of the TSM neither considers the actual action undertaken by TSM practitioners, nor the effectiveness of that action. Observational and group assessment techniques should be considered in future studies.

Thirdly, the size of the research sample meant that comparisons between
TSM practitioner categories were deemed not to be achievable. The analysis of the survey data was able to compare “mentors” and “non-mentors” and, as demonstrated by a Chi-Square Test, no significant differences in these groups were found.

Although there are these limitations, the research undertaken suggests that there are opportunities to address the knowing-doing gap in the teacher education practicum. Central to the success of the model appears to be the “portal” tasks that translate what was learned on campus into practice in the school. In addition, the role of the “in school” and “across schools” coordinators and the relationship established between the individuals undertaking these roles, are likely to be a key consideration in any approach to the practicum.

The opportunity to prepare more effective teachers by improving the processes in pre-service teacher education programs (Darling-Hammond, 2010), and at the same time to inject the “expert” (State of Queensland, 2001), or “worthwhile” (Hargraves, 2003), knowledge necessary to improve teaching into schools, is a prospect that requires further exploration. However, Darling-Hammond (2010, p. 42) reminds us that underpinning any new approach is the need for new arrangements between schools and universities.

(Strategies) for connecting theory and practice cannot succeed without a major overhaul of the relationships between universities and schools – one that ultimately also produces changes in the content of schooling as well as of teacher training.

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Chapter 5: A New Vision of Mentoring in Teacher Education

Angelina Ambrosetti, Bruce Allen Knight & John Dekkers

In pre-service teacher education, mentoring is increasingly being used to replace a supervisory type of model in professional placements. As the use of mentoring gains further prominence in the pre-service teacher education context, it becomes more noticeable that the representation of mentoring is one that aligns to a more traditional approach of a mentoring dyad. The stereotypical view of a traditional mentoring dyad in pre-service teacher education consists of an older, experienced teacher mentoring a younger, inexperienced pre-service teacher. However the reality of teacher education in the 21st century is one where many pre-service teachers are not school leavers, are beginning a second career or have had previous experience in learning contexts. Mentoring is not well defined in the pre-service teacher context and increasing evidence suggests that alternative mentoring models should be considered. The purpose of this paper is to consider alternative mentoring models for pre-service teacher education other than the traditional mentoring dyad. As such this paper explores alternative models that utilise peers and groups and incorporates a community of practice.

Introduction

The use of mentoring in the pre-service teacher context centres on a classroom-based teacher mentoring a pre-service teacher in their development of teaching practices within the authentic setting of a classroom (Ambrosetti, 2010; Graves, 2010). As mentoring is a relatively recent strategy used in pre-service teacher education, the conceptualisation of mentoring is an evolving circumstance, with different forms of mentoring approaches and models documented in the research literature (Hall, Draper, Smith & Bullough Jr, 2008; Koc, 2011; Lai, 2005; Le Cornu & Ewing, 2008; Walkington, 2005).
Traditionally, mentoring in the pre-service teacher education context has used a dyad model, whereby a more experienced and usually older teacher mentors a younger, inexperienced student teacher. Importantly, the dyad model is typically hierarchical, where the mentor teacher is seen as the person in charge. This mentoring model dominates the documented research literature in the pre-service teacher context. Yet research conducted by Kram in the eighties, which concerned mentoring in the workplace, provided a new vision of mentoring which challenged the sole use of mentoring dyads. Specifically, Kram (1985) investigated and brought to the fore the use of peer mentoring as an alternative mentoring model. Kram’s research found that peer mentoring enhanced the use of a more reciprocal relationship between the mentor and mentee, therefore mitigating the hierarchical structure of a dyad.

Recent mentoring research in the pre-service teacher education context has seen the ideas explored in Kram’s vision of mentoring being experimented with; in particular, the concepts of peer and group mentoring (Ambrosetti, 2012). This paper will present a rationale for a new vision of mentoring by outlining the results of research undertaken examining the use of alternative mentoring models and existing research literature that concerns mentoring in the context of pre-service teacher education.

**Mentoring**

Mentoring in a teacher education context occurs during the professional experience component of a pre-service teaching degree. It is during the professional placement that pre-service teachers are placed with classroom-based teachers who assist the beginner in their development towards becoming equipped professionals. The professional placement is considered a “critical component” of pre-service teacher education programs throughout Australia (House of Representatives, 2007, p.67), as it provides the opportunity for authentic teaching practice by the pre-service teachers. It is during the professional experience that the pre-service teachers engage in observations and reflections, planning and teaching as well as develop their skills, knowledge and philosophies of teaching (Walkington, 2004).

For some considerable time, the pre-service teacher context utilised the supervisory model during the professional experience. The supervisory
model, according to Walkington (2005), was intended to mould the pre-service teacher to fit into the school/classroom environment through enculturation, direction, feedback and assessment. As such the roles of a supervisor include those of teacher, expert, role model, assessor and instructor. In contrast, the use of the mentoring model in a sense extends the supervisory roles so that the pre-service teachers develop their personal selves through reflective practices. The roles of a mentor include role model, friend, guide, advisor, coach and counsellor. Within the mentoring research literature, the term mentoring has been intertwined and interchangeably used with supervision therefore creating confusion about the nature of mentoring in the pre-service teacher context (Koc, 2011; Sundli, 2007).

However, the requirements placed on mentor teachers from the institutions who seek placements for their pre-service teachers include that of assessment of the practical performance, therefore reinforcing confusion about the nature of mentoring and the role a mentor plays in providing a grade or mark (Walkington, 2005; Tillema, Smith & Leshem, 2011). Assessment matters such as assigning a grade need to be strictly considered as a supervisor’s function. In contrast, the mentoring roles are that are associated with ways of assessment are like those of coaching where specific skills and techniques may be taught and feedback provided. This feedback tends to take the form of an “informal evaluation” and allows the person to put the feedback into practice (Bowman & McCormick, 2000, p. 256).

Another significant difference between mentoring and supervisory models is that of time. A supervisory relationship, in the pre-service teacher context, traditionally occurs over a brief period of time, whereas a mentoring relationship develops over a longer period of time. This difference could explain, in conjunction with the issue of assessment, why the practices of mentoring and supervision are being intertwined.

In the above context mentoring can be viewed as a holistic process comprising of three components, namely relational, developmental and contextual. Mentoring practices which do not encompass all three components cannot be defined as mentoring in the true notion of the word (Ambrosetti, 2012; Lai, 2005). The components focus on function rather than feelings or personal qualities. As such the relational component of
mentoring concerns the nature of the relationship between the participants, and the roles each participant plays whereas the developmental component of mentoring centres on the process of development. The contextual dimension of a mentoring relationship refers to the situation and circumstance of where and how the mentoring relationship operates. It has been determined in the literature that the capabilities and needs of the mentee shape the roles and interactions that occur within the relationship (Bearman, Blake-Beard, Hunt & Crosby, 2007; Cransborn, Hennissen, Brouwer, Korthagen & Bergen, 2010; Schwille, 2008; Smith, 2007). It follows, according to Lai (2005), that the functions and behaviours of the relationship are what assist the mentee in achieving developmental goals.

**Mentoring models**

A variety of mentoring models are identified in the research literature, namely those models which utilise dyads, peers, groups and those that combine a variety of models. Each of the models will be described and synthesised.

Mentoring dyads consist of two people and are traditionally stereotyped as described earlier. Jones and Brown (2011), however, identify two types of mentoring dyads, those which are based on traditional hierarchal ‘top down’ models and those which are based on reciprocal approaches. Mentoring dyads can be formal or informal and are either created by a third party or by the mentor and mentee themselves (Lentz & Allen, 2007). According to Allen and Eby (2007) mentoring dyads are seen as ‘units’, and share a sense of belonging. The authors refer to this as a “communal relationship”, where “members feel a responsibility for meeting the needs of their relationship partners and in which the benefits provided to partners are not based on contingencies” (Allen & Eby, 2007, p.410). However difficulties can arise for both the mentor and mentee in a traditional dyad. According to Eby, McManus, Simon and Russell, (2000), personality clashes, incompetence, threatening or distancing behaviour and positional power are causes of negative experiences commonly associated with the hierarchical model of dyadic mentoring.

In contrast to the hierarchical approach, peer mentoring represents a dyadic model of mentoring that makes use of a peer(s) who shares the same job or study, or who is part of the same organisation and tend to be similar in age.
and experience (Parker, Hall & Kram, 2008; Terrion, Philion & Leonard, 2007). Peer mentoring can occur within a dyad, group or triad, and according to Kram (1985), offers an important alternative to more traditional mentoring relationships. Driscoll, Parkes, Tilley-Lubbs, Brill and Bannister (2009), assert that peer mentoring encourages collaborative learning between the mentor and mentee, as they often work as one. Peer mentoring assumes the logic that the mentor has been through similar experiences and/or circumstances and will be well equipped to support the mentee in this (McGee, 2001.) According to Parker, Hall and Kram (2008, p.489), “peers are more likely to identify with the ambiguity and lack of certainty in contemporary situations”.

Driscoll et al. (2009) and McCormack and West (2006) found through their respective studies that mentors and mentees who are peers often have a more comfortable and equal relationship, due to the lack of a hierarchal power structure. In this respect, Goodnough, Osmond, Dibbon, Glassman and Stevens (2008) report from their study concerning peer mentoring, that all participants described an increase in confidence due to being mentored by peers. Therefore, as Le Cornu (2005, p.358) suggests, peers as mentors do not engage in a hierarchal relationship, but are more collegial and “become co-learners and co-constructors of knowledge”.

Mentoring groups take the form of triads or larger groups of people, and often involve the use of peers, as well as those who inspire others and have expertise in a particular skill. A mentoring group generally contain those in a similar profession or organisation wanting to attain similar goals and/or skills (Huizing, 2012; Kostovich & Thurn, 2006; Smith, 2007). In this model it can be inferred that one mentor is unlikely to meet a mentee’s needs and that the roles of a mentor may need to be distributed among more than one mentor (Johnson, Rose & Schlosser, 2007). McCormack and West (2006) indicate that a mentoring group often has a facilitator who guides and supports the members of the group, but there is no one person considered as the mentor. Accordingly, the members of a mentoring group are able to take on roles of both the mentor and the mentee and interchange roles throughout the relationship (Smith, 2007). Higgins and Kram (2001) suggest that the members of a mentoring group benefit from a higher level mutual
trust, learning and support than a more traditional one to one mentoring relationship.

A mentoring triad is an example of a mentoring model which utilised two of the above mentioned models. Mentoring triads have transpired from peer and group mentoring models (Campbell & Lott, 2009). It consists of three participants; however the configuration of the triad can be dependent on the needs of the group and/or the needs of the organisation in which the mentoring is occurring. Research undertaken by Ambrosetti (2012) has found that a triad model which incorporates peers along with a mentor teacher in the pre-service teacher context can be an effective model of mentoring as each of the three components of mentoring are addressed as are the needs of each participant. This research will be examined in the next section of this paper in order to present a new vision of mentoring.

**Research context**

The research that was undertaken occurred in the context of the Bachelor of Learning Management (BLM) program at Central Queensland University (CQU). The BLM is a four year teaching degree accredited by the Queensland College of Teachers. The professional placement in the BLM degree is referred to as Embedded Professional Learning (EPL). Embedded Professional Learning consists of a series of five placements which are distributed over three years of the degree with the final three EPL placements undertaken in the final year of the degree. The EPL placements consist of a series of day visits and a block of continuous teaching time. Pre-service teachers are required to undertake specific observations, planning and teaching tasks as well as reflective activities in which the mentor teacher assesses using a checklist provided by the university. During the placement, a university coordinator meets with the pre-service teacher and mentor teacher to determine whether appropriate developmental progress is being made. On conclusion of the professional placement, the mentor teacher simply provides a “pass” or “fail” recommendation to the university.

This research utilised first year pre-service teachers undertaking their first EPL placement and final year pre-service teachers undertaking their final EPL placements. Specifically the research investigated three cases of mentoring triads which consisted of a first year pre-service teacher, a final
year pre-service teacher and a mentor teacher. The investigation of the three triads focused on how the triads operated, the roles of each triad member, the interactions that occurred between the members of the triad, whether the model met each of the participant’s needs and whether peer mentoring took place between the first year and final year pre-service teachers. At the time of the research, the first year pre-service teachers had completed 12 day visits whereas the final year students had undertaken approximately 40 days which consisted of a combination of day visits and blocks in their assigned classroom. The first year and final pre-service teachers had stipulated tasks that they needed to undertake during their placements. First year pre-service teachers were required to teach a series of small group lessons, as well as actively participate in the day to day routines of the classroom. Final year pre-service teachers were required to plan and implement an integrated unit of work as well as assume fifty percent of the teaching load during their placement. The three triads were situated in early-year classrooms, and the classroom teacher had previously mentored pre-service teachers from CQU. The following section outlines the findings of the research.

Research findings
The results indicate that the use of triads in the pre-service teacher education context has considerable scope for both the pre-service teachers and the mentor teacher. The results demonstrated that the triad fashioned a working environment that was supportive, collaborative and collegial. It was identified that the pre-service teachers were able to develop their skills according to their needs and were able to contribute to each other’s experience. The mentor teacher also gained from the triad model as it provided them with opportunities to observe, reflect and plan, which in turn grew their own practice.

These findings suggest that the first year pre-service teachers had their individual needs met through two differing perspectives, as well as through a combined team approach. Firstly, the final year pre-service teachers had “been in their shoes” and had knowledge of expectations, tasks and requirements. They demonstrated to the first year pre-service teachers the development that needed to occur throughout their professional placements. The final year pre-service teachers had an understanding of the steep learning journey that the first year pre-service teachers were
experiencing and were able to explain the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of the experience to them. Secondly, the mentor teachers were able to utilise the final year pre-service teachers to mentor the first year pre-service teachers, thus allowing the mentor teacher to observe both pre-service teachers in action. The mentor teachers were then able to provide more explicit feedback, and focus on the specific developmental needs of the first year and final year pre-service teachers.

Although the majority of the interactions that occurred in the triad were dominated by the mentor teacher and/or the final year pre-service teacher, the first year pre-service teacher contributed to the relationship in several ways. The role of the first year pre-service teacher in the mentoring triad was one of assistant whereby the first year might assist the final year or mentor teacher during a lesson by working with small groups of learners, handing out worksheets or keeping learners on task. Another role of the first year pre-service teachers was that of team member as they were relied on to make a contribution to the classroom. Each of the first year pre-service teachers acknowledged that they were the one with the least experience and who had the most to learn. Each of the first year pre-service teachers in particular commented that they had a very clear understanding of expectations and standards as the final year demonstrated the future capabilities that they needed to develop. The advice and assistance provided by the final year pre-service teachers came from their own EPL experiences and provided the first year pre-service teachers with a perspective to which they could relate.

It was found that there were benefits for the final year pre-service teachers as well. In particular they developed their confidence as a teacher, developed their teaching capabilities and reflected on their own practice through a shared mentoring role within the triad. They were provided with opportunities to develop mentoring skills as well as refine their management and organisational skills. The final year pre-service teachers shared a common language with the first years and therefore were able to clarify and confirm understandings that they had developed and share them accordingly. The collaborative environment helped the final year pre-service teachers grow their confidence in their abilities as teachers. In each triad the final year pre-service teachers valued the contributions of the first year and considered them to be an important part of the teaching team.
The collaborative aspect of the mentoring triad provided the mentor teachers with opportunities to reflect on their own practice, share the mentoring role with the final year pre-service teachers, and observe the individual needs of each pre-service teacher. Although the mentor teachers were still leading the triad and held responsibility for the operation of the classroom, the team approach that the triad created provided a collaborative workspace where the mentor teachers were supported by the pre-service teachers. The mentor teachers indicated that although their workload initially increased due to mentoring two pre-service teachers, the workload was no heavier than mentoring one pre-service teacher.

The research found that peer mentoring was evident between the first year and final year pre-service teachers and indicated that a peer mentor can complement and add value to a mentor’s mentoring actions. Although the first year pre-service teacher did not mentor the final year as such, the first year was able to contribute to discussions and planning as well as become involved in classroom routines, bring an alternative perspective to the teaching team. It was indicated by all participants that the first year viewed the final year as a mentor. Although the final year pre-service teacher had assumed responsibility in the classrooms during their final EPLs, it was observed that the final years did not use the first year as a teacher’s aid, but instead included them in the routine of the day and helped to prepare them for teaching, therefore inducing a peer relationship. The final year in each triad either assumed some of the mentor teachers’ mentoring roles or undertook new mentoring roles. It was also observed by the mentor teachers that the first year and final year pre-service teachers had developed a strong relationship through the use of a shared common language that is a key indicator of peer mentoring.

The structure of the mentoring triads in this research provided a platform for a community of practice to emerge. A community of practice is a group of people who share common interests, goals and practices (Wenger, 1998). The results indicate that the mentor teacher became the facilitator of the mentoring relationship and was able to use the collaborative nature of the triad model to create a community of practice where the pre-service teachers were supported by each other through shared experiences. It would seem that from the results of this research that such a setting appears to have
been conducive for collaborative growth and mutual engagement between the members who shared the common goal of developing teaching practices. However, further research is needed to determine if the collaborative nature and mutual engagement elements of the triad as a community of practice is developed by the participants themselves or is a result of the formation of the group.

Figure 1: Mentoring Triad

In considering the triad as a community of practice, the first year pre-service teachers were the least experienced as a teacher. Nevertheless the first year pre-service teacher’s lack of experience did not exclude them from the community, but enabled them to use the community to transform and make sense of their learning. The results indicate that the first year pre-service teachers in each triad were treated as a member of the community of practice in that they engaged in discussions, and assisted both the final year pre-service teacher and the mentor teacher in the classroom. The first year pre-service teacher was also involved in mutual activities such as planning
and teaching. It was also evidenced that the final year pre-service teachers as peer mentors guided, supported and assisted the first year to become an integral member of the community of practice. As shown in figure 1, the EPL context formed the community that in turn provided the setting for the development of teaching practices of each triad member. The development of teaching practice occurred through interactions and shared practices between the triad members.

As shown in this figure, the first year was at the centre of the triad, as the mentor teacher and peer mentor were assisting in the enhancement of the first year’s development as well as developing their own individual needs. It can also be seen for Figure 1 that relational, developmental and contextual elements of mentoring are addressed.

**Discussion**

A search of the mentoring literature revealed limited research about the use of triads and their configuration in mentoring in the pre-service teacher context. Peer mentoring is a growing field however studies situated in Australia are limited. The results presented in this paper however are encouraging and along with those studies identified in the research literature present a case for further exploration of alternative mentoring models.

It was found that the triad model which incorporated peers provided a platform for a collaborative team to develop. Each member in the collaborative teams, were able to contribute to the team as well as develop their teaching practices. Research undertaken by Bullough, Young, Birrell, et al. (2003), Goodnough, Osmond, Dibbon et al., (2008) and Samimi-Duncan, Duncan and Lancaster (2010) also reported that the triad model in each of their studies promoted collaboration between the triad members, in particular between the two pre-service teachers. The first year and final year pre-service teachers indicated that there were opportunities for the practice of teaching. Findings found by Bullough et al. (2003), Samimi-Duncan, Duncan and Lancaster (2010) and Schmidt (2008) were similar. The peers in their research reported that their confidence grew; they were more willing to take risks in planning and teaching and were able to assume a greater variety of roles in the classroom. According to the results presented by Bullough et al, (2003), Goodnough et al., (2008) and Samimi-Duncan et al. (2010), the
triad model provided a source of support for each member and provided opportunities for sharing. In particular Bullough et al. (2003) reported that the participants invested interest in each other’s development.

It was indicated in the research that the final year pre-service teachers became more aware of their abilities, capabilities and associated growth. In studies by Goodnough, Osmond, Dibbon et al., (2008) and Schmidt (2008), peer confidence grew through the supportive nature of peer mentoring and teaching abilities developed through observation, explanation and collaborative planning. These studies both found that observation of the first year pre-service teachers by the final year pre-service teachers was helpful in reflecting on their own practice. This result supports the presence of a pre-service teacher learning community as researched by Le Cornu (2005). In such a community, the pre-service teachers support each other, become co-learners and engage in professional dialogue which in turn enhances their abilities both inside and outside the school environment.

Specific roles of each triad member were evident. The first year pre-service teachers assumed the role of assistant, the final year pre-service teachers assumed the roles of teacher and mentor, whereas the mentor teacher assumed the role of relationship overseer and guide. Feedback, advice and help were provided by the mentor teachers and the final year pre-service teachers to the first year. The final year pre-service teachers were also key role models for the first year pre-service teacher. A similar result was reported by Schmidt (2008). The members of the triad in her study were mentored by each other and without realising took on different mentoring roles in the relationship. In this research however, the final year pre-service teachers were consciously mentoring the first year pre-service teachers as in each case the mentor teacher had explicitly articulated to the final year pre-service teachers that they were to mentor the first year pre-service teachers. The final year pre-service teacher assumed responsibility for several mentoring roles for which the mentor teacher was initially responsible. It was found that the final year pre-service teachers felt empowered by this responsibility. Goodnough, Osmond, Dibbon et al. (2009) and Schmidt (2008) reported similar findings in their research, adding that peer mentoring was complementary to the mentor teacher role. Overall, research results from Bullough, Young, Erickson, et al. (2002), Bullough Jr., Young, Birrell, et al. (2003), Samimi-Duncan, Duncan, and Lancaster (2010), and Schmidt (2008), consistently report that having a peer make it easier to
develop and maintain a relationship with the mentor, as the peers can support each other throughout the experiences.

The roles of each member of the triad changed over time, in particular the final year pre-service teacher and the mentor teacher. Bullough Jr., Young, Birrell, et al. (2003) reported similar findings in their research, as they found that the mentor teachers in that study slowly withdrew from the activities within the classroom to the sidelines so as to provide the paired pre-service teachers opportunities to develop their skills and abilities and support each other. Peer mentoring contributed to the development of the first year pre-service teacher in this research. According to McGee (2001), a mentor who is a peer can often relate to the mentee better than a traditional mentor as similar experiences are more recent and contemporary. The first year pre-service teachers also felt that because the final year was still a student teacher as they were, they were ‘more equal’.

Needs based mentoring was provided by the mentor in the research presented in this paper. Findings reported by Bullough et al. (2002) are similar. The mentor teachers in their research found that having more than one pre-service teacher assisted them in determining the pre-service teachers needs more clearly. Mentoring enabled the first year and final year pre-service teachers to view contextual aspects, in particular the work of a teacher. Colvin and Ashman (2010) reported a similar result. Although their study was situated in higher education, the peer mentors were role models by way of enculturation. The peers helped to make connections between situations; they were advocates as well as sources of support.

In summary the key findings of the research are as follows:

- The triad model promoted a collaborative and reciprocal relationship between each member of the triad
- The triad model was found to be inclusive and supportive of each triad member
- The triad model in conjunction with peer mentoring provided the opportunity for individualised mentoring
- The triad model provided mentoring that encompassed relational, developmental and contextual elements
• The triad model worked as a community of practice providing a platform for transformative learning.

However it should be noted that there are particular conditions for mentoring triads to be successful. The participants need to be willing to be part of a triad where there is a need to collaborate with others and be flexible in their approach to the relationship. Participants also need to be prepared for the roles they undertake in mentoring relationships and hold the understanding that these roles may change as the relationship progresses. This is an area in which further research is needed.

Conclusion
It has been highlighted that mentoring in the pre-service teacher context does not need to be limited to the traditional dyad model. Contemporary mentoring approaches provide purposeful options that can be tailored to the context. In the context of pre-service teacher education, a productive mentoring relationship is often seen as a critical component in learning to teach. However, as such relationships are often dependent on personal attributes, philosophy or contextual situations, the use of an alternative mentoring approach may provide the platform for a productive relationship to occur (Ambrosetti, 2011). As such, the mentoring triad approach can be used to more appropriately address the variety of issues that may occur during a professional placement within a teacher education program.

References


Chapter 6: New Frontiers or Old Certainties: The pre-service teacher internship

Tania Broadley, Elaine Sharplin & Sue Ledger

Teacher education in Australia has a rich history of evolution from apprenticeships to university education. In this chapter the teacher education internship is examined. More specifically, the chapter outlines the Western Australian Combined Universities Training School (WACUTS) project, with its focus on reducing the gap between theory and practice through a collaborative and reflective approach. The successes and challenges faced in the first six months of implementation are presented.

Introduction

The history of teacher education in Australia has evolved from one of apprenticeship, through to the dominant current model of the tertiary degree programs that include school-based experience. The National Inquiry into Teacher Education in 1978 (Auchmuty, 1980) recommended emphasis be given to the practicum in teacher education, yet today we still grapple with the challenge of ensuring our pre-service teachers are adequately prepared for the realities of classrooms. The ease with which teachers make the transition from pre-service to classroom practice has been found to be a critical predictor of longer-term retention (Hudson & Hudson, 2006). Inadequate preparation of pre-service teachers is associated with reduced graduate teacher retention (Harding & Parsons, 2011). In Western Australia (WA), the Department of Education and Training have identified continuing teacher shortages in rural locations and specialist teacher disciplines (DET, 2006). Further, according to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC, 2000) current teacher education courses do not adequately prepare pre-service teachers with the requisite skills and knowledge for rural, regional and remote locations.

While many efforts to address the issues faced by graduate teachers have been geared toward professional learning and mentoring opportunities
(Ramsey, 2000), the Smarter Schools National Partnership for Improving Teacher Quality (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009) has invested funds that target pre-service teachers. The funding favours school-university partnership models that increase school-based experiences. In 2012, an innovative combined university teacher education program was developed in response to a Department of Education (DoEWA) tender. Its aim was to increase the capacity and work readiness of pre-service teachers in both metropolitan and rural areas.

Through strong collaborative practices, the expertise of three Western Australian universities have combined to provide pre-service teachers, teacher mentors, schools and a range of other key stakeholders with a quality internship model to prepare high calibre graduates for the state's teaching workforce. This internship model is underpinned by the core beliefs of the historical model of teacher apprenticeship, yet improved and enhanced by the strong theoretical grounding provided by the current model of teacher education. This paper outlines the WA Combined Universities Training School (WACUTS) project, with its focus on reducing the gap between theory and practice through a collaborative and reflective approach. The successes and challenges faced in the first six months of implementation are presented.

**Project Background and Aims**

In 2011 a consortium was formed in response to a tender by the DoEWA to deliver on a National Partnership for Improving Teacher Quality: Training Schools Project. The tender sought to deliver 50 high calibre education graduates per annum. The aim of the project, as outlined in the tender, was to:

- introduce an innovative training program that closes the gap between theory and practice in pre-service teacher education;
- establish training schools in metropolitan and rural areas which provide a supportive professional environment for pre-service teachers;
- utilise the expertise of high performing teachers in collaboration with tertiary education providers to mentor, coach and provide quality supervision and professional development, and
- retain new graduates by increasing their professional capacity and work readiness.

The Theory-Practice Nexus: Closing the gap between University and Schools

There has been advocacy for a tighter nexus between research, theory and practice in initial teacher education, with attempts to change perceptions that these are competing domains (Ohi, 2008; Robinson & Macmillan, 2006). While the 1990s, particularly in the UK, saw the promotion of partnerships models of initial teacher education (Edwards & Mutton, 2007; Sandholtz & Finan, 1998) designed to share responsibility for the development of pre-service teachers between schools and universities, the university-based models developed in the 1970s and 1980s (Grossman, Hammerness & McDonald, 2009) have largely persisted in Australia. Teacher educators are perceived as silos of knowledge, specialising in decontextualized theory. Conversely, schools and teachers are perceived to have cornered the market on practical expertise. Prejudices and organisational and logistical constraints present continuing impediments to recognising and valuing the shared and complimentary contributions of practicing teachers and teacher educators.

Practicing classroom teachers sometimes view the credentials of teacher educators with distrust, misunderstanding and scepticism (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Bullough, Draper, Smith, & Birrell, 2004; Bullough, 2005), despite the fact that many teacher educators move into universities after years as classroom teachers, school administrators, curriculum consultants, resource specialists, or professional development providers (Cole, 1999). There is limited understanding of the variety of knowledges needed to be an effective teacher educator (Carrillo & Baguley, 2010). By virtue of their placement in universities, teacher educators are perceived as removed from the real world of classrooms, behaviour management, parents, marking and the education bureaucracy, in a realm separate to schools. Partnerships offer a means for changing these stereotypical views.
In this respect, Bullough (2005) commented that teachers and teacher educators have different sets of knowledge, suggesting that good teachers are not necessarily good teacher educators. Some practitioners maintain beliefs about sinking and swimming as rites of passage (Sharplin, 2004) or limiting input in order to find one's own style (Bullough, 2005). The result can be an over emphasis on the primacy of practice (Lunenberg & Hamilton, 2008; Tillema, 2000).

As a professional community, teachers and teacher educators need to search for ways of integrating theory and practice by establishing collaborative processes between pre-service institutions and schools to ensure graduates have the knowledge, skills and support necessary to succeed. Since the 1980s, teacher education reports in Australia have emphasised the importance of building partnerships between schools and universities (See, for example: Ramsey, 2000; Schools Council for the National Board of Employment, Education and Training, 1989; House of Representatives Standing Committee on Educational and Vocational Training, 2007); however, to develop alternatives to university-based models of teacher education, relationships between teachers and teacher educators need to be richer, more collegial and involve collaborative experiences (Bullough, 2005; Cercone, 2009). By reconnecting, schools and universities can build dialogue that values the contributions of each site of learning (Allsopp, 2006; Jasman, 2010). The Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs Action Plan (2009-2012) commits Australian governments to developing stronger education partnerships with higher education providers, to build on quality learning and teaching in schools. The WACUTS project is built on this collaborative model.

More recent initiatives such as the use of Training Schools and the Teach for Australia (2009) model are prioritising school-based teacher education (Harrington, 2011) and have revitalised partnership approaches (Edwards & Mutton, 2007), but their uptake is limited due to the lack of funding support for new models. The funding for school experience has not increased since 1992, so the ability of Schools of Education have been limited to the development of cost neutral partnership designs.
Figure 1: Western Australian Combined Universities Training Schools Model of Partnership
The WACUTS Project

The unique contribution of this project is the collaborative dimension that sees public universities working together to provide an enlarged, quality enhanced network of pre-service teachers and mentor teachers in both metropolitan and rural locations. The WACUTS project aims to enhance pre-service teacher capacity and readiness for the teaching workforce through the provision of extended, quality experiences in classrooms that tightly link theory and practice. The model, presented in Figure 1, focuses on value adding through collaborative and reflective practices. A Training Schools model is utilised that aims to build capacity in schools through mentor development, by providing mentor teachers with additional mentoring skills and a desirable, rewarding career path, recognised by the system intrinsically and financially.

The collaboration between university partners has been ambitious. The partner universities provide initial teacher education in all phases of learning (early childhood, primary and secondary levels) through a range of courses at undergraduate and postgraduate level over different durations (Bachelor of Education, four year; Graduate Diploma of Education, one year; Master of Teaching, two year) and operate in different delivery modes (face to face instruction on campus and external on-line delivery). The model delivers an internship that allows for variation of institutional requirements, while preserving common goals and intrinsic components.

Furthermore, the internship was specifically intended to facilitate rural education connections through rural internship placements and interaction between rural and metropolitan interns. This was seen as a unique component of the WACUTS model. Pre-service teachers at institutions where external enrolment was possible were placed in rural schools for the duration of their internship. Some metropolitan students commuted on a daily basis to rural schools in proximity to the metropolitan area and interns placed in metropolitan schools had the ability to interact with rural interns through an online portal environment and then participate in a rural education field experience to meet with the rural interns.

High calibre pre-service teachers, in their final year of study, were invited to participate and were selected for the internship through competitive
processes. An induction was provided at the start of the year for all participants. The interns were placed with mentors identified by schools as highly effective teachers. The interns commenced in schools from the pupil free days at the beginning of the year (prior to the beginning of the university year) and attended the school one to two days per week for the entire year, including block placement for practicum. The interns completed a minimum of 80 days involvement in the school.

Unlike the conventional school experience, the interns’ participation in the school was individually negotiated to include collaborative planning, team teaching and additional project/program work moving towards increased autonomy for the block practicum component. They were introduced to Department procedures, including writing reports, completing Individual Education Plans and accessing the Department intranet. Mentors were provided with specialised training with the delivery of the Mentoring for Effective Teaching (MET) program offered by Queensland University of Technology. This professional development program was developed in consultation with teachers and principals to build the capacity of mentoring in schools. It encompassed ten hours spread over the year (Queensland University of Technology, 2010). Pre-service teachers attended four specialist behaviour management workshops to address an area that is often perceived as problematic to new graduates.

All key stakeholders were connected through a Professional Portal. Interns interacted electronically, reflecting on their experiences against the National Professional Teacher Standards (NPTS), targeting one NPTS per week through the portal. These NPTS were also used as a starting point for weekly school meetings. Both forums provided opportunities for the interns to engage in discourse specifically related to their profession. Further, the portal played a key role in supporting an online community for collegiate networking and support across all key stakeholders including university lecturers, Department of Education central administration staff, school principals, school co-ordinators, practicum supervisors, mentor teachers and pre-service teachers. Through the richness of the portal environment, a community of practice evolved around the central notion of building a mentoring internship program.

The additional time in schools was intended to facilitate the completion of university course requirements in context. In some cases, assessment
requirements were modified while in other universities assessment tasks remained unchanged for interns. In term three, a rural education and community field experience was provided, taking metropolitan interns to the Goldfields region, where a contingent of five rural interns was placed. Finally, the interns were able to apply for a Limited Authority to Teach (LAT) with the Western Australian College of Teaching, to enable them to be employed within their school in term four.

Implementation of the project

Schools were selected to be involved in the project based on established relationships with universities. An emphasis was placed on schools that had a collegial culture and high quality staff. A further factor was geographic location across all quadrants of the metropolitan area. The pre-service teachers were not bound by the schools traditionally associated with their specific university. They were able to select from any of the partner schools. In some instances the Training Schools had students from all three universities. The rural schools were predominately located in large regional centres with the capacity for sustainability of the program or were in proximity to the metropolitan area.

Fifty-one interns commenced the program in 20 public schools across the entire state. Of the 50 interns, 6 were secondary, 15 were early childhood and 30 primary. Fifty-four mentors were involved in the project, of which over half are Level Three teachers. Twenty school based coordinators guided the school-based component, whilst the project team, consisting of a teacher educator from each of the lead universities (Murdoch, UWA and Curtin), coordinated university course requirements. An administrative coordinator managed the project logistics and the Professional Portal was managed by one of the university coordinators.

Reflections on the first six months

While an empirical evaluation of the outcomes of the project has not yet been completed, data available from contributions made by all stakeholders through the portal was used to inform a review of the first six months of the project. Ethics approval has been provided for the use of existing and future project data. To date, the project has produced some significant
achievements despite the ‘teething’ phase of implementation. Predictably, a range of hurdles have been encountered and with planning already underway for 2013 many of the challenges have already been addressed for improved implementation in the next iteration of the project. As of June 2012, 42 interns remain in the program, a retention rate of 85%. The reasons identified for withdrawal include: financial stress; poor performance in either placement or academic demands; and in one case mismatch with a mentor.

The most significant challenge was the truncated start-up phase, which resulted from protracted negotiations over final tender details. This placed pressure on the advertising, selection and placement processes of the project, resulting in some pragmatic decisions that compromised some aspects of intended best practice. For example, placing students with limited time for allocation resulted in some schools receiving only one student rather than a cohort of students as had been intended.

For many participants, the WACUTS collaborative model required a change in mindset, away from the perceptions of a traditional practicum with set university requirements to a co-teacher approach with interns and mentors negotiating the commitments of the intern around the school context and the interns’ capacity. This change of mindset was required by all participants, and commented on by both mentors and interns:

An internship is not a placement - it is a mentoring process between the mentor, intern and lecturer. Collaboration and interpersonal relationships are essential for effective co-planning, teaching and assessing. The aim is to link theory and practice so that the interns are ready to take on their own classes. (Sue, Mentor, 26th Jan)

The internship model means we get treated as interns not praccies (Bob, 2012 intern).

The coordinators were considered the essential link between school and university and pivotal to the success of the partnership. However, the different expectations of the WACUTS model meant that some site directors were uncertain about their roles.
Recognition is needed for the amount and intensity of time that is required to develop and maintain effective partnerships in a collaborative model across universities and schools. Regular meetings were held by the project team and frequent communication was expected between the project team and the schools. During this first six months, the extent of interaction expected and required between all stakeholders was underestimated.

Effective communication was enhanced by attendance at the induction session at the start of the year. School coordinators and mentors who did not attend this were less likely to access the portal and therefore under-informed about some aspects of the project. The inclusion of the portal in the program facilitated communication between all partners, allowed the project team to monitor levels of participants’ satisfaction and identify areas of risk or dissatisfaction. The portal assisted with dissemination of information, regular reflections based on NPTS, access to resources and links to industry and professional organisations. Additional induction in the use of the portal would enhance the effective use of this medium for communication. The portal represents an online community of practice (Wenger et al., 2002) for interns, mentors, school coordinators, principals and university coordinators.

For some interns, the workload of their university units was heavy and interns found it difficult to juggle and balance the commitments of both school and university. Discussions were required between participants to ensure that the interns were aware of how they could combine their school university requirements instead of seeing them as separate. In some cases, assessment requirements were modified by university staff.

Some of the interns struggled financially. Only five of the students were awarded Department of Education scholarships and only a few of the country cohort were eligible for the Department of Education country stipend. The school based commitment of the internship meant most students reduced their income producing activities, while also increasing costs related to transport and childcare.

"Seriously I think there are financial issues for the majority of students. I am placed in a rural school but because I did not re-locate I was ineligible for the"
stipend and have not been able to pick up work because I am committed to the program. (Tanya, 4th August)

Interns appeared highly satisfied with the structure and content of the internship as indicated by emails and portal reflections. They have reported appreciation for the ongoing access to professional development offered at the school level such as workshops related to the National Partnership in Schools - Literacy and Numeracy project and W.A Department of Education training in Classroom Management Strategies (CMS). The interns commented on being empowered and valued the access to training offered in their schools.

It has been a pleasure to watch a professional who is always willing to help other professionals and develop programs that will assist pre-service teachers. I have learnt how to use technology I had only ever read about and am now using. This [internship] has been an experience I could never have imagined nor could I have done without. (Sally, Intern)

The mentors commented on the value of the mentoring workshops for the content and skills developed and the networking opportunity. Ongoing professional development for all participants was a feature of the WACUTS program.

Schools are pleased with the quality of interns as evidenced by emails and portal comments and the number of schools that have assisted interns to apply for LATS in order for them to continue working within the school. Interns demonstrated a high level of commitment and engagement, produced work of high calibre and demonstrated high level professional skills.

The Intern we have here is fantastic. She has been a terrific asset to the school and has established a very positive and professional relationship with her mentor, students and fellow teachers. (Clint, Principal)

Given the teething issues of the first year all interns have expressed their appreciation of the program and the benefits that they have gained. They feel that their professional preparation has been enhanced by the experience and that the internship has linked theory with practice.
The internship WACUTS program is the best initiative to come out of teacher training for a long time. Schools and 3 Universities working together for the good of the student is a great accomplishment…The Universities, the Department of Education and WACOT are also running with this program- I don’t think such collaboration has ever happened before and I must congratulate the 3 representatives from each Uni for this. (Jen, 21st June)

Lessons learned

From this initial six months of the project many lessons have been learned which have already influenced planning for 2013. Specifically we have noted the importance of:

- an early lead in time for advertising, selection, appointment and induction of all parties;
- consolidating partnerships with a smaller number of schools in order to be able to place larger cohorts within each school to achieve economies of scale and enhanced quality;
- an administrative officer to manage communication, liaison and data between the universities and partners to overcome some of the logistical issues faced in 2012;
- ensuring academic workload is achievable and that all participants understand the importance of integration of academic and school-based content and assessment.

In addition, we believe that some of the pressure points for interns can be overcome by front loading more days in schools prior to university commencement, allowing for more flexible distribution of time in schools during the year to cater for the peaks and flows of university or school commitments. The development of more extensive documentation, including a WACUTs handbook will enhance the consistency of information supplied to all participants and help in the process of moving from the old to the new collaborative and flexible mindset.

Additional issues have emerged that are beyond the immediate capacity of the project to address:
• the negative impact on the financial circumstances of students associated with lost income, travel and accommodation and childcare costs;
• the value of providing additional time-release for school coordinators with 3 or more students; and
• alleviating accommodation issues for interns completing rural placements.

Conclusion
The WACUTS project is a unique model that represents a complex collaborative partnership between three universities, 20 schools, a professional association and the Department of Education. The model has moved from the university-centred model of initial teacher education towards a more collaborative enterprise between teacher educators and schools to tighten the nexus between theory and practice, much akin to the historical model of teacher apprenticeship situated within schools. While the aims of the project are ambitious, the first six months have indicated that the outcomes are achievable. The project brings to light the importance of pre-service teachers linking theory and practice. The collaborative approach embodied in the WACUTS project is informed by earlier apprenticeship models, yet challenges old certainties as it ventures into frontiers not yet explored. The project is facilitated by new technologies that link metropolitan and rural communities and opens dialogue between high calibre pre-service teachers and a range of partners who contribute complementary knowledge and skills to their development.

References


Chapter 7: Developing a Mentoring Platform for Successful Engagement of Pre-service Teachers with their Professional Learning Experience: What will this platform look like, sound like and feel like from the perspective of one key stakeholder – the pre-service teacher?

Elizabeth Toohey

Mentoring as a shared and transparent process is identified as the strategy to develop capacity, capability and confidence of pre-service teachers. This will include a thoughtfully constructed relationship that enables critical conversation, inquiry based learning, reflective practice and evidence based professional judgment to guide the personal and professional development of the pre-service teacher. But what factors influence and impact upon the relationship and what strategies are put in place to make this happen? This chapter chiefly explores this question.

Introduction

Mentoring has the capacity to build successful professional learning experiences for pre-service teachers and grow the human capital within the teaching and learning world. But what mentoring model will make this happen? Mentoring is complex and is about open dialogue, critical conversation, an interface of theory and practice in the real world setting and a valid and authentic assessment of the pre-service teachers’ competence against the professional standards, the benchmarks for best practice. Shared meaning and an open and transparent process that aligns
the pre-service teacher, the teacher mentor, the workplace context and university staff, lecturers, tutors and school liaisons is critical. Preparing pre-service teachers for learning success is about developing personal vision, stimulating ambition and growing the teacher ‘you aspire to be’, which motivates the learner to learn. Mentoring relationships do not just happen; they need a clearly defined structure, as they are about meshing the individual, the social dynamics and the organisational culture and determining what are the perceived affordances and constraints in the use of mentoring as a professional learning model. “Mentoring can create real, relevant and meaningful relationships to induct pre-service teachers into the teaching world but it has to be thoughtfully constructed within collaborative relationships.” (Top of the Class, 2007)

This picture provides a clear rationale for the building of a mentoring platform to guide and support the mentoring relationship which is about observation, giving and receiving feedback, collection of evidence and the making of judgments that inform the pre-service teacher of their current position within the key learning areas. This mentoring platform can provide a structure and space for reflective discourse which enables questioning, understanding and further development in practise by both the mentor and the pre-service teacher. An explicit professional learning platform for mentoring which establishes clearly defined goals, expectations, role descriptions and actions will ensure the continuous improvement of the learner, the learning process and the learning product. Professional practice within the education context engages diverse stakeholders with diverse perspectives on what is effective performance management of the pre-service teacher. “Learning in the workforce is influenced by personal, interpersonal, institutional, social and historical factors.” (Foley 2004). We need a shared vision and shared conceptions of professional and personal identity to ensure congruence in the growth and development of the pre-service teacher in their professional learning experience.

The purpose of this paper is to begin building a clear picture of how the pre-service teacher perceives the mentoring relationship and what works for them, and what grows their competence and confidence. The notion of what mentoring relationship works in this context needs to be informed by key stakeholders, and this will contribute to quality improvement strategies for professional learning. The target group is Graduate Diploma in Education students during and after their first professional learning
experience – a structured opportunity to look through the lens of the pre-service teacher. The pre-service teachers’ insights will inform the university in terms of what can be done to prepare them for learning success in this critical relationship and will also provide insights into the training needs of the teacher mentors in facilitating a successful adult learning experience.

**Literature Review**

Our world is changing, our learners and the learning context are changing and we need to be responsive to these changes if we are to grow our pre-service teachers to be the best they can be. “Our institutions need to change because of the increasing complexity of society and globalization. Schools and universities play a dual role; accommodating learner’s method and mode of learning and transforming learners and preparing them to function in the world that is unfolding.” (Sim 2006) We are part of a learning community which requires clear alignment of the person and the process to ensure that productive outcomes and the mentoring relationship can be the partnership which will build connectivity between the individual and the professional learning experience – the head, the hands and the heart working together to draw meaning from the experience. In a study titled Learning from Mentors (Feiman-Namser: 2003), significant conclusions about mentoring emerged:

1. For mentoring to contribute to educational reform it must be connected to a vision of good teaching
2. For mentoring to be effective it must be informed by an understanding of learning to teach
3. Mentoring is more than a social role; it is also a professional practice
4. Mentors need time to mentor and opportunities to learn to mentor.

The imperative to examine this relationship has increased in recent times due to the changes to teacher accreditation and greater use of standards to accredit and employ teachers. “Standards contribute to the professionalization of teaching and raise the status of the profession. They could also be used as the basis for a professional accountability model, helping to ensure that teachers can demonstrate appropriate levels of professional knowledge, professional practice and professional engagement.” (AITSL Website 2012) These standards, be they state or
national make explicit what is required to be a competent performing teacher and they are the benchmarks against which we measure the preservice teachers’ performance in the professional learning experience.

A successful mentor has the ability to cultivate an affirming environment; communicate in a way that empowers the learner to learn; role-model desired approaches; encourage independence and mentor at a level that matches the pre-service teacher’s readiness to learn. Mentoring is seen as a tool of engagement within which the learner actively constructs meaning from the learning which is context driven, socially mediated and centred in the real world. This mentoring model links effectively with constructivist learning theories. “Constructivist learning theories adopt a more learner-centred approach to pedagogical practice. Learners are seen as active agents in their own learning not merely recipients of others peoples’ knowledge. Constructivists conceptualise learners as participants, contributors and elaborators of knowledge, which is always socially mediated – learners change the world as the world changes them.” (Chappel 2003:3) It is now to be seen in a more professional and strategic way grounded in clearly defined structures and support frameworks nurturing the notion ‘of inventing ourselves or reinventing ourselves.’

The mentoring relationship has four critical functions within the professional experience of the pre-service teacher:

- “Relating – mentors build and maintain relationships with mentees based on mutual trust, respect and professionalism;
- Assessing – mentors gather and diagnose data about their mentees’ ways of teaching and learning which enables them to determine their current competence and confidence and help them meet their professional needs;
- Coaching – this allows mentors to share relevant experiences and strategies to help improve the pre-service teachers’ performance;
- Guiding – mentors can wean their mentees away from dependence by guiding them through the process of reflecting on decisions and actions for themselves.” (Portner 2008)

The teacher mentor often plays a number of roles moving from: the instructor, the master of learning to the facilitator; the constructor of
learning to the conversationalist who manages the communication and reflection; to the gatekeeper for the profession, the education system and the schools. Doing things differently will lead to something exceptional, “to retain, attract and protect difficult to replace human capital innovative best practice is needed – raise the bar, be change responsive and future focused.” (Productivity Commission 2011)

The sequential development of the pre-service teacher may require the nature of the relationship between the teacher mentor and the pre-service teacher to change. Knowing the pre-service teacher, knowing their needs will inform customisation of the experience to meet pedagogical, personal and employment outcomes and determine the relationship required to best fit the person right here, right now. These roles can also change the relationship, for example “as soon as assessment becomes a task of the mentor, changes in the relationship may occur – it can move from one of trust and openness, risk taking and empowerment to compliance and conformity, reproduction of the status quo, lowered expectations and commitment to practice. (Mitchell, Reilly & Logue: 2009). This further highlights the need for a robust structure within which the mentoring relationship can be negotiated to best achieve the desired outcomes for the pre-service teacher in their teaching and learning cycle. Mentoring works through the learning layers from; social learning theory – interacting with & observing others, being instructed and challenged ‘watch & listen with me’; to experiential learning theory – learning new information through doing the doing in a context that is known ‘work with me’; to humanist learning theory - personalisation of the learning to the individual’s own learning environment ‘guide me’. (Pascarelli 1998) These layers can be taken deeper by a four staged model of classical mentoring consisting of:

- Initiation – ‘checking out’ stage where each person is learning about appreciating the other –“I am here for you”;
- Cultivation – the mentor builds on the strengths of the mentee and sparingly shares their own with the focus being on illuminating issues and helping the mentee look at options, consequences and solutions – “I believe in you”;
• Transformation – the mentee begins to take responsibility for their actions and moves towards increasing autonomy – “I will not let you fail”;
• Separation – the culmination of the mentoring arrangement with the mentee taking risks, innovating and testing new approaches – “You have the power”. (Pascarelli 1998)

But it may not be a tool of transformation, challenge or change within all contexts for all participants and being such a qualitative and highly personalised experience the outcomes can be difficult to measure. This is not an incidental process it requires thoughtful design and implementation. “Mentors perceive their roles in different ways, emphasising aspects to do with listening, enabling, organising, trouble-shooting, supporting or teaching, acting as a friend, a colleague or a parent-figure.” (Young et al. 2005)

le Cornu (2009) surveyed students who acknowledged the value they placed on receiving both positive and constructive feedback. “This feedback both acknowledged their successes and strengths and provided them with challenges in developing their competencies in the classroom and at the same time developed their self-confidence. These outcomes are reflected in the following statement: She pushed me, which resulted in me stepping up and gaining further confidence and development as a teacher.” Mentoring is about establishing a community of support which is marked by both a ‘sense of belonging’ where individuals feel supported and safe and this underscores inquiry based learning where pre-service teachers are engaged in critical conversations about the theory and practice of teaching and learning. Bass and Vaughan (1996:p35-37) discuss four ways of behaving that produce human learning:

• Trail & error – This is the most primitive and simple way in which learning occurs.
• Perceptual organisation – Much human learning is a consequence of perceiving the total situation and organising it into a meaningful pattern.
• Modelling – We can profit from the experiences we observe in others.
• Mediation – Communication from others can serve as an intermediary process for modifying our behaviour.

The pre-service teacher is engaged in inquiry based learning which involves observing, reflecting and collaborative dialogue which informs the next steps in planning and doing. This is then the basis upon which evidence is collected to guide improvement and measure the impact of the professional learning experience. This assessment process, which is so much about high quality feedback, will provide the opportunity for the pre-service teacher to actively engage with the teacher mentor in developing an action plan; goal setting and identification of strategies to achieve these goals. This approach will re-position the pre-service teacher to enable continuous improvement in specific teaching and learning domains. So the learning environment needs to be prepared through induction and training of teacher mentors, establishing clearly defined goals, expectations, action and reporting strategies. This can be powerfully facilitated by a mentoring platform that defines the relationship, provides professional development of the mentors and continuous opportunities to reflect together on how the pre-service teacher identifies themselves and the teacher mentor as a teacher. Alignment of the operational reality with the university’s vision for aspiring teachers will be achieved through a thoughtfully constructed process and partnership.

From research conducted by Peter Hudson 2007 “the university’s role was considered important for devising frameworks and protocols and presenting ways to form professional relationships and deliver feedback with clearly defined roles and guidelines.” Building a mentoring platform for learning success will be dependent upon partnerships between universities, schools, teacher mentors and pre-service teachers using a community of practice model. Kruger et al (2009) identified three effects of an effective and sustainable partnership: a focus on learning; altered relationship practices; and new enabling structures.” This is centred around, the need for ‘new’ school – university partnerships that have a commitment to ‘reciprocal learning relationships’ (Le Cornu & Ewing, 2008). This enables the pre-service teacher to be part of a community of practice which enables them to make meaning of the learning through co-construction of knowledge.
Data Collection and Analysis
First semester Graduate Diploma in Education students responded to discussion board triggers while on their first professional learning experience. This provided an opportunity for linking with peers and processing the learning experience in a context outside the school environment. The trigger from which I have collected key themes relevant to this paper is:

Describe your relationship with your teacher mentor – what did it look like, sound like and feel like? What impact did this relationship have on your professional learning experience?

The data collected from these stakeholders revealed the following areas of challenge in the teacher mentor and pre-service teacher relationship:

Competing obligations for the Teacher Mentor

- Teacher mentors engaged in a juggling act of all their different roles and this causes stress and mood swings
- Not using feedback to engage in critical conversations and find a plan to improve the pre-service teachers’ current position – a gap
- Needing structure and direction – a shared approach
- Recognising that changes in the relationship develop differently over time as the teacher mentor becomes comfortable with the pre-service teacher in their space

Approaches taken by the Teacher mentor

- It is my class, do it my way
- Living up to the high expectations of the teacher mentor
- Not knowing what the teacher mentors’ expectations are
- As a pre-service teacher you will sink or swim
- Teacher mentors providing varying degrees of praise and critical feedback
- The ‘real world’ take of some teacher mentors
- As a pre-service teacher you will do as I say not what I do
• An adversarial approach which breaks pre-service teachers to a point where they survive or they choose to leave – the toughen up approach
• Walking in the shoes of the pre-service teacher as opposed to the experienced teacher
• More pushing by the teacher mentor to take on more learning opportunities & take some risks
• I am teacher/god – you are here to suffer - do as I tell you

Challenges for the Pre-service Teacher

• Needing opportunities for engagement as the pre-service teacher with the teacher mentor in the classroom
• Pre-service teacher learning to take ownership of the relationship and build the positives and not get drowned by the negatives – this can make change happen
• Needing more positive reinforcement and less criticism
• Needing more direction and a more balanced relationship
• Personality & teaching clashes
• Thrown in the deep end – I had to be independent, autonomous and self-regulated – learn on my own
• Feeling on the edge with an unapproachable mentor
• Feeling intimidated by the teacher mentor & needing to grow confidence
• Feeling tested not supported
• Building a positive relationship in week 1 seems to be a challenge for some – hard yards, uncertainty etc. Moving from negative to positive relationship can be difficult
• Managing lack of agreement with the teacher mentor and still maintaining a respectful relationship

The data collected from these stakeholders revealed the following positive dimensions in the teacher mentor and pre-service teacher relationship:

Observed behaviour of the Teacher mentor:
• Great role model - wonderful rapport with students & a positive attitude about being a teacher
• Willing to listen, bounce ideas off, reflect with, ask advice of and run to for help
• Acknowledgement that great relationships are critical to a successful learning community
• Pushing me to be the best I can be
• Guidance, support and the opportunity to trial different teaching strategies & find ‘your own way’
• Increasing responsibilities from week to week
• Motivating me to excel by being encouraging & inspiring
• I won’t let you drown – teacher mentor support to build confidence
• Letting me find my own way – respecting different styles not just mimicking my teacher mentor
• Letting me work outside ‘my’ comfort zone is a valuable learning experience

Relationship priorities
• Lots of trust and open communication in the relationship
• Receiving feedback that grows confidence and competence
• Valuing different styles and ways of doing – no one size fits all
• Having more than one mentor with each ‘speaking to a different part of me’
• Feeling like a colleague – learning about each other on a personal & professional level
• Forcing ‘me’ to self-reflect, facilitating my ownership of the learning experience then offering feedback
• Being real & authentic as a pre-service teacher & as a teacher mentor
• Variety in teacher mentor personalities and teaching styles is powerful
• Working together

Support for the Pre-service Teacher Role
• Sharing resources
• No sugar coating in the feedback
• This is a reciprocal relationship
• Validated ‘my’ career choice
• This relationship makes or breaks the professional learning experience
• Feedback & discussion before & after but no intervention in between as this is deemed to result in loss of power & ‘face’ – a thoughtful learner centred approach
• Nurturing relationship
• Pre-service teachers need to find themselves & what works for them

This data highlights the need to look closely at what makes and what can diffuse a quality learning relationship. This relationship is complex and is about the social/emotional dimensions, teaching and learning, being part of a team, connecting with all the stakeholders and the school culture. Pre-service teachers and teacher mentors are adult learners with different personality types, learning styles, values, beliefs and work and life experience. Finding a mentoring platform to diffuse difference and drive shared intent can facilitate the creation of a shared landscape which will enable a more consistent outcome for all players.

It is recognised that professional learning has many layers from analysing and reflecting on the pre-service teachers’ performance, validating and moderating assessment decisions and being responsive and adaptive to the identified needs of this learner. The stages that need to be considered in this imposed not selected relationship are as follows:

• Establish the relationship through a getting to know you process which will involve sharing information in terms of interests, goals, values, etc.
• Establish shared agreement on how “we will work together” – expectations, giving and receiving feedback, the school culture, etc.
• Identify specific learning needs, set goals and think through strategies to make them happen
• Continuously reflect on where the relationship is and where it needs to be.
This process enables the teacher mentor and the pre-service teacher to connect and find a common ground within which they can work and achieve identified goals. Yet we need to consider that the learning experience within a school based workplace learning context has evolved over time and is presented in specific ways which are informed by the interplay of individual agency, social, cultural and situational factors. To ensure valid, reliable, flexible and fair outcomes for the pre-service teacher we need to consider the formation of a mentoring platform to guide the thinking and action of the teacher mentor. This does not mean that we want a commodified approach to the teacher mentor/pre-service teacher relationship but we do need to create a clear framework for learning success. “In addition to clearly articulating their own practices, mentors also need an understanding of how to help and support adults so as to facilitate their learning” (Rhodes, Stokes & Hampton 2004).

There are themes which have emerged that show the need for growing the pre-service teachers’ initiative and empowerment in this process but we also need to consider that some factors are outside the pre-service teachers’ control and it is critical that the universities act as the additional set of eyes and offer training which will build consistency in this relationship. Also we need to consider the universities’ role in mentoring the mentors, providing an opportunity for critical conversations, reflection and peer review strategies. This is a reciprocal relationship which can build the professional learning of not only the pre-service teacher but also the teacher mentor and this rests on all parties having shared understanding and responsibility for achieving the agreed outcomes. Creating a learning community within this professional learning context will enable teacher mentors to learn with and from each other as opposed to being isolated. ‘In recent years the move to establish partnerships between universities and school clusters in delivering teacher education programs has provided a context for extended conversations between university-based staff, school-based staff and pre-service teachers regarding the two way nexus between knowledge and practice.’ (Research Report QCT 2012: 25)

**Conclusion**

Mentoring is the most commonly chosen workplace learning strategy within this specific adult learning context to meet the learning needs of pre-service teachers and it has many layers and can move through many stages of
development. Mentoring is a professional learning strategy which can enable the pre-service teacher to understand the nature of the workplace; build their capacity to form effective relationships within the school environment; provide the context for alignment of theory and practice in a changing landscape; provide the support necessary to move from dependence to independence and facilitate the pre-service teacher in realising their potential as a beginning teacher using dialogue and reflection. This will be achieved by establishing a mentoring platform that looks like, feels like and sounds like a learning community focused on: preparing the partnership; preparing the person; preparing the product; and preparing the process to enable all stakeholders to actively construct the knowledge, own the learning and use critical reflection to identify future learning needs and enhance workforce development for the future.

References
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Chapter 8: Developing a Professional Learning Community through the Centre for Teaching Excellence Program

John Ward & Jon Hart

This chapter focuses on the work of Coffs Harbour Senior College in leading a cultural shift in the way professional learning is delivered and experienced by current teachers and links this approach to the pre-service teachers program at Southern Cross University.

Have you ever thought of teacher professional learning as a lucky dip? Have you participated in professional learning events and come away feeling as though the whole experience was not relevant to you?

This paper focuses on the work of Coffs Harbour Senior College in leading a cultural shift in the way professional learning is delivered and experienced by current teachers, and links this approach to the pre-service teachers program at Southern Cross University.

Through the Federal Government’s Centre for Teaching Excellence project Coffs Harbour Senior College has implemented a structure which enables teachers from neighbouring schools to come together to learn on issues directly relevant to their teaching. The notion of a professional learning community within and between schools is becoming increasingly important. A close liaison has also developed with Southern Cross University, Coffs Harbour campus, to enable pre-service teachers to participate in a very successful mentoring program with experienced teachers in the Coffs Harbour area.
Teachers need to be given the opportunities to reflect on their pedagogy and share with and learn from colleagues. It is equally vital that trainee teachers are given the opportunity to experience the reality of what a teacher does on a daily basis as a part of their training.

Preamble

More than ever before young teachers are confronted by an increasingly complex challenge in an increasingly complex world – one influenced by continuing economic crises, civil wars and civil unrest, threats to resourcing and profound social and technological change. Schools have always been seen as the building blocks for preparing young people for the challenges of the adult world and are widely seen as the main vehicles for the development of a myriad of skills necessary to succeed in life.

The 2009 Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians sets out clearly what our responsibilities as educators need to be, in a society that is “prosperous, cohesive and culturally diverse” and one in which globalisation and technological change are placing greater demands on education and skill development and where the nature of jobs available is changing faster than ever.

There are regular calls from different quarters for schools to undertake more sport, less sport, more literacy and numeracy, driving skills, gun skills, healthy eating, ethics, more performing arts………..the list goes on.

We are in a time when the average of primary schools teachers is 42.1 years and 44.5 years for secondary teachers. It is no secret that a vast number of “baby boomers” are soon to retire which will arguably leave a great gap of expertise and experience in the profession.

With good reason there has been a greatly increased emphasis on the notion of “quality teaching” and pedagogy in recent years with an enormous amount of resourcing devoted towards establishing and lifting teaching standards. With this has come increased accountability through the Institute of Teachers in NSW and now AITSL (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership).
Schools need to, and indeed are, accepting the challenge to ensure that quality teaching and learning takes place. In NSW the past several years have witnessed a much greater focus on the issue of quality teaching following the release of the Quality Teaching model in 2004. It is incumbent on schools to provide teachers with ongoing opportunities for professional growth. Especially relevant now is that we are moving into an environment of National Professional Teaching Standards reinforced in NSW by the annual Teacher Assessment and Review process. This is the wider educational context that a young teacher is entering. The challenge is both daunting and exciting and we must ensure that our young, early career teachers are well prepared and understand the realities of the challenge ahead.

The Journey

Coffs Harbour Senior College was designated as a Centre for Excellence in Teaching (C4E) in October 2010, one of 36 NSW public schools in the Commonwealth Governments’ National Partnerships Smarter Schools Improving Teacher Quality Program. Centres for Excellence were intended to be school sites for demonstrating, developing and sharing high quality teaching, leading to improved outcomes for students.

This was to be achieved by:

- promoting and demonstrating quality teaching through classroom and school-wide practice in improving student learning outcomes;
- providing quality supervision, mentoring and support to early career teachers;
- providing ongoing professional development aligned to teaching standards;
- assisting more experienced teachers to achieve voluntary accreditation at Professional Accomplishment and/or Professional Leadership;
- demonstrating and developing strengthened linkages between initial teacher education programs and transition to teaching and teacher induction;
• working with other schools in the Centre for Excellence cluster to strengthen the quality of teaching to improve student learning outcomes;
• forming part of the statewide cross-sectoral team focused on teacher quality initiatives in NSW.

The program included the additional position of a Highly Accomplished Teacher (HAT) supported by a para-professional. The Highly Accomplished Teacher needed to be an excellent teacher who was capable of modeling high quality teaching for colleagues across the school with the ability to lead other teachers in the development and refinement of their teaching practice to improve student learning outcomes. Funding for the program was initially for two years with the possibility of funding for a one year transition period.

Figure 1: Diagrammatic representation of the relationship between four secondary schools in Coffs Harbour as part of this project

At the beginning of 2011 conditions were ideal for the C4E to make an impact:
• A new Principal with strong relationships with our cluster schools
A new zeal amongst teaching staff for pro active professional learning
A willingness to look at the available HSC data more deeply
In 2010 the C4 (Community of Secondary Schools) had been established locally without including the Senior College
The Centre for Excellence gave us an opportunity to develop stronger links with our cluster schools

Our three main targets from the beginning were:

1. Building teacher capacity to improve student outcomes both within the Senior College and within our cluster schools
2. High schools and with Southern Cross University
3. Provide professional learning opportunities that meet teachers’ needs – subject-based where possible

Why did we choose these targets and strategies?

1. Developing more positive relationships with cluster schools was essential to any ongoing partnership – to break down barriers that had built up over many years. At the beginning of 2011 the Senior College was included in the Coffs Coast Community of Secondary Schools and the C4 became the C5 with a focus of exploring ways of providing a wider curriculum to senior students in the Coffs Harbour network. There was also an exciting and new opportunity to engage teachers in a variety of shared professional learning activities.
2. The partnership with Southern Cross University was an obvious one as we share a site and facilities.
3. At a college level it was important to challenge teachers thinking about their classroom teaching. Equally important to start analysing data in more depth and use this in our future planning.
4. These targets also complemented the North Coast regional targets and our own college goals.
Figure 2: Sharing Professional Learning

Inputs and Infrastructure available with the Centre for Excellence Program:

- Staffing – The HAT and a Para-Professional have been integral to the success of the C4E.
- A major feature in the initial acceptance of the C4E across the cluster was the sharing of the resource – Professional Learning funds especially.
- Regular, scheduled meetings were held with SCU representatives and Cluster representatives.
- The C4E Cluster Committee is involved in advising and developing C4E Professional Learning Events.
- The fact that we are situated at the Coffs Harbour Education Campus enables us to make use of the facilities including the lecture theatres.

In a relatively short space of time a number of changes have occurred

- An acceptance that data analysis has a place and can be of value
• College wide focus on use of data – especially RAP package
• An appreciation of the importance of professional learning and professional growth
• There is an air of re-invigoration within the Senior College and across the cluster with teachers working together on issues that are relevant and important to them.
• Teachers are talking with each other – within and between schools
• The relationship between Senior College and other schools has significantly improved
• Very positive and growing relationship with Southern Cross University – before the C4E there was little relationship in the form of pro-active sharing of expertise

Specific Elements of the Centre for Teaching Excellence Program

(1) Links with Southern Cross University and the pre-service teacher education program

A mandatory component of the Centre for Excellence program has been to work with one or more universities in particular developing linkages between initial teacher education programs and transition to teaching and teacher induction. It is our belief that aspiring teachers need to have a strong understanding of how teachers operate, system expectations, the reality of day to day busyness of schools, teacher workload and teacher professional learning expectations. We were acutely aware that there is also often a real tension regarding the need to place pre-service teachers in practicums and the willingness or availability of local schools to accept placements in what is becoming an increasingly demanding profession.

Our links with SCU have seen a number of highly positive developments including:
• Sharing of expert and experienced teachers as a resource – several Senior College staff lectured in the pre-service teacher education program.
• Shadowing & Mentoring Program with Senior College Staff and then Cluster School staff – this has been evaluated very highly last year and again this year with trainee teachers commenting on how valuable the experience has been, especially in relation to being able to link theory with practical observation. It provided a non-threatening opportunity for pre-service teachers to observe experienced practitioners and discuss pedagogy and classroom management.

• Benefits for Southern Cross University with a greater understanding of school operations and also increased numbers of Practicum placements across the schools network.

• There were also great benefits for the Mentors who reported that it has encouraged them to look much more closely at their own teaching and reflect on the way that they structure their own lessons and engage students. Two comments worth noting were:
  o “The shadowing program gives students the opportunity to spend more time in the classroom which is what is required to learn and improve teaching. Students who feel they have more to learn have the opportunity to attend more days in the classroom until they feel more confident.”
  o “Prac students do force you to reflect on your own teaching practice and I certainly recommend having them for your own professional development”.

(2) Teacher Professional Learning at Coffs Harbour Senior College:

Hand in hand with our pre-service teacher program has been the journey that we have taken in relation to teacher professional learning within the senior college and with our cluster school.

Central to the work we have done has been the important notion that highly effective teachers do not work in isolation and increasingly teachers need to learn with and from each other. In education systems both in Australia and other countries more and more is being written about the enormous value of teachers working together to build their capacity and expertise. Providing teachers with ongoing and relevant professional learning opportunities is essential for professional health and growth. To pursue our theme of “Building teacher capacity to improve student outcomes”, I believe that we need to
consciously work toward establishing a model of shared professional learning that will complement the long established options such as inservices and school development days.

In much of the research into teacher learning five key characteristics are highlighted:

- Shared values and vision
- Collective responsibility
- Reflective professional enquiry
- Collaboration
- Group, as well as individual, learning

![Figure 3: Targeted elements in order to improve student learning](image)

From the very beginning it was important to use reliable research data as a basis. We wanted our teachers to develop an understanding of why we were placing so much time and energy into the professional learning model. To this end we have utilised the findings of SIMEER (2005) research into highly effective teaching, Steve Dinham’s work on “Successful Teaching in the NSW Higher School Certificate”, Linda Darling- Hammond’s
“Improving Learning: What Can We Learn from Reforms Around the World?”, Mick Walsh’s work on “Performance and Development Cultures” and the John Hattie’s work effect size and the main influences on student learning and achievement. We also utilized some of the excellent resources developed by other state Departments of Education.

We spent some time exploring the links between the Teaching and Learning Cycle, the Professional learning Cycle and student results.

In the process of establishing a school wide acceptance of a culture of professional learning and inquiry, teachers were encouraged to think deeply about the nature of teaching and learning and the process of moving from knowing what professional learning is to be undertaken to the point where students are achieving desired outcomes. See Figure 4: “Teaching and Learning Cycle.”

![Teaching & Learning Cycle](image)

Figure 4: Teaching and Learning Cycle
The key questions we asked teachers to consider in relation to the Teaching and Learning cycle were:

- What do I want my students to learn?
- How will my students get there?
- How do I know when my students get there?
- Where are my students now?

These fundamental questions can inform discussions about effective teaching practice. In particular, effective teachers will:

- Engage students in active learning
- Create intellectually challenging tasks
- Use a variety of teaching strategies
- Adapt teaching to student needs
- Create effective scaffolds and supports for their students
- Provide clear standards and constant, constructive feedback
- Set high expectations and maintain them
• Give their students lots of praise

We then looked more closely at the cycle involved in Professional Learning and asked teachers to consider:

• What are my students’ Learning Needs?
• What are my own Learning Needs?
• What Professional Knowledge will I need?
• What are my changed teaching practices as a result of my professional learning?
• How has my learning impacted on student outcomes? Has the learning made any difference?

One of the other areas that we have spent a great deal of time with is in relation to the analysis and use of data – Smart and RAP – to aid professional learning. SMART data refers to the full range of data made available to schools by the NSW Department of Education and includes HSC results, value added and student growth data. “RAP” refers to the Board of Studies Results Analysis Package and contains a significant amount of detailed information about student performance in each HSC exam. In 2012 we have introduced a HSC Snapshot approach, requiring teachers to look really deeply into their HSC results from last year in order to ascertain areas for deeper focus and improvement.

Much of the recent research on teacher effectiveness points to the critical importance of teachers being given the time to reflect on their practice and to share with colleagues in a meaningful way. In the past teachers seemed to be part of a “one size fits all approach” and sometimes came away from isolated professional learning events with little to apply to their own classrooms.

A wide range of research from educators such as Linda Darling-Hammond, John Hattie and Steve Dinham support the fact that:

• Teachers need to be well prepared in their content to know what information is to be taught;
• Teachers need to know how to use this information to provide effective feedback to students;
• The variations in individual students’ manner of receiving, transforming and being disposed to this information are significant in the act of teaching.
• Professional learning opportunities that impact on teaching practice are focused on specific curriculum content, connected to teachers’ work with students, supported by mentoring, observation and feedback and are connected to teachers’ collaborative work in professional learning communities.
• Teachers do make the difference.

It was important to ask teachers to reflect on the types of professional learning that were most useful and beneficial to their teaching and if necessary make changes to way that professional learning was delivered. Professional Learning needs to be specific, targeted and shared. While there is always a place for external systemic PL events, we made the decision to focus on two other professional learning structures. In this respect teaching staff were asked to consider 4 key questions;

I. How effective is the one size fits all approach to Teacher Professional Learning?
II. Is customised and targeted Professional Learning a more effective method of supporting teacher learning and growth?
III. How do teachers learn best?
IV. What do you think of the idea of learning with and from teacher colleagues?

Typical professional learning opportunities in schools have included
• One day in-services
• Conferences
• School Development Days
• Staff Meetings
• Online Learning

We wanted to shift the balance and move more towards a work based culture of professional sharing. This is characterised by less focus on the more traditional forms of professional learning such as external workshops, reliance on external experts and a more individual pursuit of professional
learning, and an increased focus on more work based professional learning with staff sharing experiences and expertise on a regular basis. It has certainly led to many staff being asked to operate outside their comfort zones but has led to a more interactive and engaging professional learning culture which has been supported by a wide range of subject specific professional learning events across the network of 5 cluster high schools.

At a whole school level, the staff of Coffs Harbour Senior College supported the concept of cross faculty “Professional Learning and Support Teams”. We leaned on a range of research to put forward the case for teachers to meet and share professionally more regularly:

“What my school is learning, and what current research suggests, is that teachers don’t improve by listening to someone tell them how to do something newer or better in their classrooms. They learn by working together to address problems they themselves identify in their schools and classrooms. A new teacher willing to work and learn with colleagues will quickly surpass a more experienced colleague who is not interested in collaborating.” (Hunefeld, 2009)

“Effective teachers influence their peers: Good teachers have a positive effect on other teachers who work on the same team with them. Researchers looked at teacher teams that were joined by a highly effective colleague”: (Viadero, 2009)

“The idea that a single teacher, working alone, can know and do everything to meet the diverse learning needs of 30 students every day throughout the school year has rarely worked, and it certainly won’t meet the needs of learners in years to come… Quality teaching is not an individual accomplishment; it is the result of a collaborative culture that empowers teachers to team up to improve student learning beyond what any of them can achieve alone.” (Carrollin, 2009)

It is hoped that the Professional Learning & Support Teams concept will inspire and develop teachers in improving their practice by:

- Reflecting on and using the suggestions of colleagues either at Whole School, in PL Teams, Faculty or at on an individual level;
- Facilitating ongoing professional learning in all aspects of their work;
- Critically reflecting on their practice and achievements; and
- Contributing to the professional learning of colleagues.
In the lead up to the first meetings the rationale and purpose of the Professional Learning and Support Teams were agreed to as:

- Working together / moving in the same direction with common goals and shared experiences
- Getting to know other staff better
- Enhancing school and student outcomes
- Supporting colleagues
- Sharing success stories and strategies
- Extending our better students
- Student outcome oriented
- Linked to personal professional goal setting
- Feedback to colleagues about teaching practice and classroom management strategies
- Sharing strategies for mentoring students
- Promoting a better understanding and respect for other parts of the school
Thus, it was expected that highly effective professional learning teams will work together to improve student learning outcomes through collective enquiry, joint decision making, sharing and problem solving.

We also emphasised the absolute importance of the teams being seen as supportive. A genuine professional learning and support culture in a school needs to be:

- Non-Threatening
- Non-Judgmental
- Empowering
- Supportive
- Collaborative
- Team Building
- Trusting
- Socially welcoming
- Respectful
- Professional
- Developmental

It was also agreed that the Professional Learning and Support Teams would:

- Be cross faculty in nature
- Meet twice per term in lieu of regular staff meetings at a negotiable time
- Set own agendas if they prefer
- Have a process for sharing and giving feedback within the group

This model of shared and collaborative professional learning complements the work undertaken within each faculty area as well as the external professional learning that teachers are able to participate in.

A recent evaluation of the Professional Learning team structure has endorsed it as a positive and effective form of professional learning for our teachers. The teams have enjoyed the flexibility of being able to choose their meeting times as well as the freedom of being able to focus on the Teaching and Learning issues which are most relevant to them. To support and facilitate team discussions all staff have been provided with stimulus
booklets containing professional learning articles, activities and discussion topics.

(3) Work with our Cluster schools

The third key element of the Centre for Excellence Program has been the work that we have undertaken with our identified cluster schools in supporting teacher professional learning. From the beginning it was imperative that the Senior College was seen as promoting a network wide “Centre for Excellence” rather than be perceived as a Centre of Excellence. The latter would have appeared arrogant and divisive towards our neighbouring public schools. It was made clear that the funding available was to be a shared resource, geared towards building teacher capacity to improve student outcomes across the network of 5 high schools.

- Cluster representatives were appointed by each school – regular meetings with all schools represented have taken place
- Sharing of funding / resourcing was a winner with our cluster schools
- Sense of ownership and belonging – before there was a real disconnect
- The C4E has opened communication channels and promoted professional sharing
- We are working towards some consistency in teaching methodology e.g. the scaffolding of written responses using the model known as A.L.A.R.M. (A Literacy and Responding Matrix)

There has been a wide range of Professional Learning events over the past 18 months. These have been in direct response to identified needs by teachers in a range of subject areas. The events have been a true cultural shift for teacher professional learning and have been received with genuine enthusiasm and appreciation.

What has been the impact so far?

- Very positive evaluations of all Professional Learning events
- Southern Cross University has greatly appreciated the partnership – it has given a new spark to their pre-service program
- The college directed local promotion towards gaining increased enrolments from the non-government sector which is seen as a priority of the department of education. – it is working.
Within the college staff are revisiting their teaching and evaluating how they teach – we have given a structure and a vehicle for this with lots of opportunity – professional learning events, highly credible visiting experts.

Greater consistency of teaching practice such as the incorporation of the ALARM scaffold across the school.

Sharing of teaching strategies and a cross fertilisation of ideas

Greater collegiality within school and cluster with staff from all cluster schools attending the Professional Learning events

Comments from participating teachers such as:

“We have never had such opportunities to work with teachers from other schools”;

“I would never have dreamt of how successful the Centre for Excellence would have been.”

The Professional Learning Team structure has provided a vehicle for reflection, sharing and collaboration and is becoming part of the culture of professional learning and sharing across the school.

References


Chapter 9: Building Quality into Australian Teacher Education

Jenny Johnston

This chapter invites broader dialogue around change and innovation that could build further quality and depth into Australian teacher education. Using the academic literature, this chapter overviews some of the issues inherent in the current Australian teacher education landscape. It asserts that seeing Australian teacher education (TE) as a ‘wicked problem’ (Rittel & Webber, 1973) permits some creative solutions to these problems. The paper categorises the complex problems as paradigm and program difficulties. It also utilises the situation in Finland as an exemplar and concludes with recommendations for changes to the ways in which teacher education is delivered. These recommendations could be adopted by all Australian Teacher Education Programs (TEPs), by all institutions in a state, or by a single institution’s education faculty or school.

Introduction

Change is happening in teacher education in Australia. In August 2012 NSW presented a discussion paper about ways to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in NSW public schools (Great Teaching, Inspired Learning at: http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/news/greatteaching/index.php) which is anticipated to drive change in how teachers are prepared for their profession. The 2010 creation of AITSL (Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership at http://www.aitsl.edu.au/) as a federal body responsible for “rigorous national professional standards, fostering and driving high quality professional development for teachers and school leaders and working collaboratively across jurisdictions and engaging with key professional bodies” (p.1) is also driving change in Australian teacher education across all states.

This chapter briefly discusses selected difficulties evident in teacher education and asserts that overall the problems could be considered to be a ‘wicked problem’ (Rittel & Webber, 1973). It discusses some of the key
reasons why Australia’s teacher education is under scrutiny, highlighting the changes and challenges of contemporary education (Lynch, 2012). Understanding the dialogue around dominant educational discourses assists to unpack many of the subtle presumptions that impact on what people do (Moore, 2004). It categorises the difficulties into two frames—paradigm and program—and uses Finland as an exemplar from which we can learn. It concludes with some recommendations for re-conceptualising Australian teacher education across.

While it is acknowledged that there are specific boundaries and contexts that have to be accommodated within this field (that is, accreditation and jurisdictional parameters), there are also some processes that could revitalise our current teacher education systems. Thus, this chapter invites dialogue on these issues, including teacher education, and whether the goal of revitalisation can be achieved.

**Literature about teacher education**

Educational change is not new (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009). It is an ongoing component of the field. In bringing clarity to this discussion, a range of literature about educational paradigms and teacher education (TE) has been considered. In Australia several reports have described problems and potential solutions for education in general, and teacher preparation in particular. The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) has produced two well-researched papers on these complex issues (Ingvarson, Beavis, Kleinhenz, & Elliott, 2004; Ingvarson, Elliott, Kleinhenz, & McKenzie, 2006), which, in tandem with the Productivity Commission’s *Schools Workforce* research report (Australian Government Productivity Commission, April 2012) provide details of the Australian contexts for TE. There are many consistent points and suggestions from this body of literature. Likewise, Smith and Lynch (Lynch, 2012; 2010) have written about the issues and opportunities taken from one innovative Australian TE program, the Bachelor of Learning Management. There are lessons to be learned.

Sahlberg’s book *Finnish Lessons* (2011) has clearly described the Finnish education system and the strengths that have been built into education—including teacher preparation—over the last three or four decades. This
chapter draws from Sahlberg’s explanation of how Finland manages their education in general and specifically their teacher education. See Appendix 1 for an overview of the differences between Australian and Finnish education systems.

Both Ravitch (2010) and Darling-Hammond (2010) have written about the contexts of US education. Ravitch (2010) fiercely argues against fads in education and the delusion that something as complex as education can be reformed with quick fixes and money. She critiques the business model as applied to education, excessive and punitive accountability and the ‘measure and punish’ mentality that has pervaded American education. Darling-Hammond (2010) looks carefully at the issues of quality, equity and equitable distribution of resources in the American education system. She describes the issues with insight, and presents a vision for the changes that are required to build a stronger education system.

This chapter uses key points from this body of literature to make recommendations for Australian teacher education.

**Teacher Education as a ‘Wicked Problem’**

This chapter asserts that TE in Australia is something more than complex, problematic and awkward; it is a ‘wicked problem’ (Rittel & Webber, 1973). In categorising Australian TE as a ‘wicked problem’ two things result. Firstly, it does not absolve the educational community from responsibility to continue to work towards solutions to the problem. And secondly, it highlights that the complexity of not only the problem itself, but the linkages with multiple associated areas of education - more on this to come.

In defining ‘wicked problems’, Rittel and Webber’s (1973) seminal article outlines that wicked problems are seen as:

1. Having no definitive formulation—i.e. they are resistant to clarity of definition, and since a solution is dependent on the definition, are resistant to being understood and resolved.
2. Having no ‘stopping rule’—i.e. in trying to solve the problem, and because it is impossible to clearly define, one never knows when the or a solution has been found.
3. Having no ‘true’ or ‘false’ description, solutions or answers—i.e. they are not able to be expressed as essentially ‘good’ or ‘bad’, but rather as complex.

4. Any potential solution or application of a solution may yield undesirable consequences, and there is no way of predicting all the consequences—and therefore whether or not the solution has resolved the problem—because of the complexity of the problem.

5. Every solution is a “one-shot operation” (Rittel & Webber, 1973, p. 163) because there can be no opportunity for a trial-and-error application of potential solutions.

6. Essentially unique in that there will always be a long list of similarities between wicked problem, yet there will be inherent differences in some other ways.

7. Each wicked problem is seen as being a part or symptom of another ‘wicked problem’—i.e. that wicked problems are linked by some common threads.

8. Each problem can be explained in numerous ways and the choice of explanation determines the nature of the resolution—e.g. “’Crime in the streets’ can be explained by not enough police, by too many criminals, by inadequate laws, too many police, cultural deprivation, deficient opportunity, too many guns, phrenologic aberrations etc. Each of these offers a direction for attacking crime in the streets. Which is the right one? There is no rule for procedure to determine the correct explanation or combination of them” (Rittel & Webber, 1973, p. 166).

Implications of labeling TE as a ‘wicked problem’

When applying the construct of a ‘wicked problem’ to Teacher Education, it highlights a number of opportunities for viewing the problem in new ways that may bring solutions. These include:

1. The reasons why the problem has been resistant to change;

2. How ‘tinkering at the edges’ is alluring but provides limited option for change;

3. The ways in which ‘integrative thinking’ (Martin, 2007), collaborative, competitive and authoritative strategies (Conklin, 2006; Roberts, 2000), and ‘trans-disciplinary imagination’ (Brown,
Harris, & Russell, 2010) may provide opportunities for solving problems.

These are briefly overviewed in order.

1. Resistance to change
When one considers the depth and breadth of the field of teacher education, the number of stakeholders, its history and its importance in the larger field of education, then it is no wonder that problems abound and that the solutions to those problems are not easily available. Like most social organisations, it has developed over time and it will take time to re-build. Nearly four decades ago Finland noted that their teacher education needed wholesale reform and it has taken decades of consistent effort to build the depth and breadth of their success (Sahlberg, 2011).

2. How ‘tinkering at the edges’ is alluring but provides limited option for change
Many changes have been wrought in TE over the decades. They are too numerous to list here, but the overall effect is that it has left the field with as many problems as there are solutions. Tinkering may have appeal, but in many instances it lacks a research basis. Many have tried to build quality, strength and depth and some great changes have resulted. However, large scale change at a national level, as has been accomplished in Finland (see Appendix 1), is possible for Australia as we teeter on the cusp of national curriculum, national accreditation of teachers and alignment of systems. Do not be deluded though; there is no quick fix for wicked problems.

3. Bringing together ‘integrative thinking’ (Martin, 2007) collaborative, competitive and authoritative strategies (Conklin, 2006; Roberts, 2000) and ‘trans-disciplinary imagination’ (Brown et al., 2010) may provide solutions.

Martin (2007) claims that brilliant leaders are ‘integrative thinkers’, able to synthesise opposing ideas into a solution that contains elements of both options, yet is an improvement on each, able to see the problem as a whole, resolve tensions, see new relationships and thus generate innovative outcomes. We need brilliant, integrative thinking leaders.
Conklin (2006) and Roberts (2000), in seeking solutions for wicked problems, have suggested that there are three possible strategies for solution:

- authoritative strategies that bring together an authoritative group to form efficient and timely strategies for solution (with the disadvantage of potentially narrow solutions and a lack of democratic process);

- competitive strategies that use natural competition for resources and power as leverage for creative and innovative solutions (with the disadvantage of potential for conflict and stalemates between stakeholders and the consumption of resources to create solutions);

- collaborative strategies that are the preferred and most comprehensive and effective strategy, and use fewer resources (with the disadvantage of potential for increased costs in terms of time to create resolution/solution, and a presumption of the existence genuine collaborative skill where there is none, and dialogue that can turn to conflict).

We need brilliant, integrative thinking leaders with collaborative skills. And finally, Brown et al. (2010) assert that, in tandem with the collaborative strategies for problem solving of wicked problems, that ‘trans-disciplinary imagination’ has its benefits. They assert that ‘trans-disciplinary imagination’ can merge academic disciplines and personal, local and strategic understandings so that researchers are required to recognise multiple knowledge cultures, accept the inevitability of uncertainty, and clarify their own and others’ ethical positions. Thus Brown et al. (2010) see the potential for solutions through these strategies. We need brilliant, integrative thinking leaders with collaborative skills and trans-disciplinary imagination.

Thus wicked problems are not the end of the line. They have potential solutions and although more complex, can be solved.

The next section provides an overview of a selection of specific difficulties which are evident within the ‘wicked problem’, of teacher education.
Problems inherent in the Australian teacher education landscape

The contexts in which teachers are prepared for the profession are fluid and developing (Skilbeck & Connell, 2004). What is unusual is the rate and lack of depth in these developments. The contexts of the Australian tertiary education and teacher education sectors have significant impact on the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of teacher education, and to some degree therefore the quality of their structure and delivery (AITSL, 2011). It is noted that despite some things changing, problems remain. While this chapter is not able to present great detail, the following problems inherent in current Australian teacher education will be briefly discussed:

1. Accreditation of TE programs in Australia;
2. State versus federal control of education;
3. Entry standards for TE candidates.
4. Delivery modes and expectations about the use of technology;
5. Attracting and retaining quality teachers;
6. Developing strength in and through professional experiences.

(1) Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs (TEPs)

Accrediting organisations exist to ensure that each tertiary program is rigorous and a worthwhile investment for the individual, and beneficial to the profession, and that the teachers who apply to teach are suitably qualified—demonstrating competency and capability in designated areas (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership [AITSL], April 2011). This is certainly an ‘enabling’ element in the current contexts. However, accreditation of TEPs has become so bureaucratically driven, with multiple bodies requiring university Schools, Divisions and Faculties to align their courses with their particular requirements, that it has become restrictive and disempowering (Ingvarson et al., 2006). More on these limitations is discussed below.

(2) Governance and control: State versus Federal

Linked to the first issue of accreditation is the quiet problem of governance and authority of education in Australia. The control and responsibility, and the associated issue of funding, has become increasingly muddied and chaotic (Marginson, 2007). While constitutionally education is the legal
responsibility of the states, the federal government has made further demands on the states about key educational issues. Inevitably these expectations are tied to specific types of funding available when states agree to federal initiatives (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership [AITSL], 2011). While the motivation for federal intervention in state education might be altruistic, the short and long term implications are complex, again affirming that this is indeed a ‘wicked problem’.

For example, with the introduction of national testing and a national curriculum, the leading body ACARA (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority), has been given carriage of curriculum and assessment. Ostensibly the responsibility has shifted from the states, when previously each state managed its own testing regimes, to the federal organisation ACARA, who have responsibility for national testing including “tests endorsed by the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) including the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) and three-yearly sample assessments in science literacy, civics and citizenship, and ICT literacy” (http://www.acara.edu.au/assessment/assessment.html).

Likewise, state responsibility for accreditation/registration for teachers will be transferred to an Australia-wide system through Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AISTL), and the states are anticipating that school terms dates will be nationally determined, and presumably the standardisation of what each grade of schooling is called (e.g. Prep, Transition, Kindergarten) and at what age that happens for students (e.g. all students attend fulltime Kindergarten in the year in which they turn 4 by 1st Jan) will occur from federal government pressures.

That TEPs are accredited by external, recognising bodies with either state or national jurisdiction, is not an arduous thing in and of itself. However it further complicates the structure and delivery of TEPs. This can mean that institutions no longer retain ownership of their programs and are unable to differentiate themselves in the now deregulated university market-place (Marginson, 2007).
(3) Entry standards for Teacher Education candidates

The third problematic issue in teacher education in Australia relates to claims that those entering the teaching profession do not demonstrate the required standards for quality teaching and learning. Darling-Hammond (2010) discusses the ‘underinvestment in teacher education’ in the USA, stating that a well-designed national infrastructure that gives schools and students access to well-prepared teachers with knowledge about best practice “is absolutely essential” for education (p.197). Sahlberg (2011) too has noted the ways in which investing in teacher education has paid dividends for Finland over the last three decades. Preparing quality teachers is what Finland does so skillfully. Finland requires a Masters qualification by research with a minimum preparation program of five years; their learning program focusses on personal and professional competence—especially pedagogical thinking skills, theory of education and subject didactics and practice, and they focus heavily on teacher-as-researcher to integrate research, theory and practice (Sahlberg, 2011. p.79).

Most importantly, Finland has an extremely competitive entry system, only accepting the top students and rendering it tougher to get into teacher education than medical degree programs (see Appendix 1). Sahlberg acknowledges the essential role of the teacher in student learning, and states that research and experience has shown that “the daily contribution of excellent teachers” (p.72) has proved to be the defining feature of the Finnish success story.

The evidence though, for the perceived claim about the lack of quality of Australian TE graduates, seems to be absent from the debate (Aubusson & Davison, 2012, August 1). Somehow it is assumed to be the case. None-the-less, the call for improvements to the quality of teachers can surely be a positive thing for Australia’s future.

Across the last decade there have been calls for this improvement in the academic quality of those beginning TE programs (see Dinham, Ingvarson, & Kleinhenz, 2008; Ingvarson et al., 2006). More recently this is evident in Australia’s media (Stevenson, 2012), and in the Discussion Paper from the NSW Minister for Education 3. The logic is sound but the practice has been

confused. Aspiring to have the ‘best and brightest’ become teachers gets no argument from most. Ensuring this happens is more complex. Compounding this problem is the low retention rates for new recruits beyond the first few years of teaching, and the perceived shortage of teachers in Australia as the teacher population reaches retirement. Thus universities are under pressure to graduate more teachers. Yet more teachers are not needed; more quality teachers are needed. Finland has proven that focusing on the quality of incoming students pays dividends. They graduate fewer, more highly qualified teachers to achieve their goals.

(4) T.E. delivery modes and expectations about the use of technology

The fourth of the difficulties inherent in the teacher education landscape in Australia relates to technology—the modes of delivery and the disparate notions around its use within education. While there is ample literature and research about the use of technology in classrooms and the provision, professional development and uptake of technology by teachers in classrooms, there seems to be less research available on the provision, use and uptake in higher education contexts (Fresen, 2011). TE programs seem to be at the forefront of technological innovation and use in higher education. There is the ongoing issue of technological access and equity, particularly in Australia, as the federal government seeks to increase participation for low socio-economic students (Phillips & Loch, 2011), many of whom are socially and academically disadvantaged because of lack of access and skill with technology.

Additionally, there is the less debated and more presumed movement towards alternate modes of delivery of units, courses and programs at tertiary (Oliver, Omari, & Herrington, 1998). The turns of phrase used here has become confused—‘flexible’, ‘converged’, ‘online’, ‘multimedia’, and ‘externally delivered’ units are some examples. In some instances it means ‘externalising’ the delivery of units, course and programs, that is, having unit materials online, with or without podcast, pre-recorded, live lectures for students to view, yet with students learning in off-campus/external mode,

4 see http://www.deewr.gov.au/SCHOOLING/QUALITYTEACHING/Pages/LONGLONG.aspx
with or without direct contact with lecturers and tutors through email or sometimes phone.

This is perceived to be cheaper, ergo easier, for universities to manage and so seems to be a managerially preferred option. This is an example of where the economic and business paradigm dominates over due consideration of issues of quality and pedagogy. In other instances, it means ‘converged delivery’ or ‘flexible delivery’ with a range of online and on-campus options factored in (Oliver et al., 1998). For example units, courses or programs may have learning materials online—with lectures pre-recorded or live, links to reading materials and alternate websites—and still require students to attend tutorials or whole day workshops at set dates or times. There are many variations of these delivery modes in use globally and in Australian universities (Fresen, 2011). There are also many questions that are raised about the use of technology in higher education in general and TEPs are implicated in this envisioning of the future of education (Yilmazel-Sahin & Oxford, 2010).

The point is that the expectations and ideas around the use of technology in both school and tertiary teaching and learning are disparate and contrasting (Ottenbreit-Leftwich et al., 2012). Yet, like much of what has been happening in education across the last two decades, it is driven by market forces that tout a dominant discourse of competition rather than cooperation, and a market driven economy that privileges knowledge over thinking and problem solving (Johnston, 2007). It is not so much the uncertainty about the future modes of delivery that are at the heart of this, but rather the notion that for educators there is still the hesitation that perhaps the technological revolution doesn’t match with knowledge about pedagogy (Curriculum Corporation, 2005). The issue is one of equity, and highlights how the social and cultural capital inherent in technology availability and use, muddies the waters even further.

(5) Attracting and retaining quality teachers

Attracting, training and retaining quality teachers is an ongoing set of problems for TEPs and education departments world-wide (Owen, Kos, & McKenzie, January 2008) – perhaps with the exception of Finland (Sahlberg, 2011). The OECD have summed it up well in their report *Teachers matter: Attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers*. They note concerns from
member countries about the attractiveness of teaching as a career, qualitative concerns about developing teachers’ knowledge and skills, about recruitment, selection and employment of teachers and about retaining effective teachers in education (OECD [Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development], 2005).

This information highlights and summarises the key issues inherent in education. There are implications for teacher education to be garnered from this, for example, that TEP providers need to ensure that pre-service teachers (PSTs) are:

- adequately prepared for the tasks of quality teaching and learning, with skills, knowledge, capabilities and the ability to apply this to classroom contexts;
- aware of the frustrations and issues experienced by beginning teachers, so their expectations are reality-based;
- adequately prepared to teach the full range of types of students (so are able to teach in disadvantaged areas, thus able to have a positive impact on equity and social justice issues for students);
- appropriately mentored into their careers once they begin teaching;
- trained to match the profession’s needs in areas of teaching ‘shortage’ (OECD [Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development], 2005).

Ensuring that teaching is a rewarding and valued profession or the processes of mentoring beginning teachers in their first years of teaching is not the responsibility of TEPs (Darling-Hammond, 2010). However, ensuring that those entering TE are of the highest category of university applicant can be achieved by TE providers. Ensuring that entrants are realistically equipped and supported in their teacher preparation study is the responsibility of TE providers and can be achieved. It takes effort and time.

(6) **Developing strength in and through professional experience**

An essential component of building strength, depth and quality with PSTs entails their professional, in-class experiences. Again, much has been written and suggested about ways in which this might be both more flexible, to cater for the diversity of students’ needs (working students, students with
which graduates might be seeking (Ingvarson et al., 2004). Thus, the number of ‘days’ of professional experience (minimums currently dictated by external accrediting bodies) and the kinds or types of these experiences have come under question\(^5\). What remains though, beyond regulation and external accreditation, is the need for breadth and depth in professional experiences for quality undergraduates, which permits universities and schools to provide multiple opportunities for success, yet to exit students if they are not able to evidence the requisite strength and depth (Lynch, 2012; Smith & Lynch, 2010).

It would seem that most Australian institutions struggle to acquire quality placements for professional experience for their PSTs (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership [AITSL], April 2011). Having appropriate mechanisms that engender and ensure quality control around the schools, teachers and classrooms into which PSTs are placed is difficult in the pressured environment of large cohorts of PSTs. This is compounded by the limited payment teachers receive for the tasks universities expect of them in the increasingly busy world of teachers’ work lives (Smyth, 2006). The current systems lack incentives for teachers to engage in the activity.

Additional to these system-based problems are the questions about how–i.e. how do TEPs ensure the experiences link educational theory with practice and pedagogy; how do students gain relevance and significance about their tertiary study through, and as a result of, their professional experience; how do TEPs effectively empower mentor teachers without insulting them, yet with appropriate levels of support and communication; since it’s a ‘one size fits all’ approach, are there pathways for students who may need more than the minimum number of hours/days of professional experience (without prejudice); should all TEPs have a capstone internship whereby the PST is responsible for classroom teaching for an extended period of time, with ‘light’ supervision, mirroring the reality of the classroom experience.

Thus from this discussion it can be seen that there are a huge assortment of issues and problems inherent in the teacher education landscape (Lynch, 2012; Smith & Lynch, 2010). At one level though, this array of problems

\(^5\)see DEEWR at http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/QualityTeaching/professionalexperience/Pages/home.aspx
provides a selection of possible solutions (Ravitch, 2010). Nothing simple will fix these complex problems that have both evolved over many decades and have an increasingly political level of undercurrent swirling around them (Ingersoll, 2003; Ravitch, 2010; Smyth, 2001).

The next section will summarise these observations, and from there, offers suggestions for change.

**Summarising the issues**

This chapter asserts that, based on the given information, and although TE is a wicked problem that is resistant to change, solutions that can be offered. Using the information already discussed, these problems have been categorised into two areas, the paradigm and the program. We need brilliant, integrative thinking leaders with collaborative skills and trans-disciplinary imagination to move forward with some confidence.

(1) **The paradigm**

Teacher education has remained in a paradigm that has two distinct but interrelated problems.

1. **Paradigm Difficulty A:** Firstly, teacher education has been swept along with the dominant discourse that currently privileges business and market-based principles over educational, welfare and socially-just principles (Marginson, 1999; Sahlberg, 2011). For example, it is assumed that standardisation, testing and benchmarking of curriculum are more important than individualisation and accommodation for difference, students’ and teachers’ knowledge is privileged over thinking and problem solving, and accountability has over-taken professional trust. Few have questioned these elements that are now so subtly entrenched in education. Finland though has managed to successfully resisted adhering to this paradigm (Sahlberg, 2011).

2. **Paradigm Difficulty B:** Second in the paradigm difficulties, is that education in general and teacher education in particular, are still
functioning on an industrial revolutionary model. This means that those who teach, the content and the mechanisms with which we teach, are not necessarily forward and future-oriented (Smith & Lynch, 2010). There is a tendency to ‘do as we’ve done before’—with some technology and YouTube clips included—and thus we get what we got before. Moving staff into new ways of conceptualising ‘old’ work is never easy (Fullan, 2008) but more needs to be done.

(2) The program
The teacher educations programs (TEPs) designed to equip and support pre-service teachers (PSTs) as they learn about the complexities of teaching have many areas that need to be revitalized—in tandem with the issues of paradigmatic reviews. In brief these are: the technological issues; the quality of the students at the point of entry; lack of range of pathways into and out of TE—especially for low SES and Indigenous persons; the course/program content—i.e. clear links between theory, practice, pedagogy, whether there is a mismatch with professional experience and university learning; the course/program delivery, the knowledge, skills, understanding, application of knowledge etc., how it’s assessed, mentored, supported, the number of ‘units’, years, teaching sessions and the modes and options for delivery; by whom it is delivered, reconsidering the role of lecturers and tutors, and the ideal qualifications for those charged with these tasks. This is a critical professional conversation that will take time.

The quality of entry level PSTs and graduate teachers is under scrutiny. The claim is made that the systems of ensuring that the ‘best and brightest’ get places in TE is not sufficiently rigorous. Those who graduate must be highly skilled, deep thinking beginning professionals, with competence and capacity to both do the profession proud and maximise learning for the full spectrum of students in schools (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training, 2007). Currently this is being debated.

Technology has changed the world, and higher education in general and teacher educations in particular, have not necessarily kept pace. There is an

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expectation of increased technology use, in the processes of teaching PSTs, and in using technology in classroom pedagogy and practice. There are both opportunities and threats in the push for more apposite use of technology in higher education programs. The claim could be made that how we apply this new set of teaching and learning tools is a mark of our capacity to envision and self-renew.

There is an overwhelming need to revitalise the ways in which professional experience happens for PSTs (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training, 2007). It becomes evident when talking to classroom teachers, and those at university charged with responsibility for professional experience, that there are some big problems with process and outcomes. Smith and Lynch (2010) have outlined some of the problems and offered some solutions. Issues surrounding how much time in class/centres and schools; how often and where in the structure of the study time is best for schools and PSTs; in what context/s—i.e. only in schools or early childhood centres or are other contexts to be encouraged; how is the PST’s learning best supervised in professional experience—i.e. what the role of the university and the classroom teacher might be, how much responsibility each participant has and how the PST might be assessed, all need to be factored into this big discussion (Lynch, 2012).

The next section will offer some solutions to these complex problems.

Possible Solutions

This section looks beyond challenging the dominant discourses that have enveloped education over the past decades and that employ managerial concepts and principles borrowed from the business world, to providing some possible solutions to these complex problems. While labelling and naming what is problematic with TE in Australia is part of the process of moving to a stronger position, it is only a part of the process. To eliminate or ignore the how to best implement change is to nip the bud before it can produce the bloom. So, here are some possible solutions that can be applied by brilliant, integrative thinking leaders with collaborative skills and trans-disciplinary imagination.
(1) Paradigm Solutions

The whole paradigm of education needs revitalisation—including issues of what it means to teach, to be a teacher, what knowledge is, what the role of curriculum and pedagogy is now and whether disparate view on those are enabling or disempowering, how conceptions about learning and education have changed, how TE and tertiary educators conduct their enterprise of teaching and learning, how the structure and delivery of courses best enhance learning and academics conceive of their and their students’ roles. Teaching strategies, linked to technologies and media, also need to be considered and renewed. The content of TEPs, and amount of time PSTs spend in their teaching and learning and professional experiences would benefit from revision.

There are two versions of action that could lead to solutions on offer here. First of all, conversations, discussions and debates could be invited, as is happening through the NSW DEC’s Discussion Paper. Passions need to ignite; academic and informal media papers and articles need to flag the problems and offer solutions. If the wicked problem is not presented as a problem, big solutions will not be developed and we will revert to ‘tinkering at the edges’ again (Allum, April 7, 2010). From general awareness-raising, movement could be made for individual schools, departments, divisions, and systems to review their own positions on these issues, making their own changes as they see fit.

Or alternatively, the systems of accreditation could require TE programs to make these kinds of reviews and renewals evidencing that they have moved into the 21st century and their paradigm has changed. Perhaps many have been hoping that AITSL’s new processes and requirements will bring positive change. One difficulty with the dictatorial and requirement option is that the accrediting bodies have two inherent issues. They do not require a check of paradigm changes. Some TEPs can give the illusion of a changed paradigm, but their changes are superficial and they are actually making little or no actual change. Secondly, because there are so many accrediting bodies and organisations, the issues are confused to such an extent that a school, faculty or division are barely permitted ownership of their own program, let alone articulate their paradigm or position.

Or perhaps, using Martin’s (2007) ideas of integrative thinking, another solution could be garnered, that synthesises these ideas and generates innovative solutions. This offers mechanisms through which education in general and teacher education in particular could be enabled and improved.

(2) Program Solutions
To reconfigure the content and delivery of Australia’s TE, will obviously need research on what other successful institutions are doing and seek data relating to any claims of ‘success’. Mapping and benchmarking is necessary part of that investigation. Again, it would be wise to include Finland in that study (Moon, Vlasceanu, & Barrows, 2003) (see Appendix 1). From that, quality program/s could be developed.

The first and most essential element is to ensure the quality and suitability of those offered places in TE—getting the ‘best and brightest’, the top 30% of the population (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership [AITSIL], April 2011). There are a range of options on how to achieve that end. Entry exams have been suggested as a form of check of mathematic and literacy skill. Face-to-face/online interviews provide another dimension for ensuring possible entrant quality. While both are costly, the benefits of ensuring best candidates for the short and long term future far out-weigh additional expense (Aubusson & Davison, 2012, August 1).

Multiple pathways into, and out of, TE courses are required. Thus, more options need to be available for those who are mature-aged or disadvantaged by low SES backgrounds in terms of social, cultural and educational capital (Gee, 1996) but who are determined to be teachers (Bradley, Noonan, Nugent, & Scales, 2008). These pathways could include preparatory and preliminary study associated with TAFE and university Colleges. Currently these kinds of pathways are under-utilised.

The content, knowledge and skills to be studied in TEPs can be reviewed in the light of both technological and neuro-scientific advances (Geake & Cooper, 2003; Varma, McCandliss, & Schwartz, 2008). Further developments in brain and neural functions that facilitate learning—and the difficulties and diagnoses when it does not do so—require changes in the
content of TE programs. Some of these considerations could also include: ‘backward mapping’ of the skills, knowledge, understandings and capabilities required of graduates is considered best practice (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) and developmental learning and application across the course of degrees, including enhanced expectation of research and its place in teacher’s lives. Challenges have been made to the prevalent idea of ‘embedding’ certain knowledge into existing units (Darling-Hammond, 2010). While in theory it may be manageable, in practice too many students do not make the clear connections and fail to ‘learn’. Perhaps most important is ensuring the application and integration of research and theory with practice and pedagogy (Ravitch, 2010).

In tandem with this is being explicit about the teaching of technology—for pre-service teachers (PSTs) and for their students (Ottenbreit-Leftwich et al., 2012). While technology in education is developing rapidly, not every claim made by the pundits of technology will ever be substantiated. It is important to remain critically evaluative and cautious about not being swept along with the hype and rhetoric proposed by those with vested interests in technology. It is unlikely that education will be replaced by computer programs (Recesso & Orrill, 2008). Perhaps the lead needs to be taken from those in higher education, rather than waiting for the profession to lead those in universities.

Additional to the kind of content envisioned for revitalised TEPs is the structure of the course/program. This relates to the number of ‘units’ and length of time for PSTs to learn; the kinds of delivery options— including the range of technologies on offer for universities; the most suitable and qualified staff to teach or mentor; and the ways in which technologies are employed in assessment and teaching and learning experiences.

Using content revision as a catalyst implies a complete overhaul of assessment—the kinds of assessment tasks (as demonstration and evidence of understanding), where they are placed within the course/unit, the expectations of research and literacy skills and the stated criteria against which PSTs are developmentally and sequentially assessed. Implicit in this is the mentoring of staff and noted pathways for those who struggle to achieve success.
Many of the professional experience problems and issues are system-based and radical and wide restructuring and re-visioning at the system–state and federal levels are required. ‘Tinkering at the edges’ (Allum, April 7, 2010) will not achieve this goal. When discussions are focused on the big issues, but take account of the practicalities, then possible solutions can be reached. Again, it takes the kind of integrative thinking that Martin (2007) has outlined to arrive at innovative solutions.

Ultimately this set of solutions is asking those in TE to have a large-scale review of what is done, when, where and why, and to consider whether, in the light of social, scientific, technological and educational changes, we can develop better options for teacher education. Acknowledgement of political and social agendas is helpful for renewal. Those in this conversation can recreate a strong educational paradigm, being sufficiently informed so as to resist the subtle pressure of dominant discourses of competition rather than cooperation and a market driven economy that privileges knowledge over thinking and problem solving. Challenging the actions and policies that privilege business and market-based principles over educational, welfare and socially just principles is no simple matter (Sahlberg, 2011). Traditionally teacher education has not challenged the status quo which assumes that there are benefits to education when there is privileging of standardisation and benchmarking over individualisation and difference, knowledge over thinking and problem solving, and accountability over professional trust. This needs to change by thinking deeply and challenging frequently. Policy and action are required.

**Conclusion**

So, in conclusion, this chapter has asserted that Australian TE is a ‘wicked problem’ and resistant to change. It has outlined six key problems inherent in the field and made recommendations for change under the labels of paradigm and program difficulties. Investment in teacher education is an investment in our collective educational and social future. Social equity and justice, access and opportunity for all, through an education system that actively works to minimise the impact of poverty and disadvantage, is what is required. This starts with sound teacher education programs.
The Finnish experience provides the landscape within which the kinds of revitalisation, quality and renewal are possible with time, work and focus. Summarising, we need to revision our TE programs and ensure that they have:

- More rigorous attention to teaching and learning, including a heavier research focus;
- More discerning in the selection of those entering TE;
- More options for those aspiring to TE, with more flexible pathways;
- More debate and deliberation around the content of pre-service teaching and learning;
- More time for PSTs to embrace and assimilate the practice and pedagogy of teaching, including professional experience time.

The profession needs brilliant, integrative thinking leaders with collaborative skills and trans-disciplinary imagination to enact these changes. New visions are warranted, with clear and consistent processes and expectations at all levels. The experience of Finland shows that Australian teacher education programs can be improved but it will take time and effort. We just have to insist on it, fight for it and value it when we get it.

References


practicing teachers align in their use of technology to support teaching and learning? *Computers and Education, 59*(2), 399-411. doi:10.1016/j.compedu.2012.01.014


# Appendix 1: Comparisons between Australian and Finnish education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>Finland</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>General</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22 million people</td>
<td>5.4 million people</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Independent and private schools account for about one third of all schools, students and teachers (ABS 2012).</td>
<td>Few private schools, with tuition fees strictly prohibited.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Increasingly class based; no free meals; nominal school-based health care for 5 year olds only.</td>
<td>Egalitarian system: Free meals to full time students and school based health care.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>No tuition fees, but school books/stationary costs are payable. Parents of low SES can apply for exemption.</td>
<td>No tuition fees.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Class size; national average across K-12 sector - 24</td>
<td>Class sizes are seldom more than 20 students.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No free universal day care.</td>
<td>Free universal day-care for children from 8 months of age.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Curriculum and Structure</strong></td>
<td>From 2013, 15 hrs per week of funded schooling (4-5 year olds).</td>
<td>Elective pre-school education (for ages 5-6)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Varies between states but generally Primary schooling covers ages 6-12; grouped with one teacher.</td>
<td>'Comprehensive' school for 9 years (age 7-15); grades 1-6 are with one teacher; grades 7-9 (Secondary) with more specialised teaching.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Secondary schooling and/or college (4-6 years); specialised teaching in subjects with selection possible; usually an exit exam as preparation for University entrance.</td>
<td>Upper secondary education; 3-4 years; with two tracks – academic or vocational; ends with a matriculation exam that can determine university entrance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two potential further studies tracks: TAFE education for vocational/trades learning; University for professional studies.</td>
<td>Tertiary study as two tracks: University (Total 17) or Polytechnic (total: 27; applied learning).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Currently state-based curricula but national curriculum being implemented 2013 onwards.</td>
<td>Students in grades one through nine spend from four to eleven periods each week taking classes in art, music, cooking, carpentry, metalwork, and textiles.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>High stakes national literacy and numeracy (NAPLAN) testing in years 3, 5, 7 &amp; 9 determines schools ratings and linked to funding.</td>
<td>There are no high-stakes testing; years 1-5 have verbal assessment rather than formal testing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No requirement for second language teaching and learning.</td>
<td>Two languages taught and learned.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8 For more detail on the structure of Finnish TE Programs see Moon, B. L., Vlasceanu, L. & Barrows, L. C. (Eds) (2003). *Institutional approaches to teacher education within higher education in*
Accreditation/registration of teachers and their training currently under review. Many teachers still teaching with only one year qualifications (1960s). Currently need BEd or equivalent for teaching but state and school-system dependent.

Primary and secondary teachers must have a Master’s degree to teach (4.5 -5.5 years of study).9

Entrance into TE is currently based on University entrance scores and is relatively low (70/100) with multiple pathways and opportunities.

Entrance to TE is highly competitive with an acceptance rate of about 10%.

Over supply of teachers endemic. Currently Universities generally graduate more teachers than are needed. Many teachers start with casual work.

Close monitoring of supply and demand so the graduation rates match the employment needs.

TE at 22 Universities.

TE at 8 Universities.

Determined by the institution.

Research-based teacher education.

Teachers follow state curriculum but with limited requirement for formal, national accountability and a great deal of autonomy.

High attrition rates of out teaching.

Low attrition rates out of teaching.

Fulltime employment rates within one year of graduation remain below 50%; dependent on teaching area/specialisation and geographic location.

All graduates get employment.


Finnish teacher education aims at achieving a balanced development of the personality of each teacher, a process in which their pedagogical thinking plays an integral role. Their study of education is composed of three large content areas: the theory of education, pedagogical content knowledge, and subject didactics and practice.

**Degree structure of the classroom teacher education programme**

| Educational studies (main subject) | 75 credits |
| Teacher's pedagogical studies | 35 credits |
| Subject didactic studies | 35 credits |
| Minor subject studies | 35 credits |
| Language and communication studies | 12 credits |
| Optional studies | 3 credits |
| **TOTAL = Master's degree** | **160 credits** |
Chapter 10: Improving the Quality of Teaching: Teacher preparation reformed.

Richard Smith & David Lynch

Chapters to this point have investigated and discussed various aspects of the current model of teacher education in Australia. The problematic nature of the pre-existing model has been highlighted and various recommendations and points of reference made for its reform. In this chapter the Bachelor of Learning Management (BLM), as an exemplar of what such reforms might mean, is examined. Accordingly, research findings associated with the BLM program are presented to reveal its efficacy and the logistical considerations associated with reforming teacher education.

Let’s ask what the future of schooling and teaching looks like. Look forward a decade or so and ask: how will schools be organised and managed and how will teaching be done? What will demarcate 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 surprise today’s teachers and administrators? What will be different in the way teachers are recruited, prepared, managed and perform?

In short, can you imagine major changes in the way human learning is designed and accomplished in the coming decades? Can you imagine fundamental shifts in the way teachers ‘teach’? Most of you will probably say “No” because teaching has not shifted much over the last decade or so and it is no surprise that it is difficult to imagine how it might be different.

Look at it this way. Given all the changes in space travel, genetics, the Internet, communications and medical science (to name a few), the practice of teaching seems somewhat fossilised. If we brought back a principal or a
Director General of Education from the 1960s for example, he (and it would be a ‘he’) would be anxious about shifts in the respect and order system of schools, the expansion of social expectations on teachers, the varying status of teachers and the demise of the ‘content’ driven curriculum.

However, he would also find much that was familiar in the ways schools operate today, as well as how classroom teaching is conducted. Teaching might be more learner-centred, but teaching dismembered ‘content’ continues. Teachers may be better trained if ‘doing time’ in university is a criterion, but they still ‘do’ whatever their subjective preferences dictate and this preference is always built on the ‘broadcast principle’: conveying information through oral and written mediums. It appears that the more creative one is in ‘broadcasting’, the more effective one is as a teacher. Strategy is still set at the ‘department’ level and teachers remain as cogs in a bureaucratic system that values seniority, keeping a ‘quiet ship’, union membership and risk aversion.

The question is: why is teaching seemingly caught in a cultural lag? Perhaps it is because the ‘school’ as we know it and ‘teaching’ itself have come to the end of a two hundred year plus epoch and are exhausted. Maybe all the tough issues in what we know as ‘schools’ and ‘teaching’ have been resolved within that particular model?

But consider the opposite. 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 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, (1982) 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.

Notwithstanding these achievements, schooling and teaching are subject to the S-curve phenomenon. There are periods of rapid development, progress and growth, especially when education entered its ‘mass’ phase in the 1960s, but then a general levelling out at a mature part of the cycle. Importantly, the rapid innovations in practice and aggregations of knowledge inevitably slow as the model reaches it limits and developments slow.

The development of mass education and ferment in teaching are nearly seventy years old. Indeed, the list of educators cited 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. Perhaps there are not any more things about schools and teaching to be discovered? Yet the foil to the idea that the model is perfected lies in whether we or others are truly satisfied with what we have in current 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 virtually impeccable. Thus, it would be presumptuous to assume that the educational system developed in previous centuries remains 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 yet now reveal the limits of the present models and practices.
There is no doubt that schools and teaching have wrestled with some tough problems, especially since the 1970s. ‘Schooling for all’ in a period of unprecedented change, demands not just effective pedagogy for ‘new kids’ and for ‘new times’, but different visions, organizational patterns, management and professional preparation. We can see this as school operational arrangements, developed for a different clientele and different aims, have been progressively altered to accommodate an avalanche of subcultural and individual ‘problems’ presented by the multicultural society.

New generations of students and changing societal conditions challenged expectations that single classrooms, time allocations dictated by timetables, age grading, lock step progression and smooth transitions between schooling, further study and work would be unproblematic. In response, curriculum agencies and school authorities multiplied the options for students and their parents but at the expense of adaptability.

The systems are efficient in processing students but there is little evidence that the outcomes of schooling are more equitable as time goes by or that there are “world class”. Moreover, there are now doubts that the preparation of students is appropriate for the conditions that the young will face following schooling. Perhaps the time has come to rethink the whole offer so that we do not continue to maintain the school and teaching legacy by short-term trade-offs that favour the system and status quo rather than individual students and the national interest.

Over the past decade there have been countless inquiries conducted and numerous articles written each questioning the efficacy of teacher education in Australia (see for example: ‘Top of the Class’, 2007; Committee for the Review of Teaching and Teacher Education 2003; Sachs and Groundwater-Smith, 2006; Smith and Lynch, 2010). In an article by Smith (2000), the argument was put that the university-dominated pre-service teacher education model in Australia had served its historical life. His proposition prefigured the central premise of the previously cited articles and inquiries. More specifically, Smith argued for a rethink of the prevailing teacher education rationale, content and delivery model so that there was a better fit with the demands of an emergent society.

In the intervening period, such a proposition has been explored through the Bachelor of Learning Management program (BLM) at Central Queensland
University. Here, we first recall Smith’s main points, as they provide insight into the challenges faced by teacher education in Australia and the key findings from three research studies of the BLM program. Based on these research findings, we propose that the next disruptive innovation in teacher education will be a form of syndication.

Smith (2000) argued that patterns of educational governance and the cultural contexts of education placed new demands on all levels of education as the state sought ways to adapt education policy to emergent domestic and international economic, political and social pressures. Drawing on the work of Bauman (1997, p. 21) he described the fragmentation of the “games and rules of social life” that undermined and put paid to the then traditions and rationalisations of social and university life. Under these conditions, Smith (2000) argued that appropriate connections between conventional university-based teacher education courses and schools would be difficult to achieve, no matter how much the universities might invoke tradition or precedent. This was the context in which the BLM had its genesis.

The Pressure that Led to the Development of the BLM program

Prior to 2001 CQU’s teacher education program, like others at that time, was the 4-year Bachelor of Education (BEd). It included studies in areas such as sociology, psychology, curriculum planning and a conventional ‘practicum’ regime. In general, the program focused on what students knew, rather than how they used that knowledge.

The BEd program was also “Faculty centric”. Its content and delivery was 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.

While there had been the occasional cosmetic revision, the Bachelor of Education (BEd) program had changed little since the 1980s. One of the most obvious consequences was the relative disinterest in program outcomes in a time of speedy social change (OECD, 2002). 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 article, and his appointment to the Central Queensland University Education faculty to undertake that task, proved to be timely because it coincided with political system-level determination to rethink and rework the education arrangements in Queensland Australia.

In 1999, the Queensland government published policy document QSE2010 (Education Queensland, 2000). It documented the state of Queensland society (circa 1999) and economy and the broader social changes occurring in Australia at the time. 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 teacher 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 CQU 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 BLM. The core intent of the program was that graduates would be “workplace ready”, with demonstrable capabilities including specialist pedagogical knowledge and skill relevant to the school as a workplace, yet possess a ‘futures orientated’ mindset and sensibility. This latter characteristic, the capability to interpret social change data and signals in order 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 the Dimensions of Learning was the core, and Portal Task, amongst others. The first BLM graduates entered the workforce in 2003, following a compulsory internship.

A defining characteristic was that the BLM represented a change of balance in teacher preparation between “curriculum” and “pedagogy”, or the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ of teaching (Smith, 2000). Smith believed that a BEd emphasised ‘curriculum development’ to such an extent that student teachers were encouraged to postpone of the moment of teaching implementation till later. ‘Teaching’, pushed to the back-stage of ‘curriculum planning’ was not only left to the devices of the individual teacher, later, but had the status of being a matter of subjective preference on the part of individual teachers.
Curriculum was hard, explicit, and recorded. However teaching, made up by each individual teacher, was drawn from a primeval soup of other BEd program elements such as multiple intelligences, coloured hats, Productive Pedagogies and New Basics, whole word approaches and so on, in addition to sentiments such as “I like kids”. Moreover, this segmented approach to teaching mirrored the practices of teacher education staff, each of whom had their own favourite theories and approaches that were in turn sutured into the program corpus.

It was apparent to observers and participants alike that the BLM was a sustained critique of the BEd and its encouragement of a vast proliferation of teaching approaches amongst teachers and teacher education staff. The BLM in this sense was a harbinger of ‘evidence-based’ teaching as it searched for core principles and a theory of pedagogy — teaching — to take it out of the realms of mystery and magic. The concern was to point out that if every teacher had a few favourite, unique approaches to their work, the number of pedagogies in use across a school or system reaches astronomical proportions.

It will be recalled that this kind of attitude coincided with the growing industry, professional, political and public concerns about teacher effectiveness in areas like literacy, numeracy and science and the call for teaching ‘standards’. The BLM critique labelled the proliferation and radical individualising of teaching as a major attribute of an immature profession. Its proponents were, and remain, sceptical of ‘standards’ that are in reality attributes of ideal teachers rather than descriptions of teaching effectiveness and which leave untouched the radical individualistic approach.

The original BLM game plan had four distinctive elements that define what it means to graduate from the program. These elements were: the idea of Learning Management; the new content indicated earlier; a move from knowing a lot about a few theories (labelled as “illumination”) to being able to apply theories and undertake teaching that has definite outcomes (labelled as “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 was underpinned by the concept of Learning
Management (see Smith and Lynch, 2010). The learning management concept was prompted by architectural design (an artful arrangement of resources for definite ends) and is best rendered as ‘design with intent’ (see Fletcher, 2001). The design and implementation of pedagogical strategies signalled the major emphasis in the program on pedagogical strategies. The keystone of the learning management premise was a new set of knowledge and skills, collectively referred to as a “futures orientation”: the conscious attempt to prepare graduate mindsets and skill bases for local and global social and educational change. These features alone set the BLM apart from its predecessor, the BEd.

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 utilized a device known as the Portal Task. Portal Tasks are not practicums in a conventional sense, but designed experiences with stringent in-school requirements linked to on-campus courses, and 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) was not fully aware of the overall program agenda and committed to it professionally. Without Portal Tasks, the BLM model is radically insufficient. Ironically, later permutations removed this element and thus destroyed the program’s logic.

The Portal Task model was reinforced by the assessment algorithm developed for each unit: one piece of assessment for the conceptual issues and a second piece for the demonstration of performance through the portal task. In short, the assessment regime intentionally set out to ensure
that student teachers got to know the field, and were then able to demonstrate applications of core concepts and procedures. Such an outcome was 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 was that the BLM brand name specified pedagogical strategies and other elements requiring all participants in the production of graduates to know and be able to work with the same agenda. This approach was necessary logically, in order to overcome, for example, the farcical situation of on-campus staff championing pedagogical strategies while school-based staff required ‘curriculum planning’.

Moreover, in keeping with the objective of reducing teaching approach proliferation and uniqueness, aligning the teaching of university staff, student capacities and expectations, and participating teacher understanding and practice was a priority. It was especially important for school-based staff to know why, when, where and how student teachers were required to demonstrate capability in real-life settings. Blurring boundaries between schools and university and reaching agreement on the program content and implementation went some way in reducing the theory-practice gap so often attributed to teacher education programs.

The partnership concept was fundamental to all of these aspirations. It implied that employers and schools were “partners” in a strong, substantive sense in so far as they jointly conceived ideas and policies and, contributed necessary resources. Mentors from the employing agencies became tutors and worked side by side with faculty staff. The “we” in this model were part of the community of learning that was the BLM culture and program. Such a partnership was the core of the BLM, and the model would not function without it as subsequent events demonstrated.

The overall aim of the BLM was captured by the expectation that BLM graduates were both workplace ready and futures-orientated when they graduated. The expectations, set in the program as specific outcomes, included:
1. performing ‘teaching’ to a BLM standards (guaranteed by the experiences that they had in the four knowledge areas)
2. demonstrating a futures-orientated mindset and making a difference in student learning outcomes, no matter the level or who they were
3. demonstrating capacity to integrate theory and practice
4. mentored by classroom teachers who know and can apply the BLM logic and content, and
5. completed a compulsory internship in the last year of the degree where they were judged as practising, in-service teachers.

Item five contrasts with the idea that schools or indeed employers must, by definition, have ‘induction’ programs for new teachers to ensure that they can do the work for which they are paid to do. The BLM experience attempted to graduate teaching prowess and expertise normally thought to accrue over long periods of experience.

What Research Says about the BLM

Having discussed the aspirations of the BLM, aspirations which 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 potential efficacy of the BLM concept. The studies provide an empirical platform for a further rethink of BLM principles in the concluding section of this chapter.

The first study was conducted by Ingvarson, Beavis, Danielson 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 graduate teachers’ perceptions about teacher preparation with those of their practicum mentors. 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.

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 entirely unique to the BLM at the time, they were not involved in the ACER study.

The study was comprised first, by a Likert 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 a literacy-oriented classroom session and a numeracy-oriented session respectively for each teacher twice.

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) could be distinguished from graduates from other teacher education courses.

The ACER study concluded that Learning Management approach, that underpins the BLM program, had 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 definitive components underpinned the BLM’s apparent success. These were:

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

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

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

   Student teachers were 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 BLM that required teachers in schools to understand and apply the same, agreed model and have the capability to mentor and coach students. The university and employer partnership played 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 got to know the field but were able to demonstrate applications of core concepts and procedures in situ. This essential element in the BLM linked university units to workplace experiences in the Portal Tasks mentioned earlier. Teacher professional accountability was enhanced in a regime that required 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 were recognized and valued in joint governance and decision-making procedures lay at the heart of the learning management concept.

5. Standards-based teacher education

According to Ingvarson et al., the BLM program was a thoroughgoing example of standards-based teacher education, one of the earliest, if not the earliest example in Australia. The BLM outcome criteria for judging the success of the program were external to both the graduate performances and the program itself. The emphasis on instructional theory, rather than learning theory, greatly assisted the preparation of meaningful operational outcomes.

Having elaborated the ACER study and its findings we now review two further studies of the BLM.

Lynch (2004) implemented 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 a series of focus interviews with mentors, (n = 85). He quickly found that program outcomes across all the BLM campuses varied. Some were little different from the BEd previously offered by the university despite lexicon changes in course names, etc., while at other campuses, there was a genuine process of transition from the BEd to the BLM premises and practices (Lynch, 2004).

Lynch found strong outcomes in achieving “workplace ready” graduates across all six BLM campuses, but strikingly less evidence of a “futures orientation”. Preparing graduates for ‘the future’ was not part of the working culture of the teacher education or school-based staff. 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, despite the intensive reform initiative of the Queensland government discussed earlier. Consequently, within Lynch’s sample of schools there was little attention paid to the ‘future’ element, either with student teachers or school students. Lynch argued that unless mentors of BLM students (university lecturers and teachers in schools) were accomplished in exercising a futures orientation, this aspect of the BLM would not be fully realised.

Allen, in her doctoral study conducted at one of the BLM’s campuses, compared the intentions of the BLM with the effects of university lecturers and school mentors on the teaching practice and beliefs of recent graduates employed in a non-government school system. Her results indicated that where there was a weak partnership between schools and the university, the logic of the BLM broke down and often became non-existent as the ‘BEd’ mindset and practice dominated both university and school staff. The traditional BEd relationships between university staff and school mentors were crucial in establishing the required relationships with schools, principals and teachers to make the BLM work. It was clear that some university and school staff did not comprehend the importance of partnership for the achievement of learning management outcomes, or did not see it as a worthwhile exercise. This finding suggested that the “us and them” mentality of conventional school - university teacher education programs was exceedingly resilient, despite sustained efforts by both the university and school employers to initiate a different way of doing things.

Again, as with Lynch’s findings, where the logic of the BLM was unknown or not sustained by either lecturers or mentor teachers, there was little desired effect on graduate teachers. 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. Moreover, Allen’s data showed clearly that the school ethos of every teacher doing “their own thing” was shared with significant university-based staff.

Similarly, teacher mentors required student teachers and later graduates to conform to school practices whether they fitted the formally agreed BLM model or not. For others, there were both misunderstandings and often little
understanding at all of BLM concepts and practices. In Allen’s sample of schools, the BLM’s avowed intention to develop a “consistently applied, ‘deep structure’ model of pedagogy, based on standards for effective teaching” (Ingvarson et al, 2005, p. 79) was weak, in spite of several years of professional development and learning, involving both university-based staff and the school system. In short, there were three programs operating simultaneously: the BLM, the agenda agreed by university and school staff and the ghost-like BEd.

Furthermore, where lecturers and teachers insisted on teaching their own knowledge components outside of the BLM curriculum, such as substituting constructivism and learning theory for the elements of instructional theory or Dimensions of Learning specified in unit documentation, 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 is little reward to universities for the conduct of programs like the BLM, which are heavily ‘professional’ and time-heavy in its development stages. Similarly, if the BLM model was poorly understood and implemented in schools, it appeared to have few upsides for school principals and teachers who interpreted the ‘new’ as “additional work” compared to the old BEd ‘prac’. Under these conditions, preparing the next generation of teachers was more a chore for schools rather than a core part of the professional work of certified teachers with definite professional spin-offs for teachers, schools and universities.

In short, the studies by Lynch and Allen both show that the very elements lauded by Ingvarson et al. as the drivers of a successful pre-service teacher preparation are, paradoxically, the ones most likely to generate resistance in a university Schools of Education and in schools. This 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 politico-contextual conditions of teacher education hang like a nimbus over innovative practiceii.

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The Implications for the Future of Teacher Education

Ten years have passed since the initial development and inception of the BLM program concepts. On-line education, new knowledge, domestic and international student outcome comparisons and scrutiny of the impact of teacher education programs on teacher capabilities now challenge the teacher education industry.

The research evidence reported here identifies areas of constraint and restraint in the teacher education context and provides pointers for ways to produce teachers who are better prepared for work in an emergent world. More specifically, we can conclude that the foremost ingredients required in teacher education are an emphasis on ‘teachING’ and an effective university-school partnership.

Teaching is how student outcomes are affected and is what teachers are primarily paid to do. Effective teaching is no longer the preserve of idiosyncratic teacher opinion but is rapidly accumulating a research-based pool of knowledge that resembles that on offer to doctors, architects or commercial pilots. New teachers especially need to be competent in this pool of knowledge and be able to apply it before taking up teaching positions.

On the governance side, partnership and mutual benefit are the *sine qua non* of change processes in teacher education that overcome differences in sector logics. 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).

Bauman (1997), like Nowotny, Scott, and Gibbons (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 & Haukka, 2008).

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 & Lynch, 2010). 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 & 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 is thus 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 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.

Summary and Conclusion
This paper identifies some important elements for changing the structure and content of teacher education models including evidence-based pedagogical practices, a different professional knowledge content set, social change and a more futures-oriented view of teaching work. These elements, we argue, are unlikely to eventuate in an evolutionary manner within the conventional BEd model. Accordingly, we propose an alternative syndicated arrangement to manage and lead teacher education into quite different configurations, designed for graduating futures-orientated teachers who are equipped to work in the 21st century “learning industry”.

Reference List


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


Chapter 11: Are we Preparing Pre-Service Teachers for the Reality of the Present: Casual, temporary and/or permanent employment?

Kathryn A. Jenkins

New teachers are increasingly joining the ranks of the profession as casual and/or temporary teachers, rather than as permanent teachers. The itinerant nature and subsequent alienation of this work, plus the lack of systemic support received by the majority of these beginning casual teachers, have ramifications for their job satisfaction, professional development and longevity within the profession. Some major research findings have been highlighted in this paper concerning the nature of casual teaching and the contradictions with which casual teachers struggle in schools.

Introduction

Currently, numerous beginning teachers (BTs) are forced to commence their career as casual and/or temporary teachers as this is often the only work that is available to them (Boyd, Harrington, Jones, Kivunja, & Reitano, 2010; Casual Direct DEC, 2012; McCormack & Thomas, 2005; Pietsch & Williamson, 2009; Ramsay, 2000; VARGO, 2012). Nevertheless, Pietsch and Williamson (2009, p. 2) assert that casual teaching, which takes place within “fragmented contexts”, is a “less than optimal” way to begin a teaching career. As a teacher educator, who has been both a permanent and casual teacher (CT), I feel concern about the present circumstances with which many BTs are dealing. This is particularly the case as I watch many eager and able pre-service teachers leave the relatively protected environment of their university and enter teaching, which seems to have now become a more uncertain, demanding and isolating vocation for them (Duggleby & Badali, 2007; Jenkins, Smith, & Maxwell, 2009; Lunay & Lock, 2006; McCormack & Thomas, 2005; Pietsch & Williamson, 2009).
Considering that 25% to 40% of BTs leave the profession in the first three to five years of their practice (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Ewing & Manuel, 2005; Ewing and Smith, 2003, p.15; Ramsey, 2000), it is likely that even larger numbers of casual beginning teachers (CBTs) will also do so, as they lack access to the mentoring, induction and other supportive processes afforded to the BTs. The literature suggests that access to effective mentoring and/or induction can impact positively or vice versa upon the longevity of teachers’ careers (Ewing & Smith, 2003; Hatton & Harman, 1997; McCormack & Thomas, 2003). Yet negative experiences in the early years of teaching can readily translate into BTs leaving the profession (Darling-Hammond, 1990; McCormack, 2005). While records are usually not kept on CBTs, they are anecdotally reported as facing more demanding teaching experiences, and as a result are even more likely to leave teaching. Research has consistently pointed out the long-term consequences of the nature of a teacher’s initial teaching years in terms of “teaching effectiveness, job satisfaction and career length” (Fieman-Nemser, 2001; McCormack & Thomas, 2005, p.17; cf. Pietsch, 2011).

Numerous BTs have to seek work as casual or temporary teachers due to the oversupply of primary teachers and some secondary teachers whose Key Learning Areas are presently saturated by permanent school staff. The role of CTs is gaining in importance in view of the rising attrition of early career teachers within their first few years of service, mounting numbers of BTs becoming CBTs, predictions of future teacher shortages particularly in certain specialisations (McCormack, 2005; Skilbeck & Connell, 2004), and the increasing influence of CTs on student achievement and outcomes (VARGO, 2012). Nevertheless, teachers, systems, and school communities still largely undervalue CTs despite their increasing significance.

Progressively it is becoming evident to some teacher educators that we are not preparing pre-service teachers for the type of work that requires “extra skills” to those of permanent teachers in order to achieve success in the classroom (Duggelby & Badali, 2007, p. 23). In fact, we are educating a workforce for the conditions of the ‘past’ where permanent work on entry into the teaching profession was the norm rather than the exception. A permanent position provides ‘certainty and stability’ for the BT, and in most instances allows them to build vital relationships with their students that are required to attain positive outcomes in the classroom. The rapport enhanced
by permanent employment enables the BTs to develop and hone their teaching, learning and classroom management skills (Pietsch, 2011). Unfortunately, the CBT normally does not have the benefit of the “ongoing time on-class” required within a school to build these potentially helpful relationships (Jenkins et. al., 2009). The lack of ‘continuity’ of work for the CT has enormous implications for schools students, staff, parents, education systems and teacher education. For the purpose of this paper, I will concentrate on the consequences of the growth and complexities of casual teaching for contemporary teacher education.

**Context of casual teaching – international, national and local**

There has been a scarcity of research carried out on CTs in general, and CBTs specifically, however the literature that does exist illustrates that many of the same concerns have endured even after 40 years (Boyd, et. al., 2010; Cleeland, 2007; Crittenden, 1994; Duggleby & Badali, 2007; Galloway, 1993; Jenkins et.al., 2009; Tromans, et al., 2001; Pietsch & Williamson, 2009). Owing to consistent growth in the number of CTs throughout Australia and other parts of the western world (Crittenden, 1994; Lunay & Lock, 1996; VARGO, 2012), there are mounting misgivings about the nature of CT’s roles, their impact upon student achievement, their lack of appropriate preparation, and the absence of professional development and support in their initial teaching years. The dearth of government policy documents concerning casual teaching, illustrates the low priority in which CTs are held (Galloway, 1993; Weems, 2003). For the purpose of this paper I have synthesised research findings on CTs and CBTs with the intention of creating a more inclusive picture regarding what CBTs are likely to encounter on a regular basis.

**The significance of CTs - a growing concern**

After a review of casual teaching in the UK, USA and Australia, Lunay and Lock (2006) ascertained that the average school student spent up to one year of his/her school life from K-12 with CTs. Duggleby and Badali (2007, p. 22) articulated that although CTs provided an integral role in education, and schools could not operate effectively without them, CTs go largely unnoticed.
While it is difficult to be precise about the total number of CTs who exist in Australia, the cohort is large (Casual Direct, NSW DEC, 2012; Ramsey, 2000; VARGO, 2012; Vinson, 2002). There were approximately 13,000 CTs registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) in 2007, which equated to approximately 12% of the teaching force (VARGO, 2012). On average, it was estimated that students in Victorian schools faced CTs for about three hours per week and by 2012 there had been a 36% increase in the employment of CTs since 2000 (VARGO, 2012). Crittenden (1994) verified that even as far back as 1994, students spent one in five hours under the guidance of CTs in Western Australia, while Nidds and McGerald, (1994, p. 25) reported that students spent “5-10% of class time” with “substitutes” (CTs) in the US.

In NSW, Casual Direct - Department of Education and Communities - has 45,000 CTs registered with it. In fact, it is clear that presently, “The majority of teachers commence their careers in the NSW public education system as casual or temporary teachers” (Casual Direct, 2012, Induction, Para. 1). Consequently, it is evident that universities must be graduating many pre-service teachers who drift into this type of imprecise employment. In 2003, it was assessed that 60% of teaching graduates found full time work (Dow, 2003, p. 87) however since this time the percentage has been decreasing noticeably. For example, within a regional university, well known for its large cohort of pre-service teacher education students, an estimate of only 22% of its graduates in 2007 had found permanent employment (Boyd et al., 2010). For graduate teachers who have completed four years of study and practicums, the reality of finding themselves in the uncertain world of casual work (McCormack & Thomas, 2005) must have been very disappointing.

The escalation in casual teaching means that apart from the obvious “Duty of Care” role which CTs are expected to perform, the pressure to produce teaching and learning outcomes has further intensified. In the past, CTs frequently were viewed as ‘babysitters’ (McCormack & Thomas, 2005, p. 26; cf. Pietsch & Williamson, 2009) and if some lesson aims and/or outcomes were achieved along the way, then this was a “big plus”. However, with the mounting demand for CTs, and their increased time on classes, comes more pressure to produce positive student outcomes (VARGO, 2012). Any outdated yet lingering perceptions of CTs as babysitters have to change. In
addition, the status of CTs’ as “real teachers” and their potential to fill gaps in response to areas of future teacher shortages ought to be recognised.

The ‘reality’ of casual teaching – more marginalised and more demanding

The majority of anecdotal reports and research studies based on CTs continue to illustrate the challenges that CTs contend with everyday (Boyd et. al., 2010; Crittenden, 1994; Duggleby & Budali, 2007; Jenkins et al., 2009; Lunay & Locke, 2006; McCormack & Thomas, 2005; Tromans, Bridgid Limerick, & Brannock, 2001), especially if it is their first excursion into teaching. Yet, it must be noted that there are also positive results that CTs consider do evolve out of their initial casual teaching work (See Crittenden, 1994; Tromans et al., 2001). For example, a number of teachers choose to pursue regular casual teaching for flexibility, lifestyle and/or family reasons (Cleeland, 2007). In practice, CTs are “floating populations” who can fill gaps at short notice (Jenkins et al., 2009, p. 6) and allow the school day to continue for the school students who are present. Often the problematic issues that arise do so in response to the itinerant nature of the CT’s job itself.

The life of a CT is often highly demanding (McCormack, 2005; Pietsch & Williamson, 2009). It can be a “lonely job” (Duggleby & Badali, 2007, p. 25) with some primary CTs in Western Australia having had to register their interest to teach in up to 40-50 schools to access sufficient work (Crittenden, 1994). Gaining work is not a given and can be difficult initially (Jenkins et al., 2009).

Some discrimination against graduates in preference to more experienced CTs has also been noted while “knowing someone” might be the catalyst for acquiring work (Crittenden, 1994). A number of first and second year CBTs in NSW have related stories by forum posts via an Online Alumni mentoring program about having no work at all, especially in term one and four (Jenkins et al., 2009). The uncertainty and instability of having ‘none’ or “very little work” can be quite soul destroying for CTs. For instance, these novice teachers have completed university and there are bills to pay especially if they have moved away from home to access work. The insecurity of this work has been noted (McCormack & Thomas, 2005;
Tromans et al., 2001) and its “feast or famine nature” (Lunay & Locke, 2006, p.182) appeared to be a major issue for CTs. When Tromans et al. (2001, p. 30) asked BCTs about what their “preferred futures” would be, the great majority (84%), wished for “permanency and certainty” of employment, although they perceived gaining a permanent job as quite a random process - like “Winning the Lottery” (p. 35).

Usually CBTs receive no induction or mentoring in schools, yet research illustrates that such assistance is essential for minimising the attrition of beginning teachers (Ewing and Smith, 2003; Hatton & Harmon, 1997; Pietsch, 2011; Ewing & Manuel, 2005; Ramsay, 2000) in that the nature of the first year/s of teaching experience affects the ‘longevity’ of a teacher’s career. In reality, CBTs commonly lack a constructive introduction to the school/s in which they work. Crittenden (1994), who interviewed CTs, permanent teachers and principals in Western Australia, discovered that even though the six principals involved thought that an induction for CTs was a good idea, only one out of the six took time to do so. This support was provided in the form of a manual with important information about the school (Crittenden, 1994). Ewing & Smith (2003, p. 40) accused schools of functioning in “outmoded ways” as induction and professional learning were based on permanence; hence essentially they were discriminating against those who worked on a more temporary basis. Because the majority, if not all CTs lack permanency and systemic support (Duggleby & Badali, 2007), it is difficult for them to plan for future days/weeks in any sequential or meaningful way. Accordingly BCTs face a two-fold challenge, the “reality shock of [being] beginning teachers coupled with uncertainty of ongoing employment” (McCormack & Thomas, 2005, p. 19).

In addition, while CTs are at work in schools they frequently have to deal with the negative attitudes and perceptions of students, staff and school communities (Crittenden, 1994; Jenkins et al., 2009; Lunay & Lock, 2006; McCormack & Thomas, 2005). Students expect to have ‘some fun’ when the CT enters the room. The teacher and students often do not know each other therefore rapport between them is non-existent. The teaching staff can be quite dismissive of CTs, as much due to ‘busyness’ as lack of interest. Accordingly, CTs can suffer from being poorly treated and being perceived as having a low status (McCormack & Thomas, 2005). Such attitudes and perceptions can reap adverse consequences on the CTs’ emotions and feelings of wellbeing. Lunay and Locke (2006, p. 171) discovered that 95%
of 25 primary CTs from Western Australia felt alienated. As 65% of these teachers serviced more than 10 schools, feelings of isolation (85%), powerlessness (60%) and meaninglessness (36%) were common.

Having to deal with consistent negative feelings and unpleasant situations can enhance the BCTs’ lack of job satisfaction (McCormack & Thomas, 2005), thus producing increased teacher attrition and/or a more cynical workforce. Piestch (2011) pointed out that being in casual work where mentoring and support are less likely to be provided is liable to cause regression in the quality of a CBT’s practice. All the time, effort and funds devoted to years of university work tend to fail them, as the situations which challenge these CBTs appear “out of the norm” in terms of how they have been educated. To date, teacher education generally prepares pre-service teachers for permanent work.

The contradictions of being a CBT

The life of a CBT is unpredictable and can prove contradictory in numerous ways. Firstly, those most in need, such as early career casual teachers who have very demanding jobs, are normally left to “sink or swim” in isolation. It appears incongruous that CBTs are increasingly encountering challenges because they are new to the profession and require extra skills on top of those they have, to cope with the role of “professional nomad”. CBTs are forced to wander from school to school in a random manner depending on when a particular school calls and where it is located. With each new school that CBTs enter, they continue to deal with sustained “culture shock”.

Feiman-Nemser (2001, p. 1026) articulated the predicament of BTs succinctly - “New teachers really have two jobs to do – they have to teach, and they have to learn to teach”. For CBTs, they have at least three jobs to do; “they have to teach, they have to learn to teach and they have to learn extra skills while on the job” given their more demanding and itinerant teaching situations. McCormack and Thomas (2003) highlighted the widely researched area of the stages of teacher professional growth when they outlined that the BTs they had interviewed were busy trying to ‘survive’ in their first year of teaching. Subsequent to follow-up interviews, McCormack and Thomas found that these same BTs discovered that they were still struggling to survive even after six months (p. 135). Unfortunately, CBTs
have added dilemmas! They have to survive while moving from school to school, “re-framing themselves continuously” in line with new places, schools, staff, KLAs, systems and students (Jenkins et al., 2009, p. 72; Pietsch & Williamson, 2009). In addition, they have to work on improving their teaching skills and gaining accreditation in spite of an absence of mentors, induction or school support. So despite their vital needs, CBTs have to persist and learn to cope while virtually being marginalised from the profession and before they can establish a career.

Secondly, the impermanent nature of casual work has the propensity to give rise to many of the issues encountered by CTs. The transitory work means that these teachers lack time to get to know and develop rapport with their students. This situation can become a catalyst for these students providing even more challenges for CTs (Duggleby & Badali, 2007; McCormack & Thomas, 2005; Pietsch & Williamson, 2009). These behaviour management issues demand the extra skills required of CTs to those of permanent teachers in order to achieve success in the classroom. Once again there is often no systematic support for CTs to do so. CTs have articulated how they feel like “fresh meat” and are often tested by the students who behave differently for them (Duggleby & Budali, 2007, p. 31-32). Although casuals frequently lack the “time on class” and information they require to accomplish positive outcomes in the classroom, such as knowledge of students with special needs, the permanent teacher’s lesson programs, seating plans and welfare policies; principals consider a good CT as one who can manage and control the classroom (Crittenden, 1994). In light of this view, as well as for other reasons, behaviour management has become a preoccupation of CBTs (Duggelby & Badali, 2007; Nidds & McGerald, 1994). Nonetheless it could be argued that it is unrealistic to expect CBTs to have effective classroom control when relevant information about the class/school has not been provided, time to build rapport with the students is minimal and generally mentoring and induction are absent.

Thirdly, casual teaching is about ensuring that a school student’s education continues when the classroom teacher is away. Paradoxically, the regular teacher can be absent from the school with a view to gaining access to important professional development (PD) to enhance their future professional growth and career, while simultaneously a CT must step into the teacher’s role and miss out on the PD. Actually Duggleby and Budali (2007) stressed that the lack of professional development was one
significant frustration faced by CTs. There are a number of reasons why casuals, especially CBTs, are unable to attend PD. Initially, it is difficult for CTs to give up assured work days while regular teachers undertake PD. Then there is the cost of the PD, which often CTs must cover themselves. This can become too costly unless CTs are gaining regular work. Further to this some schools do not accept any responsibility to invite and/or allow CTs to attend the PD sessions they run. The ramifications of CTs not being professionally developed in ongoing mandatory PD sessions could be tragic, e.g., Child Support, Code of Conduct and Anaphylaxis Training. It appears that casual work does not normally provide a very reciprocal arrangement, as the CTs supply the needs of the school, but apart from payment they often receive very little in return from the school, such as being valued, mentored, inducted and professionally developed by the school (Jenkins et al., 2009).

Fourthly, teacher educators are predisposed to educate pre-service teachers for permanent work although there are relatively fewer on-going positions offered to new graduates than in the past. Specific education regarding casual/temporary work is often neglected in this arena. Teacher education frequently includes the coverage of issues appropriate for more permanent work such as planning and programming for units of work and/or integrating the curriculum across the KLAs, and classroom and behaviour management methods primarily based on time to build positive relationships between the students and the teacher. Unfortunately, “much of what is learned cannot be practiced” by the CBT due to the fragmented nature of their work (Pietsch & Williamson, 2009, p. 5).

Considering the increasing numbers of teaching graduates who now help to supply the growing casual workforce, arguably providing teacher education for permanent work alone could be regarded as catering for a ‘past’ reality. Subsequently, to do justice to current pre-service teachers, teacher educators should better prepare them to teach effectively for “the present”, ultimately helping to avoid their premature departure from the profession (Crittenden, 1994). In order to achieve an appropriate pre-service education for CTs, more of a balance between preparing pre-service teachers for permanent and casual/temporary work is demanded.
The challenge for teacher educators

With increasing teacher ‘casualisation’, we as teacher educators, both nationally and internationally, should be reflecting seriously on whether we are educating our pre-service teachers for the current reality of the classroom. To do so, we must carry on constructive conversations with each other about research and practice that would aid us in readying these future teachers to transition into successful casual/temporary or permanent teachers.

So what are some of the most effective ways to prepare pre-service teachers for casual/temporary work? Undoubtedly, there will be contention among the ranks of teacher educators about whether aspects of casual teaching should become an integrated element of all university units/subjects or whether it should be offered as a discrete unit or module. The former method would mean that all curriculum, contextual and specialist areas in tertiary institutions would need to address ways that CBTs could meet their area of responsibility, for example, mathematics. A teacher educator of a specific curriculum or key learning area could tackle how a CBT could deliver some aspect of the syllabus in a stand-alone day plan or assess the value of resources and activities for CTs, given that work is not always left by the classroom teacher. University units that concentrate on classroom and behaviour management would also need to explore ‘extra’ and sometimes ‘discrete’ ways a teacher could manage the classroom for effective learning given that s/he might not know the students at all. A case in point would be to develop ways for a CBT to access and use students’ names in the classroom in a matter of moments, as this can break down the “protective barrier of anonymity” that inappropriately behaving students often believe they have when a CT walks into the classroom.

The second method - a stand-alone unit or module within each teaching course - could focus on aspects of casual teaching, thus outline what is expected of CTs and how they could enhance effective learning given the CTs’ fragmented work. Such units/modules should attend to the basics of casual teaching and could address formulating day plans for a year/stage level class plus multi-age classrooms. This could prove invaluable in that it would create and gather suitable resources and activities for all stages/KLAs that the CT may be asked to teach, along with planning effective classroom management and learning strategies specifically for casual work. Effective
long term CTs could be asked to give presentations to pre-service teachers about different aspects of their work, such as learning/teaching ideas and behaviour management strategies that they found useful. Effective methods of communicating with staff and parents and how to engage in and achieve their accreditation while teaching casually, would prove beneficial topics. In addition, alerting pre-service teachers to any avenues for PD opportunities and support that are available to CTs would be significant. For instance, the Victorian Institute of Teaching hosts a number of Casual Registered Teaching Networks, which have been very effective, self-sustaining networks led by other CTs. These networks aim to provide low cost PD and support for CTs.

Instigating further approaches that involve teacher educators, school regions/systems and schools to better prepare CBTs makes sense. Providing broader practicum coverage and experiences to include aspects of casual teaching would be insightful for pre-service teachers (McCormack & Thomas, 2005). While on practicum pre-service teachers could take the opportunities to explore their supervising teachers’ views about what they expect from a CT who takes their class(es). An example might be, “The CT should leave informative notes about what was covered and assessed”. The deputy principal, the principal and/or practicum advisor could run a session about casual teaching in their school, and this would alert these pre-service teachers to expectations of CTs and any support the school makes available for them. Pre-service teachers on practicum could be encouraged by teacher educators and school supervisors to take the opportunity to talk to and observe an effective CT within their school. Able and experienced CTs undeniably have many valuable skills, techniques, resources and ideas to share with these pre-service teachers.

If the coverage of casual work is addressed in teacher education, it also would be more likely that BTs who do secure permanent positions after graduation would be encouraged to be sensitive and supportive of their casual colleagues when working in schools. Tromans et al. (2001) stated that the principals and other “key staff” within schools need to “embrace the plight” of the beginning teachers who are employed on a temporary basis. In fact, “Schools carry a responsibility to their BTs regardless of employment status” (p. 41).
Conclusion

Increased ‘casualisation’ of the teaching workforce has significant implications for the profession. Specifically, teacher educators need to re-visit how pre-service teachers are prepared and ensure that it is in line with the current reality of more casual and/or temporary work for graduates. Consequently teacher educators ought to become involved in or informed about relevant research and practice concerning casual teaching so that they can develop the most effective ways to educate pre-service teachers, who will work as CTs in the future. The inequities with which CTs deal must be addressed, and they should be supported to improve their skills and maintain their professional registration (VARGO, 2012). Therefore a more reciprocal relationship between schools, school leaders, staff and communities, systems, teacher educators and casual teachers ought to develop in order to meet the needs of present and future schools. In fact, “The need to nurture and support CBTs in their time of uncertainty as they make the transition into the workplace is important for the future of school education and the ongoing development of the teaching profession” (McCormack & Thomas, 2005, p. 31). Without appropriate pre-service education to better prepare BTs for the complexity and probability of casual teaching, many “good teachers” will depart the profession.

References


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i Oxford Global Press is a division of the Primrose Hall Publishing Group

ii Based on a study conducted by David Lynch in 2005

iii It is pertinent to note that in the present Australian debate over the reform of teacher education, the present Federal Minister for Education, the accreditation agencies, and the Deans of Education peak body, adopt a stance that largely supports the idea of a single,
conventional teacher education model in which there is little specific emphasis on “teaching”. Teachers are presumed to “know how to teach” and while there are national teaching “standards”, it is arguable that they are “teacher” standards rather than teaching effectiveness criteria. In short, there is not much happening in the proposed reforms.

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