Training teachers for VET in schools: from worker bees to architects

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Developing ‘a Southern Theory’ of University-based Teacher Education that is appropriate for the education of teachers for VET in schools programs

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Teaching over the other side of the school
The GDTE - teacher education
Overview of the presentation

• A discussion of university-based Teacher Education for VETiS
• Using two ideas to underpin this discussion:
  ‘getting out of the labyrinth’ coupled with ‘the great perhaps’
• Developing ‘a Southern theory’ of university-based Teacher Education and applying this to teacher education for VETiS
• A focus on the two year Graduate Diploma of Technology Education (GDTE)
  • Students enter with a trade qualification and industrial experience
  • Students graduate with two majors, Technology studies and VET in schools
  • From tradie to teacher
• The GDTE Course is up for re-accreditation with the VIT and therefore an opportunity arises for careful consideration and possible re-design
• Politically, VET in secondary schools is in need of a new and more powerful imperative or narrative around purpose – retention is not enough
Using the tandem concepts of ‘getting out of the labyrinth’ and ‘a new perhaps’

• John Green writes novels about young adults for young adults, books like ‘The fault in our stars’ with characters like Hazel Grace Lancaster and Augustus Waters, and ‘Paper Towns’ with Margo and Quentin

• In particular I want to borrow the tandem concepts that he uses in his book ‘Looking for Alaska’. These are . . .

• ‘getting out of the labyrinth’ and the idea of ‘a new perhaps’
A simple change model applied to the course review and design process
a unique and interesting Univ-based Teacher Education course . . .

the Graduate Diploma in Technology Education (GDTE)

- The Graduate Diploma in Technology Education has some unique features
- Registration as a teacher requires the completion of four years of university education
- Entry criteria = trade + 8 years industrial experience
- trade + 8 years industrial experience = Two years credit
- Two years credit + two years full time = four years
- The GDTE is two years full time but which is timetabled so that participants can keep working in their day jobs
- GDTE classes are timetabled on weekends or consecutive days
# GDTE COURSE STRUCTURE

## Year 1

### Semester 1
- **EDU4LNP** Literacy and Numeracy for Professional Educators
- **EDU4VTM** VET Teaching Method
- **EDU4UML** Understanding Multimedia for Learning

### Semester 2
- **EDU4CDD** Curriculum Development and Design (30 CP)
- **EDU4IPA** Teaching Practicum A (Professional Experience 20 days)
- **EDU4TDC** Technology and Design in Context (30 CP)

## Year 2

- **EDU4CPL** Creating Positive Learning Environments
- **EDU4MTT** Methods of Teaching Technology
- **EDU4IPB** Teaching Practicum B (Professional Experience 20 days)
- **EDU4IPC** Teaching Practicum C (Professional Experience 20 days)
- **EDU4IVS** Introduction to the VET system (Cert IV in Workplace Training and Assessment)
- **EDU4SPC** Safe work practices in the VET Learning environment (OH&S Units)
Working in the Trade

Working in positions allied to their trade

Working in Secondary Schools on permission to teach

Teaching in VET/TAFE

School Support Roles

The GDTE

Placements

A

B

C

Teaching in Secondary Schools VETiS & Technology Studies including Product Design Food & Technology

Tasters

Prep for Trades (Pre Apps)

Imagineering

STEMS

Teaching Applied Learning

Sport & Camps

Option to move into teaching in the future

Staying in existing non-teaching role in industry
Considering the student experience of the GDTE

• What do the students think of the current version of the course?

• What are the most important elements, what are the least important?

• What needs to be added in, what taken out?

• Does the GDTE need to be reconceptualised, a major reconceptualising, a major revision or a minor revision?
Transformative learning in the GDTE, a change in identity

• Five data sets

Analysis of . . . .
• Student feedback data
• Student work in capstone subject (EDU4TDC)
• Marks awarded to GDTE participants for their third practicum (EDU4IPC)
• Reflective writing within the course (EDU4CDD)
• Interviews with GDTE participants and graduates, VET teachers and VET managers (n=14)
Product Design Folio

Timber Outdoor Hanging Chair

- Measure materials before cutting.
- Cut the following:
  - 1000 mm x 1200 mm panel size.
- Use CNC file into CNC machine.
- Machine components on CNC machine.
- Sand matched components on sanding bench with orbital sander.

- Mark out and cut with up saw the horizontal crossing back hoop section.
- Screw normal back hoop onto horizontal, no glue/drift with.
- Glue and screw under side horizontal hoop to horizontal cross beam and assemble.
- Glue and screw horizontal cross beam to horizontal cross beam and assemble.
- Apply two coats of exterior wood preserver to framework to provide durability and long lasting finish.

Sand all surfaces removing any glue or pencil marks, remove all chippings and

Stage 5: Evaluation

Simon Hampton - 90118018 - October 2011
Folios
TDC folios
Table 1: Practicum placement results for preservice teachers in the GDTE in 2014.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2014 marks</th>
<th>Grades awarded by mentor teacher working in the placement school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First of three placements</td>
<td>A= 12; B=4; C=2; D=2; Total =20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second of three placements</td>
<td>A=15; B=9; Total=24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third of three placements</td>
<td>A=20; B=3; C=2; Total=25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And the Third placement in 2015</td>
<td>A=15; B=6; C=1; Total 22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reflective writing in EDU4CDD

• Reflection, thinking it through and writing
• Struggled with the depth of thinking but will read further
• Leave the old ways and stop looking for the magic strategy
• The agency of the teachers and the importance of values
• The mechanics, the theories and philosophies and wanting to read more and expand on some of the topics
• Re-evaluating my purpose, methods educational and life philosophies
• Giving considered gender-neutral advice during a class
• The role of the teacher in supporting gendered identities and respect
Reflective writing in EDU4CDD

• Confronted by the history of our indigenous culture
• Action and the need for a new breed of inclusive teachers
• Feeling uncomfortable about indigenous politics, noticing in my area of fashion a report that Vogue has only ever had an Aborigine woman on the front cover twice in its history, Aboriginal women are encouraged to say they are European to justify their dark skin . . . This week’s class has given me another agenda that I will need to bring to my teaching
• The opportunity to reflect, think and change
• The need to think and question your own assumptions and actions
• Really think about why I teach
Reflective writing in EDU4CDD

• I have changed my mind on all the topics
• I have changed how I look at the role of a teacher
• Thought provoking, soul searching and focusing on what do I truly value
• Becoming aware of the way that teachers need to think
The GDTE is up for re-accreditation through VIT

- The GDTE is accredited through the VIT as a teacher education program. VIT has developed a set of standards that all Teacher education courses need to satisfy.
- The standards provide the basis for designing the program and determining the learning outcomes that the graduates of each teacher education course need to achieve.
- The designers of teacher education courses have to explicitly show how the courses that they are putting up for accreditation satisfies each of the VIT standards.
- If the accreditation panel agrees that the proposed course satisfies the VIT standards then it is approved for accreditation.
- Accreditation of the program means that all the graduates of that program are then automatically eligible for registration as a teacher.
- Accreditation is approved for five years.
- The accreditation period is up on the GDTE and it is time to carefully consider strengths and weaknesses, pros and cons, what has worked well and what not so well, what needs to be discontinued and what needs to be included – its time to review the course
Re-accreditation is an opportunity to upgrade and to innovate.

• The accreditation is for five years and so in its next iteration the GDTE course needs to serve its graduates from 2017 – 2022. Therefore, at the forefront of the redesign process is the consideration of what do our secondary school teachers need to know and be able to do in 2022?
• This is the part where we as designers of Teacher Education programs need input and assistance from others.
• What are the current innovations that are applicable to these graduates and this area of work?
• What are the future needs of the graduates of these courses?
VIT doesn’t need VET trainers to be teacher trained

• A further complication in the process is that the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) has conducted a review of their Permission to Teach policy (PTT) and are currently in the process of drafting a revised policy for implementation in the second half of 2016. In essence, they have removed the requirement for VET trainers who work in secondary school programs to attain an approved teacher qualification. Thereby allowing VET trainers to apply and work in schools with ‘Permission to Teach’ status. The rationale for this relaxing of minimum standards for teaching being that for VET trainers their currency within industry is more appropriate.

• However the effect of this decision is that VET in schools trainers are no longer required to be teacher trained. This exemption means that those teaching VET in schools programs no longer need to be real teachers. The VET trainers who work in secondary schools will still need their Certificate IV in Training and Assessment and as good as this qualification is, this means that when the VET trainers enter the school staffroom they do so as less qualified than their colleagues who teach in all the other subject areas in the school. The VET trainers will be ‘less than’.
Teacher Ed for VET in Schools teachers becomes optional

- If I am right and we can substantiate that the student experience of doing the GDTE as a university-based teacher education program and the VIT don’t see this as necessary, then what the VIT is saying with this policy is that they want tradies with their Cert IV TAE, teaching VET in our secondary schools. And that there is no difference to teaching VET in any VET context or as provided by any VET provider including secondary schools.

- Let me be really clear about this, I want to stand up here and now and say that in my opinion I believe that there are significant and important differences in teaching VET in schools programs to the young people in our secondary schools.

- I don’t want “the VET less-thans” teaching in our secondary schools, and I am sure that one way or the other, come 2022, you will agree with me.
Consider the value and efficacy (the capacity to produce effects) of university-based teacher education

• Speaking for my colleagues and myself, we want to do teacher education differently than what we do. None of my colleagues defend the class sizes of up to 300 pre-service teachers who get packed into lecture theatres in other teacher education programs. We all recognise that this is not conducive to understanding the evidence and knowledge base of teaching and it certainly doesn’t help to develop teaching practice. Instead these models of provision are about the economics of teacher education and the viability of provision. It is not about providing quality teacher education.

• What is good about university-based teacher education

• Some independence with the content
• Gale (2012) and Gale & Parker (2013) have started to take up the challenge of thinking about Connell’s notion of ‘a Southern Theory’ (Connell 2007) and what this would look like if it was applied to the field of higher education and in particular social equity in HE.

• Gale & Parker (2013) argue that a southern theory of HE suggests that the quality of the education which is thought about as the learning environment and the learning experience, ‘needs to be refashioned to serve the interests of those who access it’. Further these interests need to be informed ‘by the students’ own aspirations for their future rather than the aspirations of government’, (pg 61). Gale (2012) wants to move beyond social equity as giving bodies access, rather he wants the Higher Education learning environment and experience to recognise, value and incorporate what the members of these previously excluded socio-cultural groups embody and can themselves bring to higher education.
Doing HE Teacher Education differently – ‘a Southern Theory’ of Teacher Education

• For Gale (2012) a southern theory of Higher Education involves an authentic ‘engagement with difference’. He explains that this has three dimensions, the first is that the students are appreciated for who they are and how they identify themselves; second, there are opportunities in the learning environments and experiences for all learners to make knowledge contributions as well as develop their own understandings and skills; third, students are provided with genuine opportunities to shape how their learning environments and experiences are structured, (pg. 251). He provides an example of indigenous students and their own ways of knowing and their own knowledge and skills.
Doing HE Teacher Education differently – ‘a Southern Theory’ of Teacher Education

• Gale (2012) argues for a more refined approach to social equity and to the teaching and learning. He describes the first generation of the ‘First Year in Higher education’ (FYHE) as involving university student support services and including co-curricular activities. The second generation of FYHE involves enhanced curriculum design. He concludes, these activities are important but they do not constitute all there is to student equity. A more sophisticated approach entails the creation of space in HE not just for new kinds of student bodies but also for their embodied knowledge and ways of knowing, (p. 254 – 255).

• Locating the GDTE students within and as part of this development of ‘a southern theory of HE’ may be politically strategic.
Explicitly apply ‘a Southern Theory’ of Teacher Education to the re-consideration and re-design of the GDTE

• A collaborative program review and course design process where the users and participants are actively involved to contribute.

• Valuing and feeding in the knowledge of working people into the university

• Billett (2013) argues that with respect to VET programs - greater voice needs to be given to the practitioners of vocational work (the skilled workers), the educators who teach the vocational practices and the students who are the learners within VET. Likewise this inclusiveness into the design, interactions and engagement can be argued to be important for university-based Teacher Education programs.

• The central challenge then in applying a southern theory to the re-design of the GDTE as a university-based teacher education program is to determine ways that the program can be made more inclusive and responsive to the needs and interests of the students?

• Ways need to be found so that the work expertise, life experience and diversity of the participants are able to be utilised as a resource for this community of practice.
VET in schools is under pressure with numerous pros and cons

• VETiS helps to broaden the curriculum and course options for students in senior secondary schools. Offering a broader range of courses supports secondary schools retaining a broader range of students.

• A great deal of expectations and pressure for completion of VETiS qualification to assist students achieve smooth transitions from school to workplaces. The efficacy of VETiS to assist this transition has become increasing problematic over the past 20 years with less and less able to gain employment after leaving secondary school without any further or additional training.

• The efficacy of qualifications obtained in a particular occupation doesn’t necessarily lead to employment in that occupation or industry.
Is there a chance to do ‘VET in schools’ differently

• VET in schools should be promoted as a strategy as a pathway into middle level and higher level VET qualifications rather than into employment.
• Could there be a broad base of units in schools undertaken as an industry wide pre-cursor to further training and employment.
• Increased agency, active informed decision making on the part of the learners around their choices.
• More tasters, and trade exploration programs
• Could there be a greater take up of VETiS at the regionals and nationals of Worldskills
• What about STEM related programs?
• Development of Imagineering, increase the design content and develop a combined design, make and evaluate model.
What should the 2016-2022 version of the GDTE look like?

- Include a range of conceptions of what VET in schools might be like in the future . . .
- STEM
- Applied learning
- Increased emphasis on literacy and numeracy (Foundation skills)
- Imagineering
- A strand in an Undergraduate program
In conclusion,

- The GDTE carries on a long tradition that proves that tradies can successfully participate in and complete university-based teacher education programs and become highly effective and professional teachers.

VET teachers who have undertaken univ-based teacher education...

- all find jobs
- self report substantial change from undertaking such studies
- are qualitatively different to those who have not
- are more professional and think more deeply about the aims, philosophies, values and practices associated with teaching
In conclusion,

The GDTE has started to, and is fertile ground for, the continuing development of ‘a Southern theory’ of teacher education . . .

• encourages the participation of different and diverse cohorts of students into higher education
• For example, tradies to teachers
• But it is more than getting more bums on seats it is about getting certain bums on seats AND THEN it is about actively utilising the inclusiveness and reflexivity of the interaction and engagement within the learning environments
• Makes space for, uses, and includes, the knowledge, understandings and life experiences of those previously excluded from HE . . . such as people with trade backgrounds
• is a resource for the benefit of all the learners;
In conclusion,

• For the GDTE,

• There is a need for open mindedness and broad consultation drawing inputs from a wide range of sources.

• Clearly to be consistent with the argument, part of the consultations and inputs needs to include past students and graduates, VET Teachers working in schools, Principals, appropriate staff in TAFE and VET providers.
Your questions and comments?

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