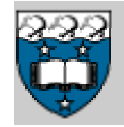




Massey University

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Te Kupenga o Te Mātauranga



Education

THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND

An Investigation of Teacher Education in Gifted and Talented Education in New Zealand



**Current Trends and
Future Directions**

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Ministry Support

- Gifted and talented education in NZ has received unprecedented support from MoE in recent years

Rationale for Research

“Provision for gifted and talented learners should be supported by ongoing high-quality teacher education.”

(Ministry of Education Initiatives for Gifted and Talented Learners, 2001, p. 3)

Rationale for Research

Initiatives specific to teacher education:

1. Increased opportunities for professional development;
2. Advice to the Teachers Council of its expectation that programmes leading to teacher registration should include content about teacher responsiveness to students with exceptional abilities (2001); and
3. A series of hui (2002-2005) for advisers and teacher educators.

These initiatives based upon premise

“ all teachers are teachers of gifted and talented students ” (MoE 2000)

Rationale for Research

With the Ministry of Education initiatives has come *increased visibility* of gifted and talented education. A flow-on effect for teacher educators seems to be *greater demand* in relation to their teaching and research.

The beginning point is an investigation of the extent and nature of current provisions – *you have to know where you are to know where you are going.*

SO this research aimed to investigate ...

Research Aims

1. The extent and nature of teaching and research in gifted and talented education within the major providers of teacher education in New Zealand.
2. The possible future form, function and practices of support between the Ministry of Education and teacher education providers.

Data Collection Tools

Mix - qualitative & quantitative data

Questionnaires to probe the extent, and to a lesser degree, the nature, of teaching and research in gifted and talented education.

Document analysis to probe the nature of teaching and research.

Interviews to allow for clarification and elaboration of teacher education programmes; and to provide a forum for discussing future directions.

Four Different Questionnaires

1. 'Coordinators' of Gifted and Talented Education
2. Lecturers of Specialised Papers in Gifted and Talented Education
3. Lecturers of Pre-service/Undergraduate Compulsory Special/Inclusive Education Paper with a Gifted and Talented Education Component
4. Teacher Educators (lecturers curric areas)

Questionnaires

- Coordinators- open & closed ended ?s re involvement in teaching & research, professional collaboration within & across institutions, MoE current & future directions (institutions direction & approaches - big picture)

Questionnaires

- Lecturers
same as coordinators but also paper details ie content, assessment, resources

Sample: Teacher Educators

21 teacher educators from 6 Colleges of Education surveyed; responses received from 18 teacher educators representing all 6 institutions (86% response rate)

Focus Groups: 6 Special/Inclusive Education and Curricular Areas; 6 Gifted and Talented Education Coordination/Teaching/Research

Aim of Focus Group: prioritise MoE current & future directions specifically relating to Teacher Education, also opportunity for more discussion re above

Sample : Teacher Educators

- For most of the 18 teacher educators gifted and talented education 'secondary' to most teaching roles; only 5 identified role as "specialist" teaching in gifted and talented education

Sample: Teacher Educators

Teaching Specialisms

1. “Generalist”
2. Inclusive/Special Education
3. Programme Delivery and Curriculum Models
4. Cultural Issues
5. Identification and Programme Issues
6. Curricular Specialist (eg, maths, arts)

Sample: Teacher Educators

Research Specialisms

Majority indicated qualitative research methodologies; 4 indicated a mix of qualitative and quantitative

Wide range of content areas and most singular responses ... Maori & multicultural issues, student perceptions, transition to school, social/emotional, curricular areas, inclusive education, teacher perceptions, classroom practices and educational provisions, creativity, young writers, spirituality, mathematically gifted, talent development across the lifespan, intelligence & creativity ...

Sample: Teacher Educators

- A strong relationship evident between research and teaching
ie teacher education involves research-informed teaching and teaching-informed research

Undergraduate and Pre-Service

- All 6 Colleges address gifted and talented education in primary pre-service programmes; 4 address in early childhood and secondary programmes
- All 6 integrate across a variety of courses (e.g., curriculum studies)
- All 6 include a module in a compulsory special/inclusive education course
- Auckland University, Christchurch College of Education, Massey University and University of Waikato offer specialist pre-service/undergraduate courses



Compulsory special/inclusive education course

- Papers all team taught, planned & assessed
- Wide range of areas: characteristics of g&t, enrichment /acceleration, inclusive classroom strategies

Areas least frequently covered: school based & out of school provisions, policy, programme development

Advantages: G&T in compulsory special /inclusive

1. Every student has exposure to needs of gifted and talented students
2. Students may gain direction & inspiration for further study in the field
3. Lecturers' awareness & understandings of gifted and talented students may be enhanced

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- “ places gifted and talented in an inclusive context highlights this group as another group with ‘ special ’ needs..... attending to these ... is the responsibility of every teacher ”
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Specialist papers:undergrad

- All single semester
- Majority team planned/individually taught & assessed
- Broad content- definitions, characteristics, identification, programmes, cultural diversity
- Not frequently addressed - out of school provisions, special populations, parenting, PD.

Advantages: specialised papers

- Appeal & popularity
- Opportunity for enhancing professional skills and opportunities
- May serve as a platform for for further study
- Depth of information
- Raising the profile for gifted and talented education within the institution

Postgraduate

- Specialised postgraduate study is available at 4 institutions: Auckland University, Christchurch College of Education, and University of Waikato offer 1 postgraduate paper; Massey University offers 2 postgraduate papers
- 1 institution = certificate & diploma
- 1 institution = Australian based certificate & diploma
- Gifted and talented education is integrated across other postgraduate papers and programmes at Massey University, Christchurch College of Education, and University of Waikato

Postgraduate

- Postgraduate student research is supervised at 5 institutions: Auckland University; Christchurch College of Education; Dunedin College of Education; Massey University; and University of Waikato
- Massey University offers endorsed postgraduate qualifications

Postgrad papers

- Most double semester
- Majority individually planned, taught & assessed
- (1 team planned)
- Content: generic, MoE initiatives, definitions, characteristics, identification, & programmes.
- Not as frequently addressed: out of school provisions, evaluation, policy, special populations, social/emotional issues, parenting

Advantages: Postgrad

- Chance for depth of study
- Allows students to put theory in to practice
- “ Depth! Really gives students a chance to seriously consider provisions for gifted and talented - makes a difference in my students’ teaching /schools”

Disadvantages: some specific to institutions
ie admin

What Works in Teacher Education?

- Specialised papers
- Introduction in compulsory papers
“peaks” student interests
- Integration across a variety of papers and programmes
- Team approaches to planning, teaching and assessment

What Could Be Better in Teacher Education?

- Gifted and talented education should be a compulsory, separate paper – conversely some argued “but never a reality.”
- Gifted and talented education should be taught consistently, and not given “token coverage.”
- Staffing issues need to be enhanced: singular responsibility for gifted and talented; institutional collaboration; professional development.
- Coverage of gifted and talented education requires more time to allow for depth: a programme limitation.

Collaboration: within & across institutions

- Within:
- Great deal of collaboration
- Sharing of teaching, research resources,
- Research
- Co-supervision
- Little collaboration re on-line, video conferencing, moderation of assessment

Collaboration

- Across
- No respondents indicated currently sharing teaching & research resources or assessment ideas
- Minimal collaboration re MoE initiatives
- 4 respondents collaborative research & marking

Opportunities for Cross-Institutional Collaboration

- Research, publications, presentations
- Sharing of teaching and research resources
- Teaching: writing materials; lectures; assessment ideas; student interactions
- Ministry of Education: Initiatives/ contracts; working with advisers
- PBRF - not driving force re above priorities

Ministry's Role in Facilitating Cross-Institutional Collaboration

Sustained funding for:

1. Continuation of the annual hui with advisers
2. Opportunities for inter-institutional research collaboration between advisers and teacher educators in gifted and talented education.

Continuation, further development, and wide dissemination of Ministry of Education resources that support teaching (e.g., publications, online material, video).

Development and ongoing maintenance of a research expertise database on the gifted and talented community of Te Kete Ipurangi, inclusive of teacher educators and advisers.

Impact of Initiatives

- Increased demand: more students and more schools wanting advice/support when developing programmes

“Sexy, hot topic!”

- Networking
- Increased teaching resources
- Increased research opportunities
- Awareness raising
- Strengthened position of gifted and talented students within mainstream education

Impact of Teacher Education Initiatives

“I have gained ... as I have met other educators and had opportunity to see what others are doing – helped inform my own research and interests.”

Networking and professional development opportunities

“...increased my motivation and built support for my work.”

Impact of Teacher Education Initiatives

“The acknowledgement that we must address this within the compulsory programme has been great, though action so far, has been sporadic.”

Teachers Council recommendation has had little impact

“Nothing evident as yet ...”

“Every teacher education programme needs to attend to this aspect of education but how this occurs should be debated and decided at an institutional level.”

Current and Future Directions

“They could support all of these – but it is unlikely they will.”

- Hui with advisors
- National Conference: teacher education strand; student discounts; student strand
- Talent Development Initiatives

“...the Ministry’s support and direction is critical. However, over-involvement is counter-productive to sustainability.”

Current and Future Directions

- Research funding
 - “build a base of skilled, competent, knowledgeable and active researchers/teachers”*
 - “need to lift the profile of Maori and Pasifika issues in gifted and talented education”*
- Professional development and support for teaching and research related to cultural groups
 - “badly in need of support and attention”*
- Teaching resources
- Funding for innovative teaching

Recommendations : Teacher Education Providers

- In house investigation & analysis of the extent & nature of each institutions teaching & research opportunities in G&T education
- Development of curricular scope & sequence of G&T education content
- Integration of G&T education content across relevant papers
- Facilitation of collaborative teaching & research opportunities for lecturers & advisers

Recommendations :Teacher Educator Providers

- Encouragement & support for individual & collaborative research within NZ bi-cultural context
- Facilitation & support for cross institutional collaboration for teaching and research in G&T education
- Consideration of the need for practical, hands- on teaching and research experiences
- Recognition of the impact of mergers re present & future G&T education at tertiary level

Recommendations : Future Research

- Broader , more representative sample of teacher education providers
- In depth investigation of integrative approaches to G&T education
- In depth study of a small sample of specialised papers eg specific content being taught

Recommendations: Future Research

- Examination of overseas approaches to teacher education for purposes of comparison with & enhancement of NZ teacher education
- Evaluation of effectiveness of different approaches in teacher education eg specialised papers, compulsory components in relation to teaching practice, skills.....
- Survey graduates to determine their perceptions in preparation in meeting needs of gifted once employed as teachers in ECE/schools

Limitations

- Sample: limited; “exclusive”; lack of rationale; may not give “accurate” picture
- Terms and Definitions: inconsistencies
- Timing: effects of mergers
- Methodology and Analysis
- Ministry Role(s): how much influence should the MoE have in teacher education and research?

Conclusion

- Gifted and talented education is addressed in 6 institutions (to varying degrees) at both pre & in-service levels
- A multi-pronged approach is preferred
- Compulsory nature of gifted and talented education is limited (differs from overseas research where specialisation at post grad level)

Conclusion

- NZ differs according to
 - existence of optional /specialised papers in gifted and talented education at preservice level
 - lack of specialised NZ based Masters degree
 - lack of field experience especially at postgrad level

Conclusion

- MoE initiatives have had impact on teacher education
- Important to keep revisiting the role & support of Ministry
- Hoped Ministry will continue to support teacher educators in PD, teaching & research - role is facilitative rather than directive

Conclusion

- Important for teacher educators to continue their support for & involvement in MoE initiatives
- Consistency in teacher educators commitment & enthusiasm (passion) for gifted and talented education
- All efforts by both MoE & teacher educators should remain focused on creating positive outcomes for our gifted and talented students as they pursue their educational adventures, hopes and dreams