



AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT PRIMARY PRINCIPALS ASSOCIATION

'Championing the Cause of Primary Education in Government Schools'

Dear Greg and Panel members

It was good to meet with you last Tuesday as part of the APPA team and discuss a range of really pertinent issues facing schools and principals. AGPPA works as part of APPA.

Following is our AGPPA submission.

However you did ask us to highlight the most salient areas for your immediate reference

1. AGPPA strongly recommends that pre-service teaching practicums be increased from a minimum of 60 days to 100 days for all teacher training courses
2. Teacher training institutions must be required to align course content with AITSL teacher standards on a nationwide basis. Training courses must be aligned with Australian Curriculum and implementation strategies.
3. Three important entry criteria should be required for entry into pre service teacher training courses;
 - Interview prior to entering teaching course – The profession takes some responsibility. Principals to be more heavily involved with interview process, including principals to sit in on interview panels. Principals with five years' experience be invited to be involved with interview process for two days
 - ATAR or comparable state based tertiary score: Teaching training institutions to mandate a minimum entry score for pre-service teacher education courses
 - For those pre-service teachers entering teacher training via non ATAR related avenues, there must be an equivalent capacity / capability to the minimum entry score / standard for ATAR
 - Passing an entrance test that indicates suitable literacy and numeracy skills
4. Tertiary teacher training institutions must develop agreed formal partnerships with appropriate pre-service teacher placement schools. These designated schools must feature rural, multicultural, provincial, remote and diverse socio-economic settings. There also needs to be an increased relationship / partnership and collaboration between employer, university and the profession. The school should have a designated and funded liaison leading teacher who works closely with the preservice students and the university.

I do hope the process proceeds well
Yours sincerely

Gabrielle Leigh
AGPPA president



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June 2014

AGPPA Response to: Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group Issues Paper Consultation 2014

The Australian Government Primary Principals' Association (AGPPA) firmly believes that there is a definite need for a more rigorous and consistent approach to teacher training across Australia to ensure that pre-service education is high quality, comprehensive and relevant to 21st century teaching and learning practices. AGPPA represents over 5000 government primary school principals around Australia.

AGPPA is highly supportive of the training in the real-world-application of teaching, and of the necessity to ensure that potential teacher graduates experience the widest possible range of school experiences with the highest quality supervisory staff available. As a nation striving for excellence in education, we need to ensure we train and produce high quality future teachers, through world-class pre-service education.

What characteristics should be fostered and developed in graduate teachers through their initial teacher education?

- A coherence across university based curriculum that ensures that an holistic curriculum is completed, that gives graduates a comprehensive training in all aspects of the primary educators role, rather than a program that follows the particular interests and research priorities of staff
- That all graduate teachers experience pre-service teaching practicums totalling a minimum 100 days for all teacher training courses
- All pre-service teachers must be thoroughly trained in contemporary, research based, evidence informed, literacy and numeracy pedagogical best practice
- Sound evidence that pre-service teachers, who pass related subjects and field experiences, will have demonstrated teacher education institutions' capacity to achieve designated professional standards

How can those best suited to the teaching profession be identified?

Admission to teacher education programs is selected on the basis of specific criteria that address:

- Motivation to enter the profession
- A genuine interest in children and a capacity to relate to them positively
- Evidence of emerging skills and abilities in relation to relationship building capabilities and communication
- Leadership of others
- Experiences with young people in community and/or family settings
- Desire to make a contribution through learning
- A tertiary entrance score that is indicative of the level of scholarship required to undertake the professional studies required
- Where possible, support of an appropriate referee with each application
- Passing an entrance test that indicates suitable literacy and numeracy skills

What are the skills and personal characteristics of an effective beginning teacher?

How can teacher education courses best develop these?

All teachers must commence their professional practice having achieved an explicit set of professional standards in their initial training and education and be required to continue to develop these as they progress from novice to experienced practitioner.

- This ongoing process should also be based on standards and resourcing that enables all educators, regardless of their employment location or sector, to access continuing, accredited professional learning. NB. AITSL Australian Professional Standards For Teachers - Graduate
- Designated teacher education primary schools are identified in a wide range of settings (urban, rural, remote, high ICSEA, low ICSEA, etc.) that allow trainee and practising teachers to observe and work with a pool of outstanding practitioners who provide ongoing modelling, coaching and guidance
- Each practicum must be a rich and integrated experience which allows a long-term relationship to develop, a broad perspective of teaching to develop over time, and which is characterised by explicit teaching, about teaching at the university level and within the school setting
- A major requirement of accreditation for pre-service programs should be the capability of the teacher education institutions to furnish evidence that pre-service teachers, who pass related subjects and field experiences, will have demonstrated capacity to achieve professional standards
- All pre-service teachers must be thoroughly trained in contemporary, research based, evidence informed, literacy and numeracy pedagogical best practice

What teaching practices should be developed in graduate teachers through their initial teacher education?

- Newly qualified teachers must demonstrate high level literacy and numeracy pedagogical skills, as well as a sound knowledge of effective contemporary approaches to teaching
- All teacher training programs must ensure that pre-service teachers develop skills in the more complex issues associated with contemporary teaching and learning practices. These to include: Behavioural management, parental interaction and dealing with student with learning difficulties

- The changing cultural profile of the Australian population demonstrates the need for education and training in the area of cross cultural communication and inclusive teaching practices
- Newly qualified teachers must have a comprehensive understanding of Australian Curriculum initiatives, assessment practices and school imperatives

How can the teaching practices that produce the best student outcomes be identified?

Understanding of and compliance to the appropriate AITSL Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.

How can teacher education programmes encourage teachers to reflect on evidence to support their choice of teaching practice?

A comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers will provide graduate teachers with the capacity to productively reflect on their teaching practice. Aligned with this capacity, graduate teachers must have ongoing access to highly credible teaching and learning mentors, coaches and advisors.

Professional learning in the teaching profession should be seen as a continuum which includes initial teacher education, induction and continuing professional learning and performance development.

How does reflection on evidence translate into student outcomes?

Within an effective performance and development culture, constructive feedback from assigned mentors and coaches, will empower graduate teachers to enhance their teaching and learning practices, which should translate into improved student outcomes.

What level of integration should there be between initial teacher education providers and schools?

- Teacher training to include a mandatory time in schools within the first six months of every course
- Tertiary teacher training institutions must develop agreed formal partnerships with appropriate pre-service teacher placement schools.

What evidence is there that effective integration achieves good teaching practice?

Teacher education training programs in Finland provide sound evidence that university affiliated model schools can successfully produce quality teachers.

www.ncee.org/programs-affiliates/center-on-international-education-benchmarking/top-performing-countries/finland-overview/finland-teacher-and-principal-quality/

What are the most effective types of integrated experiences in preparing new teachers?

- Pre-service teaching practicums be increased from a minimum of 60 days to **100 days**¹ for all teacher training courses across Australia
- Each practicum must be a rich and integrated experience which allows a long-term relationship to develop, a broad perspective of teaching to develop over time, and which is characterised by explicit teaching about teaching at the university level and within the school setting
- Teacher training institutions must be required to align course content with AITSL teacher standards and the Australian Curriculum on a nationwide basis

What are the cost implications of more integrated professional experience? Are there more effective ways in which professional experience might be funded?

Under current arrangements, it is generally accepted that the more days spent in school teaching practicums by pre-service teachers, equates to greater costs to the associate universities. One possible solution is that schools are given remuneration for a coordinating school based practitioner to coordinate and liaise between the school and the university.

What other methods, or combination of these methods could achieve better outcomes than the current approach to professional experience?

Introduce an internship year or similar whereby upon appointment, quality teachers are to be assigned as an instructor / mentor for one year learning on the job. Appropriate professional support time funded for both mentor and mentee to fulfil their respective roles.

How can partnerships between teacher education providers and schools be strengthened to make teacher education more effective?

- Tertiary teacher training institutions must develop agreed formal partnerships with appropriate pre-service teacher placement schools. These designated schools must feature rural, multicultural, provincial, remote and diverse socio-economic settings. There also needs to be an increased relationship / partnership and collaboration between employer, university and the profession
- Training institutions and school leaders to have more formal inter-relationships. NB. Interview prior to entering teaching course – The profession takes some responsibility. Principals to be more heavily involved with interview process, including principals to sit in on interview panels. Principals with five years' experience be invited to be involved with interview process for two days

How can teacher education providers and schools best work together to select and train mentor teachers to effectively support pre-service teachers on professional experience?

Established formal partnerships between teacher education providers and schools must entail mutually agreed protocols. The university based and school based personnel who work with trainee educators must be drawn from suitably qualified primary practitioners. For primary placements, these people must have:

- Credibility in professional practice
- The ability to teach across the primary age range

- A high level of knowledge about the primary years curriculum and appropriate teaching methods
- An understanding of the unique developmental characteristics of the primary aged child
- The capacity to develop positive professional relationships and organise learning in an age appropriate manner
- Formal accreditation as expert practitioners who demonstrate and educate at advanced skill level
- The training and confidence to successfully work both within the university setting and the school based practicum. They must be able to scaffold prospective teachers into the complex repertoire of knowledge, skills and dispositions that effective teachers bring to the classroom
- Access to currency of pedagogical practice; need to have secondments at university level and not just at schools

How can consistency of good practice and continuous improvement across teacher education providers and schools be assured?

- This ongoing process should also be based on the Australian Professional Standards for Teaching and appropriately resourced, thus enabling all educators, regardless of their employment location or sector, to access continuing, accredited professional learning
- A major requirement of accreditation for pre-service programs should be the willingness of the teacher education institutions to furnish evidence that pre-service teachers, pass related subjects and field experiences, aligned with the 'Australian Professional Standards for Teachers'

What balance is needed between understanding what is taught and how it is taught?

- Each practicum must be a rich and integrated experience which allows a long-term relationship to develop, a broad perspective of teaching to develop over time, and which is characterised by explicit teaching about teaching at the university level and within the school setting
- The National Initial Teacher Education Advisory Committee needs to assume a greater responsibility for setting consistent teaching standards in teacher training institutions across Australia, with an increased emphasis on developing contemporary and effective classroom literacy and numeracy skills

What is the desirable interaction between content knowledge and teaching practice for developing teachers? What is the difference for primary and secondary teaching? Why is there a difference?

It is important for effective teaching and learning, that teachers have a deep understanding of subject content. Improving teacher quality, should equate to better student learning outcomes. Teacher training institutions and practicum schools must equip teachers with both the subject content knowledge and the subject specific teaching strategies which will allow them to effectively address the learning and development needs of Australian students.

However this content knowledge and teaching practice must reflect contemporary and accredited world-wide research on what is acclaimed best practice.

Should there be explicit training in how to teach literacy and numeracy in all teaching courses?

Most definitely! Should be mandatory for all teacher training institutions across Australia. All graduating pre-service teachers must be thoroughly trained in contemporary and evidence informed, literacy and numeracy pedagogical best practice.

How can the balance between the need for subject specialisation and a generalist approach in primary teaching qualifications be addressed?

Teacher training institutions across Australia to mandate graduating primary school teachers complete a Bachelor of Education that encompasses majoring in at least two primary school curriculum subject areas.

What, if any, changes need to be made to the structure of teacher education courses? Should content be studied before pedagogy (i.e. should 'what' to teach be studied before the 'how' to teach)?

- Teacher training to include a mandatory time in schools in the first six months of every course
- There must be a negotiated and coherent balance of university and schooling sector facilitated professional teacher training. NB. An obvious need to regularly activate theory into real world teaching and learning practice
- Pre-service teaching practicums be increased from a minimum of 60 days to 100 days for all teacher training courses across Australia

What barriers are there to restructuring teacher education courses to ensure they address these concerns, and how may they be overcome?

- Principals have expressed major concerns with the one year teacher training Diploma programs, such as the 'Teach for Australia' initiative. Longer term training is overwhelmingly perceived as being more beneficial to the profession. Participants of one year training diploma courses have increased the workload of mentors and are generally not ready for teaching in primary schools, usually lacking content knowledge and experience. They have very little knowledge of primary curriculum
- A strong theory-practice link between schools and universities and continued dialogue between the practising profession in relation to what is included in each practicum
- Pre-service teaching round assessments can lack consistency of effective approaches between teacher training institutions and schools. There must be enhanced and funded coordination.
- Appropriate funding for universities to:

1. Deliver comprehensive programs that meet world's best practice standards for teacher education and training
2. Conduct rigorous induction and training programs for practicum supervisors on site in schools.

ⁱ Dinham, Stephen. **The quality teaching movement in Australia encounters difficult terrain: A personal perspective.** *Australian Journal of Education* 2013 57: 91. DOI: 10.1177/0004944113485840