INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA:
AN EARLY REPORT ON A STUDY IN PROGRESS

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The Australian Council of Deans of Education has commissioned Jim Walker, Barbara Preston, Jim Mitchell, and Ron Traill to carry out a survey of initial school and early childhood teacher education programs in Australia. The project arose out of a recognition that significant developments are occurring in initial teacher education in the context of a thin public knowledge base. This context was discussed in detail in our paper presented at the Australian Teacher Education Association annual conference held in July (Preston et al 1994).

A reference group, which includes the major stakeholders in initial teacher education, has been established for the project. Members of the reference group have provided input regarding the issues they would like to see covered by our study. Their contributions have been incorporated in the questionnaires (attached).

The investigation process
The study is seeking information from a number of sources:
1. Documentary material on courses such as faculty handbooks. This material is being used for a preliminary analysis of the content of courses according to a classification system based on the category taxonomy developed by Shulman (1987). This system was developed and trialed by members of the project team in previous research (Walker et al 1994 and 1992). The course documents also provide a reference to ensure full coverage of all relevant courses in Australia, and may provide some information about courses not available elsewhere.
2. Questionnaires for deans (or heads of school). These broadly cover the current initial teacher education courses, and developments since 1990 and expected over the coming five years; the distinguishing features or central qualities of the initial teacher education program; the overall pattern of work of the Faculty/School, and how and why that may be changing. Completion of these questionnaires may involve face to face and telephone interviews. A copy of a draft is attached, and comments are welcome.
3. Questionnaires for course convenors/coordinators. These cover detail about each course, including: the type of course; enrolments, student characteristics, entry and support programs;
course objectives, philosophy and key features; practicum and other school/centre-based and external activities; involvement of other faculties in the program; assessment; pedagogy; some specific content areas; and articulation with other relevant courses. Again, these questionnaires will be completed, where necessary, by face to face and telephone interviews, and a copy of a draft is attached - comments welcome.

4. DEET enrolment statistics will be used where necessary for checking purposes; however, their accuracy is dubious.

5. Teacher (graduate) demand and supply projections prepared for the Australian Council of Deans of Education will be incorporated where appropriate.

6. References to and information from other studies of initial teacher education will be incorporated where appropriate. These include Teacher Education Preservice: Preparing Teachers to Work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students: A national Reconciliation and Schooling Strategy, prepared by the Aboriginal Research Institute at the University of South Australia (Bourke et al 1994), and several studies published by the Queensland Board of Teacher Registration. Information about other recent research into initial teacher education would be welcomed.

7. References will be made to relevant overseas studies. In particular, the 'Modes of Teacher Education' ('MOTE') project, which surveyed initial teacher education programs in England and Wales in 1991 (Barrett et al 1992 and Barrett et al 1993b), will be considered in some detail - some items in the questionnaires have been worded so that comparability of results may be possible.

Project report
It is planned to complete the project report in mid 1995. The report will cover the following matters:

1. Overview of initial school and early childhood teacher education in Australia - initial teacher education in the context of other activities of Education Faculties
developments over the past decade and into the near future, including government policies and reports
some international context (including reference to MOTE).

2. Overview of current courses (national patterns, state/territory where appropriate):
missions/philosophies - including course coherence, course planning, relationships with other faculties
current course structures (table giving 1994 enrolments by course type/structure/length by EC, primary and secondary by state/territory)
trends in course structures: table of summary comparisons
between 1990, 1994 and expected 1998
collaboration/partnerships and the practicum
course content (modified Shulman; specific areas surveyed;
competencies - tabulated as appropriate)
assessment (including use of competency standards)
pedagogy
student characteristics and recruitment/selection/special entry
and student support programs
supply and demand through the decade (primary and secondary by
state and territory)
3. For each university:
structure of Education Faculty and general place of ITE
philosophy/mission and key features
developments over time (perhaps tabulated)
courses by type by enrolments (tabulated)
either by course or as a whole (or groups of courses):
philosophy/objectives (where not covered above)
collaboration/partnerships and the practicum
course content (modified Shulman; specific areas surveyed;
competencies)
assessment (including use of competency standards)
pedagogy
student characteristics and recruitment/selection/special entry
and student support programs
(How and where in the report information is presented will
depend in part on the nature of the information received from
universities and other sources.)
Conclusion
Comments on and input into any aspect of our study are welcome
- at this conference or over the coming months.

References
Barrett, Elizabeth; Barton, Len; Furlong, John; Galvin, Conor;
Miles, Sheila; and Whitty, Geoff (1992) Initial Teacher
Education in England and Wales: A Topography. An interim report from
the Modes of Teacher Education Project. London: Health and Education Research Institute, Institute of Education, University of London
Barrett, Elizabeth; and Conor Galvin; with Barton, Len;
Furlong, John; Miles, Sheila; and Whitty, Geoff (1993) The Licensed Teacher Scheme. A Modes of Teacher Education Project Survey.
London: Health and Education Research Institute, Institute of Education, University of London
Bourke, Eleanor; Dow, Rosemary, Lucas, Bill, assisted by Budby,
John (1994) Teacher Education Preservice: Preparing Teachers to
Work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students: A national Reconciliation and Schooling Strategy. Canberra: Department of Employment, Education and Training; and Adelaide: Aboriginal Research Institute, University of South Australia.

Preston, Barbara; Mitchell, Jim; Traill, Ron; and Walker, Jim (1994), 'Initial Teacher Education in Australia: A Study in Progress', a paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Australian Teacher Education Association, Brisbane, July.

Walker, Jim; Hughes, John; Mitchell, Jim; and Traill, Ron (1994) 'Teachers' Knowledge Base in Australian Teacher Education: Development of a Content Analysis Methodology'. Unpublished paper.