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TECE Graduates teaching in Mt Isa

Six graduate teachers have decided to kick-start their careers in Mt Isa after participating in one of our five TECE programs.

Three of the graduates jumped at the chance to teach at Barkly Highway SS - Che Mellick from Morayfield TECE, Catherine Cantoni from Mt Stuart Cluster TECE and Alex Misek from the Aspley TECE- Special Education. Alex said, “I love the school and sense of community here in Mt Isa.”

Although the three beginning teachers were mentored through different Centres, they each appreciated the excellent preparation for teaching the Centres gave them.

Cohort 1 off to a wet start!

Graduates from the Teacher Education Centres of Excellence first cohort began their teaching careers amidst one of Queensland’s wettest starts to a school year.

Several graduates of this cohort were placed in schools severely affected by floods in Bundaberg and Laidley districts but all came through the ordeal safely.

Two graduates of Benowa TECE were faced with blocked roads and closed schools in the Laidley District as they tried to get to their new schools. This is their reflection:

As a pair of newly-qualified Teachers, Michael and I were very eager and anxious about our first day of school in the Darling Downs Region. Michael and I have only called Gatton ‘home’ for the past 4 months after moving from the Gold Coast in January. We are both currently working at schools in Laidley and have quickly come to understand how adaptive teachers need to be. Due to the floods that Laidley endured during January, the roads connecting Gatton to Laidley were under water and both of our schools were declared closed. With no way of reaching Laidley, we had no choice other than to find another school to induct us into teaching. Consequently, in a bizarre turn of events, Michael and I found ourselves team teaching a Year 4 class at Gatton Primary School. Although, it wasn’t the start to our teaching career as we had quite imagined, it was a nice feeling starting it together.

Sophie and Michael have now settled into their teaching roles at Laidley SS and Laidley SHS.

Sophie and Michael: graduates of Benowa TECE experienced a ‘different’ start to their first year of teaching.
Aspley TECE I Special Education

This has been a busy year already for our mentors and mentees, who in many cases have been working together since the Student Free Days in January. The Centre is fortunate to have mentors in diverse special education contexts, and with this comes an incredible array of specialisations, training and skills. Such is the difference in the range of settings that mentors agreed that it would be advantageous for mentees to have the opportunity to make structured, day-long work shadowing visits to two of our settings – the Mater Hospital Special School and the bilingual, bicultural program for hearing impaired students at Toowong State School. Our mentors at these schools are looking forward to taking on this different form of mentoring in 2013.

To illustrate the difference in experiences that our mentees may have depending on their settings and the work role of their mentors, two of our third year mentees have made the time to describe some of the work that they have undertaken since beginning in their schools this year.

Since beginning the year at Kuraby Special School, my mentor teacher Paul has made me feel as though I am a teacher and treated me as such. Whenever possible I have taught in front of the class. This has allowed me to build confidence in what I say and do. Paul has allowed me the freedom to plan and implement our class Science unit. My knowledge of unit planning, lesson planning, curriculum differentiation and assessment have significantly increased as a result. Paul has also introduced and guided me through many administrative processes. This has included curriculum risk assessments, creating notes to parents and the use of OneSchool. Paul has guided me when I have been stuck and motivated me to be creative in all aspects of what I do. I highly value the conversations we have every week. A piece of advice from Paul that continues to motivate me is “Don’t be scared to make a mistake”.
Daniel Barker (USQ) – Kuraby Special School

When I applied to become part of the Centre of Excellence, I knew it would be an amazing opportunity for professional development. However, it has surpassed all my expectations. During just a few weeks of mentoring, I have already learned the greatness of sensory lessons, and I was stunned by the effectiveness of intensive interaction. Additionally, I became familiar with PEG feeding and assistive devices such as standing frames and hoists. I am also becoming more familiar with using the OneSchool system as well as the development of risk assessments. Furthermore, I have met inspiring parents who welcomed me into their parent-teacher meetings where I have learnt so much about post-schooling options. My experience in the program would not be possible if it was not for my fantastic mentor, Therese Campling, who generously shares her knowledge, resources and beautiful students. She has been an inspiration. I want to acknowledge my gratitude towards this incredible program.
Sabrina Lengsfeld (Griffith University) – Red Hill Special School

Benowa TECE I Science and Mathematics

Recruitment for the 2013 academic year commenced in late October and concluded late January, and the 2013 BTECE program formally commenced during Griffith University’s ‘O’ Week 2013 with an Orientation Program that included time in classes with mentor teachers and their students – the clinical practice focus of the program very much in evidence from Day 1.

Potential candidates were identified initially by the grade point average of their undergraduate degree (5+) and their teaching subjects (Maths, Physics and Chemistry being targets).

To reflect the reality of life that as a science teacher, junior mathematics is often part of the timetable, Griffith has arranged for those in the cohort with two sciences (e.g. Chemistry and Biology) to enrol in a Middle School Mathematics curriculum subject, so the BTECE graduates will be better prepared for this eventuality than other graduates.

The successful candidates are a very diverse group with backgrounds in engineering, the armed services, university research and lecturing, scientific laboratories, nursing and dentistry. They are graduates from a range of universities both here and abroad. Two candidates hold PhDs.

Following review of the 2012 program which included feedback from mentor teachers, academics and the preservice teacher participants, some modifications have been made to the program for 2013 to focus on extending support to mentor teachers. There is widespread agreement that our existing focus on explicitly linking scholarship and research at the university with clinical practice in the schools (i.e. using evidence to inform actions) is the way forward to developing effective teachers.

Professor Paul Mazzero, Pro Vice Chancellor (GU) addressing the 2012 celebration for graduating mentees.

The Smarter Schools National Partnerships are a joint initiative of the Australian Government and the Queensland Government
Kelvin Grove I Early, Middle and Senior Phases

A teacher’s job is not as simple as someone standing in front of a class to keep students engaged in their learning.

Through the work with their Teacher Mentors at their partner schools, KGTECE preservice teachers have engaged with the work of teachers in different ways. They have had opportunities to see what makes up a typical and not so typical day in the life of a teacher. This has meant that the KGTECE preservice teachers have become involved in many facets of the school community with the support and encouragement of their Teacher Mentors.

The experiences have included attendance at sport days, staff, faculty and year level meetings, school dances, planning days, time with support staff, QUT meetings, and professional development opportunities to name just a few. The preservice teachers see just how much outside 9-3 work teachers engage in as part of their everyday work.

This has a significant impact on the development of the preservice teacher’s knowledge and skills as they complete their course and begin work in schools enabling them to have a better understanding of how schools function, and what the role of a teacher is.

“As a KGTECE Preservice Teacher, I’ve had extra opportunities to develop my classroom pedagogy. I am being exposed to many other rich teacher-learning experiences such as attending the Student Free Days to gain the professional development necessary for the implementation of the schools pedagogical framework. I have witnessed the start-up processes for classes, student data and, the links between school priorities and pedagogy, all of which is preparing me for my first teaching position in a state school. I have engaged in professional conversations with school support staff (i.e. school nurse, chaplain, school based police officer, careers advisor) and I now have an understanding of how each role contributes to creating an inclusive school culture”.

Fiona Gunthorpe, KGTECE Preservice Teacher (Secondary)

Morayfield Cluster TECE I Low SES, Literacy and Numeracy

There are many advantages of having a graduate teacher from a Centre of Excellence in our school. Firstly as a result of the many weeks of preservice training the year prior, the graduate was already familiar with the school’s strategic plan, management and operations. Secondly, there was confidence that we were receiving a highly proficient teacher and were presented with an opportunity to see this for ourselves during the preservice period. Thirdly, there was a strong mentoring bond established between the graduand and the senor teacher in the year prior and this has continued to flourish in the graduates’ first year. Lastly, we had confidence that the graduate had a more thorough preparation, preparing them for the challenges of working in a National Partnership school.

Darren Wallwork – Principal Gin Gin SHS

I can’t speak highly enough about our Centre of Excellence graduates. They have arrived trained at a highly competent level. They are hardworking, passionate, highly skilled in best practice teaching and enthusiastic about learning the school’s pedagogical framework and adapting their practice. I can see these graduates have the ability to be capacity-built to be future leaders in our organisation.

Angela Kelly A Principal, Cannovale SS

Benefits of MTECE:
• Access to individual mentors and PD throughout the year assisting in the preparation for day 1, week 1.
• TECE gave me an opportunity to test new things and see what works and what doesn’t. With professional support from my mentor, I was able to shape my own pedagogical practice and apply it in my new school.

Life as a beginning teacher:
• It’s hard work!
• I have a fabulous mentor/teaching partner. This has been a significant benefit, as I always have someone I can turn to with questions and vice versa.
• The professional relationship built with her is very important.
• My students are wonderful and I love coming to school each and every day!

Sharney Spann- Beginning Teacher, Cannonvale SS

The Smarter Schools National Partnerships are a joint initiative of the Australian Government and the Queensland Government
Mt Stuart Cluster
Indigenous Student and Community Participation

The Mount Stuart Cluster Teacher Education Centre of Excellence (MSCTECE) has provided 25, 4th year university students in Townsville and Cairns with a unique opportunity. Through the productive partnership established with JCU School of Education, and the collaboration of curriculum teams in North Queensland and Far North Queensland regions, the MSCTEC is offering students an aligned university subject. This series of weekly, full-day workshops offers students job-embedded professional development in targeted workshops, addressing key Education Queensland (EQ) initiatives, and then providing the opportunity to implement, practice and reflect with the guided assistance of their mentor teachers. At the end of each week students provide feedback regarding the effectiveness of the workshops and the implementation of their new learning.

The program has been designed and facilitated in collaboration with JCU, ensuring that the MSCTECE students are engaging in similar content and concept development, through common assessment tasks. These subject assessment tasks will be moderated across both Townsville and Cairns campuses for all sectors in conjunction with JCU lecturers.

In both NQ & FNQ regions, this subject-related series of 10 workshops has allowed students, face-face access to identified specialist educators, engaging students in real-life school practices of:-

- unpacking C2C units and using current student and school data to differentiate planning, allowing all students access to the curriculum;
- preparing the MSCTECE students for the ICT expectations of EQ, by providing each student with various ICT devices including a C4T laptop, an iPad and other ICT devices to enhance curriculum delivery for all students. During 2013, the students will participate in 3 full-day ICT workshops;
- creating awareness of the importance of community and school relationships and knowing your learner.

The preservice teachers have also been engaged in 2 weeks of intensive workshops providing them with awareness and knowledge of EQ key initiatives that underpin effective teaching and learning. In collaboration with ISSU and regional educators, the students have participated in workshops foundational to being an effective teacher e.g. Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives (EATSIP), Essential Skills of Classroom Management (ESCM), ISSU’s ESL program etc.

These intensive workshops are also scheduled for term 2 & term 3 with a 4 week internship planned for term 4.

There are 8 students in Cairns working in MSCTECE Alliance schools targeting our Centre’s focus -schools with significant numbers of Indigenous students – Balaclava SS, Cairns West SS, Gordonvale SHS, & Parramatta SS, Woree SS & Yarrabah SS.

In Townsville there are 17 a students working with the Mount Stuart Cluster of schools and MSCTECE alliance schools.

In 2013, all MSCTECE students will be provided with access to over 60 Professional Development workshops facilitated by 30 regional curriculum experts. The mentors in both regions will also be offered targeted professional development workshops, building workforce capabilities and cross regional curriculum sharing in our endeavor for United in our Pursuit of Excellence.