

Teacher Expert Panel Discussion Paper Consultation

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Reform Area 1: Strengthen ITE programs to deliver effective, classroom ready graduates

| Evidence-based teaching practices |
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| Are there other evidence-based practices which should be prioritised in ITE programs? |
| <p><i>Response:</i></p> <p>The evidence-based practices presented in the Discussion paper are consistent with the key tenets of the Montessori method. Developed by Maria Montessori, the approach hinges on cognitive psychology and the psychological development of children at different stages. The Montessori approach specifically uses 'isolation of concept' as a means of addressing cognitive load theory; materials are sequenced in order guiding students to develop higher order thinking and strategies, and learning materials build upon one another year to year in difficulty and complexity. It is reaffirming to see the synergies between the Discussion Paper's emphasis on evidence-based practices and the Montessori approach. It may be a point of consideration as to how these practices are integrated into Montessori teacher preparation programs, and identify what aspects of the Montessori Teacher Diplomas may be applicable for other ITE programs in Australia.</p> <p>It is also suggested that the panel consider Self-Determination Theory and how autonomy, relatedness, and competence form motivation in learning. While this may fall within the context of Classroom Management, there could be some explicit focus on understanding motivation and how allowing for student choice, at the right times and in the right way, can be beneficial for student outcomes. While a self-directed approach may not be an effective strategy when attempting to acquire new information, and certainly a laissez-faire style approach to student-directed learning is rife with problems, research does support that students who have some degree of autonomy and choice stand to benefit.</p> <p>Additionally, the panel may like to consider the links between cognition and movement. There is a greater research base supporting the links between physical activity and movement and learning. In many schools, students have a sedentary learning experience, and new teachers may need to be specifically taught in their ITE programs how to integrate movement into classroom practice, which may also address the behavioural concerns at the same time. After all, children are not meant to sit still for extended hours of the day at a desk, and if this practice is to shift in Australian schools, ITE programs have the opportunity to influence change in this area of teaching practice.</p> |
| Amending Accreditation Standards and Procedures |
| How should the Accreditation Standards and Procedures best be amended to ensure all ITE students learn and can confidently use these practices? |
| <p><i>Response:</i></p> <p>Accreditation Standards and Procedures address broadly the areas in which teachers engage students in learning. The Montessori approach would prioritise with greater emphasis on preparing teachers in knowing how students learn (Standard 1), taking into account the extensive research on child development which guides an approach that varies according to the age of the child. ITE students must consider the natural learner in every child, which forms the basis in how they guide learning and engagement.</p> |

Based on a stronger understanding on how students learn, there would be amendments to the emphasis placed on planning, preparing environments, and assessing student learning. This would lead to some language amendments in all other standards to lessen the emphasis on teachers' responsibility to deliver learning content to their students. When students are engaged as self-directed learners and guided in accordance with the common natural characteristics of their age group, we find the need to "manage" student behaviour by the teacher to be more the exception than the rule. Standard 4 may be amended to put a greater emphasis on engaging positive learning experiences, while we don't disagree with the need to address challenging behaviours when required.