Inspiring the next generation of teachers

First year teachers Angelique Kanniah and Sharney Spann, from Cannonvale State School, are striving to be that inspirational teacher who can truly change a child’s life. Both are enthusiastic recruits to the profession and graduates of the Morayfield Teacher Education Centre of Excellence.

Cannonvale SS principal Angela Kelly said Miss Kanniah and Miss Spann were enthusiastic, passionate and ready to teach using the principals of the latest longitudinal research. “The preparation of these graduates is second to none,” she said. Rather than spending inordinate amounts of time up-skilling these teachers, I immediately could hold them up as examples of best-practice teachers and encourage others to go and watch them work. They exude everything that we are looking for in Education Queensland— they are dedicated, driven, caring, warm, fun and engaging.”

Excerpt from EdViews August, 2013.

Going Beyond the Range

Over 20 preservice teachers from across our Teacher Education Centres of Excellence have stepped up to undertake practicums or internships in rural or remote Queensland state schools in Term 4.

Seizing the opportunity to experience the diverse opportunities on offer in rural or remote schools before they take up their teaching positions in 2014, these preservice teachers will be well-prepared for teaching and living in these communities.

The Beyond the Range Professional Experience Grants provide recipients with financial support of between $1,000 and $1,500 to assist them to undertake a rural or remote practicum/ internship experience.

Over 60% of Beyond the Range recipients find employment with Education Queensland in a rural or remote school on graduation.

Recent recipient comments:

‘I loved the feel of a small town – everyone knows everyone and soon you get to know many people particularly students and teachers from other schools. A lot of the teachers were young and they were all good friends and socialised on the weekends.’

‘I learnt so much and developed a lot as a teacher. I felt so welcomed within the school and community wish I could have stayed longer!’
Mt Stuart Cluster I Indigenous Student and Community Participation

MSCTECE has provided preservice teachers in Townsville and Cairns with unique opportunities to participate in targeted and specific workshops. The Cairns MSCTECE preservice teachers engaged with Chris Newton, FNQ Principal Education Advisor – Literacy / Explicit Teaching in the series of 10 modules of How Language Works (functional grammar) workshops.

Comments from the pre-service teachers:

- This was a very intense but helpful PD. Ever since doing this PD I have become more confident in teaching the English language strand, in particular the language features. And now it is fun!
- I did not have much experience with functional grammar and after completing the workshop I feel confident in understanding and teaching functional grammar within both a History and English context. Also the workshop was very relevant to the secondary school context which I found very valuable.
- I found this workshop to be of great benefit as it made it extremely clear on the processes to unpack English grammar in order to explicitly teach English to all students, especially students for whom English is an additional language or dialect.
- The lessons from this PD supported my understanding of teaching English like no other lessons encompassed in all of university, so very practical and very applicable.

The Townsville MSCTECE preservice teachers have undertaken training in the Essential Skills for Classroom Management (ESCM). They were profiled during their 5 week practicum by a Steven Sanderson - a trained profiler – and then engaged in 3 days of profiling training with Steven.

Some observational profiling data collated by Steven of the MSCTECE students:

Provided positive feedback (ESCM 5) every 1 minute compared to ‘like’ school teachers providing on average every 2 minutes.
- Provided non-verbal redirecting every 6 minutes compared to ‘like’ school teachers every 12 minutes.
- Providing verbal redirection every 3 minutes compared to like school teachers every 4 minutes.

A comment from the preservice teachers:

- The opportunity to be profiled within our practicum was very helpful. I was able to implement the advice provided to me throughout the remainder of my professional experience. I can’t wait to get back into the classroom to try my new skills!

The Townsville MSCTECE preservice teachers also participated in First Steps in Mathematics – Number workshop providing them with additional foundation knowledge of mathematical concepts and how to use this knowledge when unpacking the C2C mathematic units.

Benowa TECE I Science and Mathematics

The BTECE cohort is blossoming.

Throughout Term 3 the preservice teachers have been in schools two full days each week: teaching lessons, practicing their teaching skills and developing new ones. In addition numerous PD opportunities have been undertaken - seminars on positive behaviour strategies, senior syllabi, Rank Vs OP, QSA and QCS, Student Support services and programs, using assessment criteria to support pedagogy and feedback, SET Planning, learning intent and formative assessment and feedback strategies.

Additionally a number of the preservice teachers have actively participated in several school excursions with their mentor teachers. Two others have been actively working with Benowa SS in developing a Gold Coast based Kids STEM Convention. All preservice teachers are involved in ongoing extra-curricular activity, whether it is supporting the chaplaincy’s breakfast program, working lunchtimes with student Science Club members, or supporting students in their ongoing experimental research project for the

STEM Convention. Take up of offers to participate in STAQ and MTAQ professional development on weekends has been impressive. Authentic participation is sustained and continues throughout the year rather than simply as compliance during block prac.

Despite the combined demands of the university and the BTECE, the students continue to impress with a GPA range of 5.6 to 7, and a mean of 6.2 for their semester 1 results. University assessments specifically tailored for the BTECE cohort to capitalise on their access to the schools and the students have also been a focus for preservice teacher attention. This has included interviewing teachers on their views about a range of educational issues impacting senior schooling. This has given the preservice teachers greater insight into the practical applications of theoretical policies and programs they have studied at the university.

When the final block practicum commences in Term 4 the preservice teachers will commence teaching from the very first day on the equivalent of an 80% teaching load: 4 classes with 2 lines for preparation and correction. This is a big ask of preservice teachers and only made possible by their extensive preparation and lead in of repeated and ongoing practical experience in getting to know their students and planning, teaching and assessing. For more than a month they will be working very closely as they may expect to be if appointed in 2014. This is a critical aspect of the BTECE’s intent – to make being a teacher as real and as authentic as possible.

(I – r from rear) Robyn Jorgensen (GU) Mark Rickard (Benowa SHS, Kim Alden (HoM BTECE) with 2013 Cohort
Kelvin Grove I Early, Middle and Senior Phases

At the start of Term 4, KGTECE preservice teachers will embark on their internships in the DD/SW region. Once again they have been well supported by their school communities to be prepared to work in the rural/remote schools. KGTECE preservice teachers have been placed at 17 schools from Kingaroy to Cunnamulla and Injune to Dirranbandi in P-10, Primary, Secondary and P-12 settings.

A priority of the KGTECE program has been to ensure that the preservice teachers are well prepared for the realities of working in rural/remote communities. This has included: tutorials dedicated to EQ policies and procedures and the programs that exist in rural/remote schools; guest discussions by practicing teachers who have worked in rural/remote schools; and a road trip to visit schools in rural Queensland. The preservice teachers have also completed a reflection on the impact that this move will have on their own personal circumstances.

For teachers who begin their career in rural and remote schools there are both opportunities and challenges in addition to those in the classroom which may include isolation from personal networks and culture shock as they are faced with different community priorities and ways of doing things. These can’t be taken lightly as they do impact on the beginning teacher’s level of comfort in the new community.

However, there are also many opportunities for beginning teachers as well as they begin their careers in rural/remote schools:

- **Innovation:** Beginning teachers can lead new projects as new policies are implemented e.g. being involved as pedagogical frameworks are implemented and as new curriculum is released. These opportunities aren’t always available in larger regional or metropolitan schools as other more experienced teachers take the lead.

- **Leadership opportunities:** Many beginning preservice teacher and teacher mentor have a small number of focus areas (no more than 3) at any given time. This process further supports timely and specific observation and feedback.

Whatever opportunities or challenges they face, it is important for beginning teachers to keep an open mind. Anything is possible when you begin work at a new school; leave your pre-conceptions at the door and go along for the ride. You may be surprised by what you are able to engage with that you had never considered before.

Congratulations to the KGTECE preservice teachers as they start their internships, and look for the opportunities that may present themselves along the way.

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Morayfield Cluster TECE I Low SES, Literacy and Numeracy

A key aspect of good teaching, as reflected within the professional engagement domain of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, is engaging in professional learning. A significant focus within this is self-reflective practice.

Preservice teachers engaging with the Morayfield Teacher Education Centre of Excellence develop their own Individual Learning Plan as part of the program. They are supported in the initial development of their plan by worksheets, their teacher mentor and the Head of Mentoring. The plan has four phases based on the phases of the Developing Performance Framework with some slight variation. These are:

- **Phase 1:** Work focus and responsibilities
- **Phase 2:** Personal and professional priorities
- **Phase 3:** Planning the detail
- **Phase 4:** Reflection and review

Preservice teachers use information from previous practical placement reports; conversations with supervising teachers and other professionals; their own professional judgement; and the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers to develop an initial plan for the start of the year. This provides an excellent starting point for the teacher mentor to begin working with their mentee.

At regular intervals throughout the year, at least once per term, the plan is reviewed. This review process involves the preservice teacher discussing their progress with either their teacher mentor and/or the Head of Mentoring. It allows further exploration of the professional standards and supports the identification of gaps in learning and practice for each individual preservice teacher as well as highlighting areas of strength and progress.

The Individual Learning Plan also scaffolds the development process and ensures that the preservice teacher and teacher mentor have a small number of focus areas (no more than 3) at any given time. This process further supports timely and specific observation and feedback.

All preservice teachers have had different experiences and are at differing stages in their development. This process recognises the need for individuality in terms of the ‘curriculum’ of the centre and allows the locus of control to remain with the preservice teacher and their teacher mentor.

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The Smarter Schools National Partnerships are a joint initiative of the Australian Government and the Queensland Government.
Aspely TECE Special Education

Term Three has been a time of shared learning for mentors, mentees and partner schools in the Teacher Education Centre of Excellence (Special Education).

In July, 20 preservice teachers from GU and USQ converged on Nursery Road State Special School for a three day intensive program that focused on disability studies, behaviour management and curriculum development.

Despite the varied courses from which the preservice teachers came – either an undergraduate B.Ed. Primary or Secondary with a specialisation in Special Education or Learning Enhancement; or a general primary Graduate Diploma in Education, there was something in the program for everyone, with an incredible array of expertise and passion from the presenters.

First the preservice teachers worked with Odette Martin, Advisory Visiting Teacher: Behaviour Services who conducted Essential Skills for Classroom Management training. This allowed participants to understand the context for approaches to behaviour management, and also provided them with essential certification for working with Education Queensland.

Some participants worked closely with Advanced Classroom Profile Kylie Glencross, observing TECESE graduate Sarah Richardson teach. They also had the opportunity to talk to Sarah about what she has learnt in her first semester of teaching.

Mentor and HOSES from Inala State School Michele Van Der Zant shared her tips on working with parents, especially in proactive communication such as making contact with home and conducting meetings.

Day 2 kicked off with Marg Sharry, Advisory Visiting Teacher: Autism Spectrum Disorder, who shared practical strategies for working with students and provided an insight into the role of an AVT.

Carmel Cooper, Advisory Visiting Teacher: Transition, shared her expertise in Intellectual Disability, including complexities in this diagnosis. She also provided ideas on working alongside parents.

Phillipa Enright, Advisory Visiting Teacher: Vision Impairment, conducted activities that simulated vision impairment, so that participants ‘walked in the shoes’ of their learners.

The final day began with Lee Withall, Advisory Visiting Teacher: Physical Impairment, who shared her resources and knowledge about the complex and challenging area of Physical Impairment.

Carl England, Head of Curriculum at Aspely Special School, led the preservice teachers through the structure of the curriculum, including resources for students with disability. He discussed with them their role in bringing curriculum to life through the P-12 Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Framework.

Huge thanks must go to Partner School Nursery Road State Special School, Principal Shauna St George and staff for hosting us for the three days; Mentor Carly Culleton for leading the Day 2 program and to all the presenters who donated their time and expertise, allowing us to offer such a quality program.

All participants dedicated themselves in their roles to support and learn from each other, using their own real-life challenges in their coaching.

They honed their coaching skills and explored key relational concepts such as emotional intelligence and giving and receiving feedback.

Many thanks must go to Jann Simmonds, Morningside State School Principal and Governance Committee member, for developing and co-facilitating this training with Head of Mentoring Simone Coogan.

August saw leadership teams from nine partner schools come together with the Centre’s training partner Nick Burnett for an introduction to using solutions focused coaching for effective instruction.

This workshop examined the benefits of using a coaching approach with staff, the qualities of a good coach, examined some techniques in solutions focused coaching and how to create a formal program.

Leaders from Aspely, Red Hill, Calamvale, Goodna, Mitchelton, Claremont and Geebung Special Schools and Morningside and Runcorn Heights State Schools enjoyed this opportunity to examine this approach to leading teacher learning, exploring and envisioning the outcomes and possibilities.

Leaders coaching leaders during October, the Centre of Excellence will host 4th year interns for a three day Internship Intensive, focusing on workshops to build readiness for employment.