UNIVERSITIES AND TEACHER TRAINING

In Australia, as in Britain, America and other "western" countries, some universities, of tertiary education face reduced enrolments resulting from a falling demand for teacher training. In addition, the adverse economic climate which has prevailed since 1974 has encouraged moves to economise by consolidating the number of institutions undertaking teacher training. Rationalisation, redundancy and retrenchment have become the 3 R's of tertiary education.

University involvement in teacher training is a recent development in Australia. True, in the 19th century a few students at training schools attended universities part-time. The training colleges were saved the expense of providing academic courses, the thinly populated universities obtaining a few more students. But the universities took no part in the actual training of these student-teachers. In the first half of the 20th century a few universities conferred diplomas in education. But these training courses were actually provided by neighbouring state teachers' colleges. Although some of these colleges were located in university grounds, this arrangement was simply to give the college administration closer contact with undergraduate students on teacher training scholarships. It also made it easier for college lecturers to offer education as an undergraduate Arts subject. But these Education subjects were academic or general ones, not professional, teacher training subjects. In many cases the Principal of the Teachers' College was also part-time Professor of Education.

It was the growth of post graduate research work (B.Ed., M.Ed., and even PhD courses) which forced the separation of universities and colleges. Full-time Professors of Education were appointed at Melbourne in 1939, Sydney in 1947. University Faculties or Departments of Education started to expand.

The growth of secondary education in the 1950's and 1960's increased the demand for graduate teachers and provided an opportunity for other universities to move into teacher training. In 1948 the University of Tasmania took over all teacher training in Tasmania. This arrangement proved unsatisfactory immediately and the Department of Education soon re-established teachers' colleges, though the University continued its teacher training programme. After theQuit about 1954 most other universities entered directly into the job of training future secondary and even primary teachers. This great incursion of universities into teacher training raised

Alan Barcan
Department of Education
University of Newcastle

little discussion at the time, partly because of the great shortage of teachers and the willingness of state Departments of Education to let universities meet some of the cost of teacher training. The articles and other writings which did discuss the new trend were mainly by proponents of university participation in teacher training.

Today the falling demand for teachers makes university participation in teacher training programmes a matter for debate. It has also raised the question of the role of colleges of advanced education in teacher training. Once again, however, the danger is that decisions will be taken and a new pattern emerge without much serious discussion.

The Falling Demand for Teachers

In 1976, for the first time since 1940, the supply of teachers started to exceed the demand. "Our present production of teachers means we will soon be in over-supply," the Federal Education Minister Senator Carrick, warned in July, 1976. He remarked that many students were now being trained in areas in which they could not expect employment.

The current surplus of teachers applies equally to primary and secondary schools. In 1971 enrolments in N.S.W. state primary schools reached a peak of 504,110. By 1975 they fell to 490,769, a fall of 2.6%. This fall will continue with the declining birthrate. However there is a slight bulge in enrolments within the primary school and this should reach secondary schools in 1982.

In N.S.W. state secondary schools, however, enrolments have been consistently rising.

1971 257,600 1975 298,400
1972 277,800 1976 303,400
1973 282,000 1977 307,400
1974 286,900

Enrolments should continue to increase until 1980.

The annual increase has fluctuated — 20,200 in 1972; 4,200 in 1973; 4,900 in 1974; 11,500 in 1975; 5,000 in 1976; and 4000 in 1977. This fluctuation reflects variation in the number staying on at school in Years 11 and 12, i.e. beyond the minimum school leaving age. The "permanency rate" responds to economic conditions, particularly the condition of the labour market. In 1971 29.2% of the 1966 Year 7 intake had reached Year 12, in 1972 the proportion which had persisted to year
and properly so makes it hard allowances produced increased enrolments in universities and university degree no longer guarantees employment, has The fluctuating demand for teachers is illustrated this fact, coupled with the produced a new pattern of response.

Numbers entering the secondary service are consistently higher than those entering the primary.

The resignation rate is highly relevant to the demand for teachers. At the end of 1974 the loss rate of teachers suddenly dropped due to the tightening up of employment situation discouraged teachers resigning to take other jobs or go abroad for a few years on recreation. In 1974/75 losses of primary teachers totalled 2,133 or 11.2% of teachers. In the previous three years the loss rate had been 12.4% (1971/2), 12.4% (1972/3) and 12.3% (1973/4). Losses of secondary teachers in 1974/75 totalled 2,206 or 12.5%. In the previous three years the losses were 11.5%, 14.5% and 14.9%. In other words the loss rate has become much the same for primary and secondary services, and the fall in resignations and retirements is likely to be about the same for other services.4

Another factor influencing the demand for teachers is class size. Demand can be stimulated by a reduction in class size. But this, in turn, may depend on availability of classrooms. In any case, if the birth rate continues to fall smaller classes will be the result, even without an increased intake of teachers.

Some Consequences of this Falling Demand

The falling demand for teachers carries implications for teacher training. In New South Wales and some other states many Colleges of Advanced Education rely heavily on teacher training for their existence. In Victoria C.A.E.'s tend to be specialized; many are heavily committed to technical education, others to teacher training. Many universities throughout Australia are highly dependent on trainees teachers for their student intake; especially in day enrolments in Arts faculties. An awkward situation arises.

On the other hand, in 1977 the number entering universities and technical colleges seems to have stabilized if not fallen. In the past, periods of high unemployment produced increased enrolments in universities and technical colleges. Today unemployment allowances are higher than student allowances, and this coupled with the assumption that a university degree no longer guarantees employment, has produced a new pattern of response. The academic freedom which is granted to university lecturers — and properly so — makes it hard for a university to re-examine what we gave up in return for this university Diploma in Education courses to on behalf of the University of Sydney, required student teachers to take two major methods of teaching as part of their training — History Method and English Method — and one minor method (e.g. Latin Method). Today in some institutions this has shrunk to two methods and in others to one method. Yet it is well-known that most teachers will teach at least two different subjects.

A third relaxation introduced in some universities was that the assumption that universities are able to cope with the number of trainee teachers undermined the assumption that universities are able to cope with the number of trainee teachers. In some institutions the requirement has shrunk to three hours per week in order to keep lecturers' teaching loads at a reasonable level.

A certain embarrassment has developed in universities and even in colleges of advanced education over teaching as a practical training course. This is reflected in the advocates of Advanced Education's terminology which has come into vogue. Instead of Method, the term Curriculum and Method has been adopted, in places of practice teaching the more pretentious but vague 'practice' and 'curriculum development' has been adopted. The phrase "teaching methods" is replaced by the more elegant "reading strategies". The academisation of teacher training is an unhealthy outcome of the university entry into this field. But does this mean that universities should vacate the field completely?

Should Universities Train Teachers?

Dr. Martin Haherman, Professor of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Wisconsin has recently complained that methods of making universities staff will pull their proper weight in university and hospitals are non-existent, "even when a sensible man or woman manifest they are not carrying out their tasks reasonably.5

Advantages of the Old System

The system of teacher training operating before the universities entered the field and before training colleges became autonomous usually entry into the teaching profession. But does this mean that universities should vacate the field completely?

Should Universities Train Teachers?

Dr. Martin Haherman, Professor of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Wisconsin has recently complained that methods of making universities staff pull their proper weight in university and hospitals are non-existent, "even when a sensible man or woman manifest they are not carrying out their tasks reasonably.5

Advantages of the Old System

The system of teacher training operating before the universities entered the field and before training colleges became autonomous usually entry into the teaching profession. But does this mean that universities should vacate the field completely?

Should Universities Train Teachers?

Dr. Martin Haherman, Professor of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Wisconsin has recently complained that methods of making universities staff pull their proper weight in university and hospitals are non-existent, "even when a sensible man or woman manifest they are not carrying out their tasks reasonably.5

Advantages of the Old System

The system of teacher training operating before the universities entered the field and before training colleges became autonomous usually entry into the teaching profession. But does this mean that universities should vacate the field completely?

Should Universities Train Teachers?

Dr. Martin Haherman, Professor of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Wisconsin has recently complained that methods of making universities staff pull their proper weight in university and hospitals are non-existent, "even when a sensible man or woman manifest they are not carrying out their tasks reasonably.5
One of the advantages of the small teacher training institutions was that the lecturers learnt from each other: young, newly-recruited lecturers learnt from their older, more experienced colleagues. In such large university-type institution it is often assumed that the learning involved in teacher training already have full wisdom when they join the staff. In any case, they are granted full "academic" autonomy and hence a system of induction training is not easy.

Mergers in England

In England mergers between universities and teachers colleges and between polytechnics and teachers colleges were arranged in 1974 and after as a means of "rationalisation"—economic rationalisation was what was primarily sought. The great majority of redundant colleges were merged with polytechnics, not universities. Polytechnics were controlled by local authorities; universities were independent.

For some months the reorganisation raised not the slightest protest. Then, in an article in June 1974, John Voisey remarked, in passing, that "teacher-training colleges are being turned into general colleges without any specific aims" and warned against "more bureaucratic amalgamation without any consistent philosophy". This brief comment gave others courage. M. Brearley, a retired principal of one of the 'new' colleges, said: "The Machiavellian system of the Department of Education and Science for picking off colleges one by one. The smoke-screen of 'consolidation'...The absence of philosophy to attack and the expensive tree-hopping of the hands of bureaucrats "and the indifference of the general public and parliament arising from the incidence of disasters...""

Mr. S. J. Morris of the National Union of Teachers draw attention to the lack of serious fight by staffs of colleges.

Cyril Bibby, principal of Hull College of Education, referred to American experience:

In the United States, where the teachers' colleges were completely merged with large multi-purpose institutions, the results have already proved to be satisfactory that some smaller universities are now struggling to re-establish what they so unwisely destroyed. The problems of a single college of education are numerically less independent. The smaller teachers' colleges were often of a simpler structure; the problem of a single college of education is a more independent role. From 1955 to 1962 the college provided the post-graduate Diploma in Education training course on behalf of the university. In 1962 the posts of the principal of the college and director of the teacher education became separated and the Department of Education and Science took over the management of the college; the college lost its autonomy and it was an independent body.

In Australia, by contrast with England, teachers colleges had to undergo a transfiguration somewhat earlier. The Martin Committee, after prolonged gestation, had produced a new academic policy—college training was de-emphasised and 1969 onwards these entered into teacher training, as part of their multi-purpose character. From the early 1970's, too, some teachers colleges, encouraged by the prospect of Commonwealth funding, developed into multi-purpose C.A.E.'s. Thus in Australia pressure for amalgamation or rationalisation involves rather different institutions. Another difference with England is that technical colleges are not involved in merger proposals, though some C.A.E.'s do sustain technical-style courses.

Mergers in Australia

In Australia the development of some teachers' colleges into multi-purpose institutions, particularly in New South Wales, started the universities in 1971 to propose mergers in order to forestall possible competitors. This early effort proved unsuccessful. Then, in 1975, courses from the higher education colleges were arranged in 1974 and after as a means of "rationalisation"—economic rationalisation was what was primarily sought. The great majority of redundant colleges were merged with polytechnics, not universities. Polytechnics were controlled by local authorities; universities were independent.

For some months the reorganisation raised not the slightest protest. Then, in an article in June 1974, John Voisey remarked, in passing, that "teacher-training colleges are being turned into general colleges without any specific aims" and warned against "more bureaucratic amalgamation without any consistent philosophy". This brief comment gave others courage. M. Brearley, a retired principal of one of the 'new' colleges, said: "The Machiavellian system of the Department of Education and Science for picking off colleges one by one. The smoke-screen of 'consolidation'...The absence of philosophy to attack and the expensive tree-hopping of the hands of bureaucrats "and the indifference of the general public and parliament arising from the incidence of disasters...""

Mr. S. J. Morris of the National Union of Teachers draw attention to the lack of serious fight by staffs of colleges.

Cyril Bibby, principal of Hull College of Education, referred to American experience:

In the United States, where the teachers' colleges were completely merged with large multi-purpose institutions, the results have already proved to be satisfactory that some smaller universities are now struggling to re-establish what they so unwisely destroyed. The problems of a single college of education are numerically less independent. The smaller teachers' colleges were often of a simpler structure; the problem of a single college of education is a more independent role. From 1955 to 1962 the college provided the post-graduate Diploma in Education training course on behalf of the university. In 1962 the posts of the principal of the college and director of the teacher education became separated and the Department of Education and Science took over the management of the college; the college lost its autonomy and it was an independent body.

In Australia, by contrast with England, teachers colleges had to undergo a transfiguration somewhat earlier. The Martin Committee, after prolonged gestation, had produced a new academic policy—college training was de-emphasised and 1969 onwards these entered into teacher training, as part of their multi-purpose character. From the early 1970's, too, some teachers colleges, encouraged by the prospect of Commonwealth funding, developed into multi-purpose C.A.E.'s. Thus in Australia pressure for amalgamation or rationalisation involves rather different institutions. Another difference with England is that technical colleges are not involved in merger proposals, though some C.A.E.'s do sustain technical-style courses.

Mergers in Australia

In Australia the development of some teachers' colleges into multi-purpose institutions, particularly in New South Wales, started the universities in 1971 to propose mergers in order to forestall possible competitors. This early effort proved unsuccessful. Then, in 1975, courses from the higher education colleges were arranged in 1974 and after as a means of "rationalisation"—economic rationalisation was what was primarily sought. The great majority of redundant colleges were merged with polytechnics, not universities. Polytechnics were controlled by local authorities; universities were independent.

For some months the reorganisation raised not the slightest protest. Then, in an article in June 1974, John Voisey remarked, in passing, that "teacher-training colleges are being turned into general colleges without any specific aims" and warned against "more bureaucratic amalgamation without any consistent philosophy". This brief comment gave others courage. M. Brearley, a retired principal of one of the 'new' colleges, said: "The Machiavellian system of the Department of Education and Science for picking off colleges one by one. The smoke-screen of 'consolidation'...The absence of philosophy to attack and the expensive tree-hopping of the hands of bureaucrats "and the indifference of the general public and parliament arising from the incidence of disasters...""

Mr. S. J. Morris of the National Union of Teachers draw attention to the lack of serious fight by staffs of colleges.

Cyril Bibby, principal of Hull College of Education, referred to American experience:

In the United States, where the teachers' colleges were completely merged with large multi-purpose institutions, the results have already proved to be satisfactory that some smaller universities are now struggling to re-establish what they so unwisely destroyed. The problems of a single college of education are numerically less independent. The smaller teachers' colleges were often of a simpler structure; the problem of a single college of education is a more independent role. From 1955 to 1962 the college provided the post-graduate Diploma in Education training course on behalf of the university. In 1962 the posts of the principal of the college and director of the teacher education became separated and the Department of Education and Science took over the management of the college; the college lost its autonomy and it was an independent body.

In Australia, by contrast with England, teachers colleges had to undergo a transfiguration somewhat earlier. The Martin Committee, after prolonged gestation, had produced a new academic policy—college training was de-emphasised and 1969 onwards these entered into teacher training, as part of their multi-purpose character. From the early 1970's, too, some teachers colleges, encouraged by the prospect of Commonwealth funding, developed into multi-purpose C.A.E.'s. Thus in Australia pressure for amalgamation or rationalisation involves rather different institutions. Another difference with England is that technical colleges are not involved in merger proposals, though some C.A.E.'s do sustain technical-style courses.

Mergers in Australia

In Australia the development of some teachers' colleges into multi-purpose institutions, particularly in New South Wales, started the universities in 1971 to propose mergers in order to forestall possible competitors. This early effort proved unsuccessful. Then, in 1975, courses from the higher education colleges were arranged in 1974 and after as a means of "rationalisation"—economic rationalisation was what was primarily sought. The great majority of redundant colleges were merged with polytechnics, not universities. Polytechnics were controlled by local authorities; universities were independent.

For some months the reorganisation raised not the slightest protest. Then, in an article in June 1974, John Voisey remarked, in passing, that "teacher-training colleges are being turned into general colleges without any specific aims" and warned against "more bureaucratic amalgamation without any consistent philosophy". This brief comment gave others courage. M. Brearley, a retired principal of one of the 'new' colleges, said: "The Machiavellian system of the Department of Education and Science for picking off colleges one by one. The smoke-screen of 'consolidation'...The absence of philosophy to attack and the expensive tree-hopping of the hands of bureaucrats "and the indifference of the general public and parliament arising from the incidence of disasters..."

Mr. S. J. Morris of the National Union of Teachers draw attention to the lack of serious fight by staffs of colleges.

Cyril Bibby, principal of Hull College of Education, referred to American experience:

In the United States, where the teachers' colleges were completely merged with large multi-purpose institutions, the results have already proved to be satisfactory that some smaller universities are now struggling to re-establish what they so unwisely destroyed. The problems of a single college of education are numerically less independent. The smaller teachers' colleges were often of a simpler structure; the problem of a single college of education is a more independent role. From 1955 to 1962 the college provided the post-graduate Diploma in Education training course on behalf of the university. In 1962 the posts of the principal of the college and professor of education became separated and the Depart-
I would argue:

1. That granting all future teachers a degree would not necessarily raise the prestige of the profession nor necessarily the quality of teachers.

2. If a bachelor's degree in Education is to mean anything it must be of a fairly high standard. Quite a number of training institutions could not tolerate a further two years and a degree. We must therefore limit the number of institutions that could claim to train teachers.

3. Many primary and infant teacher trainees do not want a degree. In the 1960's and 1970's many teachers' colleges and training institutions in the infant sections had academic records which would have admitted them to universities, but they preferred teachers' colleges. These students had a commitment to teaching, they wanted to become infant teachers as quickly as possible. Many primary and infant trainees, I believe, would prefer a two year course to a three year one and a three year one to a four year one.

4. Already the formal educational system has been inordinately protracted. It is bad enough for the child to start at a pre-school aged 3 1/2 years and then stay on till he reaches a minimum leaving age of 15 years. A further two years of secondary school, plus four years of tertiary education is too much. Enough is enough! For many people the business of life is postponed until the mid-20's. But for all this protraction of formal education, the quality of the end product is not noticeably improved.

5. I believe the supply of able teacher trainers is limited, and that in recent decades we reached and exceeded the optimum. Instead of increasing still further the number of lecturers engaged in training teachers we should seek rather to reduce this number and permit some of the experts to make their contribution directly in the schools rather than indirectly through their disciples.

6. There is a limit to the benefit which previous training can give to intending teachers. Teaching is a practical matter, in many respects best learnt on the job. We should not delay entry into the classroom for too long.

7. If introduction of a four year degree course is desired the best approach would be to let the students take a two year college or university course; then teach for two years; and then let those so wishing return to college or university for a further two years to complete a degree.

8. One of the best methods of improving the quality of teachers is by in-service training courses, preferably residential, preferably for teachers between their 5th and 10th years of service (young enough to be enthusiastic, old enough to be committed) and preferably given by successful teachers, with recent experience in teaching the methods they recommend.

Conclusion

I believe that Australian universities should retain some role in the training of future teachers, if only because lecturers in Education need some contact with schools and school teaching. But this should be a reduced role. During practice teaching the maximum number of lessons most lecturers in a secondary method course can supervise adequately each week is about ten. This suggests a maximum enrolment of ten in each major method course, or an enrolment in the Diploma of Education course of about 70 students. If trainees took two method courses total enrolments could fall to 50. An enrolment of this size would reduce the cost of practice teaching, no insignificant matter. I would permit closer contact between lecturer and student — and in teacher training a master-apprentice relationship is valuable.

If the universities are serious about teacher training they will increase the amount of time students spend on practice teaching; they will increase the number of method courses taken to at least two; and they will ensure that lecturers engaged in the teacher training programme have themselves had experience as teachers in Australian schools.

I do not deny that some colleges of advanced education face problems in teacher training similar to those in the universities — unnecessary academicization of courses, the danger of estrangement between college lecturers and classroom teachers, increasing diversity in the interests of lecturers as colleges become multi-purpose; impersonality in institutions which have become too large. Like the universities, the colleges of advanced education will have to solve these problems if teacher training is to regain its quality.

Current discussion about teacher training very easily loses sight of the central issue — the quality of the teachers being produced. Governments are concerned with economising in teacher training; lecturers are concerned with preserving their jobs, or improving their conditions; university administrators are concerned with maximising enrolments and hence maximising the Commonwealth Government's grant. Too often the educational issue is lost sight of. In my view, teacher training is best conducted in small, specialized, autonomous institutions working in close harmony with the schools. In such institutions practical, concurrent teacher training courses (i.e. where students take academic subjects, professional studies and practical work simultaneously) are more likely to work successfully.

References

5. Canberra Times, 16-3-73.
7. M. Brearley, Times Educational Supplement, 17-7-74.
9. C. Bibby, Times Educational Supplement, 12-7-74.
11. For the Wagga case cf. Barcan, "Exciting Times for C.A.E.'s", op. cit. Excision of the intricate manoeuvres of Wagga, Armidale, Wollongong and elsewhere is a difficult task for outsiders; while those directly involved are sometimes either loath to speak or else liable to present over-coloured versions.
14. ibid p. 51.