



Victorian Council of Deans of Education

18 April 2023

VCDE Response to the TEEP discussion paper

<https://www.education.gov.au/quality-initial-teacher-education-review/consultations/teacher-education-expert-panel-discussion-paper-submissions>

1. Strengthening ITE programs to deliver confident, effective, classroom ready graduates

There is an opportunity to ensure all teachers learn in ITE the evidence-based practices which improve student learning. In addition, there is an opportunity for graduate teachers to be assessed on these practices as part of their final year assessment (known as the Teaching Performance Assessment) so that they develop and practice their skills in these areas.

To what extent would this strengthen ITE to deliver confident, effective, classroom ready graduates?

The following points were raised in relation to this question:

1. The factors that happen once the graduate goes into a school are not being considered. The recommendations are all about ITE, but missing the point made in recent studies of the many impacts once in the schools. Recent research by Professor Robyn Brandenburg and colleagues on why teachers leave the profession should be considered.
<https://www.aare.edu.au/blog/?p=16439>
2. We need to see this report amongst all the reform agendas. The TOR was that this was for Teacher Education only. National School Reforms will be interesting for us to look at and see how they all come together.
3. There is an assumption in the report that these things are not already in ITE programs. It appears that the list is of topical things to include in ITE, but ITE needs to be based on the advice of experts on what is important. This list seems partial and doesn't fully reflect the range of knowledges that preservice teachers need.
4. Most providers are already doing the things they are telling us to do, but we may not be consistent. A proper audit of ITE programs would identify how much is currently being offered and whether some programs need revision.
5. Will ITE providers need to prove and verify what and how this content is it happening? Is it one subject, is it across four years, or a certain volume of learning? What is consistency and level of engagement? Redesign of curriculum is an enormous task and not completed quickly.

6. The way the report is drafted, and the language used such as the word 'reform', is of concern as it suggests that the writers have come up with something new, while many providers are already doing these things.
7. The way that First Nations people are represented is of concern in the list of enabling factors. Context is central, and while there are important bodies of knowledge for students to learn, it cannot be taken outside of the context of the individual learner. The learner and how they work in communities is missing in this report. This report suggests disaggregated bodies of knowledge without a sense of the learner, which is problematic.
8. TPA already exists. A closer examination of how an embedded (clinical) based approach to ITE ought to be considered. For example, Eastern College's proposed model for ITE incorporates an evidence-based portfolio which enables students in working with their mentor to record evidence over the life of their learning journey, to build a portfolio mapped against the standards, to support and leverage their learning journey.

2. Strengthening the link between performance and funding of ITE

Discussion

There is an opportunity to strengthen the focus on improving performance in ITE by setting standardised performance measures for higher education providers and reporting publicly against them. There is also an opportunity to strengthen the link between performance and funding through the provision of financial incentives to encourage higher education providers to strive for excellence.

To what extent would these opportunities provide a strengthened focus on improving the performance of ITE programs?

The following points were raised in relation to this question:

1. The weightings for different selection indicators are not clear. Retention/attrition data can be flawed. How will this be measured?
2. Transition funding should be available to lift performance. This proposal should not be about giving the money to those that are doing well already but working with those who are not.
3. Currently there are exhaustive measures at both a state and federal level that ensure the quality and performance of ITE providers to a very high level. The idea of introducing funding incentives to encourage higher education providers to strive for excellence suggests that this is not already in place and adds a layer of complexity that will only further polarise larger and smaller providers. All ITE providers are required to ensure all graduate are 'ready to teach' – which is realised through the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers at a Graduate Level.
4. This recommendation would potentially cut back on the diversity of providers and the long term diversity of the teaching workforce.
5. This recommendation seems inconsistent with the Universities Accord TOR. Why would ITE be on the only university subject that is subject to performance measures?
6. More clarity is needed on the position around performance. Clarifying what performance means and making sure there is data hygiene is important. Factors to be considered include what does retention actually look like, and does the measure consider people moving across courses in the university. Who is doing the prove and verify – TRAs? Are they fit for purpose to do that work? Is there an agenda around a national discussion on regulatory bodies?

7. AITSL provides very explicit guidelines for the accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia that has *“worked closely with key education stakeholders... expert input from experienced accreditation panellists and representatives of the teacher regulatory authorities.”* (AITSL, 2020). Under the frameworks to support the accreditation of initial teacher education, AITSL provide explicit guidance for Stage 2 accreditation to undertake *“analysis and interpretation of the evidence (ITE providers) have collected on program impact...(specifically) identifying areas of strength...innovations and planned improvements.”* (AITSL, 2020). These guidelines do not need financial incentives for ITE providers to undertake decisions that improve performance. This measure seems counterintuitive. AITSL and the TRA require ITE providers to present evidence in relations to pre-service teacher’s performance and graduate outcome (Program Standard 1). ITE program’s development, design and delivery take into account (Program Standard 2.2):
 - contemporary and emerging developments in education, curriculum requirements, community expectations and local and employer and national systems needs including workforce demands for teaching expectations for teacher specialisations.
 - The perspectives of stakeholders such as employers, professional teacher bodies, practicing teachers, educational researchers, and relevant cultural and community experts.
8. In terms of diversity, the funds are needed to put in supports for students that come from varying backgrounds. For example: sometimes students need literacy or numeracy support for LANTITE. There are costs to do that work: where does money come from?
9. ITE is not funded to support students transition to employment, so the recommendation has to include the combination of employers working in that space. ITE providers are not resourced to support students for two years after they graduate.
10. PTT workforce pressures – how will the change in student work/study patterns impact on the reporting of deliverables in this recommendation.

3. Improving the quality of practical experience in teaching

Discussion

There is an opportunity to improve the quality of practical experience in teaching through:

- developing more comprehensive system level agreements between school systems and higher education providers to improve the coordination and quality of placements
- developing national guidelines for high-quality practical experience
- supporting particular schools to specialise in delivering high quality placements who can share their expertise, and
- providing targeted support for ITE students with competing commitments, additional needs or studying in areas of workforce need to complete their placements.

To what extent would these opportunities improve the quality of practical experience?

The following points were raised in relation to this question:

1. The Hub model has been successful in terms of professional experience and highly commended by ITE providers. In NSW, the state government funds the hubs. There needs to be a commitment to funding for enhancing professional experience.

2. This is the best recommendation. There is disparity between one mentor and the next; the quality isn't always there. There are difficulties that providers have in organising placements. Standards for professional experience that are common to all and clear to all are needed.
3. The cost of placement not sustainable for our students. Even if we are giving rural and regional experiences it is because we are getting special state government grants for them to do that. Some do not have the ability to do four / five weeks practical experience without getting income for that time.
4. We are already doing this in Victoria, although it is impacted by availability of funding and increases in supervising teacher payments.
5. Salaries for graduates need to be commensurate with the demands of the job they go into.
6. In response to the 'Next Steps' report (2021) Eastern College has been developing a proposal to collectively establish an embedded, apprenticeship style teacher education model (Christian Initial Teacher Education Alliance - CITE). The approach will enable pre-service teachers to develop their skills through established partnerships between tertiary providers and schools.

4. Improving postgraduate ITE for mid-career entrants

Discussion

There is an opportunity to attracting mid-career entrants into ITE by:

- enabling mid-career entrants to enter the classroom sooner as part of their degree
- developing evidence and provide guidance on the features of effective programs to attract mid-career entrants, and
- improving the flexibility of available postgraduate ITE programs to support mid-career entrants in managing competing commitments.

To what extent would these opportunities improve postgraduate programs to attract mid-career entrants?

1. Victoria has many success stories about accelerated programs for mid-career entrants and is leading the way in relation to this recommendation. The Teach the Future initiatives funded by the Victorian Department of Education are a good example.
2. Feedback from students during uncertain financial situations is that they are often juggling at least one other job with their study schedule. There are many reports of students not attending classes because they clash with hours of work. With interest rates on the rise, this is unlikely to improve, especially for "career transitioners."
3. The Victorian Department of Education indicates that the time and cost of completing an ITE program are disincentives for mature-aged candidates to enter the teaching profession. Consequently many providers have developed innovative, accelerated and/or employment based ITE programmes.
4. Teacher demand and workforce shortages are forecast by the Victorian Department of Education to increase in coming years. The teacher supply challenges are more acutely identified in subject areas such as STEM, languages, applied learning and specialist education, and in some metropolitan and regional and rural areas. Stakeholder consultation

with school principals and leaders in the government, non-government and independent school sector all concur that there is an acute teacher shortage.

5. Do we want all our ITE courses to be the same? There are benefits to having variations.