



Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group Consultation 2014

SUBMISSION

NAME OF ORGANISATION OR INDIVIDUAL MAKING SUBMISSION

AUSTRALIAN DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION (ADA)- Jodi Clements

AREAS FOR RESPONSE

1. What characteristics should be fostered and developed in graduate teachers through their initial teacher education?

How can those best suited to the teaching profession be identified?

What are the skills and personal characteristics of an effective beginning teacher? How can teacher education courses best develop these?

- Knowing how to teach can be more important than knowing what to teach!
- Understand the neurological pathways for learning both literacy and maths
- Successful teachers have an innate desire to teach and reach all students in their class. These qualities need to be identified prior to entry into a course through an interview and panel process.
- Effective early teachers are dedicated to the notion that learning is a lifelong process. They enable their students to think and demonstrate their knowledge in various ways.
- Teacher education courses need to improve the way they select potential teachers and they need to monitor their personal attributes alongside their academic and or professional skills developed in undergraduate courses.

2. What teaching practices should be developed in graduate teachers through their initial teacher education?

How can the teaching practices that produce the best student outcomes be identified?

How can teacher education programmes encourage teachers to reflect on evidence to support their choice of teaching practice?

How does reflection on evidence translate into student outcomes?

- Teaching practices that are well researched and proven to be successful should be taught to undergraduate teachers.
- Scientific reading principles need to be compulsory. This needs to include the cognitive and linguistic aspects of language and literacy development and what can impede upon these areas for some students.
- The research to practice gap must be filled through quality undergraduate and post-graduate education courses. All Universities need to be aligned in curriculum across Australia.
- There needs to be opportunities for independent training specialist courses to be accredited and or aligned with undergraduate and post graduate educational courses at Universities. This type of alignment occurs in the UK and USA (British Dyslexia Association and Scottish Rite Hospital). There needs to be external accreditation programs that can independently accredit Literacy and Maths units in Universities. Measures (for literacy and reading instruction) could be reviewed and accredited for efficacy by perhaps meeting the National Reading (Critical Aspects of Reading Instructions) and the International Dyslexia Association's Standards of Teaching Reading. The ADA offers post-graduate courses that align with both these standards. The teachers ADA train are motivated and passionate to learn **how to teach** content. Upon feedback from teacher trainees they are in need of specialist content that they receive from ADA training. Many state that they needed this content and practice at the undergraduate level but were grateful to have learnt it now (often years later). Feedback has generally stated that teachers enjoy courses that are directly related to their practice (theory in a nutshell and heavier on practice) rather than courses that may be heavy on theory, light on practice.
- A beginning teacher needs to be well trained early and have access to subjects that are accessible at Masters level. In some cases Masters subjects should be compulsory subjects in the undergraduate program. Many teachers are teaching for many years before specialising at Masters level. The beginning teachers are the teachers who most need specialised theory and practice.
- Direct and explicit instruction needs to be taught and thorough pedagogy in this type of effective teaching is required. Detailed lesson plans should be part of the process with ongoing feedback and reflection on lesson taught. It would produce far greater learning outcomes if all subjects were taught directly and explicitly with an interaction phase and independent practice.

- Multisensory teaching techniques need to be covered so that teachers can learn to set up the classroom for maximum success taking into account all learners
- Further development on how to personalise teaching and learn about the most common difficulties that occur in a general classroom: dyslexia and reading difficulties are the most common difficulties making up 80% of the children who continue to struggle in a traditional classroom
- Teachers need to know how to diagnostically assess their children and plan for instruction. They need to know how to meet the needs of all students
- Teachers need to be accountable for these records and they need to provide evidence that they are planning and differentiating where required
- They must be taught to not teach to the middle or majority, all students needs must be met
- Reading and spelling (Literacy) instruction needs to be:
Direct and Explicit
Structured and Sequential
Diagnostic and Multisensory
Teach decoding and encoding to all students early (phonology) and then into morphology. Vocabulary and Sentence/paragraph. Our students deserve teachers who know how to teach the structure of our language.

3. What level of integration should there be between initial teacher education providers and schools?

What evidence is there that effective integration achieves good teaching practice? What are the most effective types of integrated experiences in preparing new teachers?

What are the cost implications of more integrated professional experience? Are there more effective ways in which professional experience might be funded?

What other methods, or combination of these methods, could achieve better outcomes than the current approach to professional experience?

How can partnerships between teacher education providers and schools be strengthened to make teacher education more effective?

How can teacher education providers and schools best work together to select and train mentor teachers to effectively support pre-service teachers on professional experience?

How can consistency of good practice and continuous improvement across teacher education providers and schools be assured?

- All subjects need to be taught by specialist teachers; the issue is that many primary teachers are required and expected to teach subjects that they are not well trained in. Further work placement is required in schools
- This is most noted in the teaching of reading the current system is wrought with ineffective practices of sight word lists and a PM reader.
- Teachers need to be accredited in each subject and have evidence of scientific theory and practice much like the human and health science fields.
- The partnership between teacher education providers and schools could be strengthened by further practical experience being offered
- Good practice needs to be accredited and reviewed every year
- The ADA train teachers and accredit teachers who continue to meet the high standards for MSL accreditation.
- There needs to be system that weeds out ineffective teachers and rewards effective teachers

4. What balance is needed between understanding what is taught and how it is taught?

What is the desirable interaction between content knowledge and teaching practice for developing teachers? What is the difference for primary and secondary teaching? Why is there a difference?

Should there be explicit training in how to teach literacy and numeracy in all teaching courses?

How can the balance between the need for subject specialisation and a generalist approach in primary teaching qualifications be addressed?

What, if any, changes need to be made to the structure of teacher education courses? Should content be studied before pedagogy (i.e. should 'what' to teach be studied before the 'h' to teach)?

What barriers are there to restructuring teacher education courses to ensure they address these concerns, and how may they be overcome?

Why does Australia face a shortage of maths, science and language teachers?

What can be done to encourage teaching students to develop a specialisation in these areas?

- There needs to be more focus on how content is taught. Many teachers can learn what needs to be taught but then it can all go pear shape if they do not know how to teach and reach all students
- There needs to be an emphasis on direct instruction and the use of multisensory techniques
- A thorough lesson plan needs to be taught and all aspects of the teaching and learning phases included. Teachers need to know what they are teaching (outcomes) and how they are going to teach. They should know if they are teaching a concept or an association etc. They should wary about teaching from assumptions!
- The only barriers I can envisage is that potential teachers need to see that teacher training needs to up the scientific evidence and ditch teacher assumptions. To change the structure of teacher education courses may not be an easy task since you need every dean interested and up skilled in direct instruction and the many benefits of teaching this way.
- Australia not only lacks maths, science and language teachers it lacks teacher who can teach reading, writing and spelling!
- To encourage teachers in these areas the gap between research and practice needs to be delivered. There needs to be more neurology and science in education degrees. Since all the subjects offered in teaching degrees has strong foundations in science and cognitive science. Teachers want to learn about the brain and the psychology of learning. They are hungry for this knowledge
- The teaching courses need to allow a teacher to feel empowered in the learning process and brain.

5. Other

Any other comments in response to the Issues Paper may be provided here.

- All teachers should be trained about the most common difficulties:
- Dyslexia
- Dysgraphia
- Dyscalculia

They should be trained in how children learn in these areas and what happens when they have trouble

They need to be able to identify these difficulties and plan for effective inclusive approaches

They need to be taught how to teach rather than relying on off the shelf programs and books!

Advise schools about the programs that have not worked: Reading Recovery

Provide beginning teachers with learning matrixes on suitable pedagogies and evidence based teaching practices

Ensure that all beginning teachers can teach reading as outlined by the IDA Standards and the National Reading Panel

Ensure that teacher preparation courses can be accredited by outside specialists in the areas of literacy instruction and maths instruction. Specialised accreditation will ensure that the University course subjects contain content and delivery that is of the highest industry and research standards.