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CHANGE

TRANSFORMATIONS IN EDUCATION

Innovations in Teacher Education

GUEST EDITORS: MIKE HORSEY (UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY)
SUSAN GROUNDWATER-SMITH (UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY)

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Editorial

This special issue of CHANGE on Innovations in Teacher Education had its genesis in the Review of Teacher Education established by the Minister of Education in New South Wales in the late 1990’s. The review received numerous public submissions, conducted a number of symposia, colloquia and conferences at different universities on different themes identified in the terms of the review, and undertook research on aspects of teacher education. During the review and its deliberations a number of innovative teacher education projects were identified. These innovative teacher education programs were noted in the final publication of the review Critical Times: Critical Choices (Ramsey 2000). These programs were identified as breaking new ground in advancing teacher education and responding to new demands on teaching and teacher education in a complex and changing environment.

During 2002 the developers of these teacher education programs were contacted to prepare a paper on the context leading to the innovation, its origin, its structure and features and its current challenges and achievements. Not all innovations in teacher education identified in the Teacher Education Review are described in the papers. To frame the innovations three special papers were commissioned. Anne Jasman, from the Quality Teaching Branch, Department of Education Science and Training in Canberra and Faculty of Education, University of Melbourne provided a scoping paper on developments in teacher education to establish the context for innovation. To frame the innovations in a national and international context, papers on the recent development of the Bachelor of Learning Management in Queensland (at the University of Southern Queensland) and the Master of Teaching in the United Kingdom (Institute of Education, University of London) were also commissioned. These papers outline radical developments in the curriculum and pedagogy of teacher education. They can be used to benchmark the progress of teacher education innovation as evidenced by the seven papers presented on innovative programs in New South Wales.

Anne Jasman argues that the context of teacher education in Australia is one of ‘benign neglect’. In explicating this she draws on the theme of Crossroads, taking the name of the 2002 Australian Federal Government Review of Higher Education as a metaphor for the paths facing teacher educators. She proposes that the repositioning of teacher education in university faculties, the development of new forms of professional regulation and the marginalisation of teacher education currently provides an opportunity for new discourses and initiatives. Using her experiences from within a number of professional development projects, teacher education programs and the development of professional teaching standards in Australia, she suggests that teacher education can embark on a new professional journey. Her paper describes the international, national and local context for the development of the innovative programs described in the issue.
Norbert Pachler and Jon Pickering, from the Institute of Education at the University of London outline the development of a new Master of Teaching that responds creatively to the new structural teacher education context created by successive reforms to teacher education in the United Kingdom. Central to this innovative course is its attempt to marry new technology mixed mode delivery aimed at developing new communities of teacher education practice that focus on the student’s classroom as the basis of inquiry and discourse. As well, the innovation responds to the new pathways in career development mandated by the New Qualified Teacher Status (NQTS) and other teacher professional reforms in the English education system. This paper shows how teacher educators can integrate their underlying philosophical approach of preparing scholarly teachers through inductive experiences with new structures for induction and career development. Both the modular design of the course and its focus on researching practice, present practical and theoretical solutions to the problems of designing and marketing teacher education in a period of rapid change. It is fitting that the paper concludes with a discussion of teacher professional learning and that the course is contributing to teachers ‘who are making their own learning the focus of developing of their pupils’ learning’.

Two papers explore major changes in teacher education pedagogy. Robyn Ewing, David Smith and Mike Horsley report on research on the case based Master of Teaching program at the University of Sydney. Apart from its unique structure and internship arrangements, this teacher education program was developed around case based pedagogy, where teacher written cases provided the resources for inquiry and inductive professional learning communities. This paper examines the implications of research undertaken on case based teacher education and links between teacher education curriculum and pedagogy. As well, Brian Cambourne, Brian Ferry and Julie Kiggins from the University of Wollongong discuss the evolution of a knowledge based community in a teacher education program, focused on problem based learning in school sites. The paper describes how the innovation links problem based and school based learning by developing new knowledge based communities of learning and reflects on the initial success of the program.

Richard Smith, David Lynch and Jim Mienczakowski from Central Queensland University outline the development and implementation of a new Bachelor of Learning Management (BLM). In a radical development of teacher education curriculum, the new program is based on the core concept of learning management. Developed around the knowledge domains of ‘pedagogy, essential professional knowledge, futures and networks and partnerships’ the new program aims to prepare work place ready learning managers highly skilled in achieving student learning outcomes. By structuring a teacher education program around eight learning management questions the program is designed to be future oriented and responsive to changes that are currently occurring in teaching, pedagogy, education and the ‘new economy’.

Two papers discuss innovations in Aboriginal teacher education, and the development of new programs that can better meet the learning needs of potential
Aboriginal teachers. Terry Mason, Carol Reid and Bob Perry from the University of Western Sydney discuss the evolution of their Aboriginal Rural Education Program (AREP); and Ross Hughes, Alma Fleet and Jennifer Nicholls from Macquarie University outline the development of their Indigenous Bachelor of Teaching for early childhood teachers. In their discussion of indigenous learning, both papers describe teacher education courses that challenge traditional assumptions about the nature of both curriculum and pedagogy of teacher education. As the papers chronicle, Aboriginal teacher education involves creating spaces for alternate modes of course delivery, new student support mechanisms and teaching arrangements.

The University of Western Sydney (UWS), the largest provider of beginning teachers to the New South Wales education system, has undergone significant restructuring in the last seven years. Events in the university system that impinge on teacher education at UWS, has significant implications for teacher preparation. Wayne Sawyer’s paper on pragmatics and articulation presents a case study on the development of secondary education programs at UWS. The paper shows how institutional restructures influenced the scope, shape and operation of teacher education and provided a catalyst for changes in the way that teacher education was offered.

The paper by Mike Horsley from the University of Sydney researches student teacher cultural reflection. The paper outlines a teacher education program based on university community partnership to provide learning experiences for student teachers in Sydney’s Polynesian communities. The program is designed to allow beginning teachers to better meet the needs of Polynesian Australian students through interaction with communities and schools. The impact of the program was researched by developing new ways to measure cultural reflection in new teachers.

The final paper by Tony Loughland and Bob Meyenn from Charles Sturt University explores the development and implementation of new information and communication technologies (ICT) in a teacher education program. The paper describes how electronic portfolios of professional learning were integrated into Bachelor of Education programs (primary and early childhood) in response to course evaluation that mapped ICT competencies. The paper reports that student e-folios were more successful than originally expected in allowing students to integrate their learning across courses more easily.

The guest editor would like to thank Professor Susan Groundwater-Smith for her insightful comments and suggestions.

MIKE HORSLEY, GUEST EDITOR

Dr Anne Jasman is now Policy Advisor for the General Teaching Council for England (anne.jasman@gtce.org.uk).