

I am a practising mathematics teacher with a very strong subject content knowledge background (I have a PhD in mathematics). I was drawn to the profession on account of my love of both teaching and mathematics. In addition to teaching, I am an active research associate at Monash University in the School of Mathematics. I have past students who are currently undertaking research degrees in Mathematics at: Oxford University, MIT, UCLA Berkley and Cambridge University.

I believe that the current demand that students obtain a Master's degree makes it difficult to attract two important cohorts of talented people: (a) high-performing young students with an honours or master's degree in a specialised area and (b) professionals (such as accountants, journalists, engineers) who are looking to change careers. The Masters of Education degree is expensive, takes too long to complete, and serves no use in preparing students for the realities of the classroom.

Indeed, the Masters of Education is uniformly regarded by students to be a complete waste of time and money. Rather, it is a cynical requirement designed to simply shore-up funding for institutions via the accumulation of student debt, while simultaneously preventing young teachers from starting their careers, and disincentivising those who want a change in career.

I see no reason why a master/apprentice model wouldn't better prepare prospective teachers, once they have acquired strong subjects content knowledge. Additionally, if internship models have been so successful for medical students, then perhaps this is worth considering, and could bypass the compromised education faculties. There should be almost no barriers for people of talent to enter the teaching profession – whether directly from university with an advanced degree or from industry. Rather, there should be only be incentives – either financial incentives or the promise of job security.

Today, university education faculties have staff who serve to push an ideological agenda rather than promote methodology that actually works. The advocacy at such institutions is largely fad-driven, addressing issues such as "mathematics anxiety" and abolishing timetables practise from the classroom. The methodology promoted by these faculties does a disservice to candidate teachers, and then the students they go on to teach.

My overall recommendation is that Government funding should be redirected away from the education faculties at universities, and directed towards talented cohorts. The talented cohort would better learn on the job under the tutelage of experienced and talented teacher. These teacher mentors should not be self-selected so as to avoid ambitious and self-promoting types with little subject content knowledge, but should be handpicked by school leaders on the basis of merit. It should be seen to be an honour to be picked for such a role. This way, we would have actual talent nurturing talent. The redirected funding could be then split between the trainee teachers (who would be doing useful and mutually beneficial work as a teacher aid while learning on the job) and the teacher mentors. Additional funding should be given to trainees and mentors working out of difficult schools.