Induction round table: Becoming a professional practitioner

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Note: This report is comprised of executive summaries of independent research and not an AITSL policy paper. The views expressed in this paper are not necessarily those of AITSL or of the Australian Government.

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- Marie Cameron from the New Zealand Council for Educational Research
- Bruce Johnson, Rosie Le Cornu, Judy Peter and Anne Sullivan from the University of South Australia, Barry Down and Jane Pearce from Murdoch University and Janet Hunter from Edith Cowan University.
- Deanne Commins from the Queensland College of Teachers

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Presenters

Marie Cameron – Independent Consultant and Author, New Zealand

Marie Cameron is a registered New Zealand teacher who has taught in both primary and secondary schools as well as pre-service teacher education. She has also worked as an educational psychologist alongside teachers and parents. In recent years she has had the privilege of talking with many New Zealand teachers as part of several research projects with the New Zealand Council for Educational Research. These projects helped her see how conditions in schools impact on how well teachers, especially new teachers, are able to do their work. This interest led to her in-depth work with beginning teachers which followed them from the start of their teaching careers until the end of 2011 when many were now in school leadership roles.

Rosie Le Cornu – University of South Australia

Associate Professor Rosie Le Cornu is an Adjunct Associate Professor of Teacher Education at the University of South Australia. Rosie is an experienced primary teacher and teacher educator with a strong commitment to quality teaching and learning, affective education and social justice. Her professional background includes teaching in schools identified as socioeconomically disadvantaged, working as a social skills and classroom management advisor with primary and secondary teachers, teaching in a TAFE college and for the last twenty five years, teaching undergraduate and graduate courses at university. Rosie completed her PhD on the practicum (professional experience) and advocates a professional experience curriculum based on the notions of reflection, collaboration, reciprocity and partnerships. Rosie’s current research interests are professional experiences framed around learning communities, the experiences of early career teachers and the role of mentoring. In 2009 Rosie was awarded the Teacher Educator of the Year award by the Australian Teacher Education Association and Pearson.
**Judy Peters** – University of South Australia

Dr Judy Peters began her career as a primary teacher and deputy principal in government schools. She also worked as a literacy facilitator and project officer in a number of state-wide curriculum and development projects. From 1990 until retirement at the end of 2013 she was a Lecturer in Education at the Magill Campus of the University of South Australia. She taught undergraduate and graduate courses with particular foci on pre-service and beginning teachers' work in schools, reflective practice and action research. She was also involved in a number of teacher development projects aimed at school reform, including the Learning to Learn Project, the School-based Research and Reform Project, the National Middle Schooling Authentic Assessment Project and the Innovative Links Project. Her doctoral research examined the conditions needed to sustain school/university professional development partnerships. Since the beginning of 2014 she has continued her association with the University as an Adjunct Lecturer. Current research interests include: pre-service teachers’ learning, early career teacher resilience, leadership for educational change and transformational learning cultures. Her most recent research has been in the ARC funded linkage project *Addressing the teacher exodus: Enhancing early career teacher resilience and retention in changing times*, 2008-2013.

**Deanne Commins** – Queensland College of Teachers

Deanne Commins is the Executive Manager (Professional Standards) at the Queensland College of Teachers. Prior to joining the QCT, Deanne worked as a secondary teacher and Head of Department in rural and urban schools in Queensland. In her work at the College, Deanne is involved in the accreditation of initial teacher education programs, engaging teachers with the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and working on state and national initiatives regarding teacher quality. Deanne will present the research recently conducted by the Queensland College of Teachers about the ‘Attrition of Recent Queensland Graduate Teachers’ (Report: November 2013).
InSights

Executive summaries
The following executive summaries were provided by the researchers who will be presenting their findings at the Induction Round Table.
Key findings and implications
Teachers of Promise (TOPs) study

What lessons are there from the Teachers of Promise Study?

This work was funded through the New Zealand Council for Educational Research’s purchase agreement with the New Zealand Ministry of Education.

Background paper for the Induction Round Table – Becoming a Professional Practitioner.

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, Melbourne, Australia
Friday 21st February 2014

Background to the New Zealand Education system

Since 1989 New Zealand has had a highly devolved education system compared with most other OECD countries. Although policy decisions are centralised, responsibility for administration and management is the responsibility of each of the 2500 state and state integrated schools. Schools advertise their own staffing vacancies (although the Ministry of Education determines staffing entitlements, and directly pays teachers). Prospective teachers apply directly to schools with advertised vacancies, and are appointed by elected school Boards of Trustees.

Teacher registration has been compulsory in state kindergartens and schools since 1996. Teachers cannot be employed in schools unless they are registered (apart from those employed in charter schools). The New Zealand Teachers Council (previously the Teacher Registration Board, and soon to be the Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand (EDUCANZ)) currently sets and maintains the criteria for full registration and approves applications for registration and practice certificates. Graduates from initial teacher education (ITE) programmes are currently required to meet the Teachers Council’s Graduating Teacher Standards, and they then apply for Provisional Registration if they want to be employed as a teacher.

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1 Although the percentages of early childhood teachers required to be registered has increased since 2005 this research is about teachers in the school sector.
Schools are required to provide new teachers with an induction and mentoring programme for two years. Each school employing a Provisionally Registered Teacher (PRT) receives an additional 0.2 salary allowance in the first year (around $9,500) and 0.1 in their second year to support PRT achievement of the fully Registered Teacher Criteria (RTC). It is expected that PRTs will have a designated mentor—primary schools typically share the 0.2 allowance between the mentor and PRT to provide release time for both teachers. Mentors are paid an additional amount (about $2000).

Secondary teachers have a reduced teaching workload and their mentor or Head of Department theoretically has one hour less teaching each week to support each PRT’s learning. An additional secondary school position, introduced in 2006, releases a teacher (the Specialist Classroom Teacher) from classroom teaching for between 4–8 hours a week to provide professional development, guidance and mentoring to other teachers, including PRTs.

The Teachers of Promise Research (2005–2011)

This is a summary of the New Zealand Council for Educational Research’s (NZCER) longitudinal study of primary and secondary teachers. It aimed to uncover the factors that sustained and developed the commitment of promising teachers over time—from ITE, throughout induction and the following six years of teaching. Teachers shared their perspectives on the factors that helped them make a good start, or otherwise, in their careers and assisted them to continue to develop their capacity and that of their colleagues. Key findings are presented, and implications from the findings will be discussed with round table participants.

Participants

The purposive sample comprised 57 primary and secondary teachers who had been identified by their initial teacher education lecturers and by their school leaders as likely to make a significant contribution to the profession as classroom teachers and future school leaders. We focused on this group because of our interest in how the teaching community supports new teachers with identified potential. The participants were graduates from seven pre-service programmes in six institutions (two universities, two colleges of education and two private tertiary institutions) in five different geographic locations across New Zealand. Thirty six participants were employed in primary schools and 21 in secondary schools, in a wide variety of schools throughout New Zealand. At the start of the study they had successfully completed two years teaching in a wide range of schools.
Methodology

All participants were interviewed face-to-face twice in 2005, by telephone in 2006, (Cameron, Baker and Lovett, 2006; Cameron, Lovett & Berger, 2007) and about half were interviewed in 2011. Focus groups were held in 2007. Surveys were undertaken in 2005, 2006 and 2011. The surveys from 2006 onwards included versions for those who had left teaching or were teaching overseas.

The first interview in 2005 explored participants’ reasons for becoming teachers, the impact of ITE on their views of teaching and learning, and the support they received during PRT induction. They described how they were assisted to build their teaching understandings and expertise, their overall satisfaction as teachers, and their decisions to stay or leave their first teaching positions. We continued to explore the changes in their professional and personal lives and the factors that kept their initial enthusiasm for teaching alive, including the opportunities they had to build their educational and leadership knowledge and skills.

Key Findings

1. Teachers were attracted to teaching for the idealistic reasons consistently identified in the international literature (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Manual and Hughes, 2006). They described teaching as “a profession that matters”; “helping to shape society”; “being influential in children’s lives” (Lovett, 2007). Some workplaces nourished that commitment while others chipped away at teachers’ well-being until they left for better working environments, reduced their commitment or left teaching altogether.

2. Two thirds of teachers thought that they had been well prepared to begin teaching. They identified factors such as: high expectations; teaching faculty who provided a thorough grounding in necessary content and pedagogical knowledge; integration of course work with practicum experiences, and knowledgeable and supportive teachers on practicum. The others were critical that they had graduated without the curriculum and class management competencies they needed for a successful start to teaching.

3. Strong teacher preparation was linked to the ability to manage the challenges and setbacks inherent in the early years of teaching.
4. Teachers recalled very differing induction and mentoring experiences during their first two years of employment. Primary teachers were much more likely to have had positive experiences than were secondary teachers.

   a. Over three quarters of the primary teachers and one third of the secondary teachers described systematic and supportive induction and mentoring programmes. Features of these programmes included: personal interest and emotional support from the principal; school commitment to their growth as teachers; a reasonable workload and timetable; being part of an effective department or teaching team who worked together on shared tasks; a skilled and committed mentor; opportunity to observe other teachers and to discuss their own teaching with observers; participation in well-designed and relevant professional learning; and opportunities for external networking.

   b. A second group of eleven teachers experienced ad hoc induction. Their schools were friendly places to work but opportunities to benefit from the wisdom of their colleagues had been left to chance.

   c. Fifteen teachers (7 percent of primary and almost half of secondary teachers) described their induction period as either minimal or unsupportive. Ten secondary teachers reportedly did not receive the 0.2 time allowance, and a number were unsure whether they had a mentor or not.

5. Teachers reported working conditions that constrained their job satisfaction and/or professional learning:

   a. Only half of the teachers said that they had scheduled time to work collaboratively with, and to learn from their colleagues

   b. Only a third considered that their efforts were acknowledged and valued

   c. Only half considered that teachers were involved in decisions that concerned them

   d. Few teachers engaged in professional reading or were encouraged to participate in subject associations or other networks

6. A fifth of teachers had voluntarily changed schools in their first two years of teaching, sometimes more than once, in search of a school that provided better conditions to support their learning to teach. These teachers appeared to be more proactive than other teachers in seeking out better school learning cultures. Elvidge (2002) reported that only 4 percent of teachers nationally changed schools during their first two years. Those with the least supportive conditions were those mostly likely to have changed schools.
7. Teacher attrition (50 percent) in the first five years of teaching was similar to that reported internationally. However much “attrition” was short term, as teachers returned from teaching overseas. By 2011, 40 of the original 57 (70 percent) were teaching in New Zealand.

8. Throughout the study few teachers moved to advance their careers. They tended to move for personal reasons or in search of a “better” school.

9. Only six teachers had left teaching permanently. With one exception teachers left because teaching demanded more from them than they were prepared to give. Their new positions (four which involved teaching) allowed them to “have a life”, and enjoy better working conditions.

10. Teachers’ sense of moral purpose was sustained in the face of personal and professional challenges. While teacher retention was high by international standards, in many cases this reflected teachers’ strong personal commitment, rather than work cultures that enabled them to thrive in their careers.

11. The most satisfied teachers typically reported strong satisfaction with their relationships with principals and their collective work with colleagues.

12. The most satisfied teachers had a principal who looked out for them personally, with the skills to create a vibrant and purposeful learning culture. For these teachers school was a place where they were stretched in positive ways to become more creative and capable, and where they had some discretion about how they used their non-teaching time. Some other teachers talked about “retreating to the four walls of my classroom”.

13. Those in less collaborative workplaces reported more stress, and were less willing or able to expand their classroom or leadership expertise.

14. There were fewer opportunities for teacher collaboration in secondary schools than in primary schools. This reflects the data from a national survey (Wylie, 2007) showing that teacher collaboration varied widely across New Zealand schools, and was not widespread at the secondary school level.

15. In 2011, despite their more experienced and senior status, the majority of teachers still lacked a voice in school decision making processes. This was reported by nearly all secondary teachers.

16. While many teachers were critical of mandatory “professional development” activities, a minority of teachers reported belonging to professional associations, reading professional articles or journals, or engaging in further academic study.

Overall the study provides a strong message about the need for the education system to do a better job of ensuring that teachers have the conditions that enable them to give their best to their students. Schools need to be better learning environments for teachers if schools are to meet the expectations that society holds for them now and in the future.
References


Note: The Teachers of Promise website http://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/teachers-promise provides details of all outputs from this project and some downloadable copies.
Executive Summary

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Janet Hunter  Edith Cowan University
Introduction

The ARC funded research project entitled “Addressing the Teacher Exodus: Enhancing Early Career Teacher Resilience and Retention in Changing Times” explored the conditions that promote resilience in early career teachers. It was a collaborative qualitative research project between the University of South Australia, Murdoch University, Edith Cowan University and eight stakeholder organisations including employer groups and unions in South Australia and Western Australia.

The research was undertaken in the context of a teacher shortage crisis at the beginning of 2008. At the time, the supply of teachers was dramatically falling through retirements and increased competition for teaching graduates from other fields. This, combined with a spiralling attrition rate amongst early career teachers, was of great concern to policy makers, school leaders and administrators alike. Against this backdrop, the research team attempted to construct an ‘insiders’ perspective on what was happening to early career teachers’ lives by asking some probing questions of them and their school leaders. Based on these ‘insider’ accounts we then examined the kinds of policy and practice contexts that need to be created to assist early career teachers, school leaders, education systems, universities, unions and professional bodies to respond in creative, authentic and practical ways. In this task, the project adopted the concept of teacher resilience to cast a theoretical lens over the daily struggles, contradictions and tensions facing early career teachers.
About teacher resilience

Considerable research has been carried out on ‘the difficulties’ facing early career teachers and in some cases graphic metaphors have been used to convey the seriousness of the situation as early career teachers ‘battle’ to survive ‘in the trenches’ (Bezzina, 2006). These difficulties lead to high levels of individual stress and burnout and unacceptably high levels of early career attrition and teacher shortages. What do we mean by resilience? The concept has its origins in early research on groups of ‘at risk’ children and adolescents where the emphasis was on identifying individual and community strengths (generally referred to as protective factors and processes) that promoted positive outcomes in children’s lives (Howard, Dryden & Johnson, 1999). Masten, Best and Garmezy (1990, p. 425) define resilience as ‘the process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging circumstances’.

In this research, we wanted to take on a more systemic and structural perspective to explain early career teacher stress and burnout. We wanted to avoid the pitfalls of individualistic explanations that shifted responsibility for human wellbeing from social institutions and culture to the individual. Instead, we tried to promote a more balanced, complex and sophisticated conception of resilience capable of recognising the importance of social, cultural and political influences at work. At heart, this socially critical orientation advances the view that teacher resilience must engage with the institutional and social structures of schooling, not merely the preparation of early career teachers to ‘fit in’. Based on the evidence from this research, teacher resilience was more likely when early career teachers had the power to engage in reflective social and critical thinking and practice.
Aims of the research

The research aimed to:

- develop a ‘human resilience’ theoretical framework to study the complex lives of early career teachers to identify the practices, processes and resources they use to engage productively with the challenges of their profession.

- identify the range of circumstances (influenced by socio-cultural and systemic school policies and practices, personal dispositions and life events) that put early career teachers ‘at risk’ of leaving the profession.

- better understand the dynamic and complex interplay among individual, relational and contextual conditions that operate over time to promote teacher resilience.

- identify specific policies, practices and resources that best promote early career teacher resilience.

The research process

During the first phase of the project the research team conducted 59 semi-structured interviews with primary and secondary early career teachers in terms two and three of the 2009 school year with a follow-up interview in term four. In the second round of interviews 51 school leaders were also interviewed, giving a total of 169 interviews of approximately 30-60 minutes duration. These ‘work stories’ were then transcribed to produce over 1800 pages of rich interview data. These data were analysed at two workshops held over five days where the research team identified five emergent themes – relationships, school culture, teacher identity, teachers’ work, and policies and practices – based on preliminary analyses of the interview data. Further, NVivo software was used to create a more fine-grained coding of categories within each of the five dominant themes. The outcome was a Draft Framework of Conditions Supporting Early Career Teacher Resilience.

In the second phase the Draft Framework was trialled with nine schools – five in WA and four in SA – to ‘check out’ its veracity for the purpose of confirmation and/or modification in the light of experience. Participating schools including early career teachers, experienced teachers and school leaders worked with the research team at specially convened workshops to review the Draft. A similar workshop was conducted with representatives from Industry Partners at one of the regular Roundtable meetings. Based on feedback, a final Framework of Conditions Supporting Teacher Resilience was produced. This one page overview served as a heuristic device to guide conversations, thinking and writing among stakeholders and the research team and examine policies, practices and resources to promote early career teacher resilience. A copy of the Framework is attached and is also available on-line at: http://www.ectr.edu.au/
In the final phase, the research team expanded the Framework to produce a more detailed profile of each theme for wider dissemination. This book was developed in close collaboration with Industry Partners to ensure its relevance and usefulness to schools, teachers and education systems in terms of structure, style, and content. Thus, the emphasis has been on listening to and faithfully documenting the stories of early career teachers and school leaders in order to better understand the complexity and challenges of early career teaching with a view to generating some helpful insights, conversations and local action. An on-line copy of the book is available at: http://www.ectr.edu.au/

Conclusions

The findings of the research contribute to a greater understanding of the dynamic and complex interplay among individual, relational and contextual conditions that operate over time to promote teacher resilience. Based on our research, we argue that ECT resilience is enhanced when:

- **systems’ policies and practices** show a strong commitment to the principles and values of social justice, teacher agency and voice, community engagement, and respect for local knowledge and practice.

- the focus is on understanding the complex, intense and unpredictable nature of teachers’ work rather than on individual deficits and victim blaming;

- **positive school cultures** are developed that actively promote collaborative relationships, professional learning communities, educative forms of leadership and dialogic decision-making;

- **relationships** are developed that nurture a sense of belongingness and acknowledge the complex emotional needs of early career teachers. Such relationships are based on respect, trust, care, and integrity; and

- early career teachers successfully integrate personal, professional and structural discourses in ways that sustain both a coherent sense of personal identity and emerging teacher identity over time.
Recommendations

1. Policies and Practices
To enhance early career teacher resilience it is important to:
• Provide relevant, rigorous and responsive pre-service preparation for the profession
• Create innovative partnerships and initiatives that assist smooth transitions to the workforce
• Implement transparent, fair and responsive employment processes.

2. Teachers’ Work
To enhance early career teacher resilience it is important to:
• Acknowledge the complex, intense and unpredictable nature of teachers’ work
• Develop teachers’ curriculum and pedagogical knowledge and strategies
• Provide support to create engaging learning environments
• Ensure access to appropriate ongoing support, resources and learning opportunities.

3. School Culture
To enhance early career teacher resilience it is important to:
• Promote a sense of belonging and social connectedness
• Develop educative, democratic and empowering processes
• Provide formal and informal transition/induction processes
• Develop a professional learning community.

4. Relationships
To enhance early career teacher resilience it is important to:
• Promote a sense of belonging, acceptance and wellbeing
• Place student-teacher relationships at the heart of the teaching-learning process
• Foster professional growth
• Promote collective ownership and responsibility for professional relationships.

5. Teacher Identity
To enhance early career teacher resilience it is important to:
• Understand the interplay between personal and professional identities
• Engage in self-reflection
• Foster a sense of agency, efficacy and self-worth.
Acknowledgements

Many individuals, groups and institutions have contributed to this research. We acknowledge the financial support of the Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Projects Scheme (LP0883672) and the following Industry Partners:

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- Catholic Education Office of Western Australia (CEOWA)
- Catholic Education Office of South Australia (CEOSA)
- Association of Independent Schools of South Australia (AISSA)
- Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia (AISWA)
- Australian Education Union South Australia (AEUSA)
- State School Teachers Union of Western Australia (SSTUWA)

We acknowledge the administrative support and cooperation provided by the University of South Australia, Murdoch University and Edith Cowan University as collaborators on the project.

We thank members of the Roundtables in WA and SA for giving their time, expertise and advice so freely.

We wish to thank the teachers and principals from participating schools who so willingly shared their knowledge and experience of what life is like for early career teachers.
## A Framework of Conditions Supporting Early Career Teacher (ECT) Resilience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policies &amp; practices</th>
<th>Teacher's work</th>
<th>School culture</th>
<th>Relationships</th>
<th>Teacher identity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policies and practices refer to the officially mandated statements, guidelines, values and prescriptions that both enable and constrain ECT wellbeing and working. ECT resilience and wellbeing are enhanced when policies and practices show a strong commitment to social justice, teacher agency and voice, community engagement, and respect for local knowledge and practice.</td>
<td>Teachers' work refers to the complex array of practices, knowledge, relationships and ethical considerations that comprise the role of the teacher. ECT resilience is promoted when the focus is on understanding the topic, complex, intense and unpredictable nature of teachers’ work rather than on individual deficits and blame.</td>
<td>School culture refers to the values, beliefs, norms, assumptions, behaviors and relationships that characterise the daily rituals of school life. ECT resilience flourishes in schools that promote collaborative relationships, professional learning communities, educative forms of leadership and democratic decision-making.</td>
<td>Relationships refers to the social and professional networks, human connections and belongingness experienced by ECTs. Schools that value relationships focus on the complex emotional needs of ECTs and encourage social exchanges that foster respect, trust, care and integrity. ECT resilience benefits significantly when these values are evident in policies and practice.</td>
<td>Teacher identity refers to the development of one’s awareness and understanding of self as a teacher. Teacher resilience is enhanced when ECTs engage in processes of self reflection and self-understanding that sustain their personal identity, while at the same time developing a robust teacher identity.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>To enhance ECT resilience, it is important to:</strong></td>
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<td>Provide relevant, rigorous and responsive pre-service preparation for the profession</td>
<td>Promote a sense of belonging and social connectedness</td>
<td>Promote a sense of belonging, acceptance and wellbeing</td>
<td>Understand the interplay between personal and professional identities</td>
<td>Understand the interplay between personal and professional identities</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Foster stakeholders’ collective ownership of preparation, induction and ongoing learning</td>
<td>• Acknowledge the complex, intense and unpredictable nature of teachers’ work</td>
<td>• Recognise that emotions are an integral part of identity development</td>
<td>• Recognise that personal and professional identities are interconnected</td>
<td>• Recognise that emotions are an integral part of identity development</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provide diverse, rigorous and carefully planned pre-service professional experiences</td>
<td>• Attend to the physical, intellectual, relational and emotional dimensions of teachers’ work</td>
<td>• Understand the evolving nature of personal-professional identities</td>
<td>• Support the development of personal and professional identities</td>
<td>• Provide opportunities for continuity of employment</td>
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<td>• Ensure coherence between on-campus courses and the dynamic demands of the profession</td>
<td>• Acknowledge that teachers’ work is demanding and tiring</td>
<td>• Engage in self-reflection</td>
<td>• Provide opportunities for continuity of employment</td>
<td>• Provide opportunities for self-reflection</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Create innovative partnerships and initiatives that assist smooth transitions to the workforce</strong></td>
<td><strong>Develop teachers’ curriculum and pedagogical knowledge and strategies</strong></td>
<td><strong>Engage in self-reflection</strong></td>
<td><strong>Foster a sense of agency, efficacy and self-worth</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Support professional development suited to the school context</td>
<td>• Provide opportunities for collaborative planning, teaching, assessment and reporting</td>
<td>• Accommodate new and different ways of thinking</td>
<td>• Commit to the ethical and moral purposes of teaching</td>
<td>• Commit to the ethical and moral purposes of teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Acknowledge the value of previous professional experiences and expertise</td>
<td>• Allocate space and structures for teachers’ critical and reflective work</td>
<td>• Challenge and develop beliefs, assumptions and values</td>
<td>• Develop a high level of social and emotional responsiveness</td>
<td>• Challenge and develop beliefs, assumptions and values</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provide additional professional and financial resources for complex school settings</td>
<td>• Focus on student diversity, passions and interests</td>
<td>• Negotiate the contradictions and tensions of teaching</td>
<td>• Maintain hope and optimism</td>
<td>• Negotiate the contradictions and tensions of teaching</td>
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<td><strong>Implement transparent, fair and responsive employment processes</strong></td>
<td>• Promote innovative and engaging curriculum practices</td>
<td>• Engage in self-reflection</td>
<td>• Promote innovative and engaging curriculum practices</td>
<td>• Engage in self-reflection</td>
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<td>• Notify school appointments in a timely manner</td>
<td><strong>Provide support to create engaging learning environments</strong></td>
<td>• Provide opportunities for collaborative learning</td>
<td>• Provide opportunities for collaborative learning</td>
<td>• Provide opportunities for collaborative learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provide opportunities for continuity of employment</td>
<td>• Take collective ownership of students’ wellbeing and behaviour</td>
<td>• Develop partnerships that engage students and encourage constructive behaviours</td>
<td>• Share responsibility for maintaining positive relationships</td>
<td>• Share responsibility for maintaining positive relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Ensure equitable access to support, resources and learning opportunities</td>
<td>• Develop beliefs and practices that engage students and encourage constructive behaviours</td>
<td>• Provide formal and informal transition/induction processes</td>
<td>• Promote collective ownership and responsibility for professional relationships</td>
<td>• Promote collective ownership and responsibility for professional relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provide professional development that equips school leaders to support ECTs</td>
<td>• Develop collaborative and democratic learning environments</td>
<td>• Provide ongoing induction</td>
<td>• Cultivate a generosity of spirit</td>
<td>• Create time and spaces for dialogue and collaboration</td>
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This project, undertaken by the Queensland College of Teachers (QCT), involved conducting research into the attrition of recent Queensland graduate teachers from the QCT Register of teachers. The aims of the project were to determine the proportion of Queensland graduate teachers whose names were removed from the register of teachers within four years of initially being granted registration, identify why recent Queensland graduate teachers leave teaching, what we can learn from their opinions and experiences and develop recommendations for action by the QCT to reduce the attrition rate of these teachers.

The project involved:

- undertaking a literature review;
- analysing data drawn from the register of teachers;
- collating and analysing data obtained from a survey of Queensland graduate teachers who were no longer registered with the QCT; and
- conducting interviews with a small number of survey respondents.
Key Findings

The estimates in the literature of the proportion of beginning teachers who leave the profession within the first five years after commencing teaching in Australia range from 8% to 50%. It is most likely that significant numbers of beginning teachers who leave the profession within five years of commencing teaching do not return to the profession. Of those initially granted provisional registration in Queensland from 2006 to 2008, 13.5% had their names removed from the QCT Register within four years of being granted registration.

There does not appear to be evidence that the attrition rates of beginning professionals in teaching are higher than rates in other professions. It is likely though that greater proportions of talented teachers than less talented teachers leave teaching. Teacher attrition also exacerbates teacher shortages in specific disciplines and some geographic areas. In particular, the literature suggests the shortages of specialist teachers are compounded by teacher attrition as secondary teachers of science, special education and mathematics are the most likely to leave teaching.

Around 20% of Queensland graduate teachers who applied for teaching positions in state schools in Queensland in 2011, 2012 and 2013 were appointed to permanent positions. Due to the independent nature of employing authorities in the non-state school sector comparable information about permanent employment of beginning teachers is not available. Graduate applicants who were not employed in permanent or ongoing temporary teaching positions are likely to seek employment outside of teaching.

A 2007 House of Representatives inquiry into teacher education identified that the key factor contributing to attrition of beginning teachers is the inadequate level of support they are given such as induction and mentoring. The nature of casual teaching also means that casual teachers often receive less support. Reviews of teaching and studies of teacher attrition commonly recommend that the retention and effectiveness of beginning teachers would increase if they were provided with more adequate support in their first few years of teaching. Survey participants clearly indicated that, as beginning teachers they needed more support.
QCT Register data – 2006 to 2012

The QCT Register data analysed in this project produced the following information about Queensland graduate teachers granted provisional registration in 2006 to 2012:

- an average of 3,500 Queensland graduate teachers were granted provisional registration each year;
- less than a quarter (23.7%) were male;
- about half (49.6%) were aged under 25 years and 30% were aged 25 to 34 years at the time they were registered. Nearly 80% of graduates were under the age of 35; and
- just over three-quarters (76.6%) of Queensland graduate teachers who were initially granted provisional registration in 2006 to 2008 were granted full registration within four years.

The attrition rate of recent Queensland graduate teachers from the QCT Register has increased with successive cohorts: from 11.7% of those registered in 2006 to 15.2% of those registered in 2008. This trend appears to be continuing.

On average, 30% of these teachers had been granted full registration by the time they had left the profession in Queensland and had therefore taught in a Queensland school or equivalent setting for at least 200 days and had obtained a recommendation from a principal that they met the professional standards for full registration. Of those Queensland graduate teachers who were initially registered in 2006, the proportion who had moved to full registration was 53.3%.

The attrition rate of males from the register within four years (14.5%) was slightly higher than that of females (13.2%). The attrition rate of males steadily rose with age for those initially granted provisional registration in 2006 to 2008 from 13% of those who were aged under 25 years at the time they were initially registered to 26% of those aged over 54 years at the time they were initially granted provisional registration. Of the females initially registered in 2006 to 2008, the attrition rate rose from 11% of those aged under 25 to 20% of those aged over 54 years, with an early peak of 18% for those aged 25 to 34 years at the time provisional registration was initially granted.
Survey results

Queensland graduate teachers who were not registered with the QCT at the time of this study were invited to participate in a survey. Of 2,597 individuals who were sent an email invitation, 386 submitted complete responses.

The group of respondents included males and females of various ages and registration status (provisional registration and full registration) at the time their names were removed from the QCT Register. Respondents had completed their teaching qualifications across all Queensland initial teacher education providers; had various teaching specialisations; had taught in state schools and non-state schools throughout Queensland; and had been employed on casual, contract and permanent bases.

The survey data was analysed and information identified about teaching specialisation, reasons for becoming a teacher and leaving the profession, employment as a teacher, and beginning teacher support.

Respondents became teachers because they were passionate about joining the profession. The two reasons most frequently selected for becoming a teacher were:

“I wanted to make a difference in children’s lives and I thought I would be a good teacher.”

Respondents

Their teacher education programs variously prepared them to teach the following levels of education:

- Early Childhood (9.6%)
- Preparatory Year to Year Three (14.8%)
- Primary (36.0%)
- Middle Years of Schooling (24.6%)
- Secondary (45.1%)
- Vocational Education and Training (3.4%)

Considerably fewer males than females completed a program which focused on Early Childhood, Prep to Year Three or Primary.

The preference of males for secondary teaching is apparent from the fact that 63.2% of male Queensland graduate teachers who participated in the survey had qualified to teach in secondary schools where as only 37.2% of female participants had done so.

Significantly higher proportions of males had qualified as secondary teachers specialising in information communication and technology, design and technology, mathematics, chemistry and physics compared to the proportions of female secondary teachers who had specialised in those subject areas.

Nearly three-quarters (74.4%) of survey respondents had taught in schools at some time after they had qualified as teachers. A further 12.4% had actively sought but had not gained employment as teachers in schools and 21.8% of respondents were teaching in schools outside Queensland.
Of the respondents who had held registration for at least four years, 4.8% had taught for four years or more and 48.1% had taught for less than one year.

Of those who had been employed in a Queensland school the majority (63.9%) had gained their first teaching appointment in Brisbane or in adjoining urban areas. About 74% had been employed initially in a state school and 26% in a non-state school. Interestingly:

- nearly 30% had gained a permanent teaching position in Queensland; and
- just over 70% had been employed as casual/relief teachers and a similar percentage indicated that they had been employed as teachers on contract.

The percentage of teachers who had been employed on a permanent basis in a school was higher for those who had completed an initial teacher education program which focused on Vocational Education and Training, Secondary and the Middle Years of Schooling than for those whose program focused on Early Childhood or Primary. Of primary trained teachers who responded to the survey 82.4% had not gained a permanent teaching position. About 28% of respondents stated that they were not teaching in Queensland at the time of the survey because they had not gained continued employment even though they had actively sought it.

The responses of the 71 teachers who had gained permanent employment in a Queensland school show that apart from one activity – *Informal support when requested* – these teachers had limited participation in professional development and support activities for beginning teachers:

- 49.3% had not observed another teacher’s lessons;
- 33.8% had not been observed by another teacher and then given feedback on their teaching;
- 28.8% had not participated in professional development related to beginning teacher needs; and
- 21.1% had not participated in an induction program for beginning teachers.

Lower proportions of those employed on a casual or contract basis participated in support activities, compared to those who gained permanent employment. For each support activity apart from *Informal support when requested* a significant 65% or more of teachers who had been employed on a casual or contract basis indicated that they had not participated in support activities.

Of the teachers who had observed other teachers’ lessons, 85.2% found this activity effective in supporting them as a beginning teacher. However, only 37% of respondents stated that they had an opportunity to participate in this activity. Participation in professional network/s or communities of practice was regarded as effective by 66.7% of respondents, with only 60.7% of permanently employed teachers and 29.9% of teachers who had not gained permanent employment having participated in this activity.
In contrast, about half (49.5%) of those who had participated in regular meetings with their Head of Department, Principal or others found this activity to be effective in supporting them as a beginning teacher. Only 54.9% of the respondents who had participated in an induction program for beginning teachers found it effective in supporting them as a beginning teacher.

More than 30% of survey respondents rated the following as Very Important in relation to their decision to leave teaching:

- family/personal reasons;
- heavy workload of teaching;
- the stressful nature of teaching;
- student behaviour;
- inadequate professional support within school; and
- decided to pursue employment opportunities outside teaching.

Survey respondents identified the following types of support that, had they been available, may have helped them to stay in the profession in Queensland:

- support from experienced teachers, particularly in the areas of planning and with resources;
- an allocated mentor, with time to support them;
- stable ongoing employment at one school, as opposed to short-term contracts at a number of different schools;
- manageable classes, not the classes that other teachers wished to avoid;
- access to online resources and support; and
- being supported through participation in an online community.

Of the respondents who were not currently teaching, three-quarters were not likely at all to seek employment as a teacher in a Queensland school in the next five years.
Recommendations and future directions for the QCT

It is recommended that the QCT, as the regulator of the teaching profession in Queensland:

1. Provide the methodology used for this research to other Australian teacher regulatory authorities for their use in undertaking similar research in their own jurisdictions.

2. Either separately, or in partnership with teacher employers and teacher education providers, develop new and promote existing online professional development resources for both mentors and beginning teachers, particularly those who are employed on a contract or casual/relief basis.

3. Facilitate online communities of practice, through the use of digital technologies, to support beginning teachers, particularly those who are employed on a contract or casual/relief basis.

4. Provide results of this research to key stakeholders, such as major employers and principal associations, and participate in discussions, particularly in relation to actions that stakeholders could pursue to support beginning teachers and reduce the early attrition from the profession of Queensland graduate teachers.

5. Use the methodology developed in this project to regularly survey recent Queensland graduate teachers to follow trends in attrition rates and use this information for strategic planning on an ongoing basis.

Given that this project has delivered a research methodology for examining and analysing Queensland graduate teacher attrition, the QCT is well placed as the professional registration authority to continue monitoring and analysing teacher attrition from the Register of teachers. Further research the QCT could conduct, which would add to the body of information around understanding our beginning teachers in Queensland and how to support them includes:

- surveying recent Queensland graduate teachers who are registered but are not teaching to obtain additional data and information related to attrition;

- surveying Queensland graduate teachers who are currently registered and have continued to teach beyond four years to find out why they have continued teaching; and

- monitoring trends in attrition of recent graduate teachers, including information about what may be occurring nationally.