



**Notes to Accompany Appearance before the
Education and Science Committee Inquiry into Teacher
Education**

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Introduction

1. The review of teacher education is timely. Other countries, including the United States of America and Australia, have recently undertaken similar studies of their systems of teacher training.
2. Today, I want to discuss three related aspects:
 - A The current context for teaching;
 - B Attracting and retaining top class people into teaching; and
 - C Providing teacher training programmes that are flexible, relevant, stimulating and intellectually challenging.

A The current context for teaching

3. Ageing teaching work force (average age = 49 years).
4. Enrolment growth in secondary schools to 2016.
5. Impending retirements.
6. Attrition caused by:
 - Low salaries
 - Increased workload
 - Need for renewal
 - Lack of professional support
 - Desire to teach elsewhere
 - Greater opportunities in other professions.
7. World-wide competition for teachers; benefits other countries offer teachers include:
 - Signing bonuses in USA states of up to \$US20,000
 - Additional pay in areas of subject shortage, such as Maths and Science
 - Free rent, housing subsidies and reduced mortgage rates
 - Income tax credits, scholarships, bursaries and forgivable loans, relocation allowances, expanded benefit programmes, such as childcare
 - Efforts to create safe and healthy schools, class size reductions
 - Systematic induction and mentoring programmes
 - Provision of ongoing professional development opportunities.

B Attracting and retaining the ‘right sort’ of graduates

8. Currently in the UK, teaching is seen as an ‘unsustainable profession’ by many educational commentators and requires radical change if it is to attract a new generation of graduates into the classroom.
9. Such a situation is also imminent in the New Zealand context. Poor pay, low status and falling morale, allied to high levels of stress resulting from constant change, increasing bureaucracy and increasingly challenging students are key factors in our profession being unable to recruit and retain enough quality teachers to sustain itself in the long term.
10. We have little chance of catching the knowledge wave and reaching first class standards without first class teachers – dedicated professionals who have a wide and deep understanding of their subjects and a repertoire of proven strategies for delivering it to their students.
11. To attract such people into teaching, people with great energy, great toughness of fibre and high intellectual ability, a number of things need to be done including:
 - Raising teacher salaries significantly.
 - New roles for teachers. We can’t recruit or retain the best people to our profession, and we can’t make the most of their talents, when teachers can’t look forward to new challenges and increased rewards unless they leave the classroom to become administrators.
 - We need to do much more to extend and expand the role of mentors, of master teachers – excellent and experienced educators who help their colleagues and the school in many ways.
 - Find new ways to develop, reorganise and reward the knowledge, skills and responsibilities these new roles require.
 - Provide immediate and ongoing support on the job for new teachers.
 - Prepare new teachers better before they begin their new careers. Good teachers need to be really well educated. They need to know deeply the subject they teach. And they need to know how to teach.
 - A rigorous school and university education is essential – but it isn’t enough. Teachers’ Colleges must provide more meaningful, practical experience in the classroom for prospective teachers.

C Teachers' Colleges

Current criticisms

12. Several criticisms directed at Teachers' Colleges, including:
 - Poor quality applicants;
 - Obsessed with irrelevant political correctness;
 - Child-centred, progressive, constructivist pedagogy is the accepted orthodoxy;
 - Teaching is bad; mentoring, coaching and facilitating is good. "Abandonment" style of teaching;
 - Skills are 'in', knowledge is 'out';
 - Theory-driven rather than practice-driven; and
 - Lecturers who are out of date, aged, with little recent classroom experience.
13. Naturally these criticisms can be debated, but from my conversations with teacher trainees at Auckland Grammar School (we have over 100 each year), these criticisms are valid. Therefore, any review of teachers' colleges' programmes must at least investigate these criticisms rather than dismiss them as 'right wing' politicking. In my opinion one of the reasons boys in particular are not attracted into teaching is because of the prevailing ethos and culture of the teachers' colleges.

Tyranny of dogma

14. While teacher educators play lip service to diversity and the uniqueness of each pupil, when it comes to instructional philosophy all the dominant approaches can be traced to the progressive education movement. Strategies that hold this orthodoxy are described variously as 'student-centred', 'child-centred', 'learner-centred', 'discovery-based' and 'constructivist'.
15. This reigning orthodoxy demands not only obeisance but also the exclusion of dissenters. Such uniformity has created a regimen of approved thought about teaching, a pedagogical correctness.
16. This submission does not wish to denounce progressivism but rather to:
 - denounce dogma and faddism;
 - urge true instructional diversity, flexibility and respect for evidence;
 - appreciate the considerable merits of other approaches (e.g "instructivism"); and
 - insist that no one size can fit all. Pluralism is important!

Essential teacher competencies

17. In devising future teacher training programmes, five essential competencies must be the core of any programme. These are discussed in turn.
 - *Curriculum.* Teachers are expected to have 'content knowledge' about the courses they are teaching and they are expected to keep themselves up to date in

it. They are expected to know how to devise programmes of learning, how a curriculum is divided up and taught, the learning theory which provides the framework for a curriculum, and what constitutes the school's or the system's official policy relating to the curriculum currently in use.

- *Pedagogy.* Teachers must know how to teach; and must know about classroom management, modes of student learning and the teaching methods which are appropriate to those modes, and about appropriate teaching technologies. Teachers are expected to have mastered a range of teaching strategies.
 - *Assessment.* Teachers are expected to know how to evaluate student work, how to assess students' progress, how to report that progress constructively to students and to parents, how to keep cumulative records of progress in learning, and how to benchmark that progress. Every teacher is expected to have in place a programme of regular assessment for every student.
 - *Contribution to the life of the school.* As a member of the staff of a learning institution, each teacher is expected to contribute constructively to the wider life of the school, both formally by accepting responsibility for certain school-wide functions, and also informally by being concerned about the school's tone and culture, the well-being of its students, its reputation and community standing, and especially its relations with parents and the wider community.
 - *Contribution to the profession.* Each teacher is expected to be actively engaged with the teaching profession by participating in professional development, by being active in professional societies, by contributing to the development of the profession's knowledge and its craft base, and by being available to and assisting the growth of professional colleagues. The teacher is expected to think and behave like a professional, including being jealous of the validity of teaching's theory base and being earnest about extending it. (H. Beare)
18. Any teacher training programmes that relegate these five essential competencies to a marginal status (as many critics would say is happening now) cannot hope to either attract quality people or prepare a teacher trainee well for their future career. Without these the intellectual challenge of the profession is lost.

Flexible routes into teaching

19. As well as the varied routes already available, a recent trend in the UK, USA and parts of Europe is the 'School Centred Initial Teacher Training Programme' (SCITT).
20. From every point of view there is weight of evidence that such programmes have many advantages over traditional programmes.
21. The SCITT conducts the Teachers Diploma Programme from within the school with recognised tutors providing the support and training. The theoretical side is dovetailed with the school terms; the trainees taking the course in tangent with their teaching practice.
22. Benefits of school-based training:

- The greater time spent in the classroom environment: With the training conducted largely from within the school, the trainee has early opportunity to become acclimatised to the classroom and addressing pupils. This leads to a greater confidence when taking up their first post as a Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT).
 - High degree of contact with the pupils: by being introduced and involved in a school community at an early stage, the trainee is able to build up and maintain a relationship with the children they are teaching.
 - The quality of the schools involved in the SCITT partnership: the schools chosen to become training bases for the trainees have to be outstanding schools. They have achieved this status from providing leading examples of good practice or from consistent high achievement in certain subject areas.
 - The designing and running of the course by the schools: with a course constructed by teachers for teachers, the SCITT training programme is more relevant to the classroom experience. Trainees are taught by practicing teachers which helps to 'ground' the theory with practical concerns and issues.
 - The benefits to the school: involvement in the SCITT programme can bring considerable benefits to the school itself. The teachers involved in tutoring become more sensitive to their own practice and thus can be simultaneously refining their own methods. The prestige of playing an active part in the training of tomorrow's teachers also lends a new professional dimension to the school.
 - Greater job satisfaction for the teacher: training the student teacher alongside teaching a class can give a greater sense of value to the teacher's efforts in the classroom.
 - Allows for new roles such as the 'master teacher' concept.
23. While student teachers in New Zealand will get at most 15 weeks in schools, teacher trainees in Germany, France, Luxembourg and Chinese Taipei have full year internships (36-40 weeks). In the USA, newer graduate level teacher training programmes have begun requiring year-long intensive practice teaching or internship experiences that are school-based. Without doubt there is a growing importance attached to clinical practice through lengthy student teaching experiences.

D Conclusion

24. While it is important to look at teacher training, it is also important to recognise that difficulties in attracting and retaining enough high quality teachers reflects a cluster of factors that together make teaching an increasingly unattractive career option.
25. Any change to pre-service and in-service training of teachers will do little by itself to solve our present, or any future, teacher supply crisis. If our teachers' colleges cannot

attract sufficient numbers of able men and women who are themselves well educated, or if considerable numbers of well trained, able teachers are resigning, then clearly the problems facing schools lie elsewhere.

26. Wider education policies clearly matter to the sector's ability to attract good people. Recent policy changes, such as greater centralisation, reduction in school self-management and further regulation of the school sector are likely to make it harder to attract top-quality people into education.
27. Teacher training, though, needs significant and immediate attention if teaching itself is to gain credibility as a status profession.
28. Programmes must not be, as they are now, highly politicised, stressing one infallible orthodoxy.
29. The priority in initial teacher training must be to ensure that future teachers are well equipped with the knowledge of the subjects they are to teach and that they acquire a range of appropriate teaching methods.
30. There is no one best way of imparting to trainee teacher the knowledge and skills they require, and there must be diversity in the way teachers are taught.