



## STUDYING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHER EDUCATION (SETE)

### RESEARCH BRIEF 5 – December 2013

The Studying the Effectiveness of Teacher Education (SETE) project is investigating the effectiveness of teacher education in preparing graduates for the variety of school settings in which they begin their teaching careers. It is following 2010 and 2011 graduates in Victoria and Queensland during their first three to four years of teaching. The project is supported by strong partnerships with the teacher registration authorities and state education departments in both states. It is expected that the findings will inform teacher education practice and provide an evidentiary basis for policy decisions regarding effective teacher education and beginning teaching.

Previous research briefs have reported the findings for graduate teachers employed as teachers at the time of survey completion. **This brief summarises the career progression and employment intentions of graduate teachers who were not teaching when they completed the SETE surveys.**

Between Round 1 (March-April 2012) and Round 3 (April 2013) the number of respondents employed as teachers rose from 73 per cent to 84 per cent. In Round 2, 88 per cent of respondents were teaching.

In Round 3, more than 97 per cent of the graduate teachers who were teaching had taught prior to 2013. Of those not teaching, more than 62 per cent had previously been employed as teachers. Ten per cent of all graduate teachers who answered this question in Round 3 were teaching in 2010.

In the 12 months between Round 1 and 3 there was a drop in the number of graduates not employed as teachers but actively seeking teaching positions. This fell from over three-quarters (76 per cent) in Round 1 to 58 per cent in Round 3. By Round 3, 48 per cent of all 209 respondents seeking a teaching position had been attempting to secure teaching employment for more than twelve months.

The perceived obstacles to teaching employment were provided as open-ended responses and fall into three categories – current conditions of the job market, systemic obstacles and individual characteristics, circumstances and issues. The overwhelming majority of graduates who were not employed as teachers cited an overproduction of teachers as the main obstacle to being employed. Graduates seeking employment also believed that the global financial crisis contributed to economic slowdown and thus “teachers are not retiring, needing to work more hours.” This situation, in turn, has led to increased competition for jobs, opening up a number of issues related to the highly competitive market. These were highlighted by respondents as: not being prepared in how to construct a good job application; employment practices focussing on casual relief or supply teaching and short contract positions; lack of employment opportunities in certain subject areas and high demand in science and mathematics, and lack of positions in certain geographical locations that require graduates to move to rural and regional places for available positions.

With regard to systemic obstacles, many respondents cited what they saw as unfair and biased recruitment practices for new graduates. Two major obstacles that they mentioned were what they perceived as ‘false’ advertising of positions (such as in cases of renewing contracts with teachers who are already in schools and yet advertising for these positions) and the lack of experience as a justification for not short-listing or hiring graduate teachers. One graduate teacher argued that schools explain to applicants that positions are highly competitive and that they receive quite often more than 100 applications for a position. They report that in such conditions it is highly unlikely that their applications would receive close attention.

Some graduates saw their own circumstances, qualities or identities as obstacles to employment. Personal circumstances that they perceived as obstacles included caring for young children and a preference for part-time jobs due to these circumstances, visa requirements and lack of local experience, English language proficiency and overseas teaching licenses. Some graduates saw themselves as lacking skills to fill the required positions (e.g. due to their combination of teaching subjects or having only one ‘double’ teaching subject). Some suggested that perhaps they did not have sufficient interpersonal and professional relationships skills. Other respondents perceived their identities as an obstacle to getting a teaching job, naming age factors (too young and inexperienced or too mature), foreign names, overseas professional training, different cultural and schooling backgrounds, and gender.

The surveys asked graduate teachers not currently seeking employment as a teacher about their intentions to seek teaching employment in the future. Across all rounds, only a small number of these graduate teachers indicated no intention to seek a teaching position in the future (10-12 per cent). However, the number of teachers who were not sure if they would seek teaching work increased from 37 per cent during Round 1 to 52 per cent in Round 3.

Of the graduate teachers not teaching at the time of survey completion, a majority (56 per cent) had a job in Round 1. This is a much larger proportion than that reported for Round 3 (29 per cent).

In Round 3 the largest percentage of graduate teachers with a job outside of teaching was working in the education sector (43 per cent). This is similar to the responses in Round 1 (51 per cent). The biggest employment sectors for graduate teachers outside teaching were retail trade and health and community services.

Graduate teachers not currently employed as teachers reported seeing themselves working outside of education at a much higher frequency than those employed as teachers. All respondents were asked to indicate where they could see themselves working in three years’ time. The Round 3 responses by current employment status are provided in the table below.

**Table 1: Graduate teachers current teaching employment by plans for three years’ time, Round 3**

Where do you see yourself in three years’ time?	Currently employed as teacher		Not employed as teacher	
	n	%	n	%
Working as a teacher in a school	1,083	63.4	145	40.6
Working as a teacher in an alternative setting; i.e. adult education	69	4.0	37	10.3
In a leadership position in a school	335	19.6	9	2.5

In an education project, policy or research position	51	3.0	27	7.5
Working outside of teaching/education altogether	56	3.3	73	20.3
Other	113	6.6	68	18.9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,707</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>100.0</b>

This table shows that graduate teachers employed in schools could see themselves employed as teachers and school leaders at a higher rate than graduate teachers not currently employed as teachers. Graduate teachers not currently employed as teachers reported seeing themselves working outside of education at a much higher frequency than those employed as teachers.

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