

**Transformative action in a Faculty of Education: A conversational approach to exploring the future challenges of the changing agendas in Teacher Education.**

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This paper presents the challenges faced by an Education faculty in reconceptualising a large Teacher Education Preservice course in times of change and uncertainty. The paper is presented as a conversational case study in three parts. The first part of the conversation provides a brief overview of course developments in the Faculty over the last decade. It highlights the ever-changing contexts and increasing complexities within which preservice teacher education programs operate both institutionally and professionally.

The overview is firstly a descriptive story told in a chronological order. Secondly it gives critically reflective attention to the development the four-year Bachelor of Education and an end-on Graduate Bachelor of Education. This critically reflective element forms the second part of the conversation. In giving the story this more critical bent, we highlight the contexts and complexities in terms of professional standards, program guidelines and standards, and generic attributes of university graduates (along with the more specific teacher practitioner attributes which the Faculty has identified).

The paper concludes with a reconstructive consideration of the emerging implications for supporting and sustaining these futures-oriented course developments in preservice teacher education. This is the third part of the conversation. It is a consideration of these implications which begins to define what it means to reconstruct teacher education in the faculty of education at QUT.

Thus, this paper is presented as a means of generating ongoing conversation and debate across the wider teacher education community in Australia as we move further into the twenty-first century. It is one way of contributing the base from which a forum such as this one might develop a significant voice in shaping the future of preservice teacher education in Australia.

This paper presents a conversational case study from the perspectives of two people who have been consistently involved in course coordination and leadership within the Faculty of Education at QUT (and formerly within Brisbane College of Advanced Education). The paper, then, is not in any sense representing a formal institutional position; rather, it is offered with the generative intent of creating a platform for ongoing conversation and debate.

### **The history**

There was a serious need to rethink the pre-service teacher education programs at QUT. The current structure for the Bachelor of Education programs and Graduate Programs were

developed approximately ten years ago (Hardingham, 2000). Since then several changes have been made to respective courses in an attempt to meet changing needs and demands, and course improvement programs have also been undertaken. However, course evaluation data, anecdotal evidence, changing social contexts and other factors in the education arena internationally, nationally and at the state level imply a need to begin anew. A review process was put in place in 1999 and continued throughout 2000. This was accompanied by a review of the field studies and practicum components that were central to the Bachelor of Education. A series of recommendations were made based on an extensive data base that was collected from interactions with significant stakeholders. Some examples of the key recommendations included the following:

1. That all preservice teacher education programs locate the practicum as a central component.
2. That the Faculty build closer and more collaborative partnerships with schools and other practicum sites. For example, this involves the Faculty/QUT negotiating with employing authorities and specific schools to create *attached* professional sites.
3. That the Faculty work toward an internship program that is offered as a mandatory part of the course.
4. That all courses contain a core of indigenous studies to be completed by all students, with options for further specialist studies available in all four year courses.
5. That the four-year courses include suites of electives that allow students to specialise in particular areas for extended periods of time. These suites may be best placed in semesters six and seven and integrated with practica. Suites might include indigenous studies (beyond the core), middle schooling, gifted and talented education, students with special needs, behaviour management, literacy, numeracy, etc.
6. That all courses incorporate ways of managing the challenges of an information age.
7. That all courses have assessment practices that require the cumulative development of a portfolio across the pre-service years. A portfolio (see glossary) is built over the two or four years of the course with the aim of being used for employment purposes.
8. That all courses promote critique actively and reflect current research.
9. That the development of interdisciplinary teaching teams throughout all courses is encouraged, and expertise is drawn from different areas across the Faculty, QUT and practica sites.
10. That all courses incorporate problem-based and problem-solving approaches to teaching and learning, specifically in relation to practica and site-based experiences.
11. The committee notes that the ways that EFTSU are divided and funding allocated do not encourage collaboration across schools. We see collaborative ventures as essential for our courses.

12. That the Faculty and the University acknowledge differentiated and differential work roles for academics engaged in dual site teaching, research, professional activities and learning that is part of building closer and more collaborative relationships with practicum sites.
13. The committee notes that in the current climate of rethinking teacher education, there is increased flexibility and scope in negotiating the content of our pre-service courses with the Board of Teacher Registration (BTR).
14. That from the beginning of the course and integrated throughout it, students are involved in research, theory and practice through action research projects and approaches to teacher as researcher that are incorporated as part of reading requirements, practicum experiences and assessment
15. That the Teacher Practitioner Attributes (TPAs) be structured around the Professional Standards for Teachers (Education Queensland, 1999b) and identified across all units of the Bachelor of Education.
16. That pre-service teachers undergo some form of self-analysis in a foundation unit to assess their current generic attributes on entry into the course.

As a result of a set of recommendations proposed by the Bachelor of Education Working Party (Greishaber et al 2000), together with the findings of the Practicum review papers (Groundwater-Smith 1999), The Teacher Practitioner Attributes project (Tayler et al, 2001), and the restructuring initiatives proposed by the Dean of Education, Professor Vi Mclean (2001), the Bachelor of Education Working Party (2001) was instigated with the following terms of reference:

- To reconceptualise a Bachelor of Education (Pre-service) for accreditation and 2002 and implementation in 2003;
- To be responsive to the recommendations proposed for internal Faculty review documents particularly the Bachelor of Education Review document (2001);
- To be cognisant to the current research in Teacher Education and respond to significant findings;
- To be open to new directions established within the Faculty, major employing authorities and the profession in a local and global sense;
- To be mindful of University policy and initiatives;
- To be reactive to current market forces and accreditation agencies internationally, nationally and locally;
- To develop and strengthen partnerships with field based partners;

- To liaise with Faculty staff, students, colleagues in the field, professional associations and other significant stakeholders.

These recommendations and the briefing of the working party highlight the contested nature of teacher education in current times. Issues such as flexibility, student diversity, multiple entry and exits points, new pedagogies, the centrality of field based studies, assessment practices, generic student attributes, the intensification of academic work, evolving partnerships, resourcing and work load were key issues that presented a number of challenges to the working party.

### **Beginning our conversation**

*Ian: Tania you might like to begin by just talking about the reviews and restructures of the BEd that took place in the early nineties.*

*Tania: Thanks Ian. In the context in which we are working we have been very conscious that our BEd has not been meeting the needs of teachers and our graduates. We have had feedback from a number of sources that have suggested that what we are doing is preparing the teachers for a different era; and we have become very cognisant that the needs are teachers in the current times are very different. So we underwent a number of reviews at a couple of levels within the institution during the nineties. We have been monitoring the course right through the nineties and we made some minor changes; but towards the end of the nineties we had a formal institutional review of the Bachelor of Education, particularly the place of field studies within the Bachelor of Education. We are primarily aware of the intensification of teachers' work and the changing nature of teachers' work in shaping up those reviews. We have called on both field and university personnel to get their heads together and review the nature of teacher education across the globe as well as locally and to consider various ways in which the course can change and needs to change.*

*We are primarily interested in the changing role and the intensification of teachers' work. That has driven the review and it was quite clear within the review that we do need to provide a very different course that caters quite differently – it has to be flexible and of a more intensive nature.*

*Based on that, we realised that the knowledge base, the skills and the pedagogies (and the way that teachers work with students) really needs to be reconceptualised into new ways of working.*

*Ian: We should pause for a moment there, and say that over the last decade there has been a trend towards increased globalisation. This has placed demands upon us to think of the best ways, and indeed the most flexible ways that we respond to globalisation in relation to what you are calling the intensification of teachers' work. If there are some guiding values that underpin our thinking, they would be associated within that context of globalisation with diversity, with equity and with flexibility. That raises questions, doesn't it, about the way in which a course in preservice teacher education can be both responsive and reflexive. I guess, then, we are looking at things like the way in which we organise content in the program,*

*whether that is discipline-based or whether we take some sort of inquiry stance; whether it is reproductive or whether it is reconstructive; and whether we maintain territories in terms of staffing or whether we break down some of those boundaries and work towards integrated teams.*

*Tania: That's good Ian. What we have realised is that we are no longer a Teachers' College preparing students to teach in Queensland. We now have to prepare professional critical thinkers in education for a global community. So the notions of diversity and equity suggest that there have to be many different pathways for different students who are entering the course and who will be taking up the profession in different cultures throughout the world. Consequently we do have to look at the way we create knowledge within teacher education quite differently - although it needs to be as rigorous as it always has been in the past. So I think that we are thinking that there certainly are some core concepts that underpin teacher education throughout the world. Essentially we want to focus on a recognition of diversity and a flexibility that allows students to engage in a teacher education journey that is quite different from the more rigid course structures within we have worked in the past.*

*Ian: And that challenge began to be addressed here in our Faculty when we worked on the Master of Teaching which began in 1999 (with the developmental work leading up to that taking place from the mid 90's). I think that we were finding that the guidelines provided by our Board of Teacher Registration here in Queensland gave us direction in terms of how we might develop a program that addresses some of those challenges in terms of how we develop themes, how we incorporate content and how we engage in particular approaches and so on. We identified principles that had to do with things like a praxis approach to teaching, a partnership between the University and other professional stakeholders, an ethical stance, a focus on the scholarship of teaching. Then, we developed some design features of the course so that we were looking, for example, at integration within and continuity across the various semesters of the program.*

*We were looking at the program as a research site in order for our graduates to engage in the notion of teacher as researcher. These were some of the things that grew out of those BTR guidelines. They have helped us address some of the challenges that we see confronting preservice teacher education.*

*Moving on from the Master of Teaching (which is now in its third year of implementation), we can now see some of the current things in all the discussions and developments regarding the reconceptualised BEd reflecting and building on these ideas. Is that an appropriate observation?*

*Tania: We certainly value the investigative approach to learning and that is something that is way up-front; but we are actually celebrating that students are learning differently. We want to offer them a range of opportunities to enhance their learning styles; but we are going to catch that in the investigative framework that is primarily problem-based in its constructs so that students raise questions through observations in and close connections with the field - questions which they will then investigate as they travel through the four years of the program. In doing so, we realise that we have to give them a scaffolding to work through, so early in the course we are giving them a fairly structured learning environment in which to work. It is a structure fosters the asking of questions, the making of hypotheses and the searching for answers. At the same time, we have to embed inquiry in a framework that offers a cohesive learning pattern so that the core areas that the BTR wants covered are certainly addressed. They are called professional learnings; but at the same time we want the flexibility. We have a tension, then, between cohesion and flexibility. We are working through this, so that students are not graduating without the necessary knowledge; but are, in fact, graduating with an inquiry-based mind that allows them to explore the continuing and emerging challenges and issues*

*in education. I guess the framework that is shaping that process is the teacher practitioner attributes that were shaped by QUT. From these, we have an image of a graduate student from a four year program; and like you in the master of Teaching, we are back tracking from desired student outcomes to a curriculum design for achieving (or working towards) these outcomes. Generally we want to use a team approach to moving forward, so that we have teams of academics letting go of traditional territory and working together to provide a rich learning environment, a cohesive curriculum and a structure or scaffolding that allow students to construct and understand the basic knowledge of a teacher education program in a cohesive and non-problematic way. We don't want to see them struggling with trying to put the bits together. Rather, we want to provide a way for them to see that their introduction to and construction of professional knowledge is a means whereby they can address the questions that they have elicited from their work in the field.*

*Ian: The vision that was contained in the report from last year when the BEd was reviewed says something like "our vision incorporates graduates who know about, understand and are able to act on principles of equity and diversity, service and partnerships, curriculum and pedagogy, technology, research and life long learning." The vision implies a change (or changes) in the nature of the work for academic staff and a concentration on provision of quality programs. So it is really all leading on from the Master of Teaching which has begun that sort of approach. It has moved on to your providing the scaffolding of a course structure and a program that leads into appropriate pedagogies for implementation – ones that will help students to work through those sorts of aspects of the vision.*

*Tania: Sure, and if we use the words quality programs we need to spell out the criteria that underpin what we call a quality program. We have mentioned a couple of those in our conversation already, about how we scaffold students' experiences - it's about the meaningful construction of knowledge, it's about inquiry-based learning and it's about collaborative learning in teams (requiring professional individual learning) and it's about engaging in learning in an inquiry mode that is closely connected to the profession (so the concept of partnerships is integral to this - where no longer academics teach in isolation but where all professional educators work together to enhance the learning of the student as they move towards entry into the profession).*

*Ian: We might just backtrack a little bit – you mentioned a little earlier the Teacher Practitioner Attributes. Here in Queensland we have been watching with interest over the last two or three years the development of the professional standards for teachers which have been recently revised and accepted. It seems that from these standards as well as from the Board of Teacher Registration guidelines, you are focusing on the teacher practitioner attributes that we as a faculty identified last year to develop reconceptualised BEd. What's your perspective on this?*

*Tania: Our program standards were put together as a result of a long couple of days speaking together. Essentially they focus firstly on life-long learners, as graduates becoming life-long learners and effective communicators; secondly, on graduates who are learner focused and inclusive teachers; thirdly, on graduates who are skilled curriculum developers and reflective practitioners; and fourthly, on professional graduates who are professional educators. Each of these has been unpacked in a particular way; but these four program standards are being very closely aligned to the teacher practitioner attributes that have been developed as the outcomes towards which we are heading throughout the course.*

*For example, the first program standard that focuses on life-learning for effective communicators can be broken down into outcomes that look at graduates who can critique knowledge, who enquire through teacher research practitioner attributes, who evaluate the material that they are presented with, who can communicate using*

*various media and forms of technology, who are problem-solving in their skills and critically reflective in their decisions to mention just a few.*

*Each of the program standards is broken down into attributes that will be visited and revisited throughout the course; and we feel so strongly about this, that we just do not want to wait until we get to the end of the four years to see whether the graduates have actually achieved those outcomes. Instead, we are actually embedding assessment tasks over the four years where students will be able to complete rich tasks or portfolio assessment items that actually offer them an opportunity to pause and monitor their growth in terms of those outcomes. We feel this is a very strategic way of scaffolding the students and the monitoring of their growth throughout the program - we hope that it will significantly contribute to their learning. So these attributes aren't just tools, or these standards are not just rhetoric; rather, we are trying to turn them into an overt basis for rigorous practice throughout the program. They will be inescapable reference points for both academic staff, students and teachers in the field to monitor each student's development regularly.*

*Ian: They, in fact, become the scaffolding, don't they, both for developing the course structure and for developing the various ways in which the course will be implemented, monitored and evaluated in terms of providing quality learning experiences as well as working towards quality learning outcomes?*

*Tania: Yes, and it is a very important scaffold that shapes design, implementation and evaluation of the course at the university level, at the field-based level and for individual students to monitor their own practical development. We are looking at using these goals not only in terms of quality control and accountability; but as significant scaffolds for students to monitor their growth and development. If they are off course and they are not achieving at these levels it will be the significant point where they can engage in self-assessment (and we can engage in course assessment) in formative and reconstructive ways.*

*Ian: In the end, we are teaching in a more integrated fashion; we probably have challenged some of the interesting boundaries for instance among Schools in the faculty in the different ways in which the course is staffed, and how units in the course are taught. All of these issues raise all sorts of implications for staffing and resourcing and for grouping of students just to mention a few. What you are doing now is to these a stage further, and you seem to have a much more specific framework within which to develop this reconceptualised BEd.*

*Tania: I think it is really important, Ian, particularly at the staff development level to give people an awareness of the course ethos that is emerging. What we are doing is engaging in a new model for teacher education which will affect the bulk of our preservice students, so we are really challenging staff about the way that they teach, the way that they plan, and the way that they work together in teams. This actually gives us some tangible material that they are needing; and so a focus is provided for staff development activities that should be paralleling all the course development work. Here, we need to rethink who we are teaching with and how we engage with our students as a basis for reconstructing the practice.*

*Ian: With all that said, can we perhaps talk about two or three ways in which things will be different in the reconceptualised BEd?*

*Tania: At the level of course design, for instance, once we have got our model in place and we have a view of the units that needs to be taught, we are not really throwing out the baby with the bathwater. Some interesting units will remain, but we are certainly creating new units and we want new content. The first step will be the development of three core units for first-year students. These will be taught across all areas and we actually want to tender these units out - we want people to tender*

*for the writing of these units. In writing those units, people need to advocate on behalf of themselves that they have appropriate content, that they have appropriate pedagogy, and that are capable of achieving the outcomes that we desire for those particular units.*

*Now that is a new process and it is new in a number of ways.*

*Firstly, it is suggesting that a course be responsible for writing the units, not a particular School. Secondly, we really want people to get to both content and pedagogy. Thirdly, we are asking for people across the faculty to own, write and teach units - not just people in the Schools. People, therefore, have got to think together and do some team building, sharing of their knowledge and creating of new pedagogy using teams of people across the faculty. We think that is going to be a tremendous challenge.*

*Thirdly, we want assessment items to be written around the teacher practitioner attributes so that they make a contribution to the professional growth of students. Assessment items will hopefully be thought of and developed in a more cohesive and integrated manner within the context of a student's full load in a semester.*

## **Pausing for breath**

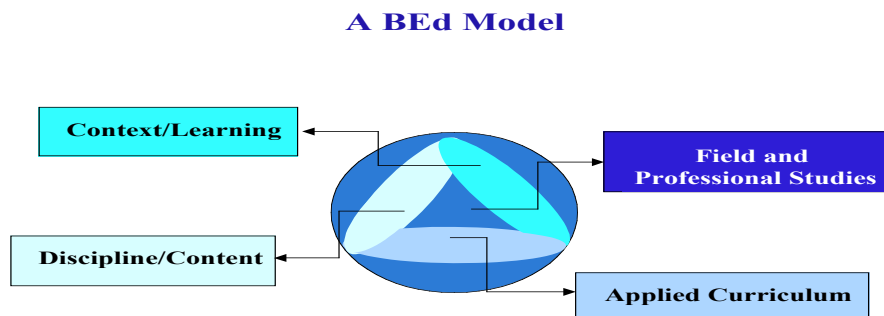
This conversation captures some of the key issues that guided the thinking of the design team during the first part of 2001. At a significant point we documented a series of design principles that were shared with the faculty as a platform for debate and discussion. They also provided a way of moving forward. The design team constantly referred back to the principles as a scaffold for our ongoing work.

- Design Principle A

The program is grounded in the principles of equity and diversity and committed to the broader goal of the pursuit of social justice. Therefore, the program will provide all students with teaching and learning experiences which are socially and culturally inclusive, as well as provide support for students in the QUT equity target groups. In order to achieve this, the program will include multiple entry points and delivery modes, and provide students with explicit knowledge of expected outcomes and processes.

- Design Principle B

Teaching, learning and assessment in the program are embedded in



investigative and critical approaches that focus on teachers as researchers, and are staged in design and recursive in enactment. These approaches to teaching, learning and assessment may include case based investigations, critical reflection, deconstruction and reconstructions, and productive pedagogies. Such approaches consider teachers as researchers in their classrooms, schools, and other learning sites and incorporate understandings of teachers as researchers in unit assessment.

- Design Principle C

The program consists of four domains and four themes which are interdependent. The nature of the interdependence among the domains and themes is represented in the diagram below. A critical aspect of this interdependency is that field and professional studies are a central or integrative focus throughout the program.

- Design Principle D

The program facilitates student learning of core knowledge within and across the interdependent domains and themes and provides student choice of pathways. In practice, this means that students will undertake a compulsory or preferred sequence of units/modules (core and common units) in particular programs and have elective choice within their designated program and chosen pathway.

- Design Principle E

Units in the program will be 12, 24, 36, or 48 credit points, constructed from combinations of modules of 6 or 12 credit points. The requisite number of modules in a Unit must be passed in order to gain credit for the Unit. This principle will permit differential weighting of units while maintaining close articulation with the QUT standard of 12 credit points per Unit. The course is informed by FOUR program standards and associated Teacher

Further our team made a commitment to a design process that had a principled commitment to outcomes based student learning and assessment. The student learning outcomes are articulated with four program standards (See Figure 1) and expressed as Teacher Practitioner Attributes (TPAs) which will form a platform for planning, teaching, learning and assessment within and across the sub-programs of the course.

We argued that student learning outcomes or the TPAs should determine the parameters of what graduating students will know, understand and be able to do as a result of their engagement with learning in their field. It was agreed by the team that students will be able to monitor their own growth and development towards the achievement of the TPAs and actively design a preferred pathway (complied of core, common and pathway units) to achieved a desirable and appropriate set of outcomes. Further we advocated that at specific times within each program, strategically designed tasks (e.g., applied curriculum tasks) will be adopted by academic staff to assess student development towards the outcomes (See figure 2). This

process is also designed to enhance the cohesiveness and meaningfulness of the program, enhancing stronger links across units within the sub-program and between university studies and field studies.

The outcomes approach to curriculum construction is timely, generates a framework to shape a significant relationship amongst teaching, learning and assessment, and facilitates the achievement of multiples entry points and pathways of learning for diverse cohorts of students within the course and each sub-program.

The program standards and the TPAs list the qualities that the course graduates should possess as they begin or continue their careers following graduation. They are inclusive of the QUT Generic attributes .The TPAs have been mapped onto the course at the outset at the levels of subprograms (See Appendix 1). Each unit of the planned course will address a set of TPAs at three levels: introductory, dependent and finished. As will be evident in each of the unit outlines that follow, the specific TPAs addressed in each unit will be articulated at the level of design in two ways : **embedded or explicit**. An embedded TPA is important in the unit, but not explicitly assessed or treated separately. An explicit TPA is explicitly addressed in an assessment item. Further, a TPA can be **theoretical** where students are openly learning about the TPA or it can be **applied**. An applied TPA demands that the student learn to put it into practice. It has been recommended that each core unit and common unit should address at least one, but no more than six TPA s. This would also be the case with pathway units. Teaching and Learning Studies units and field based units may address more as these units are designed as synthesising elements within the course. The explicit TPAs addressed in a unit would be expected to figure significantly in compulsory

assessment for all students. The achievement of the TPAs ensures the achievement of program standards and a set of quality control mechanisms will be put in place to ensure that this is the case.

### **Continuing our conversation and reflections.**

*Ian: Can we have a look at this review of teacher education which was completed in New South Wales and which was reported on late last year. It is called Quality Matters. What the conclusion of this report comes to is that there are fundamental issues confronting teacher education and teachers in New South Wales (I think that we could add any state in Australia, and they are readily identifiable in other contexts nationally and internationally). Some of the ones that are raised include improving the quality and relevance of initial teacher education, how best to re-engage teacher educators with the world of teaching, how best to induct teachers into the profession to attract and retain graduates in high demand disciplines, how teaching should respond to the challenges and opportunities of the information technology revolution and the last one there is associated with the creation of a strong learning culture for teachers. Now if we turn these issues into questions and use them to interrogate the first part of the conversation it would seem to indicate that we are pretty much on track.*

*Tania: Ian, I think we are, and what we are aiming for is for the profession to say that we really want the graduates that you are producing today. Historically that has not been the case – there has been a disjunction between the field and the university; but what I think we are trying to do here is reconnect preservice teacher education with the professional teachers and we are going about that in a number of ways. The strong partnerships we are trying to establish with our colleagues in the field is just one indication and I think we could answer those questions quite profitably. We are engaging in new partnerships and we are suggesting that there is a place for school teachers in the university and there is a place for university people in the field. I think that some of these concepts that we are exploring are really trying to pull the profession and preservice teacher education together in meaningful and authentic ways.*

*Ian: I would also refer to some of the work of Marilyn Cochran -Smith, for example. There are two papers here that we might just quote in the references that would be well worth a look at. For now, if I just want to concentrate on what Marilyn said in one of the sessions at AERA in Seattle last year. The focus was on the education of teacher educators and there were five areas that were raised in the session which Marilyn commented on. She saw that preservice teacher education programs need to be culturally responsive, that they need to take an inquiry stance, that they need to have a practice orientation in terms of learning to teach in the field, to have a life long learning perspective on our own professional development of teacher educators (and perhaps for us as teacher educators to be more willing to identify ourselves as teacher educators, to see that we indeed have tremendous challenges to confront and that we do in fact have the confidence and the competence to address those as we move forward in our professional work). If we think of those sorts of things from the Quality Matters Report or from Marilyn Cochran -Smith's work it would be true to say, I think, that we are on target with the sorts of ideas that we have come up with over the years -*

*Tania: Ian, I think we are on track; but I think that one of the key factors to sustaining the change at the teacher education level is the support offered to staff. Our faculty is currently undergoing change, other faculties are the same. We have had a lot of redundancies, we have had a lack of funding from Federal Government in the past few years and that made us feel a little bit down in the dumps about where we are. Our change is about going forwards positively and about being sustained with positive growth in teacher educators. We have to continue to offer the teaching and learning seminars that you have initiated, for example, so that pedagogy develops a much higher profile in our course thinking and practice. We have to put staff into a learning curve so that they are continually reflecting on their work and looking for support for their work. We have to encourage the investigative approach not only with out students but also with our staff. We have to voice quite loudly in teacher education forums that we are wanting to reconstruct our own in our work so that we can enhance the quality of the work that we offer the students. So I guess we are on the right track - our thinking is very positive; but the infrastructure support that we need to encourage this growth and development of teacher education staff is vital to continue the work that we are doing.*

*Ian: We are not in the process of restructuring a course, we are really in the business of reculturing a course and a faculty - that is what reconceptualising is all about. This is not just happening in a vacuum -it is very contextualised and it's very conceptualized. I think that the ongoing challenges for us are within that conceptualization, as it has been outlined in the first part of our conversation.*

*Tania: It comes down to our interaction with students – what we do now in teacher education classrooms as to whether we can incorporate the principles, the programs standards, and the teacher practitioner attributes that have been identified.*

*We can only do that if we are thinking about our practice and reconceptualising our practice. We are not just tinkering at the edges and we are not just reshuffling existing structures. We are working with a whole lot of new ideas, new practices, new pedagogies, and new ways of thinking about teacher education. We are pushing out the frontiers, as it were. We are essentially working at an ideological level, so staff development is much more than just going off to workshops –it is about having conversations with our colleagues to help us rethink our practices and our pedagogy in order to account for what we are doing (and why and how).*

### **The Faculty reacts**

Throughout 2001 we disseminated our work to the faculty and key stakeholders through a series of Town Halls, electronic communications, staff development days, teaching and learning seminars. University staff and teachers in the field have reacted in different ways to the proposals put forward. Tremendous support has been expressed by many field based teachers who are keen to facilitate the change and play a greater role in teacher education. While the industrial issues have not been fully explored, support from outside the faculty is generally very positive. Inside the faculty feelings are mixed. Student support is encouraging. Many staff, including senior staff has

acknowledged the need to reconstruct our practices to be more responsive to current issues and challenges in teacher education. Academic staff are working collaboratively to initiate strategic initiatives and trial small projects that capture the essence of the ideological shifts required to reconstruct our programs. Many lecturers are trialing the integration of the TPAs into their work. New cluster school groups are being trialed to strengthen university –school partnerships. Consultations are currently being implemented with Indigenous stakeholders and rural communities. Pilot school based teacher education projects have been effectively implemented in the Mooloolaba, Caboolture and Brisbane Districts.

However, as one would expect, there are pockets of resistance emerging throughout the Faculty. Concerns about resourcing, intensification of work, and the ‘letting go’ of current and past practices are being voiced. Questions about new pedagogies, teaching differently and the need for change have been recorded at meetings. Anxieties about “returning to the seventies”, teaming across Schools, new partnerships with teachers and the commitment to outcomes based learning are genuinely considered to be fracturing relationships within the faculty. Discussions around practices of reculturing, professional development and retraining are perceived by some to be unsettling and generating new tensions within a faculty already undergoing major changes.

In 2002, with the support of a Teaching and Learning Grant (\$150 000) and faculty support (\$20 000) a series of staff development initiatives will occur. Resources will be provided to map the TPAs onto the course. Staff will be supported in writing new units and developing the necessary resources required for implementing the course according to the design principles, particularly in relation to assessment. A series of Learning Circles will be funded to support staff development in key areas

such as pedagogy, outcomes based assessment, investigative learning and portfolio development. This will be supported by a current Faculty project support the development of flexible pedagogies across the faculty. These areas are just a few of the initiatives that prove to be challenging in reconstructing pedagogical and curriculum practices in teacher education.

### **Concluding the conversation for now**

At this point a report on the work of the team is being collated for ratification from the faculty executive. What we have is a blue print for moving forward.

This report will articulate the proposed course design in the following format:

1. Contexts of Teacher Education: A Rationale for change.
2. A Vision Statement for a Reconceptualised Bachelor of Education in the Faculty of Education at QUT
3. Course Aims and Objectives
4. Course Standards articulated with a set of Teacher Practitioner Attributes
5. Course Principles
  - 5.1 Design principles
  - 5.2 Implementation principles
  - 5.3 Assessment principles
6. Course Structure
  - 6.1 Overview of Course Structure: Core Units, Common Units, Pathway units
  - 6.2 Models of programs within the course
    6. 2. 1 Bachelor of Education (*Early Childhood*)
    6. 2. 2 Bachelor of Education (*Primary*)
    6. 2. 3 Bachelor of Education (*Secondary*)
    6. 2. 5 Bachelor of Education (*Adult and Workplace Education*)
    6. 2. 6 Graduate Bachelor of Teaching (*Early Childhood*)
    6. 2. 7 Graduate Bachelor of Teaching (*Primary*)
    6. 2. 8 Graduate Bachelor of Teaching (*Secondary*)
    6. 2. 9 Graduate Bachelor of Teaching (*Adult and Workplace Education*)

6. 2. 10 Generic Double Degree Program (*Secondary/x/y/z/*)
6. 2. 11 Double Degree Program (*Early Childhood Studies/Primary Education*)
7. Transition arrangements
8. New units and timeline
9. Units to be deleted and timeline
10. Units to be modified
11. Action plan for 2002
12. Program Management

There is a consensus in our work that suggests:

- Our institutional history is significant in helping us to understand the context within which the reconceptualised Bachelor of Education is developing.
- The trends in education generally (eg globalisation) and in teacher education particularly (eg intensification of teachers' work) are playing a major role in our thinking and practice.
- Institutional histories and external trends don't necessarily suit comfortably together; and this tension creates challenges for recolouring teacher education within a faculty of education
- We must engage in a process of reconstruction in order to meet the changing agendas within the profession but relinquishing affirmed practices is challenging
- We can articulate and justify worthwhile principles of design, implementation and assessment, but enacting the changes is demanding on academics

However many questions remain at the fore of the debate within our faculty and continue to provide us with ongoing challenges in thinking about teacher education in the twenty-first century. These include:

- How do we think about knowledge and knowledge creation in preservice teacher education?
- How do we cater for diversity, equity and flexibility in a globalised world and within a preservice teacher education
  - How we balance many competing demands and yet remain focused on critical reflectiveness AND pedagogical competence?
  - What should be the most significant guiding principles?

- What and how much scaffolding should be present, and how will it enable and liberate rather than stifle?
- What are the implications for resourcing, timetabling, staffing, etc?
- How appropriate is the vision for our reconceptualised BEd?
- Are the four program standards appropriate?
- Are the suggested tendering and teaming approaches feasible?
- How might the issues associated with workload, transition programs, etc be addressed?
- What differences are there between restructuring and reculturing?
- How do we, as a Faculty teach differently according to the preferred pedagogical principles, and, at the same time value academic freedom?
- How do we effectively shift pedagogy from content based approaches to an outcomes based approach.
- How do we move forward in a world on resource neutral imperatives?
- How do you facilitate a paradigm shift within a faculty that is undergoing change at all levels

This paper has reported the challenges faced by an Education faculty in reconceptualising a large Teacher Education preservice course in times of change and uncertainty. The paper is presented as a conversational case study in three parts. In sharing a conversation between two academics the paper has highlighted the ever-changing contexts and increasing complexities within which preservice teacher education programs operate both institutionally and professionally.

The paper concludes with a reconstructive consideration of the emerging implications for supporting and sustaining these futures-oriented course developments in preservice teacher education and a positing of ongoing questions that capture the future challenges of this work. It is through consideration of these implications and questions which begins to define what it

means to reconstruct teacher education in a faculty of education and confront the many changing agendas in the challenging futures of teacher education.

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## 1 Figure 1 PROGRAM STANDARDS AND ASSOCIATED TEACHER PRACTITIONER ATTRIBUTES

The BEd is informed by FOUR Program Standards and associated teacher Practitioner Attributes which will be pursued through all specialist strands of the program.

Program Standards	Teacher Practitioner Attributes
<b>Preservice graduates will be:</b>	<b>Preservice graduates will be able to:</b>
<p><b>1.0</b> <i>lifelong learners and effective communicators</i> who possess a strong <i>knowledge</i> of the content discourses of the disciplines from which their projected teaching areas are derived and who will be able to contribute to the formation of <i>new knowledge communities</i> and areas of inquiry;</p>	<p><b>1.1</b> gather, form and <i>critique knowledge</i> (or new configurations of knowledge) from a variety of sources; seek <i>knowledge through the practices and inquiry modes of a scholar-teacher-researcher</i></p> <p><b>1.2</b> retrieve, evaluate and present information <i>using appropriate technologies</i></p> <p><b>1.3</b> participate in a range of <i>traditional</i> (e.g. print) and <i>new</i> (e.g.) multimedia, web) <i>literacies</i></p> <p><b>1.4</b> listen and <i>communicate</i> effectively using <i>various media and forms of communication</i>;</p> <p><b>1.5</b> adopt a <i>problem-solving and inquiry-based approach</i> to their own learning and that of others;</p> <p><b>1.6</b> <i>critically reflect</i> on their own learning and <i>generate new information and ideas</i>;</p> <p><b>1.7</b> <i>manage</i> their own learning and that of others in <i>purposeful, goal-oriented ways</i>;</p> <p><b>1.8</b> use <i>self-evaluation</i> to understand and improve the strengths and weaknesses of their own learning style</p>
<p><b>2.0</b> <i>learner-focused and inclusive teachers</i> who understand the positioning of learners in local and global communities, and develop their own inclusive communities of practice which respect diversity and difference;</p>	<p><b>2.1</b> understand, care for and <i>relate effectively to a diverse range of students</i>;</p> <p><b>2.2</b> manage a <i>learning environment</i> that is <i>emotionally and physically safe and secure</i>;</p> <p><b>2.3</b> foster the <i>social development of all students</i>;</p> <p><b>2.4</b> practice and promote <i>non-discriminatory ways of relating</i> to others, through the adoption of <i>teaching approaches that promote equity and social justice</i>;</p> <p><b>2.5</b> diagnose, value and respond to <i>individual learning needs</i>, taking account of a range of cultural, physical, social and behavioral factors;</p> <p><b>2.6</b> help learners to <i>develop, monitor and evaluate their own thinking and learning skills</i>;</p> <p><b>2.7</b> integrate knowledge of <i>students' developmental needs</i> into practice;</p> <p><b>2.8</b></p> <p><b>2.9</b></p>

Program Standards	Teacher Practitioner Attributes
Preservice graduates will be:	Preservice graduates will be able to:
	<p>2.10 integrate knowledge of the <i>social and cultural context of education</i> into practice;  <i>listen to, respect and negotiate</i> where appropriate with the learners' families, carers and surrounding community;            continuously develop and foster interculturally appropriate versions of <i>language, literacy and numeracy</i>.</p>
<p>3.0 <b>skilled curriculum developers and reflective practitioners</b>, committed to a range of pedagogies, principles of learning inquiry, and assessment and reporting practices that promote equity and monitor effective learning practices for a range of learners and programs across a range of sites;</p>	<p>3.1 effectively <i>design, create and manage learning environments</i>;            3.2 <i>plan learning experiences and programs for individuals and groups</i>;            3.3 <i>apply knowledge and skills</i> in both <i>general and specific areas of the curriculum</i>;            3.4 <i>model inquiring, cooperative and independent approaches to learning</i>;            3.5 <i>integrate information technology</i> effectively into teaching and learning activities;            3.6 <i>provide learning experiences that connect with worlds</i> beyond the immediate learning context;;            3.7 <i>reflect on and plan for continuous improvement in teaching</i>;            3.8 employ accountable and theoretically grounded processes to <i>monitor and assess</i> student understanding and progress;            3.9 <i>translate knowledge of mandatory educational policy</i> to practice;            3.10 integrate the best available <i>educational theory with practice</i>.</p>
<p>4.0 <b>professional educators</b> who are dedicated to ethical, legal and professional practices which enable them to work with leaders, partners, team members and autonomous individuals in a range of learning communities.</p>	<p>4.1 develop and work within an <i>ethical framework</i>, and commit to responsible and <i>legal work practices</i>;            4.2 promote, within a <i>legal framework</i>, issues of <i>diversity, equity and inclusivity</i>;            4.3 contribute to the work of <i>professional communities</i> in a <i>range of roles, involving autonomy, team membership and leadership</i>;            4.4 respect and promote <i>professional rights and</i></p>

Program Standards	Teacher Practitioner Attributes
Preservice graduates will be:	Preservice graduates will be able to:
	<p>4.5 <i>responsibilities;</i> initiate, value and practise <i>collaboration and partnerships</i> with learners, colleagues, carers, community, government, social and workplace agencies;</p>

Figure 2 :VISION STATEMENT

□  
 Program Standards & Teacher Practitioner Attributes  
 □  
 Design Principles  
 □  
 Implementation & Assessment Principles

