

Additional submission to the Inquiry into Teacher Education

Suggested modifications to teacher training courses to better prepare pre-service teachers to work more closely with parents.

1. Include in Philosophy of Education course a core lobe "*Parents as Primary Educators. The rights and duties of parents. The rights and duties of government, church and schools.*"

Core content should include provide clearly reasoned exposition on the following topics:

- that parents have a *natural* right and duty to take responsibility for education and upbringing of children they have brought into the world;
- a brief history of how *parents as the first educators* has been interpreted and how the artificial dichotomy between schools and parents has arisen;
- a review of recent initiatives to redress this disunity between schools and parents;
- a review of the moral right of parents to be the ones to establish the moral agenda for their own child's education;
- that teachers, church and government have a duty to provide effective support to parents for them to achieve this;
- the principles of social justice, especially the *Principle of Subsidiarity*... that a complex and higher-order organization present in society (eg school or government) has a duty to assist the more fundamental organizations (eg family) achieve their natural purpose, ie the nurturing and education of children. This principle derives from social ethics not theology and is well explained in the quotations below from a new publication the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace.

"Just as it is gravely wrong to take from individuals what they can accomplish by their own initiative and industry and give it to the community, so it is also an injustice and at the same time a grave evil and disturbance of right order to assign to a greater and higher association what lesser and subordinate organizations can do..." ...On the basis of this principle, all societies of a superior order must adopt attitudes of help ('*subsidium*'), therefore of support, promotion, development, with respect to lower-order societies.

Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church
Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. 2004. 186

The principle of subsidiarity protects people from abuses by higher-level social authority and calls on these same authorities to help individuals and intermediate groups to fulfil their duties. This principle is imperative because every person, family, and intermediate group has something original to offer to the community.

ibid, 187

2. Ensure there is a focus on practical skill building (possibly in coordination with practicum experiences) in skills such as:
 - proactive communication with parents
 - understanding parental priorities
 - reinforcement of parental priorities and values
 - conflict resolution
3. In addition, studies should extend to best practice in parenting.

Please accept the attached copy of my book *Parenting for Character* which is a manual outlining core parenting skills that we keep in circulation amongst parents in my school. It illustrates a curriculum of parenting material that would be of immense benefit to young adults.

4. Furthermore, it would be useful for pre-service teachers to study approaches to establishing a school culture of character education... both by direct delivery to students through targeted curriculum and mentoring programs, and also by delivery to parents. Please see my attached article "In pursuit of virtue; uniting home and school" from *The Practical Administrator*, the journal of the Australian Council for Educational Administration. The article outlines mainstream practical approaches that schools can use to establish a culture and curriculum of character education.



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