Strategies for co-constructing an initial teacher education curriculum: A school-university partnership

Massey University

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MASSEY UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
TE KURA O TE MĀTAURANGA

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

He kura tangata, he tangata kura

The Massey University Institute of Education's whakataukī above expresses the valuing of scholarship and recognises the unique talents that each member brings. It also recognises the importance of connecting with people to encourage collaborative partnerships in the field of education – just as this project aimed to do.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The intended output of this small-scale project was to develop and to document effective strategies that would facilitate the co-construction of an initial teacher education (ITE) curriculum in a school-university partnership. In so doing, this project sought to make links between theories underpinning effective pedagogies, taught at the university, with the day-to day practice of teaching and learning in three Normal Schools in the Manawatū.

Using qualitative methodology, consisting of field notes from meetings, focus group discussions, observations and interviews, the following findings were identified as supporting the effective co-construction of a university ITE curriculum with school partners:

- Building trust
- Making visible our shared values
- Willingness to share power and expertise
- Being responsive to the school context
- Promoting dialogue
- Setting and resourcing manageable goals
- Communicating effectively

The one central theme running through the findings was the importance of *building relationships* between the school and university sectors in order to create *a professional learning community with a focus on building knowledge together.* Examining this central theme more closely revealed several behaviours, dispositions and attitudes that characterised and facilitated the development of these professional relationships. These are conceptualised in this study as strategies to facilitate effective collaboration. Essential to relationship building is working with the intention to grow trust and mutual respect. Secondly, making our shared professional values visible was a key factor in enabling our successful ITE co-construction. With the goal of establishing a genuine partnership in mind, it was important to find ways to share power during the construction and delivery of the learning experiences. Being responsive to the diversity of individual school contexts was also an important element of relationship building between education sectors. Another successful strategy was to deliberately open up spaces for dialogue between school teachers and university teacher-researchers and to encourage everyone's voices to be heard. The significance of developing manageable goals, and of providing financial resources for the participating schools, also became apparent in the data analysis. Finally, effective communication played an important role in establishing and maintaining collegial partnerships between university teacher-researchers and school teachers during this collaboration.

The community-building strategies discussed and illustrated in this report serve as a guide ITE institutions in their efforts to work collaboratively with schools and centres to co-construct ITE curricula. These strategies might also serve to inform the development of workplace and tertiary partnerships in applied professions such as nursing and social work.

INTRODUCTION

Background

The establishment of Massey's Institute of Education in 2013 heralded a new era in the University's history as a leader in ITE. Situated within the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, the Institute replaces the University's 16-year-old College of Education, and has a new direction focusing on research, postgraduate teaching and related educational qualifications. The Institute is committed to producing outstanding graduates who will be able to effect systemic and transformative educational change.

The Institute of Education currently provides quality ITE programmes that promote excellence in teaching and professional activities by offering a Graduate Diploma of Teaching (ECE, Primary and Secondary). As part of a multi-campus university, the Institute of Education has well-established education community relationships in Manawatū and Auckland. Partnership relationships for the development and delivery of ITE programmes already exist with local centres, schools and kura in the Manawatū and Auckland regions. In recent years, considerable effort has been made to provide exemplary training and development to Associate Teachers through the Institute's *Lead Associate Teacher Project* in several local schools. This Ako Aotearoa-funded research focused on work in the Graduate Diploma of Teaching (Primary) run through the Manawatū campus.

Partnerships between schools and universities in New Zealand are varied and changing. The Institute works collaboratively with local and regional principals' groups to ensure that sector requirements and concerns inform programme development and evaluation. Developing closer connections between the school and university sectors in initial teacher education is now an imperative to enable excellence in teachers' professional learning. There is a call from the Ministry of Education for universities to design ITE models that require greater collaboration with schools, for example the 'clinical practice' model. To respond to this call, we need to remove the siloes between the ITE work of the university and the ITE work of schools. This was the motivation for our research; to engage in "knowledge-generating activities [about learning and teaching] in authentic contexts" (Bolstad & Gilbert, 2012, p. 5). Accordingly, two key evidence sources motivated this study: evidence from published literature about the need for university and school sectors to work more closely, as well as evidence from our professional observations and obligations.

This small-scale project saw university teacher-researchers working with three local Normal Schools; Central Normal School, College Street Normal School and Palmerston North Intermediate Normal School. The purpose of Normal Schools[1] is to model best teaching practices through expert and innovative guidance and mentoring for student teachers. Normal Schools have historically had a close relationship with their respective tertiary ITE providers. In recent years, efforts have been made to enhance this relationship (Grudnoff & Williams, 2010). Additionally, the project aimed to realise three of Massey University's key strategic goals:

- to ensure an exceptional and distinctive **teaching and learning** experience at Massey for all students;
- to strengthen our **connections** with local partners and stakeholders, creating mutual benefits;
- to **enable excellence** through providing the best working environment for student-teachers and university teacher-researchers.

The project has sought to identify strategies for *successful* co-construction. This project proposes a co-construction process in the ITE context can be deemed "successful" when the outcomes of the process include enriched academic outcomes for student teachers; the positive professional engagement of all parties; the extension of professional knowlege of all parties; effective problem-solving and conflict resolution; and the deepening of professional relationships across the School-University sector.

Introducing the researchers

Dr Alison Sewell has worked in ITE for 20 years, before that teaching in primary school sector. Currently Programme Co-leader for the Degree of Master of Teaching and Learning (MTchgLn), she teaches professional practice, context and inquiry papers. Her research interests include sociocultural pedagogy and practice in primary school settings, learning and teaching in agricultural settings and historical biography.

Dr Tracey-Lynne Cody is an experienced teacher educator, working in ITE in New Zealand for the past 12 years. Also a Programme Co-leader for Masters of Teaching and Learning (MTchgLn) and Graduate Diploma (Secondary)Teacher Education programmes, she lectures in teacher education and Arts Education across primary and secondary sectors, with a particular specialization in drama education. Her research interests include drama pedagogy and practice in school and applied theatre settings, culturally responsive teaching practice, and education for social and emotional well-being.

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[1] The first institution for teacher training in New Zealand was established within a School in Dunedin in 1876.

Dr Kama Weir has had 20 years in the primary sector, and 20 years in ITE. Her research interests include the history of health education in New Zealand, policy and practice in the implementation of health education curricula in the secondary sector and teachers' professional learning.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many researchers encourage the formation of partnerships between teachers and teacher educators based on evidence that this is one mechanism to build effective ITE programmes (Cochran-Smith, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Mason, 2013; Moody, 2009). Darling-Hammond (2010) argues this point by looking to the outstanding qualities of teacher preparation programmes in Finland and the strong partnerships between the university and school-based learning featured in these programmes. Finland's 'university-affiliated' schools are known as model schools, where prospective teachers and researchers *together* develop and model new practices and complete research on teaching and learning. She argues that this cross-sector collaboration is one factor that contributes to the high quality of teachers, internationally renowned as being the hallmark of Finland's education system.

Bolstad and Gilbert (2012) also uphold the value of cross-sector collaboration with one of the principles for 21st century New Zealand education system, emphasising the need to develop new kinds of partnerships and relationships. The key to establishing cross-sector collaboration is to initiate new power-sharing partnerships where the expertise from each sector is recognised and valued equally. It is the development of knowledge-creating professional communities comprised of school and university members that will help to remove the boundaries between the sectors. As O'Neill (2013) claimed:

> The challenge is to try and gain consensus across the 'chalk' and 'ivory' communities about which elements of the full pedagogical repertoire are best learned in the field, and how, and which in the tertiary setting, and how, and which in both settings, and how. And how these various elements should be funded, and by whom (p. 25).

These questions, essentially about the meaningful acquisition of highly specialised knowledge, were fundamental to our small scale project. The researchers in this study were motivated to open up aspects of the pedagogical repertoire contained in a core paper – *Teaching in Context 1,* originally developed by a team of university academics, so that practising teachers could share in decisions about the design of better learning experiences in the field.[2]

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[2] This shared decision-making saw planning, behavior management and biculturalism as the content knowledge to be taught and, in two cases, co-taught in school settings.

Haggar and McIntyre (2006) also maintain the importance of developing relationships between universities and schools that are truly collaborative so that practitioners become "full partners in ITE programmes, rather than viewed as providers of classrooms for students to teach in" (Grudnoff, 2011, p. 231).

The call to a *truly* collaborative partnership in teacher education is a relatively new phenomenon in New Zealand. Teacher education started in the 19th century as theoretical and practical on-the-job training where student-teachers took on the role of apprentices and assistants to learn the craft of teaching. In the early 20th century teacher education then moved into higher education institutions using a 'theory into practice' approach which yielded an 'ivory community'. Later in the 20th century teacher-education began to move back to practice-base settings in Teachers' Colleges with a liberal arts education model forming more of a 'chalk community' on the argument that there was too much theory and not enough practice. In all three models, O'Neill (2013) argues that:

> while the intended relationship between theory and practice knowledges may have been reasonably clear, the respective roles of tertiary and school or centre teacher educators, and more importantly their interrelationship, remained incoherent (pp. 25-26).

It is vital that student-teachers make connections between theory and practice during the university-based component of their ITE programme. However, it is all too common that students consider the practicum to be disconnected from the rest of their ITE programme; a stark difference noted between what is taught at the university and what is experienced by student-teachers in the field.

Encouragingly, some work has been done in New Zealand to overcome the divide between school-university relationships in the area of the practicum. Grudnoff and Williams (2010) radically re-designed the final year practicum in a primary ITE programme with local schools (i.e. using a co-constructive process). Their findings suggest that school-university relationships can be strengthened for the betterment of student-teachers' learning. Simpson and Grudnoff (2013) caution that while "consultation processes" are ideal to develop ITE programmes, there are tensions.

> Tensions are evident between those who promote a technical view with a focus on a teacher needing to know what works and those who see teachers needing to integrate theory and practice and take an evidence-based approach to developing their practice. Respect for the knowledge and expertise of all parties seems hard to achieve (p. 73).

Further research is required in order to learn more about the challenges and opportunities of ITE co-construction, and to identify ways to successfully negotiate these tensions.

The literature on school-university partnerships also highlights the challenges involved in making such partnerships successful due to differences in language, culture and

organisational priorities (Greany & Brown, 2015). These authors have studied successful school-university partnerships and suggest that the key features of effective partnerships include: school and university staff having an equal voice, explicitly valuing practitioner knowledge and priorities, creating a third space that is separate from the culture of either institution, and ensuring strategic as well as shared or distributed leadership. Interestingly, their findings match many of the key findings from the project reported here.

Two successful professional learning communities developed by Massey University staff and teachers in local primary schools also inform the project and the work of the researchers. *The Lead Associate Teacher Project* was a university-funded initiative made up of four workshops held over the course of the year. Each workshop had a particular focus to support the development of mentoring skills, as well as to provide opportunities for the teachers to work on their self-identified mentoring goals. The process of *teaching as inquiry* (Ministry of Education, 2007) was used to provide a learning framework. The goals, which highlight the attributes of a high quality mentor, were co-constructed between the teachers and university staff guided by the New Zealand Teachers Council's (2011) *Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring and Mentor Teachers.* These guidelines were designed for provisionally registered teachers to "shift away from a view of induction as 'advice and guidance' to one of skill facilitation of 'learning conversation' focusing on evidence of teachers' practice" (p. 3). The teachers used an e-portfolio to document progress on their goals. Successful completion in their role as a mentor was acknowledged at an end-of-year celebration and also provided a credentialing pathway for post-graduate study.

The second professional learning community arose through the *Practicum Innovation Project,* which aimed to co-design the practicum experience in a university-based ITE paper called *Teaching Experience 1* . University teachers worked senior staff from one Normal School, resulting in a number of innovations. These innovations included: linked postings, digital reflections requiring evidence of growth and shared school/university responsibilities for students' learning. The student-teachers and school teachers were interviewed to find out how successful the co-constructed innovations had been. Four key findings showed that student-teachers' learning was enhanced and this attributed to: i) feeling included in the school's professional learning community, ii) being given detailed and ongoing feedback and feed-forward, iii) reflecting using digital tools to provide evidence of learning, and iv) engaging in professional dialogue with peers, school teachers and university staff.

METHOD

This qualitative project was exploratory in nature. Data on the co-construction process was collected over three months, drawn from focus group discussions, email correspondence, observations from teaching episodes and reflection notes without using a pre-conceived research framework. This resulted in the development of patterns and themes in a way consistent with a grounded theory approach strategies (Charmaz, 2006). These themes and patterns were further analysed to identify the levers for co-construction, conceptualised here as *strategies* which enabled the professional collaboration to be successful.

Objectives

The key objectives were to:

- extend and enhance our current school-university relationships
- engage in and reflect on a school-university co-constructive process
- develop effective strategies for co-constructing a university curriculum with school partners.

Research question: *What strategies support the successful co-construction of an ITE curriculum?*

Data analysis

A thematic approach was used to analyse the data. Yin (2003) identifies a five phase cycle of qualitative analysis: compiling data, disassembling and reassembling it, making interpretations and reaching conclusions. As data were collected, transcriptions were *compiled* of the recorded focus group discussions and interviews. By becoming immersed in these transcripts and field notes, emergent themes were identified. Once the transcripts were coded, assigned nodes were collapsed and *reassembled* to identify noticeable themes and patterns. This led to *interpretations* being made.

The data sets from the three schools were merged to enable the three researchers to identify key themes in relation to the research questions. From these themes, successful co-construction strategies and opportunities of this collaboration were identified.

Ethical considerations

The following potential risks associated with the study were discussed with the Massey University Research Director:

- Possible school-university tensions were considered. However, the working relationships with the Principals and senior staff of the normal schools had been very

positive and successful in other projects. Managing the school-university relationships would be key. These Normal schools provide a major teaching practicum facility for the university by modelling best practices and our focus was on collaboration, so the project would build on our existing collaborative and respectful relationships.

- We did not anticipate any conflicts of interest. The research participants were the collaborating teachers and university teacher-researchers, not our ITE student teachers, nor school pupils.

- In the unlikely event that seriously poor teaching practice was observed in the school setting, the lead researcher would discuss this with the school liaison person and/or principal.

- In the case of any other difficulties arising between school staff and the research team, further advice would be sought from appropriate university colleagues as necessary.

- Data would be aggregated across the three schools so that individual participants Manawatū would remain anonymous, although the schools involved would be known.

- We ensured understandings of the research team's processes and protocols were shared through information sheets and ongoing negotiation.

- We did not include student voice or photographs of interaction because we had not gained ethical approval for this.

Participants

There were eleven participants in the study comprising of:

- 3 primary school principals
- 3 deputy principals
- 2 primary school teachers
- 3 university teacher-researchers

Data

Data were drawn from the following sources across the three Normal Schools prior to and during the 2014 academic year, in which the co-constructed ITE experiences were implemented. Because the project sought to identify the strategies for co-construction, it was important to record the discussions that took place, the roles the collaborators played and steps taken in creating these ITE learning experiences. This variously took the form of meeting notes, field notes, emails, interviews and focus group discussions. Across the three

sites, different data sources arose that worked to capture the collaborative process undertaken.

1. Meeting notes by university teacher-researchers taken at preparatory meetings held in 2013 with senior school and Institute of Education management
2. Meeting notes taken by university teacher-researchers at a school-university meeting.
3. Focus Group Discussions with participating school staff held at the beginning and at the end of the Semester 1, 2014
4. Interviews held with selected school staff at the end of Semester 1, 2014
5. Field notes, in the form of descriptive reflection, concerning observations of ITE learning experiences and working meetings
6. Communication with schools via email and phone.

In this report the generic terms "teacher" and "university teacher-researcher" have been employed to preserve the identities of participants. At times, the school a teacher came from has been indicated (Sch1, Sch2 or Sch3) to convey the breadth of views across teachers.

Research process

The first meeting was held in mid 2013 at Massey University for the school principals and senior Institute of Education staff to introduce and discuss the concept of co-constructing sections of an ITE university paper. Having established mutual interest and after gaining the approval of senior management, a second meeting was held at one of the participating schools at the end of 2013, attended by senior staff from the three schools and the three Massey University teacher-researchers.

Teaching in Context 1 [278.422] (15 credits) provided the curriculum context for the co-construction of the school-university partnership. The paper is compulsory for student-teachers enrolled in the *Graduate Diploma of Teaching (Primary),* (165 credits) ITE programme for primary teachers. The university-approved learning outcomes of the paper are:

1. critically reflect on self as learner and as professional teacher.
2. examine theories of learning and investigate a range of pedagogies that promote learning.
3. demonstrate a critical awareness of the bi-cultural and multi-cultural characteristics of the New Zealand primary educational system.
4. communicate effectively (in written and oral formats), using accurate and appropriate language conventions for clarity and purpose.

After initial whole-team meetings were held, the process for the university teacher-researchers working in each school involved meeting and negotiating content, designing learning experiences and deciding on roles, and finally enacting and reflecting on these learning episodes. Table 1 outlines the unique features of the participating school profiles.

School	Type	Decile (2014)	Roll
College Street Normal School –	Contributing	8	Over 600
Palmerston Normal Intermediate Normal School - PNINS	Intermediate	9	Over 600
Central Normal	Contributing (Includes bi-lingual unit)	4	Over 450 50% Māori

Table 1: Participating school profiles

The school-university interaction varied, as the following accounts reveal.

Co-construction process in College Street Normal School

At the second meeting, school staff chose the topic of *school-wide planning*. This led university teacher-researcher 1 to share the contents of two university sessions designed to develop understanding of the planning process including key readings. While the teacher considered herself to be an expert in this area, she was not familiar with the theory underpinning planning. It was agreed that the student-teachers would read about this planning theory and that the university teacher-researcher and teacher would together design two school-based sessions that illustrated how the theory could be applied, noting that all schools will apply the theory in different ways.

The first session saw the student-teachers meet at the school. They gathered in the staffroom where the principal welcomed them. The university teacher-researcher began the session by providing a purpose for their session and sharing that this was a co-constructed session. The teacher then led a power point presentation she had designed that took the student-teachers through the application of theory at the School. She then arranged for the students to observe in six classrooms to see if they could identify how the planning theory at the school was expressed in the classrooms. After this time of observation at different levels of the school, the student-teachers met to discuss these theory-practice links.

A second session was co-constructed that saw the student-teachers return to the school to teach a short lesson to a small group of children that required them to use some of the planning ideas and theory. As the students taught the lesson, the university teacher-researcher and the teacher observed their interactions. This led to a co-facilitated discussion with the student-teachers to reflect on their planning and teaching and to help them to make connections between theory and practice. Subsequent to this, a web-based forum was set up so that the teacher and the university teacher-researcher could continue to talk with the student-teachers about their planning, teaching and reflection experiences. The questions that guided this online forum were co-constructed.

Co-construction process in Palmerston Normal Intermediate Normal School

School staff at Palmerston Normal Intermediate Normal School chose *behavior management* as their focus. The collaboration began with the university teacher-researcher sharing the content of the university sessions historically offered within the paper and the key readings. The teacher involved was familiar with the theories and the key models the paper presented to students, and a good fit was discovered between the focus within the school and the practice of their teachers, and the models focused on within the programme. It was agreed that a learning experience that included some initial exposure to theory and identification of strategies for classroom practice would benefit the students, who could then observe these practices in classroom settings in the school. To aide the observation, the university teacher-researcher created an observation sheet with a range of strategies listed and shared this with the teacher and other leaders in the school for comment. Additions and minor edits were made in response to this feedback. Once these foundations were laid through a university session and the classroom observation, it was decided that the teacher would lead a session with students introducing the school behavior management plan and the model of social and emotional support utilized in the school. The teacher and university teacher-researcher then jointly facilitated a discussion with students to make connections between theory and practice. Students participated in this school-based learning experience over the course of a morning, and staff reflections on this process were shared in the days following to gauge the outcomes of the collaboration.

Co-construction process in Central Normal School

The third school nominated the *bi-cultural* focus of the paper. The planning was led by the senior school staff and the Team Leader of Te Arawaru (the bi-lingual team). The role of the university teacher-researcher in this case was largely a responsive one and therefore differed from the roles of other two university teacher-researchers. In terms of a balance of power that was enacted through the co-construction of the bi-cultural focus for this paper the school was dominant. This dominance was because the school and the community owned the knowledge of their bi-cultural journey. Thus the primary role for the university

teacher-researcher consisted of sharing the material used at Massey (online learning material and readings) and clarifying what the anticipated outcome of the visit to the school would be: a presentation addressing the key question of how the Treaty of Waitangi is interpreted and performed in the day-to-day life of the school.

The face to face meetings and email correspondence resulted in the student-teachers participating in a mihi whakatau (led by the children and staff of Te Arawaru) prior to a comprehensive and highly-engaging presentation by the Te Arawaru team leader. After the mihi whakatau and presentation, an open discussion was held involving the Teacher and the Team Leader of Te Arawaru. The morning finished with a tour of the school to identify bi-cultural environmental elements. The PowerPoint developed for the Team Leader's presentation was later posted on the university's online learning platform *Stream,* and has since been adapted for other audiences.

FINDINGS and DISCUSSION

The analysis of data has shown that the main enabling factor for a unversity/school co-construction of an ITE curriculum is the *building of relationships within a professional learning community*. Productive learning relationships not only supported the cognitive outcomes of the co-constructed curriculum, they were crucial to our motivation to work together and the nature of our participation.

The professional learning community was at the heart of our co-constructive interactions outlined under the following seven key themes:

- Building trust
- Making visible our shared values
- Willingness to share power and expertise
- Being responsive to the school context
- Promoting dialogue
- Setting and resourcing manageable goals
- Communicating effectively.

Successful strategies for co-constructing an ITE programme

1. Building trust

A key strategy evident across the data sets was the importance of the university teacher-researchers building relationships with their school-based collaborators which were marked by mutual trust and respect widely known in the research as a means to promote learning (Bryk & Schneider, 2003). For two of the university teacher-researchers, a relationship already existed based on previous work with students doing their practicum work and an earlier research project called *The Lead Associate Teacher Project[3]*.

> *…and I wasn't even nervous teaching with you at school. I had already built that trust and that relationship with you...so I didn't have things to overcome.*
> [Teacher]

We intentionally built trust by creating spaces to work together, actively listening to the teachers' perspectives, accommodating and building on their views, and sharing our belief in their expertise to enrich the kinds of learning experience that were offered by the university. In short, we placed value on their practice as teachers and we placed value on the possibilities that can come about through successful collaboration *'to provide the student-teacher with authentic learning opportunities.* [Teacher]

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[3] The Lead Associate Teacher Project aimed to improve the mentoring capabilities of Associate Teachers working in the Practicum papers

Physical and virtual spaces were created for working together by holding meetings at the school sites and by co-teaching in their staffroom, hall and classrooms. We also used Massey University's *Stream* e-learning platform, emails and cellphone. Our intentional shift from the university campus, our place of teaching, to the school's places of teaching was a small but significant step in creating successful co-construction.

The university teacher-researchers also actively listened to the school teachers' diverse views about their practice and about this project. It was important to enable the teachers to feel that their views were heard and that their efforts were valued by us - the university teacher-researchers. It was also important that, prior to listening to the teachers, we listened to their Principals, whose acceptance of and belief in this project paved the way to our co-construction. While continuing to listen to the teachers was important, they were also open to listening to us and the theories we taught that underpinned best practice; it was in this open exchange of ideas that we were able to engage in many learning conversations (see promoting dialogue).

> *It was the authentic links between the reading, the theory side of it and the practical application…they [student-teachers] got to see the relevance of the reading in terms of classroom practice.* [Teacher,]

While the following comment discusses the experience at Palmerston Normal Intermediate Normal School , it reflects the experience in all three participating schools.

> *What's made it successful is that you and I have had previous… you know we've known each other, we've respected each other's work, there's been a sense of trust. [Teacher-researcher]]*

> *I am certain that this whole process was helped by [Teacher's] generosity and goodwill. Having someone so willing, friendly and open to work with made collaboration easy. [Teacher-researcher]*

> *I wasn't encroaching on your teaching space and you weren't encroaching on mine, we were quite comfortable.* [Teacher]

The university teacher-researchers sought ways to demonstrate their trust in the school teachers' practical teaching experiences and expertise. We made a point of articulating how, in making our shared expertise set available to each other, a far richer learning experience could be offered to student-teachers. Through communication via email and in face-to-face meetings, we encouraged the teachers to critique what had been taught before so that we could either build on it or adapt it. Previous course notes and lecture plans were made available to teachers with the invitation for these learning episodes to be newly co-constructed. These actions and intentions, as indicated in the following excerpts, served to build all important relational trust.

> *Please find attached my draft for the students to use in their observation of classroom management next week. I wonder if you would have a quick look*

and see if there are any strategies I have overlooked, would prefer to have added or any that you are uncomfortable with? [*University teacher-researcher*]

The warm rapport, mutual respect and relational trust generated was evident throughout the data.

> *While sharing foundational material behind our stance on classroom management, we exercised a fair amount of trust in one another and left spaces for each other to work as we saw fit.* [*University teacher-researcher*]

> *I thoroughly enjoyed the experience and working with you* [*Teacher – to University-Researcher*]

As the level of trust grew, a corresponding sense of excitement grew, not only for the possibilities we were able to create for student-teachers' learning but also for our own professional learning:

> *I was actually quite excited by the whole thing.* [Teacher]

> *We began the first session by telling the students that this was the first time that [Teacher] and I had taught from a co-constructed plan – that we were both excited to be doing this knowing that it better supported their learning…* [University teacher-researcher]

> *For them (student-teachers) to see us working together was important…and I think for me as a Pāakehā, I learnt so much from the resource you created.* [University teacher-researcher]

Relational trust deepened as the success of our co-constructed efforts became apparent. There was a greater willingness for us all to be more open with each other. The school-teachers shared more of their exemplary practices and policies than were expected and university teacher-researchers shared more of their practice and underlying philosophies, and were honest in identifying some of the barriers that constrain their teaching at the university. This reciprocal sharing enabled the student-teachers to gain a far deeper insight into the complexities of teaching in New Zealand primary and intermediate schools.

This climate of mutual trust, respect and support was vital to carry the emotional demands teachers face when attempting pedagogical reforms (Hargreaves, Earl, Moore, & Manning, 2001). Greany and Brown (2015) showed from their research that the heart of reforms to develop school-university alliances is personal relationships - being open to each other's ideas, being honest and supportive of one another, as well as trusting one another. These researchers note that building alliances between universities and schools requires tremendous energy and interpersonal skills. The benefits of such personal relationships is that they "provide both the conditions and the necessary social basis for communities of learning, and through these, for joint practice development to take root within the alliance" (p. 9).

2. Making visible our shared values

The second key strategy found to be important for successful school-university co-construction was to make visible our shared professional values. These shared values include: focusing on learning, supporting learning through effective teaching, and ako (the simultaneousness of learning and teaching).

Initially, the participants from each institution strongly identified with their workplace - either to a primary/intermediate school or a university. Each school participant had a strong sense of belonging to their respective work places with its own set of core values and practices. The primary school teachers were keenly aware that their core business was to teach children not to teach ITE students.

> *The senior staff spoke of their core business being teaching of children – and were wary of the consequences for children's learning if their best teachers were called out from their classrooms.* [Meeting notes taken by University Teacher-Researcher]

Conversely, the university teacher-researchers identified as being teachers of ITE students and, in that work, they highly valued their engagement with research-led teaching practices. While both groups identified as teachers, school teachers did not strongly identify as being teacher educators. These differing values, evident in the traditional school-university divide, initially set us apart. The theory and evidence-base were separated from the craft of teaching. Being locked in our own worlds, with our own norms and language initially created a barrier to successful co-construction. We needed to use a language that was inclusive and accessible to all the participants and we needed to intentionally look for what held us together rather than dwell on what set us apart. Making such connections requires understanding the diverse "knowledge cultures" (Tsouvalis et al. 2010) brought by each member of the professional learning community. We were, after all, teachers engaged in promoting learning for a better society. The subsequent discourse shifted to emphasising the connection to our common goals. All three participating schools saw our co-construction work as mutually beneficial.

> *I like the theory and you get the practice – we all win. This will create much stronger beginning teachers?* [Teacher SCH 1]
>
> *I would like to see more of these connections with Massey.* [Teacher SCH 2]
>
> *I think it was a win, win for all because some [teachers] found they reflected on their practice and it was a springboard for professional discussion and ongoing "Teaching as Inquiry".* [Teacher SCH 3]

Another way that we created our shared values of learning and teaching was to take time to reflect together on the role that Normal Schools have historically played to model best practices and to mentor ITE students in partnership with the university. Revitalising this

guidance and mentoring role was a key impetus for the project, so it was important for the participants to not only be aware of this historic partnership but to want to revitalise it. The university staff believed that by working creatively together that a significant difference could be made to ITE. This belief was verbally communicated as well as demonstrated in the genuine welcoming of these staff into what was before a university space for learning.

> *You know, to me, it was a new partnership that you're trying to develop… I'm thrilled to see this absolute partnership...we've loved being part of this.* [Principal]

Another shared value was positioning ourselves and each other as learners. We all had something to learn from this co-construction experience, and we all understood that we needed each other to develop the ITE curriculum; no one participant had all the answers to how we would go about this, nor what might get developed. We genuinely valued each other to develop this ITE experience, knowing that it would be far richer than any one of us could achieve alone. In this way, the project became an opportunity for shared professional learning and leadership development for all the participants.

> *Hi. Great session today! Thank you for the opportunity (to learn).* [Email Teacher]

> *It (this project) was a wonderful professional challenge for our teachers, and we want to push our teachers… give them leadership roles in our school. Even though it was extra work for him, there were so many opportunities to grow, and you know, he's (Teacher) more confident… We've loved being part of this research.* [Principal]

> *For me, I learnt so much and the resource that you created ...there was so much in there…that was great learning for me.* [University Teacher-Researcher]

> *…The fact that we can see these mutual professional learning opportunities arising from this collaboration is, particularly if we have further opportunities to co-construct/co-teach.* [Teacher]

Positioning ourselves as learners, indeed expecting to learn through our mutual involvement supported the co-construction process (Turkanis et al., 2001). We came to see that effective co-construction is a genuinely interdependent activity. We both needed each other's expertise not in a co-dependent way but in a genuine needing of the other's wisdom and experience so that what transpired was superior to what could have been achieved alone. These mutual expectations had a positive effect on our shared motivation in the project (Brophy, 2010). This genuinely interdependent teaching interaction is evident in the following excerpt:

> *Rather than saying here's what you have to cover - it was here's what you've been doing, how can I chip in to build on it and develop that further I could see how I could make connections back to what you were trying to*

promote…otherwise it could seem that your university stuff's over there, and my stuff's over here. [Teacher]

It was a more co-constructed experience in the moment. [University teacher-researcher]

By enacting an ako model where the university and schools expected to learn and teach together through their mutual involvement is the hallmark of a professional learning community. Knowledge from the literature and individual experiences was deliberately shared and expertise was intentionally distributed for the purpose of everyone's professional learning (Sewell, St George, & Cullen, 2013). In this sense, we created a 'third space' which was separate from the culture of either institution. This finding aligns with the review of school-university partnerships, conducted by Greany and Brown (2015). They point out that where partnerships are more successful, a 'third space' had been intentionally created by leaders of the institutions where school and university staff had equal voice, with practitioner priorities and knowledge explicitly valued.

3. Willingness to share power and expertise

As relational trust built, the power once held by the university began to be shared. The teachers came to share the decisions that once were made only by university staff. Power-sharing was evident in the way questions were asked about possible ways forward; the university staff did not assume to know the best solution or the ultimate learning design. Aitken and Sinnema (2012) remind us that "sharing power is not the same as relinquishing all authority or abdicating all responsibility" (p. 18); rather it is about reducing dependency and increasing joint participation. Valuing the teachers' contributions supported their motivation to participate in the project, as did seeing themselves as co-learners with the university teacher-researchers.

With the goal of establishing a genuine partnership in mind, we *intentionally* looked for ways to share power during the construction and delivery of the learning experiences. This power-sharing was set in place from the outset of the project, where principals were empowered to identify the senior staff they wished to be involved in the leadership of the project, and these leaders, in turn, were empowered to identify teaching staff within their teams who might have relevant expertise to offer.

While constrained to an extent by the learning outcomes and assessment of the university paper and by the university timetable, within this framework lay a range of content areas and opportunities for the creation of rich learning experiences. A clear intention was set to design learning opportunities for students-teachers to make connections between theory and practice. We proceeded by sharing the overview of topics for the paper and allowed teachers to consider these whilst also considering the strengths of their school context and

teaching staff. In doing so, we were able to actively focus on the strengths of each school and to position schools in a way that emphasised their professional expertise. Offering this specific range of topics was also beneficial, not only in providing choice but usefully constraining the possibilities, which enabled decisions to be made more readily – thus reducing the time demanded for consultation.

> *I'd love to do planning* [Teacher]

Once the school teachers had identified a topic they believed would work for them, a university teacher-researcher was assigned to this topic and was responsible for facilitating the co-construction of the learning experience. The university teacher-researcher facilitated the consultation over the way each topic might be addressed. Each case varied. As part of sharing expertise, the university teacher-researchers were not wedded to any particular material, and were enthusiastic about locating university classes in the school context. Time was taken to identify key issues in the topic and to make connections between theory and practice, as well as identifying the pragmatic considerations of the learning episode:

> *We'd sat down prior to our teaching and there was a lot of space in between us sitting down figuring out together and the actual doing of it…to process it and think about how it was all going to work.* [Teacher]

In all three schools, presentations were held by senior staff where university teacher-researchers participated as co-facilitators and/or co-teachers. Some of these in-school sessions were preceded by university teacher-researchers, which 'front-loaded' the key theoretical underpinnings and provided literature on the topic to pre-service students.

> *[The teacher] and I talked together about the topic of classroom management and the principles we were reinforcing. We also talked about the experience some teachers had when the school implemented the Five Keys model. This discussion was really helpful when we came to the debrief session with our graduates as [the teacher] and I were able to cue off each other to develop the discussion, and to make connections between the students' experience and the theory behind this.* [University teacher-researcher]

As part of these sessions, teachers were also invited to contribute to or to develop their own resources. Their ability to do so was assisted by the funding made available to release them from other duties. Teachers also made these resources available online for the student-teachers:

> *You put the [PowerPoint] on Stream as well and one of my slides was a planning example working with PRT 2 and I chose that because I thought it was quite relevant for them so they could see this is what someone who has just started teaching has worked through*. [University teacher-researcher]

The university teacher-researchers also developed resources, taking care to consult with teachers and to accommodate the feedback received. An example comes from one

university teacher-researcher's work in developing a resource for observing classroom management, which was shared in draft form with teachers:

> *Thanks for sharing the work that you are doing with the students here at [School]. Our only comments are that this seems heavily focused on Bill Rogers' advice of managing difficult situations/students. (Which it does really well). You might want to add some more specifics on the positive stuff? Like the power of smile, evidence of a 1-1 positive connection, non-verbal affirmation. Maybe reference to "Catch-em when they're good"?* [Teacher]

Reflection on the co-construction and the sessions themselves reveals how beneficial iterative cycles of co-construction and delivery would be as both university staff and school staff learned from one another and saw new possibilities for future work:

> *I left feeling very satisfied but also aware we had only scratched the surface in terms of the Five Keys. Having had greater exposure to this model through [the teacher's] presentation, I can now see that we could develop further interactive activities to enable students to engage with this content. [The teacher] also informed me that there had been a positive response from [other] teachers to the management checklist I had created. The fact that we can see these mutual professional learning opportunities arising from this collaboration is exciting, particularly if we have further opportunity to construct/ co-teach.* [University teacher-researcher]

> *Yeah I think in terms of…there could have been an element of more co-construction on a session …I had my own ideas on how to present and I should have touched base with you more in terms of what you started at Massey, so probably there's a bit in that we could have just …just developed it a bit more*. [Teacher]

From the outset, the intention for genuine collaboration set the tone for the project. The university teacher-researchers were confident in the expertise of these school-teachers and this was further supported by allowing schools choice in what they wanted to focus on. As outlined in the preceding sections - *building trust* and *making visible our shared values,* there was a genuine recognition of the value of praxis by all parties. This enabled a reciprocity that contributed to the success of the co-construction in the first instance, but also, has provided a firm foundation for future school-university collaboration. These findings align with Greany and Brown's (2015) research that identified successful partnerships as those where all voices are heard and where a hierarchical approach - one that elevates university knowledge and devalues practitioner knowledge - is firmly rejected.

4. Being responsive to the school context

A crucial element of relationship building between education sectors is that of being responsive to individual school contexts (Bolstad & Gilbert, 2012). The university teacher-

researchers were conscious of structuring the work so that it was manageable for the participating schools and, at the same time, ensuring that it was responsive to the school context, without being overly dominating. The tension inherent in this 'balancing act' was addressed by being open, responsive and sensitive to power distribution.

The importance of sharing different skill sets in co-constructing an ITE curriculum was evident in the comments from one of the principals who had also worked with adult learners in ITE:

> *There is a whole different set of skills … of teaching adults than [teaching] children, and I think that the more of us who have both those skills.* [Principal]

A senior staff member at the same school explained how the opportunity to work in a new way with the student-teachers had a positive impact on the school's aim of developing leadership capacity by presenting his (tikanga) knowledge:

> *For [Teacher]…even though it was extra work for him… there were so many opportunities to grow ….and you know he's more confident…. You do amazingly anyway, but your confidence will grow as a presenter of your knowledge as well.* [Teacher]

The benefits of power-sharing for the student-teachers was apparent in the Principal's comments quoted above who spoke warmly about the potential of the model to bridge the gap between 'university learning' and 'school learning':

> *But I think from an ITE view, that absolute link that they see, because in the past (they have said) we learn so much at school ….yet they haven't made the connection between Massey work and the posting work whereas here they can see that direct link of what you're teaching and what we're doing and they can apply it. So I'm really excited that that was the first step, it seems to have been a long time coming, but that's good, and I would like to see more of that happening…..part of our Normal School role….thrilled with the whole model of it.* [Principal]

This quote highlights the importance of leadership from both the school and the university for successful school-university partnerships. As Greany and Brown (2015) point out, "partnerships and networks are not naturally self-organising. They require strategic leaders who recognise and prioritise external working of this nature as well as distributed an shared leadership across the boundaries between partners" (p. 13). The seed for this project was sown through Diane Legget's strategic and visionary leadership at the university, and the ideas, once shared with the schools, where supported by leadership there. These leaders could see the strategic relevance and fit for both institutions. Greany and Brown (2015) raised this same issue in their claim that, "partnerships work well when there is joined-up coherence … and focus on solving locally defined problems … bringing together academic research, practitioner knowledge and priorities" (p.14).

5. Promoting dialogue

Another successful strategy to create the conditions for successful ITE co-construction was by creating spaces for dialogue. Co-construction is an iterative process drawing on past experiences and strengths, and creating something new that neither alone could have arrived at. Dialogue is a cultural tool through which we can learn and work together; "we can transcend our solo limitations, and expand the range of what we can learn" (Wells & Claxton, 2002, p. 5). Vygotsky gave pre-eminence to the cultural tool of spoken, in face-to-face interaction in which "we manipulate, not only our language, but also our thoughts, which lead us to higher cognitive processes" (Wink & Putney, 2002, p. 61). Of all the cultural tools, dialogue is the most valuable because it not only transmits ideas between individuals but mediates shared understandings. One of the defining characteristics of a dialogue of knowledge-building is the "principle of *responsivity*…in which a structure of meaning is built up collaboratively over successive turns" (Wells, 2000, p. 72). These ideas led Wells (2002) to suggest that "learning-and-teaching needs to be seen as essentially an enterprise of inquiry that is dialogically co-constructed by teacher and students together" (p. 5).

> *Just in talking about our cultural and tikanga stuff from my Māori world-view,
> it just made me realise that, yeah, it's out there but it's probably not widely
> been thought about* [Teacher]

Through our dialogue in this project we developed shared understandings about many varied topics such as reflecting on theory and practice links, school-based practices, our teaching beliefs, new teaching resources, planning, biculturalism, behaviour management and possible future work together. Our dialogue helped the school teachers to talk about their different practices and how they were reflected in theory. This affirmed and enlightened, and enabled teachers to better articulate why they practice in the ways they do and where any future shifts might occur.

Initially, it felt unusual for the university teacher-researchers to rely on the school teachers in the co-construction process as indicated below.

> *When I sent you those reflective questions, I had been thinking "I've got to
> think of these…, but then I thought – no, I don't need to do all this on my own,
> I can send them to you!...It took a while for me to realise that I could get your
> thoughts on this, and you came up with some great ideas! And that took the
> pressure off me and I think we got a better product. I'm so used to doing this
> all on my own…and then a little bell rang – 'no I don't have to, I can whiz it off
> to you'.* [University teacher-researcher]

The dialogue between the university teacher-researchers and the school teachers in two cases developed into a co-teaching scenario. In these cases, the school teachers and university teacher-researchers listened and talked with the student-teachers at the same time:

Later in the session we began to co-teach! Instead of you talking about your bit and me keeping to mine, we began to build on each other's ideas in the moment teaching. Together we commented on how proud we had been of their confidence (despite nerves), their organisation skills, creativity with resources and designing learning experiences and the connections they made to students' lives. Their motivation to keep learning was so high that many wanted to stay on talking after the session had finished – that was an exciting moment. [University teacher-researcher]

One example is seen below where one teacher joined the university teacher-researcher on the online learning platform, *Stream*. Having co-constructed a sequence of reflection questions for these students to engage with following their co-constructed planning and teaching experience in the school setting, the university teacher-researcher and teacher engaged with the students in an online dialogue, each building on the other's ideas. While the nature of what was said varied, the underlying shared philosophies about how learning happened were similar as evident in the following forum thread. In this sense, the co-construction evident in the design of this learning experience, spilled over to become an important part of the experience itself.

Student-teacher: ….Given how the students took to making connections and sharing their knowledge, I found that I quite quickly had a flow as the students took the lesson out of my hands and carried it themselves…. When I teach a lesson again, I will pay more attention to the conclusion and tying up the lesson. I found that I put way more thought into the introduction and the body and had to patch together the conclusion more than I had anticipated. All my other planning really paid off and I can see the merit of spending more time on a conclusion and reviewing key points.

University teacher-researcher: …You have picked up on two important points and you will learn more about them through the Nuthall text. He found that about 50 percent of children know something of what is to be taught…which is a reminder to understand what children know and how connections can be made to that. You also raised the value of learning together. These children are in classrooms that run as learning communities so they are used to the cultural traditions of sharing ideas, connecting it to what others share and together building a momentum that leads to new ideas... Lesson conclusions are important ... a short reflective times helps to reinforce key ideas and signal the close of that part of the learning

Teacher: From what I saw of your lesson, you really looked comfortable in your role as the teacher and seemed to enjoy the experience. I was so proud of our school when I read your reflection, as we really aim to develop our classrooms and our school as a community of genuine learners. Great to see you thinking about how you will conclude a lesson. I agree with [University teacher-researcher]*, that this is so important as it's a chance for you to see whether or not the children have learnt what you set out to achieve. You then can use this information to plan where to next that will develop their learning further.*

Such a professional community needs to be structured to listen to teachers' perspectives of learning and teaching and to critique these in a sustained dialogue (Jennings & Mills, 2009).

The *Teacher Professional Learning and Development Best Evidence Synthesis* (Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, & Fung, 2007) points out the effectiveness of professional learning communities comprising some external expertise, such as university researchers who can contribute new perspectives consistent with contemporary theory and research.

6. Setting and resourcing manageable goals

"Successful partnerships might start small and build over time as trust and shared vision develop" (Greany & Brown, 2015, p. 5). The significance of developing small and manageable goals, and of resourcing these, became apparent very early in the project, when the university teacher-researchers and senior staff from the three Normal Schools met in December 2013. The purpose of the meeting was to share the aims of the project and to plan for its implementation the following year. The school teachers appeared tired and several noted that this project would add an additional demand to an already challenging work load.

It was vital, that the university teacher-researchers listened, showed empathy to their teaching situations and listened to their expressed concerns about workload in the project. Notes from the meeting indicate the commitment to hear and to acknowledge these concerns and to find suitable solutions:

> *We acknowledged how they were feeling. We tried to look at ways forward…maybe just one topic for each school – and that was received positively.* [University teacher-researcher - Meeting Notes]

The school teachers appeared reassured as the university teacher-researchers described the relatively modest scope of the co-construction work (one topic per school with only 1-2 school visits). By the end of the meeting, one school teacher was visibly excited: *"I want planning!"* she exclaimed (a topic in Module One of the paper). This led that way for the other teachers to consult with their principals and staff to ascertain their school's preferred topic and to identify staff who might work on the project.

We also came to realise that an important step in strengthening school-university relationships was the provision of financial resources. The university teacher-researchers were able to confirm that resourcing through the Ako Aoteaora funding would be available to release teachers for their work in this project. These financial resources provided time to work with the university in the co-construction process. This gesture signalled to the school teachers that the university valued their practical expertise and their contribution to the design of these learning experiences. This, in turn, encouraged the school teachers to value

the opportunity to work with the university teachers; to view the work as meaningful and *"not just another task on top of others".* The walls dividing *"them and us"* began to break down*.*

One challenge occurred, however, in one school because the academic teaching year began on January 21 and the first topic, 'planning' occurred in the first module, which corresponded with the beginning of the school year – a very busy time for teachers. In this case, the teacher made the time to access the university teaching materials:

> *I think from my perspective I'd done a little bit of pre-planning about what I might cover prior to getting a reading and it wasn't until I sat down with the reading that I completely changed what I was going to do.* [Teacher]

She also commented favourably on the benefit of having processing time and considered that one of the reasons for the success of the co-teaching model in her school was because:

> *…we'd sat down prior to that session and there was a lot of space between us sitting down and figuring out that out together and the actual doing of it, so there was time to process it and think about how it was going to work.* … [Teacher].

The flexible response to this university constraint is indicative of the way the university teacher-researchers and school teachers worked amicably and sensitively to overcome potential issues.

7. Communicating effectively

Effective communication played a significant role in establishing and maintaining collegial partnerships between university and school staff during this co-construction. Expectations of involvement were negotiated and clarified together through whole group meetings, one-to-one meetings between individual staff, and follow-up emails. It was important that communication was clear and timely, that any concerns and needs school staff had were addressed openly and matters arising were worked through. These intentions are reflected in the project's correspondence.

For example, meeting notes from December 2013 demonstrate several key conversations occurred where potential concerns were openly addressed. When initiating the collaboration, a meeting took place with the Principals and some senior leaders, though not all leaders at the subsequent December meeting had been present. This resulted in some confusion over the status of the project and how much further consultation with principals was needed. It was important to some school staff that their Principal was still kept informed. This highlighted the importance of clear lines of communication with both the participating school staff and their wider senior management team, and subsequent correspondence addressed this need.

The university teacher-researchers took responsibility for communications as part of facilitating the work. Meeting notes and reflections were shared with school staff, and face-to-face meetings were regularly followed up with an email recap. This communication enabled greater clarity around arrangements and next steps, and reinforced an ongoing level of openness. Furthermore, email communications initiated by the university teacher-researchers consistently feature expressions of gratitude and appreciation for the contributions of school staff, as well as inviting their critique and feedback:

> *I wonder if you would have a quick look and see if there are any strategies I have overlooked, you would prefer to have added or any that you are uncomfortable with!* [University Teacher-researcher]

> *This is fabulous feedback – I'm really pleased! Here's a description and some thoughts of our time that I will add to our data, once you have clarified you think it a fair account.* [University Teacher-researcher]

> *Thank you very much for meeting with me yesterday – as always I am very appreciative of the way this school works to support the development of the profession.* [University Teacher-researcher]

Clear, considered and timely communications with all three schools occurred through face-to-face meetings and the exchange of emails. Conscious of the teachers' demanding professional lives, these communications were initiated by university teacher-researchers. One example follows:

> *Dear [teacher]*

> *I do hope that your term has got off to a good start! I would like to make time soon to talk over this work and how we might approach this. The course times we have allocated for these sessions happen on Tuesday April 8th and Thursday April 10th. Do you have any time this week or next? Let me know what might work for you. My mobile is …*

> *Many thanks*

> *[University teacher-researcher]*

Another email sent to this teacher after the first meeting detailed next steps and participating staff were invited to comment on the draft resource that the university teacher-researcher had developed to support the theory to practice links.

Communication episodes such as these show how the university teacher-researchers aimed to ensure that the teachers were clear about the nature of the co-constructed teaching that would occur in each school and the small steps that each could take. These also served to illustrate how leadership was distributed amongst the school and the university

One other dimension of effective communication worth noting is the way the university teacher-researchers worked to ensure that professional discussions were not impeded by an emphasis on academic jargon. The university teacher-researchers worked alongside the school teachers to identify theoretical connections that resonated with professional learning models in the school. The value of school-based learning was regularly reinforced in communications to the school teachers:

> *I'm sure that the students are going to have a great experience – so, so much better than just 'doing' these sessions at the university!* [University Teacher-researcher]

> *I learnt so much and the resource that you created the PPTs – that was so good and there was so much in there*. [University Teacher-researcher]

Analysis of the correspondence sent from the university teacher-researchers revealed this communication to be timely and that it supported the intention for a genuine partnership. It also enabled consultation with wider school staff and conveyed a genuine respect for the contribution school teachers were making to the professional learning of student-teachers.

The findings discussed above are not linear, they work together to contribute to a model of collegial relationships that are foundational to successful co-construction of ITE learning experiences.

Figure 1: Strategies for successful co-construction of ITE curricula
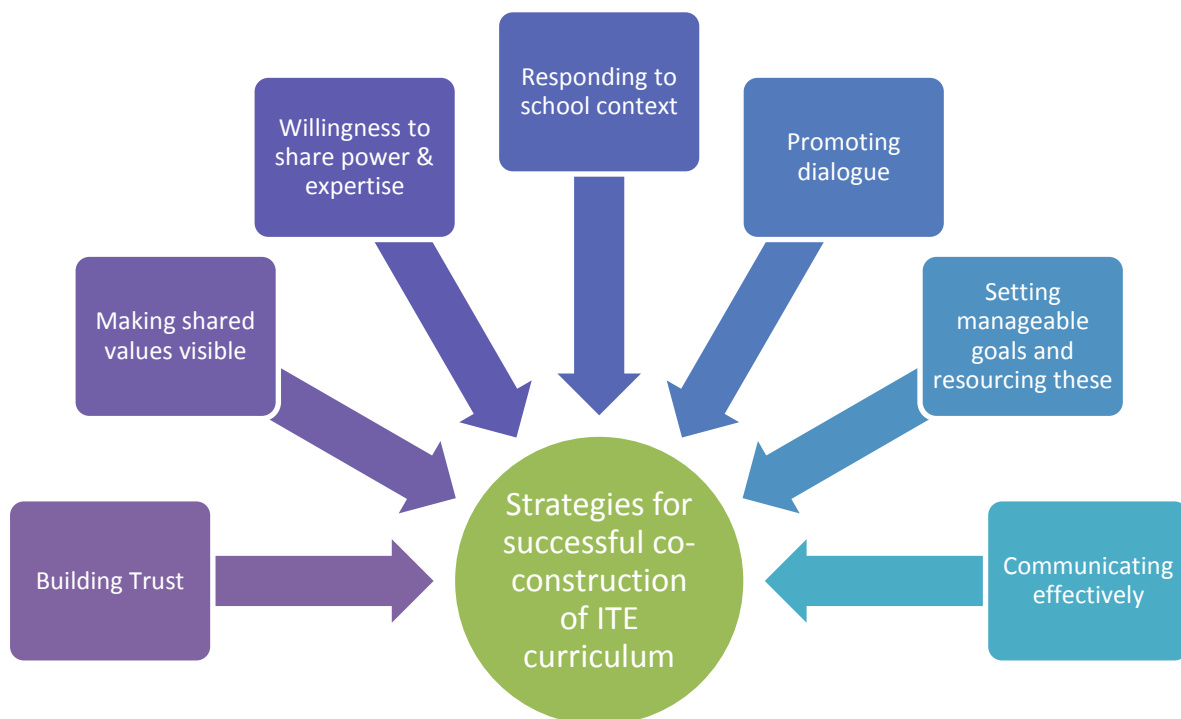
Impact of the project on further ITE programme development

This study has been particularly relevant and timely for the university teacher-researchers, who in 2014, sought to offer an ITE programme at Masters level. Massey University was successful in winning a Ministry of Education contract to design, develop and deliver, an exemplary new ITE programme, known as the Masters of Teaching and Learning (MTchgLn). Central to the curriculum design and development of the MTchgLn is the significant increase in time devoted to school placements. This increased time in the field has been deemed essential to improve candidate performance from the minimum levels of proficiency required by *The Graduating Teacher Standards* to the mastery of adaptive expertise needed by teachers in 21st century classrooms. This has required extensive co-construction of the ITE learning experiences between the university and seven Partner Schools– three of which where the schools who had participated in this research project.

The successful co-construction strategies found to be successful in this project significantly informed our work to develop the papers that made up the MTchgLn. Our strengthened relationship was beneficial as we set about co-constructing these eight curricula with seven primary and secondary schools.

Using these findings the university teacher-researchers were able to successfully share decisions about the nature, sequence and enacting of the learning experiences across all eight MTchgLn papers in what has become a dynamic school-university partnership. Joint professional learning opportunities and co-construction of these papers has generated 'shareable knowledge' that draws together research and practice knowledge.

> *Teacher education has to be something we do together. Maybe one of the spin-offs of this project is that we will have created joint access to expertise... more of your ability to access expertise at the university for issues you're facing in your school, and more where we can work with you to improve the way we support student-teachers' learning. It's not about imposing on each other it's about sustaining the learning community we have created in this project.* [University Teacher-researcher]

Further collaborative endeavours have also emerged. For instance, the Normal School principals and senior staff joined the researchers in their selection of ITE students at the end of 2014. Opportunities have also opened up for further work in the schools where connections have been made to the work from this project. For example, one university teacher-researcher returned to College Street Normal School in 2015 to lead an authentic planning experience for the student teachers. Many teachers printed out the observation sheet for future reference and the University Teacher-Researcher felt – *"braver now to rub shoulders [with teachers]".* The presentation developed by Central Normal School was used in an Exemplary School Practice visit in 2015 for the MTchgLn students and staff from all other Partner Schools.

CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATIONS

The obstacles to the participation of the wider school sector in ITE programmes are formidable. The time, schedules and resources for school teachers and university teacher-researchers can create barriers to collaboration and limit the extent of teacher involvement. This project, however, has shown that it *is* possible to begin this daunting and at times awkward shared participation.

The project has identified and discussed seven strategies that supported the successful co-construction of an ITE paper. The key to which was the development of a professional learning community, in which shared reflection through dialogue could be maintained. Sustained and critical reflection on practice is a powerful tool for promoting professional learning (Timperley et al. 2007).

From these findings we suggest the following recommendations for those interested in co-constructing ITE curricula in a school-university partnership:

- Intentionally build a professional learning community where collegiality, mutual trust, respect and openness are encouraged
- search for and build on shared pedagogical knowledge, skills and values - be clear about what each institution can offer
- be willing to share power and leadership – co-construction requires dance-like moves rather than a follow-the-leader linear sequence
- be responsive to and build on the unique culture and strengths of the school context
- establish a third space so that ongoing and regular professional dialogue can occur – know that learning happens in the talk
- set small, manageable and shared goals and provide time and resources to enable effective dialogue, shared reflection, co-planning and other forms of joint participation – effective partnerships take time
- set up effective communication systems, and be honest about what is working and what needs to be changed.

Productive school and tertiary partnerships in the development of ITE programmes will improve the quality of teachers coming into the profession. The quality of teachers is widely considered to be the 'single most important school variable influencing student achievement' (OECD, 2005, p. 2). It is therefore, crucial that collaborative efforts, such as those described in this report, are made to enhance the quality of initial teacher education.

This project has emphasised *participation* metaphors of learning where university teacher-researchers and school teachers joined together to enhance learning opportunities for student-teachers. Our joint efforts have also seen engagement in *knowledge-creation*

metaphors of learning and teaching (Paavola et al., 2004). This successful collaboration across sectors has transformed and expanded what was once solely a university-designed paper to produce a new ITE curriculum. In this way, the development of a professional learning community worked also as an 'innovative knowledge community' (Paavola et al., 2004).

Disrupting rituals of practice – in this case, the ways universities and school partner in ITE, is unquestionably a difficult task and it is by embedding this change in a professional learning community that staff can "transcend [their] solo limitations, and expand the range of what [they] can learn [together]" (Wells & Claxton, 2002, p. 5). The ultimate aim to further enhance school-university partnerships is to forge 'new liaisons' wherein shared professional learning leading to co-constructed curricula, is embedded in joint and sustained participation in professional learning communities (Sewell et al, 2013).

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