Preparing BTchLn (Primary) Graduating-Year Students

for the Beginning-Teacher Employment Process: A Case Study

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Abstract

This study explores one aspect of the professional preparation of students graduating from teacher education institutions. A case study of one of the University of Canterbury College of Education's initial teacher education programmes (the BTchLn (Primary) qualification) is the focus for this study. The purpose of the study is to illustrate what school employers from the Canterbury region, and BTchLn (Primary) graduates and teacher educators from the University of Canterbury, consider as important practices when preparing graduating-year students for the beginning-teacher employment process. This study addresses the lack of systematic research into the employment of beginning teachers within a New Zealand setting.

The study employs a case study approach and involves two stages of data gathering. Quantitative data is collected in Stage One to identify potential participants for the case study. More substantive qualitative data are collected in Stage Two through semi-structured interviews conducted with samples of school principals, graduates and initial teacher education lecturers from the Canterbury region.

The findings suggest that the decentralised system of employment in operation in New Zealand has made the employment process complex for teachers entering the profession because schools have developed their own individual practices and preferences in the employment-related area and advertise their beginning-teacher positions while students are still completing their programme of study. The findings also suggest that lecturers at the University of Canterbury perform an important and valued function when they prepare their graduating-year students for employment, although there are both strengths and weaknesses in their current employment-related programme and practices. This case study will inform course and qualification reviews planned at the University of Canterbury, and will be of interest to other teacher education organisations in New Zealand that prepare their graduating-year students for employment.

Chapter 1 Introduction

General Introduction

Applying for a teaching position in New Zealand as a beginning teacher is a complex process. Because the majority of beginning-teacher positions are advertised when students are still completing their initial teacher education qualifications, many teacher education organisations consider it desirable to prepare their graduating-year students in some way for the employment process. Teacher educators, employers and graduates each have a notable yet different interest ensuring the development of sound employment-related practices within an initial teacher education qualification. Teacher educators want to prepare their graduating students well for the employment process, so their graduates secure teaching positions in an increasingly competitive market. Employers want to identify, interview and then employ the most suitable beginning teachers for their schools. Graduating students want to know how to represent themselves best during the employment process, in order to secure a teaching position. The purpose of the study described in this thesis was to identify what participants from these three groups considered important practices when preparing graduating-year students for the beginning-teacher employment process.

Rationale for the Study

This thesis topic has close alignment with my work as a lecturer of Professional Studies and Professional Practice at the University of Canterbury College of Education. We currently prepare our Bachelor of Teaching and Learning (BTchLn) Primary graduating-year students for the beginning-teacher employment process in two distinct ways:

- by including employment-related content in the compulsory Professional Studies (EDPS) courses undertaken by students in their final year of study; and
- by providing students, prior to graduation, with an exit profile that describes their achievement in the Professional Practice (EDPS) courses.

I have developed both interest and expertise in the employment-related area over the sixteen-year period I have been involved in the design and delivery of these two professionally focussed courses. In light of the merger of the Christchurch College of Education with the University of Canterbury in 2007, and the 2008 review of the BTchLn initial teacher education qualification, lecturers who taught in the primary Professional Studies and Practice areas at the College of Education were asked to conduct a review of these courses. Any changes made to the employment-related content and preparation practices in these courses could potentially affect both our graduates and the employers of our graduates in negative ways. Therefore, it was essential that we determined what constituted 'important practices' in the preparation of graduating students for the employment process before we made any major changes. To do this, I contended we must consider the perspectives of the three groups of people: employers, teacher educators involved in the development and delivery of the employment-related course content and the graduates themselves. Because the employment-related feedback gleaned from graduates and principals to date had been primarily anecdotal, I decided to make 'preparation for the employment process' the focus of my thesis. It is my intention that the findings described in this thesis will contribute to the reviews underway at the University of Canterbury. They may also assist other teacher education providers who prepare their graduating-year students for the beginning-teacher employment process. Importantly, this study also contributes to the limited pool of literature in the teacher employment domain that is specific to the New Zealand educational context.

Research Questions

The main research question under investigation in this study is 'What do school employers, BTchLn (Primary) graduates and teacher educators from the University of Canterbury College of Education, perceive to be important practices when preparing graduating-year students for the beginning-teacher employment process?'

In order to answer the main research question, this study addresses the following sub-questions:

Preparation of Graduating-Year Students for the Beginning-Teacher Employment Process

- To what extent is the preparation of BTchLn (Primary) graduating-year students for the employment process one of the roles and responsibilities of the University of Canterbury?

- What do BTchLn (Primary) teacher educators from the University of Canterbury College of Education perceive to be the essential components of an employment preparation programme for students in their graduating year?

- To what extent do BTchLn (Primary) graduates from the University of Canterbury College of Education believe they were well prepared for the beginning-teacher employment process? What advice would they provide to graduating-year students and teacher educators, to help them enhance their employment-related practices?

- What do primary school principals (as employers) in the University of Canterbury's region think about the preparedness of graduates for the employment process? What advice would they provide to students, graduates and teacher educators, to help them enhance their employment-related practices?

The Exit Profiles Produced at the University of Canterbury

- What do the participants consider the purpose and usefulness of the exit profiles provided to BTchLn (Primary) graduates by the University of Canterbury?

- Is there a justification for continuing this practice?

Definition of Key Terms

Teacher Education Organisation

An accredited provider of an initial teacher education qualification. Currently in New Zealand, these are either University-based, Wananga-based or offered by private providers.

Initial Teacher Education (ITE) qualification

The pre-service teaching qualification (which may be an undergraduate degree, graduate diploma or undergraduate diploma) provided by an accredited teacher education provider.

Employer

In the primary school sector, the employer is the school Board of Trustees, which includes the principal of the school. In this research, principals were invited to participate on behalf of their Board of Trustees.

Employment process

The processes and procedures an applicant and a school's Board of Trustees follow when seeking employment/ employing a teacher. For the graduate this generally involves; the collection of a job package, the preparation and submission of a curriculum vitae, covering letter and job application, and, if shortlisted, an interview. For the employer this generally involves the advertising of a teaching position, the preparation of a job package, the short-listing of applicants, an interview and the selection of the successful applicant.

Exit documentation

The range of written documentation provided to graduates by their teacher education provider when they have completed their qualification. These may include one or several of the following depending on the provider:

- the degree/ qualification;
- an academic transcript;

- a list of key competencies covered throughout the course;
- a written reference or a written report; and/or
- an exit profile.

Overview of Chapters

The following section includes a brief outline of the contents of each chapter of this thesis.

Chapter 1 Introduction

A rationale for conducting this investigation is presented in this chapter and the significance of the study discussed. The specific research question and sub-questions are stated, the key terms identified and the contents of the thesis chapters outlined.

Chapter 2 Context for the Study

The current employment-related practices within New Zealand primary schools and the BTchLn (Primary) qualification at the University of Canterbury College of Education are described in this chapter.

Chapter 3 Literature Review

A review of relevant literature is presented in this chapter, positioning beginning-teacher employment within a national and international context and providing a foundation for the research described in this thesis.

Chapter 4 Methodology

The methodological approach adopted for the study is outlined in this chapter. The two stages of the study are then described, including the participant selection process, the data gathering methods and procedures, and the processes used when conducting the data analysis. The Stage One results are presented and the Stage Two participants introduced. The chapter concludes with statements addressing ethical issues.

Chapter 5 Results

The results from Stage Two of this study are presented in this chapter. The findings related to the preparation of graduates for the employment process are presented in the first section of the chapter and the findings related to the student exit profiles presented in the second section of the chapter.

Chapter 6 Discussion

A discussion of the themes, ideas and issues highlighted in Chapter Five is included in this chapter. There is consideration of the ways in which the findings may suggest answers to the questions posed in this study and the implications of the findings. The limitations of the study are outlined in the concluding section of this chapter.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

The final chapter of this thesis outlines the significance of the case study and the importance of the findings. The chapter concludes with suggestions for further related investigations in the area of preparation for employment.

Chapter 2 Context for the Study

Introduction

This chapter situates this case study of employment-related practices both within the context of New Zealand beginning teacher employment and the BTchLn (Primary) initial teacher education qualification at the University of Canterbury. In addition, it provides a rationale for this study. When describing the context and issues underpinning a case study, a researcher endeavours to enhance the reader's understanding of that particular case. Stake (1995), a leading academic in the area of case study research, proposed that within an instrumental case study, the issue under investigation could be more dominant than the case itself. However, he also asserted, "issues are not simple and clean, but intricately wired to political, social, historical and personal contexts" (p.17).

Five topics are introduced in this chapter. The chapter begins with an overview of the employment-related practices experienced by beginning teachers applying for teaching positions in the primary/ intermediate school sector in New Zealand. The Professional Studies component within the BTchLn (Primary) qualification offered at the University of Canterbury is then described. This follows with:

- a description of the employment-related content currently included within the final year Professional Studies courses in the degree; and
- an outline of the exit profiles produced for graduating students by Professional Practice lecturers.

The chapter concludes with an overview of issues within the BTchLn (Primary) qualification that have necessitated a review of the current employment-related content.

The Employment Practices Experienced by Primary/Intermediate School Beginning Teachers in New Zealand

As I have been unable to find any New Zealand literature outlining this process, I have drawn upon my own, and my previous students' experiences in this area to develop this

section of the chapter. This background information is important because it will enable the reader to be aware of the complex process graduates need to understand, and prepare for while they are studying, when entering the employment market.

Upon successful completion of their initial teacher education programme, teacher education providers will confer a graduate's qualification. In conferring this qualification, providers are attesting to the New Zealand Teachers' Council (NZTC) that " …the beginning teacher meets the requirements under the Education Act (1989) that registered teachers must be satisfactorily trained to teach, be of good character, and fit to teach" (Ministry of Education, 2006, p.35). This qualification enables the graduate to apply for provisional registration with the Teachers' Council. Once provisionally registered, graduates can then attempt to secure a teaching position in a school.

The majority of teaching positions in New Zealand are advertised in the Education Gazette, an official magazine published under the authority of the New Zealand Ministry of Education. This bi-monthly publication is issued free of charge to schools and learning institutions, and is the official medium used by the Ministry to communicate with members of the education sector. The publication includes educational articles, general education notices, education related advertisements and teaching/ teaching–related job vacancies. Educators are able to access an electronic version of this publication at www.edgazette.govt.nz. If they choose to subscribe to the publication online, educators will receive email updates when new vacancies are submitted to be included in the next publication. Although teaching positions are advertised throughout the year, most positions suitable for beginning teachers are advertised between August and December. A review I conducted of beginning teacher advertisements in the Education Gazette 2006-2008, revealed that positions are increasingly being advertised earlier in this period, with the peak occurring in October. Because students are completing their initial teacher education qualification at this time, they are applying for beginning-teacher positions whilst still studying.

Beginning teachers in the primary/ intermediate/ area sector are eligible to apply for Scale A teaching positions in schools. These positions could be advertised as permanent, fixed

term or relieving, and can be full-time or part-time. The advertisements in the Education Gazette are limited to 55 words and so there is little room to describe the job position and person specification in any depth. Here is an example from the January 2009 Education Gazette:

> U6, decile 10, well-resourced contributing school. **Scale A fixed-term position** in **Y3** from term 2 to the end of the year. We are looking for a collaborative, energetic, innovative classroom facilitator with up-to-date curriculum knowledge and excellent interpersonal skills. This position is not suitable for beginning teachers. Applications close 4pm, Monday 9 March. Applications including a CV with details of qualifications, NZ registration, two referees, experience and suitability for the position should be sent to the Principal.

It can be a difficult task for graduates to identify if an advertised teaching position is suitable for them before submitting an application. Although there may be many Scale A positions advertised, not all will be suitable. In some cases, advertisers will clearly indicate that a position is suitable for teachers just entering the profession: 'beginning teachers welcome to apply' or 'suitable for beginning teachers'. Conversely, an advertisement could include strong or subtle indicators that the position is not suitable for a beginning teacher:

'Not suitable for a beginning teacher'

'Experienced or fully registered teachers welcome to apply'

'Experienced classroom teacher required'

'Includes 2 MU (management units)'

'Incumbent applying'

To add further complexity to the process, the advertisements often include a range of abbreviations that can confuse graduates. For example, there may be references made to RTLB (resource teacher of learning and behaviour) positions, SDA (special duties allowances), SIA (staffing incentive allowance) and tagged positions (in special character schools). Graduates need to review the above carefully when compiling a list of potential schools.

The next step of the employment process involves the graduate completing some form of application. The majority of schools invited prospective applicants to either:

   a) contact the school for an application pack/ form or

   b) submit a curriculum vitae with a covering letter/ letter of application and the contact details for two or three referees.

A review of application packs sent to previous students revealed that the following items might be included in the package:

   • a person specification outlining the skills and qualities the school requires in the successful applicant;

   • a job description detailing the specific aspects of the position including teaching, administration and contribution to the school/ community;

   • the school charter and/or recent Education Review Office reports;

   • information about the school (developed for prospective parents);

   • a timeline for the application/ interview process;

   • an application form/ with an accompanying form allowing the school to access any information about the applicant from any sources mentioned in the curriculum vitae; and

   • a police clearance form.

Increasingly schools are posting information about their teaching positions on their school website, as this minimises the cost of furnishing packs to applicants. In addition, each position advertised online in the Education Gazette includes a link to the Te Kete Ipurangi (www.tki.org.nz) school information database. This enables the prospective applicant to glean some useful information about the school before applying if no pack is available.

After the closing date for an advertised position, the school employment panel reviews the applications and draws up a shortlist of preferred applicants. They then contact these people and invite them to attend an interview. Although these interviews are most often conducted face to face, they are occasionally conducted via telephone, particularly if the applicant is living in a different city or the school is situated in a remote area. Once all of

the interviews have been conducted, the interview panel makes a decision and the successful applicant is offered the position. If this offer is accepted, the school then contacts the other short-listed applicants and lets them know that they have been unsuccessful. If the offer is not accepted, they will offer the position to the next preferred candidate who has been short-listed. Most schools contact all of the applicants for the position once a candidate has accepted their offer of employment, although this contact may be many weeks after the closing date for the position.

The BTchLn (Primary) Qualification at the University of Canterbury College of Education

Descriptive details of the BTchLn qualification are included in this section to indicate the structure of the degree and in particular, the category of course type in which my interest in employment-related content resides. The Bachelor of Teaching and Learning degree, known as the BTchLn (Primary), is a three-year full-time initial teacher education qualification offered at the University of Canterbury that prepares graduates for a teaching career in primary, intermediate, middle and area schools. Students can complete the qualification at campuses in Christchurch, Nelson and Rotorua. The Flexible Learning Option (FLO) also enables students to complete the qualification via distance education. The degree requires a total of 360 points and consists of the following compulsory components:

- **Curriculum Studies:** Curriculum studies include compulsory courses in all curriculum subjects that primary teachers are expected to teach.
- **Professional Practice:** This is time spent working in a classroom with an associate teacher (i.e. the teacher who hosts and mentors the student in their classroom during a school placement). There is one school placement (four weeks) in year one, and two placements (2 x five weeks each year) in year two and year three. Part-time students complete one placement each year.
- **Professional Education and Professional Studies:** The Professional Education courses address areas such as child development, teaching and learning, assessment, the New Zealand education system, socio-political and cultural contexts and communication skills. The Professional Studies courses introduce

students to the professional knowledge required of teachers in New Zealand primary, intermediate, middle and area schools.

- **Optional 300 level courses:** The optional courses enable students to specialise in areas of particular interest and strength.

Figure 2.1 presents an overview of the degree, and indicates the relative weightings of the different components of the degree as described in the previous section.
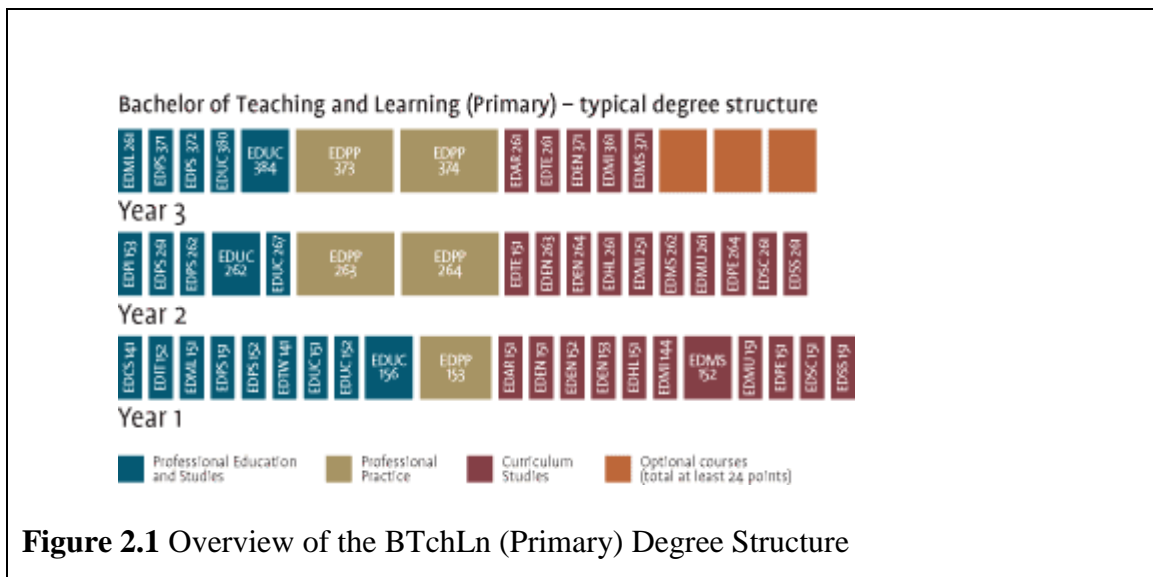
Figure 2.1 Overview of the BTchLn (Primary) Degree Structure

The Professional Studies (EDPS) aspect is a core component of the BTchLn (Primary) degree and consists of a series of six compulsory courses. Students can complete only one EDPS course each semester and must pass the pre-requisite EDPS course before completing the next course in the sequence. In addition, the EDPS courses are both pre-requisites and co-requisites for the associated Professional Practice (EDPP) courses in each year. The EDPS courses have a total allocation of 31 points within the degree, representing 8.6% of the total 360 points. The EDPS and EDPP courses combined represent a considerable proportion of the BTchLn (Primary) degree: 122 of the total 360 points or 34% of the degree.

The employment-related practices that are central to this study sit within the Professional Studies courses. The focus of the EDPS courses is to establish links and connections between professional practice experiences, pedagogy, learning theory and the knowledge and skills students gain in Curriculum Studies and Professional

Education courses. A further focus is to ensure students have the professional knowledge required to become effective teachers in New Zealand primary, intermediate, middle and area schools. One aspect of this professional knowledge is ensuring students understand the employment process so they can secure a teaching position in a school. Therefore, employment-related content is included within the final year Professional Studies courses. The following section includes a description of this content and the employment-related practices central to this study.

The Employment-Related Content in the BTchLn (Primary) Professional Studies Courses

Employment-related content is included in the two final-year Professional Studies courses – EDPS371 and EDPS372. Students currently complete these semester long courses in groups of around 25-30, under the guidance of two Professional Studies lecturers. Each six-credit course has three hours x 10 weeks of classes each semester. In addition, the semester one course has a two-week intensive at the start of the year (to prepare for the first school placement), and the semester two course includes a one-day conference at the conclusion of the year, This is referred to as "Moving On: Induction to the Profession". Employment-related content currently accounts for approximately 25% of the semester one course and 40% of the semester two course (not including the conference). Although distance and regional BTchLn (Primary) students cover the same content as on-campus students in Christchurch, their content is delivered differently. An in-depth description of these programmes is beyond the scope of this report.

Table 2.1 on page fourteen includes an overview of the employment-related content included in each of the on-campus final year EDPS courses. As noted in this table, the EDPS371 course content focuses on the development of an emergent teaching philosophy and curriculum vitae. Beginning teachers are invited as guest presenters in the course to share their experiences of applying for jobs. The EDPS372 course content focuses on the job application process.

Table 2.1 Employment-related course content and practices within the BTchLn (Primary) graduating-year Professional Studies courses at the University of Canterbury College of Education

	Relevant graduating-year Professional Studies content BTchLn (Primary) qualification: standard groups	Graduating-year school placements BTchLn (Primary) qualification: standard groups	Documentation available for graduating students	Beginning teacher positions (Primary)
February	+ Developing a curriculum vitae: content/ design and presentation (begin initial development) + Developing an emergent teaching philosophy (summary added to curriculum vitae at a later date) + Staff begin drafting graduating students' exit profiles	Graduating students complete a Five week school placement (Feb/March) Associate teacher asked by graduating student to act as a referee or provide a written reference	Interim academic transcript: available at any time (online)	
April	+ Presentations by beginning teachers: Applying for jobs + Semester 1 portfolio presented			
August	+ Applying for a teaching position: understanding job advertisements, job packages (person specifications/ job descriptions), covering letters + Semester 2 portfolio developed + PP lecturer begins to compile the final profile	Graduating students complete their final five week school placement (July/August) Associate teacher asked by graduating student to act as a referee or provide a written reference		
September	+ Principals day: visits by primary/int principals - panel discussions and individual/group interviews with students if positions possibly available + Mock Interviews (in student groups) + Teachers' Council representative presentation: provisional registration + Presentations by beginning teachers: The first-year experience Draft profiles shared with graduating students			The first of the positions suitable for graduates for the following school year are advertised from this point Graduating students apply for teaching positions
October	+ Profiles are moderated: within group (by a professional studies staff member) and then across group (by an external moderator)			Graduating students apply for teaching positions
November	+ 'Moving on' Conference - full day conference for graduates involving key note addresses/ workshops and trade displays		Final profiles provided to graduating students	Graduating students apply for teaching positions
December January+			Hard copy of academic transcript available to graduating students	Graduating students apply for teaching positions

Employment related content is also included as a main thread within two events organised within the EDPS372 programme - 'Principals Day' and the 'Moving On' student conference. 'Principals Day' involves principals from primary, intermediate and area schools in the greater Canterbury area coming to the University to meet with final year students. Principals take part in panel discussions during which they share their thoughts, suggestions and processes about employment in their individual schools. Those principals with positions available in the following year also hold group or individual interviews with interested students. Attendance by principals on this day is usually high, particularly if there are a corresponding high number of vacancies in schools.

Employment-related workshops, guest speakers and trade displays are included within a one-day 'Moving On' conference organised for graduating students. This conference has historically been conduced on the last official day of the course. The conference aims to provide students with both a learning experience (i.e. the experience of attending and presenting at an educational conference) and an opportunity to celebrate their graduation.

As well as addressing employment-related content in the BTchLn (Primary) EDPS final year courses, employment matters are also currently a component of the final year Professional Practice courses in the development of student exit profiles. The next section of this chapter includes a description of the exit profile, another of the employment-related practices central to this study.

The Student Exit Profile

The exit profile is a written report provided to a student just prior to graduation, enabling the student to use it as evidence when applying for beginning teacher positions in schools. An example of an exit profile is included in Appendix One. The one-page exit profile includes statements (of up to six lines under each heading) related to the achievement of the student during their school placements in the following areas:
- personal professional qualities;
- relationships and communication;

- professional knowledge;
- planning, teaching and assessment skills; and
- classroom organisation and management.

The lecturer who observes the student during their final two school placements produces the exit profile. This staff member is usually one of the two Professional Studies lecturers the student has been working with over the year.

The lecturers who create the exit profiles adhere to a set of guidelines when writing them. This is to ensure there is some consistency between the content of the profiles between lecturers. With a limit of one page per profile, it is not possible to comment on all of the content included in the guidelines, therefore each lecturer has to decide what content they will include (or not include) for each student. When developing the first draft of an exit profile, lecturers review the following information:

- the notes they recorded when they observed the student during the two school placements;
- the reports completed by the student's associate teachers over the three-year period (with more emphasis placed upon reports completed in the final year); and
- any other relevant placement information included within a student's file.

Lecturers discuss the profile with the individual student when it is in draft form. At this time, the student has the opportunity to comment on the statements that the lecturer has included within the draft and identify any key omissions. The lecturer can subsequently revise the contents after the review if they choose to. The draft profiles then go through a moderation procedure.

The moderation procedure is undertaken by the University to ensure there is some consistency in the quality of the profiles across lecturers. This involves a review of every profile by firstly an internal and then an external moderator. The internal moderator is usually the other Professional Studies lecturer who has worked with the EDPS group the student is in that particular year. They review the profiles of their EDPS partner and appraise the content and writing. The writer might modify the profile

after receiving feedback, and then send the profile to the external moderator, (an academic staff member who does not work with any of the professional studies groups). The external moderator reviews the full set of profiles from each writer. The moderator annotates each profile with suggestions to improve the writing and then puts the profiles into a rank order for the group (i.e. strongest profile to the weakest profile). Finally, he/she indicates on a continuum where the set of profiles sits in relation to the sets of profiles from other lecturers. The moderator then sends the profiles back to the writer, who may make further adjustments prior to sending them to the desktop publisher. The whole moderation process takes approximately four weeks to complete. The student receives their exit profile from their Professional Studies lecturer just prior to graduation. At this time, those student seeking employment for the following year are applying for teaching positions. Some students have secured teaching positions by the time they receive their exit profile.

Key Issues for this Study

This section of the chapter includes an outline of issues that informed the development of this research under the following sub-headings: feedback from employers, graduates and staff informing practice, and factors influencing the BTchLn (Primary) qualification. Consideration of these issues is timely given the need to retain the credibility of our programme with employing schools, and to ensure student teachers' satisfaction with their preparedness to enter the profession.

Feedback from employers, graduates and staff informing practice

Prior to undertaking this study, feedback gleaned in the employment-related area of the BTchLn (Primary) qualification had been primarily anecdotal. Although some principals, graduates and lecturers have informally shared positive comments about our practices in this area over some years, others have expressed some concerns. This study has provided an opportunity to collect and analyse data in a more systematic and rigorous way.

The school principal is the key person in the employment process of beginning teachers. Consequently, it is useful to seek feedback and advice from principals to inform the

employment-related content. For a number of years, lecturers who have worked with final-year students in schools have mentioned that principals have expressed varying opinions regarding the quality of the curriculum vitae and job applications submitted by our graduates. Likewise, principals have varied in their opinions regarding the value of the student exit profile. While some principals have indicated the profiles are worthwhile, others have described them as 'bland', 'written in code to disguise weaknesses', and dependent on the credibility of the writer. They have also reported that many graduates have not included their profile in job applications. Therefore, if the students have opted not to include their profiles in job application documentation, the question needs to be raised about why this is the case. At another level, questions could be asked about the time end effort required to produce profiles if principals do not value this documentation. Indeed, if these profiles and job applications from our students have not met the needs of the intended audience, it would indicate that it is time to review what we currently do within the Professional Studies and Professional Practice courses.

It is equally important that we consider feedback from students as 'consumers' of the employment-related content in the courses. There is an opportunity to gain constructive feedback through course surveys completed by students at the conclusion of Professional Studies and Practice courses. Unfortunately, the return rate and depth of comments included in such surveys have historically been low. It would appear that the last thing students want to do on the last day of a three-year study programme is fill out an evaluation form. The current adoption of the university-wide course evaluation system will address the issue of timing but might not address the issue of high quality feedback. In comparison, Professional Studies lecturers had reported over the years that they have received useful feedback from graduates when they have returned to speak with students and attend beginning-teacher courses. This could suggest that students need time to implement the employment-related learning in a real life context, and reflect on their experiences, before they can be in a position to provide relevant feedback. Gaining up-to-date, constructive feedback from graduates is, therefore, vital to ensure that the course content does prepare graduating-year students effectively for the employment process.

In addition, some lecturers delivering the employment-related content have started to question the amount of course time dedicated to the employment process, as arguably employment is situated 'outside' of the initial teacher education qualification. There appears to be an uncertainty of the roles and responsibilities of the University in relation to employment. Furthermore, there is an awareness that some students do not intend to teach, yet the employment-related course content is compulsory for all students. Finally, some lecturers question the value of the exit profile. It takes many hours to produce each profile. In light of the reduction in allocated hours for teaching the course, and conflicting anecdotal feedback from principals, there is some uncertainty that the product remains worthy of the time invested.

Factors influencing the existing BTchLn (Primary) qualification

Finally, three further factors have emerged since beginning the study that could potentially influence the content in the Professional Studies and Practice areas. These further support the timeliness and usefulness of this research:

- the introduction of the Graduating Teacher Standards in 2008;

- the need to reduce contact hours in all courses in the BTchLn (Primary) qualification in 2009; and

- the move to make all courses 15 credits by 2010.

Chapter 3 Literature Review

Introduction

A review of selected literature in the area of beginning teacher employment is presented in this chapter. Three purposes are met, namely to:

- position the processes involved in the employment of beginning teachers in both a national and international context;
- develop a foundation for the issues I have chosen to investigate in my research; and
- identify how my research would specifically contribute to New Zealand research in the area of beginning-teacher employment.

As Merriam (1988) suggested, "the value of any single study is derived as much from how it fits with and expands on any previous work as from the study's intrinsic properties" (p.61).

Many writers propose that research into the ways teachers are employed is of importance (Rutledge, Harris, Thompson & Ingle, 2008; Liu & Johnson, 2006; Liu, 2003, Strauss, 1999). Although there is some research in the overall area of beginning-teacher employment, there has been little research conducted in New Zealand in the way that schools employ teachers. Therefore, this literature review also includes relevant findings/ information gleaned from position papers, Ministry of Education documents, websites and educational magazines. The first section of this chapter presents findings from literature related to the employment of beginning teachers in a variety of countries. The second section presents findings from literature relating to who has the responsibility for employing beginning teachers in New Zealand. The third section explores literature relating to employment practices of primary schools in New Zealand.

The Employment of Beginning Teachers: An International Perspective

The employment of teachers is a complex process (Rutledge et al., 2008). Consideration of beginning-teacher employment literature from other countries shows variations in employment practices from country to country. Although variations exist, the literature reveals that the employment or hiring of teachers can be categorised into countries that have either a centralised, moderately centralised or decentralised teacher employment process (Liu & Johnson, 2006; Wang, Coleman, Coley & Phelps, 2003; Liu, 2003). In the 2003 Education Testing Service Policy Information Report "Preparing teachers Around the World" (Wang et al.), the authors presented a summary of findings from their review of the policies and teaching quality control mechanisms in seven countries deemed to be 'high-performing' in education. This exploratory report focused on the regulatory controls influencing the teaching workforce at key points:

- entry to/ exit from teacher education programmes (pre-service);
- certification, hiring and induction (beginning teachers); and
- professional development and advanced certification (experienced teachers).

Their report included an overview of the involvement of levels of government in the decision making when employing teachers in each country. Table 3.1 illustrates these different levels of involvement.

Table 3.1 Level of government at which teacher-hiring decisions are made (adapted from Wang et al., 2003, pp. 32)

	National Government	State Government	School District	Individual School
Korea			X	
Japan		X		
Singapore	X			
United States			X	X
Australia*		X		X
England				X
Netherlands				X
Hong Kong				X
New Zealand				X

* States hire for permanent positions

In countries that have a centralised system (e.g. Korea, Japan and Singapore), the employment decision-making rests with the School District Body, the state or the

national education body or Ministry. Administrators have the responsibility for assigning teachers to positions, and in accepting a job offer a teacher agrees to work for a district rather than an individual school. Liu & Johnson (2006, p.332) suggest that centralized employment processes "tend to use generic job descriptions and standardised interview protocols" and focus on an applicant's formal qualifications.

In the United States, both a moderately centralised and decentralised system exists. Teacher employment is conducted at both district and school level. In some states, districts screen the applicants first then schools select them (Liu & Johnson, 2006). One Mid-western state in America has adopted a common 4-step selection process (Bowman, 2005). This includes initial screening and interviews conducted by the school principal. However, the final hiring responsibility lies with the superintendent of the District Board of Education. In most Australian states, the Education Department is also involved in the employment of teachers to permanent positions through their involvement in appointment panels (Wang et al, 2003).

By comparison, England, The Netherlands, Hong Kong and New Zealand operate a decentralised system of teacher employment. In decentralized systems, the responsibility for the employment of teachers sits with individual schools. Each school has more power to ensure that the teacher they employ fits well into the school culture, and meets the requirements of the position and the school's particular needs (Liu & Johnson, 2006; Liu, 2005). They also have some control over the employment procedures that they follow. Interestingly, interviews appear to be a common and important component of the employment process for teachers in both centralised and decentralised systems (Harris, Rutledge, Ingle & Thompson, 2007; Liu & Johnson, 2006).

A further group of American studies has focused more specifically on the employment practices at a school level. Harris et al.'s (2007) investigation has attempted to define, then examine, the characteristics principals in Florida (a moderately decentralised employment system) prefer when employing teachers. Their study revealed that principals preferred teachers to have a mix of professional and personal qualities, have a good organisational match with the school, and differ from existing staff in the school in

terms of "experience, skills, gender and race" (Harris et al, 2007, p.2). Likewise, Liu and Johnson's (2006) study examined the employment practices in four states in America and explored whether these practices led to a good fit between the schools and the year one and two teachers they employed. Their findings suggested that as most of the teachers had limited opportunities to interact with staff during the employment process, there were reduced opportunities to see if they fitted well into the school culture. In addition, Liu (2003, 2005) has conducted a number of similar studies that explore the links between the employment of teachers and job satisfaction. These writers concluded that the lack of graduates' knowledge in the employment related area was problematic because "experience and research point to the importance of fit between individuals and the organisations in which they work" (Liu & Johnson, 2006, p.349). Other American researchers have identified gaps in the literature in this area. The gaps include investigations of the specific tools and procedures employers use in the decision-making process, and deeper investigation into the interview phase of the employment process (Rutledge at al., 2008).

The Responsibility for the Employment of Beginning Teachers in New Zealand

The locus of responsibility for employing beginning teachers in New Zealand has varied over the years. Prior to the educational reforms in 1989, the responsibility lay with the regional Education Boards working under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education. In 1963, each regional Education Board's Appointments Committee, working under the Educational Amendment Act of 1955, had the task of appointing 'newly certified teachers' to 'probationary assistant' positions in schools (Ewing, 1963). By 1984, beginning teachers continued to be appointed to teaching positions by Education Board's Appointments Committees, but now these were "certificating positions for a period of up to two years, with the entitlement of permanent appointment upon certification" (Battersby, 1989, p.1).

With the advent in 1988 of '*Tomorrow's Schools*' (New Zealand Department of Education), the document that defined the then Labour Government's reforms in

educational administration, the responsibility for employment in schools passed from the Education Boards to the newly established Boards of Trustees. The board, composed of five members elected by the parents of students, the school principal, a staff member elected by staff, and other co-opted members if required, became the legal employers of both the teaching and support staff within their school, and therefore responsible for all staffing matters. Within section 1.2.1 of this document, it states:

> *The board will act as the legal employer of staff: it will appoint the principal, approve appointments of basic-scale teaching staff on the recommendation of the principal and approve appointments for staff above the basic scale on the recommendation of a staffing committee.*
> New Zealand Department of Education (1988, p.17)

Although the board may delegate the responsibilities related to the selection and employment of beginning teachers to the principal, who in effect manages the school on its behalf, they are ultimately responsible for meeting the requirements of the Government Employment legislature. Currently these include the State Services Act 1989, the Heath and Safety in Employment Act 1992, the Privacy Act 1993, and the Employment Relations Act 2000 (New Zealand Teachers' Council & Ministry of Education, 2006; Ministry of Education, 2004).

There is some New Zealand literature that defines the roles and responsibilities of, and is intended to provide support to, Boards of Trustees and principals in relation to teacher employment (Yeoman, 2007; Robertson, 2000; Ministry of Education, 1990). Whether or not schools have found this material useful, or used it to inform their practices, is unknown. For example, the 1990 Ministry of Education document '*A Guide to Personnel Management*' contains some very clear, practical suggestions for Boards of Trustees and principals to follow when they develop their personnel policies. It also includes some suggested procedures for schools to follow when appointing teachers. That information suggests:

- the principal, as personnel manager, has the professional expertise to recommend appropriate appointments;
- the selection of applicants can be delegated to one person or a selection panel as the board deems appropriate;

- with the approval of the Board of Trustees, the principal will compile a job description, personal specification, criteria for appointment and job advertisement; and
- all teaching positions of at least one-year duration must be advertised nationally.

Likewise, the New Zealand Teachers' Council/ Ministry of Education '*Towards Full Registration: A support kit for schools*' (2006), briefly mentions some aspects related to beginning-teacher employment. For example, the requirement for a school to issue a letter of appointment, the need for a beginning teacher to negotiate a job description, and the requirement for the Board of Trustees to 'act as a good employer' are areas touched upon yet no guidelines either outlining or describing the beginning-teacher employment process are included.

In addition, the New Zealand School Trustees' Association (NZSTA) attempts to support and guide Boards of Trustees in the employment-related area. Established in 1989 as a 'not for profit' incorporated society, NZSTA is the sole recognised national organisation specifically representing the interests of Boards of Trustees. On their website (http://www.nzsta.org.nz/) they include a range of downloadable free forms schools can access in the employment area. These include generic application forms, police vetting forms, employment agreements and letters of appointment. Members can also access the NZSTA Trustees Handbook. The Human Resource (HR) section of the handbook has information about interview techniques. In addition, they produce a monthly magazine (STANews) that includes an HR section and occasional articles that relate to employment (Yeoman, 2007).

Beginning-Teacher Employment Practices in New Zealand

Although some research has been conducted in the area of beginning-teacher employment in New Zealand, there is little literature available that specifically relates to the area investigated in this study: the preparation for the employment process. One New Zealand study that has relevance for this investigation is that of Cameron & Grundnoff (1992). Their study built upon their earlier study of beginning-teacher

employment conducted in 1989 (the first year of the new employment system under the 'Tomorrow Schools' regime), in which they gathered the perspectives of principals and students who were experiencing the new employment system. In the 1992 study, they looked at the process from the point of view of the employers only. The results suggested that there was intense competition for beginning teacher positions that year and that graduates were forced to compete for Scale A positions with more experienced teachers. In relation to the selection process, they found that most schools formed selection panels when making appointments and that they interviewed, on average, three or four applicants. The principals involved suggested that applicants needed to personalise their curriculum vitae (CV) for each position, and ensure that they addressed the job descriptions carefully. Interestingly, they also suggested that, although the quality of CVs produced by graduates was impressive, these often included documentation that was not useful. Likewise, the feedback from principals in relation to the usefulness of student profiles was mixed. Although they suggested they found these worthwhile, they also commented that they were often bland and lacking in specific information that would be useful to an employer.

Jacqui Duncan (2007), a Christchurch primary school principal, has provided advice for beginning teachers preparing for the employment process in New Zealand that has specifically addressed the areas of CV development, covering letters and job interviews. Although she did not base her article on formal research, Duncan drew on her many years of experience as a primary school principal when formulating this advice. Duncan recommended that a CV should be handed to the principal directly if possible, be four to five pages in length, look attractive and that every aspect of a CV should specifically support the application. She also suggested that the CV include a succinct teaching statement, be personalised to the school and highlight the applicant's personality and computer skills. She strongly advised that all applicants review the school website before submitting an application. In relation to the interview, she advised that applicants dress in a professional manner, arrive on time and practise answering questions prior to the interview. She included some specific suggestions for answering a range of questions in an interview situation, and concluded with some advice about coping with

rejection, getting feedback from a school and the importance of achieving the 'right fit' between the applicant and a school. This supported the findings of the US studies.

Similarly, Broadley and Broadley (2004; 2003) examined the different approaches that primary and intermediate school principals in New Zealand used when selecting their beginning teachers. Their findings suggest that principals are likely to use 'general compatibility' as the main factor when employing a beginning teacher, and that an interview is a key tool for making decisions about the best applicant for the advertised position.

I was able to find only one source of material that specifically explored the role of the initial teacher education provider in relation to the actual employment process. The Education Review Office's 1999 report *'Pre-employment for School Teachers'* suggests that "…there is relatively little organised contact between employers of beginning teachers and the providers of pre-employment" (p.17). It also suggests that principals and trustees would value having increased opportunities to liaise with initial teacher education providers, in order to communicate their needs and expectations. The lack of any systematic research into beginning-teacher employment practices, particularly in relation to the New Zealand employment context, signals an urgent gap that this study endeavours to address.

Chapter 4 Methodology

Introduction

This chapter includes a discussion of the two stages of the study including the methods used for the participant selection, data gathering and data analysis. The findings from Stage One of the study are then discussed and the Stage Two participants introduced. Ethical issues are addressed in the final section of the chapter.

Research Design

The purpose of the study was to identify what a range of school employers, BTchLn (Primary) graduates and teacher educators from the University of Canterbury College of Education perceived to be important practices when preparing students in their graduating-year for the beginning-teacher employment process. I investigated the different views of these three participant groups with an expectation that their views would reflect their different employment-related experiences and the particular roles/ responsibilities they assumed in those experiences.

When deciding which research strategy most suited an investigation, Yin (1994) suggested it prudent to begin by considering the type of question that is central to the research. The nature of my research question made a case study approach appropriate and fitted well with Cohen, Manion and Morrison's (2000) description of the purposes of case study research, namely to:

- portray, analyse and interpret the uniqueness of real individuals and situations through accessible accounts;
- catch the complexity and 'situatedness' of behaviour;
- contribute to action and intervention; and
- present and re-present reality: to give a sense of 'being there'.

(Cohen et al., p.79)

Several different case study definitions exist in the literature, ranging from simple to complex. Anderson (1998, p.152) defined a case study as "[an] holistic research method

that uses multiple sources of evidence to analyse or evaluate a specific phenomenon or instance". Yin (1994) provided a more technical definition when he described a case study as being an empirical inquiry that "investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p.13). Stake (1995) contended that attempting to create a common definition of a case or case study was impossible, as so many competing definitions existed across disciplines. Instead, he identified three types of case studies:

- an intrinsic case study (whereby a study is undertaken in order to understand that particular case);
- an instrumental case study (which examines a particular case in order to gain an understanding of a larger question, issue or phenomenon); and
- a collective case study (where groups of individual, yet coordinated, case studies are conducted in order to gain a better understanding of something)

(Stake, 1995, p.3).

I chose an instrumental case study framework for this study because I considered the understandings developed through the investigation of this particular case could be instrumental in accomplishing something else (informing the (re)development of course content/ practices within the BTchLn programme). Yin (1994) contended that case studies could be based on any mix of qualitative and quantitative evidence. Thus, researchers may adopt a mixed-methods approach in order to "build on the synergy and strength that exists between qualitative and quantitative methods" (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2006, p.490).

The study had two stages and the data collected in each stage served a different purpose. The quantitive data collected in Stage One was used to identify potential participants for the case study, and to refine questions for the semi-structured interviews conducted with these participants in Stage Two of the study. Conversely, more substantive qualitative data collected in Stage Two was used to identify the participants' views on the preparation of graduates for the beginning-teacher employment process and the exit profiles produced by the University of Canterbury. A rationale and description of each of the two stages follows.

Stage One of the Study

The purpose of Stage One of the study was to:

- identify potential participants for the case study; and

- develop and refine the interview questions to be used in Stage Two of the study.

This involved surveying a broad sweep of the population of University of Canterbury BTchLn (Primary) graduates, lecturers involved in the delivery of employment-related content in this qualification, and primary, intermediate and area school principals in the Canterbury region.

Participant selection process

I conducted Stage One of this study between December 2007 and March 2008. In order to gain participants for Stage One of the study, I emailed the research information letter, consent form and a questionnaire to the following people:

- all 2005-2007 BTchLn (Primary) graduates who were members of the 'GradNet' online community (copies of the material was also housed on the community site and available for download);

- all primary, intermediate and area school principals who belonged to the Canterbury Principals Association mailing list (sent via the CPA listserv after gaining permission from the CPA executive team); and

- all lecturers who taught the 300 level BTchLn (Primary) Professional Studies and Professional Practice courses in 2007-2008.

The participants who chose to be involved in the study posted or emailed back the completed questionnaire and research consent. Copies of the information letter and consent form are included in Appendix Two.

Data gathering: Questionnaire

As noted above, the Stage One data-gathering instrument was a questionnaire. The questionnaire included two sections. The first section sought information on the attributes of the respondent (e.g. demographic/ employment/ institutional information).

The second section included a series of questions that sought to elicit the participants' general attitudes to the:

- quality of the current preparation process for graduates; and

- value and purpose of the exit profiles currently produced by the University.

Importantly, the respondents were asked to indicate on their questionnaire if they wished to participate in Stage Two of the study.

The questionnaire for each of the three participant groups was framed differently so that the questions they were asked reflected their different roles and experiences of the employment process. Copies of the three questionnaires are included in Appendices Three to Five. The participants indicated their answers by circling the appropriate category in the response box. The response categories included i) yes or no, ii) yes/ no/ undecided, and iii) 5 point Likert scales. There was no space provided on the questionnaire for qualitative responses because I intended to use the data collected at this stage for formative purposes only. The questionnaire was trialled when in its draft stage, and feedback gleaned on the clarity of the format and questions.

Data analysis and findings

The Stage One findings have been included in this section of the chapter because they provide background information that informed the design of the substantive data-gathering phase in Stage Two. This information was also used in the selection process for the Stage Two participants.

Twelve lecturers involved in the delivery of Professional Studies and Practice courses returned a questionnaire. Two lecturers were involved in distance delivery of the course, five delivered the course in a regional outpost and five delivered the course on campus. Twenty-seven graduates and forty-nine principals returned completed questionnaires. The following tables (Table 4.1 and Table 4.2) outline the graduation year and teaching status of the graduates who furnished returns and the type, location and staffing in the schools of the principals who furnished returns.

Table 4.1 Characteristics of the graduates who returned questionnaires

Year of graduation	N	Current teaching	N
2007	12	Full time	21
2006	15	Relieving/ part-time	6

N= number of returns

Fifteen of the graduates who furnished returns graduated from the University in 2006 and twelve graduated in 2007. Twenty-one of these were teaching full time in 2008 and six were either relieving or teaching in a part-time capacity.

Table 4.2 Characteristics of the principals who returned questionnaires

School Type	N	Location	N	Size (staff)	N
Contributing	20	Rural	9	<5 staff	6
Full primary	25	Semi-rural	9	5-10 staff	16
Intermediate	3	City	31	11-20 staff	15
Area	1			>20 staff	11

N= number of returns

Twenty-five questionnaires were returned from principals at full primary schools (i.e. schools that teach up to and including year 8 students), twenty from principals at contributing schools (i.e. schools that teach up to and including year 6 students) and three from principals at intermediate schools (i.e. schools that teach year 7 and 8 only). Only one questionnaire was returned from a principal at an area school (i.e. schools that teach students up to year 13). Thirty-one of these principals identified their school as being located in the city, nine in a semi-rural area and nine in a rural area. The sizes of the schools varied, with staffing numbers ranging between two and twenty-nine.

Responses to the questionnaires were collated in tables for each participant group, and then analysed to identify any issues that could lead to a re-focussing of the questions framed for the Stage Two interviews. Copies of the tables and analyses are included in Appendices Six to Eleven. The findings that informed the interview schedule are described in the following section.

Preparation for the employment process

Should employment-related content be included within pre-service courses?
The participants indicated on the questionnaire if they thought employment-related content should be included within the compulsory final year Professional Studies courses for graduating students. All of the graduates and eleven of the twelve lecturers

believed it should be included within these courses. Interestingly, although 35 of the 49 principals agreed, 14 were undecided about this. I decided to explore the reasons for this indecision in greater depth in Stage Two of the study.

How well prepared are graduates applying for beginning teacher positions?

Principals rated how well prepared they had found the majority of beginning teachers who applied for a position at their schools. Lecturers and graduates rated how well they believed the employment-related content in the final year Professional Studies courses helped prepare graduates for the beginning-teacher employment process. While 62% of the graduates and 82% of the staff surveyed appeared to be pleased with the quality of preparedness for the employment process, 54% of the principals appeared to be not quite as pleased. I decided to focus on this area in Stage Two of the study by asking the principals for any specific advice they would pass on to future graduates preparing for employment.

Exit profiles

Should we continue to develop exit profiles for graduates?

The principals were asked to indicate if it was useful to have an initial teacher education provider's comment on the quality of a graduate in some form of exit document. Although 84% of the principals surveyed indicated 'yes', 16% either indicated 'no' or were 'undecided'. Similarly, graduates and lecturers were asked to indicate if they believed it was the responsibility of a teacher education provider to comment on the quality of a graduate in some form of exit document. Surprisingly, all of the graduates surveyed believed it was, while only nine of the twelve lecturers agreed. These figures suggested that there is an expectation from students that they will receive an exit profile upon graduation, and that the majority of principals found them useful in the employment process. Yet a quarter of the lecturers surveyed questioned the need to provide an exit document. Again, I decided to explore this issue in more depth in Stage Two of the study.

Did you include your exit profile when you applied for a teaching position?

Graduates were asked to indicate if they did or did not include their exit profile within their application package when applying for a teaching position. Although nineteen of the graduates indicated they did, eight did not. This again seemed an interesting thread to explore further in Stage Two of the study.

Stage Two of the Study

I conducted Stage Two of this study between March 2008 and May 2008. The purpose of Stage Two, the substantive part of this study, was to glean the participants' views on the preparation of graduates for the beginning-teacher employment process and the exit profiles produced by the University of Canterbury. This involved the collection of qualitative data in interviews conducted with a selection of participants from the three groups involved in Stage One of the study.

A qualitative approach suited this stage of the study well because it enabled me to re-present the multiple realities and interpretations of the participants with whom I worked. Greene (1998, p.175) defined qualitative research as being "concerned with meanings as they appear to, or are achieved by, persons living in social situations" and that those investigating educational understandings are interested in "the interpretation of particular kinds of human action in an inter-subjective world". Qualitative approaches have an epistemological base that is humanistic, subjective and interpretative (Husen, 1999). These research methods recognise the importance of the subjective experiences of people and are concerned with 'matters of meaning' (Eisner, 1998). The researcher endeavours to understand the world from the viewpoint of their participants through an interpretation of their actions and words (Burns, 2000).

When adopting a case study approach, Bassey (1999) recommended that sufficient data needed to be collected to enable the researcher to:
- explore significant features of the case;
- create plausible interpretations of what is found;
- test for the trustworthiness of these interpretations;

- construct a worthwhile argument or story;

- relate the argument or story to any relevant research in the literature;

- convey convincingly to an audience this argument or story; and

- provide an audit trail by which other researchers may validate or challenge the findings or construct alternative arguments.

(Bassey, 1999, p.65)

Participant selection process

Twenty-nine principals, twenty-one graduates and nine lecturers indicated on their Stage One questionnaire that they would be interested in being involved in Stage Two of this study. A list of potential participants in each group was complied and each participant categorised on a matrix of characteristics. This involved the following steps.

- Each potential participant was allocated a number (names removed).

- This number and the information about school location, type and size (for principals), year of graduation and teaching status (for graduates), and delivery mode (for teacher educators) was collated and entered into a table of characteristics designed for each group involved in the study.

- Using each of the tables, I then used a die to randomly select the participants from each of the groups. Every time the die was rolled, the characteristic profile of the corresponding participant was checked. This participant was accepted if the category had not been covered. This process continued until I had eight participants from each group (24 in total) that covered each of the categories.

A check was then made to ensure that:
- the sample of graduates interviewed reflected a variety of graduating-years and had experienced a variety of employment positions (i.e. permanent/ part time / fixed term/ relieving);

- the sample of principals interviewed reflected a variety of school sizes (i.e. staff number), types (i.e. area school/ intermediate school/ Primary) and locations (i.e. rural/ semi-rural/ city) within the Canterbury region; and

- the sample of teacher educators interviewed reflected a variety of EDPS course delivery methods (i.e. campus, regional and distance).

I contacted those selected and invited them to participate. Although twenty-four participants were selected, interviews were only conducted with twenty of the participants due to time limitations and unavailability. The final sample included eight principals, six graduates and six lecturers and those selected covered all of the characteristics noted above.

Data gathering: Semi-structured interviews

Stage Two of the study included a semi-structured interview. Although the specific questions differed slightly for each group, the focus of the interviews was the same, namely preparation for the beginning teacher employment-process and the University of Canterbury's student exit profiles. I had developed a series of semi-structured interview questions in the design period of this study. These were subsequently refined after consideration of the Stage One findings, and again after I conducted a pilot interview, prior to beginning the Stage Two interviews. The final sets of questions were used as starters to generate some focussed discussion in the interviews. This semi-structured approach allowed themes to emerge in the interview and enabled participants to comment upon anything else they considered pertinent to the research focus. The interview questions for each group are included in Appendices Twelve to Fourteen. The interviews lasted between twenty minutes and one hour, and each interview was recorded using a digital voice recorder. These were conducted either by phone or face-to-face, at a time and place that suited the participant. I emailed a sample exit profile and a copy of the interview questions to the participants prior to the interview if they requested this.

Data analysis

Stake (1995, p.71) contended that a case study approach has "no particular moment when data analysis begins - analysis is a matter of giving meaning to first impressions as well as final compilations". The analysis of data occurred throughout both data collection periods in this study, although the analysis procedures differed at the different

stages according to its purpose. An interpretive approach informed the choices I made in relation to the analysis of the interview data. Bassey (1999) has claimed that researchers who adopt an interpretive paradigm are likely to consider that people possess different understandings of what is 'real' (Bassey, 1999) and so they examine situations through the eyes of the participants in order to "strive to understand and interpret their world" (Cohen et al., 2000, p.28).

The initial data analysis for Stage Two of the study was actually conducted when I transcribed the interviews. This was because I transcribed the interviews on the computer using the software package 'Dragon Naturally Speaking 9.5' following a process described by Matheson (2007) and Park & Zeanah (2005). This process involved uploading the recorded interview onto the computer, then listening to the interview recording in an earpiece while concurrently repeating the interview verbatim (i.e. the words spoken by both speakers) through the headphone mouthpiece. Each transcript was edited multiple times throughout the process and all transcripts were checked against the recordings when completed. There were three reasons for using this transcription process, namely:

- it enabled me to engage deeply with the data, and begin my analysis, as I 're-lived' the interview;
- it was cost effective given the number of interviews to be transcribed; and
- it overcame my lack of typing speed and skills.

Importantly, my engagement with data throughout this process was very high. This process afforded the opportunity to focus on the data with the accompanying emotions and expression and in addition enabled me to develop my interviewing skills through a critique of the earlier recordings.

The second part of the analysis of the interview transcripts was both structured and iterative. I employed a thematic or constant comparative approach (Mutch, 2005, Hutchinson, 1998) when analysing the printed transcripts and identifying themes. This involved reviewing each transcript and highlighting the key ideas in each transcript that related to the two areas addressed in the interviews - preparation for the beginning teacher employment process and exit profiles. Once completed, I reviewed all of the

transcripts again. I was then able to establish some initial categories on large sheets of paper and cluster the participant responses accordingly, using a coding system that enabled me to cross-reference back to the original transcript efficiently. At this time, I consciously "engaged in a systematic search for alternative themes, divergent patterns and rival explanations" (Patton, 2001, p.553) ensuring that the exceptional response and ideas were acknowledged as well as common responses. The transcripts were checked carefully again and a few further categories/ responses added to the compilation sheet. At this point, some categories were merged. The Stage Two results are presented in Chapter Five.

The Stage Two Participants

A short biography for each of the Stage Two participants involved in this study has been included to provide the reader with some useful contextual information to consider when reviewing the responses of individuals in Chapter Five. Pseudonyms replace the real names of participants and I have omitted the specific locations and names of actual schools throughout the text.

Teacher Educator (Lecturer) Participants

Paula: A graduating-year Professional Studies/Practice lecturer with over eight years' experience teaching on-campus groups.

Peter: A graduating-year Professional Studies/Practice lecturer who works with distance groups (including at residential schools).

Heather: A graduating-year level Professional Studies/Practice lecturer with ten years' experience working with students in one of the University's regional outposts.

John: A graduating-year Professional Studies/ Practice lecturer who has worked with distance and on-campus GDipTchLn groups in the past, and who now works with BTchLn graduates.

Sarah: A graduating-year Professional Studies/ Practice lecturer with seven years' experience.

Louise: A graduating-year Professional Studies/ Practice lecturer who has also acted as year level co-ordinator for these courses.

Graduate Participants

Mary: Graduated 2006 and now in her first year of teaching full-time. Last year Mary was a part-time music teacher.

Lauren: A distance graduate who is in her first year of teaching in 2008.

Carolyn: A first year teacher, employed in a rural school in 2008.

Michael: A first-year teacher, employed in a two-teacher school on the East Coast of the North Island in 2008.

Kara: A first-year teacher currently employed in long-term relieving position in a city school in 2008.

Sammy: A 2006 graduate who travelled overseas after graduating and is now relieving in New Zealand on a day-by-day basis while applying for teaching positions.

Principal Participants

Gordon: Principal of a decile-4 city intermediate school, with over 300 students.

David: Principal of city decile-10 full primary school with 404 students.

Margaret: Principal of small rural decile-9 full primary school, with 50 students.

Richard: Principal of decile-5 semi-rural full primary school, with 470 students.

Brian: Principal of a rural decile-7 area (composite) school with 257 students.

William: Principal of a city decile-5 contributing school with 191 students.

Susan: Principal of a decile-2 city contributing school with 200+ students.

Mark: Principal of rural decile-8 contributing school with 105 students.

Ethical Considerations

Neuman (2003) advised that, "a researcher's authority to conduct research is accompanied by a responsibility to guide, protect and oversee the interests of the people being studied" (p.119). Those conducting research involving people have to be particularly aware of the conflicts, concerns and issues that could potentially affect their participants in an adverse manner. The ethical considerations I specifically addressed in this study were:

- obtaining informed consent;
- respecting the right to privacy and confidentiality;
- trustworthiness; and
- Researcher's positioning.

Obtaining informed consent

Prior to beginning this study, I gained the approval of the University of Canterbury College of Education Ethics Committee. I then needed to ensure my potential participants were well informed. I shared the aims of the research in an information letter and answered any questions posed in relation to this information. All of the participants were informed of their rights and obligations in this letter, and in the accompanying consent form. They were informed that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time, and that the data collected in the study would be used specifically for the purposes of this research and to inform any subsequent journal articles or conference papers. Participants were also informed that they had the right to withdraw any data or information pertaining to them at any time during the study. Importantly, I obtained the written consent of participants prior to any data being collected.

Respecting the right to privacy and confidentiality

It was important that I respected the privacy of the research participants throughout this study. I maintained the anonymity and confidentiality of each individual participant by replacing any references to specific people or schools with pseudonyms in the report

and by leaving blank spaces on the interview transcripts. In addition, all of the research data were securely stored, with access being restricted to my supervisors and me. One dilemma did arise in this area. As I consciously chose to reveal the name of a particular teacher education organisation within this research, I acknowledged within my information letter and consent form that I could not assure the total anonymity of the teacher educators involved within this study. I also discussed this issue with each individual it could potentially affect.

Trustworthiness

Bassey (1999) suggested that when case study researchers address the concept of trustworthiness, an ethic of "respect for truth" (p.75) would underpin their study. Lincoln & Guba (1985) suggested that trustworthiness acts as an alternative to validity and reliability: two important concepts in research methodology but not well suited to a case study approach. Bassey (1999, p.75) provided case study researchers with some guiding questions to help them address trustworthiness in their research. He asked:

- has there been prolonged engagement, persistent observation and adequate checking with sources? (collection of raw data);
- is there sufficient triangulation? (analysis of raw data);
- are you checking the emerging story against the statements? (interpretation of statements)
- does the account include sufficient detail to give the reader confidence in the findings? (reporting of the research); and
- does an adequate audit trail exist?

In addition, Patton (2001) promoted the use of rigorous methods of analysis, and Anderson (1998) the incorporation of a solid chain of evidence, as strategies researchers employ to demonstrate trustworthiness in their research methods.

To account for trustworthiness within this study, I implemented the following strategies:

- utilising multiple sources of evidence: two stages involving two data gathering instruments with multiple participants;

- prolonged engagement and persistent observation: spending enough dedicated time on the case study to truly become immersed in the data and features of the case;

- supplying the raw data (interview transcript) to the participant if requested and enabling them to modify this if deemed appropriate (member checking); and

- maintaining a chain of evidence both within the report and in my research documentation (audit trail).

Researcher positioning

One concern expressed about case study research is that it involves subjective research techniques (Sturman, 1999). Janesick (2003) suggested that conducting qualitative research is never an objective exercise. All qualitative research is subjective, and therefore subjectivity needs to be seen as "an essential element of understanding" (Stake, 1995, p.45). In my role as a Professional Studies lecturer, I work closely with both school principals and students. Teaching in this area also makes me a member of one of the participating groups. I was in fact 'known' by most of the Stage Two research participants in this study. As a member of the graduating-year Professional Studies and Practice team, I had professional relationships with all of the lecturer participants in this study. I had also worked with some of the graduates interviewed, either in my role as graduating- year Dean or as a Professional Studies and Practice lecturer. In addition, I discovered that over ten years ago I had been the Professional Studies lecturer of one of the principals interviewed. I also knew three of the other principals interviewed, having talked with them when visiting students on placement at their schools.

Although initially concerned about the impact these relationships could have on this study, I believe they were actually quite beneficial. I sensed lecturers openly shared their issues and concerns with me because they believed I understood these tensions due to my involvement in the Professional Studies and Practice area. The graduates appeared to enjoy having the opportunity to talk with a college lecturer they recognised and the majority of our conversations continued long after the recorded interview had

concluded. Similarly, the principals appeared to appreciate that somebody from the University was seeking their opinion, and they willingly shared their feedback and advice. Not surprisingly, some of the principals also wanted to discuss broader matters to do with the merger of the College of Education with the University of Canterbury in the interview. Rather than attempting to curtail their comments at that time, I accepted these then edited the interview transcripts to remove the text that was not specifically related to the subject of this study. This occurred on two occasions. Importantly, I ensured that I was not drawn into any discussions at any time that involved talking about specific students or graduates.

Finally, early in the study I recognised that I had my own particular views and biases in relation to the topic I had chosen to investigate. I realised that I needed to mindfully 'bracket' (Creswell, 2003) my own preconceived ideas about employment-related issues and practices when conducting the interviews. This bracketing would then help me, as a researcher, to better understand the perceptions of my participants. This was harder than anticipated, and my subjectivity was evident when reviewing some of the transcripts. This on-going awareness subsequently enabled me to better bracket my perceptions when analysing the data.

Chapter 5 Results

Introduction

The results presented in this chapter reveal themes that emerged both within and across the three participant group interviews in the areas under investigation in this case study. The results are presented under the following headings:

The Preparation of Graduating-Year Students for the Beginning-Teacher Employment Process:

- The lecturers' perspectives
- The graduates' perspectives
- The principals' perspectives

The Exit Profile Produced for BTchLn (Primary) Graduates at the University of Canterbury:

- The purpose and use of the exit profile
- Issues with the exit profile
- Suggestions for improving the exit profile
- The continuation of this practice at the University of Canterbury

The Preparation of Graduating-Year Students for the Beginning-Teacher Employment Process

The participants' perspectives and experiences related to the preparation of graduates for the beginning-teacher employment process are presented according to the three categories of participants, namely: lecturers, graduates and principals.

The lecturers' perspectives

All of the lecturers interviewed in the study believed that is was one of their roles to prepare graduating-year students for the beginning-teacher employment process and emphasised they enjoyed delivering the course content in this area. Two lecturers

highlighted the value of the content fostering the transition from 'student' to 'professional'.

> *On a generic level, every provider of 'whatever' should transition their graduates towards the profession they have been prepared for.* (Louise)

> *I think it's part of our role and while we can point them in online directions, such as the registration process, I think the linking with the professional community and preparing them for the application and interview process is very important.* (Heather)

Importantly, many wondered who else would adopt the role of preparing students if employment-related content was not included in the Professional Studies courses. However, one lecturer wondered if the University was involving itself in matters 'outside of its responsibility' by addressing employment in the core programme.

> *Although I do think it's part of our responsibility…it's a bit of a grey area because it's almost like we are putting our hand out and doing something 'out there'…I think if we didn't do it, they could go out with the wrong ideas and be misinformed about what they were going into. We have done all the training and now we've got to help them get into their line of work.* (John)

Five of the six lecturers believed the employment-related content should be a compulsory component of the final year Professional Studies courses. One questioned if all students needed it, and suggested that mature students could be offered some form of recognition for prior learning. Conversely, Sarah, an experienced lecturer in the Professional Studies area, believed that compulsory inclusion of employment-related content ensured that all graduates received equitable preparation and it was the responsibility of the University to address this.

When asked to comment on the employment-related content included in the BTchLn (Primary) Professional Studies courses, all of the lecturers seemed to be positive about the topics and activities currently included. When then asked to identify what they considered the **key** components of an employment preparation programme, all six lecturers believed the following components were vital:

- the preparation of a curriculum vitae;
- the development of a covering letter;
- knowing how to work through a wide variety of job application packages; and
- conducting mock interviews with students.

In addition, most lecturers emphasised the value of inviting principals to talk to students in the course. John reflected on 'Principals Day', a part of the current employment-related content included in the Professional Studies course, and said:

> *Principals day is good, that's real contact…it really makes them realise the variation of what principals want and that there's no right way or one kind of person that comes out of here and suits every school.*

Three lecturers also considered it important to help students develop an emergent teaching philosophy and two others believed it was valuable to bring beginning teachers in to talk with the students about the employment process.

Only two lecturers offered ideas to possible improvements. Peter believed that there needed to be greater emphasis, for example, in the course on what it means to be a professional, and also that the course include an overview of the pathways for teachers into management roles. Heather, a lecturer in a region that has a shortage of teachers, suggested more emphasis be placed on relief teaching.

The graduates' perspectives

The six graduates interviewed in this study had very different experiences when they applied for beginning teacher positions and were very keen to share their journeys. Five graduates applied for positions while they were still studying and each applied for multiple positions at the same time, two putting in applications as early as August in their final year of study. They all emphasised that the application requirements for each school differed. Therefore, most customised the employment material they had prepared for each individual application.

> *The next school's process was quite different from the last- the applications for some schools are quite hard out and others want nothing more than your CV so*

> *I ended up having to create different CVs for the different jobs I applied for.* (Michael)

One graduate applied for teaching positions only after completing her studies. When asked why, she talked about being 'disorganised' and wanting to concentrate on passing her courses before she applied for teaching positions.

The job interview experiences of the graduates also differed remarkably. Five of the graduates were interviewed at least twice before securing a teaching position. The interview panels they experienced varied in size from two to five people, and the interviews differed in both length and complexity. Two graduates experienced telephone interviews, and one secured a position with no interview, having had a teaching placement at the school. Kara, a graduate currently teaching in a city school, turned down a position offered to her at an interview after deciding that the school was not a good fit for her. She said:

> *I thought I do not want to teach anywhere where I can't be me. I had the whole bus ride home to think about it (six hours)...they had a completely different programme than the one I would run myself...you can't work somewhere where it's not you.*

All of the graduates thought that the employment-related content they had experienced at the University of Canterbury prepared them well for the employment process. The graduates identified some key aspects of the programme they believed were particularly useful. These included working through the CV process, Principals Day, exploring a range of job application packages, the mock interviews, and in conjunction with the interviews, working through examples of interview questions. They also suggested some improvements. Four graduates proposed more class time be allocated to CV development. Two believed conducting two sets of mock interviews would be advantageous and that the mock interview panel should include people unknown to the students. Kara believed the course should explain the role and responsibilities of the tutor teacher, who works with the beginning teacher in their first two years of teaching, more and earlier in the year:

I would bring in tutor teachers. It would have been interesting to hear what they actually expect from a beginning teacher...I really didn't know what a tutor teacher was until the last week of college.

All of the graduates contended that employment-related content should be a compulsory component of any initial teacher education programme. Two emphasised the daunting nature of the employment experience and were concerned it would be even harder for graduates if the initial teacher education provider did not address employment in their programme.

How else are they (students) going to learn about it in a non-threatening way? You'd be going cold in the process of getting a job and it's hard enough to get one without having armour on so to speak. (Lauren)

I think if we hadn't done all of the things we did at college, it would have been an even more daunting task, and you might not be successful because you don't know what happens and nerves take over. (Mary)

However, one graduate considered it impossible to 'ever be prepared fully', and two others suggested that the motivation and mindset of the graduate were also important factors when considering graduates 'preparedness' for the employment process.

My own motivation wasn't good, so I'm not going to put all the emphasis in college to prepare me enough because that was where I was at personally. (Sammy)

I think college gave me the basis of what I needed to do but then it was up to me individually and I don't think I did that very well. (Mary)

When asked what advice they would pass on to future students, two key themes emerged. The first theme that emerged was the need for students to be organised. All of the graduates recommended that students make their CV as early as possible in the year and that they have the CV checked by a number of people. Carolyn shared some pertinent thoughts in this area:

*I know everybody tells you to start making your CV early **but you should** ...you just need to find the time, you need to fine tune it for every job anyway, so just get organised, get the framework and take the time, so when it comes down to it you are ready to fire them out.*

The second theme related to the competitive nature of the job application process. Four graduates advised that students needed to be aware that this was a stressful process and that they needed to 'figure out what they really wanted' before applying for positions. As Mark proposed:

> *The question is 'how well does this sit with me...is this job right for me or am I just applying for it because I don't want to be the one on Monday who turns up at college and has to say 'well no, I missed out on the job'.*

Two graduates offered different advice. Lauren, a graduate who is currently teaching in a rural area, advised students to make the most of their final-year school placements, especially those considering teaching in rural communities when they graduated.

> *Make the most of your placements...in smaller districts word of mouth so to speak so it's being aware of making the most of placements, making connections and making the most of opportunities.*

Sammy, a graduate who worked part-time in a children's programme before teaching, suggested that students in their final year should consider a broader range of employment options and stressed the following:

> *Really figure out what you want. If you want a job, then go for it but if you don't know what to do keep your mind open and look at other possibilities...there are other avenues to go down rather than just teaching, especially for new graduates.*

The Principals' perspectives

All eight of the principals interviewed in this study had either employed or interviewed beginning teachers in the previous five-year period. Five explained that the majority of applications they had received were from recent graduates and that it was difficult in the current environment to attract applications from more experienced teachers. As Brian, the principal of a rural area school, explained:

> *We don't advertise beginning-teacher positions as such but no matter what position we advertise, whether it is primary or secondary, we get a preponderance of applications from beginning teachers.*

When asked to comment about how well prepared they had found recent graduates, from any initial teacher education provider, to be for the employment process, the responses varied. Three of the principals suggested they were very impressed by the quality of graduates they had encountered. Two shared the following:

> *The vast majority of students who apply seem to be well prepared and you can tell this from the letter they have written, the CV they have produced and on the odd occasion some of the other behaviours. Like they will make contact with the school.* (Richard)

> *I have actually usually been in awe of the young people who have come to interviews, and have compared them with myself and how I bumbled through interviews and really botched many…most of them do pretty well.* (Brian)

However, four principals believed the graduates they had encountered were only 'reasonably' prepared for the employment process, and one found graduates to be not prepared enough. The examples they provided to illustrate this varied. David, the principal of a large city school, suggested that the applications he received from the majority of graduates did not reflect enough knowledge of the school, that there were grammatical errors in the written material and that the CVs were mostly too long. Mark echoed David's first sentiment when he commented, "I have had several applications and really apart from the change in the name at the top, they are not talking about my school at all". In addition, Susan, the principal of a decile 2 city school, commented that the standards of the CVs and covering letters ranged enormously, and that too often they lacked in professionalism. Interestingly, two principals believed they could tell the provider an applicant had studied with by the shape and contents of the CV.

When asked if preparation for the employment-process should be one of the roles and responsibilities of an initial teacher education provider, seven of the eight principals believed it should. Brian suggested it was a key role, and stated, "…it benefits the students and it also benefits us - we need them in order to staff our schools and if they don't find a job then we have lost them". Two principals believed it should be the provider's responsibility because the nature of teacher employment had changed over the years and the process now was now more complex for both employers and applicants.

> *I think it is your responsibility in this day and age; when I graduated from college it was the Education Board's responsibility, they just placed us. I'm sure it is very difficult for them (students) because I'm sure principals have very different opinions.* (Susan)

> *When I came out you were just given a job; I think schools are getting better, the whole appointment of staff is new to us and we've never received any training and we still don't...we learn from our mistakes.* (William)

However, the principal that believed it was not the responsibility of the initial teacher education provider suggested there were more important elements that needed to be addressed in initial teacher education programmes. He did not say what these elements were in the interview.

Although all of the principals were aware that employment-related content was included in the BTchLn (Primary) qualification at the University of Canterbury, they did not know the specific content students covered. Therefore, it was more appropriate to glean the advice principals (as employers) would pass on to future students and graduates preparing for the employment process rather than attempt to glean their comments about course content.

The principals offered a range of suggestions when asked what advice they would pass on to students and graduates preparing for the employment process. The suggestions related to different stages of the employment process and therefore have been categorised under the following sub-headings: covering letters, curriculum vitae and job interviews. Suggestions that did not fit these categories have been included under the sub-heading, other advice.

Covering letters

All of the principals claimed that the covering letter was an important component of the application package. David suggested it was the most important component included by applicants.

> *A covering letter is very important- it is designed to be read first and if it captures my interest, I will read on. If I can't find that or if it is not clear then I won't be going any further quite simply.*

Five of the eight principals emphasised the need for graduates to demonstrate knowledge of the school in their covering letter because this demonstrated that the applicant was genuinely interested in that particular school. Most suggested graduates visit the school website to glean this information. Gordon claimed, "it tends to stick in your mind if an applicant has read your mission statement". Three principals intimated that applicants should visit the school prior to completing their covering letter and application. Two suggested they contact the school to organise a visit, whereas the third suggested applicants look around the school when it was closed.

Five principals asserted that the covering letter needed to be grammatically correct and professional, and four suggested it needed to be brief. Susan illustrated the importance of these suggestions in her school.

> *I have an outstanding beginning teacher here who was employed, basically, from his letter of application and CV- his letter was professional, succinct and gave a clear message about his passion for teaching and for children.* (Susan)

In addition, one principal highlighted the need for graduates to check their letters carefully when he related his experience of receiving a letter addressed to another principal and school. Another, Richard, claimed, "one spelling mistake and you are out".

Two principals recommended that the covering letter should highlight both the qualities of the applicant and how they could specifically address the job description the applicant had received in their job package. As William explained, "for one position we had over 70 applicants, so what stood out for us was not so much where they had come from but the individual". Finally, Margaret recommended that the covering letters be handwritten because this enabled the graduate to demonstrate their ability to write and spell correctly "…in this technological age".

Curriculum Vitae

In relation to the curriculum vitae, the most prominent advice recommended by the principals was that graduates accentuate their individual 'points of difference'. Seven of

the eight principals suggested that graduates include any extra-curricular activities they are involved in outside of college, and emphasise any interesting life experiences they have had.

> *I'm interested in their life outside of school…the kinds of things they got involved in, like clubs or sports, their interests, what sorts of things really excite them. Things that make me sit up and take notice is if they have been involved with young people in some way, it is always a good indication that they have some interests and are genuinely interested in young people. Being a top level sportsperson...having been involved in art or music or drama…these are the sorts of things that show they have got a skill or an aptitude in a particular area and they are also building themselves to a higher level with that, this is really important information to have in a CV.* (Brian)

Moreover, four indicated graduates should emphasise the activities that involved them working with children or young adults.

> *I suppose what I look for is the link with children, the ones that mention children…a lot of them mention themselves…some of them tend to be a little self-centred.* (William)

> *I am interested in any life experiences that they have had and their involvement working with young people, a passion for teaching children and a genuine enjoyment of working with people.* (Margaret)

It was interesting to note that one principal suggested the inclusion of extra-curricular activities indicated to her that the applicant would achieve a better work-life balance in their first year of teaching, and therefore be of less risk of 'teacher burnout'.

Five principals advised graduates to substantiate the content of their CV with comments from associate teachers. Some said they sometimes contacted associate teachers to corroborate the information included in the CV, as well as contacting the referees graduates nominated. Two principals indicated that their job packages included a declaration form that enabled them to do this. In addition, four principals suggested graduates also include information about their school practices and three suggested graduates customise their CV for each job they applied for.

The need to keep the CV brief, easy to read and professional was suggested by five principals. They reiterated that because they had little time to read each CV in depth, graduates needed to present their information clearly, with the key points highlighted. As Gordon explained, "they've only got a quick chance of capturing my attention. The CV needs to be brief, summative and have the essential information". Some suggested that bullet points and tabbed pages made the reading easier for the viewer.

One issue raised by four principals related to the actual construction of the CV. Richard shared an experience that illustrated this issue.

> *I had one CV, it was very large and had been laminated- it came in a tube all rolled up...it got stuck in the door and you would drop it...when you opened it, it rolled back together again...it just about drove me nutty. Principals will throw (this kind of thing) out because they can't be bothered with that sort of presentation.*

These principals suggested graduates consider the viewpoint of the reader when designing their CV, and this included thinking about who could be reading it. Three principals reminded graduates that because members of their school's Board of Trustees read them, they needed to ensure they framed the contents of the CV in terms 'lay people' would understand. Additionally, one advised graduates mindfully consider the images included in the CV, in terms of what they might represent to a prospective employer. As David recalled:

> *I opened one recently and it had a picture on the front cover, taken in a lounge, with the applicant sitting on a couch with all the washing piled up around her...which I laughed at but it was not really what you want to see on the front cover of a CV.*

Three of the eight principals advised graduates to demonstrate their knowledge and skills specifically in the areas of numeracy and literacy in their CV, and three suggested graduates highlight their strengths in other curriculum areas.

Although most of the principals agreed in the advice they offered in the areas outlined above, they appeared to have contrasting views in other areas related to the CV. For

example, while half of the principals considered it worthwhile for students to include an emergent philosophy statement in their CV, half did not consider this valuable:

> *The ones that are more effective will have an 'emerging' philosophy...one chap dropped in a one-page CV to do some relieving and he had something neat about his philosophy and where it was at the moment and that it would change as he developed more experience.* (William)

> *The philosophy statement that they make is nice but it doesn't do anything for me- I'm not interested in what they believe, I want to know what they know...and about numeracy and literacy those two things first and foremost.* (Richard)

Similarly, while some principals advised graduates to include academic transcripts in their CV because they considered this information valuable, some stated they did not care either way if it was included. In addition, others suggested they were not at all interested in applicants' academic results.

> *I want to know what they have majored in and the sorts of grades they achieved...I do like to see which things they have actually excelled at because this can give a guide to filling gaps at the school.* (Margaret)

> *I'm not so interested in their marks, I will have a look at them but we have to take it that the university has said they are suitable to be a teacher and they have met all of the requirements.* (Richard)

> *Sometimes performance in the classroom and achievement at college or training institutions, sometimes the correlation is not great.* (Gordon)

Finally, David described a practice he undertook before he shortlisted applicants for his school. He strongly advised graduates to consider their 'internet footprint' before they applied for teaching positions. He said:

> *You learn a lot about people by just typing in a google search about them. I have found all sorts of information about people with links to their 'facebook' and 'my space' sites. There are many ways you can find out about people and New Zealand is a very small place.*

He also suggested graduates critically appraise the professionalism (or lack of) demonstrated in both their email addresses and cell-phone messages-both avenues prospective employers might use to contact applicants.

Job interviews

Although the shortlisting process schools used was not a focus in this study, some of the principals shared interesting information in their area. For example, three principals commented that it was difficult to create a shortlist of applicants to interview because it involved numerous people each reviewing a number of applications. Gordon, the principal of a decile four intermediate school talked about the large number of applications he had received in the past. He claimed:

> *Sometimes we will have 30 to 40, but I have been in situations where we have had 100. Even if we have one come up during the year and the main market is limited, we can still get 20 +.*

To address this issue, one principal indicated he filtered the applications first then passed the twelve that stood out to his associate principal for further review. He explained that although all of the applications were available for the interview panel to review if they chose to, this practice made the process easier. Four principals said they usually shortlisted between three and six applicants for beginning teacher positions.

In relation to interviews for beginning teachers, six principals indicated they had three people on their interview panel but had more when they interviewed experienced teachers for positions at the school. One indicated he usually had four people. It appears the members of the panel were generally the principal and senior staff, although some indicated a member of the Board of Trustees could also be involved. Although no consistent themes emerged from the advice principals would share with graduates preparing for interviews, they did make some common suggestions. For example, three principals suggested graduates needed to be able to talk positively and clearly, and two recommended graduates practise articulating answers prior to having an interview.

> *They need to be very positive about what they are going to talk about and should give themselves wait time....not fill things with meaningless words, just wait and give a more decisive answer.* (Margaret)

> *I don't want to see cynicism; I want to see a real passion for the job and a belief in their own abilities.* (Gordon)

*Try to be yourself as much as possible…I mean that's the thing in the end, we are hiring somebody to join our staff **team** and we want to get a feel for them as a person…some people shoot themselves in the foot because they go off at the mouth because they are nervous.* (Brian)

Three principals signalled that graduates needed to be prepared to talk about what constituted high quality learning in an interview and emphasised the areas of literacy and numeracy in particular. One suggested it important graduates talk about children and the experiences they have had in schools in the interview. William advised:

I always advise people, always mention children- some people come in and they get too technical; they try to impress us with their ability…really I'm looking for somebody who has an interest and love of children…I know it sounds a bit clichéd but we're looking for enthusiasm for children, not the job but for children. (William)

Interestingly, two principals said graduates needed to be able to talk about their weaknesses. These principals suggested the ability to do so honestly was 'a strength', and that it enabled them as school leaders to consider the induction programme they would design if they employed the applicant. They both reiterated the need for graduates to be honest in this area. Margaret explained why she felt strongly about this and said:

I think the students' own knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses is important, because a school is not always a good match for them. They shouldn't see the failure to get appointed as necessarily a bad thing; it may mean the difference between surviving in teaching and going under- that 'right fit'- they shouldn't sell themselves beyond what they can honestly do.

Mark reminded graduates that the interview process begins before you sit down with the interview panel, and to be mindful of the way they related to all members of the school community. He claimed:

The interview actually starts from the first contact. I often joke with people that the first impression is made with my secretary. I had one applicant who had a go at my secretary last year. It was totally unprofessional and she was out of the list. She didn't appreciate that you are being interviewed by the school, not just the principal.

Other advice

Although only three principals specifically advised graduates to make the most of their final-year school placements, most commented that they looked carefully at the final year students on placement in their schools. Brian suggested students needed to think differently about their final placement:

> *The final section to me is crucial, as you are writing the last chapter or maybe the first chapter…I think that placement is the big one and they've got to make sure that one works.*

Two principals suggested graduates also consider part-time teaching positions, if possible, as a way to enter the workforce. With teacher release time now allocated to all primary teachers, schools have many part-time teachers. They both suggested that this could be the first step into the profession for some graduates. Finally, two principals highlighted the need for students to establish a point of difference, and suggested that creating a bond with a school in their own time was one way they could do this. William shared an experience at his school and said:

> *We had a student who came back and said "I will be available for relieving after November, I'm thinking about doing Honours but I really like your school and I am available" and he offered to be a helper…you see that is something different…that is a point of difference. He will walk away with a good reference and something that will look more real than just completing a college course.*

The Exit Profile Produced for BTchLn (Primary) Graduates at the University of Canterbury

The participants' perspectives on the exit profiles currently produced for BTchLn (Primary) students at the University of Canterbury are presented in this section of the chapter. The results from the three participant groups cluster under the following headings:

- the purpose and use of the exit profile;
- issues with the exit profile;
- suggestions for improving the exit profile; and
- the continuation of this practice at the University of Canterbury.

The purpose and use of the exit profile

The first of the profile-related questions endeavoured to identify what the participants considered the purpose of the exit profiles produced at the University of Canterbury, and how they used them in their particular roles. One of the first things noted when reviewing the interview transcripts was the range of different terms participants used when they described profiles. These terms included; school report, summary, evaluation, feedback, statement, reference or testimonial, and tool. Although the terms differed, two main purposes emerged. They were:

- it was a tool for employment; and/ or
- it was a document lecturers used to provide summative feedback to graduates.

Seven of the eight principals considered that the University developed the exit profile for employment purposes and four signalled that they used the profile as a tool during the shortlisting stage of the application process. Richard, the principal of a semi-rural school talked about how he used the profiles at this stage and intimated:

> *I go through the profiles and underline some words, and they are like little lights to me, indicating things. I suppose it is like a Christmas tree, and each word is a candle and if it's fully lit by the time you get to the bottom, then this person goes into the next pile.*

Five of the six graduates interviewed believed the exit profile was developed for employment purposes, although four expressed frustration that they could not use it to support their applications in the initial job round because it was provided so late in the year. This is problematic when the responses from the following principals are considered:

> *They will not move to the next level if we have not seen the profile.* (Richard)
> *If the profile was not there, I would have questions about what has happened in the training.* (Brian)
>
> *If it was not included, I would think there was something wrong with their teaching or something wrong...I would just put them to the bottom of the pile, depending on how many I got.* (Margaret)

Some lecturers indicated that they were aware of this problem. As Louise suggested, "the really good ones already have jobs when they get them". Four graduates indicated they took their profile with them to interviews to address this issue.

The notion that the profile was a tool for feedback appeared as a thread through many of the interviews, although graduates and lecturers highlighted this more than the principals did. Three graduates emphasised the value of the profile as a mechanism for valuable lecturer feedback. They described the profile as offering validation, and helping them to identify their next learning step. Carolyn, a graduate, shared the following thoughts in this area:

> *It is feedback in its finest form really…you know this is where you have come from and this is what you can do now. It is telling you what you can do well and on that, you can decide 'what do I need to concentrate on now'?*

The lecturers interviewed described the profile as an employment tool, a documentation of student achievement and a way to provide feedback, both to and for students. The word 'quality' appeared often when they described it and its use for both employment and feedback purposes. For example, four of the lecturers stressed the purpose of the profile as being a vehicle to provide employers with an indication of the strengths and weaknesses of each graduate. John summed this up when he stated, "the purpose for me is that I can make an outstanding student stand out". The indication of quality also appeared to be important to the lecturers who perceived the profile as a student feedback mechanism. Additionally, one lecturer believed that some students found it difficult to express their positive qualities, and that the profile was able to speak about quality 'on their behalf'. Peter said:

> *The profile you write is a rounding off for what you do for students…you are presenting them with a picture of where they are at. We tend to be a bit more reserved and modest in New Zealand, so it's good to have somebody from the outside putting that across.*

Two lecturers shared additional perspectives about the purpose of the profile. Louise, an experienced lecturer at the college, shared how she used the profile when working with

students setting their professional goals at the beginning of the year. She talked in depth about the profile's purpose as a both formative assessment and motivational tool.

> *I ask the student "where are you really at" and then we talk about priorities. So to me, the profile is not an exit thing, it is something to be used throughout their third year, and it's about them taking some responsibility.* (Louise)

For Heather, the purpose of the profile was that it could satisfy the needs of both students and the professional community by bridging the gap between the pre-service and in-service experiences. She said:

> *I think it is client expectation that we do; by clients, I mean students expect it, also employers... I think that the linking with the community and preparing them for the application and interview is very important. I am here to serve my community and I have a very strong responsibility for that, and I see our schools' and especially our principals' expectations of us are very high.*

One principal, Mary, echoed this sentiment, when she asserted, "we trust the colleges or universities to provide things that are an accurate assessment of how they have seen that student".

Issues with the exit profile

Although the participants identified a range of purposes for the profiles, some negative comments about their value appeared even in the initial stages of the interviews. As one principal, Mark, indicated:

> *I don't think they are a valuable document for the student and they are not an employment document because when I get 20 of them, they all have a nice feeling about them but they give no evidence or reason to put this one aside and this one out of the pile.*

Two key issues were evident in the findings. The first key issue is related to the coded and generic nature of the language used in the profile. The second issue is related to the perceived accuracy of the contents of the profile.

The coded and generic nature of the exit profile

The perception that lecturers wrote the profile in some sort of 'coded' way appeared as a very strong thread in the principals' responses. Brian, a principal who has interviewed many beginning teachers, stated this explicitly when he suggested, "there is a trick to reading them, isn't there!" Richard also echoed this sentiment when he suggested that more experienced principals have learnt how to read profiles over time. He suggested:

> *You do need to know how to read them. I think principals have learned how to read them and can pick up on the things that are really important to look for.*

It appeared that although many of the principals understood this tacit practice, it undermined the value of the exit profile. As Mark shared:

> *I personally don't read them for what they say; I read them for what they are not saying. For me, as an employer, they are not telling me what I want; they are not warning me of the pitfalls.*

Similarly, David remarked that, "…unless you start reading between the lines and look for the adjectives that have been omitted…high standards…very high standards…is beginning to…then it all becomes a bit useless."

The majority of the lecturers showed an awareness of this issue and considered this one of the challenges when writing profiles. More than one lecturer acknowledged that what they did not say in the profile was just as useful was what they did say.

Interestingly, the graduates did not raise this as an issue. Those interviewed felt that their profiles reflected their skills and attitudes quite well, although some suggested additional components could be included in the profile. Surprisingly, one graduate even seemed to be unaware of the evaluative nature of the profile. Sammy said:

> *I assume there were not negative things written in these. I think if there was anything negative like 'she still needs to develop this' or something like that, I don't know how I'd feel about it.*

A related issue identified by participants centred on the perception that the profiles all read the same. A number of principals who had reviewed the profiles of many applicants, talked about the 'blandness' of the comments included and suggested that they found it difficult to identify points of difference between the students easily. Susan added:

> *I think it needs to be more like the report that we do at school, where there is a continuum, whether they are above expectations, at expectations or below expectations. I want to know if they are top of the group or bottom of the group.*

Two of the graduates expressed similar concerns. Mary commented that although the personal professional qualities included in her profile were accurate, the comments in other areas were 'very generic'. Sammy questioned the process staff used when they developed their profiles when he stated "some of them seemed to be very generic, with a cut and paste (laughter)…if the lecturer did this, it don't know if they did (laughter) but it wouldn't surprise me". Some of the lecturers admitted they struggled to say the same things in different ways when writing profiles for 15-17 students. As Paula mused, "they do have a bit of sameness to them. Trying to make each individual student sound different is a challenge".

The accuracy of the exit profile

The second issue that emerged related to the perceived accuracy of the profile contents and the evidence lecturers used to create them. Both the principals and graduates reiterated that the profile must portray an accurate record of the student's achievement and qualities. As Margaret, a principal, commented "I hope when the tutors write these, they don't just look at a whole lot of nice things to make the person look right…in other words, they are really honest". Likewise, Michael, a graduate, suggested "they need to be an honest reflection of the person, you know…it could be quite upsetting to read it and say' oh well, that person doesn't know me at all."

The lecturers also highlighted the importance of accuracy, but expressed concern about the time needed to develop comprehensive profiles. They said it was essential they gained a lot of knowledge and evidence about each student prior to writing them, to

ensure the comments they included were valid. The majority contended they needed to visit each of their students on both of their final school placements in order to do so.

Finally, although the majority of graduates appeared satisfied with the accuracy of their profile, Lauren was concerned that principals had no idea about the sources of evidence lecturers used when they developed the content. She claimed:

> *I looked at it and thought 'well that's been copied straight out of my placement book'...a paraphrase...no more than a paraphrase because it was pretty much word for word what was written in my placement book by my associate teacher...but not presented in that form. I know it was what other people had said although the person reading it wouldn't know that.*

The fact that two principals suggested profiles would improve if they included the summary statement from the last two associate teachers, indicated there was some misunderstanding in this area. Mark suggested, "if you could successfully marry up the placement summary and the profile, then at the end of the day I am going to get something that speaks well to us and I will be reading trends across those". Interestingly, only two of the lecturers commented that they relied on the associate teachers' comments when creating profiles.

Suggestions for improving the exit profile

The principals and graduates suggested a variety of ways to improve the profiles if the college continued this practice. Four graduates recommended that students get the profile earlier in the year, so they were able to use them when applying for positions schools advertised early in the year. In addition, two graduates suggested that the profile would be better if the Professional Practice lecturers developed it over the three years of study. Carolyn believed this could also address the timing issue:

> *Perhaps instead of having one person write it all in the final year, perhaps your Professional Practice lecturers should be writing a bit at the end of each year. You are not going to get them out in time for the people who apply early, so perhaps if something were written each year, they would have something to take to the interview.*

Interestingly, two graduates proposed the profiles should include specific comments about their attitudes and skills as learners. Mary believed this could be a point of identifiable difference between applicants when she stated, "…we can all graduate but people get there in different ways". Likewise, two principals suggested information about a graduate's study habits would be of interest to them as employers. Susan suggested that she would appreciate the inclusion of an even broader range of comments:

> *I want to know how they relate to other students, other graduates who are coming out. We have no idea of their attendance at college or their health, as you know these can make or break the first term.*

Although all of the lecturers appeared comfortable with the current profile format, most reiterated that if the profile was not meeting the needs of employers and graduates, changes or alternative practices should be explored. Many of the principals and graduates suggested that lecturers provide verbal references for students instead of writing profiles, yet five of the six lecturers interviewed expressed concerns about the viability and equity of this practice.

The continuation of this practice at the University of Canterbury

Although all of the graduates interviewed believed the University should continue to develop profiles for students, not all of the principals and lecturers agreed. Although four of the eight principals did not care if the practice ceased, the four that used the profile for employment purposes were adamant the practice should continue. Margaret said:

> *The profile is the only reliable source I have got for what they have done in their training and how well they can do academic work, because how else do we tell whether or not they are researchers, action researchers, are they prepared to be reflective, all of those skills… there is nothing else for us to go on.*

Similarly, Richard suggested:

> *I think you should continue with them (the profiles) because the graduates rely on them to get them to the next stage…without it, it can become a bit of a raffle,*

as they can offer so little tangible evidence that they have the potential o be a good teacher…there is a huge amount placed on that page.

The lecturers also differed in their opinions. They equally highlighted the value of the profile and their concern about the time and evidence needed to create them in the current environment. Paula echoed the sentiments of many staff when she suggested, "whatever we do, it has got to have value and work".

Chapter 6 Discussion

Introduction

The purpose of this instrumental case study was to identify what school employers, BTchLn (Primary) graduates and teacher educators from the University of Canterbury College of Education perceived as important practices when preparing graduating-year students for the beginning-teacher employment process. This chapter includes consideration of the ways in which the findings might suggest answers to the research questions of the study. Limitations of the study are stated in the concluding section of the chapter.

The Preparation of BTchLn (Primary) Graduating-Year Students for the Beginning-Teacher Employment Process

The research questions that related to the preparation of graduating-year students for the beginning-teacher employment process were:

- to what extent is the preparation of BTchLn (Primary) graduating-year students for the employment process one of the roles and responsibilities of the University of Canterbury?

- what do BTchLn (Primary) teacher educators from the University of Canterbury College of Education perceive to be the essential components of an employment preparation programme for students in their graduating year?

- to what extent do BTchLn (Primary) graduates from the University of Canterbury College of Education believe they were well prepared for the beginning-teacher employment process? What advice would they provide to graduating-year students and teacher educators, to help them enhance their employment-related practices?

- what do primary school principals (as employers) in the University of Canterbury's region think about the preparedness of graduates for the employment process? What advice would they provide to students, graduates and teacher educators, to help them enhance their employment-related practices?

The following section includes a discussion of the ways in which the findings presented in Chapter Five suggest answers to these questions.

There was an expectation that the University of Canterbury prepare BTchLn (Primary) graduating-year students for the employment process

The findings suggested that the majority of the case study participants considered it the responsibility of the University of Canterbury to prepare BTchLn (Primary) students for the employment process in their graduating year. All of the graduates and seven of the eight principals contended that employment-related content should be a compulsory component of any initial teacher education programme, in particular because of the timing of the advertised positions, the complexity of the employment process and the inability for students to access the employment-related information they needed elsewhere. The lecturers interviewed in the study considered preparing graduating-year students for employment as one of their professional responsibilities. In doing so, they perceived they were meeting the needs of two communities of importance to the university - the school (professional) community and the student community. Seven of the eight principals affirmed this perception when they suggested the preparation of graduating-year students was of benefit to both schools and graduates. The graduates also appeared to agree and indicated they valued the guidance provided by the lecturers.

The common perception amongst the research participants that it was the role of the University to prepare BTchLn (Primary) graduating-year students for employment could imply that it was the University's contractual responsibility to prepare students and provide the employment-related content. Yet it appeared the lecturers at the University of Canterbury perceived preparing graduating-year students for employment more a service they offered to meet the needs of the student and school community rather than a contractual responsibility they upheld to meet legal, institutional or qualification requirements. Given the lack of available documented information in the employment-related area, and the current limitations in the alternative ways students could attempt to glean beginning teacher employment-related information at the University, the provision of this service is important. Therefore, although arguably not the 'core' business of the university, these findings implied the preparation of

graduating-year students for the employment process within the BTchLn (Primary) qualification was an important and valued practice currently implemented at the University of Canterbury.

Lecturers considered the development of curriculum vitae, understanding the job application process, mock interviews and 'Principals Day' as essential components of an employment preparation programme

The findings indicated that lecturers deemed some aspects of the current employment preparation programme for BTchLn (Primary) graduating year students to be essential. The development of curriculum vitae, understanding the application process, conducting mock interviews and 'Principals Day' were all highly valued by the lecturers. Interestingly, the graduates highlighted this same content when asked to identify the key components of an employment preparation programme. Broadley & Broadley (2004) and Liu & Johnson (2006) similarly identified the interview component as important in preparing teachers for employment.

However, the findings did indicate that there were some differences amongst the lecturers' views regarding the relative importance they placed on other aspects of the current preparation programme, such as developing a teaching philosophy. For example, only four of the lecturers considered a teaching philosophy to be an essential component. Likewise, the principal group varied in their support for including a teaching philosophy in an application package furnished by a graduate. Three lecturers highlighted the benefit of inviting recent graduates to talk with students while five did not. One exception to the current preparation programme was a lecturer working in a region of New Zealand that has an undersupply of relieving teachers. That lecturer suggested that the current programme ought to address relief teaching in greater depth. These findings show that flexibility in the content of a preparation programme for graduating-year students is desirable if the particular needs and interests of students are to be met.

Although the employment-related content included in the BTchLn (Primary) qualification appeared to satisfy the needs of graduating-year students, the process was deemed to be complex, time-consuming and stressful

These findings intimated that there were factors outside of the preparation programme that could affect a graduate's ability to prepare for employment and that these could in turn affect their feeling of preparedness. Many of the graduates suggested they found the employment preparation particularly stressful because they had to apply for multiple positions at the same time they were completing their studies. Some indicated that making important decisions about their future, in an environment that had changed from being collegial to competitive, was also challenging. Another aspect that was both challenging and time consuming was the need to customise their employment material in some way for each application after discovering that individual schools had differing requirements and practices throughout the employment process. These findings confirmed Wang et al's (2002) observation that employment practices in a decentralised employment system often differed because the responsibility for the employment of teachers lies with the individual school. This is an important finding for those with the responsibility for preparing graduates for the employment-process.

The graduates themselves suggested that future student teachers needed to be made aware that the application process was indeed stressful, and that early organisation was critical. In addition, the results highlighted the need for graduates to understand, as Cameron & Grundnoff (1992) proposed, that the application package they develop for one school might not suit another school. It appears that 'one size does not fit all' when applying for a teaching position. This could imply that an employment preparation programme for graduating-year students needed to introduce students to a broad range of possible employment processes and lecturers needed to be tentative in their provision of 'best practice' advice to students in this area.

The principals interviewed in the study demonstrated a range of attitudes regarding the perceived quality of graduate preparedness, and they offered a range of advice to help graduates prepare better for the employment process

Three principals indicated they were very impressed with the quality of graduates who had applied for positions at their schools while five principals indicated that their previous beginning-teacher applicants could have been better prepared. These five principals shared examples of practices from previous applicants to support their impressions of a lack of graduate preparedness. These examples suggested that there were both commonalities and differences in the employment-related expectations and preferences of principals in the Canterbury region. These findings indicated that an applicant practice that may impress one school principal might not impress another. This further reinforced the need for an employment preparation programme for graduating-year students needed to cover a broad range of possible employment processes and in doing so highlight the fact that employers may differ in their preferences and practices.

Likewise, the principals offered a range of advice when asked to suggest ways beginning-teacher applicants could enhance their employment-related practices. Again, some of the advice they offered was conflicting and some common. The main conflict appeared in the advice they provided regarding the inclusion of material in a CV. Some principals wanted to see an academic transcript included, others did not. Similarly, some appreciated the inclusion of an emerging teaching philosophy and again, others did not. In addition, some principals indicated they liked applicants to visit the school prior to completing an application while others intimated they had no time to meet with prospective applicants prior to interview.

However, some common themes emerged from the advice the principals offered in other areas. For example, all of the principals claimed that the covering letter was an important component of the application package. Five advised graduates to substantiate the content of their CV with comments from associate teachers and five advised graduates to keep the CV brief, easy to read and professional. Three common themes

that emerged from the data warrant more in depth-discussion. These were that graduates need to:

- market their individual 'points of difference' when applying for beginning teacher positions;
- demonstrate professionalism in all stages of the employment process; and
- learn enough about the school to ascertain if it would be a 'right fit' for them, before applying for the position at that school.

Graduates need to market their individual 'points of difference' when applying for beginning teacher positions

The most prominent advice recommended by the principals in this study was that graduates should accentuate their individual 'points of difference' in the application process. They suggested they do this by emphasising the extra curricular activities they were involved in, particularly those involving working with young people, and/or by highlighting the interesting experiences they have had in their lives. This finding could suggest that principals liked to use a broad set of information when making decisions about an applicant's suitability for their school. It could alternatively suggest that many principals find it difficult to identify individual points of difference clearly in the information they currently see included in job applications from beginning teachers. This has implications for graduating-year students in light of the finding discussed in the previous section: that many students find the employment process time-consuming and stressful. It appears that many students in tertiary institutions need to work to fund their studies, and complete part-time jobs at the same time as completing their studies. The graduates in this study suggested that completing job applications concurrent with the above was already stressful and time-consuming, leaving little time in a week to include any other commitments or extra curricular activities. If principals rely on this information at the short-listing stage of the employment process, there are implications for the students who are unable to complete extra activities for very legitimate reasons. There could also be implications for teacher education organisations if the documentation they provide to students to use in the employment process is not effective for employers.

Graduates need to demonstrate professionalism in all stages of the employment process

The findings in this area suggested that beginning-teacher applicants needed to ensure they demonstrated professionalism in all stages of the employment process. The principals advised that graduates ensured there were no spelling and grammatical errors in any written material, that they demonstrated a professional knowledge and attitude in an interview situation and that they were mindful of the images they included in their CV in terms of what these might represent to a prospective employer. This appears to be a logical practice to accentuate within an employment-preparation programme for beginning teachers in particular.

The importance of demonstrating professionalism also extended into practices that graduates may not commonly identify as part of the employment process. Although only one principal suggested graduates review their 'internet footprint' before they applied for teaching positions, this finding is noteworthy. This principal outlined his practice of putting the names of his potential shortlisted applicants into the internet search engine 'Google'. He then reviewed all of the information he could find online about this applicant and used this as supporting evidence when making his final selection of applicants to interview. When a group of graduating-year students discussed this finding this year, they initially seemed annoyed and amazed that prospective employers might try to access information about them 'online' that they deemed to be 'private'. Most of the students admitted they paid scant attention to the access settings on their Bebo and Facebook sites and then realised that if the access settings were not set to 'private', all of their information would be available in the public arena. These findings suggested that internet privacy and the notion of an internet footprint are valuable inclusions in an employment preparation programme for graduating year students. This caution about the implications of employers accessing internet data is a good example of the way employment practices are changing in the workplace. It is unwise to think that this preparation knowledge remains static for all time.

Graduates need to learn enough about the school to ascertain if it would be a 'right fit' for them, before applying for the position at that school

Many of the principals advised graduating-year students to ensure they demonstrated knowledge of the school in their application packages, and this appeared to serve two important purposes. The first purpose was that it would demonstrate to a prospective employer that the applicant was genuinely interested in their particular school. Whilst this is important, previous research suggested the second purpose is more so - that it would enable the graduate to ascertain if the school would be a 'good fit' for them. This was identified as noteworthy in both the studies of Liu & Johnson (2006) and Harris et al (2007). Similarly, Broadley and Broadley (2004) identified 'general compatibility' as the main factor New Zealand principals used when employing a beginning teacher, further reinforcing its importance. The finding from this study suggested that appropriate ways for graduates to do this were by reviewing the schools website, visiting the school and carefully considering the job description, person specification, information about the school included in the school's application package. These findings are reinforced by Cameron & Grundnoff (1992), and in the advice provided by Duncan in her 2007 article on teacher employment.

These findings are particularly important given this study has revealed that the employment practices and expectations of employers differ in individual schools. They could suggest that there would be a greater likelihood that the application would be appropriate for the particular school if graduating-year students were encouraged in an employment-preparation programme to identify their preferences, strengths and points of difference, then supported to find schools that appeared to present a good 'fit' for these things. This would also dispel any erroneous perceptions that a 'one size fits all' approach is appropriate when applying for beginning teacher positions.

The Exit Profile Produced for BTchLn (Primary) Graduates at the University of Canterbury

The research questions that related to the exit profile produced for BTchLn (Primary) graduating-year students at the University of Canterbury were:

- what do the participants consider the purpose and usefulness of the exit profiles provided to BTchLn (Primary) graduates by the University of Canterbury?; and
- is there a justification for continuing this practice?

The following section includes a discussion of the ways in which the findings presented in Chapter Five suggest answers to these questions.

The participants had varying opinions regarding the purpose and usefulness of the exit profile produced for BTchLn (Primary) graduating-year students

The participants in the study expressed varying opinions and ideas when asked to share their perceptions of the purpose and usefulness of the exit profiles currently produced for students in the Professional Practices courses of the BTchLn (Primary) qualification. They suggested that the exit profile produced for primary graduating-year students at the University of Canterbury served two main purposes. The participants described the exit profile as a document designed for students to use to support their job applications and a document that enabled lecturers to provide summative feedback to students in relation to the quality of their achievement in their two graduating-year school placements. Two of the lecturers in the study suggested two additional purposes for the profile. One lecturer described its purpose as providing a bridge between the pre-service and in-service experiences and another indicated she used the profile as a formative assessment and motivational tool. Overall, these findings indicated that the exit profile served different purposes for different people in the study.

The majority of graduates in the study perceived the exit profile as an employment tool, although many complained they did not get it in time to use for early job applications. All of the lecturers believed the profile was designed to be a tool for students to use for employment purposes, although in addition many admitted they were aware of the issue regarding the timing. Although seven of the eight principals perceived the exit profile as an employment tool, only four of them appeared to use it at different stages of the employment process. The other half suggested the current profile had either little or no value as an employment tool, and one suggested it had little value in any way. This finding was important given that four of the lecturers perceived the exit profile to be a

valuable means to highlight the quality of individual graduates to principals in the employment process. The lecturers in the study appeared to take their responsibility in this area seriously. They perceived they were meeting the needs of the professional community by helping act as 'gatekeepers' to the profession, and they also wanted to ensure the qualities of their best graduates were evident in their profiles, so employers would be able to identify them as outstanding prospects. This was not surprising given that the credibility of any initial teacher education organisation rests on its ability to produce excellent beginning teachers.

Three of the graduates interviewed valued the profile for the summative feedback it provided them, and appreciated that this enabled them to identify both their strengths and the areas they might need to focus on in their initial years of teaching. The lecturers also appeared to value the exit profile as a vehicle to provide summative feedback to students and indicated they believed it was important they were able to document the 'quality' of a student's achievement in the profile, whether it was being used as an employment tool or for summative feedback purposes.

As noted above, although most of the participants suggested that the exit profile was useful in varying degrees as either an employment document or a feedback mechanism, many also indicated that the current profile had flaws. For example, although the findings suggested the profile had met the needs of the lecturers and some of the graduates as a summative feedback document, it appeared the profile had not met the needs of the graduates and many of the principals as an employment tool. The two main flaws that emerged from the findings related to the coded and generic nature of the language used in the profile and the participants' perceptions regarding the accuracy of the contents in the profile.

Cameron & Grundnoff reported in 1992 that the principals in their study found student exit profiles to be bland and lacking in specific information that would be useful to an employer. The findings from this study suggested that little had changed in seventeen years. Moreover, many of the principals in the study commented on the generic nature of the comments included in the exit profiles the university produced, and revealed their

tacit practice of decoding them. Two of the graduates expressed similar concerns. The majority of the lecturers identified the challenge of writing each profile as a unique document, and most expressed concern about the amount of time, knowledge and evidence it took to do this. These findings could suggest that either the exit profiles did not reflect a wide enough range in terms of the quality standards they portrayed, or that principals mainly saw the profiles of good or very good students because those students who had profiles that were 'unsatisfactory' had not included them with their job applications. Importantly, it could also indicate that the profiles needed to change in this area to become more effective as an employment tool.

The second issue that emerged related to the perceived accuracy of the profile contents with both the principals and graduates emphasising that the profiles should present accurate records of the students' achievements and qualities. Although the findings suggested the majority of the graduates interviewed believed their profile reflected them accurately, some appeared concerned that employers had no idea what evidence lecturers used when writing the quality statements in the profile and the findings did indicate that some principals were uncertain of the process lecturers used to develop them. These findings indicated that it was important principals understood both the process and the evidence lecturers used when they developed exit profiles for students.

There was a mixed expectation from the participants that the University of Canterbury continue to produce an exit profile for BTchLn (Primary) graduating-year students

Although there was a clear expectation from the graduates that the University continue to produce some form of exit profile for students, the principals and lecturers expressed varying views on this matter. Many of the lecturers in the study expressed reservations about continuing the practice of preparing exit profiles, although their reservations appeared to relate more to the feasibility of producing them in light of proposed course changes, rather than dissatisfaction with the actual product. In addition, although the findings suggested that some principals used the profiles in the employment process, others did not use them at all. These findings could suggest two things. Firstly, that there was a justification to continue creating exit profiles in their current form if the

profile's purpose was to provide valuable summative feedback to students. Secondly, that there was far less justification to continue creating exit profiles in their current form if the profile's purpose was to be an employment document for students.

Limitations of the Study

Case study research involves an in-depth examination of an instance or event: a case. By definition, they should make no claims to be typical. The specific case investigated in this study was the employment-related practices in the BTchLn (Primary) qualification at the University of Canterbury. For this reason, all of the principals involved in the study were employers in schools in the greater Canterbury region, and all of the graduates and lecturers came from the University of Canterbury. Given that the employment process for beginning teachers differs from school to school, and might differ in other regions of New Zealand, limited generalisations are warranted in relation to the specific advice provided by principals. In addition, the information gleaned from the participants in the study was retrospective, and involved the recollections of past events. The study is therefore open to the problem of memory recall.

It was my intention that this case study would represent the multiple perspectives of members from each of the three participant groups. All of the graduates involved in the study were teaching in a school in some capacity. It is possible that graduates who were unable to find employment might have offered different feedback and advice in the employment-related area. This further suggests there were limitations in the method used to disseminate the research information to potential participants during Stage One of this study.

Finally, the researcher's subjectivity is always evident in qualitative research because, as Essey (2002) suggested, "observing and writing are acts of selective attention" (p.149). As a researcher I made decisions about what to include and what to leave out when conducting this study and reporting the findings. There are always multiple ways to interpret data and I acknowledge that what I have presented in this thesis is my interpretation. As Essey also suggests, "a written research report is both less than, and

more than, the event it represents… the self is always an abiding influence both in and on our writing" (p.150).

Chapter 7 Conclusion

Introduction

The final chapter of this thesis reiterates this significance of this case study and the importance of the findings. The chapter concludes with suggestions for further related investigations in the area of beginning-teacher employment preparation and practices.

The Significance of the Study

This thesis has added rich case study data to the existing and somewhat meagre literature on the topic of the preparation of beginning teachers for employment. Its focus on a New Zealand context has allowed insights to be gained from the perspectives and experiences of school employers, BTchLn (Primary) graduates and teacher educators from one provider, the University of Canterbury College of Education. In this study, the identification of important practices when preparing graduating-year students for employment has aimed to develop a greater understanding of the beginning-teacher employment process. Although this has been a single case study and unique in its context, the approach and findings will still offer others working in teacher education organisations ideas for reviewing their employment preparation practices for initial teacher education students. More immediately, the findings will inform a number of qualification reviews at the University of Canterbury where I am employed as a lecturer.

The Importance of the Findings

This case study has revealed that the process teacher-education graduates experience when applying for beginning-teacher positions in the Canterbury region is both complex and varied. Considerations include when, and even if, a preparation programme needs to be included within their initial teacher education qualification at Canterbury University, and what is included in a preparation programme for initial teacher education students should this occur. This study has confirmed the value of the University of Canterbury's employment preparation programme in the BTchLn (Primary) qualification. The study

has shown that such a programme continues to serve a useful function that satisfies the needs of both the school and student community in its bridging of the gap between the initial teacher education qualification and the two-year provisional registration period in schools. The timing of when to introduce students to the employment process has become an important consideration for those delivering such programmes. This study has highlighted that attention to such preparation needs to be included earlier in the year rather than being an after-thought at the end of the formal teacher education programme for graduating year students.

Lecturers in the Professional Studies courses in the BTchLn (Primary) qualification at the University of Canterbury have modified the course content over many years to encompass a range of employment-related content and practices in their attempts to make the process easier for their graduating year students. This case study has uncovered particular strengths and weaknesses within those current employment-related practices. For example, the strengths have included the development of curriculum vitae, understanding the application process and job packages, conducting mock interviews, and 'Principals Day'. However, one aspect of the current employment preparation, the student exit profile, has not worked well largely due to misconceptions about its function and purpose held by lecturers and the employing principals, who differ in their understandings. That their views are different signals a need for change in the current programme so there is a shared understanding of how this aspect contributes to the employment chances of graduating student teachers. Moreover, this study has revealed that schools in the Canterbury region have developed their own individual employment practices and preferences in the employment-related area. Acceptance of this reality adds to the complexity of this preparation because student teachers need to realise that the expectations and practices of employers in the primary school sector will differ and they need to accommodate these differences in the ways they prepare for employment. For the lecturers, this variation between employing schools' practices necessitates the need for the preparation to include a broader range of strategies than might have been anticipated. A key finding has been to discover that there is no one strategy or process which schools are using.

The principals in the region had three particular messages to convey. These were that graduates needed to market their individual 'points of difference' when applying for beginning teacher positions, demonstrate professionalism in all stages of the employment process and learn enough about a school to ascertain if it would be a 'right fit' for them before applying for the position at the school. These findings suggest beginning teachers should attempt to identify beginning teacher positions that present as a good fit for them and then customise their applications to communicate this to the employer and confirm that 'one size does not fit all' when applying for beginning teacher positions in this region of New Zealand.

Teacher education organisations have a responsibility to examine their practices to ensure they are preparing their students well for the teaching profession. Given employment preparation is currently an integral component of two compulsory courses in the BTchLn (Primary) qualification, lecturers will examine these practices when they conduct their yearly review of the current courses, and again when they contribute to the BTchLn (Primary) qualification review. This study has made a valuable contribution in this area because of the triangulation of data sources from principals, lecturers and students to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current programme, and their suggestions for the future.

The importance of this preparation programme cannot be emphasised enough since beginning teachers represent the future of the teaching profession (Education Review Office, 2004; Murray, 2006). Given that a decentralized employment-system currently operates in New Zealand, each school's Board of Trustees has the responsibility for the employment of the teachers in their school. This means employers in New Zealand have the power to ensure that the teachers they employ fit well into the school culture. They also control the employment procedures that they follow. This decentralised system may be of benefit to schools but this study has revealed that it has made the process of preparing, and applying, for teaching positions incredibly complex for beginning teachers. If new graduates do not secure a teaching position, there is the potential that they could be lost from the profession, and the time, money and energy they invested completing their initial teacher education qualification wasted. The findings from this

study suggest that the actual practice of preparing graduating-year students for beginning-teacher employment process could in fact be the most important employment practice of all.

Further Research Opportunities

Further systematic inquiries are needed in the area of preparation for beginning-teacher employment to enhance and inform the employment practices of schools, graduates and teacher education organisations. Future investigations might usefully explore topics such as examining how graduates try to identify 'right fit' with a school before choosing to apply for a position could be of value for teacher education organisations and graduates. This would extend Broadley and Broadley's 2004 study of how school principals in New Zealand identified this when selecting their beginning teachers. Another suggestion includes investigating the selection procedures schools have used at the shortlisting and interviewing stage of the employment process. Such ideas would extend the findings of this particular study, and be of interest to teacher education organisations, graduates and school principals.

In addition, there is further scope to explore the role of the initial teacher education organisation in the beginning-teacher employment process. Given the introduction of the New Zealand Teachers Councils' Graduating Teacher Standards, research that explores the relationship between the standards and exit documentation produced for graduates and/ or employers by teacher education organisations would also be both timely and topical. For example, how important is it that a teacher education organisation measures 'how well' each of their graduates has met these standards upon graduation and to what extent should initial teacher education organisations convey this information to the employers of their graduates.

Finally, one aspect of this study focussed on the perceptions of lecturers at the University of Canterbury in relation to the role they played in the beginning-teacher employment process. The students involved in the study valued the service the university provided preparing them for employment. The principals suggested that they

valued having the opportunity to liaise with one initial teacher education provider in order to communicate their needs and expectations as employers better. Given that it appears teacher education organisations have some role to play bridging the gap between the initial teacher education qualification and the two-year provisional registration period in schools, this study suggests that further investigation of teacher educators and the complexity of holding professional responsibilities to multiple communities (i.e. school, student, university) is warranted.

Postscript

It is now October 2009. The first of the beginning teacher positions for 2010 were advertised in the Education Gazette in August, and some of our graduating-year students have already secured their first teaching position. The lecturers at the University of Canterbury are continuing to prepare BTchLn (Primary) graduating-year students for the beginning-teacher employment process within the Professional Studies courses. In selecting the focus for this study, I anticipated that the findings of my study could stimulate discussions that would help inform the decision-making in a number of upcoming qualification and course content reviews at the University of Canterbury. This has happened. The findings highlighted some of the strengths and weaknesses of the current employment-related practices implemented in the graduating-year Professional Studies and Professional Practice courses and some changes have been subsequently made to these practices. For example, there has been a suspension of the practice of producing exit profiles for graduating-year students. Further discussion with the whole of the graduating-year Professional Practice team is still pending on this suspension for the future. A new formative assessment document is currently being trialled as an alternative way of providing both formative and summative feedback to graduating year students. In addition, some of the suggestions the research participants made regarding additions to the Professional Studies content have been included in this year's course. There is also an intention to share pertinent findings from this study with all of the BTchLn (Primary) graduating-year students.

Designing and conducting this instrumental case study has been both an enlightening and challenging journey for me as a researcher. It has caused me to appraise my own practices in the employment-related area and enabled me to have some enlightening conversations with members of the school community in the Canterbury region. I hope we continue to invite people from this community to work in partnership with us as we now move forward and develop a new initial teacher education degree for initial teacher education students at the University of Canterbury. Their opinions, perspective and ideas are plentiful, and deserve to be valued.

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Appendix 1: Sample Student Exit Profile

Personal professional qualities

******* is an extremely competent, personable beginning teacher who approaches all aspects of her work with a high degree of professionalism, maturity and diligence. A reflective, conscientious practitioner, ******* actively seeks and responds to any feedback that will further her professional growth. She sets and achieves very high standards for herself, and has consistently demonstrated that she has the skills and attributes to be an effective, enthusiastic member of any professional team. ******* is an enjoyable person to relate to, on both a personal and professional level.

Relationships and communication

****** is able to establish very positive, professional relationships with students, staff and parents. She has a calm, consistent yet confident teaching style, is extremely approachable and takes a genuine interest in the well-being of her students. She uses questioning effectively to promote higher order thinking and gives clear instructions that are well -suited to the particular age group of her students. ******** has consistently demonstrated a very high level of professional oral and written language skills.

Planning, teaching and assessment skills

This is an area of strength for ********* who approaches all aspects of her planning, preparation and teaching diligently. ******** produces comprehensive planning and organizes all written material in a systematic manner. She ensures that her programmes are of high interest and that they involve purposeful, engaging, age appropriate learning experiences. She monitors the progress and achievement of her students carefully and she provides them with useful formative feedback. *********has demonstrated considerable flexibility within her delivery and she continually adjusts her programmes to meet the emergent needs and interests of her students.

Professional knowledge

Well grounded in her understanding of the curriculum documents, ********* is able to design effective units of work that endeavour to meet the different learning needs of her students. During her initial teacher education qualification, ******** has completed a full range of courses that cover all of the school curriculum areas and she has a particular strength in Te Reo Maori. She has completed school placements within a variety of socio-economic areas. In addition, *******has experienced 18 weeks of teaching within an International School in China in 2007.

Classroom organisation and management

********* calm, friendly yet firm manner ensures that a positive learning environment is established and then maintained in the classroom. She has a genuine desire to provide a high-quality learning environment for the students in her class and establishes high expectations for their individual progress, achievement and behaviour. She uses a variety of effective low-key behavioural management strategies and she works well with individuals who need extra support in this area. Overall, ******** has demonstrated all of the skills of a very effective beginning teacher

Appendix 2: Research Information and Consent Forms

Preparing Graduates for the Beginning Teacher Employment Process in the Primary School Sector:
A Case Study

Information for Participants

My name is Nicki Dabner and I am a Senior Lecturer involved in the design and delivery of primary initial teacher education qualifications (BTchLn & GDipTchLn) within the University of Canterbury College of Education (UCCoEd). I am currently undertaking research for my Master of Teaching and Learning Thesis and I would like to invite you to participate in this study, which focuses upon preparation of graduates for the beginning-teacher employment process in the Primary/Intermediate school sector.

I believe teacher educators, graduates and principals have an important contribution to make in both developing sound employment-related practices within our initial teacher education programme and ensuring graduates are well prepared for the beginning teacher employment process. Within this research, I intend to record the perceptions of people within these three groups on the importance of the practices involved in the preparation process. I will ask you to share your experiences and perceptions of the employment-related area, and share any suggestions you have that could help graduates prepare better for the employment process. I will also ask you for comment on the value and contents of the exit profiles currently provided to BTchLn (Primary) graduates.

The research findings will support the redevelopment of the current practices within the BTchLn (Primary). They will also be of interest to other pre-service organisations, and all graduating students applying for teaching positions. As there is little current New Zealand research in this area, I anticipate that the findings will be presented at education conferences, and articles based on the research will be submitted to professional journals for publication.

I will be gathering my data in two stages but you can choose to only be involved in stage one if you prefer. Participation in stage one will involve you completing a short survey. Participation in stage two will involve an interview lasting 20-30 minutes. This interview will be audiotaped, and subsequently transcribed.

The University of Canterbury College of Education Ethical Clearance Committee has reviewed and approved this study. Although the University of Canterbury will be named in the research, the names of any individual participants and schools will not be included. Your confidentiality will be respected at all times. The Information recorded in your interview will be used for illustrative purposes only, and pseudonyms will be used within the final paper. You can choose to withdraw from the research at any time and if you do so, any material related to your contribution will be destroyed. If you have any complaints you may also contact the Chair of the University of Canterbury Ethics Committee; see contact details on the following page.

If you would like to participate in stage one of this study, please complete the attached survey and consent form and return this to the researcher via email: nicki.dabner@canterbury.ac.nz . Alternatively, this can be mailed to 61 Nortons Road, Avonhead, Christchurch.

If you have any particular questions or would like to discuss your involvement in this study, please feel free to contact me via the email address or contact phone numbers recorded below. I look forward to meeting with you and thank you for the contribution that you will make to what I believe is an area worthy of investigation.

Many thanks
Nicki Dabner

Senior Lecturer
School of Literacies and Arts in Education
University of Canterbury College of Education
Nicki.dabner@canterbury.ac.nz
Direct Dial: 3458452
Fax: 33484311

Date: 26/11/2007

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1. This project has received ethical approval from the University Of Canterbury College Of Education Ethical Clearance Committee.

2. Complaints may be addressed to:
    Associate Professor J Greenwood, Chair, Ethical Clearance Committee
    College of Education, University of Canterbury
    Private Bag 4800, CHRISTCHURCH   Telephone: 345 8390

Consent form for participants

I _____consent to participate in the research project conducted by Nicki Dabner: ***Preparing Graduates for the Beginning Teacher Employment Process in the Primary School Sector: A case study.***
I understand that:

- ✓ my participation in this project is voluntary and I am free to discontinue my participation at any time without penalty

- ✓ the information supplied by me will be treated in strict confidence

- ✓ no primary schools or individual participants will be named within the research

- ✓ the information gathered within the research will be stored securely for a three-year period, and after that period of time the information will be destroyed

- ✓ at my request, I can receive additional explanation of the study at any time

- ✓ the results of this study may be submitted for publication to national and international journal(s) and presented at suitable conferences

Name:
Participant category   (Please circle): Principal   Graduate   Teacher Educator
Signed:
Date:

Appendix 3: Principals' Questionnaire

Preparing Graduates for the Beginning Teacher Employment Process in the Primary School Sector: A Case Study *Questionnaire for principals*	

Principal Contact Details
Name:
School:
Contact phone number:
Contact email address:

Information about your School
- **Type of school:**
- **Location of school:**
- **Number of students in 2007:**
- **Number of full time teaching staff :**

Q1. Have you received a job application / curriculum vitae from a beginning teacher within the last three year (2005-2007)	**Yes** **No**
Q2. Have you interviewed a beginning teacher for a position at your school within the last three years (2005-2007)	**Yes** **No** **(If yes, please answer Q3.)**
Q3. How well prepared (for the employment process) did you find the majority of beginning teachers who applied for a teaching position at your school?	**1. Very well prepared** **2. Well prepared** **3. Reasonably well prepared** **4. Not very well prepared** **5. Inadequately prepared**
Q4. Should employment-related content be included within compulsory final year courses for graduating BTchLn (Primary) students?	**Yes No Undecided**
Q5. As an employer, is it useful to have initial teacher education providers' comment upon the **quality** of a graduate in some form of exit document?	**Yes No Undecided**
Many thanks for your responses so far. I will be conducting follow-up interviews with a range of participants in order to explore these issues in more depth. This interview can be conducted via telephone if you wish.	Would you like to participate in a short (20-30 minute) semi-structured interview scheduled at a date/ time and place that will suit you **Yes No** If yes, please indicate your preferred month(s) **November 2007 December 2007** **January 2008 February 2008** **March 2008 April 2008**
Signed:	**Date:**

Please return to Nicki Dabner via email to (nicki.dabner@canterbury.ac.nz) or via mail: Nicki Dabner, 61 Nortons Road, Avonhead, Christchurch

Appendix 4: Graduates' Questionnaire

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Preparing Graduates for the Beginning Teacher Employment Process in the Primary School Sector: A Case Study
<i>Questionnaire for BTchLn (Primary) graduates</i></td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">
<u>Contact Details</u>
Name:
Contact phone number
Contact email address:

<u>Employment history information</u>
• Are you currently teaching :Yes   No
• If yes, are you: Full time   Part time   Relieving (long term)   Relieving (casual)
• If no, are you currently applying for teaching positions: Yes   No
• What year did you graduate: 2005   2006   2007
</td></tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1. Should employment-related content be included within the final year professional studies courses for graduating students?</td>
<td>Yes   No   Undecided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2. How well did the employment-related content in your final year professional studies courses help to prepare you for the beginning-teacher employment process?</td>
<td>1. Extremely well
2. Very well
3. Reasonably well
4. Not very well
5. Inadequately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3. Do you think it is one of the responsibilities of a teacher educator provider to be able to comment upon the quality of a graduate in an exit document?</td>
<td>Yes   No   Undecided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4. Have you included a copy of your exit profile within your curriculum vitae when you have applied for a beginning teacher position?</td>
<td>Yes   No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><i>Many thanks for your responses so far.</i>
I will be conducting follow-up interviews with a range of participants in order to explore these issues in more depth.
This interview can be conducted via telephone if you wish.</td>
<td>Would you like to participate in a short (20-30 minute) semi-structured interview scheduled at a date/ time and place that will suit you
Yes   No

<u>If yes, please indicate your preferred month(s)</u>

November 2007   December 2007
January 2008   February 2008
March 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signed:</td>
<td>Date:</td>
</tr>
</table>

Please return to Nicki Dabner via email to (nicki.dabner@canterbury.ac.nz) or via mail to:
Nicki Dabner, 61 Nortons Road, Avonhead, Christchurch

Appendix 5: Lecturers' Questionnaire

Preparing Graduates for the Beginning Teacher Employment Process in the Primary School Sector: A Case Study *Questionnaire for BTchLn (Primary) EDPS staff*	

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2"><u>Contact Details</u>
Name:
Contact phone number:
Contact email address:
<u>Information about your EDPS involvement</u>
Current involvement in EDPS-Delivery mode: Regional   Distance   Campus</td></tr>
<tr><td>Q1. How well do you think the employment-related content currently included in the final year EDPS courses prepares our graduates for the beginning-teacher employment process?</td><td>1. Extremely well
2. Very well
3. Reasonably well
4. Not very well
5. Inadequately</td></tr>
<tr><td>Q2. Should employment-related content continue to be included in the EDPS courses for graduating BTchLn (Primary) students?</td><td>Yes   No   Undecided</td></tr>
<tr><td>Q3. Should the employment-related content be compulsory for all final year students?</td><td>Yes   No   Undecided</td></tr>
<tr><td>Q4. Is it one of the responsibilities of a teacher education provider to comment upon the quality of a graduate in some form of exit document?</td><td>Yes   No   Undecided</td></tr>
<tr><td>Q5. Should we continue the practice of developing an exit profile for our graduating BTchLn (Primary) students?</td><td>Yes   No   Undecided
(If yes, please answer Q6.)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Q6. Should we retain the exit profile in its current form (including qualitative comments)?</td><td>Yes   No   Undecided</td></tr>
<tr><td><i>Many thanks for your responses so far.</i>
I will be conducting follow-up interviews with a range of participants in order to explore these issues in more depth. This interview can be conducted via telephone if you wish.</td><td>Would you like to participate in a short (20-30 minute) semi-structured interview scheduled at a date/ time and place that will suit you
Yes   No

<u>If yes, please indicate your preferred month(s)</u>

November 2007   December 2007
January 2008   February 2008</td></tr>
<tr><td>Signed:</td><td>Date:</td></tr>
</table>

Please return to Nicki Dabner via email to (nicki.dabner@canterbury.ac.nz), via mail to Nicki Dabner, 61 Nortons Road, Avonhead, Christchurch or via internal mail (School of Literacies and Arts)

Appendix 6: Summary of Stage One: Principal Participant Returns Primary (up to year 6)

Return	School Type P-FP-I	Location R-SR-C	No of staff	Q1 Y N	Q2 Y N	Q3 1-5	Q4 Y N U	Q5 Y N U	Interview Y N
1	P	City	29	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	Yes
5	P	City	17.5	yes	yes	3	yes	yes	no
7	P	City	5	Yes	Yes	2	Und	Yes	no
8	P	City	28.5	Yes	Yes	3	Yes	Yes	yes
13	P	City	21.92	Yes	Yes	3	Yes	Yes	yes
14	P	City		Yes	Yes	3	Yes	Yes	yes
17	P	City	18	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	Yes	yes
23	P	City	28.3	Yes	Yes	3	Yes	Yes	yes
24	P	City	5	Yes	Yes	2	Und	Yes	no
28	P	City	8	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	Yes	yes
29	P	City	18	Yes	Yes	3	Und	Yes	no
30	P	Rural	6	Yes	Yes	3	Yes	No	yes
34	P	City	8	Yes	No		Yes	Yes	no
38	P	Semi-Rural	2	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	yes
40	P	City	4	No	No		Yes	Yes	no
42	P	City	6	Yes	Yes	¾	Yes	Yes	yes
43	P	City	28	Yes	Yes	2	Und	Yes	yes
44	P	City	12.5	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	Yes	yes
46	P	Rural	12	Yes	Yes	2	Und	Yes	yes
48	P	Rural	6	Yes	Yes	3	Yes	Yes	yes

Summary of Stage One: Principal Participant Returns
Full primary (up to year 8)

Return	School Type P-FP-I	Location R-SR-C	No of staff	Q1 Y N N	Q2 Y N N	Q3 1-5	Q4 Y N U	Q5 Y N U	Interview Y N
2	FP	City	18	Yes	Yes	3	Yes	Yes	no
3	FP/area	Rural	19	Yes	Yes	2	Und	Yes	Yes
4	FP	Rural	7.1	Yes	Yes	3	Yes	Yes	no
6	FP	Rural	6	Yes	Yes	3	Yes	Yes	yes
9	FP	Semi Rural	16	Yes	Yes	2	Und	Yes	no
10	FP	City	7	Yes	Yes	3	Und	Yes	no
11	FP	City	20	Yes	Yes	1	No	Yes	no
12	FP	Semi Rural	24	Yes	Yes	3	Yes	Yes	yes
15	FP	City	7	Yes	Yes	1	Und	Und	no
16	FP	City	6	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	Yes	yes
18	FP	City	12	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	no
19	FP	Rural	3	Yes	Yes	4	Yes	Yes	yes
20	FP	City	16	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	no
21	FP	City	5	Yes	Yes	3	Und	Und	No
22	FP	City	20	Yes	Yes	3	Yes	Yes	yes
25	FP	Semi Rural	7	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	yes
26	FP	Rural	4	Yes	No		Yes	Yes	No
27	FP	Semi Rural	4	Yes	Yes	3	Yes	Yes	no
32	FP	City	20.23	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	Yes	yes
35	FP	City	20+	Yes	Yes	4	yes	No	yes
36	FP	Semi-Rural	9	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	Yes	yes
37	FP	Semi-Rural	24	Yes	Yes	3	Yes	Yes	yes
39	FP	City	21	Yes	Yes	3	Yes	Yes	yes
41	FP	Semi-Rural	4.7	No	Yes	3	Yes	Yes	no
45	FP	Semi-R	17	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	Yes	no
49	FP	Rural	8	Yes	Yes	3	Yes	Yes	no

Summary of Stage One: Principal Participant Returns
Intermediate Schools

Return	School Type P-FP-I	Location R-SR-C	No of staff	Q1 Y N	Q2 Y N	Q3 1-5	Q4 Y N U	Q5 Y N U	Interview Y N
33	Int	City	33	Yes	Yes	3	Yes	Und	yes
47	Int	City	17	Yes	Yes	3	Und	No	No
50	Int	City	15.8	Yes	Yes	3	Yes	Yes	yes

Appendix 7:   Summary of Stage One: Graduate Participant returns

Return No	Teaching?	Full T Pt T Relieving	Graduated	Q1 Y/N	Q1 1-5	Q3 Y/N	Q4 Y/N	Interview Y/N
1	Yes	FT	2007	Y	2	Y	N	yes
2	Yes	R	2007	Y	3	Y	N	yes
3	Yes	R	2006	Y	3	Y	N	Yes
4	Yes	FT	2006	Y	2	Y	Y	Yes
5	Yes	FT	2006	Y	2	Y	Y	No
6	Yes	FT	2007	Y	1	Y	N	?
7	Yes	FT	2006	Y	3	Y	N	Yes
8	Yes	FT	2007	Y	2	Y	Y	Yes
9	Yes	FT	2007	Y	3	Y	Y	Yes
10	Yes	R	2006	Y	¾	Y	Y	Yes
11	Yes	FT	2007	Y	¾	Y	Y	Yes
12	Yes	FT	2006	Y	2	Y	Y	Yes
13	Yes	FT	2007	Y	1	Y	Y	Yes
14	Yes	FT	2006	Y	3	Y	Y	Yes
15	Yes	FT	2006	Y	2	Y	Y	Yes
16	Yes	FT	2006	Y	2	Y	N	Yes
17	Yes	R	2007	Y	2	Y	N	Yes
18	Yes	FT	2007	Y	2	Y	Y	No
19	Yes	Ft	2006	Y	2	Y	N	Yes
20	Yes	FT	2006	Y	2	Y	Y	Yes
21	Yes	R	2006	Y	3	Y	Y	Yes
22	Yes	FT	2006	Y	4	Y	Y	Yes
23	Yes	FT	2006	Y	1	Y	Y	Yes
24	Yes	FT	2007	Y	2	Y	Y	No
25	Yes	FT	2006	Y	2	Y	Y	No
26	Yes	R	2007	Y	2	Y	Y	Yes
27	Yes	FT	2007	Y	2	Y	Y	No

Appendix 8: Summary of Stage One: Lecturer Participant Returns

Return Number	Regional	Distance	Campus	Q1 1-5	Q2 Y N U	Q3 Y N U	Q4 Y N U	Q5 Y N U	Q6 Y N U	Int
1FP			✔	1	yes	yes	undecided	undecided	undecided	yes
2GE			✔	2	yes	yes	yes	yes	undecided	yes
3VN	✔			2	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no
4 AMH	✔			3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Und	yes
5 BR	✔			2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Undecided	Undecided	yes
6 PS		✔		2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	yes
7 JW		✔		4	Und	No	Und	Und	und	yes
8 LM	✔			2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Undecided	yes
9 FG			✔	2	Yes	Yes	Undecided	Yes	No	yes
10 CH	✔			2	Yes	Undecided	Yes	Yes	yes	yes
11 SW			✔	2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Undecided	yes
12 LW			✔	1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	yes

Appendix 9: Stage One Analysis: Principal Returns

- 23.5% return from principals on the Canterbury Principals Association email list
- 20 returns (40%) from schools up to year 6; 26 returns (52%) from full primary schools and three returns (6%) from Intermediate schools
- Eight schools (16%) were rural; nine (18%) were semi-rural and 33 (66%) were city schools
- Four schools (8%) have under 5 staff: 16 (32%) have between 5-10 staff; 16 (32%) have between 11-20 staff and 11 (22%) have over 20 staff.
- 29 principals have indicated they would be interested in a follow up interview if selected.

Up to year 6	41%	Rural	17%	>5 staff	8%
Full primary	53%	Semi-rural	19%	5-10 staff	35%
Intermediate	6%	City	34%	11-20 staff	35%
				<20 staff	22%

Questions related to the employment related content in the EDPS courses
Question one: Have you received a job application / curriculum vitae from a beginning teacher within the last three years (2005-2007)
- 49 schools (98%) have received an application from a beginning teacher in the last 3 years

Question two: Q2. Have you interviewed a beginning teacher for a position at your school within the last three years (2005-2007)
- 47 schools (94%) have interviewed a beginning teacher within the last three years. Of the three who have not, one was rural (4 staff) and two cities (4 staff and 8 staff).

Question three: Q3. How well prepared (for the employment process) did you find the majority of beginning teachers who applied for a teaching position at your school?

1-5 rating used.
1. Very well prepared
2. Well prepared
3. Reasonably well prepared
4. Not very well prepared
5. Inadequately prepared
- Seven principals (14%) believed the majority of beginning teachers are very well prepared: 12 principals (24%) believed they were well prepared; 25 principals (50%) believe they were reasonably well prepared; 2 (4%) believe they were not very well prepared. One respondent did not indicate in this area. One indicated both a 3 and a 4.

Question four: Should employment-related content be included within compulsory final year courses for graduating BTchLn (Primary) students?
- 38 principals (76%) believe that the content should be included within compulsory courses; 11 principals (22%) were undecided and 1 respondent believed it should not be included.

Questions related to the exit profiles
Question five: Q5. As an employer, is it useful to have initial teacher education providers' comment upon the **quality** of a graduate in some form of exit document?

- 42 principals (84%) believe it is useful; three principals (6%) believe it is not useful and three (6%) were undecided.

Summary and key questions arising:
The vast majority of principals who responded have received an application from a beginning teacher in the last three years and 94% have actually interviewed a beginning teacher in this time. Interesting statistic!

38% of the principals surveyed appear to be happy with the preparedness of graduates who have applied for positions at their schools, but 50% (the majority) believe they were only 'reasonably well prepared'. What needs to be improved?

While the majority believe that employment related matters should be a compulsory part of the pre-service programme, 22% are undecided. Why?

84% of the principals find the exit profile useful, but 12% don't or are undecided? Why is this? Is it the format or the content??

Appendix 10: Stage One Analysis: Graduate returns

- Approximately 13% return from the graduates, although unsure of total number that may have received the research information package as quite a few email accounts are no longer active in GradNet. Three surveys were returned via mail, the rest via email.
- All respondents are currently teaching
- 21 (77%) are teaching full time, six (22%) are relieving
- 12 (45%) graduated in 2007, 15 (55%) graduated in 2006.

Graduated	% of returns	Currently teaching	% of returns
2007	45%	Full time	78%
2006	55%	Relieving	22%

Questions related to the employment related content in the EDPS courses
Question one: Should employment-related content be included within the final year professional studies courses for graduating students?
- All graduates surveyed (100%) believed that employment related content should be included within the final year EDPS courses.

Question two: How well did the employment-related content in your final year professional studies courses help to prepare you for the beginning-teacher employment process?
1- 5 rating scale used:
1. Extremely well
2. Very well
3. Reasonably well
4. Not very well
5. Inadequately
- Two graduates (7%) believed the content prepared them extremely well
- Fifteen (55%) believed the content prepared then very well
- Eight (22%) believed the content prepared them reasonably well
- Three (11%) students believed the content did not prepare them very well
- Two students were undecided (indicating both a 3 and 4).

Questions related to the exit profiles
Question three: Do you think it is one of the responsibilities of a teacher educator provider to be able to comment upon the quality of a graduate in an exit document?
- All graduates surveyed (100%) believed that it is the responsibility of a TEO to comment upon a graduate within an exit document.

Question four: Q4. Have you included a copy of your exit profile within your curriculum vitae when you have applied for a beginning teacher position?
- Nineteen (70.3%) of the students surveyed included a copy of their profile within their CV's.
- Eight (29.7%) did not, although some indicated that this was because it was not available when they applied for a position.

Summary:
All of the graduates who returned surveys believe that employment related content should be included within the EDPS graduating-year courses and that TEO's should comment upon the quality of graduates within an exit profile.

62% believed the were either extremely or very well prepared by this content, 22% reasonably well, but still some believe it did not?

The majority did include their profile within their CV's and some how didn't indicated this was because it was not available at the time it was needed.

Questions: In what ways could the course content be changed to further improve its effectiveness? What aspects were most effective/ least effective?
Is there an issue relating to when the graduates receive their profiles?

Appendix 11: Stage One Analysis: Lecturers Returns

- 75% return from staff
- Five staff teach in two of the three areas (distance/ regional/ campus)
- Six returns regional/ six returns distance/ six returns campus
- 11 staff have agreed to be interviewed if selected

Questions related to the employment related content in the EDPS courses
Question one: How well do you think the employment-related content currently included in the final year EDPS courses prepares our graduates for the beginning-teacher employment process?
1- 5 rating scale used:
1. Extremely well
2. Very well
3. Reasonably well
4. Not very well
5. Inadequately
- 16% (2 staff) believed the current content prepared students extremely well
- 66% (8 staff) believed the current content prepared students very well
- 8% (1 staff member) believed the current content prepared students reasonably well
- 8% (1 staff member) believed the current content did not prepare students very well

Question two: Should employment-related content continue to be included in the EDPS courses for graduating BTchLn (Primary) students?
- 11 out of 12 (91 %) considered that employment related content should be included within courses for students
- 1 staff member (8%) was undecided.

Question three: Should the employment-related content be compulsory for all final year students?
- 10 out of 12 (83%) considered that the content should be compulsory, one staff member (8%) was undecided, and one (8%) believed it should be optional.

Questions related to the exit profiles

Question four: Is it one of the responsibilities of a teacher education provider to comment upon the **quality** of a graduate in some form of exit document?
- Nine (75%) of the staff believed in is our responsibility to comment upon the quality of graduates within an exit document, and three (25%) of the staff were undecided about this.

Question five: Should we continue the practice of developing an exit profile for our graduating BTchLn (Primary) students?
- Nine (75%) of the staff believe we should continue this practice and three (25%) of the staff were undecided about this.

Question six: Should we retain the exit profile in its current form (including qualitative comments)?

- Three (25%) of staff think we should retain the profile in its current form, two (16.6%) believe we should not and seven (58.4%) are undecided.

Summary:
Over 80% of the staff who completed the survey believe we prepare graduates well for the employment process.

The majority (91%) believe it should continue to be included as part of the EDPS programme, and also believe it should be compulsory (83%).

Three quarters of the staff surveyed believe it is our responsibility to comment upon the quality of our graduates in some form of exit documentation, but over half (58.4%) are undecided about what form this should take, and 16.6% believe it should be changed.

Key Questions arising:
What particular aspects of the profile are staff unhappy with? What is the cause of this dissatisfaction? Does it relate to time allowances or their ability to write the profiles accurately? Do they have any suggestions re other 'forms' for the profile?

Appendix 12: Semi-structured Interview Questions: Principals

Principals (employers)

1. Preparation for the beginning-teacher employment process

In question 3 of the survey you returned, you indicated that you have you found the UCCoEd graduates that applied for a beginning teacher position at your school to be (very well prepared/ well prepared/ reasonably well prepared/ not very well prepared/ inadequately prepared. Can you give me one or two examples that illustrate why you believe this?

*In your opinion, what could **we do** to prepare our graduates better for the employment process?*

*In your opinion, what can graduates applying for a beginning teacher position do to prepare **themselves** more effectively for the employment process?*

Do you think it is one of the roles of a teacher education provider to prepare graduates for the employment process in the primary sector within their compulsory programme? Why or why not?

2. Exit profiles
Share an example of an exit profile (un-named)
What do you consider the purposes of these exit profiles?

How much do you use the contents of these profiles to help you make decisions a) at the short-listing stage and b) at the interview stage?

What do you think if an applicant within his /her beginning teacher application / CV includes no exit profile?

*(**Refer to the exit profile example**) What aspects of these profiles do you find useful?*

*Is there any **other** type of information you would like to see included within an exit profile? What is this?*

Do you believe we should continue to develop profiles for our graduates, either in their current form or in a modified form?

Do you have any further suggestions for ways in which we could improve these profiles if we continue to produce them?

Is there anything else you would like to comment upon in relation to either of these two employment-related areas?

Appendix 13: Semi-structured Interview Questions: Graduates

Graduates from the BTchLn (Primary)

1. Preparation for the beginning-teacher employment process
Can you share with me your experiences of applying for a teaching position?

On reflection, how well prepared do you think you were for the employment process for a beginning teacher position when you graduated? What do you think helped or hindered your preparation?

*In your opinion, what can **we do** to prepare graduates more effectively for the employment process?*

*In your opinion, what can graduates applying for a beginning teacher position do to prepare **themselves** more effectively for the employment process?*

*Do you think employment related material should remain a **compulsory** aspect of the EDPS programme? Why or why not?*

2. Exit profiles

What do consider the purposes of the exit profiles we produce for graduates at the College of Education?

*In question 3 of the survey, you indicated that you **did/didn't** think that it is one of the roles and responsibilities of the teacher education provider to be able to upon the **quality** of each graduate upon completion of their pre-service qualification. Why do you believe this?*

In question 4 of the survey, you indicated that you did/didn't include your exit profile when you applied for a beginning teacher position. Why was this?

How accurately do you think the exit profile provided to you upon graduation reflected your particular skills and qualities at that time? Which aspects of the profile do you think were accurate? Not accurate?

Do you believe we should continue to develop exit profiles for our graduates, either in their current form or in a modified form? Why or why not?

Do you have any suggestions for ways in which we could improve the exit profiles if we continue to produce them?

Is there anything else you would like to comment upon in relation to either of these two employment-related areas?

Appendix 14: Semi-structured Interview Questions: Lecturers

BTchLn (Primary) EDPS graduating-year lecturers

1. Preparation for the beginning-teacher employment process

Do you think it is one of the roles of a teacher education provider to prepare graduates for the employment process in the primary sector? Why or why not?

*What do you think are the key components students **need** to cover in the employment-related area?*

In question 1 of the survey, you indicated that you think that what we currently do within the final year EDPS programme prepares out graduates (extremely well/ very well/ reasonably well/ not very well/ inadequately) for the beginning teacher process. What do you consider the strengths within our current programme?

Are there aspects you think we could improve and do you have any suggestions for improving these aspects?

*Do you think employment related material should remain a **compulsory** aspect of our EDPS programme? Why or why not?*

2. Exit profiles

What do you consider the purposes of the exit profiles we produce for graduates at the College of Education?

*In question 4 of the survey, you indicated that **you do/ do not** believe it is one of the roles and responsibilities of the teacher educator provider to be able to comment upon the **quality** of each graduate upon completion of their pre-service qualification. Why do you believe this?*

What are the greatest challenges you face when writing exit profiles?

In question 6 of the survey, you indicated that (you thought/ you did not think/ you were undecided if) we should continue to retain the exit profile in its current form (including qualitative comments). Can you explain why?

Do you think we should continue to produce some form of exit profile for our graduates? Why or why not?

If yes, do you have any suggestions for way in which we could improve/ modify these exit profiles in terms of: the content we include/ the process we follow creating them/the moderation process we have/ the format?
Is there anything else you would like to comment upon in relation to either of these two employment-related areas?