

Anonymous Submission 003

Related consultation – Teacher Education Expert Panel Consultation

I am going to make observations in point form about my becoming a teacher at mature age, [REDACTED].

1. I chose to do teacher training at [REDACTED] where there was a requirement to undertake 2 days a week teaching placement in a school for 16 – 20 weeks. Under such a system, there is a possibility to develop a relationship with students and with the supervising teacher. Because there is time, it is also possible to try and develop suggested strategies. In two 3 week teaching blocks, I do not believe either is at all possible.
2. I started teaching the year when recognition of prior relevant work experience was removed and I started teaching at a school considered to be every teacher's nightmare posting and where the Year 9 boys told me it had only taken them 3 weeks to get rid of the last new teacher (was true) and reckoned they could do the same to me that first lesson. This recognition of prior work experience had not been removed when I started training. This meant that when I did start teaching my salary was the same as 22 year olds. This was not appreciated and was a big blow to the family budget. The decision to train had partly been based on a start salary level which recognized prior work experience. Because of this, only two years after teaching in school I moved to teach at TAFE (where prior relevant work experience is actually required) in order to be paid a reasonable amount, effectively doubling my salary. (I was teaching in the high demand area of info tech.). If you want to attract mature age students don't expect them to work for a pittance.
3. After I had been teaching for a year, the principal of the school had a carpentry teacher declared in excess. He gave my job to the carpenter and I was transferred to humanities to teach English. Having undertaken significant curriculum development for IT classes and losing my area of expertise was another reason I left for TAFE. So two people were then teaching in areas not of their expertise. This sort of behaviour on the part of a principal should not be permitted.

4. Some years later I left TAFE for a while to handle an issue with my younger daughter's health. Because part time work was not available at schools, it meant I later returned to teach at TAFE part time, where innovative teaching practice can be undertaken. I understand from my current younger teacher friends (also mature age starting) that school principals do not like to offer part time positions even now.
5. When my daughter was older and I could return to full time work rather than part time, it was at this time I discovered the new record keeping requirement in schools. However the record keeping that was now required looked to me like a recipe for taking away curriculum and activity development and replacing that with drudgery for no good reason. I therefore did not return to teaching at all and changed careers again. For me developing interesting activities to capture students interest and engagement is all important. Record keeping destroys the time and interest to do that. It achieves very little for the student, but may keep the government and parents happy.
6. I note that the Finnish education system does not require the ridiculous record keeping such as required here, as teaching is what is encouraged, and paid well, so attracts good graduates. It far outperforms the Australian system which seems to have gone in the direction of the completely untenable UK system, along with its boring standard National curriculum and failing system. Fails to attract good teachers and fails to provide good outcomes for students, except for those students who provide their own outcomes regardless of system. The high percentage of segregation as a result of private schools does not help matters in Australia. The Finns don't have a significant number of private schools and less than 2% of students attend them. In Germany only 5% of students go to private schools.
7. In Australia the private school system works in much the same way as the UK Public Schools do: to perpetuate a them and us mentality and can block career advancement for those who did not go to private school. And I wonder how many private school students think going into teaching would be a good idea. And just in case you are wondering – I went to a private girls school but in my last year at school I insisted to my parents that I be allowed to go to the local high school.