

Education of Early Childhood Teachers

Miss Varcoe's speech notes, 1989

(Likely presented on the occasion of 3 year ECE qualifications being introduced to Dunedin College of Education)

(Judith Duncan Papers)

The major concern of the pioneers was to have a qualified teacher – they required a major teacher. Therefore Miss Wieneke a Froebel trained teacher was appointed. She came from Christchurch, and brought with her Miss Gresham who was pupil teacher.

From 1889-1950 students spent the morning in the kindergarten & attended lectures in the afternoon at Kelsey Kindergarten until 1949. After seeing children safely across the road, or on a bus the students assisted with preparing art activities, raking the sand-pit, bringing in outdoor equipment and also doing domestic chores – now done by a cleaner. Students did not have cars in those days, so were dependent on the D.C.C. transport; Often they had no time for lunch. Students paid for their training, so often worked in the afternoon or evening to earn money.

1941 Dept of Education made student allowances available £100.00 year.

1947 First national syllabus was drawn up & Diploma of NZ Free Kindergarten Union was awarded.

1949 Office rented in Stuart St for 3 staff Principal, Assistant Principal, & Supervisor of Students. The Dept of Education purchased 519 Macandrew Rd. & 23 first year students & 11 second years & 3 staff now had a HOME – this was marvellous – 3 Staff Officers, 2 lecture room, a library & a craft room, which also served a students common room. There was a corporate life students, leisure time activities, kitchen & storage space.

This resulted in a more balanced programme with block teaching & theory sections. However 519 became inadequate; so we moved to 273 York Place – an imposing residence which had been altered indoors to be functional as a College. It was further away from the Helen Deem Centre but closer to University College of Education, King Edward Technical College – all three participated in courses. Full time staff was increased Principal & 4 lecturers & 9 hrs of part-time staff – it meant NINE HOURS (note change of staff titles to lecturer), a secretary part-time. Students had a common room & a kitchen, the staff had their kitchen staff room, increased library space, a large & a smaller lecture room – staff offices – the facilities were more adequate. Student nos increased to 83 from 34 in 1950. Each year group was divided into sections – this relieved the congestion of too many students in one kgtn at any one time. Seminar type teaching increased, group discussions & knowledge resources, & a variety of approaches to staff teaching & student participation.

1967 Meeting College Principal Primary college staff Dept of Educ personel met at Lopdale House – plan a national course – agreed to include professional

studies/educational & curriculum studies – each College to dev its own course in that framework.

We had the support of the Principal Mr C Ivsen & staff & also staff Educ. Dept of the University to restructure our existing course & timetable.

1971 Hill Report Enquiry into School Educ. Recommendation that Kgtn college should be incorporated with their neighbouring T. College. Entrance qualifications, opportunity for students & staff for university study to be the same as the primary service.

Liason with TC contd & expanded – health services available Kgtn students. Principal of the TC chaired the Selection Committee; Snr Staff member chaired the Association's Educ Committee.

1974 Hogben House Course. Working party prepared a report on the Integration Course for KT students. The relationships established over the years provided a solid foundation on which to build ECE course into the T.C. By the time the minister's letter arrived the Snr. Lecturer had been appointed & the programme awaiting the Teachers' College Council's approval.

The degree is concurrent with pre-service.

Div E students attended classes with Div A – ie Child Dev. Social Foundations of Educ, Educational Psychology & subject topics. Specially planned course taught by Div E staff Early Childhood Educ 1 & 2, Family & Community Studies & curriculum studies. Div A staff expertise was used as appropriate. Div E taught and tutored in some Div A courses & were accepted as part of the total College staff & representing Div E & or the college on committees.

Disadvantages of a 2 year course soon became evident, when organising courses in a 3 yrs geared institution. They had little time to browse, explore & discover knowledge. Staff appreciated the professional support & resources Bachelor of Education Degree, ECE. Need for a 3 years course – we realised this was essential to receive the same salary as primary teachers.

1975 SUB-COMMITTEE elected by the Advisory Committee ECE worked on B.Ed proposal, which had been kept in cool storage, & completed it as an extension of the B.Ed ECE Degree (Otago) for approval in 1982 it was accepted by the University Academic Committee.

1984 Div E students could enrol for the degree. It was constructed to preserve the present based professional preparation for ECE teacher education; including academic standards necessary for a University degree training – including credits for College courses as well as Univ papers. Teachers can do degree extra murally – same as primary teachers fees etc.

1988 2 teachers received the degree, Dunedin was one of the 2 Colleges to introduce the integrated course. 0-8 years ECE 3 yr course plus 1 year induction course.

What has this offered – variety of career structure, educational career opportunities, study leave.

There is increased demand for ECE.

Social & economic problems are here, even though we do live in a different society, with all the technology & changes in some family life. The change in teacher education ECE also brought the other E. Childhood groups closer together – cemented the relationships.

What a long way we have come in 120 years. Dunedin was fortunate in the relationship that had been established with the College prior to the initial moves. I wish to acknowledge Mr C.H Irwin (Principal TC), Mr E. Munro, Mr Neil Borland both chaired the Assoc Education Committee, Miss E. B. Hamilton, Miss Vera Hayward – her help was establishing a Service organisation NZFKT now part NZEJ (we hoped this would happen) Assoc Members of the Education Committee & the Association.

It may sound easy but we had some differing opinions to deal with – degree of professional jealousy when planning for a national course for ECE – the concern of some senior teachers re the preservation of the basis of Early Childhood Education – Competition for positions with teaches who had been awarded the degree. We did of course have support for the planning the committee was doing. We took time to discuss the concerns referred too, and so forestalled problems that might have happened.

2007 – Div E with all the other Teacher College Courses is within the University.

We paved the way for a 3 yrs course & degree, but like other pioneers we need to be supportive of continuing education courses offered today and in the future for our teachers.