Understanding a transitional teacher education in globalised and neoliberal contexts

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ATEA, CDU, July 2015
United States

• 2003 Secretary of Education’s Annual Report
  o colleges and schools of education get it the way of good people becoming teachers
  o need ways to reduce the barriers to becoming a teacher among ‘otherwise highly qualified individuals’

• US Secretary of Education highlighted what he saw as the mediocre job schools of education were doing to prepare graduates to teach effectively (Duncan, 2009, October 22)
The Crackdown on Poor Teacher-Training Programs

Tougher regulations and stricter standards are the supposed panacea but is there a risk of over-regulation?

According to U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, both teachers and students deserve better. Liliaquityn

2014 Teacher Prep Review
Which programs come out on top?

Read the full report
See which programs ranked at the top
Delegate speak up for strong teacher prep
Teacher Prep Homepage

Mayer, Dixon, Kline, Moss - ATEA 2015
While there are certainly bright spots in the field of teacher preparation, overall there’s a capacity gap between the country’s heightened expectations for teachers and what their training equips them up to do.”

Analysis of the 2013 NCTQ report

“[H]as a number of serious flaws that include narrow focus on inputs, lack of a strong research base, missing standards, omitted research, incorrect application of research findings, poor methodology, exclusion of alternative certification programs, failure to conduct member checks, and failure to use existing evidence to validate the report’s rankings.”

(Fuller, 2014, p.63)
England

‘Teaching is a craft and it is best learnt as an apprentice, observing a master craftsman or woman. Watching others, and being rigorously observed yourself as you develop, is the best route to acquiring mastery in the classroom.’

‘… more training … on the job’

(Department of Education (DfE), 2010).

• Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Education

Teacher education in England (Ian Mentor)

• Up to 2010
  o PGCE
  o BEd
  o BA (QTS)
  o Employment-based routes e.g. Graduate Teacher Programme
  o SCITT (School-Centred Initial Teacher Training)
  o Teach First

• School-based and school-led teacher education since 2010-
  o School Direct and School Direct (salaried)
  o Teach Next
  o Troops into Teaching
  o Teaching Schools
  o University Training Schools
  o Academy Chains and Private Providers

Mayer, Dixon, Kline, Moss - ATEA 2015
In the past, the education debate has been dominated by education academics - which is why so much of the research and evidence on how children actually learn has been so poor. Now, thankfully, teachers are taking control of their profession’s intellectual life, taking the lead in pioneering educational research and creating a living evidence base...We have already taken a number of steps to put teachers and schools in charge of recruitment and training (Gove, 2013).
All too often Victoria's teacher training, referred to as pre-service education, falls short of the demands of today's schools ... Principals report that in the case of more than one-third of teachers, insufficient pedagogical preparation hinders student instruction.
• NSW and Australian students are among the best performing in the world. However, in recent international assessments the relative performance of Australian students has declined.

• Students in other OECD countries are overtaking us, and the proportion of Australian students who are performing at the highest levels is declining.
Bypass ‘traditional’ teacher education ...

A national solution ....
Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG) - 2014

Specific brief to examine three aspects of teacher education:
• Pedagogical approaches
• Subject content
• Professional experience

"And there is evidence that our teacher education system is not up to scratch. We are not attracting the top students into teacher courses as we once did, courses are too theoretical, ideological and faddish, not based on the evidence of what works in teaching important subjects like literacy. Standards are too low at some education institutions - everyone passes."
Hon Christopher Pyne, SMH, Feb 2014

I have established the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group to provide advice on how teacher education programmes could be improved to better prepare new teachers with the practical skills needed for the classroom. (Pyne)

I have asked the Advisory Group to identify common components regarded as world's best practice in teacher education, with a particular focus on:
1. Pedagogical
2. Subject content
3. Professional experience (Pyne)

I have instructed the Advisory Group to focus on measures that are practical and which will have demonstrable benefits for students. (Pyne)
1. Stronger quality assurance of teacher education courses
2. Rigorous selection for entry to teacher education courses
3. Improved and structured practical experience for teacher education students
4. Robust assessment of graduates to ensure classroom readiness
5. National research and workforce planning capabilities.

‘Crisis’ discourse: Teacher education is broken and needs to be fixed

- Situation is ‘imagined’ as necessitating the pursuit of neoliberal policies in order to ‘fix’ the problem (Furlong, 2013)
- ‘New professionalism’
As researchers and practitioners in the field of teacher education, we seem ill prepared to respond to critics who question the value of professional education for teachers with evidence of our effectiveness (Grossman, 2008)

…the weight of the research, being fragmented, often narrowly focussed, and usually not directly connected to a shared research agenda on teacher education, does not position teacher educators strongly to craft an evidence-based narrative about teacher education (Sleeter, 2014)

Research Questions:

• How well equipped are teacher education graduates for the diverse settings in which they are employed?

• What characteristics of teacher education programs are most effective in preparing teachers to work in a variety of school settings?

• How does the teacher education course attended impact on graduate employment destination, pathways and retention within the profession?
[Studies of teaching and teacher education are] responsive to problems of practice. However, when these problems are framed rhetorically as crises, we are apt to respond to their urgency by seeking simplicity, authority, and order in our research. ... We should resist (a) pitting approaches to research against one another, (b) privileging approaches merely because they are compatible with the language of policy, (c) accepting uncritically any approach to research, and (d) disregarding research emphasizing local knowledge.

(Florio-Ruane, 2002, p.205)
Teacher education is a set of representations, practices and experiences that are socio-spatial and relational in their nature...

... although people perceive, conceive and live in all three spaces simultaneously—they are not discrete, separate ‘realities’—the tactical differentiation of spaces enables us to distinguish dominant and more specific ways of graduates’ engagement with teacher education across time and across space (p.286)
Those with a teaching position felt more positive about their teacher education than those without a teaching position, especially those with full time permanent positions.
Overall, graduate teachers feel **prepared** and feel **effective**, but feel **more effective than prepared**.

Females feel better prepared and more effective than males

**Preparedness** – **more prepared, less prepared**:

- Teaching culturally, linguistically and socio-economically diverse learners
- Design and implementation of the curriculum
- Pedagogy
- Assessment and the provision of feedback and reporting on student learning
- Classroom management
- Collegiality
- Professional engagement with parents/carers and the community
- Professional ethics
- Engagement with ongoing professional learning
Effectiveness – more effective, less effective:

- Teaching culturally, linguistically and socio-economically diverse learners
- Design and implementation of the curriculum
- Pedagogy
- Assessment and the provision of feedback and reporting on student learning
- Classroom management
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- Professional ethics
- Engagement with ongoing professional learning

Principals rate the graduate teachers more effective than they rate themselves.
• Initial teacher education: the first phase of ongoing learning teaching — not linear

• Perceptions are mediated by the context - dynamic interaction of personal, employment, and school size, location, and community as well as leadership and support in the school

• Limitations on preparedness and effectiveness
  o Employment
  o Separation of schools and teacher education

• Initial – transitional – continuing (Bill Green, 2009)
  o Focus on policy and practice, curriculum and pedagogy across the continuum – preparatory, transitional and continuing teacher education involving both universities and the profession
  o Practice is not the Other of ‘theory’ and ‘policy’

• Scaffolded transition (Ward et al 2013)

• Learning teaching (SETE):
  o not linear nor staged-based
  o mediated by the local context (universities and schools) as well as the broader political context and by local conditions of work
  o builds on pre-existing knowledge and develops as a result of accessing a knowledge base for teaching and practice-based inquiry

However, a lack of connection between teacher education in universities and teacher education and teaching practice in schools is highlighted by the SETE project and is popularised as a theory-practice divide and a disconnect between learning teaching and doing teaching. These play out as dichotomies ...
Dichotomies

- Prepared – Effective
- Preservice – Inservice
- Universities – Schools
- Learning teaching – Doing teaching
- Theory – Practice
- University knowledge – School knowledge

The recent British inquiry into the role of research in teacher education “demands an end to the false dichotomy between higher education and school-based approaches to initial teacher education” (British Educational Research Association (BERA), 2014)

• Ziechner, Payne and Brayko’s (2015) call for approaches to teacher preparation that value and promote interaction between practitioner, academic, and community-based knowledge – this requires the creation of new ‘hybrid spaces’ where these knowledges can come together to inform innovative solutions to teacher preparation (p.124)
(Transitional) teacher education

- **Hybrid spaces**/ Collaborative spaces for teacher education (physical as well as conceptual; real as well as imagined) involving universities, employers, schools

- Bring together **learning teaching and doing teaching**; sustained practice alongside learning teaching

- **Inquiry centred** teacher preparation rejecting the idea that there are universally appropriate ‘best practices’

- **Pedagogies for learning teaching** that help preservice teachers and beginning teachers make sense across the spaces