

Terms of Reference PART A - Attracting and selecting high-quality candidates into the teaching profession

1. How can we further encourage high-performing and highly motivated school leavers to enter ITE and choose teaching as a career?
2. What changes to admissions and degree requirements, including recognition of prior experience, would better attract and support suitable mid- and late-career professionals from other fields transition into the profession and become quality teachers?
3. How can we increase ITE completion rates so that quality ITE students graduate and pursue careers as quality teachers?
4. What more can be done to address issues with workforce supply in some subject areas (particularly maths) and schools?
5. How can we attract a more diverse cohort into ITE so that teachers better mirror the diversity in school students and society?

PART B – Preparing ITE students to be effective teachers

6. What more can we do to ensure that ITE curriculum is evidence-based and all future teachers are equipped to implement evidence-based teaching practices?
7. What more can ITE providers and employers do to ensure ITE students are getting the practical experience they need before they start their teaching careers?
8. How can Teaching Performance Assessment arrangements be strengthened to ensure graduate teachers are well-prepared for the classroom?
9. How can leading teachers, principals and schools play a greater role in supporting the development of ITE students?
10. Can ITE providers play a stronger role in ongoing professional development and support of teachers?

Quality Teacher Education Review

An introduction:

This year will conclude 42 years full time teaching in both Public and Independent High Schools, mostly of low Socio Economic and high LOBTE in New South Wales. I am teaching in my 5th year as a casual teacher. My teaching roles in Technology Education extend from Years 7 through to the Higher School Certificate in Engineering, Design and Technology, Industrial Technology stage 6 and stage 4 and 5 curriculums.

Other roles have extended to senior positions as subject Coordinator, and relieving Deputy Principal in school. Professionally, I remain active with my membership with the Institute of Technology Education, a past Federal President of that body and a past board member of the NSW Professional Teacher's Association. I have experience with syllabus development and curriculum panel membership. I mentored many years of teacher practicum from the Australian Catholic University.

I have served in schools as a Parents and Citizens President, and Parents and Friends President since my 5 children attended both Public and Independent schools.

My comments for the review panel:

I comprehensively agree that the teacher in the classroom is most important for a child's learning. Schooling is the greatest impact of growth in the child physically, emotionally, academically if not spiritually outside of the family. The generic literacies, Mathematics, Reading, Writing, computer and emotional literacies are developed in each subject a student undertakes in the curriculum, and co-curricula under teacher guidance underpinned by teacher ability, creativity and proficiencies.

A teacher's relationship across the breadth of a school curriculum is paramount to promote and maintain learning. I have enjoyed my responsibilities as much in the playgrounds, out of school activities and excursions.

There is a strong correlation between the teacher and their students love for learning. A passion in the classroom related to teaching as a 'ministry'. A good teacher wants to teach.

I believe there is a strong correlation between the broader co curricula such as sport with the teacher and the subject that same teacher experiences a student in his or her classroom. Classroom management has been easier for me as students' rugby coach and then as their coach in the classroom. My personal interests rebound into the classroom.

After school involvement in weekend sport, technology afternoons and holiday workshops allowed both a student to extend learning and a parent to view their child's learning as a reflection of teacher passion.

Quality teaching is a reflection of the mentoring given at both the practicum during teacher training and following a school placement. So, the longer a training teacher can be in the classroom supported by experienced teachers, mentored adequately will support quality teaching. Practicum requires good mentors and a lengthy duration to assist and perfect the craft of teaching. In a number of subjects, the experience a teacher in training owns and completes a project-based course (STEM or small Industrial Technology project) is essential to make mistakes or achieve the positives with students and teacher learning. Mentoring continues after teacher placement.

Active membership with a teacher professional association supports the teaching craft in many ways. Notably, develops skills as a teacher in a conduit of discussion and provides resources. Experienced teachers provide tricks for the trade, provide appropriate and known useful resources such as worksheets, management skills and collegial discussion and even with teacher banter. This informs and develops the mind

Within the curriculum syllabus I still teach, teachers who maintain their skills by constructing projects with the students in their care gain not only their proficiency for practical subjects but build esteem with both parents and students. That project management is passed onto the students.

New teachers who have had experiences outside of school in a trade, engineering profession or the range of Information technologies are a conduit for authentic learning in the classroom. Authentic, because realism of life outside of school, technological understandings and experiences gained are taken to the classroom. These experiences can be project management, communication strategies and protocols in industry. Teaching is dynamic.

My degree, BSc (Industrial Arts) completed with Honours in 1976 completed at UNSW allowed me a breadth of teaching expertise. I have had the opportunities to teach across Science and Mathematics apart from my technology subjects. Can I say this degree was completed with the generosity of a teacher scholarship! Teaching was not my first career after school, as it was working as a clerk in the Liverpool Petty Sessions courts impacted my teaching. There must be implications when only students enter a teacher training degree with a lessor ATAR. Drawing relevant year 13 or later students into teaching degrees with high ATARS can be the attraction with scholarships, appropriate university placement and finally, relevant and a fitting school placement.

So, to answer the question, why the shortages of teachers especially STEM subjects?

Teacher training similar to my degree developed my knowledge and understanding of STEM. Such degree does NOT exist now. Teacher training in project work where STEM specifically involves the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics of such project seems amiss and pigeon holes the degree in disparate subject areas. The relationship of the STEM disciplines is lost. So are the intricacies of problem solving, project management, creativity from a project apparently not transferred into the teaching of STEM. STEM teaching is still misunderstood. The value of the technologies I teach, namely Industrial Technologies and Engineering in the community is still viewed as Woodwork, Metalwork and Manual Arts. Much has been accomplished attempting dispel the notion of me and my colleagues as artisan teachers. I am a STEM teacher within my classrooms. What I teach, how I teach, what and how students learn in my classrooms is STEM!

Teachers in some schools may not be allowed ownership to their classroom. I understand that the craft of teaching, the pedagogies are learnt with experience with practice. Your ability to teach and students to learn develops with time. Your personal creativity influences your classroom and the students learning. Teaching a range of students in a range of schools. Teachers must learn their craft. Teaching is hard and not an act or facade within the classroom. Students see the real you! I have been asked about a duration of teaching in a particular school, I always said that 6 – 10 years is healthy for a teacher's life. Although, my career spanned 13 years as a Coordinator and relieving Deputy Principal at Cabramatta High School. However, the latter 4 years was completed serving alongside my classrooms with other professional responsibilities.

An Institute of teachers has been a positive step forward for the teacher profession. Though initially maligned and possibly still is due to the workload to maintain competence administration. Let alone working towards higher levels of accomplishment and leadership. There have been clearly mixed messages with individual schools, systems and teachers supervising this administration has brought frustration and taken the real work of the teacher out of the classroom.

To know your student is to understand how they learn, then teach to their individual learning traits. Ask my students who still communicate with me positively about our shared time in the classrooms. Comments usually pertain to our classroom relationship for learning and the excursions out of the classroom that are so valuable assisting learning. Alas, time is required to cover all of the protocols and risk assessments now for a simple trip into the school grounds and out of the classroom! I also wonder if teachers do know how to know their charges, they complete that by relevant and continued qualitative and quantitatively assessments? Time is required to complete and accurately assess. And this assessment is dynamic within each classroom. Assessment for every student in a classroom in my class of 20 is difficult enough. How more difficult is assessment for a class or 32 students?

The landscape for teaching, impinging upon learning has been now and remains a dynamic change from my first years using a blackboard and white chalk.

I do hope that the review is positive in relevant outcomes for teaching and teachers in the future.