



'There can be no contentment but in proceeding.'

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In 1969, Sir Peter Medawar¹ quoted the above words of the 17th century English philosopher Thomas Hobbes to illustrate his own view of the relationship between science and progress. For Medawar (1990: 242-3), the good life was about improving things; a process in which scientific research had a vital role to play. He rejected notions that 'progress' was a chimera. These notions he called 'the last word in poverty of spirit and meanness of mind'. However he also warned of the danger of believing that in this life science would win for us a resting place beyond which we need not try to go. In Medawar's view, 'progress' (when it occurred) was the product of attempts to improve one's world through intelligent endeavour; a process that had no fixed end. Thus he settled with delight upon Hobbes' conclusions that 'there is no such thing as perpetual tranquillity of mind while we live here because life itself is but motion, and can never be without desire, or without fear no more than without sense. There can be no contentment but in proceeding'. This is also true of issues that arise in the world of teacher education; a world which is particularly prone to being buffeted by messianic enthusiasms or swayed by political agendas. 'Progress' in this particular world requires us first to analyse the point we are at, then to seek to improve our practices, and finally to rest content, knowing that any changes in teacher education which we initiate will themselves be reviewed and probably revised by later generations. In Hobbes' terminology, this is our proceeding.

It is interesting to examine past models of teacher education and training in New Zealand and see for ourselves how models that were once regarded as being efficient and sensible came to be rejected because they were later seen to have been miseducative, nonsensical or otherwise inappropriate. When free, secular, and compulsory schooling was introduced into this country in 1877, it became clear immediately that providing sufficient teachers to meet the enthusiastic demand for schooling services was a major challenge. The cost to supply good buildings and the necessary physical school resources was itself high but at least halls and even tents could be hired until building programmes could be completed. It was otherwise with teachers. The solution hit upon was to develop the pupil-teacher system; a system of apprenticeship teacher training which had been extensively used in Great Britain and elsewhere from the mid-nineteenth century. Pupil-teachers were just that. Selected pupils who had completed the primary school course and were 14 years of age or older, were apprenticed for a four-year period to a master teacher (usually a head teacher). The apprenticeship could be terminated if a pupil-teacher failed to pass an annual examination or if the master teacher judged that the apprentice was unsuited to the work. Pupil-teachers observed their master teacher taking lessons as well as undertaking periods of supervised classroom teaching themselves. The master teacher received additional remuneration to provide

extra hours of instructions for the apprentice(s) who were required to prepare for annual external examinations in addition to completing their teaching duties. The syllabus for these examinations covered primary school subjects at a slightly more advanced level. The examination for first year pupil-teachers in Otago's schools, for example, required candidates (among other things) to memorise the first 60 lines of Gray's 'Elegy'. In the second year more was asked. Candidates now had 'To show a good knowledge of the matter and language of Gray's 'Elegy' ... and to repeat (i.e., memorise) the whole poem'.² The apprentices' task performance in teaching was also examined annually. First year pupil-teachers in Otago, for example, were required 'to move a class from desks, or gallery to floor or vice-versa; conduct a reading lesson, correct mistakes, and maintain order and attention, before a school Inspector'.³ All pupil-teachers received incremental salary rises if they passed their examinations; males receiving more than females because they were harder to recruit into teaching. Once qualified, the apprentices were free to apply for teaching positions anywhere in New Zealand.

The strengths of this model were manifest. British precedent in a colonial society made the apprenticeship concept an easy one to accept. But more importantly, what the pupil-teacher system of training succeeded in doing was to provide increased teaching staff at a relatively small expense. Policymakers seeking to grow school systems from the ground up commonly find that their aspirations are constrained by the initial small supply of effective teachers. The pupil-teacher system not only added to the immediate number of 'hands' in the classrooms but it also augmented the future supply of qualified teachers. It was true that the knowledge of these pupil-teacher trainees was limited and that they could fairly be called 'technicians' at best. Technicians, however, met the immediate need in classrooms where teachers were primarily required to dispense information and keep order as they drove pupils through an examination-ridden syllabus. In some respects the model was almost too good. The uncomfortable truth is that it is not easy to refute firmly the proposition that the foundation of national schooling in New Zealand owed much to the cheap labour of girls and, less often, boys.

It was true that unpleasant tales of apprentice teachers being exploited in the schools did arise from time to time and that the climate of anecdotal opinion led employers to tighten their regulations by specifying in more detail the rights and duties of apprentice teachers. Spurred on, however, by the decline in usage of the pupil-teacher system in Great Britain, and by a growing public equation of apprentice teaching with drudgery, professional comment began increasingly to question the validity of apprenticeship training as the best form of career entry to teaching. The latter half of the 19th century was a time when most of today's leading professions – medicine, dentistry, law, engineering, architecture – were moving away from their apprenticeship origins and looking to require tertiary education as their mode of professional preparation. This movement was worldwide and teachers (especially primary school teachers) concluded that their own professional enhancement lay in moving beyond apprenticeship entry. Sometimes the arguments advanced were little more than self-serving but at their best, commentators presented a message that still needs to be emphasised today. Of all the professions, the art of teaching requires mature and well-resourced minds which are not satisfied by the routine of habit; a routine which can become quickly dated. As one 19th century commentator in New Zealand concluded, the pupil-teacher system whereby 'Children are withdrawn from their regular course of study at an age when they

should just begin to realise how little they know, and are placed in charge of classes sometimes containing pupils older than themselves⁴ was self-evidently not going to promote quality teaching in the classrooms. The demise of the apprenticeship system was hastened in the end by the simple fact that after free education in the secondary schools became more widely available in the early years of the 20th century, the pool from which candidates for professional careers (including teaching) were drawn contained people who had completed up to three years secondary education. At this point, the apprentice teaching system as it had been known in New Zealand became redundant.

The model that was turned to in its place was that of the separate training college; a model which had been introduced into Great Britain in the mid-19th century and a model which in New Zealand was also able to form some kind of oblique relationship with local universities. The theory was that training colleges would always be able to exemplify 'best practice' in a way that the pupil-teacher system could not. In Great Britain, following their exemplars in Prussia, the training colleges were residential; the argument being that in a controlled environment, students could be produced who were not only rule-governed practitioners but also people with 'safe' thoughts. Teaching as a subversive activity in working class schools was something that the British training colleges were designed to avoid but through accident rather than design their New Zealand counterparts, while accepting their role as agents of domestication, were never as restricted as the model which they had inherited. Their development was set in train in Christchurch and Dunedin in the 1870s; both centres establishing day training colleges (sometimes called normal schools) which provided students with practice teaching and tuition for teaching certificate examinations or (where qualified) entitlement to enrol in degree classes at the local university. Most of the latter were funded to attend the colleges and their additional university enrolments were very important because they helped to keep pioneering universities afloat as viable institutions. The evidence also shows that many of these students did not teach in the schools for very long. Rather, they used the colleges as a means of getting free attendance at the university; an option that was far ahead of anything available at that time in England. It was, however, closer to the more open ethos of education in Scotland. In 1894, the Otago Education Board admitted that, 'a large proportion of the (training college) students, and those as a rule the most talented and promising, belong to families unable to maintain their sons and daughters without the help afforded by the Board'.⁵ But administrative prudence also played its part. Without the enrolment of many of these 'best' students in university classes, the infant university may well have had to close its doors.

By the early years of the 20th century, enlightened leadership from the New Zealand Department of Education was easing the impact of external examination syllabuses on the primary school classrooms and requiring individual teachers to take more responsibility for designing and assessing their own teaching programmes. The early training colleges had not really had any symbiotic relationship with the dominant apprenticeship form of training but now their number was augmented to four (one in each main centre) and each college examined its own candidates. After a period of requiring many candidates to serve an initial year of apprenticeship in the schools, college entrants were now accepted from the secondary schools directly into a two-year training course if they had passed Matriculation or a Teachers' Entrance Examination which was set at a slightly lower level. The shape of the College curriculum then became one with which we are familiar. Practice teaching

supervision was undertaken by all staff along with associate teachers in the local schools. The College staff who were usually, although not always, selected on their record of successful teaching experience, taught specialised areas of the primary school curriculum (e.g., English, mathematics, science, art and craft, physical education) and took general responsibility for the nurture of their students. Special attention was also paid to the new subject of child development, a subject which from the 1920s possessed a blossoming international literature, and to the writings of education philosophers such as Percy Nunn and John Dewey whose work had captured the attention of official literature in New Zealand. Within this framework, the training colleges developed their own cultures and traditions; cultures which were distinct from university traditions but cultures which (following 19th century precedent) supported qualified training college students enrolling in some university classes in lieu of some college studies. Students who successfully completed the college course spent one further year in probationary teaching before being certificated as qualified teachers.

For their part, the four universities, which until the 1960s were small institutions by modern standards, continued to welcome training college students to their classes on a part-time basis. Following precedents being set in the USA in particular, the Universities of Canterbury and Otago went further and with financial assistance from the government established Chairs in Education in the 1920s. There was, however, no formal relationship between these foundation professors of education and their local training colleges; a fact which dismayed James Shelley (the first Professor of Education at the University of Canterbury)⁶ and Richard Lawson who had hoped to set up secondary teacher training at the University of Otago.⁷ By 1930, however, the New Zealand government was warming to the idea of incorporating the four training colleges within their respective universities; a proposal that was specifically recommended by the Atmore Report of that year.⁸ Sadly the years of financial depression and world war which followed, reduced the recommendation to a dead letter but in 1962 the Currie Report revived the idea in the light of developments which were then taking place in the United Kingdom. The first merger between a teachers college and a university took place in Hamilton. This was followed by a merger between the Palmerston North College of Education and Massey University, and the most recent mergers have taken place at Auckland and then Wellington. The current government's policy is to encourage mergers to take place at Christchurch and Dunedin which will then leave only some private venture and polytechnic training courses outside the orbit of the universities.

For much of its history, teacher training in New Zealand was identified exclusively with the task of preparing teachers for the nation's primary schools. Today, however, its scope has broadened. When for example the kindergarten movement was established in this country in the late 19th century, it established its own teacher preparation programmes based upon exemplars drawn from the USA and the United Kingdom. These have been superseded by qualifications which are obtained usually from Colleges or Schools of Education; a qualification shift which signifies the priority that public policy today attaches to the provision of quality early childhood education. On the other hand, post-primary teaching in New Zealand prior to 1960 was principally remarkable for requiring no significant professional training programmes at all. Possessing a university degree was deemed to be sufficient evidence of preparation to teach (Ernest Rutherford was a good example) but often the status of the degree

masked the fact that its holder was no master of teaching. When few people in the population attended the pioneering secondary schools, this situation was marginally tolerable although even then it did not escape public criticism. By 1950, however, when attendance at post-primary schools had become virtually universal, the proposition that the mere possession of a university degree was a necessary and sufficient qualification to teach, strained credulity. It was the Currie Commission which finally seized the day. Reporting an alarming shortage of teachers to meet the demand of burgeoning post-primary enrolments, the Commission in 1960 persuaded the government to provide generous bursaries for post-primary teacher trainees who after their three years of university degree study were required to complete one further year of education studies and practice teaching; courses for which were provided at two of the country's existing training colleges. This remains the typical model of most post-primary teacher preparation today. The professional courses and practice come after the initial degree studies have been completed.

What becomes clear, therefore, is that these differences in traditions, and the role which university study has played in those traditions, will be manifest in the agenda of reform. In programme planning a delicate balancing act is required in terms of weighting the need to produce practitioners who have the necessary skills to succeed in the classrooms and grow in professional accomplishment against the need to have teachers in the classrooms who are masters of the knowledge they teach and the need to have teachers who are attuned to the disciplines of educational inquiry. Ideally this balance should be struck within the context of a collegial environment which welcomes the interchange of ideas, promotes cultural respect, and facilitates the growth of individuals through their creative achievements; an environment in short which is an exemplar of the classrooms of the future. Where such an environment does not exist, however, balanced programmes of the kind outlined above will be scarcely likely to occur. And it needs to be firmly stated that optimum educative environments are not in any way guaranteed by the transition of Colleges of Education to University Schools. They have to be forged and sustained through constant review.

Public judgments of the worth of professional training programmes usually centre upon the teaching skills which graduates possess when the classroom door closes and they have sole responsibility for their classes for the first time. This is to be expected and it has long been a fact of life. In the late 19th century the school inspectors in Otago supported the concept of training colleges replacing apprentice teaching but not if 'theory' was to be provided at the expense of practice. With respect to the infant Dunedin Training College, they noted,

We have had a large experience of teachers trained under these arrangements and regret to say that on taking up appointments ... a large proportion of them prove unable to teach or manage classes ... in a satisfactory manner, and have practically to learn their business at their pupils' expense and not without much pain and annoyance to themselves.⁹

Not unreasonably, what people usually expect first and foremost is that graduates from professional training courses should possess the skills for which they are being paid. We would look askance at a doctor who did not know how to give an injection or a surveyor who stumbled over his or her instruments, so

why should we concur with an unstated proposition that graduates in education cannot yet teach but they might be able to one day if they get in sufficient practice? The case for practice teaching being a major component of professional preparation programmes is, in fact, so overwhelming that there is the opposite danger that it might then come to claim almost exclusive attention. If that happens we are then no better off in terms of a quality product than we were in the days of apprentice teaching. Perhaps worse.

This is not to say, however, that the practice teaching component of professional education programmes cannot be improved upon and developed. It is a common complaint among trainees in all kinds of professional training courses (e.g., medicine, engineering, law) that there is an insufficient linkage between the practical and theoretical sides of their work but this cannot be held as an excuse for failing to improve upon things no matter how unrealistically high some students' expectations might seem to be. The use of associate teachers in the schools, a scheme that has been with us for over 100 years, can, and should be, upgraded. Probably no more than one teacher in every four at a particular time is properly suited to supervising students engaged in practising teaching; a reality that places real constraints upon the number of student places that can be offered if our priority is to provide quality programmes. Schools, as a whole, should also be involved in managing the students' learning environment. Ideally, school principals who have associate teacher programmes operating in their schools should have their duties and responsibilities written into their contracts; contracts which would also specify that they and their associate teachers were necessarily included in the professional training team and properly recognised and rewarded as such.

Mentoring is a further development which should be fostered in modern schemes of professional preparation. The provision of quality teaching and learning in the classrooms is absolutely dependent upon the practitioner; a fact which is more important than the particular 'styles' of teaching that are adopted. What is required from the novice teacher is that she/he marshal their energies and learn through self assessment and review to develop teaching strategies which best suit them. This is not an easy task. Indeed, it can become a lonely and dispiriting process unless there is a formal system provided that enables novice teachers to get support and criticism in a collegial context. Often this occurs now in an incidental way but it would be appropriate if mentoring facilities were provided on a mandatory basis for all newly-graduated teachers for a specified period until full registration is awarded. None of this comes without additional cost. But good education costs more than poor education and anything which cheapens the art of teaching is in effect providing nothing more than an extended footnote to a form of apprentice training which has long since had its day.

The incorporation of Colleges of Education within Universities provides an opportunity also to review the place of general university studies within professional preparation programmes. As we have seen, teachers college students were able to study university subjects while at college from the earliest settlement days in New Zealand. The relationship between the early colleges and universities was not one that was especially close but it seems to have worked; especially for those college students who sought to advance themselves through their university studies. It was also a relationship that was powerfully endorsed. In 1886, for example, Sir Robert Stout, then Premier and later Chief Justice and Chancellor of the University of New Zealand, told a public audience in Dunedin that 'we must use our universities for the training of

teachers because these will give teachers not technical instruction only but culture also.¹⁰ Stripped of its 19th century idiom, Stout's essential thesis, namely that general studies have an important contribution to make to professional training, has long come to be accepted in university life. It is also true that the practice of permitting some college students to undertake university studies during their training has been continued in most colleges of education in recent years; some colleges working more closely with their respective universities than others. With the merging of the major colleges within the universities about to be realised, the opportunity now arises to place education upon the same principled footing as that of other professional courses conducted in the university environment.

In an ideal world, the purpose of students pursuing general subjects as part of their professional training should be nothing more or less than that of pushing the boundaries of interest for individuals in a particular discipline of their choice. In some professional courses there are restrictions but the range of choice is in principle open to negotiation and it is appropriate to claim also that there is no *prima facie* reason why subjects drawn from an arts/science menu should be required to be tailored to the needs of one particular group of professional trainees. It should be enough that they join other kinds of students in reading the subjects of their choice. This also applies to students enrolled in education training courses. Apart from the obvious exception of students preparing themselves to teach particular subjects in the post primary schools there seems to be no case for students being restricted in the choice of general subjects which they choose to study.

The number of subjects of a general kind permitted in a professional degree is, however, something which those in charge of professional education are entitled and indeed duty-bound to stipulate after negotiation with the university as a whole. A healthy university is one in which there is a dynamic interplay between its general and professional faculties. But it needs to be said firmly that no science or arts subject is owed a living by professional schools. In general, students will choose to study in departments which welcome them and provide good scholarly teaching.

Professional curriculum papers, which once in times long ago were known loosely in the colleges as methods papers, can themselves also be sources of general education and thus contribute to the maturation of students in an educative community. It would be sad if curriculum subjects became little more than soulless studies of curricular prescriptions authored by some bureaucratic authority. It is possible for them to be much more but everything depends upon the vision of gifted teachers and a welcoming institutional environment. These circumstances have existed in the past. As a college student I was privileged to be taught by a brilliant art and craft lecturer who not only demonstrated various kinds of art and craft teaching with classes of children brought down from a local school but also introduced us to the research literature on children's art, to aesthetics in New Zealand, and to hands-on work ourselves. This opened up a whole new world for me and I'm sure for many of my peers. As we studied teaching and learning in this curriculum area we were also learning, many of us for the first time, what the disciplines involved in art and craft were all about.

Sometimes other learning experiences of a fundamentally important kind can go well beyond the utilitarian. I have a vivid recollection of our college lecturer in English introducing us to his old friend Denis Glover and inviting him to talk about poetry in New Zealand. As a staid 17-year-old product of an orthodox 1950s secondary school, I was perplexed by Glover. He just didn't

look like a poet to me; more like an ex-boxer which in fact among other things he was. He asked us to name a good poet and someone (was it me?) nominated Tennyson – a safe bet I suppose because all the textbooks said that Tennyson was a major writer as well as being a Poet Laureate. Glover's reaction was memorable. He roared in disgust, delved into his bag and after extracting a volume of the bard's poesy, read in withering tones some of what he regarded as Tennyson's worst compositions. His point was, of course, that good poets could also write bad poetry and that it was up to the reader to respond in an honest and critical way to the work offered. Glover then turned to reading some contemporary New Zealand poetry (I doubt that I had ever read any) finishing brilliantly by reading his own poem 'The Magpies'. When he came to the lines vocalising the magpies' 'Quardle oodle ardle wardle doodle', the words resonating from the depths of his throat sounded as if the birds were in the room. I note now that both of these examples demonstrate educative experiences of teaching and learning that pushed the boundaries of conventional wisdom in 1950s New Zealand; exactly what we hope in the best circumstances will occur in professional courses today.

Research and innovation is profoundly important in any professional preparation programmes conducted in a university context. Thus, it is unfortunate that educational research in New Zealand (NZCER excepted) has tended in the last 70 years to be conducted in education departments in universities; departments which have often had no formal links with colleges of education and which in recent years have themselves been distorted by the Ministry of Education's powers as a major funder of high cost research. The new merger environment therefore offers great possibilities for research and teaching in educational psychology, sociology, history, social theory and politics to become a defining characteristic of a Faculty, College, or School of Education. If we want to produce graduates who have a dynamic grasp of the teaching-learning process, to have a teaching profession which will stand forcefully for education in the face of bureaucratic and political pressures to turn schooling into something else, and to foster a public which has a better grasp of the complexity of educational issues, we will need to embed 'Educational Studies' firmly into professional preparation programmes. Correctly perceived, they must be an integral component of professional education and at their advanced levels provide research opportunities for qualified students. They should also, as they have done in the past, provide study and research opportunities for students from other areas of universities and from the general public.

As merger proposals in recent years have wended their way through the bureaucratic processes, an apparent key concern which has emerged is the assertion by those in authority for existing college staff to upgrade themselves by obtaining PhD degrees. This is dangerously fallacious. Not only is it the case that existing university staff do not universally hold PhDs but it is also likely that the current university PBRF rankings will themselves be modified over time. It is important that all staff be encouraged to do research by being given the time to do so, and of course, by having people who wish to pursue an advanced research qualification assisted to do so. But what is far more important is that Colleges as a whole be inviting environments where all staff feel that they have a role to play and that they can give service which is valued. Any suggestion that some persons are more significant than others because of their paper qualifications alone would be an unmitigated catastrophe in an environment which needs to be sufficiently robust to meet the challenges from without.

In the past 20 years New Zealand has joined other English-speaking countries in reversing a one hundred year trend of easing narrowly-prescribed curriculum requirements and providing more opportunities for teachers to design their own classroom programmes with the School Inspector acting as a prudential but increasingly supportive accounting authority. C. E. Beeby is the name often associated with this liberalisation process in New Zealand although the trend far outstretched the work of one man. Today, however, this policy has been rejected in favour of one which (under the rubric of market competition) has replaced inspectors with detailed curricular prescriptions in which teachers must record pupil progress in behaviourist terms and demonstrate that all the bureaucratic niceties required have been met in the process. This policy, which is more or less supported by all the major political parties in New Zealand at the present time, lends itself easily to reducing teachers to being compliant technicians and the process of learning to the linear result. Robustly prepared teachers, however, can cope with this danger and may well in time work to rid the system of its worst miseducative possibilities. The university environment can be a decided advantage in assisting us in this task of preparation but it guarantees nothing on its own. Indeed, it is worthwhile reminding ourselves that universities in the English-speaking world have not always produced exciting teacher preparation programmes. Henry Giroux, a leading liberal educationist in the USA, once described his own university education as a teacher thus:

During the time I studied to be a teacher, for the most part I learned how to master classroom methods, read Bloom's taxonomy and became adept at administering tests. I was never taught to question anything.¹¹ (p.44)

Our task therefore, is to use the new environment which is soon to be gained to plan deliberately to produce teachers of tomorrow who will be sufficiently skilled and intellectually robust to ensure that the best possible educational service is provided in the schools and elsewhere. This is our proceeding.

- 1 Medawar, J. (1990). *A very decided preference*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 2 *Otago Education Board* (1883). Regulations regarding pupil teachers.
- 3 *Ibid*.
- 4 *Otago Daily Times*, January 14, 1891.
- 5 *Otago Education Board Letter Book*, August 31, 1892. Gov.3. Pryde/Reeves.
- 6 Carter, I. (1993). *Gadfly: The life and times of James Shelley*. Auckland: Auckland University Press.
- 7 *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* (1999). Auckland: Auckland University Press.
- 8 *AJHR* (1930). Educational reorganisation in New Zealand.
- 9 *Otago Education Board Letter Book 30*, March 13, 1886. Report.
- 10 *Otago Daily Times*, January 9, 1886.
- 11 Giroux, H. (1995). Teachers, public life and curriculum reform. In A. Ornstein, & L. Behr (eds), *Contemporary issues in curriculum education*. Toronto: Allan & Unwin.



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David McKenzie was enormously influenced by the liberal philosophy of the staff at Wellington Teachers College when he was a student of the College in 1954/55. He remains convinced that the great threats to liberal education philosophies in New Zealand schools today are (1) bureaucratic compliance costs which starve the funds which should be spent on teachers and (2) the colonisation of New Zealand schooling by inappropriate policies formulated from abroad. However, he is much encouraged by evidence which suggests that there is a growing consensus that New Zealand schooling should chart its own unique path; a path that suits a bicultural society.