



Education Report: Advice on strengthening the practical component of ITE

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
Date:	10 March 2021	Priority:	Low
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Purpose of report

This report provides advice on strengthening the practical component of initial teacher education (ITE), following your recent discussion of ITE issues with Perry Rush from the Principal's Federation.

Summary

1. High quality initial teacher education (ITE) relies on effective partnerships between the tertiary provider and the host schools that provide the opportunities for student teachers to learn and develop their teaching practice.
2. In 2019 the Teaching Council released new requirements for ITE programmes. The new requirements reflect the key features of high quality practice-based ITE. Changes to the requirements include an increase to the minimum required length of practicum placements and an expectation of strengthened partnerships between ITE providers and schools. All programmes must be approved under the new ITE requirements by 2022.
3. There is value in considering how we can strengthen the capability and capacity of host schools to provide quality practicum experiences for student teachers and how to make these more consistent nationally. We propose to develop further advice about how to address some of the most enduring issues identified including:

- a. 9(2)(f)(iv) [Redacted] ✓
- [Redacted] ✓
- [Redacted] ✓



The Ministry of Education recommends that you:

- Noted**

- Noted**

- Noted**

- i. 9(2)(f)(iv)

e. **agree** that this Education Report will be proactively released

Agree / Disagree

Dr Andrea Schöllmann
Deputy Secretary
Education System Policy

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

10/03/2021

8/4/2021

9(2)(f)(iv)

Background

1. The President of the New Zealand Principals' Federation, Perry Rush, has expressed concerns about the quality of practical learning in initial teacher education and its effectiveness in preparing graduates to begin their teaching careers. In particular, he has said that traditional ITE programmes place too much emphasis on "lecture-based" academic learning rather than practical teaching skills and has called for a greater focus on practice-based training.
2. Following your meeting with Mr Rush on 11 February, you requested advice on the provision of more applied initial teacher education programmes.
3. We have focussed this analysis on ITE in the compulsory schooling sector (primary and secondary). We have not included advice on early childhood education (ECE) as there is already a high level of field-based ITE provision in this sector.

High quality ITE enables strong connections between theory and practice

4. Over the past decade there has been an increasing focus internationally on initial teacher education that is more deeply linked to practice. In addition to subject content and pedagogical knowledge, ITE programmes must also equip beginning teachers with practical skills that allow them to make appropriate professional judgements and decisions, and to deliver effective teaching and learning to diverse students.
5. A growing body of research suggests that efforts to prepare beginning teachers more closely for practice can improve their confidence in their readiness to teach, impact positively on student learning and increase teacher retention.
6. High-performing teacher preparation systems incorporate the following three key features to strengthen the integration of theory and practice and to ensure that graduates are ready to teach:
 - a. A clear and coherent vision of how teachers integrate theory and practice in real settings.
 - b. Strong connections between ITE providers and schools.
 - c. Continual development of teacher educators based on research and evidence of best practice.

Issues and challenges within our teacher preparation system

7. In New Zealand, concerns about the quality of ITE and how well it prepares beginning teachers have been persistent. Anecdotally, principals have expressed concerns about the preparedness of beginning teachers, particularly their capability in managing classrooms; responding to students that need additional learning support; and using assessment to inform teaching and learning.
8. In a 2016 report, the Education Review Office concluded there is variability in the competence of New Zealand beginning teachers in several areas, indicating a need for ITE to strengthen graduates' ability to work with diverse learners and their whānau, and to apply their knowledge and theory in practice.¹

¹ Education Review Office. (2016). *Newly Graduated Teachers: Preparation and Confidence to Teach*.

9. The 2018 Teaching and Learning International Survey of New Zealand Year 7-10 teachers found that, on the whole, beginning teachers' initial training covered a wide range of content and skills.² However, just over two thirds of beginning teachers felt well prepared for the classroom practice (70%), pedagogy (68%) and content (67%) of some or all of the subjects they taught. Fewer than half of beginning teachers felt well prepared for the use of ICT in teaching or for teaching cross-curricular skills.

Variable quality of partnership between ITE providers and the host sites for practicum

10. There have been ongoing challenges for ITE programmes in developing effective enduring partnerships with the host sites for practicum, particularly (for example in secondary) where providers have needed to reach beyond Normal Schools and Model Schools to broaden the range of experiences they offer students. These include:
- a. an increasingly competitive environment for providers looking for host schools;
 - b. establishing partnerships and practicum placements in schools with diverse students;
 - c. the level of funding for the costs associated with practicums, including associate teacher pay, administration fees of host schools, time and travel costs for ITE staff;
 - d. the skills of associate teachers working with student teachers and their engagement with tertiary providers' programme design and delivery expectations;
11. We have heard from ITE providers that it is increasingly difficult for them to secure practicum places in schools. There are 10 ITE providers seeking placements for the majority of ITE students in the Auckland region alone. Newer providers also face the challenges of securing practicum placements for students in schools that may have long standing relationships with traditional providers.
12. There have been concerns regarding student teachers' experience working with diverse learners, including Māori and Pacific learners and those with additional learning needs. The 2016 ERO report found there was variability in beginning teachers' preparedness to respond to learners and whānau from diverse cultural, socio-economic and language backgrounds. The majority of ITE providers are located in main centres and tend to place students in nearby schools which are more likely to be high-decile.
13. Costs for practicum placements typically include payments for associate teachers, an administration fee for the school that hosts the practicum, and time and travel costs for lecturing staff who visit student teachers on practicum to support and assess their practical learning. Resourcing issues may be exacerbated for low-decile and rural/isolated schools – these are likely to be smaller and therefore more limited in their capacity to support student teachers. Some providers also face additional costs subsidising student travel and accommodation when they are required to undertake their practicum in a distant region.
14. There is additional funding and resourcing available to Normal schools and Model schools, in recognition of these schools' specific role in supporting teacher education. Normal and Model schools receive additional per-pupil funding and teachers working in these schools receive an allowance of \$2,000 per annum. These schools also receive an additional 1 FTTE mentoring and coordination staffing allowance. There are currently 29 designated normal and model schools.

² Ministry of Education. (2019). *2018 TALIS - Year 7-10 teachers' training and professional development*.

15. However, aside from Normal and Model schools our system does not provide additional resource to schools to help cover the extra work and time required of them.
16. Providers have also reported concerns about the quality of some associate teachers. Key concerns include associate teachers' varied understanding of their role; insufficient knowledge of the ITE programme they are supporting; and the capability of associate teachers to provide effective feedback to student teachers.

Māori medium ITE programmes

17. The relatively small pool of Māori medium kura creates a particular challenge for Māori medium ITE providers seeking practicum places for student kaiako. There are also some indications that smaller kura in particular struggle with hosting practicums as there are fewer kaiako to share the responsibility of supporting student kaiako.
18. There are high expectations within Māori medium programmes for student kaiako to develop strong relationships within the kura including with ākonga and their whānau. Programmes are also expected to develop and maintain relationships with iwi and hapū, in addition to their partnerships with the kura community. These are just some of the additional elements of Māori medium programmes that need to be considered to support quality practicum experiences in this setting.

Steps taken to strengthen practical learning in ITE

19. The 2014 exemplary postgraduate ITE initiative provided additional funding for postgraduate programmes to address many of the issues identified above. The evaluation of the programmes found that while they did produce high calibre graduates, there were challenges related to providing student teachers with practicum experiences where they worked with diverse learners. Some student teachers and ITE staff found the demanding workload of the programmes difficult to manage.
20. Since 2013, the Ministry of Education has contracted the provision of employment-based ITE through the Teach First NZ initiative. The programme is relatively small scale with funding for cohorts of 100 participants. 9(2)(g)(i)
21. In Budget 2019, the Government committed funding to expand the provision of employment-based ITE programmes, with a specific focus on either STEM or Māori medium teacher training. 9(2)(g)(i)

The Teaching Council's new ITE programme approval requirements

22. In 2019, the Teaching Council released new ITE Programme Approval Requirements with the intention of ensuring that all ITE programmes adequately prepare their graduates to teach, right from the start of their careers. All programmes must be approved under the new requirements by 1 January 2022.
23. The Government increased funding for ITE qualifications in Budget 2019 to support providers to meet these new ITE requirements. This recognised that there are additional costs involved in providing programmes that include a significant proportion of practical learning through practicum experiences in schools. This funding increase does not take full effect until 2022.

24. The new requirements include five key elements that describe how providers should enable “practice-based” learning in ITE programmes:
- a. ITE providers must partner with schools to design programmes that ensure graduates are able to meet the Standards.
 - b. The ITE curriculum must be structured and include content in a way that coherently integrates theory and practice.
 - c. Delivery methods in programmes should model the principles and practices of effective and adaptive teaching.
 - d. Professional experience (practicum) placements must provide high-quality learning opportunities.
 - e. Student teachers must be assessed on their knowledge, capabilities and skills.
25. The new ITE requirements are grounded in the research about high-quality, practice-based initial teacher education. They place a greater focus on what graduates need to know and do in the classroom, the integration of theory and practice, and emphasise the importance of effective ITE-school partnerships.
26. Based on information from the Council, we understand that most of the newly approved programmes exceed the minimum length for practicum placements, which was increased as part of the new requirements. The Council has also reported that many providers are working with schools to develop their ITE curriculum, practicum arrangements and the role of the associate teacher. A summary of the key requirements identified above and information from newly approved programmes are provided in Annex 2 (attached).
27. The Council is still in the process of assessing programmes under the new requirements, and currently:
- a. 40 programmes have been approved for delivery this year.
 - b. 6 programmes are under the approval process.
 - c. A further 48 programmes will be seeking approval before 2022.
28. Over half of the approved programmes are one-year programmes. This means we will begin to see the impact of the new requirements on the quality of beginning teachers from the start of next year. We recommend allowing time for the new programmes to impact on the quality of graduates before making further changes to the ITE requirements.
29. The ITE requirements are an outcomes-focussed framework for the design and delivery of teacher education programmes. Providers have considerable flexibility in how they design programmes to meet the requirements. ITE programmes also rely heavily on the schools that provide the settings for practicum and the associate teachers who supervise and work with student teachers while they are on practicum.
30. Through the increased Student Achievement Component funding for ITE, we have sought to address provider related additional practicum costs. However, we consider that more work is needed to improve the capacity and capability of schools, particularly those that aren't Normal or Model schools, to partner in the provision of initial teacher education.

31. As noted above, it will take some time before we can assess the impact of the new ITE requirements on the quality of beginning teachers. We recommend holding off on making any further changes to the ITE requirements until we have a better understanding of how programmes have changed to meet the new and strengthened requirements around graduate outcomes and partnering with schools.

33. Further work would seek to address the following issues and challenges:

- a. 9(2)(f)(iv)

34. 9(2)(f)(iv)

- ## Next Steps

- ## Annexes

- 7

Annex 1: Summary of evidence on high-quality, practice-based ITE

1. High-performing teacher preparation systems incorporate the following three key features to strengthen the integration of theory and practice and to ensure that graduates are ready to teach:
 - a. A clear and coherent vision of how teachers integrate theory and practice in real settings.
 - b. Strong connections between ITE providers and schools.
 - c. Continual development of teacher educators based on research and evidence of best practice.

Clear and coherent vision of how teachers integrate theory and practice in real settings

2. Programmes that successfully connect theory with teaching practice ensure that there is a shared vision of good teaching that is woven through formal course work and practice experiences. This shared vision is fully understood, negotiated and enacted by all participants.⁴ Further, effective programmes model the practices they expect from their student teachers.⁵
3. Contemporary education research has highlighted the importance of teachers continually analysing and developing their own practice.⁶ Fundamental to this is the ability to assess the impact of their teaching on student learning, characterised by Timperley (2013) and others as “adaptive expertise”.⁷ Effective ITE programmes prepare student teachers to collect and analyse data on their students’ learning and then adapt their practice to increase each student’s learning.⁸ This approach is central to teaching a diverse range of students and selecting appropriate strategies for teaching and learning.
4. To support student teachers to become adaptive experts, high-performing systems recognise that student teachers learn the most about teaching when they are in actual classrooms working with expert mentors who model and coach candidates on the practices they are trying to develop.⁹

⁴ Whatman, J., & MacDonald, J. (2017). *High quality practice and the integration of theory and practice in initial teacher education - A literature review prepared for the Education Council*. Wellington, New Zealand: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.

⁵ Roberts-Hull, K., Jensen, B., & Cooper, S. (2015). *A new approach: Teacher education reform, Learning First*. Melbourne, Australia.

⁶ Jensen, I. S., Klette, K., & Hammerness, K. (2018). Grounding Teacher Education in Practice Around the World: An Examination of Teacher Education Programs in Finland, Norway and the United States. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 69(2), 184-197

⁷ Timperley, H. (2013). *Learning to Practise*. Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Education. & Darling-Hammond, L., Burns, D., Campbell, C., Lin Goodwin, A., Hammerness, K., Low, E.-L., . . . Zeichner, K. (2017). *Empowered Educators: How High-Performing Systems Shape Teaching Quality Around the World*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

⁸ Timperley, H. (2013). *Learning to Practise*. Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Education

⁹ Toon, D., & Jensen, B. (2017). *Teaching our teachers a better way: Connecting teacher preparation to practice*. Melbourne, Australia: Learning First

5. High-performing systems also recognise the first years of the teacher career as a critical stage to both guarantee the implementation of knowledge and experience from ITE in real settings and the acquisition of new critical professional knowledge and skills.¹⁰

Strong connections between ITE providers and schools

6. A coherent ITE curriculum that effectively integrates theory with practice requires strong partnerships between institutions. Establishing partnership is an essential pillar to build the capacity of teacher educators, both in ITE and schools, and to foster continuous improvement of programmes through effective ITE-school feedback mechanisms.¹¹
7. Effective partnerships clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the teacher educators based in ITE institutions and the mentor teachers working in schools. The whole school takes responsibilities for student teachers' practical learning (not one mentor teacher in one classroom) and is a site of learning (a community of learning/practice) for all involved.¹² Every aspect of the ITE programme is integrated and there is not a sense of "theory" and "practice" being enacted separately in different institutions.

Continual development of teacher educators based on research and evidence of best practice

8. The knowledge domains of teacher education must adapt as new understandings and evidence on teaching and learning emerge. New models of teaching and learning, and emerging evidence need to be reflected in the delivery of teacher education.¹³ This means that teacher educators themselves need not only to update their knowledge base, but also to adjust their practices to provide an authentic and coherent role model of teaching to their students
9. If teacher educators are to model the effective teaching practices expected of student teachers, they must be equipped with a complex set of skills. Teacher educators, both in ITE institutions and in schools, must be able to recognise learning opportunities as they arise in-situ, actively guide student teachers to make the connections between learning in ITE and support them to analyse, reflect on and adapt their practice.¹⁴

¹⁰ Darling-Hammond, L., Burns, D., Campbell, C., Lin Goodwin, A., Hammerness, K., Low, E.-L., . . . Zeichner, K. (2017). *Empowered Educators: How High-Performing Systems Shape Teaching Quality Around the World*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

¹¹ OECD. (2019). *A Flying Start: Improving Initial Teacher Preparation Systems*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

¹² Whatman, J., & MacDonald, J. (2017). *High quality practice and the integration of theory and practice in initial teacher education - A literature review prepared for the Education Council*. Wellington, New Zealand: New Zealand Council for Educational Research

¹³ OECD. (2019). *A Flying Start: Improving Initial Teacher Preparation Systems*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

¹⁴ Timperley, H. (2013). *Learning to Practise*. Wellington, New Zealand : Ministry of Education.

Annex 2: Five key Teaching Council requirements that support practice-based learning in ITE programmes

1. The following provides an overview of five key requirements within the Teaching Council's ITE Programme Approval Requirements that focus on practice-based learning. We've obtained summary notes from ITE approval panels which provide some insight into how seven providers intend to meet these requirements.

ITE providers must partner with schools to design programmes that ensure graduates are able to meet the Standards¹⁵

2. The new ITE requirements shift the focus to graduate outcomes. Programmes must ensure that ITE graduates are able to meet the Standards for the Teaching Profession (the Standards) in a supported environment. As part of this, programmes must develop a set of 10-15 key teaching tasks that graduates will be able to carry out when they begin teaching. Key teaching tasks must be discrete and measurable practices and must be linked to the Standards.
3. ITE providers are also expected to work with schools, iwi and their local community to design their programmes. Programmes are assessed on how they partner with key stakeholders on the design and delivery of programmes, the arrangements for professional experience placements and the assessment framework.
4. Examples of partnerships include ITE providers working with teachers and principals to unpack the Standards and to identify key teaching tasks. Some providers are working with Kāhui Ako, Rural Education Activities Programme (REAP), and local iwi and hapū to develop the conceptual framework and assessment framework of programmes.
5. Providers are given a high degree of discretion in how they demonstrate partnerships with key stakeholders. The Council has noted that the extent and quality of partnerships vary across programmes with the strongest partnerships evidenced through the provider having multiple conversations across many facets of programme design, delivery and assessment.

The ITE curriculum must be structured and include content in a way that coherently integrates theory and practice¹⁶

6. The new requirements include a high-level requirement for programmes to integrate theory and practice in a coherent way. As part of this, the new requirements specify several core elements that should be included in programme content, for the first time. These include:
 - a. Modelling the skills and practices required for effective teaching in the learning context in which graduates will be teaching.
 - b. Integrating culturally responsive teaching and inclusive teaching.
 - c. Ensuring graduates will have sufficient depth of curriculum and assessment knowledge.

¹⁵ Requirements 1.1 and 1.3

¹⁶ Requirements 2.3 and 2.4

7. While the panel notes indicate that all providers are committed to delivering a coherent programme with strong links between theory and practice, we do not have detailed information on how providers will do this in the programme. Given the high-level nature of the ITE requirements, the structure and content are likely to vary across programmes.

Delivery methods in programmes should model the principles and practices of effective and adaptive teaching¹⁷

8. Delivery methods, including pedagogical approaches, the mode of delivery, delivery sites, and the nature of professional experiences must prepare student teachers to meet the Standards (with support), upon graduation.
9. Guidance for this requirement provides that programmes should explicitly model the principles and practices of adaptive teaching in a range of contexts and describes the approach as constant evaluation of routine responses and assumptions.
10. Panel notes did not show any explicit focus on adaptive teaching and only limited references to other pedagogical approaches. A summary of one programme's learning activities and approaches included some practices that relate to the evaluation of teaching practices:
 - a. case studies and analysis of learning and teaching;
 - b. simulated experiences, role plays and micro teaching;
 - c. critique and peer/lecturer feedback;
 - d. representation, decomposition and approximations of practice.

Professional experience placements must provide high-quality learning opportunities¹⁸

11. A key change in the new requirements is the increase to the minimum length of professional experience placements. One-year programmes must provide a minimum of 80 days of professional experience (increased by 10 days) and three-year programmes a minimum of 120 days of professional experience (increased by 20 days).
12. The new requirements also expect placements to include high-quality features of professional experience, including a shared understanding of the purpose by all participants, clear roles and responsibilities and learning opportunities for associate teachers and visiting lecturers.
13. A number of providers exceed the minimum requirement for placements, and some provide "blocks" of practicum to ensure student teachers have the opportunity to develop relationships in their schools. Information from the panels suggest that decisions on placements are made in collaboration with the local schools e.g. timing placements around school exams.
14. One provider indicated it had sought feedback from key partners about the role of the associate teacher during placements and another outlined its intent on providing online workshops for associate teachers. Due to the limited information we have, it is difficult to form a full picture of how placements work across programmes.

¹⁷ Requirement 3.1

¹⁸ Requirements 3.2 and 3.5

Student teachers must be assessed on their knowledge, capabilities and skills¹⁹

15. The new ITE requirements establish a new assessment framework that focusses on a student teacher's ability to meet the Standards and includes particular assessment of how student teachers work with diverse learners and adapt their practice in a range of situations.
16. The requirements also expect programmes to assess a student teachers' preparedness to teach, towards the end of the programme, in the form of a culminating integrative assessment. The culminating integrative assessment must be based on an open-ended authentic practice situation that requires complex decision making and the synthesis of learning from across the programme.
17. As noted above, some providers have indicated they have worked with key partners to develop the assessment frameworks that are linked to the professional expectations of teachers in the classroom. However, we do not have further details on how programmes have designed frameworks to assess student teachers' practice.
18. Panel notes indicate that culminating integrative assessments will occur primarily through oral presentations, in line with the expectation in the ITE requirements. However, it is unclear how practice situations will be designed and whether the assessments will be undertaken in a classroom or simulated setting.

¹⁹ Requirements 4.1 and 4.2