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Initial Preparation of Secondary Teachers: Implications for Australia

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Abstract: Observation of secondary art teacher education in the United Kingdom and Australia has revealed a range of differences, including a greater role for schools in initial teacher education (ITE) in UK. The literature reporting on research into preparation of teachers in UK indicates a general satisfaction among students regarding their experiences in schools. However some issues of concern arise which need to be considered if there is a move towards greater involvement of schools in ITE in Australia.

Introduction

There is ongoing discussion in Australia about a possible shift towards school-based teacher education. Indeed, England and Wales made this shift two decades ago. In this paper I seek to report on observations of a school-based secondary art and design teacher education program in the United Kingdom. The report is informed by current literature in the field and comparisons are made with the Australian context. The conclusions will draw out the strengths and weaknesses in both situations and address implications for future practice in Australia.

England and Wales – A Context

The rationale behind the shift in Britain to a greater role for school-based education is seen by Bridges (1995: 64) to have three bases: the strengthening of the school as the 'unit of educational responsibility'; an acknowledgement and enhancement of teachers' professionalism; and an emphasis on experiential learning. These changes have increased the school-based component of initial teacher education (hereafter ITE) with 'a key role for teachers as mentors' (Kerry & Shelton Mayes 1995: 1). This reflects a fundamental shift from teachers supervising students in the application of learning gained from ITE courses to the teachers educating students based on their skills as practitioners. The practical classroom knowledge of teachers ie. knowledge of children, situations, subject matter and strategies, it is argued, is essential to the teacher education process (Maynard & Furlong 1995).

The Literature

These changes have not taken place without extensive critique (Bridges 1995; Geen & Harris 2002; Hagger *et al* 1992). The Department of Education and Science (1991: 36), itself, drew attention to 'the quality of teacher involvement in planning, providing and assessing training and the quality of co-operation between higher education and schools'. However, concerns raised by critics include the extra burden placed upon already busy teachers by

mentoring and the failure of authorities to provide adequate training and resources including time for planning with and for debriefing students.

Another concern of teacher educators is the role of critique and alternative views to mainstream schooling. Bridges (1995: 78) writes that the undermining of higher education's role in ITE is accompanied by the concern that the increased corporatisation of schools may lead to a form of 'professional parochialism' and a narrowing of students' professional training. He argues that higher education still has an important role to play: in collecting together and passing on professional knowledge; in development through discussion, reading and encouragement of reflection ideas and conceptual structures to inform and shape observations; and in the development of moral schemata and wider socio-political frameworks of thinking, including the need to question and the growth of personal integrity. Such frameworks enable students to question normalised and often inequitable practices in schools that might otherwise have gone unobserved and unchallenged.

The notion of "partnerships" between schools and higher education institutions raised by the Department for Education (1992) supports contact for students with both teachers and staff from higher education. This is reinforced by Bridges (1995: 71) who sees the broader collaborative model engaging many voices as a foil to the increasing narrowness of corporate models proposed by right wing ideologues. He writes that the benefits for the teaching profession from ITE partnerships include the 'invigoration of the professional and intellectual context of teachers' working lives' (Bridges 1995: 78).

A number of models of initial teacher education exist including: the apprenticeship model; the competency model; and the reflective practitioner model. These models are outlined below to form a basis for comparisons between the UK and Australian contexts. The role of a mentor as part of teacher education is fundamental to the models. Geen (2002: 8-9) writes that the term "mentor" has been defined variously as information provider, role model and door opener, someone committed to good teaching and professional development, someone who guides and teaches. So mentoring entails a complex interactive process requiring modelling, sponsoring, encouragement, counselling and friendship to promote the professional development of an individual (in Geen 2002: 9).

The *apprenticeship model* has been discussed by a number of writers. Aspects of this model include collaborative teaching and focused observation. Collaborative teaching (Hagger *et al* 1993: 1) involves 'the joint planning, delivery and evaluation of a lesson by a student teacher in partnership with the mentor' and helps students learn first hand (Brooks & Sikes 1997: 106). Tomlinson (1997: 51) writes that this strategy allows students to remain 'within the mentor's framework', beginning with more support and gradually moving to less support to develop their teaching repertoire. Maynard and Furlong (1995) state that collaborative teaching belongs to the apprenticeship approach of initial teacher education where students are able to model themselves upon the mentor thus enabling them to acquire understandings of learning and teaching strategies. Collaborative teaching can take three forms: the teacher and classroom assistant mode, the linear sequence mode and the class division mode. Collaboration can also be between student teachers, a sort of buddy system where more experienced trainees mentor younger students. Focused observation involves shifting from student to teacher perspectives and developing understandings of experienced teachers' practices, getting a sense of standards set by teachers and different ways of doing things, learning to monitor progress of a lesson and to analyse what is happening in the classroom, and to identify things not understood that can lead to further discussion with the mentor (Hagger *et al*1993: 42-43).

The *competency model* assumes that learning to teach involves the acquiring of certain competencies and that the mentor trains or coaches the student, providing feedback on teaching practice and progress in developing professional knowledge. In England and Wales,

Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) is awarded once competencies, as defined by the government, are mastered (see Geen 2002: 11, 26-30).

The *reflective practitioner model* assumes that the professional development of teachers should involve "education", rather than "training" in which apprenticeship implies a mechanistic approach and competency implies a reductive approach. Ghaye and Ghaye (1998: 4) draw on the work of Donald Schön (1983) to explicate this notion of training. Training results in *technical rationality* or the application of theory in the classroom by teachers who do not 'question the context in which they are teaching and how this liberates and constrains what they do'. They use Schön's term, *knowing-in-action,* as a more appropriate construct. This is described as a process of application of teacher knowledge to encourage children to learn which can be difficult to put into words. As this often unconscious and unarticulated knowledge is drawn upon in teaching and provides an implicit framework for action and as it is value-laden, reflection provides a basis for the recognition of and challenging of those previously unquestioned assumptions and attitudes.

Based on this view Ghaye and Ghaye (1998) argue that there is value in reflection in the framing of problems to draw on the kind of knowledge embedded in the workplace that is generated through practice, for the use of teachers among themselves. So *reflection-in-action* enables professionals to address and resolve problems arising in practice. It determines whether our knowing-in-action is adequate and often takes place when normal practice is challenged requiring a rapid interpretation of the situation to guide further action.

Reflection-on-action sets out to improve future action in a conscious and public way after an event. It can lead to the generation of professional knowledge and the improvement of practice. 'Reflective practice is a research process in which the fruits of reflection are used to challenge and reconstruct individual and collective teacher action' (Ghaye & Ghaye 1998: 5). The important outcome of empowerment can contribute to teachers' new found sense of professionalism, to respect for the profession in general, to personal efficacy and importantly to a more democratic learning context for children (Ghaye & Ghaye 1998: 115-116).

Mentors can use three approaches proposed by Schön (1988) to aid development of attributes of the reflective practitioner in their trainees. These are *joint experimentation*, the *follow me* approach and the *hall of mirrors*. In the first, the aim is to create and sustain a process of collaborative enquiry through joint planning, action and evaluation. The *follow me* approach involves the modelling of strategies followed by analysis of performance. The *hall of mirrors* requires the student and mentor to engage in a dialogue about the student's performance, inquiring into a range of perspectives and understandings. Such an approach is more likely to lead to reflection-on-practice including the interrogation of underlying attitudes and values (in Geen 2002: 12). The important outcome from reflection-on-practice is that students can develop personal theories that then may be related to more formal theory derived from readings and theory lectures.

Maynard and Furlong (1995: 18) conclude that each of these models is inadequate by itself to meet the changing needs of students over their "apprenticeships" but, when taken together, they provide more effective mentoring and more effective teacher education. However, based on their research with secondary teaching trainees in Wales, Geen and Harris (2002: 1) warn that 'secondary school mentors were often less successful in exploiting the advantages associated with 'competence' and 'reflective practitioner' approaches'. Their results reveal a range of concerns about school partnerships and the mentoring of student teachers.

In Australia, the reflective practitioner model is strongly supported in teacher education. *New teaching, new learning* published by The Australian Council of Deans of Education (hereafter ACDE), clearly confirmed the importance of reflective practice. The report (ACDE 2004: 42) quotes Alan Reid (2001) who argues that more time in schools for

ITE 'simply reproduces the *status quo* and reinforces the idea that teachers are technicians'. The report supports Reid's position that 'advocates a model based on enquiry into educational practice which would involve project work and greater collaborative learning, between students, teachers and academics (2001)'. Cherednichenko and Kruger (2001: 7), concerned that teacher education is driven 'top-down' by HEIs, propose an approach, 'an inquiry pedagogy for partnership based teacher education', to overcome the divide between theory and practice. Changes in the partnership, argue Yardley and Lock (2004) leading to greater balance, would allow for an enhanced role of schools in ITE.

School Partnerships

According to Geen and Harris (2003), students in Wales spend one third of their course at the HEI and two thirds at partnership schools, where along with teaching practice they receive tuition from subject and senior mentors (see Geen, 2002 and Hagger *et al*, 1993 for more detailed discussion of mentors' roles). HEI tutors visit schools to observe and evaluate students' practice and progress and liaise with and support school mentors. As well, tutors are responsible for quality assurance, ensuring that consistent standards are applied across schools (GTTR 2002: 25).

A number of studies have set out to evaluate the effectiveness of mentoring and school and HEI partnerships from the student teachers' points of view (Booth 1995; Geen & Harris 2002, 2003). The majority of students (77 per cent) canvassed by Martin Booth (1995) felt they were "very well" or "quite well" prepared to teach subject specialisms after their largely HEI based first term of their course. Therefore, the students started their teaching practicum with a generally high level of confidence. At the completion of the practice block students were again assessed for confidence with the greater majority claiming a higher level of confidence and preparedness to teach their subjects. Evidence from the questionnaires pointed to the key role of the mentor in the process of learning to teach, including building on subject specific pedagogy of the HEI component of the course and general skills of lesson preparation and class management. However students identified some concerns which included lack of confidence: in liaising with education professionals and parents; in teaching students with special needs; in using information technology in the classroom; in teaching students from different cultural backgrounds. Perceptions of successful mentoring were also high with 88 per cent of students expressing satisfaction in terms of positive attitudes, encouragement and approachability, and time allowed by mentors. As the data suggests that the information sought and received by students was of the "professional commonsense knowledge" kind, this raises concerns about the possibility of developing the "reflective practitioner" within this framework. Students identified the lack of overall school policies on student teachers and the senior mentors' failure to effectively carry out their roles. Booth concludes that students at this stage of their initial teacher education seek a positive, unthreatening environment where support and mentoring advice on immediate and practical subject specific issues, including management and control, are readily available. While students are concerned primarily with these immediate and practical issues, as a result of their experience in schools they also identify the need for time to broach broader issues that are important for professional competence and understanding. Booth (1995: 97) advises that the HEI has the 'key role in ensuring that the broader issues are addressed'.

Initially HEIs have a responsibility to prepare students for their practical experiences. Burn *et al* (2003: 329) question the ways HEIs and schools should work together to address the complexity and diversity of each student teacher's development over the one year of postgraduate teacher preparation. There needs to be recognition, they say, of the varying

needs of individuals who are learning a 'highly complex craft in demanding circumstances'. Zanting *et al* (2003: 200) argue that because students are so absorbed in their own teaching, they need some direction as to how they can 'explore their mentor teachers' practical knowledge'.

Geen and Harris (2002, 2003) reported on students' perceptions of the current state of partnerships between HEI and schools and the effectiveness of the mentoring process. The authors summarise that, for 200 students responding to questionnaires, during practice teaching 'collaborative teaching enabled them to acquire understanding of learning and teaching strategies in terms of the "apprenticeship" model of initial teacher education and training'. The majority (90 per cent) felt the teacher/assistant model allowed them to learn first hand pedagogic skills and that a wider knowledge of skills was enabled by teaching with a number of staff. The mentor's presence for support and guidance in the beginning of placement was reassuring to 86 per cent. Over 80 per cent felt that through the linear model skills could be acquired in a progressive manner as confidence increased. For 89 per cent of students the class division model enabled them in small groups to discover more about the learning process and 86 per cent of students also felt that the collaborative model was of value to their pupils through a greater range of teaching strategies, smaller groups and increased pupil interaction with a teacher. Pair and group teaching, led to sharing of ideas, refining thinking and strategies for delivery and 72 per cent of students felt less apprehensive when facing the class with a buddy present (Geen & Harris 2002).

The students identified the following constraints. There was failure by some mentors to exploit the benefits of the collaborative teaching model and 33 per cent of students felt teachers did not share professional knowledge. Students believed they were treated as an extra pair of hands rather than learners. Discussions about planning and evaluation were often too brief and mentors' choices of methodologies were not always explained. Some teachers failed to model good practice and the possibility to work across the range of pupil abilities did not always eventuate. Students' programmes were not always organised in a progressive manner or with reference to the standards or competencies. During evaluation of jointly taught lessons, mentors were not willing to evaluate their part but were critical of student's role where more careful planning and briefing might have avoided any problems. Differences arose between expectations of student and mentor eg. pupil noise, and about who the authority figure was for pupils.

While many students felt more confident working with a partner or buddy this led to problems when the partner did not cooperate. Group planning was found to be more complex and time consuming thus creating stress about such issues as unfair distribution of labour and what to do with a weak student in the group. Planning constraints caused by timetabling and logistical problems also impacted on group work. Fewer students evaluated lessons when involved in team teaching than when working with school staff (Geen & Harris 2002). Other research (Beaumont 2003; O'Neil in Geen & Harris 2002) supports the value of peer and team teaching. Groups or teams also allow experimentation in a range of pedagogic styles leading to discussion and reflection and peer support. Audrey Beaumont (2003: 19) writes that 'students become critical friends ... group activities are recorded using a camcorder as a means of self and peer appraisal and used as a resource and teaching aid to further develop students' professional practice'. Team activities allowed art students to draw on one another's expertise within the disciplines of the subject and through careful planning ensured these skills were fully integrated into the school program taught by each team (O'Neil in Geen & Harris 2002).

A major constraint to effective mentoring was lack of time. Despite the high level of satisfaction with teaching practice arrangements expressed by students in both studies, Booth

(1995) and Geen and Harris (2002) report that mentors lacked the time to give the degree of support considered desirable, a concern that continues to arise in surveys and research.

In their 2003 paper, *Which way forward? The views of students on the future direction of initial teacher education and training in Wales*, Arthur Geen and Charlie Harris make a number of recommendations for future practice. With regard to the preparation of mentors, in-service training is required to develop understanding of models of teaching and effective techniques for collaborative and reflective practice. The provision of time for mentors is necessary to release them from other duties to effectively carry out their teacher education role. Control systems need to be put in place to ensure students' experiences in schools are consistent across schools and consistent in quality. In the Geen and Harris study students confirmed the need for a range of settings for their practicum placement because movement around a number of schools allows a wider range of experiences.

The students supported the role of the HEI in providing initial teacher education as students' experiences of senior mentors and collaboration with subject mentors led them to emphasise the value and the need for out of school education. They saw that the main role of schools was to educate pupils not to educate student teachers, so if partnerships were to be effective time and funding were needed to do it properly. This included sufficient funding for HEI tutors to visit schools on a regular basis to ensure quality assurance in terms of schools meeting their responsibilities to students in providing induction material, feedback on lessons, support in planning and debriefing. Thus consistency could be ensured in students' experiences across schools through tutors observing lessons in light of the GTS standards. So, as Geen and Harris (2003: 23) conclude, 'there appeared to be agreement with the verdict of Pachler and Field (2001) that tutors still have a crucial role to fulfil within ITET'.

Students emphasised the value of peer support in team teaching and in tutorial settings. Classes in the HEI allow them to learn through/with peers, to gain friendly advice and support that was not always forthcoming in schools. They also emphasised the value of HEIs, as their courses were more up to date with government initiatives and had a broader picture through research and scholarly activities than provided by senior mentors in schools. Subject mentors could not offer the range of pedagogic techniques offered by HEI tutors who had more time to assist students with difficulties, and who maintained "quality control". Distance learning instead of HEI attendance was not supported because of technology requirements and the lack of social and personal interaction with students and tutors. This reflects the emphasis placed on the value of group work and solutions by the students (Geen & Harris 2003).

Observations of the PGCE Art and Design Program

The Post-Graduate Certificate in Education Art and Design Program is run at more than thirty institutions across the United Kingdom. Entry is through the Graduate Teacher Training Registry, an admissions service operated by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service. The year long course provides Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) upon successful completion. Prospective students are interviewed by staff at the institution level where their qualifications and suitability for teaching are assessed through interview. Aspects examined are medical fitness for teaching, police record and English and mathematics competencies.

While in the UK I was able to observe aspects of the PGCE Art and Design course in one institution. There are some major differences between courses in UK and Australia. The most obvious ones are the length of the courses and the number of days spent in school settings. In this HEI the course was composed of 24 weeks (120 days) of school-based

practice and 12 weeks (60 days) HEI based. This, as already discussed, allows a far greater role for schools, subject mentors and senior mentors in the teacher education process. Strong similarities in practicum expectations exist between the two countries including students' records of school experience and assessment of students' teaching. The HEI component is divided between Art and Design Subject Studies and Initial Professional Development.

The student enrolment in the one institution was about forty which led to dynamic interaction at a manageable level for the staff involved. This critical mass ensured a high level of debate as many creative and varied viewpoints were drawn together during tutorial time. The academic year was bracketed by two major projects in which students' involvement in schools and with children was celebrated. These projects in the forms of an exhibition and exposition also served to publicise the works of students, schools and children and the course team to the HEI and to the wider public. Assessment for the students was situated in the development of units of work and curriculum as well as teaching practice. The partnership between HEI and schools took high priority and tutors were committed to supporting students and mentors in the school settings.

A visit to a Welsh medium secondary school in the area allowed me to observe a student working with pupils on the second major project, an innovative art project that went beyond the curriculum. This was tested as a form of action research on half the normal class. Pupils were deeply involved with their work on a personal and creative level and drew on a range of skills that the student had demonstrated to the group. Nearing the completion of her course, the student was working confidently quite independently of her mentor who was working with other pupils nearby. The teaching students' achievements are examined through the documentation and display of the projects and a *viva voce* in which the projects are critically evaluated in discussion with the tutor. Thus there is an expectation of *reflection-on-action* being evident in students' thinking.

On a cautionary note, personal discussions with students in other discipline areas of the PGCE program uncovered students' dissatisfaction with the limited theoretical bases to their course. With the emphasis on practice they felt there was insufficient time in the course to introduce students to theories of child development and psychology, of learning and teaching, and of the sociology and history of education. They felt they were floundering in attempting to organise their observations and experiences in schools in meaningful ways as part of the process of developing personal theories about education and teaching practice. Unfortunately I was unable to follow this direction more fully.

Secondary art teacher preparation in Victoria, Australia

In Victoria, secondary teacher education is available in a variety of course formats and qualifications ranging from a Graduate Diploma in Education (P-12) to a one year Graduate Diploma in Secondary Education from a number of providers qualifying teachers for secondary schools in Victoria as well as interstate and overseas. Students apply to enter the courses through the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) using an online process. They must be able to demonstrate that they have completed appropriate tertiary study in subject areas suitable for teaching in secondary schools acceptable to the Victorian Institute of Teaching, which governs teacher registration. As in the UK students must pass a police check on their suitability for working with children, however no medical suitability is assessed because of the requirements of Equal Opportunity Legislation.

At La Trobe University Bendigo, the Graduate Diploma in Secondary Education runs for 28 weeks during which 45 days minimum are spent in schools. The course is divided into three main areas: Studies in Teaching and Learning, Studies in Curriculum, and Practical

Studies. Practical Studies involves preparation for teaching practicum in schools as well as the actual placement in schools. A large number of subject specialities are catered for. Through observations, self-evaluations and assessment tasks directed towards developing reflection-on-action, the course aims to develop the attributes of the reflective practitioner in student teachers. Students do not go through a formal interview process as in the UK but are ranked according to their academic qualifications by VTAC. Students normally take two teaching methods as part of Studies in Curriculum. Visual Art which runs as a double teaching method because of the diversity within the subject in how it is taught in schools and the disciplines and techniques that contribute to that diversity.

Assessment takes a range of forms from examination, to folios, oral presentations and research essays. In Practical Studies, students are involved with self-evaluation as well as being assessed on their progress by supervising teachers, practicum coordinators in schools and visiting lecturers. A final assessment of suitability for teaching is made by the HEI practicum coordinator and course coordinator based on all the available evidence, such as reports from teachers, practicum coordinators in schools and lecturers. This represents a similar three-way structure as experienced in the UK with the mentor, senior mentor and visiting tutor from the HEI. Unlike the UK situation, there is no external examiner who assesses students' competencies through visits to schools. This examiner, an appointed colleague from another HEI, visits a proportion of the students twice in the course with a view to moderating the assessment across all the placements. S/he is supported in this work by a teacher representative, the head of an art department. It could be argued that while objectivity and fairness is ensured through the external examination process, it is also likely that assessment of students against a checklist of teaching competencies is reductive and takes little cognisance of more advanced knowledge of teaching that would be expected from a reflective practitioner.

There are multiple pressures on lecturing staff in Victorian institutions which limit the number and length of school visits to supervise students and view lessons, and confer with school personnel. The example given here is only one institution and the author acknowledges that there exists a variety of supervision arrangements across the HEIs and their partner schools. In recognising and valuing the increasing emphasis on professionalism in teaching and the importance of the role of teachers in educating future practitioners, it is possible to argue that assessment of students should be left to school personnel who have had the most contact with the student in the placement and have seen the progress made since day one. However, there are contradictory arguments as viewed in the UK research in which students' opinions strongly support HEI tutors maintaining their important role in liaison with schools, support of students and quality assurance of provision across schools.

The supervising teacher's role in Victoria does not fully concur with the master/apprentice model which has developed in UK schools due to the greater role of schools there in the preparation of teachers. However, approaches that have been observed in Victorian schools include the collaborative teaching approach (with the three modes of teacher and classroom assistant, the linear sequence and class division), focused observation, competencies approach and the reflective practitioner approach. Despite the smaller part played in the course by practice teaching, the role of the supervising teacher in Victoria does closely match that of the mentor in UK, as described by Geen (2002: 9), involving modelling, sponsoring, encouragement, counselling and friendship to promote the professional development of the individual. The ACDE (2004: 42) report identifies the vital roles of mentoring, team teaching and time for debriefing and discussion in achieving the goals of collaborative and flexible learning. Students have opportunities to collaborate with peers both in coursework and practical components of their course. The notions of critical friends and valuing the expertise of others are central to this collaboration as in the UK situations noted.

The report, *Australia's teachers: Australia's future* (Committee for the Review of Teaching and Teacher Education 2003: 146) concludes that increased partnerships between HEIs and schools should lead to 'rethinking of practical experience – seeing practicum, internships and induction as a single developmental phase'. This it is argued should lead to more effective ITE and better retention rates in the profession. A number of programs already operating are cited as examples of innovative teacher education including the University of Wollongong's Knowledge Building Community program which utilises problem-based learning with students working with a mentor in a school but also interacting with other students and staff in a 'whole-school' model of mentoring (Committee for the Review of Teaching and Teacher Education 2003: 129). This report will no doubt have an impact upon government policy on teacher education and HEIs will be faced with a need to reconsider the nature and length of practicum provision in ITE courses.

With regard to financial constraints on teacher education in terms of government funding, there is acknowledgement in the literature in Britain that underscoring the emphasis on increasing teacher professionalism and the school as 'the unit of professional identity' (Booth 1995: 67) is the agenda to make teacher education less expensive to the public purse. As well the lesser role of institutions limits the voices that are dissonant with government policy on teacher education. HEI departments of education have been considerably downsized as a result of their diminished role in teacher education since the 1980s. Booth (1995: 73) is concerned that taking ITE out of the hands of the HEI will 'in time diminish teachers' professionalism and constitute a quite unwarranted restriction of student teachers' access to alternative ideas'.

Conclusions

The research cited provides much support for the continued role of HEIs in initial teacher preparation. Coursework allows for the passing on of professional knowledge, for the reflection on ideas and development of conceptual frameworks through reading, discussion and observation, the development of notions of ethics and morality including understandings of wider socio-political frameworks for thinking, and the development of personal integrity and efficacy (Bridges 1995). Booth (1995: 97) agrees that the HEI has the "key role" in addressing these broader issues. Yet anecdotal evidence suggests there is insufficient time for theory in some courses in the UK.

Students value peer interaction in the HEI that allows them to learn through/with peers and to gain friendly advice and support. HEI courses were more up to date with government initiatives and had a broader picture through research and scholarly activities than provided in schools. HEI tutors could offer a wider range of pedagogic techniques and had more time to assist students with difficulties. They maintained "quality control" in the school setting. Emphasis placed on the value of group work and solutions by the students (Geen & Harris 2003) meant that distance learning using information technology gained little support.

The issues of time for effective mentoring and in-service for mentors were raised in relation to quality control of student teachers' experiences in UK schools. This was also recognised at the government level. An extensive literature has been produced to facilitate mentor in-service by HEI academics. Ongoing research and publication are needed to continue to raise these issues if governments are to be pushed into action. To ensure consistency in students' experiences across schools there is a continuing need for HEI tutors observing lessons in light of the GTS standards (Geen & Harris 2003), a crucial role for tutors within ITE.

In Australia, any future movement for schools to have a greater role in initial teacher education should be carefully considered in the light of Australian research and the UK experience. There are important implications this country. Economic constraints on HEIs in Australia should not be allowed to drive the agenda for change in ITE. While growing professionalism amongst teachers includes a sense of responsibility for the education and induction of the next generation of teachers, the success of this needs to be ensured by the provision of sufficient in-service training and time for effective mentoring to take place. The role of the HEI in the provision of initial professional development, as Bridges (1995) reports, should not be underestimated. The HEI provides a forum for students' exchange of ideas, for accessing professional knowledge in terms of reading and research, and for discussion with peers and staff for the development of reflective capabilities thus allowing for integration of theory and practice.

In the worst case, when background theory and tutor or peer support is lacking, students can struggle to make sense of the complex world of schools and teaching. Or where a student's "apprenticeship" limits access to alternative views, then the practical experience can be dangerously narrow. If schools in Australia are going to take on increasing roles in initial teacher education, then careful consideration needs to be given to the balance between theory and practice, to the nature of HEI and school-based education, and to quality assurance to ensure that the complexity and diversity of the experience is recognised and supported across the partnership.

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