

Seizing the Opportunity

Part IV : Developing the Shape and Structure of the Degree of Bachelor of Education (Teaching)

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Introduction

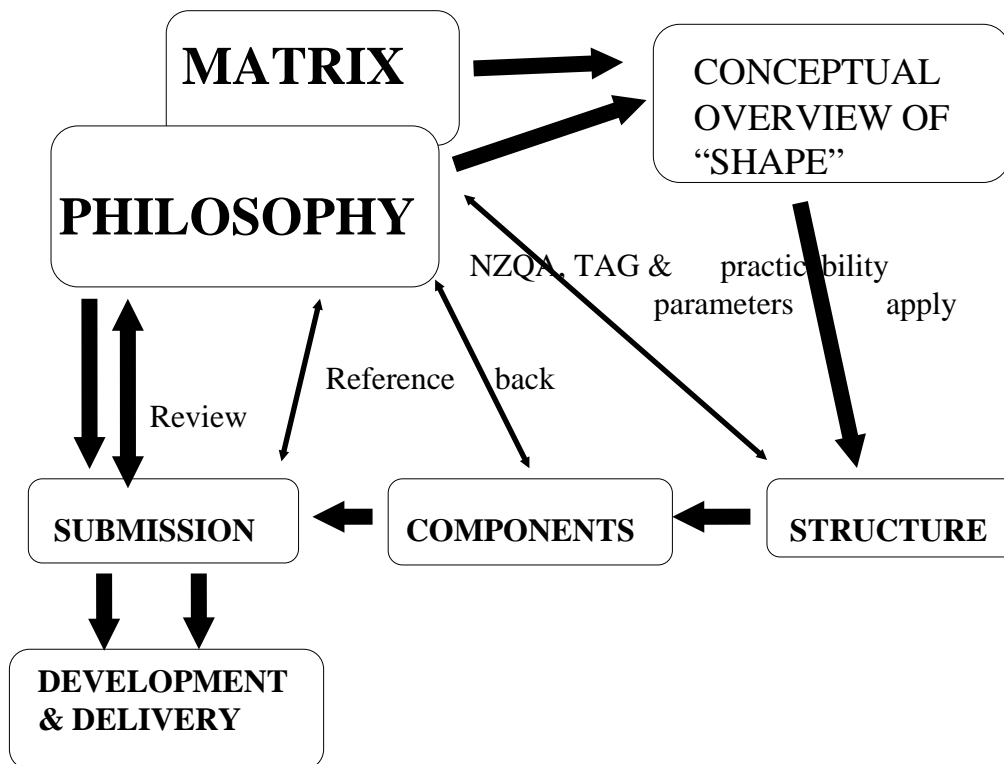
This paper deals with the shape and underlying structure of the first three year Bachelors Degree in teacher education accredited in New Zealand. The key elements of the development of the degree were a statement of philosophy and the identification of outcomes for a professional degree in teaching. In the fashioning of these, the initial priority was to conduct a review both of current practice and of recent and relevant literature. Preliminary consultations with staff and community representatives were undertaken to inform the core group leading the development.

As the development proceeded, a paper entitled *The Profile of the ACE Graduate* was produced. This paper was later distilled into a draft philosophy statement that paralleled the development of the matrix of the dimensions of teacher education. As the form and content of the matrix became clearer, this in turn, enabled the writing of the definitive philosophy statement.

By similar processes, building on an initial 'trawl' through the literature and supplemented by staff and broader community responses to a call for references and principles, the matrix of the dimensions of teacher education emerged. These two elements provided the basis for shaping the degree programme as shown in Figure 1.

Shaping the Degree Programme

Figure 1: Shaping the degree programme



The philosophy that emerged from ongoing dialogue underpinned the creation of a matrix of the dimensions of teacher education upon which the degree is structured. In terms of the student experience, the shape of the programme of study is organised across three strands (see Figure 2) representing the essential professional base which the matrix represents in four domains. These strands are interdependent and the absence or isolation of one would negate the others. The strands are professional education and knowledge; curriculum knowledge and practice; and professional inquiry and practice. As the proposal document states, “[a] professional teacher education degree programme demands the unique and combined contribution of all three strands” (Auckland College of Education, 1996).

Figure 2 (overleaf): Conceptual Overview of Shape of Degree

Notwithstanding the reflexive overlaps and linkages between the strands, as shown in Figure 2, each has distinctive features. The professional education and knowledge strand encompasses areas of study that develop students' professional knowledge of a generic nature rather than that of a curricular specific nature. As such, it includes education, information technology, tikanga Maori and Pasifika. The curriculum knowledge and practice strand deals with the National Curriculum and the documents associated with the designated seven essential learning areas as well as the early childhood area. Delivery here focuses on a knowledge and understanding of the documents, the subject discipline(s) and the classroom and early childhood centre practices relating to these. Professional inquiry and practice stands as the central strand, a crucial acknowledgment that practice is essential for a graduate teacher who, on exit from the programme, is adequately prepared to begin (the practice of) teaching with suitable guidance - that is, to enter into a professional internship. The designed overlaps and linkages between the strands ensure that practice is informed by and, in turn, informs the "knowledge, concepts, skills and understandings" gained in generic and curricular areas while the central strand develops the "capacity to theorize practice and practise theory reflectively" (*ibid*).

Designing the Structure

Within the three strands, the components of the degree programme are modules with attached New Zealand Qualifications Authority credit values and assigned appropriate National Qualifications Framework levels. Thus, although the modules are not directly derived from the teacher education unit standards, they are linked to that reference framework (of domains). The modules are the method of delivery of the seventeen dimensions of the teacher education matrix (See Windross and Lomas, 1998) with different and coincident dimensional elements being evident in the range of modules. The integrated nature of the programme, however, ensures that distribution of matrix dimensional elements across the three strands is harmonized to guarantee coverage appropriately sequenced over the semesters and years of the programme. There is also a significant degree of commonality in curriculum knowledge and practice modules at National Qualifications Framework Levels 5 and

6. This is partly achieved by all curriculum focused modules having a core number of common matrix elements, e.g. referring to subject discipline knowledge. The module structure details the links between matrix elements and associated learning outcomes and thus the basis of delivery and assessment for each module is established.

Before module outlines could be written the structure of the degree had to be determined, at least skeletally, in terms of the plan of the programme of study. At this stage, the reference points were the matrix, a diagram depicting the interrelatedness of the strands and the philosophy statement. Taking on board the teaching communities concern to address curriculum areas and teaching practice in greater depth, the weighting on these was significantly increased compared to the previous conjoint degree programme.

Figure 3 : Comparison to Previous Programmes by Credit Allocation

Bachelor of Education/Diploma of Teaching Programme - 4 years

| AREA OF FOCUS | TOTAL CREDITS POINTS | PERCENTAGE OF PROGRAMMES |
|--|----------------------|--------------------------|
| BEd/Diploma in total | 56 | |
| Professional Practice incl Teaching Experience | 6 | 10.7% |
| Curriculum Studies | 22 | 39.2% |

Bachelor of Education (Teaching) - 3 years

| AREA OF FOCUS | TOTAL CREDITS POINTS | PERCENTAGE OF PROGRAMMES |
|---|----------------------|--------------------------|
| BEd (Tchg) in total | 360 | |
| Professional Inquiry and Practice incl Teaching Experience | 96 | 26.7% |
| Curriculum Studies | 192 | 53.3% |
| Curriculum Knowledge and Practice including Pasifika, Tikanga Maori, and Information Technology modules | 224 | 62.2% |

Figure 3 shows the weighting on curriculum, by credit values, in the previous conjoint programme and the proposed new degree. Comparing the two degree programmes; the conjoint BEd with the new BEd (Tchg) we see a significant increase from 39.2% to 53.3% on curriculum specific credits and from 14.3% to 26.7% on teaching practice. Within the parameter set by such weightings the heads of centres consulted with colleagues in each of the essential learning areas and education studies, and then conferred as a group. The detail of how each quantum of credits would be used in each area was established. The result is shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4 : Composition of the degree programme by credit value.

| Professional Education and Knowledge (PEK) | | Professional Inquiry and Practice (PIP) | | Curriculum Knowledge and Practice (CKP) | |
|--|-----------|--|-----------|---|------------|
| Education | 40 | Professional Inquiry | 44 | Language and Languages | 32 |
| Information Technology | 8 | Practicum | 44 | Mathematics | 24 |
| Tikanga Maori | 16 | Research Methods | 8 | The Arts | 32 |
| Pasifika | 8 | | | Health and Physical Education | 24* |
| | | | | Science | 16* |
| | | | | Technology | 16* |
| | | | | Social Sciences | 16* |
| | | | | *Plus one 8 credit elective chosen from one of these areas. | 8 |
| Total | 72 | Total | 96 | Total | 168 |
| PLUS OPTIONAL MODULES TALLING 24 CREDITS | | | | | 24 |
| <i>(ie Three further 8 credit modules selected from the PEK or CKP strands above.)</i> | | | | | |
| OVERALL CREDIT TOTAL | | | | | 360 |

Note: The bulk of the programme consists of compulsory modules with only 4 optional modules worth 32 credits.

Summary

The shape of the degree was largely determined by the way in which the development was approached. Issues of structure and detail were deliberately excluded until the overarching philosophy and matrix of dimensions were confirmed. This approach avoided the usual practice whereby details of existing custom and practice influenced or dominated innovation. The structure and detail flowed from a conceptual overview stemming from principles and philosophy.

The matrix was developed and refined through vigorous dialogue. This resulted in an increasingly clear articulation of philosophy. Using the matrix and underpinning philosophy as a basis the shape, structure and detail of modules, within the degree structure, was set. Detailed module writing then proceeded with direct reference to the domains and dimensions of the matrix. Indeed, the central plank of the actual programme of study is the matrix of the dimensions of teacher education, which is the touchstone for all modules. On this basis we kept faith with our philosophy and fundamental principles we have established for the ACE brand of teacher education.

Bibliography

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