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Te Hautaka Mātauranga o Waikato

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*Special Edition:*  
Reclaiming and reframing  
teacher education in Aotearoa New Zealand



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## TE HAUTAKA MĀTAURANGA O WAIKATO

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# Waikato Journal Of Education

## Te Hautaka Mātauranga o Waikato

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## **Rapporteurs' report: Is initial teacher education a profession?**

### **Presenter**

**John O'Neill**

### **Rapporteurs**

**Beverley Norsworthy**

Bethlehem Tertiary Institute

**Jill Paris**

University of Otago

The discussion after both of the presentation sessions was certainly a good starting point in achieving John's aim of "promoting systemic, critically informed discussion about how to reconfigure tertiary and setting-based educators' various contributions to initial teacher education". Discussion was enriched by the diversity of contributors; teacher educators from a range of providers, school and early childhood contexts as well as representatives from the New Zealand Teachers Council, Ministry of Education, PPTA and NZEI. John facilitated the discussion with responses to questions, elaboration on aspects of the paper and further provocations.

### **If we are a profession, on what basis are we a profession?**

The starting point for consideration of this critical question begins with defining what is understood by a profession. John presented two models. The first, which he termed Classic Professionalism, positions the professional as one with specialised knowledge and preparation, self-regulation and governance, and a belief that decision making draws on an objective knowledge base which the professional interprets for the specific context. The second, he termed Responsive Professionalism, indicating that this approach is defined with plain language, rules and standards, and includes a codification and monitoring of competence. While discipline matters are handled at the internal level, an outside body, such as a consumer's tribunal, may receive grievance cases. Within this model, teacher educators are positioned as technocratic, subservient to an outside body, such as the New Zealand Teachers Council, that defines what and how teacher educators should do what it is they do.



However, in relation to the question at hand, John argued that neither of these models will work and a new model is required. He hoped that such a model would be developed collaboratively within educational communities and address issues such as how teacher educators are positioned, the difference between training and education, the emphasis on competency and lifelong learning, and finally how to bring different sectors to work together in a time where new approaches are impossible due to the moratorium.

### **Who are the teacher educators?**

Related to the question of teacher education being a profession are considerations related to the teacher educator's identity. If initial teacher education is continued into subsequent years, key questions that need to be considered include: Who are the teacher educators and what is their context—the university, the school, a mixture of both? What knowledge and skills are needed? Is a doctorate necessary? What is the role of teacher educators as professional fellows? How do we get above institutional ownership of parts of the process? Who has the accountability? John proposed that the current set of roles may be out of sync with what we know is necessary to produce fully competent, confident teachers. It is clear that mentoring and induction into the role is needful but the question remains: Into what is the person inducted—the academy? The school? Or is a new understanding of this larger professional and shared context required? The importance of induction is linked to questions related to the nature, purpose and approaches specific to teacher educators.

### **The distinction between training and education**

John referred to the three different approaches to knowledge as all being necessary for the development of teacher educators as professionals. Epistemic knowledge is developed through one's commitment to lifelong learning and craft knowledge through 'doing teaching'. The two together enable one to be reflexive or committed to ongoing learning, or praxis. As Haggart and McIntyre (2006) commented, craft knowledge/competency on its own will not equip teachers to address the challenges such as those raised by Alan Scott in his keynote address. The critical analysis needed for this does not arise from training. While craft knowledge and competency are important, teaching is more complex than those outside teacher education understand. The sessions included extensive discussion around this complexity of learning related to teaching and the need for continuing growth as features of teacher education. This links to ongoing challenges faced by teacher educators in the media and the issue of emphasis in terms of sufficiency and competency. Contributors identified that there is an expectation of competence for employability, but that employers also need to be confident that beginning teachers can go beyond competency. It is critical to present teacher education as inclusive of all experiences through to registration. This may help address an unrealistic public expectation that beginning teachers are both competent and confident from day one of employment but also may facilitate a recognition for mentor teachers to be recognised as teacher educators. While in the second session John suggested that thoughts about 'coming into teacher education' not be equated with coming into a tertiary setting, throughout the two sessions frequent questions or discussion focused on the relationship with teacher educators in tertiary settings.

### **How do we bring everyone together?**

It was suggested that there may need to be a discursive shift in the way teacher education is constructed societally. There may be no one answer to how to keep all parties involved; most universities have professional contacts through principals' organisations or NZEI, and the key thing is to recognise that all contributors, participants and beneficiaries have a right of ownership over teacher education in New Zealand. The complexity of the New Zealand system, across sectors and at local levels, is a complication to be considered. How do we get together at systems level and local level? Providers have a range of systems in place, with serious attempts to develop better communication between university and practice settings. Discussion explored the preparation required for associate and mentor teachers in their role as teacher educators, and the impact differing views of craft knowledge held in different settings have on student and beginning teachers' development. With fractured identities and a lack of agreed or shared vision for our roles, the challenge is what more do we need to do?

### **The way forward**

If existing models of being professional won't work for teacher educators, how do we go forward in a manner which brings the different settings together? In the first session questions were raised about the Teach First NZ model. John clarified that Teach For All advocates employment-based training, not an apprenticeship model with a different justification, with university components initially to support learning on the job and select the 'cream' of people. Is this a model of what we want? No—it is unethical to 'throw people into the field' and it is unfair on students. It doesn't teach two of the three things that teachers need. How then do we do this i.e., address all three aspects? There was agreement that two foci for further collaboration and communication are the fields of assessment and the need to embed continuing learning so that beginning teachers develop skills and critical thinking over time when in field-based settings. It was also suggested that more emphasis on the 'service' or 'public good' component of a profession may strengthen a view of teacher educators as professional. John concluded by emphasising the importance of collegial conversations and the development of a collaborative professional stance.

### **References**

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## Teacher education policy in New Zealand since 1970

Noeline Alcorn

University of Waikato

### Abstract

How can New Zealand schools be provided with a sufficient supply of knowledgeable and skilled teachers at a reasonable cost? This question has shaped teacher education policy over decades but its interpretation and preferred solutions have varied markedly.

By 1970 three-year training for primary teachers was finally achieved and teachers colleges were striving to change their organisational patterns, move away from their image as extended secondary schools and become fully tertiary institutions. Colleges had also acquired their own councils, though important decisions in finance, numbers, curriculum and staffing were all made finally by the Department of Education. In 2012 most teacher education in New Zealand is carried out in university faculties of education offering early childhood, primary and secondary programmes and heavily involved in continuing professional education.

These significant developments have occurred against a backdrop of social and systemic change in New Zealand. In this paper I examine what issues have shaped educational policy in teacher education, what conflicting ideas have underpinned it, and which players have been pivotal. Key themes include (i) the scope, nature and preferred locus of teacher education; (ii) control, funding and quality assurance; and (iii) supply and demand for teachers.

The paper will examine policy documents, reports, critique, and systemic developments with a focus on the changing and often contradictory nature of concepts such as professionalism, accountability, student success, and teacher quality.

### Introduction

How can New Zealand schools be provided with a sufficient supply of knowledgeable and skilled teachers to meet student and social needs at a reasonable cost? This pragmatic question has shaped teacher education policy over decades but its interpretation and preferred solutions have varied markedly. All the aspects of the question can be debated. How is a 'sufficient supply' to be measured? What do 'knowledgeable and skilled teachers' look like? How are student and social needs to be defined? And what is a reasonable cost? This paper examines policy with reference to reports, critique, and systemic developments with a focus on the changing and often contradictory nature of concepts such as professionalism, accountability and teacher

