

1993

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Recommended Citation

Grant, J. (1993). Preservice Intern Teaching : A P-12 Approach in the University of Melbourne Bachelor of Teaching Degree for Graduates. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 18(2). <https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.1993v18n2.8>

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PRESERVICE INTERN TEACHING: A P-12 APPROACH IN THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE BACHELOR OF TEACHING DEGREE FOR GRADUATES

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INTRODUCTION

The report of the consultancy on future directions of the Institute of Education at the University of Melbourne (September 1992) recommended the replacement of concurrent undergraduate courses with a two year course in education for graduates in which the student spends an extensive period in schools. However, forms of school based teacher education had been practised for twenty years. This commitment to the role of schools in teacher education in the Diploma in Education, Bachelor of Education (Secondary) and Bachelor of Education (Primary) courses was a major factor in the development of the Bachelor of Teaching degree which will be offered to a small intake in 1994.

School based programs in all existing courses had involved semester length or longer periods of supervised school experience in one school. Although the student was required to attend classes at the University on several days each week, the extended period in the school enabled teachers and student-teacher to form a colleague relationship. At the same time, students were expected to engage in observation and learning activities to widen their experience beyond the classroom. Hence at Melbourne the term *school experience* was used deliberately to broaden the concept of practice teaching. For these students the school became the site for reflection on their studies in education and they brought insights and observations from the school into University classes.

At the same time as school based placement of student teachers became popular inter-department team teaching emerged. For the lecturers committed to the programs this was an exciting development which enabled them to see the application of their teaching in a holistic context which was school related. Their department colleagues did not always share their enthusiasm and prolonged debate about the value of interdisciplinary studies and teaching was not uncommon. Resources were not plentiful and as the effects of the Razor Gang cuts were felt in the late 70s and early 80s the teams were difficult to sustain. Nevertheless the impact of the

programs and the influence of the lecturers created a bond between the participating schools and faculty staff generally.

In 1992 an intake into the B Ed (Primary) fourth year was offered a new set of subjects which built on the completed 100 days of supervised school experience and related studies by requiring the students to undertake induction teaching and reflective studies in a selected school. The model of selection of students and schools and the integration of school and University studies was extended to become the internship second year in the development of the new Bachelor of Teaching degree. The imperative underlying the model is that the student has been judged to be competent to teach without supervision and is capable of independent study in applications of education theory in the school and the classroom.

Neither the recommendations of the consultancy nor the criticisms of the weakness of discipline studies in reports leading up to the Ministerial statement Teaching Counts (1993) required the University to rethink its commitment to school based preservice education. Rather they provided the impetus to move to the next phase. During the development of Internship subjects in the Bachelor of Teaching course the major questions about school based teacher education were revisited.

THE BACHELOR OF TEACHING DEGREE

The Bachelor of Teaching is a two year degree for which the prerequisite is an approved undergraduate degree with studies appropriate for secondary teaching. Because of the P-12 approach of the course this prerequisite applies to all entrants although not mandatory for the employment conditions of primary teachers. The possibility of setting separate conditions for entry for intending primary teachers was considered. An ideal intake of intending primary teachers might include applicants who have completed mathematics and English studies in the first degree. However experience indicates that the numbers of qualified applicants would be likely to be small thus imposing a limitation on numbers. This prerequisite issue will be revisited early in 1994 when the 1995 intake is planned.

In year one of the course the students complete the education, method, context and school experience studies which would allow them to be considered ready for unsupervised teaching and registration. The studies are equivalent to but do not replicate a standard one year Diploma in Education course. In year two extensive intern teaching occupies 80% of the course. Advanced method studies are available early in the year to support the internship teaching. In the second semester a school related study provides for assessment of the student's ability to think about education and to research a significant aspect of teaching or schooling.

An alternative to the year long internship teaching is offered for intending primary teachers who cannot complete essential studies before the second semester of year two and for other students or schools who prefer the alternative. This strand delays the internship until the second semester and includes an additional 30 days of advanced supervised practice teaching in semester one.

The course is uncompromising in intention. The year one studies are inter-related and sequential. They must be completed before the year long internship program of the second year is attempted. Class hours have been reduced to increase the time for independent study. The 50 days of supervised practice teaching in year one and 120 days of internship provide a significant school based component. At the same time it is the intention of the course to provide relevant and stimulating experience of researching and learning to reinforce the value of reflective practice and independent learning.

THE P-12 CONCEPT

In 1994 the Bachelor of Teaching course will be offered to a small intake of intending secondary teachers. In 1995 a small cohort of intending primary teachers will be added and at a later date the course will provide for those who wish to graduate qualified to teach P-12.

The experience of school based teacher education has demonstrated to University staff that there are fundamental similarities in the principles and practice of the preparation of primary and secondary teachers. In Victoria there are designated P-12 schools and the University has close associations with a number of primary and secondary schools working across the sectoral boundaries. Differences are acknowledged but

broad understandings of schooling, curriculum and the development of children and young people as a continuum were identified as core studies in a P-12 approach.

The subject Language and Literacy in the Classroom examines theories of language and literacy acquisition and the application of language and literacy teaching to all subject areas of the curriculum. This subject is compulsory for all students and they will not be segregated into groups by teaching area specialisation. Since the subject must contribute to mandatory requirements in literacy studies for primary teachers some intending secondary teachers may find the subject challenging. The University believes that the approach could provide a solution to the problem of implementing literacy teaching across the curriculum in the secondary school.

The decision to move quickly to a four year qualification for primary teachers reflected a commitment to parity in qualifications status for all teachers. Further, the NPQTL project has confirmed the long held assumption that all teachers need demanding personal and professional development studies at tertiary level. The Bachelor of Teaching degree will therefore admit graduates selected on merit who will initially share learning experiences before specialising in a preferred teaching area or school sector. As noted earlier requirements for employment as a teacher in a secondary school in Victoria include major and submajor studies in relevant curriculum teaching areas and it is not intended to make a distinction for intending primary teachers.

At the beginning of the course all students will observe and teach for ten days in each of a primary and a secondary school before they finalise their decision about a teaching area specialisation. They will study together in three subjects: Language and Literacy in the Classroom; Developmental Perspectives and Education; Teachers, Inquiry and Learning. In the second semester they will be placed for specialised practice teaching supported by appropriate methodological studies. The subject Social Perspectives and Education and the continuation of Teachers, Inquiry and Learning will again bring all students together.

In year two of the course specialisation is absolute because the internship program is embedded in this year. Nevertheless the schools which participated in the course validation and 1994

planning exercise include some which indicated that the P-12 concept could be drawn into the second year. Schools would share intern teachers for teaching and curriculum planning experience and certainly for school related research activities.

The demands on preservice teacher education courses for primary teachers are such that the Bachelor of Teaching arrangements must rely heavily on the relevance of the experience during school based components and the ability of graduates to synthesise and apply information and theoretical knowledge at an advanced level. Planning for 1995 has demonstrated that as long as school systems require a primary teacher to graduate as both a curriculum specialist and a generalist classroom teacher, reflection and in-depth study in the preservice experience must be ensured by structure.

PARTNERSHIP WITH SCHOOLS

School based programs at the University have required schools to be committed to the course and participate in planning and coordination workshops. This approach was used to validate the Bachelor of Teaching degree and to plan the 1994 implementation. Principals of 40 key schools were sent the draft course document for comment. An evaluation meeting was held at the University but chaired by the General Manager of a Regional School Support Centre. Principals and teachers outnumbered University staff and the recommendations of the meeting were recorded and acted on.

Following formal approval of the course by the Council of the University of Melbourne in August 1993 the schools group became the planning group which held four monthly meetings to hear and advise on recommendations for course implementation. A steering group of school and Institute staff managed the agenda for the meetings. Regular written reports were sent to principals of the schools for comment. At the end of the process the schools were asked to indicate the level of their involvement in the program and those wishing to work with the year two program provided information about the school and a 'position description' for the intern teacher.

Schools have accepted the responsibility of selecting the intern teacher by using similar processes to those for appointment of teachers. Because of the need to give schools early information about staffing arrangements for the coming year schools agreed to make an offer to

the intern teacher quickly and applicants agreed to accept or not within 24 hours if possible. In 1993 a small number of secondary Diploma in Education graduates have been admitted to the course as a pilot intake into year two. Particular arrangements have been made. At the end of 1994 the first year students will be familiar with the host schools and for them selection for internship will be more easily managed during the end of the year processes.

However, the 1993 experience has worked well. The University staff provided students with an application kit and advised about written application and interview procedures. Principals of the cooperating schools obtained the permission of the school community or employer to select and offer supernumerary teaching to an intern. At this stage no school has offered a paid position. If this were the case the student would be required to complete an employment contract with normal provisions for legal liability. In 1994 a deed of agreement signed by University and School will ensure that the rights and obligations of all parties are protected including the University's responsibility to indemnify the student.

The letter of offer to the student from the school will set out the details of the teaching and other responsibilities. The Principal of the school becomes a co-examiner of the Internship subject although the University must retain the final responsibility for assessment.

The schools were also offered a teaching partnership in the School-related Project subject which is integrated with the internship experience in the final semester. For 1994 the schools have opted to be involved in team projects, to offer supervision and advice to students and to disseminate the report of the study within the school community. The option of joint assessment of the subject was not taken up.

Government and non-Government schools from both primary and secondary sectors have participated in the planning and it is likely that ten secondary schools will be host to intern teachers in 1994.

INTERNSHIP

In year one of the course the 50 days of supervised practice teaching are governed by the same principles and practice as existing preservice teacher education courses. The

assigned assessment tasks integrate the experience in schools with the study of education, teaching methods and the human and social development studies. The subject Teachers, Inquiry and Learning also examines the work of teachers in the school and the classroom. Students enrolling in the Internship subject in the second year should be confident that they are ready to begin unsupervised teaching and to continue study and research into practices and processes of education. They and the schools in which they teach should be guaranteed of this ability.

In Victoria the former Teachers' Registration Board set agreed standards for entry to the teaching profession. The Board no longer exists and in the interim period before the recently established Standards Council of the Teaching Profession (SCTP) determines whether these standards should be varied, the Bachelor of Teaching course embodies subjects and requirements which would previously have allowed a teacher to register.

Selection by a school for students enrolled in the Internship subject can therefore follow the normal procedures for appointment to a school. The allocation of duties to the intern in this course however recognises the need for novice teachers to be given a reduced teaching load in order to have time to prepare classes effectively, to reflect on their teaching and not to be subjected to work overload and stress. The intern teacher is therefore given a reduced teaching commitment. The teaching allotment is 80% of an 80% load. Effectively 60% of the normal weekly commitment of a full-time teacher.

The time outside of class is spent in private study and at the University in classes, workshops or colloquia for 2-4 hours a week intermittently throughout the year. These activities are scheduled after 4pm to give greater flexibility to the time the student can spend teaching and in extra curricular activities, research and study. The model suggests the way in which teachers should approach work and study with a time adjustment for the inexperience of the intern teacher.

The distinguishable difference between the experience in schools in the first and the second years is the way in which the involvement of school staff shifts from in classroom supervision with full assessment responsibilities to that of the cooperating colleague teacher. The term mentor teacher is used for this role. In the planning process the teachers emphatically rejected an assessment role for the mentor although it was

agreed that the principal should consult with the mentor as with other school personnel and students in order to coordinate the assessment report they provide to the University.

The intern is an enrolled student of the University and the chief examiner must be assured that the school Principal's report addresses the objectives of the subject as set out in the approved course handbook. Since schools differ in practice and organization there is likely to be a need for moderation of results by University staff. This is an area which will be evaluated and reviewed from time to time. The University would wish colleagues in the schools to be able to assume responsibility for internship assessment but the evidence to date suggests that teachers and Principals are not anxious to accept full responsibility for this academic task.

University staff will be allotted to each school at which an intern teacher is teaching. These staff will visit the school periodically. They will advise teachers and interns from time to time and when required. They will make reports on the assessment of the Internship subject. They will supervise the School-related Project activities of the intern or refer this supervision to a more appropriate University staff member if the Project is outside their area of expertise. In 1994 equal resources have been allocated to all departments for these school contact and project supervision positions. Over a period of years evaluation of the demands on staff will provide information to vary this allocation to recognize trends in the nature of projects.

It is obvious that the most useful distribution of resources and sharing of expert supervision of school based studies would be effected if the contact staff from the University were also engaged in research activities in the school. Logistically this is difficult to arrange. It is evitable that the success of programs of school based studies will increasingly depend on the success and recognition of research activities.

The advantage of developing a course with key schools is that mutual professional respect has been established. Nevertheless the stakes are high for the intern teacher and safeguards have to be built into the internship arrangements which protect the student. The selection and decision about the offer to the intern teacher are relatively easy to effect within existing staff appointment guidelines. The course implementation process has allowed schools to volunteer to be accepted into the program rather than be imposed on to

accept an intern teacher. The arrangements for discontinuance or transfer are sensitive since the student has the right to guaranteed conditions under which the subject requirements can be met and the school has the right to expect teacher behaviour consistent with that of an employed first year out teacher.

The University has decided that whenever problems arise abrupt termination or transfer of the intern would not be consistent with the year two objectives of the course. Collaborative solutions of problems is written into the course. If the student is likely to be disadvantaged by the decision to transfer the University must take steps to renegotiate a place in the same or another school. The normal University processes of academic appeal apply. The alternative semester two internship strand also provides a safety net for those students disadvantaged by circumstances rather than their own failure in semester one.

There is no doubt that the internship concept challenges the relatively secure arrangements for experience in schools developed in teacher education courses since the 1970's. Effectively schools are offered the opportunity to determine the criteria for selection of students into a Bachelor of Teaching subject and the major contribution to an assessment which is framed to be an indicator of the profession's statement about quality and control of entry.

In this brief overview it is not possible to discuss the proposed resolution of the inherent tension between the credibility of the school as a site for credentialling the intending teacher and the obligation of the University for the conduct of a subject and the assessment of the students. The arrangements in the Bachelor of Teaching recognise the professional responsibilities of all participants. Since employment in the next year is not guaranteed by schools or the Directorate of School Education, and the intern teacher is not paid salary, agreement on the arrangements was not difficult to effect.

The propensity of school based teacher education to replicate practice without critical reflection is well documented. The Bachelor of Teaching degree recognises that intensive induction teaching may be vulnerable to this conservative and constricting influence. The solution in the course lies in the careful choice of schools and mentor teachers, the assessment requirements of the Internship subject which include seminar presentation and written evaluations of school

and classroom and the assessment of the school based research project. Research and evaluation can be guided towards change and innovation. Since University staff and students are part of a team with a broader experience than that of the intern teacher or school community, it would be expected that their continued involvement in year two of the course would challenge any potential conserving influence.

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LEARNING TO TEACH AND TEACHING TO LEARN

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Clandinin, D., Davies, A, Hogan, P and Kennard, B. (1993)(Eds). *Learning to teach, teaching to learn*. New York: Teachers College Press. 238 pages.

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The dangers of conventional teacher education programs are well known: collisions between university-based theory and school-based practice, hit-and-run supervision by university staff who have no other connection with the student's development as a teacher, and sink-or-swim supervision by cooperating teachers who are unwilling (or unable) to help students bridge the gaps in their knowledge. As this edition of *The Australian Journal of Teacher Education* shows, there is no shortage of interest in school-based alternatives which attempt to provide a more integrated introduction to the craft of teaching. I was a student in one in the mid-Seventies, and am now teaching in a similar alternative program. Like the alternative program from which I learned so much as a student, most of these experiments in teacher education live and die on the energy of a few university staff. Few alternative programs seem to have been sustained over the years; even fewer are the subject of serious book-length evaluations. These two books, both called *Learning to teach: Teaching to learn*, provide detailed accounts of alternative teacher education programs conducted half a world and almost 20 years apart. Considering the gaps of space, time and context, the similarities between the two programs are striking.

Gwyneth Dow's *Learning to teach: Teaching to learn* (1979) shows that current criticisms of university-based teacher education have a long history. The book describes her own response to these criticisms in the context of an experimental one-year post-graduate program conducted at the University of Melbourne. Called Course B, the program began in 1973 and was designed to provide prospective secondary teachers with an experience that blended theory and practice. Course B was based on three key assumptions. The first of these assumptions was that for each student, the problem of becoming a teacher was a very personal matter. In order to discover an appropriate teaching style, each student first had to answer the questions "Who am I?" and "How do others, especially children, see me?" The second assumption was that the best time for tackling theoretical questions was when they

arose in actual teaching. The third assumption was that students would benefit more from learning to think for themselves than from learning "tips for teachers". For this reason, the course team resolved that students should have as much experience as possible in thinking and acting autonomously in their training year.

For most of the academic year, Course B students spent Mondays and Tuesdays in two long Methods seminars at the university. Wednesdays and Thursdays were spent in a school. On Friday mornings students were involved in a program called Curriculum Studies which replaced separate foundations courses in psychology, philosophy and sociology with an integrated and problem-centred program which was sometimes conducted at the university and sometimes conducted in schools. Through the Methods courses and Curriculum Studies, the small group of university staff attached to Course B worked hard to build bridges between students' personal and professional concerns in becoming a teacher. In order to narrow the gap between students' school and university experiences, the program made some joint appointments of staff to schools and the university.

Twenty years after many of the events described in the book, some of the material inevitably feels dated. I remember being as excited about Freire, Illich, Holt and Kohl as Dow's students were, but their concerns about freedom and authority seem to have been replaced by Nineties issues such as quality and accountability. The freshest and most enduring aspect of the book is the student-teachers' voices, quoted extensively from their diaries. Their concerns are the perennial concerns of young people making the transition from student to teacher: autonomy, authority, how to present themselves to children, and how to talk and listen to children. Viewed close-up, with Dow's generous attention to the students' perspectives, it is clear how personal and risky is the process of becoming a teacher. As Dow says, "A course of teacher training, whether it is aware of it or not, puts the novice teacher at risk; but the more it bases the learning on experiences and the