

1995

Restructuring Teacher Education

Shirley Grundy
Murdoch University

Gordon Stanley
Education Policy and Coordination Bureau, W. A.

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ro.ecu.edu.au/ajte>



Part of the [Teacher Education and Professional Development Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Grundy, S., & Stanley, G. (1995). Restructuring Teacher Education. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 20(1).

<http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.1995v20n1.6>

This Journal Article is posted at Research Online.
<https://ro.ecu.edu.au/ajte/vol20/iss1/6>

SMITH, D. & HATTON, N. (1993). *Critical Reflection on Reflection in Action*. Paper Presented at the 5th Practicum Conference, Macquarie University, Sydney.

SMYTH, J. (1989). Developing and Sustaining Critical Reflection in Teacher Education. *Journal Of Teacher Education*. 40 (2).

STAKE, R. (1983). Case Study Method in Social Inquiry. *Educational Researcher*. 7.

STUFFLEBEAM, D. (1983). Evaluating The Curriculum. *Primary Viewpoint*. Brisbane: Queensland Department of Education. 2 (6).

TOM, A. (1987). Replacing Pedagogical Knowledge with Pedagogical Questions. In J. Smyth (Ed.). *Educating Teachers: Changing the Nature of Pedagogical Knowledge*. London: The Falmer Press.

VAN MANEN, M. (1977). Linking ways of Knowing with Ways of Being Practical. *Curriculum Inquiry*. 6.

VAUGHAN, J. (1990). Foreword: In R. Clift, W. Houston & M. Pugach (Eds.). *Encouraging Reflective Practice in Education*. New York: Teachers College Press.

WILDMAN, T. & NILES, J. (1987). Reflective Teachers: Tensions Between Abstractions and Realities. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 3 (1).

WILDMAN, T., NILES, J., MAGLIARO, S. & McLAUGHLIN, R. (1990) Promoting Reflective Practice Among Beginning and Experienced Teachers: In R. Clift, W. Houston & M. Pugach (Eds.). *Encouraging Reflective Practice in Education*. New York: Teachers' College Press.

WILSON, S. (1979). Explorations of the Usefulness of Case Study Evaluations. *Evaluation Quarterly*. 3 (3).

ZEICHNER, K. & TABACHNICK, B. (1991). Reflections on Reflective Teaching. In B. Tabachnick & K. Zeichner. *Issues and Practices in Inquiry Oriented Teacher Education*. London: The Falmer Press.

RESTRUCTURING TEACHER EDUCATION

Shirley Grundy
Murdoch University

Gordon Stanley
Education Policy and Coordination Bureau

As part of the process of developing a four year Bachelor of Education in September 1994, Edith Cowan University conducted a public seminar entitled "Restructuring Teacher Education". The invited speakers were Dr Shirley Grundy (Murdoch University), Professor Bob Meyenn (Charles Sturt University), Sandra Milligan (Ashenden Milligan Pty Ltd), Professor Paige Porter (University of Western Australia), Greg Robson (Education Department of Western Australia) and Professor Gordon Stanley (Education Policy and coordination Bureau).

Two of the presentations are published here to inform others engaged in the tasks of restructuring teacher education.

SHIRLEY GRUNDY

Before addressing the issue of the restructuring of teacher education and providing some thoughts about what might be appropriate restructuring practices to consider, I want to go back a step and engage in some reconceptualization. Actually what I am wanting to investigate here is not entirely a reconceptualization, but rather a reiteration, a reclaiming and a reassertion of some ways of thinking and talking about teaching, teacher professionalism and teacher education, that have been around for a long time, but somehow have always remained marginalised.

In essence, then, what I want to do is to reclaim and reassert what I see to be a muted discourse within the field of teacher education, and to explore what the implications might be for teacher education programs and practices if such a discourse was to be privileged.

The initial premise of my argument, then, is that **teaching is a learning profession**. That is, teaching is not a technical act that is learnt at one time in one site and then applied in a variety of sites for ever more (maybe with increased efficiency and effectiveness, and with the need for periodic re-honing and/or updating of skills).

To assert that teaching is a learning profession is, however, to assert more than that concepts of 'life-long' or 'career-long' learning should be

applied to teachers along with everyone else in our society. Teachers need to be career-long learners because of the special nature of the profession of teaching, but it is beyond the scope of this discussion to explore this notion in any depth. In making my assertion, I am standing upon much work in the areas of 'teacher as researcher', 'action research', 'action learning', 'diagnostic teaching' etc.

It is important, however, that we also extend this notion of the teacher as learner, beyond the individualised conception from which it is frequently understood. That is, even where a 'learning' model of teaching is accepted, the teacher is usually interpreted as an individual learner, engaged in self-reflection upon (largely) solitary practice.

We need to go further than this. **Being a teacher is not only being a learner, but being a member of a 'learning community'**.

Again we need to ask 'what does it mean to be a member of a learning community?' and 'where is this learning community situated?'

The recent emphasis upon 'retraining', 'upskilling', 'competency standards' etc. has signalled an enormous boost in the professional development and training industry. Teachers, along with members of practically every other industry in Australia, have been sent off on a massive paper chase; going off to this course and that in the quest for the 'good oil' that will ensure improved practice.

The idea that teachers are members of a 'learning community', however, must mean more than that they are members of a profession which is engaged in structuring 'learning' (or training) activities for its members.

The principal learning community to which teachers must be seen and must see themselves as belonging is **the school**.

For a long time now, dating back to the development of insights arising out of the 'new sociology of knowledge', we have understood that the school is not simply the site of education, it is a

key player in the educative process.

Similarly, we need to recognise that the school is not simply the site of teachers' work. The school is itself a social construction, partly constructed through wider social and political influences, but partly, and significantly constructed through the work practices of the teachers of whom it is partly comprised. Not only do teachers' practices construct the school, however, but their practices are also constructed by the school in which those practices are enacted.

So, if we are to realise the potential of teaching as a learning profession, we need to understand the importance of the school as a significant site of professional learning. But not professional learning understood individually, the school needs to be understood as and become a learning community.

Once we recognise the school as a significant site of professional learning, it also follows that we need to recognise and take seriously, the potential for communities of teachers within schools to take collective responsibility for their professional learning, by focussing that learning upon the development of the school as a learning community for students and teachers.

This is what Stenhouse was suggesting way back in the mid 70's when he argued:

The conclusion seems inescapable. I value highly the tradition of professional autonomy as the basis of educational quality but it seems that this must now be negotiated at school level. ... [T]he school staff can no longer be seen as a federal association of teachers and departments: it must be a professional community. And it is with that community that professional autonomy must lie.

We must be careful, however, that by asserting that responsibility for teacher professional learning (professional development) should or could lie with the school, that we do not fall into the trap, common to so-called 'devolutionary' practices, of simply devolving responsibility for professional development to schools, and further eroding resource support. We need to explore new ways of supporting and legitimating school-based professional development.

Why have I gone on about this notion of the school as a site of professional learning so long? What is its significance for the restructuring of teacher education?

a) The first implication (and it is a big one, but one at which I can just wave here) is that from the

start, teachers must understand that teaching is not a solitary occupation of one teacher and her class or classes. Each and every teacher has a professional responsibility to be engaged in the construction of the school as a learning environment - for herself and her colleagues and well as for their students. Involvement in school development and improvement can no longer be regarded as a peripheral, something that a teacher can opt into or out of. It is part of the job.

So initial teacher education programs need to take seriously the challenge to prepare novice teachers to become active members of the school professional learning community. This needs serious consideration, but at this time I want to gloss over this point to move on to explore continuing professional education.

b) The second implication that I want to investigate in a little more depth is the potential for school-based professional development of practising teachers.

The opportunity for site based professional development is not new. I can think of examples from Western Australia going back at least to the mid 70's. I think of the volume of teacher writings entitled *32 Voices*, that was produced by teachers involved in the Language and Learning Project. I think of the Kewdale Project, initiated by Bill Loudon and Bill Green in the early eighties. And I think of other work that has been going on across Australia right up to the 1991-93 National Schools Project and now the initiatives being taken under the auspices of National Schools Network (in WA running under the title Flexibility in Schooling Project.)

Thus, there has been developing within Australia, a significant movement of school-based research and development, but this tradition has developed officially largely independently of teacher education institutions. I say 'officially' because many teachers who have been involved in this movement of school-based teacher development have also been engaged in university credentialed courses, whether they be action research courses which have provided insights into processes of change and development or other courses which have provided substantive insights for initiating school level experiments.

However, the opportunities for university traditions of on-going professional development through credentialed courses and school-based teacher development to coincide has been minimal.

But at this historical moment, such opportunities exist, and it is these opportunities that, in turn, offer challenges and possibilities for the restructuring of teacher education within universities. That opportunity began to be opened up with the then Minister for Education Beazley's 1993 statement 'Teaching Counts'. While there were some worrying features of the agenda for university based teacher education in that statement, there were also statements of possibility. For instance on p. 9 of the document it is claimed that'

It is essential that we maintain and work hard to enhance: ... closer links between universities and teachers and trainers in their catchment areas, thereby encouraging the development of teacher education courses which are relevant and responsive to their professional needs and career development.

The Australian Education Union and the Independent Teachers Federation were keen to build upon the Commonwealth's commitments to professional development and at the end of 1993 entered into an 'Agreement between the Commonwealth Government and the Teaching Profession through their Teacher Unions providing for an Accord to Advance the Quality of Teaching and Learning'.

One of the important aims of that Accord is:

To improve the professional support and career development available to the teaching profession ... [by] encouraging partnerships between teachers, their schools and other education stakeholders to improve the quality of teaching and learning. (p.19)

The Union partners to the Accord are insistent that the agreements in this document are matched with concrete programs, and the National Professional Development Program (NPDP) is a direct and tangible expression of the Accord.

As part of the NPDP, a sum of \$1 million was put aside to promote the university/school partnerships referred to in the Accord. In the end, it was decided to fund one coherent, coordinated national project and the project 'Innovative Links between Universities and Schools for Teacher Professional Development' came into existence. The Grantee for the Innovative Links project is the National Teaching and Learning Consortium (a consortium of 14 Australian universities, representing all States and the Northern Territory).

The Innovative Links project is structured around what we call 'Roundtables'. A Roundtable is

hosted by a local university. About 5 schools are affiliated with each Roundtable. They are funded to work on school-based development projects. An 'academic associate' works with each school as a facilitator, collaborator, critical friend to the teachers in the school. There are 17 Roundtables in operation, two are in operation in WA, one hosted by Murdoch University and the other by Edith Cowan's Bunbury Campus.

When I just described the way in which 'academic associates' and school personnel work together through the Roundtable, it sounded as if these relationships are established. In fact it is precisely the development of this relationship which is at the heart of this project - this is the Innovative Link which we are hoping to be able to forge.

As teacher educators we are used to working in schools and in other forums, making our expertise available to teachers by providing in-service courses or workshops etc. We are also used to working for schools, carrying out contracted research - maybe designing and administering a survey of community views. But what of the relationship of working in partnership with schools, on the schools' agenda of research and development, in which it is the teachers who are being or becoming the researchers? It is the contention of the teacher educators who are working on the Innovative Links project that we can develop new ways of working, forge new links with the teaching profession which will provide powerful opportunities for the development of teachers as learners and schools as learning communities. At the moment we have a structure for doing that, and a time line of 3 years in which to explore these innovative relationships, but there is much to be done.

Well, what has this project to do with the topic of 'restructuring teacher education' which is the focus of our deliberations this evening?

I hope it will have a great deal to do with it. At the moment we have a space for the exploration of new partnerships for professional development with the teaching profession. However, I believe that it is important that this goes beyond a one-off experiment. We need to explore ways by which these sorts of relationships with school learning communities can be constructed into our work as teacher educators if such work is to come in from the margins.

What needs to happen for this to be so? Firstly, we need to study this way of working with school learning communities as a form of academic and scholastic work. What is it that acade-

mics do, when they do this sort of work? How can academics engage in such work as a form of scholarship and hence have such work 'counted' as academic 'performance'? How can they fulfil the requirements of academic performance while working in genuine partnership with teachers? How can we, as academics, avoid 'ripping teachers work off' for our own purposes, as often happens when research and development come to serve different purposes?

A second large area that this project opens up is the possibility for this school-based work to be accredited towards formal award bearing courses. Lots of problems present themselves here, but if members of school communities have the opportunity to develop their school-based projects at a level of scholarship, then, I believe that will be to the benefit of the learning community as well as the individual teachers. But there is much to be done in this area.

A third area in which this work has potential for the restructuring agenda is by opening up more flexible relationships between schools and universities, relationships which will present opportunities for the development of improved approaches to pre-service teacher education. The best way for novice teachers to learn about professional responsibility within the whole school context is to see such responsibilities being modelled in schools in which they undertake school experience. It will only be when such relationships between schools and universities are observed and accepted that we could claim that teacher education practices at the in-service level have been restructured.

All of this implies a fairly fundamental shift in the way that we now think about the academic work of teacher educators in relation to the on-going professional development of teachers. It will be unacceptable simply to graft these new ways of working with school communities onto an already intensified working life of the teacher educator. Many currently involved in innovative practices are experiencing unprecedented increases in work loads with a concomitant intensification of work related stress. Sometimes it appears easier to continue to regard the university's role in on-going professional development as that as the structured provider.

To do so, however, is not only to risk increasing irrelevance and hence a potential loss of a client base, but, more importantly to miss the opportunities to make a difference to the schooling experiences of our young people.

REFERENCES:

Stenhouse, L. (1976) *An Introduction to Curriculum Research and Development*, London: Heinemann.

Beazley, K. (1993) *Teaching Counts*. Canberra: Department of Employment, Education and Training.

Commonwealth of Australia, Australian Education Union, Independent Teachers' Federation (1993) *Agreement between the Commonwealth Government and the Teaching Profession through their Teacher Unions Providing for an Accord to Advance the Quality of Teaching and Learning*. Canberra: Department of Employment, Education and Training.

GORDON STANLEY

One international trend emerging from economic restructuring and its impact on education is a concern about teacher education. Clearly where there is an agenda for change the nature of the workforce and its training becomes an issue. Similar issues of concern about teacher education are emerging across the globe whether or not there is a perceived shortage or excess in supply of teachers. The status of the profession potentially has a big impact on recruitment and on the resources available to educate and train teachers.

The status of teaching

Paul Ormerod (1994) in his trenchant critique of orthodox economics points out that the principle that the higher the demand relative to supply the higher the price does not apply to teaching. The main cause of this appears to be related to the status of teaching as a profession.

The status of teaching has been uncertain in public policy discussion from ancient times until the present. The ancient Greeks and Romans did not accord high status to teachers. Mitford Mathews has pointed out

"Those who taught children to read and write were regarded with great disdain and contempt. Whenever possible, slaves were assigned to this monotonous, unimaginative task. In old Athens there was a saying of one who was missing that he was either dead or had become a schoolmaster and was accordingly ashamed to appear in polite society. It was thought that kings and others of high rank who had lived evil lives would, in the next world, be forced to maintain themselves by teaching." Mathews (1966, p9)

The cause of low status and relatively low salaries for teachers in the US has been ascribed to the fact that many teachers are paid from public funds and are seen as a present tax on something to be contributed by their students much later. They are said to be on the

wrong side of the public-sector versus private-sector conflict and from being seen as a "burden" and "overhead" on private enterprise' (Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, 1993, p 140)..

In China Confucian philosophy ascribed high status to teachers. However as modernisation has gathered apace in China this has changed. Once teaching was among the most popular choice for university graduates, now it is among the last choice. A recent survey of teacher training students at Beijing Normal University indicted that 60% regret their decision and would rather enter a different profession after graduating. It is not only the low pay but also the declining status associated with teaching which is affecting their attitude.

The Japanese have a different attitude towards the teaching profession recognising that the knowledge implanted in children will be harvested later. Teachers earn an upper middle class salary because of the public importance attached to their work. In this regard they are somewhat unusual among modern nations (Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, 1993, p 140).

In Australia I suspect we have seen a decline in the regard and status of teaching as a profession, not unlike that which has occurred in many other countries. This raises the question of entry level characteristic of teacher education students.

Characteristics of entering students

Unfortunately we do not have any systematic data available on attitudinal and motivational characteristics of entry level students. There are of course many alternatives for higher level TE scorers beyond teaching. It is of interest therefore to consider trends in the choices of top level students. The proportion of students in the top 25% of TE scores in different fields of study at university from 1980/1 to 1992/3 are shown in Figure 1. It can be seen that the proportion going into teacher education has remained fairly low during this period with some encouraging increase since 1990/1.

Whether this trend upwards is temporary or not is yet to be seen. However it is worth noting that from 1990 to 1994 the mean minimum tertiary

entrance scores for education increased by 12.8 points as against a mean increase in all courses of 8.7 points.

The TE score is not necessarily a particularly helpful index of whether or not those selecting teacher education courses are strongly motivated to pursue teaching as a career and research does not indicate a strong correlation between entry score and qualities on graduation. Nevertheless it would seem that teaching is starting to attract a stronger field of entrants than was the case a few years ago.

The data presented on TE entry does not represent the inputs from those who are graduate entrants to teacher education of which there are an increasing number.

Rationalisation of Teacher Education

In WA there are five universities engaged in teacher education. It is a matter of some interest as to whether or not this is a sensible use of university resources as one would normally expect less opportunities for economies of scale and for concentrations of expertise to emerge when there are five separate programmes. Other things being equal one might expect that the big faculties of education would get bigger and the smaller faculties become marginal, especially in a time of steady state or decline in student numbers.

However the two biggest players in the local market are Curtin and Edith Cowan who have cut their programmes and are not gaining market share from Murdoch and UWA. Moreover the newest and smallest player UNDA is emerging with a growing share. In our forecasts of local need there would appear to be prospects for some growth in teacher education numbers especially from about 1996 onwards, ie at about the time that the current cuts have worked their way through the system.

There are strong arguments for a serious look at rationalisation or at least at some cooperative planning. The higher education dollar is going to be stretched further in the future than it has been in the recent past. There is no indication from any Government that there will be any return to the golden era pre-Dawkins which some arbitrarily refer to as the era of full funding. The system is expected to live within its current envelope of expenditure and teacher education will have a continuous fight for its share of resources relative to other claimants.

One of the unfortunate consequences of funding

pressure on education faculties is that it is occurring just at the time when the teaching task itself is undergoing most change and when there is a need to evaluate the effects of these changes. Given these real funding impediments priorities need to be set for relevant educational research. I recall talking informally with several Directors-General about the important role that education faculties can play in research and evaluation when they replied that they were amazed at how little research was being addressed towards the issues to which they were having to direct their attention.

Demand for Teachers

We have developed estimates for State demand for teachers. Forward projections have to make assumptions that one knows can be invalidated readily by public policy changes. Will the issue of fulltime pre-primary receive greater support? Will changes to year 11 and 12 curricula increase retention to year 12 in WA? Will the issue of six years of secondary education ever get addressed?

There is evidence for a greying of the current teacher population. Will there be an increase in people exiting the profession? Certainly during the recession there has been a dramatic slowing down of the rate of separations, which may change when the recovery builds up steam.

Depending on responses to these questions one can envisage the potential for greater or less growth than that predicted by the underlying population increase in WA. However there is a case for retention of teacher education numbers if not a gradual increase beginning in 1996. If this does not occur there could be a great pressure to increase numbers in a short period when a short-fall occurs rapidly.

Teacher education and teacher training

In the last two decades with the total transfer of teacher education to universities the emphasis has shifted from teacher 'training' to teacher 'education'. The undergraduate curriculum has been freed from what were often considered unnecessary departmental constraints. However many employers of teacher graduates are beginning to question whether the changes have led to a decline in emphasis on the skill aspects of teaching.

In the UK the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) found that around one third of lessons taken by new teachers were unsatisfactory. Not surprisingly this has led to a review of initial

teacher training. Key issues addressed by the reforms proposed in teacher training were:

- *teachers must have the key classroom skills necessary to maintain discipline; introduce pupils to the national Curriculum; and use testing and assessment to improve their own teaching as well as keep pupils and their parents informed about progress;*
- *the profession must be open to the best candidates from whatever background, and courses must be developed to give them genuine access to the necessary training;*
- *there should be a wider range of courses so that new teachers are not only competent professionals but have particular combinations of knowledge and skills to meet the increasingly diverse needs of schools; and*
- *schools should not only act as full partners with higher education institutions, but should also be able, if they wish, to play the leading role in planning and providing courses.*

Locally we do not believe that the outcomes of teacher education programs are as deficient as those in the UK. However as we do not have an independent audit process like Ofsted we can not be sure.

As the quality movement gains momentum there will be an increased emphasis on obtaining appropriate evidence that programs are meeting customer needs. What will constitute 'appropriate' data ought to be the focus of considerable debate and input from both students and employers.

It is clear that the roles and expectations of teacher performance are being affected by the myriad changes occurring in education. The growing emphasis on customised learning environments, regular testing and the development and integration of new technologies in the classroom are beginning to have an impact. As the demand for a greater vocational emphasis in the school program increases the skill profile for teachers will change.

Issues relating to teacher competencies and student outcome statements will require a focus on assessment and institutions will not be able to ignore the external pressures generated by these trends. If new graduates are seen to be deficient there will be greater pressure for increased employer representation on university faculty boards. Paradoxically this may occur at the very time when education departments shift away

from a role of professional oversight of school systems to that of a funder of devolved school operations. It will be increasingly important for the teacher educators to be in touch with the grassroots operations of schools where the most important professional functions will occur.

REFERENCES:

Mathews, M.M. (1966), *Teaching to Read, Historically Considered*. Chicago, Chicago University Press.

Hampden-Turner, C. and Trompenaars, A. (1993). *The Seven Cultures of Capitalism: Value Systems for Creating Wealth in the United States, Japan, Germany, France, Britain, Sweden and the Netherlands*. New York, Currency Doubleday.

Ormerod, P. (1994), *The Death of Economics*, London, Faber.