Education Minister opens Special Education TECE (Aspley)

Special education teachers in training now have access to their own Teacher Education Centre of Excellence!

On Thursday 19 July, mentors and mentees were joined by Principals, members of the Centre’s Governance Committee, Griffith faculty, and staff from the Department of Education, Training and Employment to celebrate the official opening of the Teacher Education Centre of Excellence - Special Education by Education, Training and Employment Minister John-Paul Langbroek.

“I’m proud to have officially opened Queensland’s fifth and final Teacher Education Centre of Excellence today,” Mr Langbroek said.

“These centres have been established to provide quality supervision and support to pre-service teachers, as well as deliver ongoing professional development to established teachers”. The Centre was also delighted to have in attendance Federal Member of Parliament, Yvette D’Ath MP, and Jill Manitzky from the Queensland College of Teachers.

The audience was addressed by special education leaders Peter Blatch OAM, Assistant Regional Director, Metropolitan Region, and Ches Hargreaves, President of the Queensland Association of Special Education Leaders; Fiona McNamara from the Queensland Teachers’ Union and Professor Richard Bagnall from Griffith University.

Kathleen Noonan, journalist and columnist with the Courier Mail, provided a powerful and enthralling address on the importance of having a mentor, her ‘lighthouse keeper theory’.

Minister John-Paul Langbroek

Ches Hargreaves, President of QASEL and PartnerSchool Principals

Mentees at the Spread Your Wings Winter Intensive
Teacher Education Centres of Excellence

Preservice teachers from the first cohort at each of the Centres of Excellence are rapidly reaching the conclusion of their university studies. The Centres have prepared the 84 graduands from the initial cohort to teach in a variety of state schooling contexts across Queensland.

Students have a broad range of teaching specialisations including:
- Secondary Science areas (17)
- Secondary Mathematics (5)
- Secondary Home Economics (2)
- Secondary History (1)
- Secondary English (1)
- Primary and Early Years (37)
- Special Education (21)
- Low SES (20)
- Indigenous students and community participation. (9)

Our 10 male and 74 female participants have each contributed to the collegial atmosphere of each centre. Many participants have seized the opportunity to develop a supportive network of exceptional TECE participants both for now and into their future teaching careers.

Each centre is working with the department’s Regional Human Resources teams to consider placement options for 2014.

Our TECE graduates are seeking placements across Queensland with all regions keen to access our skilled and talented participants.

Preparation for the Graduate Interview ranking process is a major focus for each centre as our first cohort prepares to share their skills, knowledge and passion for teaching with their interview panels.

Our skilled mentor teachers are continuing to support their mentees through:
- professional discourse,
- modelling of best practice,
- relationship building,
- reflective observations,
- goal setting and
- enhancement of professional knowledge.

Benowa TECE Science & Mathematics

Action research underpins the ongoing evaluation of the Benowa Centre in ensuring a quality program. An initial report has been generated from collected and collated, quantitative and qualitative responses by the preservice teachers. Overall, the results are very positive, perhaps aptly summed up in the following comment:

- A great experience. I am very lucky and grateful to be a part of it.

There are many aspects of the structure of the BTECE program that are unique including the partnership between the Benowa SS and Benowa SHS.

Preservice teachers in a Graduate Diploma of Education (Secondary) would normally enter the secondary context only, so access to working in a primary school is quite unusual. The sharing of discipline knowledge (usually the domain of secondary teachers) and pedagogical knowledge (usually the domain of primary teachers) is a strong feature of the BTECE.

The preservice teachers’ experiences of these two very different environments needed to be considered. Data in Figure One (below) indicates, they have had a strong, positive experience across the two sites – both in terms of the powerful learning experiences (columns 1 and 2) and their enjoyment (columns 3 and 4) of both schools. The scores in these evaluations are very high with all mean scores being about 4.45. This is an outstanding result.

Preservice teachers appeared to value this experience:
- The time spent in primary school is very beneficial. The primary school has definitely helped to build my confidence and teaching techniques.

It would appear that integrating (upper) primary and secondary school into the Grad Entry program has been a positive experience for the preservice teachers.

The action research undertaken and the subsequent report address a range of issues but the following statement best summarises the view of the preservice teachers:

- Overall I can definitely see the benefits in the program that will put us leaps and bounds ahead of the other Dip Ed students.

Data continues to be collected to inform further iterations of the program and the operations of the BTECE.

Web site hosted at Griffith University

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

On Thursday 7th June, 2012, the KGTECE preservice teachers went on the first annual Road Trip to the Darling Downs and South West Region to get a taste of the schools they could be working in from 2013.

After a very early start, we arrived in Toowoomba to meet with the Regional Staffing Officers and the Queensland Teachers’ Union Organiser for the South West. This gave the preservice teachers an opportunity to meet and speak to the staff that they would be working with while in their DDSW schools.

This was followed up by a visit to Dalby State High School. The preservice teachers engaged in conversations with a variety of new teachers to the school and were given a tour of the school facilities.

After a lunch at “Pips and Cherries” in Bell, the KGTECE preservice teachers visited Bell State School where the Principal took the opportunity to speak with them about living and working in a rural community.

With travel bingo to keep them busy – yes, cotton was the big white things covered with a tarp – the preservice teachers were provided with an opportunity to get a feel for the area. While it was only a taste of the Region, students were very positive about their prospective internship and subsequent move to the region.

Mentees visiting Dalby State High School

Thanks to all who participated in the Road Trip.

Mt Stuart Cluster TECE Indigenous Student and Community Participation

We welcome Patsy Tanner as the new Head of Mentoring and say farewell and thank you to Jordana Bosworth as she moves to a new role at Townsville SHS. Patsy’s extensive research and knowledge in regards to coaching and mentoring and strong interpersonal skills will ensure the MSCTECE continues to grow and evolve.

The Mt Stuart Cluster Teacher Education Centre of Excellence (MSCTECE) has continued to have many firsts.

The MSCTECE students were:
- provided with a digital savvy resource backpack including a laptop, iPad, iRiver, smart pen, P2V, handiscan and video camera to seamlessly integrate into their planning to engage, and enhance student outcomes
- profiled during their second phase of practicum to provide feedback on the behaviour management techniques that they harness in their teaching practices
- provided with an intensive, targeted, 3 day period of professional development activities in preparation for their final phase of practicum

Other exciting events that have occurred at the MSCTECE include:
- expansion to partner with both James Cook University in Townsville and now Cairns. This has resulted in the Centre forging links with the Far North Queensland Region and inviting Cairns schools to become Alliance schools of the MSCTECE.

This semester will see the graduation of two mid-year students from the program. Congratulations Allarna Langford and Nikea Bettridge for your valued participation, commitment and engagement in the MSCTECE. However with sad farewells, comes the excitement of selecting the new cohort of students.

Allarna Langford
Nikea Bettridge

The Smarter Schools National Partnerships are a joint initiative of the Australian Government and the Queensland Government.
MTECE preservice teachers have settled into the routine of regular classroom attendance with their teacher mentors. These formalised relationships support and encourage the preservice teacher’s professional learning whilst also engaging the mentor in reflective practice. The following is a student’s reflection on her mentoring experience through the centre.

Being part of the MTECE continues to be an exciting and rewarding experience. While we are receiving exceptional opportunities to develop our capabilities as teachers, one of the most beneficial experiences is having one mentor for our time with the centre. I have come to understand and appreciate the importance and benefit of having a quality mentor to guide my learning. With short practicum experiences, the relationships between student and supervising teacher are generally restricted to ensuring we “get through” our prac. With my TECE mentor, Deb, I am fortunate to have a wealth of knowledge and experience to call upon, both inside and outside her classroom. We started our in-school TECE experience prior to the start of school. I was involved in the essential planning before the doors open on the first day of school. This was such an insightful experience, as I believe it has been extremely beneficial to observe the work that teachers must do to ensure their classrooms and strategies are ready for the new students. Importantly, this time allowed Deb and me to begin discussing our plans for the year. As I have continued to be involved in this classroom throughout the year, I have been able to regularly reflect on our plans and consider new strategies. It has been really interesting to observe how Deb continues to develop her own strategies to benefit her students. It has been exciting to be a part of celebrating not only the students’ successes, but Deb’s excitement as her students meet and surpass her expectations. While we have had to juggle our commitments, Deb has provided advice and encouragement even when I’m not in her classroom. And when I am able to return to her classroom, I am immediately welcomed by her and her beautiful students. As I realise how fortunate I am to have such a great mentor, I also realise how important it is that I continue to gain as much knowledge and experience as I can before I have my own classroom. I do know that her continued mentoring will be a welcome support in not only my first week, but my first year of teaching. Having developed a positive relationship throughout this year with my mentor, I am excited to know that this will continue into the future.

Natalie Reason QUT

MTECE preservice teachers came together for three days of focussed professional development – winter school. This hugely successful program engaged expert presenters while also allowing the preservice teachers opportunity to share their classroom and mentoring experiences.

We headed to WinterSchool armed with hot cups of coffee and the warmest jackets we could find. Fortunately, we forgot all about the weather the second we met Tony Ryan whose effortless enthusiasm was a fantastic start to the week and he provided us with useful activities, thinking games and highly effective pedagogical tools.

Next, the “data guru” Kerri Giebel provided us with invaluable knowledge regarding the different types of data, how to access and use data effectively. We then met Robyn Brown and Jane Irvin. Within five minutes the ladies had us on the edge of our seats as they taught us how to differentiate for our students in numeracy. The hands-on session made us realise that the use of Math games within the classroom can have a huge impact on student’s numeracy abilities.

During our final day we focused on the seven procedures of reading with Aminta Miller. We learnt about the importance of incorporating shared, guided and independent reading into a reading program and gained some valuable new skills. Aminta’s enthusiasm was contagious and she had us all practicing our shared reading approaches in no time. Finally, we were provided with the opportunity to learn more about teaching in rural and remote areas. Paul Pickering and Amy O’Keefe inspired us with their genuine care and overwhelming dedication to their school, leaving me excited about my own future.

We left WinterSchool with a repertoire of new skills, strategies and resources that we will undoubtedly use again and again but more than anything, we left determined, motivated and inspired – just itching to get into a classroom!
Aspley TECE Special Education

Big Week for the Teacher Education Centre of Excellence (Special Education)

Special Education in Metropolitan Region was abuzz when educators gathered to support the preservice teachers in the Centre of Excellence program, and also celebrate the Centre’s opening.

From Wednesday 18 July to Friday 20 July, the Bachelor of Education (Special Education) third and fourth year students from Griffith University gathered at the Brisbane School of Distance Education conference rooms to interact with experts in the field for the inaugural Spread Your Wings Winter Intensive program.

The program was sponsored by the Queensland Teachers’ Union and QT Mutual Bank.

Wednesday saw the preservice teachers, as well as ten teachers and teacher aides from some of the Centre’s Partner Schools work with Odette Martin, an Advisory Visiting Teacher: Behaviour Services.

Odette provided an overview of School Wide Positive Behaviour Support and conducted the Essential Skills for Classroom Management training. This allowed participants to understand the context for approaches to behaviour management in their mentors’ schools, and also provided them with essential certification for working with Education Queensland.

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

Thursday was an eventful day for the Centre, with mentors and mentees attending the day’s program. This is the first time that they have all been together.

Together, the mentors and mentees attended the first session of the day with Wayne Wilkinson, Principal of Mitchelton Special School. Speaking about the holistic development of students with disabilities, Wayne’s passion and knowledge was described by mentees as inspirational and empowering.

Mentors then completed their third and final day of mentor training with Nick Burnett.

Mentees spent time with Griffith faculty who are conducting research on the program, before learning from Carmel Cooper, Advisory Visiting Teacher: Transition, who shared her expertise in Intellectual Impairment, including complexities in the diagnosis and working with parents.

Lee Withall, Advisory Visiting Teacher: Physical Impairment and Therese Campling, Teacher, RedHill Special School shared resources and knowledge about these complex and challenging areas of special education.

Carl England, Head of Curriculum at Aspley Special School discussed with mentees their role in bringing curriculum to life, as well as the documentation process, and where to go for help.

The program was rounded out with a session on gaining employment with Education Queensland and a final panel Q&A on the interview process with Principals Jann Simmonds and Terry Forster, and Janet Bannah from DETE.