

21st February 2005.

The Hon Dr Brendan Nelson
The Department of the House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Sir

re: University Education of Teachers

I have included two articles from new teachers and some notes from one subject I completed in my first year of Teacher Training.

I agree that University does not prepare you for a career in education. I feel that all I have learnt is 'theory' and feel only slightly more competent in teaching than what I was before commencing the course four years ago. A bit like a brick layer learning all about how to make bricks with very little actual experience of constructing something from the bricks. Pilots could not learn to fly an aeroplane by theory. Would you like to be operated on by a doctor who had had lots of theory but little practical experience? In my opinion Teacher training needs to have a greater element of hands on experience.

A suggestion I have made to Lecturers at University is that for the four units of work undertaken each Semester is that one be the undergraduate working in a school one day per week as an unpaid teacher's aide. I see this as giving the person who is training to be a teacher more practical experience and a side benefit is that the teacher would have more time as there would be a second pair of hands in the classroom.

Undergraduates could be assigned to schools in this manner:

- First year students attend a school class every Monday of the year.
- Second year students attend a school class every Tuesday of the year.
- Third year students attend a school class every Wednesday of the year.
- Fourth year students attend a school class every Thursday of the year.

Other Practica would still be fulfilled, but at the same school where the Undergraduate was completing the 'Teacher's Aide' units of work.

I also feel that each syllabus should be worked through with weekly submissions that showed the Undergraduate's understanding of teaching requirements. At present the number of essays that constitute the requirements are beneficial to those whose forte is writing or have access to see/use previous essays that have been marked.

Yours faithfully

Gaye Barclay