Studying the Effectiveness of Teacher Education (SETE)

Prof Diane Mayer (Uni Sydney) on behalf of the SETE team: Presentation to VIT Accreditation Expert Group
Melbourne, February 12, 2015
101 Damnations: the persistence of criticism and the absence of evidence about teacher education in Australia
Bill Louden (2008)
Teacher Education
Ministerial Advisory Group
Issues Paper

From New Directions to Action:
World Class Teaching and Learning in Queensland
October 2013

Great Teaching, Inspired Learning
A blueprint for action

SETE Presentation to VIT Accreditation
Expert Group
"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
Teacher education..
‘a policy problem’

When teacher education is defined as a policy problem, the goal is to determine which of the broad parameters that can be controlled by policy-makers (e.g. teacher testing, subject matter requirements, alternate entry pathways) is most likely to enhance teacher quality.

(Cochran-Smith, 2008, p.273)
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 ideal is that newly established policies will emerge out of research results and findings. Currently, that is not the way it happens. Policy is more likely to emerge from public perceptions, based on isolated anecdotes or support for recent educational fads or initiatives. In more cases than not, policy emerges quickly and without the benefit of research before or after mandated innovations are implemented. (Wiseman, 2012)
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?

**AIM:** To provide a large-scale evidence base with which to inform policy and practice in teacher education and beginning teaching.
Project team
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Partners:
Queensland College of Teachers (QCT)
Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT)
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Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD)

The SETE project ran concurrently with the Longitudinal Teacher Education and Workforce Study (LTEWS) funded by the Australian Government for the first two years of SETE. LTEWS built on the SETE research framework and relied upon SETE data collected in Queensland and Victoria to track teacher education graduates and capture workforce data nationally. The final LTEWS report is available on the Australian Government website.
Longitudinal, mixed-methods, iterative design

• Target population: Almost 15,000 teacher education graduates in 2010 and 2011 (in two Australian states - Queensland and Victoria)

• Database analysis (4,200+ schools)

• Mapping of initial teacher education (550+ programs)

• Surveys of graduate teachers and principals
  o 4 rounds over 3 years, 2012-2014
  o Total of 8,460 responses from teachers and 1,001 responses from principals. In total, 4,907 graduate teachers contributed to the survey data - about one third of the target population

• Case studies
Case studies

• 30 government schools in Victoria and Queensland, selection based on:
  o 2010 student enrolment data
  o Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value
  o Percentage of students with language backgrounds other than English
  o Percentage of students of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin
  o Number of first year teachers employed
  o School location
  o Schooling level (primary, secondary, P-12)

• Up to 5 visits per site (2011-2014)
• 182 graduate teachers
• Analysis within and across cases
Snapshot: the graduate teacher survey respondents (across surveys 1,2,3,4)

- 47% 2010 graduates; 53% 2011 graduates
- Average age 30 years
- 78% are female
- 94% reported English as their only language
- 1% identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- 43% identify as the first in their immediate family to gain a tertiary qualification
- 85% completed their teacher education in full time study
- 96% had been enrolled as domestic students
- Schools in which employed (Rd 3 example) .. (only those employed)
  - 38% Queensland; 62% Victoria
  - Government 67%; Catholic 14%; Independent 14%; Other 5%
  - Almost 66% in major cities
  - About 44% in primary schools, 35% secondary, 17% P-12
68-84% had other academic or trade qualifications in addition to their teaching qualifications:
- Bachelor 57-63%
- Postgraduate 12-14%
- Certificate 10-13%
Graduate Teacher Survey Representativeness

Distribution of the SETE survey cohort was compared to teacher demographics reported in:

- Staff in Australia’s Schools (SiAS) survey 2010
- Australian Bureau of Statistics Census, 2011

The distribution of survey respondents is, on the whole, consistent with these collections.
Motivation for teaching

- Graduates wanted a teaching career for altruistic reasons – ‘Wanting to make a difference’ and ‘Always wanted to teach/work with children’.
- Very few saw teaching as a ‘backup plan’ or entered teacher education just because their ATAR score was sufficient.
Employment as a teacher

Round 1: (n=1,426)
- Yes: 20%
- No: 80%

Round 2: (2,810)
- Yes: 60%
- No: 40%

Round 3: (2,215)
- Yes: 80%
- No: 20%

Round 4: (1,548)
- Yes: 90%
- No: 10%
Employment type

Round 1 (1,008) Round 2 (2,437) Round 3 (n=1,823) Round 4 (n=1,384)

- Full-time permanent
- Part-time permanent
- Casual
- Full-time contract
Where do you see yourself in three years' time?

- Working as a teacher in a school
- In a leadership position in a school
- Working outside of teaching/education altogether

Round 1 (n=1,300)
Round 2 (n=2,597)
Round 3 (n=2,067)
Round 4 (n=1,523)
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.

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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 *

* Linked to whether they would recommend their teacher education program to others
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
- Collegiality
- Professional engagement with parents/carers and the community
- Professional ethics
- Engagement with ongoing professional learning
Principals rate the graduate teachers more effective than they rate themselves.
Successful in influencing student learning

- Round 1 (n=971)
- Round 2 (n=2,307)
- Round 3 (n=1,751)
- Round 4 (n=1,332)
Challenges - preparedness

- Behaviour/classroom
- Catering for diverse
- Assessment and
- Parent and local
- Curriculum
- Planning and
- Collegiality inc.
- Workload inc.
- Time management
- Out of field teaching
- Students engagement
- Implementing
- Differentiation
- Understanding school
- Professional ethics
- Pedagogy
- Literacy
- Securing a position
- Accessing resources
- Mentoring/induction
- Class size
- Ongoing professional
- Use of and access to
- Other

Percentage

Round 1 Teacher
Round 1 Principal
Round 2 Teacher
Round 2 Principal

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Graduate teachers with a teaching position by the importance of support received in school alongside availability of this item (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support Item</th>
<th>Teachers state it is not available</th>
<th>Strongly disagree/disagree</th>
<th>Strongly agree/agree</th>
<th>Principals state it is available</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Induction program</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>97.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Formal mentor arrangement</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>55.9</td>
<td>78.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Informal mentor arrangement</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>86.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ongoing network with other beginning teachers</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>70.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guidance on curriculum and classroom planning</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>99.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ongoing professional development opportunities</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>75.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>List of informative websites</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>62.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information on pay and conditions</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td>82.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular debriefing opportunities</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>91.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RQ1: How well equipped are teacher education graduates for the diverse settings in which they are employed?

- Overall, graduate teachers feel prepared and feel effective, but feel more effective than prepared.
- Principals rate the graduate teachers more effective than they rate themselves.

- More prepared:
  - Pedagogy
  - Professional ethics
  - Engagement with ongoing professional learning

- Less prepared:
  - Classroom management
  - Professional engagement with parents/carers and the community
  - Assessment and the provision of feedback and reporting on student learning
  - Teaching culturally, linguistically and socio-economically diverse learners
• More effective:
  o Professional ethics
  o Engagement with ongoing professional learning

• Less effective:
  o Design and implementation of curriculum
  o Pedagogy
  o Assessment and provision of feedback and reporting on student learning
  o Teaching culturally, linguistically and socio-economically diverse learners

• Perceptions are shaped by the context (involves dynamic interaction of personal, employment, and school size, location, and community as well as leadership and support in the school)
• **Challenges** in the early years of teaching (both graduate teachers and principals)
  - classroom management
  - catering for diverse learners
  - professional engagement with parents/carers and the community

• **Females** feel better prepared and effective than males

• No differences between the states - Queensland and Victoria

• Graduate teachers see initial teacher education is the first phase of **ongoing learning teaching**
RQ2: What characteristics of teacher education programs are most effective in preparing teachers to work in a variety of school settings?

• Teacher education program characteristics account for little of the variance in overall perceptions of preparedness.

• No statistically significant differences between perceptions of preparedness and effectiveness for graduate teachers:
  o with a specialist qualification and those without
  o who completed their teacher education program at a metropolitan campus and those who completed at a non-metropolitan campus
  o who completed their studies on campus and those who completed off campus

• Program type, mode of study and campus location did not effect perceptions of preparedness over time.

• Qualifications: Graduate teachers with Master’s or Bachelor’s degrees felt more effective than those with Graduate Diplomas.
• Professional experience:
  o **Skills developed** during the practicum were important (95% agreement)
  o Practicum prepared them for their current teaching context (approximately 90% agreement) irrespective of the ways in which it was structured – **days per week or blocks of time** in schools
  o Regardless of the way the practicum was structured, graduates felt successful in influencing student learning as beginning teachers
  o Those who completed an **internship** (this concept was not defined) felt slightly better prepared
  o In all data collections, graduate teachers and principals stressed the importance of **time in schools**
Graduate teachers called for more (Survey free text responses and Case Study data):

- Time in schools
- Practical hands-on pedagogy
- Engagement with school curriculum and content including senior secondary curriculum
- University lecturers and staff with recent school experience
- Practical assessment
- Feedback on assignments (and less group assessments)
- Focus on ‘behaviour management’
- Hands on direct learning of ICT
- Course time – programs of 18 months or less duration were regarded as too short

Strengths of ITE identified by graduate teachers (longitudinal cohort – Survey free text responses)

- High quality University teaching staff
- Practicum experiences
- Small classes/tutorials
- Opportunity for practical application in assessments and class activities
- Theory-practice links
- Working with fellow classmates
- Practical hands-on pedagogy
RQ3: How does the teacher education course attended impact on graduate employment destination, pathways and retention within the profession?

• <30% start teaching in full time permanent positions. Increases to just over 50% over three calendar years
• ~50% start teaching in full time contract positions. Decreases to 28% over three calendar years
• Full time permanent positions:
  o Males more likely
  o Bachelor’s degrees more likely
  o Graduate Diploma less likely
  o More likely to feel effective
• Job security raised as a concern when asked about employment (pay, demands of the job). Linked to mobility.
• **Principals – transition into profession:**
  - *supports ...* supportive and collegial staff, mentoring, induction
  - *inhibits ...* poor teaching skills/ classroom management, not listen to advice, lack of understanding of demands of the job

• **Future plans: Over the duration of the study**
  - **Continue as a teacher in a school** – decreased
  - **Go into leadership positions** – increased (especially those with masters and graduate teacher education)
  - **Leave teaching altogether** - increased
Employment

• Those employed full-time felt more effective than those who are on contract/casual employment.
• Often employment meant relocating far away from their usual support network of family and friends, a challenge during ‘tough’ times at school.
• Sometimes this meant employment in areas where housing was difficult to secure and expensive, especially if government housing was not available.
• Some secondary beginning teachers were teaching out-of-field. For some this was ok and an exciting challenge; but for most it was quite challenging--particularly in terms of the time needed to develop content knowledge and lesson plans.
• Contract or CRT positions drive behaviours aimed at securing further employment that often have nothing to do with student learning. Sometimes these behaviours caused tension and compromised collegial working environments. Sometimes grads felt pressure to agree to out of field teaching in order to attain ongoing employment.

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Overall, graduate teachers feel prepared and feel effective, but feel more effective than prepared.

Principals rate the graduate teachers more effective than they rate themselves.

Graduate teachers see initial teacher education as the first phase of ongoing learning teaching, but this is not linear.

Perceptions are shaped by the context (involves dynamic interaction of personal, employment, and school size, location, and community as well as leadership and support in the school).
• SETE identifies some major **limitations on feelings of preparedness and effectiveness**
  
  o Employment
  
  o Separation of schools and teacher education

• **Towards a cross-border cooperation in teacher education**
  
  o A hybrid model of teacher education between teacher education providers and schools
  
  o Ongoing learning teaching
  
  o Collective action
  
  o Collective responsibility