

Future-focused Normal and Model Schools

Innovation through leading teacher education partnerships

The best teachers for the best outcomes for all tamariki

The Normal and Model Schools Association (NAMSA) has been a partner in the education of prospective teachers since 1876. This paper describes NAMSA's aspirations for Initial Teacher Education (ITE). As key stakeholders in ITE, employers, and representatives of the children who are impacted daily by the quality of their teachers, NAMSA members are committed to the development of a system that produces teachers who are world class.

Given the current discussions regarding the future of ITE it is timely and appropriate for the NAMSA to reflect on its aspirations for teacher education in New Zealand. The association believes that success for our diverse New Zealand primary school student population is reliant on the provision of holistic, high-quality initial teacher education that is able to produce a 'fit for purpose' teacher workforce for the primary (Year 1-8) sector. The following points describe how this might be achieved.

1. Increased Partnership between ITE providers and NAMSA Schools

There is willingness to increase the level of partnership and collaboration between ITE providers and NAMSA, through the increased ability to contribute to the development and shape of initial teacher education. Normal and Model schools provide the space where research and theory meet practice. The increasingly academic nature of teacher education has led to a divide between what is happening in schools and how prepared beginning teachers are for the realities of the classroom. Increased diversity, technological advances, changing classroom configurations and collaborative teaching evidence that what is required of our teachers in 2017 has significantly evolved over the past ten years. The balance between classroom-based practice and theory taught out of the school context must be carefully considered in a future-focussed model of ITE.

Normal and Model schools bring both a culture of mentorship and expertise in current curriculum and teaching practice and we see opportunities to strengthen ITE through partnership. Increased availability of adjunct lecturer positions, genuine support and recognition for mentor teachers, and greater opportunity to participate in ITE curriculum development and delivery would all contribute to a more agile, relevant and up-to-date model of ITE.

2. Developing a Clinical Practice Pathway

The NAMSA proposes the development of a New Zealand clinical practice pathway for teachers where learning to become a teacher is offered through situated learning, immersed within a school setting, led by NAMSA. Digital technologies have enabled teaching and learning for ITE to happen on site, there is clearly an opportunity to immerse ITE within a teaching setting. This pathway would have all the academic rigor of the provider-based settings, however the learning would occur within the school setting, either via digital technology or face to face with adjunct lecturers. The adjunct lecturer's role where they are both expert teacher and lecturer ensures they are well-placed to make explicit links to theory and practice for students. We envision that as well as hosting student teachers themselves, Normal and Model schools would provide mentoring and support to other schools. This would ensure a diversity of experience (decile, cultural, geographic) and grow capability across the network.

3. Multiple Pathways

A NAMSA, New Zealand clinical practice model of situated learning, would develop prospective teachers' abilities to practice collaboratively, responsively, and reflectively. This model should be included in a variety of ITE offerings to attract a range of prospective teachers. Increasing student diversity necessitates pathways that are designed to increase the diversity of the teacher workforce. There is a significant risk that a one-size-fits-all Graduate Diploma pathway will create a one-size-fits-few entry point to teaching; decreasing the ability to attract a culturally, linguistically, geographically, economically and experience rich workforce. This is especially important for kura kaupapa and bi-lingual settings where teacher supply is a significant concern.

We see potential to offer a number of options and pathways, including but not limited to:

- Clinical Pathway of Situated learning
- Pathways to a Master's Thesis through work based learning
- Marae and place based distance learning
- Maintaining the current undergraduate degree pathway with increased partnership

4. Raising the Status and Professionalism of Teaching

Developing future-orientated initial teacher education must support raising the status and professionalism of teaching. Evidence from high performing education systems across the world demonstrates that teacher status influences education outcomes. The re-visioning of ITE provides an opportunity to raise the status of the profession by considering pathways for mentor and associate teachers. There is a significant opportunity to provide qualifications, recognition, networking opportunities and create a career pathway within the system to support mentor and associate teacher development. There is an opportunity to reposition the place Normal and Model schools play in developing and supporting beginning teachers and their mentors.

5. Normal and Model Schools leading Quality Practicum across the Sector

Quality practicum occurs when there is the ability to develop quality relationships between the student teacher and children, between the mentor teacher and the student teacher, when the relationship is ongoing and the time spent in classroom is significant. In the future-focussed classroom learning and teaching is relationship oriented and collaborative, and we see the opportunity for teacher education to be a natural and immersed part of the school.

Evidence demonstrates that there is significant variability in the experiences that student teachers have on placement. Normal and Model schools could play an increased role in leading quality practicum across the sector including; developing a professional network of mentor and associate teachers; supporting practice across schools; and contributing to the design of practicum alongside providers. Design input from NAMSA will ensure greater responsiveness and agility to the changing demands of the sector.

6. ITE System Responsiveness

The NAMSA supports the development of a system that is responsive and agile and able to produce a teacher workforce that is 'fit for purpose'. That is, new teachers are able to work effectively in a range of community and school settings, have knowledge of teaching approaches and theory, and are able to apply them in the classroom, making decisions that enable them to meet the needs of diverse learners. Clearly the structures of the secondary school system are significantly different from the primary school sector and require differentiation in creating and auditing outcomes. Schools need to

know that teachers are consistently graduating from their ITE prepared to teach. NAMSA sees that there is a role as industry representatives in assuring that graduate teachers meet the standards regardless of the institution they attended.

Implications:

This paper has several implications for the proposed changes including:

- Increased responsiveness of the system to the needs of schools.
- Improving the collaboration between ITE providers and Normal and Model schools, shifting from consultation to partnership.
- Increasing options available for student teachers rather than restricting training options to a postgraduate pathway.
- Investigating the opportunity to develop a local model of situated learning for ITE.
- Increased presence of local research and kaupapa Māori approaches to create an ITE system that is indigenous.
- Reconsidering the place of the Normal and Model schools in the development of practicum standards and support for schools.
- Increased focus on the development of a network of adjunct lecturers, associate teachers and mentor teachers.
- Improved quality assurance across ITE providers so that schools can be assured graduates are prepared to teach.