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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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Special Interest Group report: ICT/eLearning competencies in ITE

Mary Simpson
College of Education
University of Otago

A group of fourteen people from a range of initial teacher education providers met to discuss the use of ICT/eLearning in initial teacher education.

Initial discussion established that there was agreement that we need to see our students (and learners in school and early childhood settings) as intimately embedded in and interconnected with their tools, their environment and their social networks (Facer, 2011). The question then arose of when those tools are digital, how should we be interacting with our students/learners in schools and centres? This is a continuing challenge and a question that needs constant foregrounding.

In the teaching and learning context, questions are more important than answers given the ready availability of information on the Web. How can the use of ICTs in our programmes and the schools and centres we engage with promote a question-asking environment, and what skills, knowledge and values do teachers need to support this approach?

When developing papers and programmes and teaching in our initial teacher education programmes we need to constantly ask ourselves how we will prepare student teachers to engage in the digital world. At present this is often not done well enough. Currently, approaches taken are often not a cohesive whole. The challenges of teaching with technology need to be addressed through professional development as many lecturers still lack confidence.

We also need to maintain close links with schools and centres as the use of technology in those settings is changing rapidly. The challenges these settings face are also varied as the contexts are so different. There is variation within the sectors and from setting to setting. Cluster schools are an example of a context where teachers (our graduates) are expected to teach online.

The group noted that learning with technology can develop a disposition for new ways of learning with our students. It was acknowledged that our students are learning in fundamentally different ways from those we are used to. However, the response can't just be to provide the tools as this doesn't necessarily build appropriate dispositions and promote the use of technology for learning. The University of Auckland College of

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(pp. 159–161)

Education has developed a useful DVD that focuses on the use of digital technology in the classroom. We also need a disposition to learn alongside our students.

It is also imperative that our students understand the risks of social networks. Many make unwise decisions about the use of social networks and don't realise the consequences. The New Zealand Teachers Council's work on this is useful and provides a starting point.

The entry skills and understandings of our students need to be acknowledged. The challenge is to identify these and build on them. We have students coming into our initial teacher education programmes who have come through networked teaching—e.g., Māori video network being used in Kura/Wharekuri.

BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) is a noticeable trend in schools so we need to prepare students for this. Likewise the reuse of portable devices is becoming more universal, although not all schools are 'equal'. The impact of socioeconomic status is obvious.

Ultimately, the use of technology is all about pedagogy. There is an obvious need to consider carefully what we are we doing with our students and to develop ways of sharing good practice. Alongside this we must raise the profile of technology-enhanced teaching. A SIG subset on the TEFANZ website which currently lists initial teacher education publications from member institutions would be a good way to develop this. Some examples are presently available. Go to http://www.tefanz.org.nz/member-organisations/teacher-education-research-outputs-member-organisations/

A paper from Professor Niki Davis (2012), University of Canterbury, was circulated to the SIG. The paper indicated there was a need for initial teacher education providers to have access to, and be included in, current Ministry of Education developments related to the Network for Learning (N4L) and the Ultrafast Broadband in Schools initiatives. The paper noted there is a need to guide implementation and development of education in New Zealand with the Network for Learning and Ultrafast Broadband in Schools, with particular reference to teacher preparation. Many educators will be unable to access the nation's Network for Learning unless action is taken to influence policy to ensure relevant educators in the tertiary sector, particularly teacher educators, can engage in the initiatives. The following three recommendations from the paper (p. 6) were discussed:

1. The services of the UFB Crown Entity be adjusted to cover all those who work with the schooling sector.
2. A national hui be convened to better understand and start to disseminate the contributions and needs of initial teacher education, including services such as nationwide ePortfolio services that are already deployed for schools and professional learning development (PLD) in the schooling sector.
3. The government's billion-dollar investment in UFB be leveraged by gathering relevant illustrations of best practices plus related research and development to inform the national strategy and all relevant educational agencies and institutions. Best practice includes PLD provided by student teachers and curriculum innovations with digital technologies that reach schools and communities through initial teacher education, including blended online learning across initial teacher education and some partner schools.

The issues raised were recognised and there was agreement that there was a need for continued engagement with them.

References

Davis, N. E. (2012). *The network for learning and initial teacher education in New Zealand.* Christchurch, New Zealand: University of Canterbury e-Learning Lab.

Facer, K. (2011). *Learning futures: Education, technology, and social change*. New York, NY: Routledge.