



An advanced qualifications pathway for secondary teachers

Prepared by Executive

1 Introduction

The PPTA 2007 conference paper 'Secondary teaching into the future' envisages a future scenario in which:

...teachers need to be continuing to learn throughout their careers. Teachers will have ample and equitable opportunities to advance their professional knowledge and skills, both while working as teachers and through opportunities for study awards, sabbaticals, placements in industry, and other learning experiences. As they move through their careers into more specialised roles, professional learning opportunities will be made available to support the new demands on them.

For this scenario to be realised there would need to be a significant change to the way that professional learning experiences for secondary teachers are organised.

2 What is professional learning?

Professional development has long been the catchall term for any upskilling undertaken by teachers currently in the service. In reality, there are three distinct forms of in-service education for teachers: retraining, professional development and professional learning.

- **Retraining**

This activity facilitates adjustments in work practice made necessary by changing demands such as curriculum change, changes in the demands made by students and technological change.¹ Retraining activities are either in school time with funding provided for teacher relief or are held nationally on nominated days during which schools are closed. Retraining activities usually involve an external "expert" who is charged with updating the course participants. A distinct feature of retraining is that it tends to be one-off rather than a programme of development integrated into teachers' professional practice.

¹ Professional Development and Retraining. A paper to the PPTA Annual Conference 1992



- **Professional Development**

Professional development is a wider term that encompasses a planned learning programme, often based in schools but also organised externally by groups such as subject associations, teacher education contractors and universities. The focus on the expert remains but there is usually greater capacity for teacher involvement and choice and some recognition of the insights teachers have into teaching and learning.

Many of the compulsory upskilling activities that take place in schools under the name of professional development would be more accurately defined as retraining. They tend to be “one-size fits all” and focussed on a particular method or style of teaching that is in vogue. In this model, teachers are technicians who are expected to amend their practices and beliefs to comply with an ideal of effective teaching as determined by external agents - the Government, the Ministry of Education, the Education Review Office, various education consultants and researchers. Even architects have been known to run sessions for teachers at which they explain the version of effective teaching for which they are designing new classrooms.

Professional development is funded by boards of trustees from the operations grant. For most teachers this equates to one or two days per year. PPTA policy, set in a 1992 conference paper that arose out of frustration at the lack of support for the early qualifications changes, was that boards should allocate 4% of their budgets to professional development and that this should be matched by a further 4% held centrally for the funding of national initiatives. Fifteen years on, there is still no consistency around funding for professional development; very few boards would be able to meet the 4% test² and the central agencies continue to impose new demands on teachers without making provision for any professional support.

NZCER’s 2003 national survey of teachers reported that “sources of funding for professional development included boards of trustees (83 percent), the Ministry of Education (44.5 percent), and voluntary organisations (3 percent). Twenty-eight percent of teachers paid for some of their own professional development. These teachers were significantly more likely to be undertaking personal study. There

² Wylie, C. & King, J. (2004). How do effective schools manage their finances? <http://www.nzcer.org.nz/pdfs/13385.pdf>
“Seven secondary schools provided details of professional development expenditures within their financial statements. In 2003, these secondary schools spent between 1.4-4.3 percent of their operations grants on teacher professional development (mean 2.4 percent). From 2000-2003, professional development expenditure usually comprised between 0.6-1.4 percent of locally managed expenditure.”



was also a trend for more teachers than not to pay personally for attendance at one-off seminars or conferences with a special focus, for annual conferences of an educational organisation, and for Internet list-serves.”³

If anything, the Ministry of Education appears to be moving towards a model where professional development becomes the financial responsibility of the teacher, mistakenly concluding that because other professionals are compelled to undertake upskilling at their own expense, teachers should be prepared to do the same. The difference, of course, is that other professions have the power to set their own fees and can pass on any costs to customers or the IRD. This is not an option teachers have, though many of them altruistically undertake professional learning at their own expense as well as in their own time. In the 2003 NZCER Survey, it was reported that 26 percent of principals and 28 percent of teachers had paid for at least some of their own training, and most principals and 58 percent of teachers had undertaken at least some of their professional development in their own time.⁴

- **Professional learning**

Professional learning differs from retraining and professional development because it is oriented around teachers’ strengths as professionals and practitioners, rather than around the deficit assumptions implicit in the first two categories. It recognises that teachers have a range of abilities, knowledge and understandings derived not only from their experiences in schools and classrooms but also from their lives outside school. It accepts that learning is multi-dimensional and fluid and profoundly affected by personal experience and values. In contrast to the imposed “one-off”, “one-size fits all” model, a professional learning approach allows teachers to direct and manage their own learning in a framework that parallels the “personalised learning” approach being advocated for school students.⁵

3 Professional Learning in Professional Learning Communities

There is very little genuine professional learning in New Zealand secondary schools. While there are groups of teachers who are undertaking extra study at their own expense in order to improve their teaching practice and others, for example, the e-learning clusters, where

³ Hipkins, R. & Hodken, E. (2003) National Survey of Secondary Schools, Wellington: NZCER pp 65-66

⁴ Hipkins R, & Hodken, E. (2003) National Survey of Secondary Schools, Wellington: NZCER

⁵ See <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/ViewDocument.aspx?DocumentID=28881> for the Minister of Education, Steve Maharey’s views on personalised learning.



teachers are actively engaged in exploring how to improve teaching and learning through ICT, these initiatives are necessarily limited by the costs in terms of money and time.

To some extent professional learning can be seen as a new term for the very old practice of teachers getting together to share their insights and experiences:

“Investing in teachers’ learning community as a strategy to build teachers’ capacity for effective teaching in twenty-first classrooms entails a shift from system policies that seek to prescribe standardised practices to those that aim to strengthen teachers’ judgement and opportunity to learn. Policy strategies would promote teachers’ engagement in learning outside, as well as inside, the education system – in professional associations, teacher unions, subject matter networks, informal professional development groups.”⁶

It would be a mistake, however, to assume that any group of professionals engaged in discussions on matters of common interest is a professional learning community. There has to be focus on actively improving teaching and learning; in other words, putting research and theory into practice in the classroom.

There is sound international evidence that the countries whose education systems are able to report both high student achievement and high equity are those that give teachers autonomy within coordinated and supported professional and career development cycles and pathways. This model has been termed by Professor Allan Luke (University of Queensland) as ‘the cool curriculum’. While high achievement coupled with high equity is clearly the New Zealand government’s goal, it has failed to deliver the coordinated and supported approach to professional learning that is required to be able to reach that goal.

There is no doubt that secondary teachers want to do more professional learning. The 2003 NZCER survey reported that 16 percent of principals and 20 percent of teachers were studying towards a specific qualification. It also reported that “sixty percent of teachers intended to undertake more professional education in their own time in the next 12 months. Those who did not want to do so felt they did not have the time (20 percent) or energy (19 percent) for further professional education. Some said they were already involved in enough professional development, or could not afford it (both 9 percent), that they saw no need for further education/training at this point (6 percent), or that the

⁶ McLaughlin M., Talbert J. (2001). *Professional Communities and the Work of High School Teaching*. University of Chicago Press pp.134-136



distance they would need to travel precluded this (4 percent). Difficulties in finding relievers were also mentioned by 2 percent of teachers.”⁷

4 Professional Learning in the Future

Two developments have given the professional learning networks of this century a new twist:

- The development of digital networks, internet communications, video-conferencing and web 2.0 technologies enable teachers to build national and international professional learning communities on top of their traditional school-based and local groups, and
- The establishment of the New Zealand Qualifications Framework which recognises informal learning and experiences and allows them to be formally recognised for qualifications purposes. The Framework is steadily systematising qualifications and pressuring institutions to make their qualifications portable both nationally and internationally.

In sum, teachers can contemplate a future in which they undertake professional learning on-line in collaboration with teaching colleagues in New Zealand and globally and have that learning recognised in a qualification.

5 Getting there

Almost five years ago, *The Ministerial Taskforce on Secondary Remuneration*⁸ identified that professional learning for secondary teachers should be based around individually selected pathways that could be validated by the Qualifications Framework.

*“The proposed new pathways would be registered on the New Zealand Register of Quality Assured Qualifications. The qualifications would be nationally-based, quality assured and capable of recognising both learning through accredited providers and workplace-based learning. Credit transfer mechanisms would allow portability and flexibility. There would be national consistency of assessment. The qualifications would encourage teachers to invest in and build their capacity as highly effective teachers. These qualifications must be fit for this purpose.”*⁹

It was the view of the Taskforce that a “fully operational qualifications pathway” could be set up by 2005, leaving the issues around qualifications and pay progression to be sorted out as part of the 2007 collective agreement negotiations. That this has not happened reflects a

⁷ Hipkins, R. & Hodken, E. (2003). National Survey of Secondary Schools, Wellington: NZCER pp. 67

⁸ The Ministerial Taskforce (2003) was set up after the industrial strife of 2002 and was charged with establishing a strategic direction for secondary education. It was chaired by Dame Margaret Bazley and had representatives from the Ministry of Education, PPTA and the New Zealand School Trustees Association.

⁹ Report of the Ministerial Taskforce on Secondary Teacher Remuneration. (2003, November). Wellington <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/mallard/secondary-teacher-remuneration/home.cfm>



fundamental philosophical difference between the Ministry of Education and the PPTA on the nature of the secondary teaching profession and what constitutes “appropriate, accessible and adequately resourced professional development”.¹⁰

6 Creative Tensions

From PPTA’s perspective, a qualification “open to all secondary teachers”, as required by the Ministerial Taskforce report, must overcome the barriers of time and cost that currently prevent teachers from undertaking more professional learning. PPTA remains concerned that a failure to make this a priority will result in unfairness because teachers in wealthier schools are more likely to receive time and cash subsidies than those teaching in poorer communities. Care needs to be exercised about the unintended effects as well. A professional learning strategy badly implemented and done on the cheap will undermine retention and recruitment and impact on secondary teachers’ capacity to continue to participate in extra-curricular activities. In other words if a professional learning strategy is to have any meaningful effect it must take account of teachers’ individual circumstances and the context of their work.

A review of the Scottish chartered teacher scheme, a professional learning scheme that involves teachers undergoing a programme of assessed professional development in order to access higher steps on the salary scale, notes that the uptake has been very low:

Many teachers did not regard the chartered teacher programme as an attractive proposition. The reasons given included money and time costs for individual teachers. Few teachers appeared to accept the argument that the cost of qualifying through the stages would be balanced by salary increases as they moved up the scale or that relatively young teachers could enjoy 25 years of enhanced salary once they had reached the top of the chartered teacher scale. Few teachers agreed that the chartered teacher route had the potential to provide fulfilment in their careers.¹¹

In contrast to PPTA, the Ministry of Education seems to see the issues of cost, time and fair access to any qualification as secondary to actually establishing one. The difficulty this presents for PPTA is that the G3 experience has made members, quite reasonably, wary of any qualification recognition process that is not completely transparent from the outset.

PPTA’s experience in working with the Ministry to develop the two specialist subject diplomas for G3 teachers has not been auspicious

¹⁰ Secondary Teachers’ Collective Agreement 2004-2007. cl.2.2.3 (b)

¹¹ Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education. (2007). *Teaching Scotland’s Children. A report on progress in implementing “A Teaching Profession For The 21st Century.”* Livingstone p.9



either. The Ministry constantly sought to make the qualification as inaccessible for teachers as possible. This led to disputes and time delays compounded by the seemingly inordinate time it took the Ministry to work through its own internal processes for approval of the qualification. The second diploma, the Diploma of Specialist Subjects, Version 2 is still not operational although the process of setting it up began in 2005.

Furthermore, history shows that the Ministry is more interested in using qualifications as a salary-rationing device than as an incentive for improving teaching and learning.

For all these reasons, PPTA is justifiably distrustful of the Ministry's motives in wanting to establish a practice-based qualification for secondary teachers and is doubtful about its capacity to oversee the operation of any such qualification in an impartial manner.

7 Where is the Ministry going?

The agreement the Ministry has reached with primary teachers suggests it is more interested developing standards than qualifications. This is in spite of the fact that there is currently a plethora of standards for teachers in existence and considerable evidence that specified standards control and contain teachers¹² in a way that is not consistent with the professional learning ideals outlined here. The NZEI proposal looks to extend the current beginning, fully registered teachers and experienced teachers' standards in the collective agreements by the addition of standards and exemplars for skilled teachers, mentor teachers and lead teachers. The standards define what knowledge, skills and attributes are required for each position and are assessed by external attestors. Promotion will be restricted to teachers who have met the requisite set of standards. This is redolent of the highly unpopular "grading system" which was a feature of New Zealand schools for the first half of last century.

A system of teacher assessment which bypassed the tertiary qualification requirements would not be regarded by PPTA as sufficiently rigorous to be acceptable.

8 What would a 21st century qualification for secondary teachers look like?

There can be no doubt that secondary teachers are keen to undertake professional learning activities providing the environment supports them to do so. They are constantly upgrading their qualifications in their own time and at their own cost. The 70 study awards available annually

¹² Thrupp, M. (2006). *Professional Standards for Teachers and Teacher Education: Avoiding the pitfalls.*
<http://www.ppta.org.nz/cms/imagelibrary/101346.pdf>



through the collective agreement are always over-subscribed, as are the various study grants, scholarships and fellowships offered to teachers either through schools, the Ministry or other agencies. The challenge facing PPTA is how to give life to the practice-based professional learning framework envisaged by the Ministerial Taskforce in a context that is both relevant and meaningful and grounded in the reality of teachers' working lives.

9 A postgraduate course of study for secondary teachers

Since the report of the Ministerial Taskforce, there have been significant changes to the organisation of tertiary education in New Zealand. The Statement of Tertiary Education Priorities (STEP)¹³ requires tertiary institutions in New Zealand to operate collaboratively rather than in competition as they did in the past. Tertiary funding is no longer based simply on the number of students but on the extent to which a programme addresses national and regional priorities. Category 1 of the funding to tertiary providers requires at least 50% of assessment in a paper for teachers in primary and secondary schools to be practice-based, and the extra funding is intended to be used to support "supervised" work by classroom teachers.

It is possible in this new environment to develop an applied postgraduate qualification with multiple providers that secondary teachers could customise to their needs. For example, they could credit prior learning, receive credit for school-based professional learning programmes such as Te Kotahitanga or the literacy and numeracy interventions and they could enrol in selected papers available nationally and internationally.¹⁴ All courses would be available on line and assessment could be via an e-portfolio¹⁵ as well as the more traditional options. While there might be a compulsory core to the qualification, teachers would also be free to choose particular courses that meet their learning needs. The 27% of secondary teachers who, because of staff shortages, are teaching outside their subject areas¹⁶ might choose to take papers that strengthen their subject knowledge while teachers interested in pursuing a particular career path in say, guidance, pastoral care, mentoring, ICT or any other specialist area, could select papers appropriate to that work.

The benefits of this approach are:

- The resulting qualification is validated by the tertiary accreditation process rather than by the whim of the Ministry, the Teachers'

¹³ <http://www.tec.govt.nz/templates/standard.aspx?id=1134>

¹⁴ The School Support Service is already offering professional learning programmes that can be linked to a qualification such as the Graduate Diploma of Education.

¹⁵ An e-portfolio is an archive of artefacts of personal learning that can be presented for credentialing. Eg entrance to a university course, for RPL or in some countries for registration.

¹⁶ Staffing Survey Paints Grim Picture, *PPTA News*, June 2007

<http://www.ppta.org.nz/internal.asp?CategoryID=100007&SubCatID=100046>



Council or by a local attestation process such the one the Ministry is proposing for primary teachers.

- It is flexible and allows teachers to personalise their own learning pathways.
- It values teachers' classroom and life experience by allowing it to be credited through RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning).
- It can give academic recognition of school-based professional learning programmes.
- It could be offered at a range of levels (graduate, post-graduate) and offer a range of exit points (certificate, diploma, masters and doctorates) making it more manageable.
- It will have sufficient economies of scale to encourage institutions to offer programmes that are relevant for secondary education whereas presently most courses are designed to meet the bigger, primary, generalist market.
- It avoids the standards-type approach already agreed to by the Ministry and NZEI, which has the effect of imposing a particular style of teaching that is fashionable at the time. (Standards are not normally used to measure higher levels of professional practice because the learning at post-graduate levels is highly complex and not open to being simplistically defined in standards.)
- It will encourage more secondary teachers to engage in authentic classroom-based research themselves, thus providing a necessary challenge to the wave of politically-inspired research which operates on the assumption that teachers need 'fixing'.
- It offers a refreshment and renewal pathway for classroom teachers who do not want to move up the traditional promotion pathway.

Obviously PPTA members would need some assurances that the Ministry was committed to the principles of professional learning and was prepared to demonstrate that by funding the following:

- Time for teachers to be able to commit to the study without compromising their teaching. The draft Best Evidence Synthesis on Professional Learning and Development¹⁷ notes that for professional learning to be successful teachers needed sufficient time for extended opportunities to learn and for that time to be used effectively. There are a number of ways that the time could be provided, for example as additional non-contact time or as a partial

¹⁷ Timperley, H., Wilson, A., Barr, H. & Fung, I. (2007, January) *Professional Learning and Development: Best Evidence Synthesis*. (Draft in edit) Faculty of Education, University of Auckland. p.xi



study award that allowed a teacher to reduce one class. It is important for the teacher to remain engaged in teaching while undertaking the study so as to facilitate the changes in practice that professional learning anticipates.

- Fees: the cost of tertiary study is a significant barrier for teachers wishing to improve their qualifications. As mentioned earlier, teachers are not able to write-off the costs of their professional learning by increasing their fees or charging it against their tax. If the Ministry is serious about wanting teachers to undertake professional learning in a comprehensive way it will need to provide realistic funding. When a post-graduate qualification can cost as much as \$10,000 it is completely unreasonable to expect individual teachers or boards of trustees to find the money.¹⁸
- Appropriate courses: As already noted, one of the particular difficulties for secondary teachers is that there are few courses purpose-designed to meet their professional learning needs. Tertiary institutions tend to focus on the larger primary sector but many of those generalist courses are not particularly relevant for secondary classrooms.
- Voluntary Entry: Although the draft Best Evidence Synthesis (BES) on Teacher Professional Learning and Development¹⁹ purports to show that professional learning is just as effective whether teachers choose to do it or are compelled to, this finding needs to be treated cautiously because it stands in defiance of common sense. The BES notes that providing teachers engage with the learning, outcomes in terms of student achievement are better, regardless of the requirements around entry. PPTA prefers to operate on the assumption that engagement is more likely in situations where the learner is a volunteer rather than a conscript.
- Payment on completion. For many teachers having fees paid and being granted time to study would be sufficient incentive to undertake professional learning. However, if secondary teaching is to become a professional learning community more formal salary recognition is required. An obvious approach would be to draw on the framework used for the service increment (Appendix A) but modified so unit holders and teachers at any point on the salary scale could receive it. It would need to be increased to the value of a unit as per the 2007 claim so that it remained current.

This is preferable to making salary increments and promotional opportunities entirely dependent on qualifications. That risks creating a

¹⁸ It was with the intention of beginning to address the inequalities around access to professional learning that led PPTA to claim the \$1000 professional learning entitlement in the STCA negotiations this year.

¹⁹ Timperley, H., Wilson, A., Barr, H. & Fung, I. (2007, January) *Professional Learning and Development: Best Evidence Synthesis*. (Draft in edit) Faculty of Education, University of Auckland.



“conveyor belt” mentality that rewards the endless acquisition of qualifications at the expense of other worthwhile activities. The capacity for teachers to pursue a course of study because they find it interesting must not be unduly constrained by a single-minded focus on qualifications. Effective teaching requires teachers to draw on a range of diverse experiences, not just those that can be encapsulated in the term “professional development”. A professional learning approach recognises that the distinction between education for work and education for life is an artificial one.

It is fair to say that any form of payment for qualifications is potentially fraught because it raises the spectre of a future government, unnerved by the cost, moving to cap the scheme. The Scottish chartered teachers’ scheme referred to above is uncapped and there is some concern from politicians about the cost implications of that position. The risk can be mitigated somewhat by establishing entitlements in the Collective Agreement, which is an enforceable legal contract.

It would also be essential to negotiate translation arrangements for secondary teachers who already held postgraduate qualifications as a result of voluntary study, usually undertaken at their own cost and in their own time. The establishment of a new set of qualifications that were linked to the salary scale must not be allowed to leave these teachers out in the cold. (Recommendation 4 addresses this concern.)

10 A Centre for Secondary Teaching Excellence?

Considering the cost and complexities involved in developing a nationally coherent and fair professional learning structure for secondary teachers, it is not surprising that the Ministerial Taskforce’s expectation that the job would be complete by 2005 has proved to be somewhat over-optimistic. Given the sheer size of the task and the range of other industrial issues

that PPTA and the Ministry must work through; there may be a case for locating this project elsewhere.

As part of the tertiary reforms, the government set up The National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence. This is based at Massey University in Wellington with regional hubs in Palmerston North, Auckland and Christchurch. Its role is to work with tertiary providers to promote and support effective teaching across the tertiary sector. A similar entity, perhaps a Centre for Secondary Teaching Excellence, could be established to develop an appropriate qualification, coordinate its delivery across the tertiary sector and liaise with schools and other stakeholders. Without a dedicated organisation charged with doing the legwork necessary to get a relevant, accessible and meaningful national qualification for secondary teachers up and running, it is difficult to see how any real progress can be made.



PPTA has already explored the possibility of a secondary-specific professional learning qualification with some of the providers of advanced qualifications for teachers, and they were supportive of the idea itself and endorsed the notion of a collaborative approach.

11 Conclusion

It is one thing for governments to sing the praises of a highly qualified, highly skilled secondary teaching profession; it is another thing entirely to get them to pay for it. The professional learning landscape for teachers is littered with the debris of populist ideas, poorly implemented and done on the cheap. If the government is serious about its professed commitment to effective teaching, it will need to do more than talk about it.

Recommendations

- 1 That the report be received
- 2 That PPTA support the development of post-graduate professional learning qualifications for secondary teachers, coordinated by a centre for secondary teacher excellence, conditional on:
 - The provision of a time allowance for all teachers who wish to enrol;
 - Fully funded course fees; and
 - Payment on completion of each level of a qualification (a level being equivalent to one year of full-time study).
- 3 That entry to the qualifications is voluntary.
- 4 That translation arrangements for teachers who already hold equivalent postgraduate qualifications be negotiated.



Appendix 1

4.9 Service Increment

- 4.9.1: A teacher who, at the date of application, is permanently appointed to a base scale position, and who has met the requirements of Supplement 1 and has satisfied the qualifications and service criteria for the payment of the service increment (as required by the Secretary for Education) shall, upon application and from the date the Secretary for Education is satisfied that those requirements and criteria have been met, be paid additional salary at the rate of \$1578 per annum. A teacher holding a permanent unit or units in terms of clause 4.3 is not entitled to receive the service increment.
- 4.9.2: Eligibility for the service increment, once approved, remains (subject to 4.9.3 below) if the teacher subsequently moves to a new position, whether permanent or not, and regardless of breaks in service.
- 4.9.3: This payment (and eligibility for it) ceases upon the teacher being appointed to a position with a permanent unit or units in terms of clause 4.3. The payment (and eligibility for it) resumes should the teacher cease to hold such a position.
- 4.9.4: Subject to 4.9.1, 4.9.2 and 4.9.3, the criteria and exemptions for payment are as follows:
- (a) A “service increment” is additional salary payable to permanent teachers who have completed three years’ New Zealand state teaching service on their maximum on the base scale and have completed an approved additional qualification. This latter condition is satisfied by the teacher obtaining qualifications set out in the [Education Gazette](#) from time to time.
 - (iii) New entrants to the secondary teaching service on or after 1 February 1971 who are classified in qualification Group 4 or Group 5 (previously Group IIIb) are also exempted from the qualification criterion and are eligible for the service increment on satisfying the service criterion only.
 - (c) Manual teachers are eligible for the granting of a service increment on the top of their maximum rate on the base scale.
 - (d) Primary or area school teachers and those in the advisory services who hold the service increment, or who have accumulated service towards it, and who move to positions in the secondary service for which the service increment is payable in addition to salary, will receive payment of the service increment, or will be able to count teaching service accumulated towards the service requirement, on satisfying the requirements set out in Supplement 1.