School of Education
Faculty of Education
La Trobe University
Submission to the National Inquiry into Teacher Education April 2005

The School of Education, La Trobe University, Bendigo, welcomes the opportunity to participate in this national inquiry into teacher education. In this submission we wish to focus mainly on point (8) in the terms of reference for the inquiry, the role of schools in teacher preparation, but also consider other issues. We extend a warm invitation to the membership of the Standing Committee to visit the Bendigo campus at a mutually convenient time and meet with students and staff. A Scheme of Work, 2005 is attached which identifies student practicum periods and vacations.

Our pre-service courses are conducted at the Bendigo and Mildura campuses with 215 and 30 first year students in the four-year Bachelor Education course respectively. There are also 110 students enrolled in the one-year Graduate Diploma in Education (Secondary) at Bendigo. First year Bachelor of Education students from Mildura complete the second and third years of the course at Bendigo before returning to Mildura in Year 4. This is a unique relationship between two of La Trobe's campuses that has led effectively to graduates returning to remote school settings in the north of the state. The Bachelor of Education was recently accredited by the Victorian Institute of Teaching. It replaced the Bachelor of Teaching degree that was recognised twice in recent years as a leading teacher education course in an Australia-wide survey of graduate satisfaction of such courses.

We can make a significant contribution to the inquiry, particularly in relation to rural and regional teacher preparation. We acknowledge that teacher education also focuses on a global context, offering world-wide employment prospects for graduates. We are therefore particularly concerned with the preparation of teachers who are able to work effectively in a variety of regional and rural settings according to the demands of social and geographic contexts, entailing disadvantage, isolation, and ethnic and itinerant populations.

Point 8: Role of Schools in Teacher Preparation

There is broad consensus that teacher preparation programs can be enhanced through effective partnerships with schools. The Australian Council of Deans of Education (in Committee for the Review of Teaching and Teacher Education, 2003, p. 137), argued that professional practice must be at the heart of teacher education, and that theory and practice must be mutually informing, concurring with the call by the Ramsey Review of Teacher Education in New South Wales (2000, p. 63) for "a fuller integration of practical experience into educational programs for beginning teachers". From our perspective, strong and diverse partnerships of both our students and staff with schools represent a crucial element in effective professional induction for teachers. Our courses are designed around mutually-planned, diverse collaborative work with schools, including scope for additional teacher-, university lecturer-, and student-initiated collaborative projects. These partnerships seek to develop the diverse range of knowledge, skills and values crucial to the professional preparation of teachers. These partnerships are outlined below:

Practicum Experience

A diverse sequence of school experiences in regional, city and rural school settings through the conventional supervised practicum, entailing 80 days in the Bachelor of Education course, and 45 days in the Graduate Diploma program, with regular visits by university teaching staff. Bachelor of Education students participate in a variety of school-based experiences such as an extended observation placement in year 1, four 2–3 week block placements in years 2 and 3 with the option of extending a block to a semester length one-day-per-week alternative arrangement in third year. In these programs students collaborate with university and classroom teachers to devise, implement and evaluate lesson sequences or extended projects in their major study areas, such as Literacy, Mathematics and Physical Education. This work develops student-teachers' curriculum expertise but also enables them to be crucial contributors to school program success (Tobias & Leder, in press). In the fourth year students undertake a more intensive and on-going collaborative practicum arrangement with a classroom teacher where they can gain an in-depth understanding of child development over one semester.

Other Partnership Programs

(1) Participation of Graduate Diploma students in rural and isolated teachers' professional development through a guided practicum experience entailing implementation of innovative curriculum approaches (Lloyd & Matthews, 1999).

(2) School-based Science Program in year 2 of the Bachelor of Education course, where students plan, implement and evaluate science topics over 8 weeks, working in teams and collaboratively with primary classroom teachers. This program develops students' confidence and competence in teaching science, and also facilitates the implementation of an under-represented curriculum area in the participant schools.

(3) Partnership program with Bendigo Senior Secondary College for secondary pre-service teachers. This program which operates over the first six weeks of the course has two parts: the Classroom Experience Program, where students team up with a teacher in the first week of the year to observe and participate in as many classes as their timetable permits; and a formal program presented by College teachers, focusing on new technologies for teaching and learning, Victorian curriculum documents, teaching and learning resources, and contextual factors relevant to beginning work in schools. This program is perceived by students as enabling a very effective orientation to both practical and theoretical issues in teaching and learning (Savage, Taylor, Hayman, Prain & Rosengren, 2004)

(4) Secondary pre-service students also participate in the so-called Practicum C, which offers students access to a range of teaching initiatives which they can potentially extend over the entire academic year. The list of options for this year include the following:

Literacy Tutoring Program. Students work as literacy tutors within a classroom at Flora Hill Secondary College.
Numeracy Tutoring Program. Students provide one-on-one tutoring to students in mathematics at Flora Hill Secondary College.
VCE Writing Workshops. Students with strong backgrounds in creative writing conduct writing workshops with VCE students at Catholic College Bendigo.
VCE Oracy Workshops. Based on their experiences in planning and conducting tutorial lessons as part of their Graduate Diploma in Education coursework, students conduct workshops with secondary students preparing for the oral component of their Year 12 English units.

Eaglehawk Focus Group IT Tutoring. Students with strong IT background volunteer their services to conduct evening computer classes for young students and adults at the Eaglehawk Focus Centre, which caters particularly for youngsters who have demonstrated a disenchantment with conventional schooling.

Cultural Institutions Program. Students work over an extended period with the education officers from Bendigo cultural centres, preparing and delivering courses of study to visiting parties of schoolchildren. Participating institutions this year include the Bendigo Art Gallery, the Central Deborah Gold mine, The Discovery Science Centre, the Golden Dragon Chinese Museum and the Bendigo Tourist Centre. This program also entails work with local schools on their perception of students' needs in relation to this extension of the school curriculum.

Mentorship Program. Student teachers with a particular area of interest offer to run a course of study in their area for groups of interested students from Flora Hill Secondary College College.

Adult Literacy. Opportunities to do voluntary literacy work through various agencies in Bendigo.

Primary School Tutoring. Providing individualized literacy support in primary schools.

All these programs represent (a) our clear recognition of the crucial role of guided, developmentally appropriate, school experience in effective teacher preparation, (b) the value of diversity of cooperative programs with schools for developing pre-service teachers' professional competence, and (c) our capacity to enact these collaborative endeavours. We hope we have the opportunity to present and elaborate on the value and benefits to our students of these diverse partnership arrangements.

However, there are various structural and financial constraints to maintaining the goals and achieving the desirable outcomes indicated above. We feel it is important to bring this issue to your attention. These constraints include:

- The need for increased funding support for practicum programs to match increasing teacher payment costs.
- Additional funding support that acknowledges the increased cost of student supervision and assessment in schools in remote rural centres.
- The current comparative financial disadvantage for teacher education staff when their salaries are compared with the salaries of primary and secondary teachers and administrators undertaking comparable duties. This poses challenges for effective recruitment of staff into this sector and effective transitional planning for an ageing tertiary sector workforce.

A range of university-school partnerships is a key to the success we have achieved in (a) strong acceptance of the quality of our graduates by local and international employers, and (b) graduate satisfaction rates with our programs. However, there is now considerable financial pressure on the range and nature of these partnerships. While this submission might have addressed other points, to do so would have distracted from what we perceive is a key platform of successful pre-service teacher education: finding optimum ways to develop university-based content and expertise in professional practice through mutual strategic partnerships with schools.

Vaughan Prain
Phillip Payne
Steve Tobias

School of Education
La Trobe University

References

Committee for the Review of Teaching and Teacher Education, (2003). *Australia's Teachers: Australia's Future, Advancing Innovation, Science, Technology and Mathematics*. Canberra: Department of Education, Science and Training.

Lloyd, D. & Matthews, C. (1999) The Rural Professional Education Program (RPEP) – An Evaluation. Proceedings of the National Rural Education Conference, *Rural Community Partnerships –Education for the 21st Century*, Ballarat.

Ramsey, G. (2000). Quality Matters. Revitalising teaching; Critical times, Critical choices. *Report of the Review of Teacher Education New South Wales*. Sydney: Department of Education and Training.

Savage, W., Taylor, L., Hayman, L., Prain, V., & Rosengren (2004) Effective Orientation Programs for Secondary Pre-Service Teachers through School Partnerships: A Case Study. Paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education Conference, Melbourne, November 29 -December 2, 2004.
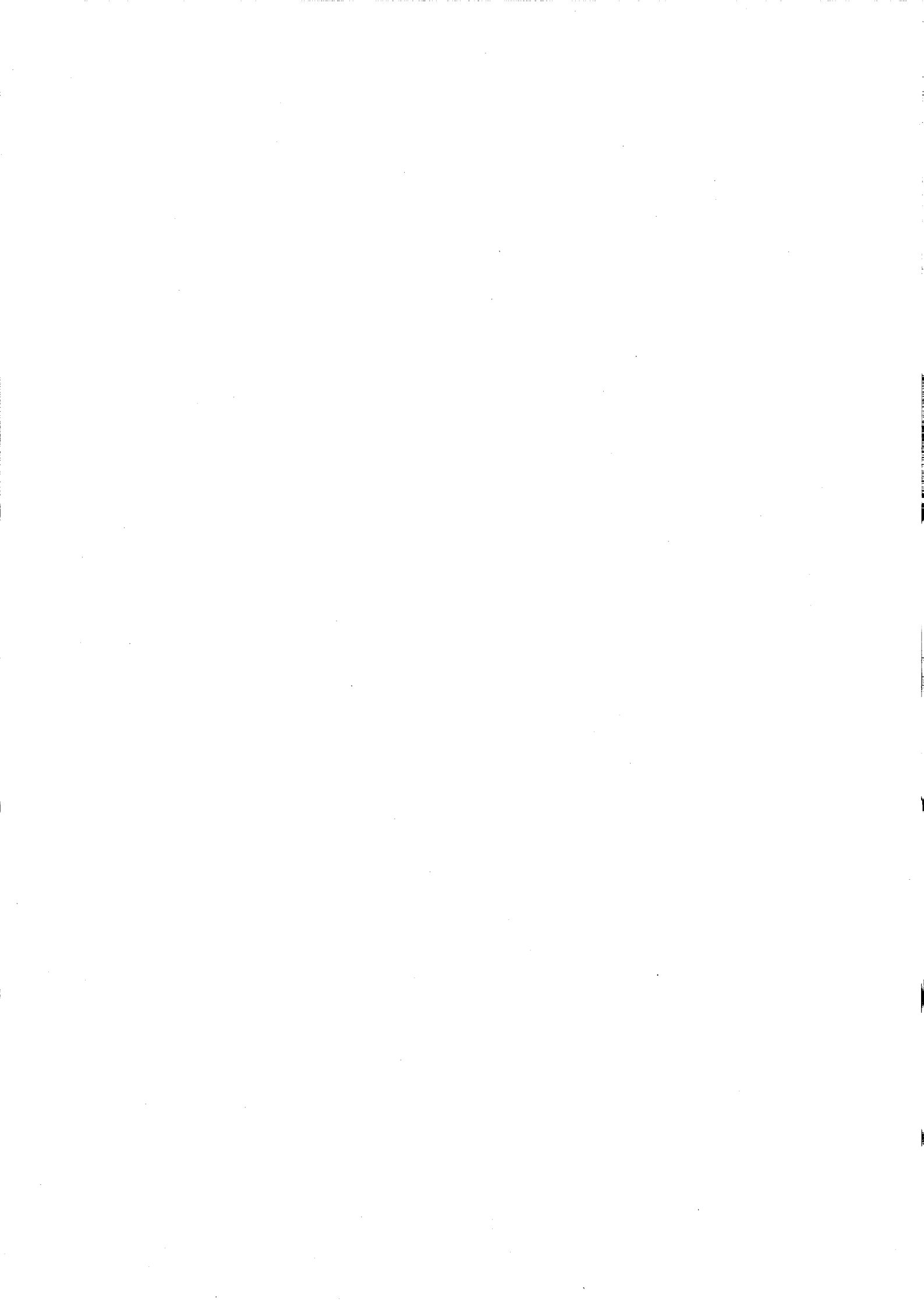
Tobias, S. and Leder. G. (in press) Partnerships in Teacher Education: Are they necessary?, *Mathematics Education Research Journal*.

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY, BENDIGO
SCHEME OF WORK 2005
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

| WEEK | BACHELOR OF EDUCATION | | | DIP. ED | MAJOR DATES |
	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	(SEC)	
Jan 3-7					
10-14					
17-21					
24-28					Australia Day 26th & DE&T Schools Term 1 begins 27th Jan
31 - Feb 4					
Feb 7-11					
14-18					
21-25	O'WEEK				Orientation Week / Dip Ed classes commence Monday 21/2
28 - Mar 4					Commence Semester 1
Mar 7-11					
14-18					Confirmation of Enrolment
21-25					Good Friday 25/3
28 - Apr 1					31/3 Last date for enrolment amendments DE&T Schools Term 1 ends 1/4
Apr 4-8					
11-15					
18-22					DE&T Schools Term 2 begins 18/4 Anniversary Day Procession 2?
25-29					25 Anzac Day / 26-27 April Practicum Workshops / 29-30 Prac Observa
May 2-6					Graduation Ceremonies 5&6 May
9-13					
16-20					
23-27					
31 - Jun 3					End Semester 1 - 3/6
June 6-10					Study Break 6-9/6 Dip Ed Post Prac Debrief Exams 10-30/6
13-17	EXAMS	EXAMS	EXAMS	EXAMS	Queen's B'Day 13/6
20-24	EXAMS	EXAMS	EXAMS	EXAMS	DE&T Schools Term 2 ends 24/6
27 - Jul 1	EXAMS	EXAMS	EXAMS	EXAMS	SEMESTER BREAK
July 4-8					
11-15					DE&T Term 3 begins 11/7
18-22					
25-29					Commence Sem 2, Supp Exams Sem 1 25-29/7,Awards/Prizes Pres 26/7
Aug 1-5					Open Day 7/8
8-12					Confirmation of Enrolment 8-12/8
15-19					Mature Age Information Night 18/8
22-26					Last date for enrolment amendment(HECS census date)26/8 Sem 2 subjs
29 - Sep 2					
Sept 5-9					
12-16					DE&T Schools Term 3 ends 16/9
19-23					
26-30					AVCC Common Week MID SEMESTER BREAK
Oct 3-7					DE&T Schools Term 4 begins 4/10 Bundoora Graduation 7/10
10-14					
17-21					
24-28					End Sem. 2 - 28/10
31 - Nov 4					STUDY BREAK 31/10 - 3/11 EXAMS 4 - 24/11
Nov 7-11		E X A M S			
14-18		E X A M S			
21-25		E X A M S			
28 - Dec 2					
Dec 5-9					Exam Results published 9/12
12-16					Supp Exams Sem.2 13-16/12 Ac Prog/Show C
19-23					DE&T Schools Term 4 ends 21/12
26-30					

VACATION   PRACTICUM   STUDY BREAK   SCH TERM HOLS

VICTORIAN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION & TRAINING TERM DATES

TERM 1: 27/1/2005 - 1/4/2005   TERM 2: 18/4/2005 - 24/6/2005
TERM 3: 11/7/2005 - 16/9/2005   TERM 4: 3/10/2005 - 21/12/2005

Revised   15/12/04

School of Educational Studies

April 19, 2005

Janet Holmes,
Inquiry Secretary
Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Ms Holmes,

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to this inquiry. As part of this submission I have attached documents prepared for the Parliament of Victoria Inquiry into Pre-service Teacher Training, together with Handbooks from this year's courses.

Since the report for the Victorian inquiry was written there have been some changes in our Faculty that are in line with the Key Recommendations listed on page 3 of the report. These are:

Recommendation 1:

The number of available Commonwealth Supported Places has increased. For 2005 on the Bundoora Campus we have the equivalent of approximately 330 full time students in Dip. Ed. programs.

Recommendation 3:

Now that we can offer local fee-paying places, enrolments on all campuses have increased. In addition we have been able to accept many applicants who would otherwise have missed out. The demand has been strong and includes a new cohort of secondary trainees in Mildura, instigated with the support of the schools in that region, and a mid-year intake for the Graduate Diploma of Education (Primary) on the Bundoora campus.

In addition, La Trobe University has now created a **Faculty of Education** and the School of Educational Studies is part of this faculty. This move has created many opportunities for us to receive increased support and facilities for the courses, including additional staff with recent professional practice experience and a 40-seat computer laboratory with state-of-the-art equipment and materials.

We would be delighted to be included among the educational institutions that you visit and to provide you with access to members of the current cohort of students. Students are on teaching rounds or vacation between May 9 - May 27, June 27 – July 15, and August 29 – September 30.

In addition to the enclosed report we would like to make the following comments in relation to some of the specific items your Inquiry seeks to examine.

1.   Student selection: As mentioned in the attached report (p 5-6) we are well disposed to moving from a strict adherence to the use of academic grade point averages as a means of selecting students and would be keen to consider other professional and personal experience. However, as we have previously engaged in interviewing applicants we know how labour and cost intensive this process is. A further consideration of the difficulties inherent in selection processes lies in the difficulty in validating decisions and meeting any challenges that may arise. As an alternative to selection interviews we counsel students during the course and assist them in determining whether or not this is the profession they wish to enter.

2.   The students in our Diploma of Education programs are generally of a high quality and bring with them a range of life experience that contributes to their work as teachers.

3.   We have a low attrition rate and find that most students are keen to complete the course and do well. Those who do withdraw usually do so after their first school placement when the realities of teaching often lead them to conclude it is not the job they wish to pursue. Occasionally students withdraw for personal reasons beyond our control.

4.   In relation to rewarding education faculty members we note salaries of teacher educators have not kept pace with those of teachers. To enter teacher education an experienced teacher accepts a drop in pay even though he or she is required to have additional qualifications to doctoral level.

5.   Staff members have been engaged in meetings regarding the recent move towards the Victorian Government Essential Learning Standards and are using this as a springboard for constant review and revision of the courses. It must be noted that the current Victorian Department of Education and Training Application Procedures for Research in Victorian Government Schools are likely to impede our continuing efforts to undertake research in this area.

6.   The School of Educational Studies has been able to develop two 'double degree' courses for students in Arts and Science.

7.   Our courses focus on developing knowledgeable teachers of literacy and numeracy, especially in the primary levels. Vocational courses are catered for in the Graduate Diploma in Technology. In all programs the issue of effective classroom management is a critical component and several staff members have considerable expertise in this area. As noted above, we are well resourced in the area of information technology and in all courses students are expected to become proficient in this area at a personal level, as well as being able to apply this technology in their teaching. Issues of bullying and disruptive students and dysfunctional families are and catering for the needs of children with special needs and disabilities are also part of the course, although we do not claim to produce specialists in these areas. In some cases students come to us with a background of work in areas such as disability, social work

and mediation. We assist successful students in becoming accredited and work closely with Victorian Institute of Education to ensure that we meet and maintain the mandated standards. Preparation for dealing with senior staff, fellow teachers, school boards, education authorities, parents, community groups and other related government departments, is covered in the course. As the majority of our students are mature age graduates they come with considerable expertise in the field of interpersonal relationships. The most difficult area for them is when their supervising teacher acts from a set of standards that conflict with the student's expectations of professional conduct. This issue is relevant to the next point.

8.   In terms of the role and input of schools and their staff to the preparation of trainee teachers we note that it is increasingly difficult to get supervisors to accept student teachers, especially in secondary schools. We also have little control of the quality of supervisors who are appointed and there is no provision for the teachers to develop their supervisory schools.
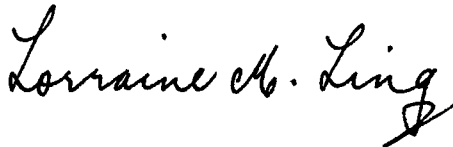
9.   To overcome some of the difficulties arising from the split between primary and secondary education training we arrange for primary and secondary students to attend lectures and tutorials together, whenever possible. In addition we offer the p-12 course at the Albury-Wodonga campus. The Graduate Diploma (Secondary) to be offered on the Mildura campus is working closely with schools and the Sunraysia Mallee Innovation and Excellence staff to focus on the middle years concept.

10.   Members of our staff are continually engaged in providing professional development in schools and resourcing ongoing professional learning for teachers in the workforce. This leads some to take up additional post-graduate courses leading to masters and doctorates in education.
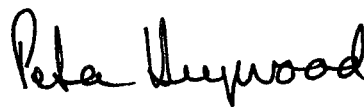
11.   Although we have fared better this year than ever before, there is a continuous shortage of funding for teacher education and the money supplied by Government to the University does not necessarily come down to the Education Faculty.

We thank you for this opportunity to provide information and looking forward to talking with you in more detail.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Lorraine Ling
Interim Dean
Faculty of Education

Dr Peta Heywood
Pre-service Course Coordinator
School of Educational Studies

LA TROBE
UNIVERSITY

School of Educational Studies

Submission to the Parliament of Victoria Inquiry into Pre-service Teacher Training

In this document issues bound to *part a* and *part b* of the Education and Training Committee's terms of reference (TOR), as contained in correspondence K. Ellingford / M. Osborne of 23 February 2004, are addressed.

To contextualise the discussion the summarised recommendations of the School of Educational Studies (SES) will be presented, Part 2 contains representative submissions from course convenors (specific to individual programs). Issues relevant to SES post-graduate pre-service course offerings at metropolitan and regional campuses, inclusive of offerings at Bundoora, Shepparton and Albury-Wodonga will be addressed. This does not include undergraduate offerings from the School of Education located at La Trobe University's Bendigo campus.

The School in brief

The School of Educational Studies (SES), located in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, provides a wide range of graduate and higher degree programs in education. Pre-service teacher education courses have been integral to the offerings in education since the inception of La Trobe University in 1967. Pre-Service teacher education programs remain at the core of the SES range of courses. These pre-service programs have been developed through ongoing cooperation and consultation with schools, VIT and relevant elements of the Department of Education and Training. There are currently over 350 students engaged annually in graduate pre-service teacher education. This number is currently limited by the number of government funded (HECS) places allocated to the school.

The aim of SES pre-service programs is to equip innovative, articulate and well informed students for their chosen profession as School Teachers. In particular, the courses seek to service the specific needs of schools in Victoria whilst maintaining a forward view to continuous improvement and innovation.

Scope of SES pre-service programs

The scope of SES pre-service teacher education programs includes:

Graduate Diploma in Education (Primary)   *(Bundoora and Shepparton campuses)*
Graduate Diploma in Education (Secondary)   *(Bundoora campus)*
Graduate Diploma in Education (P-12)   *(Albury-Wodonga campus)*
Graduate Diploma of Technology Education   *(Bundoora, Albury-Wodonga, Mildura campuses)*
Graduate Diploma of Vocational Education & Training*   *(Bundoora, Albury-Wodonga, Mildura & Shepparton campuses) *Not school-based*

La Trobe University Double degree programs are also offered:

Bachelor of Arts / Bachelor of Arts Education
Bachelor of Science / Bachelor of Science Education

Key recommendations and summary:

In dealing with the committee's terms of reference, there are a number of key issues tied to the formulation of this submission. The following information deals with both parts a. and b. of the Education and Training Committees TOR as interdependent topics and, therefore, a single set of recommendations and discussion.

The range and scope of La Trobe University pre-service teacher education programs is not only appropriate to the current needs but also responsive to the emergent needs of the teaching profession in the 21st century. Whilst continuous renewal and improvement occur, the school remains aware of the need to maintain these strategies as central to good practice. Limitations to the scope for the implementation of innovative practice are largely determined by external funding models and resource support for this important task.

A number of consistent features and limitations of current pre-service teacher education courses can be recognised across the SES pre-service offerings. These features and limitations reflect not only what is progressing well for the perceived needs of future schooling, but also reflect inhibitors to current and future best practice.

Features salient to the scope and purpose of the TOR are that SES courses have:

1. Established professional networks and ongoing consultative relationships with schools and principals, for all pre-service programs;

2. Innovative and flexible programs that promote access for mature-age students seeking career-transition;

3. Programs for renewal and upgrading of extant (but potentially dormant) professional knowledge and skills;

4. High proportions of mature-aged students;

5. High demand for graduates, based on quality not simply availability;

6. Strong focus on a balanced theory-practice approach, maintaining commitment to both well informed pedagogical practice and ongoing research;

7. A pervasive practice of encouraging and modelling student-centred learning;

8. A Technology Education specialisation that attracts professional practitioners from industry and enterprise in both the Technology KLA and VET strands;

9. An enviable reputation locally, nationally and internationally – this can be seen in the increased number of international students being accommodated in programs, consequently reflecting high-quality outcomes expected from students trained for the Victorian schools sector;

10. Strong connections to school-based projects and school-based method/content delivery (predominant in specialist programs); and,

11. Content / methods balance based on the current and predicted emergent needs of schools and the wider community.

Limitations of current practice (per TOR) in SES programs:

1. Increasing difficulty in securing practicum placements (2003 statistics reflect a close to 5:1 refusal:placement ratio in the Secondary Dip Ed – the 2004 figure is likely to be an increase).

2. Absence of funded places in Technology Education programs has impaired the capacity to attract a wider pool of applicants, especially those from technical trades and professions targeted in recent government statements.

3. Limited scope of resources to provide ICT training to current account for school needs – making this discipline area responsive, but often reactive.

4. Research opportunities (as professional development) for teacher-educators are severely limited by the high teaching and coordination loads required by full-time staff.

5. Perceptions of pressure for increased teaching outputs; based on numbers of students taught versus models of pedagogical best-practice for the classroom.

Key Recommendations

1. Increase the number of HECS funded places;

2. Substantially increase resources for student teacher placements;

3. Permit inclusion of local fee-paying places in pre-service programs;

4. In one-year programs, increase funding to schools from payment for 45/60 days for school experience and fieldwork to 60/60 days.

5. Promote and fund opportunities for professional development (within schools) for teacher educators;

6. Promote and support more accessible research opportunities for teacher educators;

7. Establish an ongoing model and procedures for informing universities of trends in teacher attrition and areas of subject growth and demand;

8. Develop a model of selection that gives greater visibility of professional experience and qualifications, beyond current first-degree based criteria.

9. Specific additional funded places quarantined for mature-age professionals;

10. Fund collaborative mentoring programs between universities and schools;

11. Provide scholarship opportunities for mature-age students to assist in career transition;

12. See attached submissions for further recommendations attached to specialist courses – Technology Education (including vocational education) and P-12 programs.

Discussion

The School of Educational Studies is committed to the ongoing development of pre-service teacher education as a critical function in improving both the range and quality of graduate teachers in Victoria. The 'student experience' during their training is central to their view of teaching as professional work and we strive to make that experience both rewarding and challenging, particularly as the students enter the profession after an intensive graduate program. However, the personal and professional investment of staff in these activities could now be considered at saturation point. Supportive strategies such as access to fee-paying options for local students would also expand the capability of universities to further commit to innovative professional practice. Without increased access to additional resources, funding and professional development opportunities it is difficult to maintain the momentum of practice and research required for high quality programs that are responsive to the needs of future schooling in the 21st century.

The ongoing issue of the cost and frustration of student teacher placements is of paramount concern to the SES. It is the most valuable learning experience within a teacher education program, yet it is the most difficult and complex of all subjects to administer. Costs to both universities and schools act as a disincentive for both elements to engage in practicum placements, yet they remain central to quality teacher education and to registration requirements for the VIT. The SES understands that it is not alone on this issue, with the evidence suggesting that all Victorian universities involved with pre-service teacher training are suffering similar fates. The management of teaching practica are being handled in differing ways at different institutions. The SES maintains a strong commitment to providing as much in-school teaching practice as possible, including continuing to visit students on rounds as a necessary part of student-teacher development. School visits by SES staff are also paramount to the development and maintenance of the important relationships between schools and universities, however again current government funding does not cover this cost attached to practicum and the burden is largely born by the personal and professional commitment of university teaching staff and school based supervisors.

In exploring this point further against the TOR, those experienced mature-age professionals we are collectively trying to continue to attract to teaching are again struck by the lack of government funding in support of this important part of their sea-change to teaching. Another point to consider is that with student-teacher placements viewed as increasingly difficult to secure and under-resourced at both the school and university levels, yet regarded (rightly or wrongly) as the most important dimension of their teacher training, our mature-age professionals are unlikely to report favourably to peers and colleagues considering a similar path. Importantly, it is the discussion of these teaching-as-work issues that often permeate feedback sessions and debriefings on teaching practice with mature-age students from industry and enterprise.

Currently, the SES's ongoing development for programs reaching into the needs for training teachers in the need of future schooling include several strategies for both growth and renewal. This is evident in the expansion of the full-time SES teaching base to engage a number of 'new' staff drawn from recent doctoral graduates in education with extensive experience in a wide range of teaching and learning contexts beyond the usual reach of academics based solely in university settings. This range of 'new' experience includes schools, VET sector, industry and enterprise, ensuring that programs are infused with current and emergent theoretical perspectives, further developing innovative practice.

The engagement of expert sessional staff sourced from schools and departments such as the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) further demonstrates a resolve to renew and inform the practice of teacher education. Again, the capacity to fund the maintenance of these important links from with stretched resource allocations is of increasing concern. To this end it is necessary to utilise funding models that incorporate expenditure on the professional development of university staff within both the schools and industry contexts. There is little room in current operating budgets to achieve the necessary renewal and updating of knowledge and skills of teacher educators.

As we continue to move into the 21st century, there must be room in operating budgets for ongoing research tied to professional practice. Importantly, research serves as a key means to inform and develop practice. However, it is also a measurable component of academic staff profiles for teacher educators, yet funding is so limited it restricts research opportunities for full-time staff to a point where it is no longer tenable to be professionally invested in research beyond the bare requirements of performance reviews. Arguably this is but one of the risks of reduced funding that may see the work of teacher-educators develop into an occupational mode of employment rather than as a committed professional practice.

Likewise in teaching centred subjects it is increasingly common to be teaching teachers to interact in the 1:25 classroom through a 1:200+ model of practice (ie. mass lectures). It is a student centred practice for us and for them. However, the management of teaching load is increasingly difficult without an increase in resource allocations and high volume lecture formats are utilised to strike some form of balance – regardless of their pedagogical limitations. Prior to engaging in teaching rounds this conceptual distance can be reduced by strategies such as engaging students with environmental parameters similar to those in schools to help contextualise their learning. This point is also relevant to addressing the issue of classroom management in pre-service programs. For mature-age students the classroom management and discipline strategies of the early 21st century are arguably quite detached from those experienced in their own school years or professional life. Therefore, the learning attached to this conceptual transition should be as personal and engaging as possible, again advocating for classes and environments similar to those in which they will ultimately engage in the practice of teaching.

Further to the needs of mature-age entrants to the profession, those who are fee-paying students are quick to share with us the frustrations of trying to find 'value for money' in their classes when presented with lecture format lessons and limited tutorial support. That said, the SES has an enviable reputation for personalised and contextualised teaching, however this connects with the professional commitment of teaching staff rather than to appropriately funded programs. These issues relate closely to the premise of attracting mature-age entrants from other professions as it does little to instil confidence in the practice of teaching as a professional activity – one that should be adequately resourced by governments espousing commitment to the needs of teaching and learning in the 21st century.

Based on the recent experiences of SES staff, shortages in Secondary School discipline areas such as Maths and Science also need to be balanced with the selection of mature-age students who are well suited to teaching. Eligibility and selection criteria for pre-service courses need to be carefully reviewed to assist in recruiting the most appropriate mature-age professionals to teaching. Change and challenges to professional identity, interpersonal skills (especially working with children and adolescents) and capacity to communicate well are central to this issue. Again, with the overwhelming numbers of highly qualified and competitive applicants for teaching courses placed against the limited number of funded places reduces selection to a largely administrative process. For example of the almost 1200 suitably qualified applicants for Primary teaching in 2004 approximately 5% were able to take up funded places and (due

to volume) the initial selections were made based on VTAC screening of applications, potentially excluding a great number of excellent candidates who simply did not make the Grade Point Average (GPA) formula applied by the VTAC system. The number of high-quality people with professional and vocational credentials that are immediately excluded from selection through this "first degree" system remains unknown. To continue to attract high-quality mature-age professionals we need this selection filter (largely based on post-training registration requirements) to be comprehensively reviewed or we will continue to miss a large proportion of them in the selection process. One strategy may be to quarantine a number of funded places for these applicants. They could be recognised through a selection filter on the VTAC system attached to an appropriate range of professional and vocational qualifications.

The issue of student selection for the needs of future schooling also extends into method areas of Secondary programs. For example, anecdotal evidence suggests an increasing need for teachers in the areas of Media Studies, Psychology and Drama. These areas are currently being served through a reactive model based on a need to be responsive to school and community needs. A more direct, informed and pre-emptive method of communicating emerging needs of schools would assist the SES in program development, inclusive of staffing, placement and budgeting issues. This extends to meeting the needs of existing teachers in the implementation of initiatives such as VCAL, including access to professional development in preparation for personal development and communication aspects of these programs for secondary students as young adults.

Finally on the issue of professional development, pre-service programs must provide foundations for long-term growth and enhancement of the teacher knowledge base. There needs to be strategies and opportunities that encourage teachers to continue their development by upgrading their skills through collaborative programs with universities; continually renewing the nexus of teaching-learning and theory-practice between schools and universities.

The following section gives an overview of intent and direction of SES graduate diploma courses for Primary and Secondary teachers. To complete the brief, two submissions from more specialised programs (Technology Education and P-12) are attached, as Part 2, that deal with issues connected to the scope of the TOR but with course specific recommendations.

SES Graduate Diploma of Education programs (Primary and Secondary) in brief
(please see attached course handbooks for detailed course structure and subject outlines)

The current Graduate Diploma of Education (Primary) and Graduate Diploma of Education (Secondary) offered within the SES are intensive one-year graduate programs that provide pre-service teacher training to suitably qualified candidates. These candidates are generally qualified by a minimum of a first degree (four year) with a requisite balance of major and minor studies – as required for VIT registration. Beyond this selection limitation the program has a number of features that help prepare teachers for the needs of future schooling.

One of the key features of the program is that it is usually conducted over a single academic year. This serves as a key feature in that it offers the opportunity for students to move into their professional roles as teachers in the most timely way possible, responding to the ongoing urgent demand to renew and refresh the teaching profession. Juxtaposed with this timeliness is the engagement of both university based academics and school based practitioners in the delivery of the program. Students are exposed to a wide variety of contemporary practices and are constantly engaged with literature and policy regarding emergent trends in education. In particular, focus is brought to the needs of Victoria's school systems as they seek to inform the practice of Primary and Secondary education through improved skills and knowledge for teachers in the 21st century.

Beyond the core subject offerings supporting the pedagogy of essential learnings and specialist method areas there are also practice based subjects addressing the needs of mature and / or second career learners. These subjects include studies of learning technologies, the development of ICT skills, technology studies in the early and middle years, and development of a philosophy of education which supports renewable, forward looking educational practice. The programs engage students with deep-learning and holistic approaches to understanding and communicating essential learning to their own students as an essential component of professional practice.

Students engage with an appropriate mix of theory and practice, wherever possible students are exposed to models of best practice in classroom teaching. This is seen to be a significant point of difference for SES programs in comparison to other institutions, where possible SES programs focus on engaging students in realistic, personalised, student focussed activities. Another feature of the SES profile is the diversity of cultural influences (from both local and international students) brought into shaping a more globally aware and culturally sensitive teaching population for the 21st century needs of Victorian schools and the community.

Conclusion

The preceding recommendations and discussion from the School of Educational Studies (SES) have been presented as a representative submission from course convenors and lecturers working inside post-graduate pre-service programs at metropolitan and regional campuses, and are shaped in light of the TOR for the parliamentary inquiry. Discussion has focussed on a number of fundamental issues tied to the needs of future schooling that are located very much in the here-and-now of current practice. Interrelated recommendations in this submission illuminate a complex world of work that should not be reduced to isolated models of teacher preparation, we should be encouraging a broader view of longitudinal models of teacher development that renew and improve the quality and status of teaching as highly-skilled work. The implicit recommendations also require action. The Teaching community itself should enhance its role in the development of teachers at all levels, to further legitimise teaching as professional practice beyond an occupational mode of employment, and consequently consolidate the position of teaching as a *Profession*.

The School for Educational Studies extends an invitation to the Education and Training Committee to visit and discuss any issues raised in or from this submission.

Dr. Damon N. Cartledge
Coordinator – Pre-service Teacher Education
School of Educational Studies
La Trobe University

N.B.   Additional material and comment from the Head of the School of Educational Studies follows to complete Part 1 of the SES submission. Part 2 of the submission contains specialist course submissions. Part 3 consists of individual course handbooks.

Head of School comments

The following material from Head of the SES, Associate Professor Lorraine Ling, is provided as amplification and extension of statements and recommendations in the preceding submission:

Key Recommendations

In the conduct of in-school teaching practica, there are two key alternative recommendations that warrant careful consideration.

Firstly, that as an alternative to providing more resources to the process we could abolish payment for supervision and integrate this as a routine responsibility for teachers to renew and develop their own professional ranks.

Secondly, in line with the previous alternate recommendation, provide no payment to schools for supervision, as is the case in most other professions and countries of the world

Practicum placements

In regard to the issue of the administration and conduct of practicum placements (see page 4). An agreement between universities used to occur, under the auspices of the Council for Practicum in Teacher Education, to use specific schools which would be regarded as "first call" for particular universities may again be required.

Schools are currently being inundated with requests for placements by multiple universities, thus creating difficulties for both schools and universities due to a lack of a clear strategy for allocating specific schools to specific universities.

The focus upon school-based practica may also reflect an over-emphasis upon the practical issues of teacher education courses. Care and caution are needed to ensure that the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of practice are explicit and integrated with all elements of practical teaching experience.

Professional Development

In considering collaborative approaches to professional development, again some of the strategies which were prevalent previously in teacher education, such as exchanges between school-based teaching staff and university teacher educators, may be worth serious re-consideration.

In terms of framing long-term strategies for professional development (p.6) there appears to have been a missed opportunity for the Victorian Institute of Teaching. The VIT has missed the chance in its establishment phase to make specified periods of professional development mandatory for teachers if they are to be eligible for continued registration. Few professions (which are defined as such) do not require members to fulfil specific requirements for mandatory professional development and the teaching profession should be no exception to this.

University teaching models

To expand the comments regarding models of university based teaching (p.5), it is important to note that whilst we may advocate particular practices and approaches to classroom teaching in a scholarly context, in terms of teaching graduates who are adults, methods such as lectures have a defensible and legitimate place for which continual apologies need not be made. One must also guard against a narrow construal of what can actually be done in a lecture situation in addition to 'transmission'.

School-Based internships

On the issue of extended school-based practicum experience (or similar extended in-school training / internships), there is a risk that where students undertake extensive periods of school-based experience, without the university-based theoretically and reflectively oriented approaches, they will become uncritically enculturated into the existing teacher culture, thus perpetuating (rather than rendering as problematic) the status quo of teachers and teaching.

Conclusion

There is a view amongst staff of the SES that all primary and secondary teacher training should be post-graduate, hence ensuring that teachers do not simply progress from schooling into another course whose central focus is education and schooling. A discipline based first degree (and recognised equivalents) allows students to develop higher-order thinking skills as well as a specific ability to engage with various modes of inquiry. A minimum requirement for all primary and secondary teacher training (except that which involves formally structured education and training, e.g. apprenticeships and trade qualifications) should be a basic 3 year degree (minimum) and a one year graduate diploma. However, inline with overseas standards 4 years of training could be regarded as less than fully qualifying a graduate. A further fifth year qualification (e.g. a Master of Teaching) would seem to be an appropriate level at which to regard a teacher as 'fully qualified' and would bring Australia in to line with other countries where a Master's degree is considered the norm for teachers who are able to move unhindered through the career structure. It may also assist in raising the status of teachers within the community.

Associate Professor Lorraine Ling
Head
School of Educational Studies
La Trobe University

Submission Group

This submission has been informed by focus groups and contributions from the following course convenors and coordinators in the School of Educational Studies at La Trobe University:

Associate Professor Lorraine Ling – Head of School

Associate Professor Bernie Neville – Associate Professor (Education)

> *Course Convenor:*   *Graduate Diploma in Education (Secondary)*

Dr Damon Cartledge – Senior Lecturer

> *Coordinator:*   *Pre-Service Teacher Education programs*
> *Course Convenor:*   *Graduate Diploma of Technology Education*

Dr Howard Nicholas – Senior Lecturer

> *Subject Coordinator:*   *LOTE Methods*

Ms Christine Bottrell – Lecturer (Albury-Wodonga)

> *Course Convenor:*   *Graduate Diploma in Education (P-12)*

Dr Peta Heywood - Lecturer

> *Course Convenor:*   *Graduate Diploma in Education (Primary)*

Mr Kim Keamy – Lecturer (Campus Head – Albury-Wodonga)

> *Coordinator:*   *Regional programs*
> *Course Convenor:*   *Graduate Diploma of Technology Education (Albury-Wodonga)*

Contact details:

Head of School

Associate Professor Lorraine Ling
(03) 9479 1953
l.ling@latrobe.edu.au

Coordinator of Pre-Service Teacher Education programs

Dr Damon Cartledge
(03) 9479 2288
d.cartledge@latrobe.edu.au

Part 2: Specialist Courses - Convenor submissions:

Technology Education
Dr Damon Cartledge

"We're very short of technology teachers but technology courses have virtually disappeared from the face of the Earth in Australia's universities"

Ted Brierley, President - Australian Secondary Principals Association (The Age -13 March 2003).

In the specialist area of Technology Education, the issue of meeting immediate needs and the needs of future teaching in future teaching contexts, connects well to *part b* of the TOR. Therefore this section of the submission will reflect on continued development and enhancement of current practice at La Trobe University, through a course we consider both supportive and innovative in pre-service teacher education for technology teachers, and one which was developed in conjunction with the Department of Education and Training in response to a number of principals' requests to provide a teaching accreditation to instructors who were already employed in their schools.

La Trobe University currently offers a unique Graduate Diploma of Technology Education (GDTE). The GDTE is a two-year program that attracts registration with the VIT (currently for routine accreditation review). This program provides pathways for appropriately qualified and experienced practitioners from industry and enterprise to train as technology teachers for secondary schools. It is currently the only course of its type in Victoria specifically designed for second career / mature-aged industry practitioners as a graduate/pre-service program. The course has grown in popularity and demand, to date no advertising has been required to fill the available places in the course and it also attracts an annual waiting list.

The demand for graduates from this program is continuous and school principals are overwhelmingly supportive of this type of teacher profile. Schools are actively courting GDTE graduates and students, primarily because these teachers are bringing an unprecedented combination of real-world industry experience and informed professional educational practice into their schools and classrooms. These teachers are encouraged to continually evaluate the potential and emergent needs of industry / enterprise alongside the needs of students embarking on the years of secondary education where many of them will be making critical work-life-study choices. In light of this student position, GDTE student-teachers are trained to investigate and evaluate the knowledge and skill requirements of students to be equipped for a way forward to the future not as a mirror to past practice.

Key issues being addressed in this specialist area include:

- Innovation in design and technology,
- Developing more integrated approaches between Technology / Science education,
- Occupational Health & Safety in Technology education programs
- Meaningful reengagement and development of disaffected learners,
- Literacy development in technology and vocational programs,
- Development of innovative design and systems initiatives (at industry standard),
- Cross-curricular programs for VCE, VET in Schools, VCAL,
- Reinventing 'Excellence' as a whole of curriculum outcome,
- Cooperative, collaborative and realistic resourcing (equipment/materials),
- The role of the 7-10 technology curriculum toward PCET/University options,
- Developing professional industry links, partnerships and pathways.

The preceding list is not exhaustive but does illustrate the types of concerns being worked through.

Arrangements for mature-age entrants to the GDTE program have been well considered and are continually being refined. The accessibility of the program is central to its success. Classes are delivered primarily in intensive mode, with students attending a range of vacation schools, weekend lectures / workshops, evening classes and online resources. There are also a variety of induction and support programs integrated throughout the course to ensure that the needs of adult learners (more specifically mature-age learners returning to study) are met. These support mechanisms include out-of-hours contact strategies, academic writing support, staged and sequenced assessment practices, and flexible practicum schedules. These strategies combined, permit a level of flexibility and access that attracts high quality applicants as they are able to move incrementally from their practitioner world of work into the profession of teaching. This strategy is considered vital in order to continue attract high quality candidates to teaching as they are often moving away from long-term (if not also lucrative) employment or business ventures.

Further to the issue of attracting appropriate candidates to the profession, more flexibility could be entertained by VIT as the pre-service accreditation agency as to the practicum requirements of these GDTE industry based practitioners. Current accreditation sees that the requirement for 82 days of supervised teaching broken into four practica of 22, 20, 20 and 20 days duration respectively, this represents an additional 22 days of in-school practice above the requirement for a generalist Graduate Diploma of Education – Secondary (EDGES). The rationale provided by VIT for this additional practicum requirement (above that for the contemporary Grad Dip Ed - Secondary) rests on their calculation of the duration of the GDTE as spread over two years, in contrast to the one year EDHES program. As no pedagogical rationale has been established, it is the view of the SES that this presents yet another disincentive to suitably qualified and experienced mature-age candidates.

The range of occupations and pathways by which applicants are deemed to be qualified is an area of disquiet. One glaring omission is in the instance of prospective students who have, over a working lifetime of learning-on-the job supplemented by short-course training, become competent office administrators and information and communications technology specialists—highly desirable people to have teaching ICT in VET in VCE programs. Yet, because they do not always have a recognised qualification, and because a "mainstream" pathway to obtaining an information and communications technology qualification exists (that is, via university courses), these potential students are considered ineligible for entry into the GDTE.

In the post-qualification context it is often teacher starting salaries that draw cause for concern amongst students; as many are effectively taking a large downturn in earning capacity to engage with the profession of teaching. Whilst for most GDTE students the lure of a teaching career is certainly not based on the salary scales (there are more intrinsic motivations), we must remain mindful of the professional and personal profiles of these experienced practitioners. These are not young adults embarking on a first career post-university, they are established and experienced practitioners (and in many cases – business people) with many years of real-world experience that has been enhanced by a rigorous academic program of teacher preparation. It is critical that teaching offers these GDTE students a step up and not a step back, this is increasing in importance as we seek to attract more students from design and engineering backgrounds who often have a combination of university qualifications and vocational / industry experience and potentially even higher earning capacities in industry and enterprise. If we hope to grow and nurture the development of a knowledge-based economy,

12

replete with competent future designers, engineers, technologists and associated tradespeople in support of areas such as infrastructure for design and manufacture, we need to continue to grow and enhance programs such as the GDTE.

In preparation for the future needs of teaching, the GDTE program is actively engaging student-teachers across both the generalist 7-10 technology curriculum (IAW CSF II) and also their individual industry specialisations. Many of these teacher specialisations are key to school strategies for involvement in School Based New Apprenticeships (SBNA), VET in Schools and VCAL programs – they are also often central to the support of Design and Systems areas of VCE programs. This offers GDTE graduates a wide range of opportunities across the secondary school sector, however it likewise presents an almost overwhelming range of contexts and applications to which the GDTE students' vocational expertise can be applied.

Therefore, within the technology context there remains the need for well informed, generic, technology savvy teaching strategies that will provide graduates with a wider range of transferable skills that will allow them to keep pace with the ever-changing dictates of policy and legislative requirements (especially in areas underpinned and aligned with industry practice – OH&S for example).

The central tenet of the course is to prepare teachers for a longitudinal role as educators that have the skills and strategies required to engage with the profession as a long term career choice. This premise can only hold true if schools are likewise initiating strategies for the long term development of the technology area, including appropriate cooperative and collaborative links across all sectors in the schools community and also meaningful links with industry.

Links with industry should look beyond simplistic and reactive strategies to meet labour-force requirements. School-based strategies should reach into new ways of thinking about the role of education and the knowledge/skill nexus in growth areas of technology such as design and systems development. That said, we should not lose sight of the valuable role of technology education on the development of vocational skills, in particular the impact of this vocational element on social-infrastructure in regional areas – especially those outside the usual reach of universities.

Not every design student will pursue technology studies into a higher education context, even those that do return to study may do so after an extended vocational engagement with industry; returning with a wider range of practical real-world experience. Therefore, we should prepare our teachers for this type of student outcome as a part of their pre-service teacher education; striking a balance between pursuing excellence and perpetuating unrealistic myths.

These views are commensurate with the recommendations of the recent report *Learning to Work* (March 2004) from the federal parliamentary inquiry into vocational education in schools. Many of the recommendations for pre-service training and professional development form part of the GDTE program offerings, including those which extend into the more general EDGES course profile.

Recent press-releases by the Minister for Education Services (Ms Jacinta Allan) and the Minster for Education and Training (Ms Lynne Kosky) outline initiatives for mentoring programs to attract more engineers, IT experts, scientists, (amongst other professions) into schools. These programs are espoused to permit teachers to also undertake a teaching qualification whilst working in the profession part-time. We argue that as these "trainees" would be presumably bound to a single school they will develop a dangerously narrow perspective on the profession of teaching and the needs of learners. In fact, we already have evidence of the potential for this to happen, such as has been the case of school-based instructors enrolled in the GDTE—whilst keen to experience different ways of teaching in schools other than their own, their principals are generally unwilling to release them to do this because they do not have the necessary funding to cover the instructor's "absence". Are there strategies that will permit a wider range of pre-service teaching experience? There are already difficulties in finding suitable supervised practicum placements for technology teachers; increased funding in support of enhancing the reach of established and successful practicum placements, and the funding to enable instructors already working within schools to be replaced while they undertake their teaching experience in settings different to their own school, would be a more appropriate approach.

The mentor/part-time model has potential to increase separation rates of the teacher mentors (particularly those close to retirement or already overburdened and under-resourced) during the highly dependent phase of pre-service teacher training – whilst highly capable and experienced educators, they are generally not immersed or invested in the wider field of teacher education. This is particularly important in how the universities are able critically observe the machinations of schools and school-based teaching in light of contemporary research; looking at future directions of school-based education aside from (but constantly aware of) routine pressures of school-based practice. In pursuing the mentor/ part-time model the Education sector may also be seen to be reinventing its past, similar programs were on offer throughout the 1960's-1980's albeit with varying degrees of success. The effect of the economic rationalisation of 'technical' education during the 1990's is now apparent in the critical skill shortages in technology education. The mentoring model is far more appropriate as a professional development and support mechanism for graduate teachers in first appointments than as pre-service /in-service preparatory strategy.

In relation to the future requirements of these courses, the high quality outcomes can only continue if there are opportunities for growth and development of this pre-service area, including funded places accessible apart from the narrow academic-rationalist perspective of first degree requirement for funded pre-service places in teacher education programs. An appropriate and equitable formula could be devised to take account of accredited vocational and recognised professional (non-university) qualifications and experience. Victoria's schools are missing out on too many mature, experienced and well qualified applicants as they are not gaining access to funded university places, and for many of them this exclusion is based entirely on the absence of a first degree.

Those students who are making the significant personal and financial contribution to access specialist programs such as the GDTE are committed to preparing young Victorians for future opportunities in an increasingly complex and ever-changing world of work; a world that these industry practitioners have currency in and first hand experience.

14

Recommendations for Technology Education

1. Funded places be made available alongside fee-based models;

2. State funded scholarship places be reintroduced and expanded;

3. More resources for connecting curriculum areas; particularly design, sciences and technology;

4. Salary scales and increments for industry-experienced technology teachers be reviewed;

5. In recognition of the leadership positions that may have been held by many of the students in their enterprise roles, that some recognition be made of this in their employment in secondary schools;

6. Practicum requirements for GDTE be aligned to the Graduate Diploma of Education (Secondary) requirement of 60 days of teaching practice;

7. VTAC selection formula and VIT registration requirements be reviewed to accommodate a wider range of suitably qualified candidates;

8. Selection procedures for entry to the GDTE be enhanced so that the suitability of the candidate to teach technology be the prime consideration, rather than their previous formal qualifications; and,

9. Emphasis placed on realistic and sustainable educational, vocational and professional directions for Victorian school students,

Summary

In summary, the current and developing practices of La Trobe University in the area of Technology Education are continually looking forward to the needs of future schooling. This includes the recruitment of mature aged, high-quality industry practitioners into secondary education programs. The GDTE program concentrates its efforts on producing graduates who will be responsive and innovative in their practice and make a significant contribution to the areas of innovation, design and technology in industry and the wider social context.

Graduate Diploma in Education (P-12) – Albury / Wodonga
Mr Kim Keamy & Ms Christine Bottrell

The Graduate Diploma in Education (P-12) is a one-year, full-time course that qualifies graduates to teach in both primary and secondary schools. The method areas students are eligible to teach in secondary schools depend on the major and sub-major streams undertaken in their undergraduate degree. Graduates of this course have been eagerly sought locally, regionally, State-wide and nationally, and each year, a small number of graduates take advantage of their qualification and travel and teach overseas.

Future requirements of this course:

In order for this course to continue to offer the best it can for its students, it will need to address several ongoing issues.

Firstly, that it fosters its continuing positive relationship with primary, secondary and P-12 schools in the region, which will result in the engagement of practising teachers being employed in addition to our permanent teacher-educators to prepare aspiring teachers and to act as mentors for our students when they are on teaching placements.

Next, Charles Sturt University, a NSW-based university has commenced a K-12, Middle Years degree program at its Albury Campus. CSU students will therefore shortly be placed in schools and many of their graduates will be employed in Victoria. It is therefore important that we adopt a co-ordinated approach with CSU in relation to the timing and number of students placed for each fieldwork and teaching placement;

And finally, it would be ideal to have a flexible model of funding so that the course could be extended from 12 months to 18 months, which would allow for further fieldwork and more time for critical reflection by the students.

Nature of the course

As it currently stands, these are the components of the P-12 course:

1. 1 year full-time;

2. 5 days per week, based on the Victorian School term, each day being from 9am - 4pm;

3. 45 days practicum (spread over three practica);

4. 15 days minimum fieldwork: VCE (5 days); Early Years (5 days); Bike Ed /Austswim, and

5. alternate education environments negotiated with schools in the area.

During the course students attend a minimum of:

1. 84 hours face-to-face in the areas of Issues in Education, Literacy and Numeracy;

2. 42 hours face to face *in each* of the areas of Arts, Health & Physical Education, Science, SOSE, and Technology.

In addition to these requirements, the students are involved in innovations in the Tallangatta and Beechworth Clusters of schools. These innovations encourage P-12 students to take up active roles within schools and working with staff, students and the broader community in a variety of ways. These innovations have come about through on-going conversations between school communities and academic staff from the Albury-Wodonga Campus of the University and form a nexus of pedagogy, problem-solving, problem-posing and theory. With the Tallangatta Cluster initiative, Science forms the common thread, whereas the Beechworth Cluster innovation has student engagement at its centre. The participation in learning teams where student teachers have a voice alongside experienced teachers and students provides valuable modelling and recognition of each student teacher's prior learning and life experience.

The essentially fast-paced life in any educational environment requires graduate teachers to not only be accomplished pedagogues, but to be able to critically reflect and continually respond to changes around them and to adjust their craft accordingly. The very nature of the P-12 course is that it is fast-paced and intensive. It is an expectation that students manage their time, prioritise, communicate with peers and students in plain language, and above all, establish a collaborative approach to their teaching practices. The current, and future, education climate requires professionals who can communicate and problem solve, the P-12 course manages to do this.

The short timeframe for the completion of the P-12 can also be a double edged sword. The fast transition into the profession of teaching generally provides positive challenges and outcomes. The tracking of P-12 graduates identifies anecdotal evidence from principals, teachers and P-12 graduates themselves, which indicates that P-12 graduates respond favourably to the rapid pace of school life, from both pedagogical and administrative perspectives.

The SES P-12 course has always only been available to mature-age entrants, and for those people taking part in a change of career. The opportunity to make the conversion in a twelve month period is a positive aspect of the course, and many students (from within and beyond the region) are attracted to the course because of this. By being condensed into a 12 month period, there are lessened economical costs and less disruption to lifestyle, and once the students graduate, greater financial stability is possible because of the relative short time it takes them to make the transfer from one career path to another. Mature age students who have family and other financial commitments are more able to absorb the drop in income that frequently occurs, achieving a more manageable work-life balance.

Because students in the P-12 course are drawn from a variety of academic disciplines, their understandings of teaching and learning and their worldviews expand during their period of candidature, resulting in graduates who are readily able to embrace diversity and who are equipped with skills and sensitivities that are essential at this particular moment in education – a time when the very nature of curriculum is under review. Graduates, such as those from the P-12 course, who are able to articulate their understandings and their insights, are well-placed to participate in and influence the curriculum changes afoot.

Graduates of the P-12 course are not only expected to have gained a sound understanding of the nature of the subject disciplines for which they are preparing to teach, but an understanding of suitable stages for the introduction of concepts. P-12 graduates are able to – and do – "cross the cultural divide" that exists between primary and secondary teachers. Their ability to make connections between disciplines, locate and distribute resources and to utilise relevant technologies, assists their students immensely by teaching them how to adapt and transfer their learnings to the global demands of the 21st Century.

17

Teaching continues to be an attractive proposition for many mature-age people who might come from a variety of backgrounds, though individuals understandably have different motivations for making a change in their career progressions. It would be advantageous if there were more incentives for people to convert from their existing career into teaching. The following suggestions are made:

1. Recognition by the Department of Education and Training of demonstrated leadership/supervision aptitudes in a person's previous career. At the moment, all graduates commence at the same level, without any regard of skills and abilities from their previous employment. This means that school communities potentially miss out on what some graduates have to offer, and that some graduates commence their teaching careers frustrated at not having their full potential realised. By recognizing previous skills and abilities, this would enhance the leadership capacity of schools, which would be consistent with the third strategy of the Government's *Blueprint for Government* Schools. Consequently, this would allow some graduates with particular skills and abilities to enter further up the pay scale, thereby making teaching a more attractive proposition for people inclined to make a career change;

2. The provision of scholarships that would not only assist mature-age people to move into teaching, but which would also reflect the needs of this particular cohort of students, such as home loan repayments, HECS etc.

This concludes the P-12 submission.

End of Part 2