



UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

Faculty of Education

15 April 2005

Mr Luke Hartsukyer MP
Chair, Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Education
R1 109
Parliament House
Canberra
ACT 2600

Via email: evt.reps@aph.gov.au (hard copy to follow in post)

Dear Mr Hartsukyer,

On behalf of the Faculty of Education at the University of Tasmania, I am pleased to forward this submission to the Inquiry into Teacher Education. A printed version will be sent next week.

The Faculty welcomes this review recognising the potential it has to support the renewal process being undertaken currently within the Faculty. I commend this submission to you and look forward to the Standing Committee's Report.

Yours sincerely

Professor Roslyn Arnold
Dean and Head of School



Submission to the House of Representatives
Standing Committee on
Education and Vocational Training
'Inquiry into Teacher Education' from the
Faculty of Education at the University of Tasmania



TRANSFORMING LEARNING COMMUNITIES: PRESENT AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

INTRODUCTION

The Faculty of Education is committed to a strong and clear agenda of transformation to meet the challenges that confront educators in schools and universities in the 21st century. That agenda includes:

- building positive, purposeful partnerships, specifically with schools and school systems, to bring practice and theory together through dynamic collaboration. Two major recent initiatives, the *Institute for Inclusive Learning Communities*, developed in partnership with the Department of Education, and the *Transforming Learning Communities Research Centre* will together and in parallel offer new, exciting possibilities for undergraduate and post-graduate study and research;
- embracing radical curriculum change in Tasmanian schools by adopting the new *Essential Learnings Framework* to transform the curriculum and practice of Faculty pre-service teaching programs;
- rethinking approaches to the teaching of literacy and numeracy to ensure that our pre-service teachers are skilled and highly competent in these key areas of practice; and
- enhancing the learning outcomes of our pre-service teachers by reshaping the practical component of pre-service teacher programs through greater cooperation between scholars, schools and teachers, building on and sharing the expertise and knowledge of both schools and the Faculty.

This drive for improvement is endorsed by Skilbeck and Connell in their recent report, *Teachers for the Future (2004)*, in which they provide convincing evidence that the changing nature of society

demands a transformed teaching profession and transformed teacher education programs. The Faculty of Education is responding to these challenges with enthusiasm and energy. It is engaged in a process of deep reflection, critique and renewal, intent on creating a learning community that is vibrant and informed, closely connected with key partners. It holds a strong commitment to research, seeing the essence of universities and education faculties in particular to be the reciprocal relationship between the practice of teaching and the evidence base which informs it.

CONTEXT: FROM LOCAL TO GLOBAL

As part of the only university in Tasmania, this Faculty takes seriously its responsibility to deliver highly competent and effective teachers to educate the young people in Tasmanian schools and to contribute to the vision of a community of lifelong learners shared by the state government and the University. The unique context in which the Faculty exists offers significant opportunities, as well as the potential for closer scrutiny and informed critique than might be the case in other States. A key opportunity is related to the economic outlook in Tasmania which has been dramatically transformed since 2000, resulting in expanded individual and community expectations of Tasmanians and increased pressure on major contributors to social and economic capital, including the University and the schooling systems. Response to this pressure is exemplified by the University of Tasmania's (UTAS) Strategic Agenda, with its focus on Excellence, Distinctiveness, Growth and Engagement (EDGE) and the significant educational reforms being undertaken within the Tasmanian education system, including the *Essential Learnings Curriculum*

Framework being implemented in Tasmanian government and many non-government schools.

The Faculty also holds a clear view of its position in the national and global context. It is involved in a number of innovations in its teaching, learning and research to develop educators for the future who demonstrate a global perspective based on intercultural understandings.

A RENEWED EMPHASIS ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

The Faculty of Education at the University of Tasmania provides five teacher preparation programs across the three campuses of the University, in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie.

Four of these programs – the Bachelor of Education (*B. Ed*), the Bachelor of Education [*B. Ed [IS]*] the Bachelor of Human Movement (*BHM*) and the Bachelor of Adult and Vocational Education (*BAVE*) are undergraduate degrees. A fifth program, the Bachelor of Teaching (*B. Tch*), is a two year graduate entry program.

Students in the Bachelor of Education [In Service] and the Bachelor of Adult and Vocational Education are predominantly part time students while the students in the Bachelor of Education, the Bachelor of Human Movement and the Bachelor of Teaching are predominantly full time students.

The employment rate for our graduates is approximately 75%, exceeding that of other faculties in UTAS by up to 10%. The Faculty's improvement agenda aims to further enhance the employability of graduate teachers by ensuring that they are able to meet, at a high level, the DEST Beginning Teacher Standards set in 1996 and any National Standards that might replace them in the future. The Faculty is contributing to the Tasmanian Teacher Standards

Development Project being funded by the Australian Government Quality Teaching Programme. Employing bodies can be confident that the UTAS pre-service teachers will continue to meet the highest levels of competence and take their place confidently and successfully as 21ST century professionals.

The pre-service courses offered are currently the subject of considerable internal scrutiny and review, with excellence in teaching and learning the key objective. In response to the significant curriculum reform underway at present in Tasmanian schools through the development and implementation of the Essential Learnings Framework, a distinctive quality of Faculty programs into the future will be their close alignment with the structure, content and pedagogy central to this new curriculum.

These developments at the Faculty level contribute to the strategic focus across the whole University on improving teaching and learning, with the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee engendering a high degree of commitment, energy, reflection and development in recent months.

Staff have considered their own practice through a range of processes, as is demonstrated in the following ways:

- Over the past 12-18 months, the Faculty has engaged in a series of reflective and strategic discussions, with the explicit and shared intention of enhancing course content, pedagogy and structures.
- Academic staff take increasing advantage of the UTAS Student Evaluation of Teaching and Learning (SETL) process, considering carefully the feedback the process provides, reflecting on and reviewing their current teaching practices. Changes made in response to this feedback are

made explicit to students and further critique encouraged.

- A number of academic staff are undertaking further study in tertiary teaching offered by the UTAS Flexible Education Unit.
- The Faculty also recognises that pre-service teachers need to be supported as individuals, that strong interpersonal relationships, skills and qualities enhance personal resilience and are important keys to success as a teacher in the 21st century.

The content and coherence of the range of programs are also under review, to address areas for improvement identified through the Faculty and program review processes since 2000 and to respond to contextual imperatives. For example:

- A cross-program module focussing on the teaching of print literacy is under development, to be implemented in all undergraduate programs in the Faculty, commencing in semester 1, 2006, and focussing on systematic approaches to teaching basic literacy skills and supportive literacy interventions.
- Masters units related to literacy interventions and/or inclusive schooling are being considered simultaneously with the module above.
- All pre-service teachers will have access to a revised module called *Orientation to the profession of teaching* to ensure that they are *au fait* with current legal requirements and employment selection procedures.
- Current programs recognise the importance of skilling new teachers so that they are confident at managing complex classrooms, rich learning tasks and diverse young people. Each program includes fundamental management approaches and encourages reflection on classroom practice

as part of the follow up to school experience. However, improvement is needed. The resilience of teachers-in-training is considered critical if they are to thrive throughout their course and when they assume the role of teacher. The Faculty is proposing a common approach, across all programs, to developing and maintaining personal resilience and emotional health and well-being which will be applicable to pre-service students as well as providing a model for their own work with students in schools.

PARTNERS IN PRACTICE: STRENGTHENING THE THEORY/PRACTICE LINKS

The Faculty is focussed on getting the balance right between the campus and school-based components of its courses. Traditionally, Tasmanian schools and teachers have accepted their central role as partners in the pre-service education of teachers, enabling courses to have a high practical component, compared with other States across the nation. The school experience ranges from 90 days in the graduate-entry Bachelor of Education Degree course to 96 days in the graduate-entry B.Teaching degree course. Without the cooperation of schools, this critical element of teacher education would be unsustainable. That said, the partnership has survived despite some ongoing concerns on the part of the students, the schools and the Faculty.

A number of initiatives have been introduced to strengthen the theory-practice interface in pre-service courses. For example:

1. Literacy in teacher education: From research to best practice

This project will bridge the gap between teaching and research through the development and

implementation of a new model of literacy in teacher education.

The University of Tasmania will build upon work that is already being done in the field to implement a new teacher education model of literacy teaching. The specific research that is being carried out involves focused conversations with teachers of literacy in Tasmania, and it will clarify the challenges that face the contemporary literacy teacher in the primary and secondary Tasmanian schooling context. Given this information, the University of Tasmania literacy research team will identify and describe the real literacy needs of the pupils in today's classroom and suggest a model of best practice for emerging literacy teachers. The model should be robust in an inter-disciplinary and technological context, in that it should genuinely address the pupil's literacy needs in a changing curriculum.

This model of best practice will be taken forward to a collaboration stage, where other universities and bodies such as the Australian Government and the Department of Education in Tasmania will be invited to participate in the implementation of this model. The focus of the second stage is to build upon the research that will be headed by the University of Tasmania team, and to increase the scope of the project by comparing and contrasting the research findings with literacy research that has recently been completed at institutions such as the Edith Cowan University. This stage will also provide opportunities to look at the ways in which this research can align with work that will be carried out in the Transforming Learning Communities Research Centre and the Institute for Inclusive Learning Communities. It is anticipated that the model for literacy teaching will also be influenced by research from international sources and bodies such as UNESCO.

The third stage of this project is to form an implementation consortium between interested stakeholders that will trial the model in other research-intensive universities across the nation.

2. Substantial evaluation and revision of school experience has been undertaken by Faculty members since 2003, as illustrated by three major initiatives:

- In the context of concerns about the quality of the practicum experience for pre-service Health and Physical Education (HPE) teachers, the Bachelor of Human Movement (BHM) program facilitated a consultation process to develop a new partnership model for school experience. The partnership is built around schools, teachers and BHM staff agreeing to meet certain criteria that promote best practice for the development of knowledge and skills for pre-service HPE teachers. The partners are working together to ensure high quality learning outcomes for pre-service teachers on school experience.

The expected outcomes of this model for schools and supervising teachers include access to negotiated professional learning opportunities facilitated by the BHM staff; input into the ongoing development of the SE program and its goals; regular contact with BHM staff and the Faculty of Education; quality assurance for teaching/observation experiences for pre-service teachers.

The benefits for pre-service students include high quality school experience; supervision by committed and supportive schools and teachers.

- Staff in the Bachelor of Teaching program evaluated school experience and identified a number of shortcomings and areas for improvement, resulting in significant revision of the model of school experience in 2004 and

further refinement in 2005. Students have increased opportunities for focussed observation and reflection and academic staff commit to increased contact and support throughout the practicum. In particular, a series of one day placements in schools have been introduced in the first semester of study, where pre-service teachers undertake focussed observations of lesson planning and implementation, the nature of learning environments and classroom and behaviour management. These observations are supported by tutorials and submitted, with reflective notes, as an assessment task.

- Internal and external reviews of the Bachelor of Adult and Vocational Education and subsequent consultations established an ongoing need for a degree course of this type. However, the review

and consultation processes highlighted a number of areas for improvement relating to the practical application of the theoretical content. These included the need for more effective professional adult educators who can play a key role in equipping Australians for a rapidly changing, more complex labour market and building the national skill stock. As a result, the course has been totally rewritten in response to demand and to meet changing environmental factors.

The content of the new course is much more strongly evidence-based, working the nexus between theory and practice, and responding to students' reports that the practical elements extend their knowledge and skills in ways that students perceive as relevant. Innovations

WE LEARN TOGETHER

Fourth year student teachers from the Bachelor of Education program are playing a pivotal role in a Pilot Program called We Learn Together, designed to enhance young children's competence in literacy and numeracy. Each week these Bachelor of Education students have visited a number of schools, including Rocherlea Primary School (photo) to work on a voluntary basis with individual or small groups of young learners, focussing on specific literacy or numeracy experiences designed to enhance each child's learning.

When school and university communities work collaboratively the benefits are numerous for all concerned. Not only have the young learners at the school benefited but also the student teachers have been given opportunities to consolidate, refine and expand their skills and knowledge in a supportive environment. Furthermore, all student teachers tutoring in primary grades have received individual and small group tuition. As noted by one student teacher, the program is '*... fantastic and a great way for pre-service teachers to get classroom experiences and ideas without the pressure that School Experience seems to add*'.



A pre-service teacher with a small group of Rocherlea Primary School students

include units designed to meet current developments in vocational education and learning – ‘Adolescent Development and Behaviour’ and ‘Career transitions’.

As a result of involvement on the working party that developed the new course, a valuable working relationship, one of mutual respect and responsiveness, has been established with the Office of Post-Compulsory Education and Training in the Department of Education.

3. Collaborative developments to enhance the practicum

In mid-2004, the Faculty and the Department of Education demonstrated their shared commitment to enhancing the pre-service teacher programs by agreeing to appoint a jointly-funded officer to progress various collaborative initiatives, with a particular focus on addressing the flaws and weaknesses in current processes and practices related to the practicum. The non-government school sectors accepted the invitation to participate in a joint working group, established to support the work of the liaison position.

Outcomes to date include:

- A new model of school-experience placement, supervision and support, based on clusters of schools, is being developed through which the capacity of schools, teachers and faculty staff to work together to build tangible theory-practice links will be further developed. The model, which will be trialled in 2005-2006, will address such aspects of school experience as the need for increasing numbers of placements; the recognition and accreditation of the skills and understandings of colleague teachers; review of policies, guidelines, incentives and payments; school and teacher input to course content

(*getting the balance right*); standards of beginning teacher performance; and assessment of pre-service teacher competence.

- The role of principals and school leaders in the education of new teachers will be given a higher profile through both the pilot model above and professional learning opportunities under development within the Faculty and the Department of Education.
- A Graduate Certificate in Supervision, Mentoring and Induction is under development in the Faculty, with input from experienced colleague teachers who have supported pre-service teachers on school experience over a number of years.
- A research module within the Graduate Certificate will enable articulation across to research higher degrees where desired.

ENHANCING TEACHING AND LEARNING THROUGH INDIVIDUAL PATHWAYS AND SUPPORTS

The Faculty of Education, in developing its transformational approach to teaching and learning, caters to the diversity of people and cultures within society. It supports and recognises individual difference in the learning process by developing a range of support services and programs which take into consideration different learning needs; different cultural and social experiences and expectations; and different technological capacities. Within the Faculty there is a focus on developing individualised pathways for students by providing them with a range of specialist courses and options to suit their particular needs, such as:

- The introduction of additional literacy support and information and communications technology literacy lessons for pre-service teachers.
- The introduction of a numeracy program to support science graduates to become Secondary Maths teachers.
- The development of flexible delivery of units through the use of Web CT VISTA and video conferencing to address distance related and time issues.
- Implementing a flexible delivery learning object to help students in the Bachelor of Education (In-service) Program to learn how to teach primary literacy and numeracy.
- The development of conceptual and meta-cognitive frameworks for pre-service teachers to assist them in their own thinking and planning

The Faculty is committed to extending this concept of individualised pathways for pre-service teacher in recognition of the diverse work and life experiences of pre-service teachers enrolled in Faculty courses. For instance:

- Consideration is being given to offering a fast tracked program which takes into consideration an individual's circumstances, learning needs and career goals.
- Additionally, the increased complexity of workplace and technological changes in the labour market has required the Faculty to identify and meet the changing and emerging needs of their students in offering different educative settings and programs in its adult and vocational courses.
- Practical experience is being offered in a broader range of settings such as child care centres.

- The development of inter-discipline learning experiences for students within the Library, ICT and Flexible Education Unit sections of the University.

Since 2004, in response to a renewed emphasis through the University EDGE agenda to internationalise our programs, the Faculty of Education has been developing teacher education exchange programs in Europe and North America. The aim of this opportunity is to open up options and pathways for students and to broaden the perspective of their educational practice through an experiential mode of learning. The Faculty has selected third year students to undertake a one-semester accredited program at Malmö University in Sweden, with UTAS and the Faculty providing financial support to facilitate this exchange. Other exchanges of this nature are currently under development.

EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Consistent, high quality research is critical in a Faculty of Education. As this Faculty recognizes the need for a sustained and productive research culture, it has created the Transforming Learning Communities Research Centre to foster a research environment that is now such a vital part of University life. Although in its early stages, the Centre will reflect the Faculty's endeavour to document and understand the transformative powers of education: how effective learning causes transformation to the individual, the teacher, the community and to society. One aspect of this transformation is the process where a 'student' is transformed into the teacher through a complex, multi-dimensional and incompletely understood set

of learnings and experiences that define teacher education; teacher education can no longer be driven by a reproductive model, rather it must become increasingly evidence-based in order to achieve greater effectiveness. The pre-service teachers, themselves, are part of this research culture; the introduction of action research methodologies within the various teaching programs has proven to be very successful with pre-service teachers and their associated schools. For example:

- Second year Bachelor of Teaching students undertake a significant action research assignment, requiring them to reflect upon and act to improve an aspect of their teaching. This project follows a spaced learning model over two major school placements and requires students to consider a negotiated focus on their teaching from practical and theoretical perspectives.
- Honours students within the Faculty are engaged in many meaningful research projects which investigate crucial and current issues within the wider education community. Some of the topics under investigation for 2005 include: Arts literacy through the lens of The Reggio Emilia model; investigating student teachers and primary children's attitude to maths; the role of male teachers in primary schools; the social competence of children as they enter prep and how their social competence impacts on their behaviour in the class and playground; the changing nature of kindergarten learning programs and their implications for teachers' practice and the education of young children; investigating a community-based music program from an underprivileged area and examining why it has had sustained success in the community.

- A number of previous Honours students are returning to research studies in the Faculty while they are currently teaching.

Educational research, however, has greater breadth than teacher education. Diverse topics are examined and challenged, such as discipline-based educational practices, educational policy and history, pedagogy in schools, assessment practices, administration and school leadership. This important research (i.e., inquiry, data analysis and synthesis in the generation of new educational knowledge), provides benefits to the educational stakeholders through its incorporation into the Faculty's community partnerships. Research excellence is encouraged through a community focus which fosters collaboration between the various industry partnerships, which in turn, strengthen the Faculty's reputation and leadership in research. Research partnerships have been established recently with the Tasmanian Department of Education including, for instance, the Centre for Extended Learning Opportunities; a working party examining pre-service school experiences and various school committees and consultations. The Faculty of Education is soon to be officially recognized as the Tasmanian Hub for SiMEER (a Commonwealth initiative administered from the University of New England). This group will coordinate and sponsor small scale research projects in the areas of science and mathematics education in Tasmanian rural settings. The Faculty is also in the process of seeking additional partnerships with other universities, both interstate and overseas, to build on and strengthen its international quality and reputation in education.

As well, educational research greatly increases the Faculty's capacity to support curriculum initiatives and innovations in its course offerings and degree

programs. It is the Faculty view that the research/teaching divide is a myth; strong links arise as research informs contemporary teaching design and practice. In recognition of the demand for high quality school teaching, the Faculty has established an Institute for Inclusive Learning. The Institute, through research and collaboration with various school institutions, will offer qualified, experienced teachers professional support and guidance in inclusive strategies and pedagogy.

CREATING STRONG COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

The Faculty values its strong student-university-school partnerships. Collaboration is a crucial ingredient in developing supportive and professional relationships in the current educational community.

Developing a strong sense of community is recognised as an important attribute for pre-service teachers. The Faculty is interested in developing programs with local community stakeholders and organisations to introduce pre-service teachers to the education and responsibilities of their community. For example, the Faculty has already strong connections with local Land Care groups, in the conservation of the local environment and other options are being explored.

The Faculty is committed to furthering its partnerships and relationships with transnational communities and universities, as well as focusing on its local and regional community partnerships. This is seen as crucial in developing a quality teacher education program both locally and overseas. This is represented by the following initiatives:

- The development of a new satellite campus in Tasmania's north-west, the Cradle Coast



Bachelor of Education Program Director, Julie Porteus, signing partnership agreement with the Principal of Penguin Primary School, Mr Jim Rudling

Campus, which is trialling a new model of delivery involving locally trained teachers and pre-service teachers in school workshops. Strong community partnerships are being formed with two schools: Cooe Primary and Penguin Primary. Both of these schools have agreed to provide facilities and staff for UTAS pre-service teachers in order to complete modules such as art, drama, music and physical education. The benefit of this partnership will include pre-service teachers learning about and absorbing the school environment; opportunities for pre-service teachers to interact with students; and current educational theory and practice being disseminated to the teaching staff involved.

- The Faculty of Education is proposing to establish a Bachelor of Education and Care in the Early Years (title provisional only), to be articulated with Child Care qualifications from the *Institute of TAFE Tasmania* and other registered training organisations. Currently in Tasmania there is no undergraduate degree in



Ben Will, a pre-service teaching graduate working in Thailand in 2003

early childhood education specialising in the education of children from birth to four years of age; nor is there a degree course which allows educators to train in leadership, management and administration in early childhood services. This is a deficit which this proposal seeks to address in order to ensure that early education services in Tasmania are of the highest quality. The proposed course will be delivered by flexible mode to suit potential students, some of whom may already have full-time employment, and will emphasise the important links between child care and schooling.

- Establishing strong community partnerships with industry representatives and performance artists to act as mentors for pre-service teachers in their learning to teach. One project involved pre-service teachers creating and performing a theatre in education piece for students at Mowbray and Spreyton Primary schools. A theatre professional was invited to assist in this creative process.

- A strong partnership has been formed with the Education Officers at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery at Inveresk. Pre-service teachers enrolled in art modules are introduced to the Education Officers and given a guided tour of the gallery and in particular the Museum Education Learning Centre. During this time they are informed about the number of opportunities available for teachers visiting the museum and how these can be utilised within their own classes in the future. It is also an important opportunity to increase their knowledge of arts literacy, which is to be reported on in the Essential Learnings in 2007.
- Partnerships with leading educators such as Maxine Greene, Emeritus Professor at Harvard University and Doctor Malcolm Skilbeck strengthen scholarship in the Faculty.
- A number of pre-service teachers have taken advantage of an opportunity to travel to Thailand during the summer vacation to teach on a voluntary basis.



Thai teacher, Ilada, visiting a Tasmanian school in 2005

- There is a reciprocal exchange program which includes bringing teachers from Thailand to spend time in the Faculty working with colleagues and in Tasmanian schools.
- The development of research scholarships for students and lecturers living overseas to enhance cross cultural ties and relationships.
- Research into the development of a cross-cultural program which will enhance the development of intercultural understandings across undergraduate programs in the Faculty of Education.
- Establishing and implementing regular seminars and expertise in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) for professionals and other interested parties in regional centres.
- *Young Children Learning (2004)*. During 2003, a collaborative project between the Department of Education and the Faculty of Education was undertaken in which seventy-five 4th Year Bachelor of Education students designed learning materials for young learners in Early Childhood classrooms. This project encapsulated the philosophical approach of the Tasmanian

Department of Education's Essential Learnings curriculum. These Early Childhood student teachers collaborated with 8 classroom practitioners in the publication of the book *Young Children Learning (2004)*. The joint success of this project has been acclaimed by Early Childhood practitioners across Tasmania. In the words of the Principal Education Review Officer with the Department of Education: *I have received so many comments about the resource 'Young Children Learning' from teachers, staff from support schools and those working in child care. The resource is highly professional, easy to use – and practical.*

CONCLUSION

The Faculty of Education welcomes this Inquiry into Teacher Education, for which this submission has been prepared, because of the opportunity it has offered to present a snapshot of the Faculty at a time of deep reflection and renewal. The challenges ahead are substantial, but the Faculty is confident that its commitment, strength and sound reputation position it well to undergo the transformation needed to produce effective and highly skilled teachers into the future.

SCIENCE ALIVE!

An exciting new partnership has been formed this semester with primary schools in a low-socio-economic cluster of government northern suburbs schools. A Faculty science teacher-education specialist meets with a group of 20 year 6 high-ability students weekly after school for a science enrichment program. The students investigate science topics in depth over the course of a 15 week period.



Budding scientists absorbed in dissecting flowers

