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Reclaiming and reframing  
teacher education in Aotearoa New Zealand



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## TE HAUTAKA MĀTAURANGA O WAIKATO

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## Is initial teacher education a profession?

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### Abstract

*Over 200 years, the dominant metaphor for the preparation of beginning teachers by teacher educators has evolved from 'correction' to 'apprenticeship', 'training', 'finishing', 'education' and, most recently, 'standardisation'. Teacher educators' primary affiliation has similarly varied over time from church, to classroom, normal school, training college and, latterly, the university.*

*Scholarly analyses of teacher educators as an occupational group typically describe a continual struggle for individual and collective credibility in a) university and faculty, and b) school/centre or classroom settings. Teacher education does not satisfy the classical requirements for a profession and has been referred to by others, dismissively, in such terms as 'the uncertain profession' and by teacher educators themselves, approvingly, as a 'semi profession'. Many individual teacher educators now meet neither contemporary benchmark expectations of research entrepreneurship and productivity among their university colleagues, nor currency of occupational expertness among those with whom they and their students interact in schools and centres. Requirements for some teacher educators to be registered teachers, but not to have a current practising certificate, further reinforce their fractured occupational positioning.*

*This is a debilitating, untenable position for teacher educators. In New Zealand, the position has developed in an ad hoc fashion over the last twenty or so years and has resulted in teacher educators being expected to be all things to all constituencies in both scholarly and occupational spheres.*

*Drawing on classical Greek philosophical distinctions between abstract and scientific knowledge, practical and craft knowledge, and the wisdom borne of thoughtful practice, this paper considers alternative ways in which teacher educators' relationships with and contributions to initial teacher education policy discourse might realistically be reconstituted over the next decade in order to provide them with a meaningful, distinctive, manageable and satisfying professional role.*



## **Introduction**

This position paper sets out some basic parameters for discussion of the extent to which working in initial teacher education (ITE) may reasonably be regarded as a professional activity, and on what grounds. The purpose of the paper is to promote systematic, critically informed discussion about how to reconfigure tertiary- and setting-based educators' various contributions to initial teacher education over the next decade in order to provide them all with meaningful, distinctive, manageable and satisfying 'professional' roles. It considers, first, what are the distinguishing characteristics of a profession; second, what are the distinguishing characteristics of ITE; third, to which characteristics of a profession may initial teacher educators reasonably lay claim; and fourth, how might ITE be better conceptualised and organised to take advantage of the professional status claims of initial teacher educators?

## **What is a profession?**

The three classical professions (for 'gentlemen') were divinity, law and medicine. In the 19th century in Britain a directory of occupations was developed to permit the population to be classified for census purposes by their rank, profession or occupation. Teachers were included among the professions—but so too were 'pew openers' and 'performers'. The profession of teaching was sub-divided into three categories: 'schoolmaster', 'teacher, professor, lecturer' and 'school service and others connected with teaching' (Woollard, 1999). Today, standard definitions of a profession emphasise distinguishing characteristics such as a specialised body of knowledge and training, self-governance and regulation with regard to the admittance, registration, development and discipline of members, and commitments to objectivity and client service. On these criteria, broadly interpreted, the professions expanded greatly during the 20th century contiguously with the expansion of post-compulsory tertiary education where accredited courses that met the academic requirements for entry to the profession were being offered to replace workplace training positions such as cadet or articled clerk, for example in the law and accountancy professions. The newer 20th century professions included what are now often described by scholars as the 'softer', 'caring' or 'feminised' public service salaried occupations of nursing, teaching and social work but also any occupational grouping in the private sector that aspired to have a registered professional body and restricted entry together with defined standards of practice and ethics, and to operate on the basis of transparent self-regulation and accountability to the public, most recently, for example, real estate workers.

On the face of it, real estate workers and initial teacher educators may appear to have little in common as professions. However, both groups wish to have greater public recognition and respect for the work they do. As initial teacher educators, we may struggle, understandably, to be sufficiently dispassionate about our own claims to professional status and about the occupational processes of professionalisation that are necessary to secure this. This may particularly be so in an era when the distinctiveness claims of tertiary-based teacher educators are labelled 'vested interests' by some and disputed by others. In that sense, the case of real estate workers in New Zealand provides a comparative illustration of one way legislation and regulation may be used to rapidly 'professionalise' the activities and relative standing of an occupational group. The Real Estate Agents Act 2008 states that its purpose is to protect the interests of

consumers, promote public confidence in the performance of real estate workers, to regulate those working in the field, raise ‘industry’ standards, and provide accountability through an ‘independent, transparent and effective’ disciplinary process (Section 3). The Act established the Real Estate Agents Authority as a Crown Entity, with a range of functions including licensing and registration of real estate workers, the development of practice rules and ethical and professional standards, setting of fees and levies, establishing a complaints process and providing information for consumers and the public, and developing (external) complaints and (internal) discipline procedures. As a Crown Entity, the Authority may also be directed to perform in accordance with the Crown Entities Act (Section 12). Real estate is described in the 2008 Act as both an industry and a profession. Real estate agents and branch managers must be licensed. There are two routes to gaining a licence: completing three years’ experience in real estate work in the previous ten years; or gaining the prescribed qualifications (Section 36). The Act also grants the Authority the right to gazette practice rules for continuing education (times, frequencies, topics or specified requirements; Section 15).

The consequently established Real Estate Agents Authority published a Code of Professional Conduct and Client Care, pursuant to The Real Estate Agents Act (Professional Conduct and Client Care) Rules 2009. The Authority developed the Rules. The Rules specify standards of professional competence and conduct, a duty to report misconduct or unsatisfactory conduct, a duty to display the Rules and ensure that workers and other persons are made aware of them, to act in the client or customer’s best interests, and a duty to ensure both the existence of a complaints procedure and customers’ or clients’ awareness of these. In developing its Code, the Authority claims to “have drawn on best practice in occupational regulation in New Zealand and internationally” ([www.reaa.govt.nz](http://www.reaa.govt.nz)).

Taking the claim at face value for the purposes of this position paper, ‘occupational regulation’ along the lines specified in the 2008 Act and 2009 Rules is regarded as necessary whenever an occupational group of ambiguous standing wishes to be regarded by the public and the government as a profession. In the crudest sense this is a pragmatic trade-off between autonomy and credibility in pursuit of professional status. Notably, on this occupational regulation model of professionalisation, ‘knowledge’ includes plain language rules and standards of practice, conduct and ethics; ‘education’ encompasses both initial and continuing dimensions of personal professional development; and ‘professionalism’ includes on the one hand the codification and monitoring of the day-to-day practice activities of members by their overarching governing authority, and on the other hand, a willingness among members to be held accountable for their competence, activity and dispositions by that same authority. Significantly, where statutory incorporation of the membership occurs through the establishment of a Crown Entity, this permits limited ministerial control over some areas of professional activity. Occupational regulation might also be described as a ‘responsive professionalism’ discourse in terms of its appeal to potential members.

Overall, somewhat less importance is placed in ‘occupational regulation’ or ‘responsive professionalism’ models on a specialised body of knowledge, per se, and more on its correct practical application in the field in the service of clients. The knowledge of skilled practice provides more of a professional warrant in this regard than the abstract discipline knowledge favoured by the aspiring professions in the second half of the 20th century. Moreover, the new public management architecture of

collective compliance is somewhat more important than collegial trust in the character, virtue and disposition of individuals. As we shall see, this has significant implications for the 'theory into practice' model of university-based initial teacher education that was briefly hegemonic in the 1990s and 2000s.

### **What is initial teacher education?**

The usage adopted in this paper has only fairly recently become normalised in the teacher education literature (research and policy texts). Initial teacher education is differentiated from 'pre-service' teacher education or teacher 'training' by inclusion of the period during which teachers are qualified and working in classrooms or centres and are 'provisionally' rather than 'fully' registered. Provisionally registered teachers have yet to provide their employer and professional registration body with the assurance that they are sufficiently skilled to warrant full registration. During provisional registration qualified teachers are still learning their craft, but are 'on the job' in a government-funded programme that, in theory at least, provides them with structured, supported learning opportunities as they further develop their craft knowledge of classroom or centre teaching. In some jurisdictions, the transition to full registration also requires additional academic credits or credentials. In either case, it is the process of ongoing learning to become a proficient teacher that characterises the provisional registration period and therefore it forms part of the teacher's 'initial' education. ITE therefore connotes the ideal of a seamless learning transition to full professional registration.

The basic point, it would seem, is that an accredited programme of study (theory and practical) leading to qualification as a teacher is insufficient to assure professional competence. Just as in other professions that require several years of higher level learning prior to qualification and then several years of supervised professional practice prior to full registration as an autonomous professional practitioner, a beginning teacher must spend several years working in one or more practice settings under supervision before they may be regarded as sufficiently knowledgeable and skilled to be considered a fully professional teacher.

The point of labouring the 'new' understanding of initial teacher education is to emphasise that it involves considerably more than completion of an accredited course of study. As such, it seems reasonable to argue that the roles and practices of teacher educators are also more numerous and complex than those involved in delivering an accredited course of study in a tertiary education organisation. It also implies a fuller integration, or jigsawing, of tertiary and practice-setting activities undertaken by the student and beginning teacher. This, it is argued, requires a reconceptualisation of the specialised knowledge that would justify the definition of teacher education as a profession.

So, what might be a useful conception of ITE that incorporates multiple roles and practices? The "incontestable purpose of ITE is to ensure, if at all possible, that prospective teachers should become able teachers" (Haggar & McIntyre, 2006, p. 5). The wording is significant. If ITE is about developing the capacity to become an able teacher in the future, it must involve more than assuring basic competence in the present. For Haggar and McIntyre, "the main curriculum issue for ITE is that of enabling beginning teachers to develop classroom teaching expertise" (2006, p. 6). According to the authors, the work of initial teacher educators therefore involves three related tasks: first, enabling student teachers to acquire the basic competence to meet

the criteria for teacher registration and perform satisfactorily in their first teaching appointments; second, “to prepare them for a situation in which they will need to go on learning, primarily on their own initiative and on the basis of their own classroom experience” (p. 6); and, third, “to prepare beginning teachers to respond intelligently and critically to demands for innovation and improvement” (p. 7). In short, if teachers are to become able, and over time to develop from ‘competent’ to ‘proficient’ and even ‘expert’ classroom or centre practitioners, they need the knowledge, skills and dispositions to both learn from their day-to-day practice and make professional judgments about the value of any proposed or mandated changes to their practice. Threading these tasks together is the notion of critical engagement “in the development of their own craft knowledge” (p. 41).

However, this craft knowledge is considerably more than an apprenticeship of learning by doing in the classroom or centre. Haggar and McIntyre (2006) make the case that these various forms of knowledge teachers require in order to become proficient at their work must be developed in a range of *settings*, supported in various ways by several people who enact different but highly complementary *roles* and who collectively contribute to a managed, co-ordinated *process* of initial teacher education for the individual. Management and co-ordination are necessary precisely because ITE is not simply about ensuring that beginning teachers can demonstrate observable practical *competence* as classroom teachers. Its role is also to ensure that teachers (i) learn the abstract skills of working out how day-to-day performance is *shaped* by various contextual factors; and (ii) develop a disposition to ongoing personal learning in order to be able to exert increasing influence over the contextual factors through which teaching and learning relations unfold.

In short, this elaborated professional pedagogical repertoire involves the knowing *that*, knowing *how* and knowing *why* of classroom or centre teaching. Initial teacher educators in tertiary settings can support acquisition of some elements of the pedagogical repertoire, and school- or centre-based staff some other elements. But we already know this! The challenge is to try and gain consensus across the ‘chalk’ and ‘ivory’ communities about which elements of the full pedagogical repertoire are best learned in the field, and how, and which in the tertiary setting, and how, and which in both settings, and how. And, how these various elements should then be funded, and by whom. These are essentially questions about the meaningful acquisition of highly specialised knowledge. Management or co-ordination of the ITE curriculum towards this end has always proven problematic for various historical, cultural, political and fiscal reasons. Together these have militated strongly both against the idea that the occupation of teacher educator is itself a profession, and equally strongly against the realisation that, just as in the Victorian directory of occupations, there are sub-categories with different roles and responsibilities that derive from different, yet complementary knowledges and expertnesses. As Haggar and McIntyre (2006) demonstrate in the English context, state-funded teacher education began in the 19th century as a process of atheoretical practical learning on the job, moved largely to the higher education institutions in the 20th century using a ‘theory into practice’ approach, and towards the end of the century began to move back to practice-based settings on the argument that there was too much theory and too little practice in ITE courses. However, these moves were fuelled more by gut dissatisfaction with the status quo than any clearly documented evidence of the benefits of the new approach. Unsurprisingly, each model manifested significant weaknesses. In all three, while the intended

relationship between theory and practice knowledges may have been reasonably clear, the respective roles of tertiary and school or centre teacher educators, and more importantly their interrelationship, remained incoherent.

Since the advent of mass compulsory schooling, the dominant conceptual metaphor for the preparation of beginning teachers by teacher educators has evolved from 'correction' (the monitorial system of in-class assistants in the early 1800s) to 'apprenticeship' (the pupil teacher scheme), 'training' (the normal schools), 'finishing' (liberal arts teachers' colleges), 'education' (university-based ITE) and, most recently, 'standardisation' ('evidence-based' ITE curricula linked to measurable competencies).

The dominant or normative locus of teacher educators' primary affiliation has similarly varied over time from church, to classroom, normal school, training college and, latterly, to the university. In the last two decades, however, in New Zealand and other countries that have subscribed heavily to new public management reform ideologies, belief in the greater efficacy of initial teacher education based in practice settings has undergone something of a return to fashion. Lubricated by a market liberal ideology of choice and competition, non-university pathways to teacher qualification have proliferated in New Zealand, including field-based programmes offered by private providers in direct competition with the public universities.<sup>1</sup>

In New Zealand, school sector initial teacher education programmes remain at present almost exclusively university provider-led, while in early childhood there is a considerably more diverse mixture of field- and tertiary provider-led programmes. Within most universities, teacher education is one among a number of so-called 'professional schools'. Teaching is generally associated with other historically feminised, soft-science oriented, predominantly working-class populated programmes such as social work and nursing, rather than the historically male dominated, hard-science oriented, middle-class populated programmes such as medicine, law and engineering.

Initial teacher educators today work in a challenging environment, arguably one that is incompatible with development of the highly specialised knowledge that is their stock-in-trade. Proposals to merge universities and their local teachers' colleges spawned a series of elaborate courtship rituals to bring together two very different approaches to teacher education: the 'liberal arts pre-service practical teacher training' philosophy that reached its zenith in the teachers' colleges just prior to the watershed reforms of educational administration in 1989, and the 'teacher education as induction into an abstract scholarly discipline' philosophy that reached its high point in the universities at roughly the same time. Today, the status of teacher education in New Zealand universities is ambiguous at best.

Typically the six teachers' colleges merged with existing, much smaller, faculties of education within the universities between 1990 and the mid-2000s. Since the early 1990s, government subsidies for teacher education programmes have fallen significantly while the tuition and user-pays student fees components have grown to around a third of institutional revenue for those programmes. Total institutional revenue for teacher education is around a fifth lower in real terms in 2010 than it was in 1990, while compliance and other overheads have grown much faster than the rate of inflation (O'Neill, 2012). Greatly reduced institutional revenue from government tuition subsidies has impoverished the breadth and depth of ITE learning experiences that teacher educators may offer, while the prospect of significant personal debt has made

the experience of being a student teacher more transactional and instrumental as they struggle to balance full-time study and full-time casualised work simply to make ends meet.

Two further new public management policy initiatives from the Labour coalition government years (1999–2008) have also affected the environment for initial teacher educators, together with a third market-liberal education policy decision taken by the National-led government (2008–2011). First, the establishment of the New Zealand Teachers Council, including powers to act as the accrediting and quality assurance authority for all initial teacher education programmes, challenged the institutional autonomy of the university colleges of education in terms of their statutory freedom to choose how to teach and assess students. Second, the Performance Based Research Fund (PBRF) and, in particular, its conception of ‘research’, challenged the idea that teacher educators may continue to pursue a university career as scholar teachers. The de facto employment requirement to gain a doctoral qualification and to undertake and publish research has had adverse career consequences for significant numbers of teacher educators from the former teachers’ colleges and, in addition, has created a hard barrier against staff movements between professional practice and tertiary education settings. While, arguably, it was possible to operate a mutually beneficial ‘revolving door’ employment or secondment policy between the two settings prior to the introduction of the PBRF and the incorporation of the teachers’ colleges, this is no longer the case. Third, the teacher support services that in 1990 were brought under the administration of their local teachers’ colleges (an arrangement that was intended to last for up to three years only) were finally made fully contestable from 2010. Almost all of the Ministry of Education’s professional development contracts for teachers in public schools and centres are now run by private charitable trusts (e.g., Cognition Education and Core Education) or public-private consortia (e.g., Leading Learning Network). The significance for initial teacher education is that contestability of the advisory and contract facilitation services to schools and early childhood centres has resulted in a further highly visible reduction in the presence of ‘expert practitioners’ in university-based ITE settings.

In combination, these new public management and market-liberal policy initiatives since 1999 have added to the already considerable uncertainty for staff in terms of how to articulate with any degree of confidence the nature of initial teacher education within the ‘merged’ teachers’ college-university faculty of education. Without wishing to caricature anecdotal accounts of what has occurred within the universities since 2003 (the first PBRF census), on the one hand, the initial teacher educators from former teachers’ colleges who remain in universities in 2012 are generally those prepared to subscribe to the definition of research promulgated through the PBRF. Accordingly, they have gained their doctoral qualification, contributed as best they might to a predominantly *abstract knowledge* of teaching found in reputable research journals (preferably international), and disseminated their newly acquired knowledge to ITE students as theory into practice, typically through the impersonal large lecture format that the universities are increasingly forced to use in their attempts to create some institutional economies of scale. On the other hand, the New Zealand Teachers Council has deliberately positioned itself since 2001 in its professional leadership role as the ‘voice’ of the sector: registered teachers and employers of beginning teachers. In recent years it has begun to ‘demand’ that ITE programmes are demonstrably both evidence-based and competence-focused, that practitioners have a greater say in the assessment

of observable *practical knowledge*, and that the tertiary education organisations pay greater attention both to official government initiatives in their curricula, and to the modelling of actual school and centre pedagogies in their interactions with students. A proportion of initial teacher educators must also be teachers who are registered with the New Zealand Teachers Council. To a considerable degree, this constitutes an irreconcilable paradigm clash between those who lay claim to professionalism more on the basis of their specialised knowledge and the attendant right to self-regulation, and those whose claim to professionalism is based more on occupational regulation and rules- or standards-based service.

### **How professional is teacher education?**

Self-evidently, initial teacher educators do not qualify as professionals under the occupational regulation or responsive professionalism model: there is no period of compulsory training or preparation to become an initial teacher educator; there are no admittance or registration criteria, no common rules or standards of practice or code of conduct. While TEFANZ exercises a co-ordination and representation role for a proportion of ITE providers, including a majority of the universities, it has no formal authority. It carries out no continuing education or discipline functions for individual members, and it receives no complaints about institutions or individual educators from clients or the public. There is no occupational regulation body for initial teacher educators. Educators retain their autonomy, such as it is, by virtue of their employment in tertiary education organisations, which enjoy the privilege of academic freedom under the Education Act 1989. However, as a consequence of the Education Standards Act 2001, the New Zealand Teachers Council operates as the occupational regulation authority for teachers in early childhood and school settings. It also approves initial teacher education programmes and maintains standards for teacher registration. Consequently, it makes demands of ITE providers that sometimes give the impression that it also has (or believes it has) occupational regulation authority over initial teacher educators and their work. This is a contradictory position, not least because (i) the composition of the NZTC Council does not include a representative of initial teacher educators as it does all other constituent membership groups; and (ii) unless they are visiting students on practicum, initial teacher educators are not required to be registered by the NZTC and in principle therefore it has no statutory authority over them.

The New Zealand Teachers Council is unlikely to disappear entirely as a result of the Ministerial review that is underway at the time of writing. As a Crown Entity and overarching registration authority for the teaching profession, it represents the emerging hegemony of professionalisation through occupational regulation or responsive professionalism. This has inherent appeal to government and, no doubt, to significant fractions of the teacher workforce and the wider community. Either the NZTC or a professional college of teaching in some form or other will therefore almost certainly continue (possibly promoted as an apolitical alternative to the NZEI and PPTA, which pursue both professional and industrial agenda on behalf of teachers). Equally, although the present number of university-based ITE providers may shrink without a very significant increase in public funding, the university sector is unlikely to disappear from the ITE policy mix (university credentials, per se, have greater prestige and exchange values than those awarded by other tertiary providers or national credentialing bodies).

The question, then, is whether initial teacher education provision nationally can simultaneously accommodate the statutory right to autonomy in teaching and assessment enjoyed by the universities and other tertiary education organisations (i.e., academic freedom), and the occupational regulation practices required by the NZTC as the accrediting authority for ITE programmes that lead to school and early childhood setting teacher registration (i.e., practice compliance). Some sensible accommodation has to be found for university-based ITE to survive and for educators in them to enjoy professional satisfaction and credibility in both ‘chalk’ and ‘ivory’ communities. It is argued that part of the conversation necessarily involves clarification of the nature of ITE knowledge (or epistemology<sup>ii</sup>) for this will largely determine the nature of initial teacher educator professionalism in the universities and other tertiary education organisations. In other words, initial teacher educators’ claim to being a profession stands or falls on a claim to having a specialised body of knowledge. However, and this is crucial, the nature of that knowledge may not be as currently contested by either the universities or the NZTC.

It is possible to see epistemology as dominated by two rival metaphors. One is that of a building or pyramid, built on foundations. ... This metaphor favours some idea of the ‘given’ as a basis of knowledge, and of a rationally defensible theory of confirmation and inference as a method of construction. The other metaphor is that of a boat or fuselage, that has no foundations but owes its strength to the stability given by its interlocking parts. This rejects the idea of a basis in the ‘given’, favours ideas of coherence and holism, but finds it harder to ward off scepticism. (Blackburn, 1994, p. 123)

Today’s university education faculties are struggling to find an optimum or even a basic pragmatic accommodation between these rival metaphors of knowledge for precisely the same sorts of reasons that initial teacher education has always struggled to do so: finances, cultures and politics. For one thing, the theory into practice model that underpins university-based ITE is increasingly untenable in the context of the burgeoning occupational regulation and compliance demands tertiary providers face from funding and regulatory bodies outside. For another, the competitive performativity imperatives of PBRF require initial teacher educators to take up ‘unnatural’ subject positions within the university, positions that directly militate against the kinds of teaching *scholarship* and practical school and centre teaching *expertness* that underpin the New Zealand Teachers Council’s demands for evidence- and competence-based modelling of professional teaching practice in approved ITE programmes.

A significant difficulty for the tertiary institutions is that government tuition subsidies do not now provide for replica school and early childhood centre learning environments, and craft knowledge exploration in initial teacher education. In much the same way, they no longer provide for the traditional small group tutorial system that was a signature of learning to participate in academic discourse until comparatively recently. It is perfectly reasonable for the NZTC to expect that student teachers will experience authentic classroom and centre learning environments. It is both unrealistic and unnecessary to demand that this shall be provided as a ‘model’ within tertiary settings because for the most part this is not the specialised ITE knowledge that exists any longer in today’s merged university faculties of education. This specialised knowledge is mostly to be found in schools and centres themselves, and it is in these

environments that student teachers are best placed to learn the various practical elements of their craft knowledge, supported both by practising teachers who have specialised knowledge in supporting student teachers, and by tertiary educators who have theoretical and empirical knowledge of the most efficacious ways to support learners (Haggar & McIntyre, 2006). The specialised knowledge contribution that tertiary setting educators make to the education of student teachers is to support development of their “systematic propositional knowledge”, the capacity to “make explicit the assumptions beneath the know-how” (Pring, 1976, p. 122). The specialised knowledge contribution of practice setting initial teacher educators is rather different because, as Pring bluntly puts it, “one learns to be practical by being practical” (p. 122). Accepting this division *and* interdependence of responsibilities is key to articulating the specialised knowledge claims of initial teacher educators as an occupational group.

University-based initial teacher educators alone cannot reasonably be expected to have a working command of both Blackburn's (1994) knowledge metaphors because this asks them to reconcile competing conceptions of knowledge: the pyramid and the boat. Nonetheless, we can extend the conversation about knowledge and gain greater precision in what this might mean for the work of initial teacher educators by drawing on classical Greek philosophical ‘soft’ boundaries between abstract or scientific knowledge (episteme), practical or craft knowledge (techne), and the wisdom borne of thoughtful practice (praxis). These boundaries were soft, precisely because it was recognised that there is considerable overlap between these knowledges in practice: theory and practice are not mutually exclusive. They ‘interlock’ in other words. As Haggar and McIntyre (2006) articulated earlier, the craft knowledge base of teaching involves all three of these forms of knowledge within the one metaphor. In Blackburn's terms, they are a boat or fuselage, not a pyramid or building.

It is argued that precisely the same forms of coherent, holistic knowing constitute the specialised knowledge claims of initial teacher educators. The key is to recognise their complementarities, and not to regard these too as rival metaphors of knowledge. The particular balance between episteme, techne and praxis is a question of fitness for purpose, as too are the responsibilities of the various people who support student teachers to develop them. In other words, the profession of initial teacher education comprises a number of distinct roles that are themselves interlocking and interdependent. ITE professionalism is consequently vested in collective not individual endeavour. The initial teacher education knowledge whole is more than the sum of its often artificially separated parts. School- or centre-based teacher educators are as important as those based in universities and other tertiary education settings. Clearly they should be neither working in isolation from each other, nor attempting to build those parts of the boat or fuselage about which they know very little.

### **Reframing teacher education: Autonomy and credibility?**

Scholarly analyses of teacher educators as an occupational group typically describe a continual struggle for individual and collective credibility in a) university and faculty, and b) school/centre or classroom settings. Initial teacher education does not satisfy the classical requirements for a profession and has been referred to by others, dismissively, in such terms as ‘the uncertain profession’ (Powell, 1980) and by teacher educators themselves, approvingly, as a ‘semi-profession’ (Gore & Morrison, 2001). Equally, initial teacher educators in New Zealand face onerous demands borne of the emerging

hegemony of occupational regulation or responsive professionalism that is enacted by the NZTC in pursuit of greater professional standing and credibility for classroom and centre teachers, and their representatives and employers who constitute the Council's membership.

Many individual teacher educators now meet neither contemporary benchmark expectations of research entrepreneurship and productivity among their university colleagues, nor currency of occupational expertness among those with whom they and their students interact in schools and centres. Requirements for some teacher educators to be registered teachers but not to have a current practising certificate further reinforce their fractured occupational positioning in the university. For example, in the American context, Shen (1999) identified a cultural schism between the original mission of schools of education, the research university settings within which teacher educators now mainly find themselves employed, and the promotion and reward structures they have to negotiate. He described this as "the rise of research and the loss of identity" (p. 123). Similar trends can be identified in New Zealand since 1990. What we have now is a debilitating, untenable position for tertiary-based initial teacher educators. The position has developed in an ad hoc fashion over the last twenty or so years as successive governments have choked tertiary tuition subsidies and transferred costs to students, while at the same time imposing vastly increased regulatory demands and compliance costs on ITE providers via the NZTC and the Tertiary Education Commission. This external policy milieu has resulted in initial teacher educators in the research universities being expected to be all things to all constituencies in both scholarly and practical spheres.

In terms of reframing initial teacher education as a profession, the choice is not between autonomy and credibility, between academic freedom and occupational regulation. This paper has argued, instead, that the sector needs to embrace a different conceptual metaphor of teacher educators' specialised *knowledge*, that of the boat with interlocking parts, and thereby to adopt a holistic rather than a compartmentalised understanding of how student teachers acquire the craft knowledge that is both sufficient to demonstrate competence as beginners, and yet sufficiently robust to enable them to continue to learn throughout their classroom careers.

A realpolitik acknowledgement that tertiary educators must decide whether to attempt to support part of this craft knowledge development well, or all of it badly, is essential. Acknowledgement that there are serious material constraints on what it is possible to achieve in initial teacher education should act as a pragmatic spur: to more, and more precise, dialogue with the other, all too frequently forgotten, possessors of specialised knowledge—working teachers in classrooms and centres.

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<sup>i</sup> Internationally, the starkest contrasts in ITE today are arguably found between the university-based postgraduate pathways lasting a year that are funded conventionally by a combination of state subsidy and student fees, and the 'fast-track' 'employment-based' ITE pathways such as those offered through the Teach for All network (<http://teachforall.org/>). TFA providers receive significant private equity funding from corporations, individual philanthro-capitalists and family foundations that wish to see ITE liberalised from a perceived government imposed pathway monopoly. The local TFA start-up is Teach First New Zealand (founded by Aotearoa Foundation, Harry Singer Foundation, Chapman Tripp, Deloitte, Hutton Wilson Nominees, and Woolf Fisher Trust) in partnership with the University of Auckland.

<sup>ii</sup> Discussion of ontology is just as important but is beyond the scope of one brief paper concerned with professional 'knowledge'.