

Chapter 104

Global Examples of Approaches to Teacher Education in the 21st Century: Creating Theory–Practice Nexus through Collaboration

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ABSTRACT

The field of teacher education has been evolving for several decades, and current approaches to teacher education aim to prepare preservice-teachers to teach diverse populations and develop a range of skills, dispositions, and attributes. Emerging models of teacher preparation recognize the disconnect that has occurred between theory and practice, as opposed to developing student teacher skills and knowledge of learning processes as they occur in both formal and informal settings. The current focus, teacher education (“training” is now a pejorative term) signals a significant shift in the field over the last three or four decades. Increasingly, there is a recognition that new teachers need theoretical, technological, content, and pedagogical knowledge skills to manage the realities of the 21st-century digital classroom and the capacity to connect theory to practice. There is a growing emphasis internationally on the need to create effective and systemic school-university partnerships to prepare teachers for the profession. The focus of the chapter is to outline the features of successful models of teacher education in Finland and Singapore and to highlight the value of an Australian partnership model that is school-based while bridging the theory-practice divide.

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INTRODUCTION

The recent emphasis on approaches to learning that are based on self-determination and networking such as heutagogy and connectivism help us understand learning as making connections with ideas, facts, people and communities (McLoughlin & Lee, 2010). Learning for the professions has grown beyond mere learning of skills and become a participatory knowledge creation process, where novice teachers often belong to a learning community and are mentored into the skills of the profession. It is expected the new age effective teacher must think more about process than content, enabling learners to operate in the digital world rather than learn a discrete body of facts. The evolution from a training purpose in teacher education to a preparation focus commenced in the 1970s and has since moved away from the notion that teaching is a process of transmission, to a focus on how, what, and under what conditions teachers learn to respond to the needs of a changing society. Likewise, the concept of a good teacher has moved away from mastery of content and classroom management to a more complex, multidimensional view of teaching as having expertise in professional knowledge of curriculum, and learning and disciplinary content in addition to pedagogical and technological knowledge. Shulman (1987) proposed seven categories of teacher knowledge: *content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, curriculum knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of learners and their characteristics, knowledge of educational contexts, and knowledge of educational ends, values and purposes*. In this framework, Shulman proposed two major types of teacher knowledge: content, which is also known as ‘deep’ knowledge of the subject, and knowledge of curricular development, called the structure of knowledge. This refers to the theories, principles and concepts of a discipline; and the pedagogical skills which enable teachers to present that content knowledge in ways accessible to

students. This he referred to as pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). PCK is now viewed as a key component of teacher knowledge and teacher professional development and is often referred to in literature exploring teacher knowledge (Shulman, 1992). The development of *Pedagogical Content Knowledge* (Shulman, 1987, p. 8) and *Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPCK)* (Koehler, Mishra, & Yahya, 2007) are well-recognised frameworks for encapsulating the domain of teacher knowledge and are integrated in current models of teacher education in Finland, Singapore, Europe and Australia. The TPCK model ensures that blending of content, pedagogy and pedagogical content knowledge are woven into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented, and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners, and lead to teacher professionalism (Shulman, 1987, p. 8).

In the UK and Australia, teacher professional standards have been introduced, and teachers are expected to demonstrate through portfolios and practice that they meet these standards, that entail a number of categories such as:

- Setting high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge pupils;
- Promoting academic progress and outcomes by pupils;
- Demonstrating extensive subject and curriculum knowledge
- Managing behaviour effectively to ensure an inclusive and safe learning environment
- Fulfilling wider professional responsibilities in the school and community
- Continuing with inquiry and reflection into their own teaching

Zeichner (2006, p. 334) maintains that we need to move away from the model of field experience as sink or swim and “towards a model like the professional development school or partner school where university faculty and staff provide instruction

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