Australian Centre for Child Protection

Professionals Protecting Children

*Child Protection and
Teacher Education in Australia*

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Working together to enhance the lives of children

Contents

By Professor Marie Brennan

Office of the Head of School and Dean of Education

In overcrowded professional education programs, many stakeholders press for their concerns to be included; it is sometimes too easy to dismiss such claims because of the wide range of competing claims. The area of child protection, however, is not one of these. In teacher education, we urgently need to use issues of child protection both as a separate area for education and training and as a series of issues to be integrated across many areas of our work.

This benchmark study of coverage of child protection issues in teacher education programs in Australia represents a serious challenge to 'business as usual'. In a sample which represents a significant proportion of programs in Australia, most coverage of issues to do with abuse, neglect, vulnerable children and those in care was conducted in training for mandatory child protection courses, of only a few hours in any program. Given the research on the widespread consequences for life chances and educational futures, and the widespread numbers of children so affected, we need to do better. The account details that of the 266,745 notifications of suspected abuse or neglect in 2005-6, almost 56,000 were substantiated - and the numbers are likely to be significantly understated. The research study further notes that school staff are the most common source of notifications that result in finalised investigations. Our role as educators, especially of pre-service teachers, is thus crucial. Our programs need a stronger focus and further research on appropriate teaching, support for staff and on children's lives in order to be more effective.

I commend the study to teacher educators around the country for immediate consideration and action.

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Executive Summary

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The Australian Centre for Child Protection is a federal government initiative funded through the Department of Education, Science and Training and located at the University of South Australia. The Centre's professional education initiative, *Professionals Protecting Children*, supports a broad range of professions to prepare graduates and practitioners who feel confident and competent to address and respond to the needs of all children who face adversity due to abuse or neglect.

The professions include teaching, nursing, psychology, social work, childcare, medicine and allied health workers.

In support of this outcome the Professional Education initiative is investigating -

Focus Question	*Strategy*
What is currently being taught about child protection within professional education programs?	Map the undergraduate and graduate courses in relevant disciplines across Australia to identify the curriculum content that promotes professional competence for recognising and responding to child protection issues
What do professionals know, think and do about protecting children?	Explore, promote and evaluate processes for effectively enhancing professionals' child protection knowledge, beliefs and practices
Where does child protection fit into the respective professional education programs and who takes responsibility for its delivery?	Promote quality teaching and effective learning about child protection and diffuse exemplary models of professional practice through the development of high quality curriculum support materials

Purpose and Content

The findings reported herein focus on the first question only. That is, how issues of prevention, identification and response to child abuse and neglect are currently addressed within teacher education programs. As such the findings provide a valuable benchmark in time. Within the broader context of teacher education and child protection, however, the process provided invaluable opportunities for professional engagement and discussion of ways in which the key issues of interest may be explored, with and by key stakeholders in the future.

The research study builds on two Australian Government Senate Committee reports commissioned in response to the increasing and convincing evidence highlighting the poor educational and life outcomes of Australian children in State or Territory statutory care, or those considered to be vulnerable and at-risk due to abuse and neglect, namely:

1) Forgotten Australians: A report on Australians who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children (Commonwealth of Australia, 2004),

2) Protecting Vulnerable Children: A National Challenge (Commonwealth of Australia, 2005) report.

In both reports, it was recommended that tertiary institutions establish courses of study that address child protection related issues in a range of disciplines. Specifically with regard to teacher education, the reports recommended that the longer term and broader effects of child abuse or neglect, and being a child or young person in care, be incorporated as components of future teacher education programs.

In light of recommendations from the two Reports, and in line with the Centre's mission, all Faculties/Schools of Education across Australia were invited to help map child protection curriculum content in teacher education programs.

The full account of findings begins with a brief review of literature on child protection and teacher education nationally and internationally. It then presents the analysis and results of the curriculum mapping survey data, and outlines issues raised in the subsequent National Teacher Education and Child Protection Forum.

The Research Process

The curriculum Mapping Process consisted of three stages.

Stage 1 encompassed the research design phase. Specifically it examined previous studies and relevant findings, in addition to –

- scoping the sample group

- identifying the content to be mapped

- establishing time frames, and

- planning subsequent actions and outcomes.

Stage 2 involved the actual mapping of child protection content in teacher education. In December 2005 the survey instrument was trialled, evaluated and refined following a small-scale trial. The Board of the Australian Council of Deans of Education offered support in principle and endorsed the curriculum mapping process. The Deans also nominated a liaison person in their respective school/faculty to coordinate the completion of the surveys on behalf of the Australian Centre for Child Protection. Survey data was then collected from May to August 2006.

In addition to the survey, a national roundtable forum was held on the 1st December, 2006. Invited participants included the Dean of Education (or his/her nominee) and one staff member from each School/Faculty that provided data, together with a representative of the Teacher Registration body of each State or Territory.

The forum enabled –

- preliminary results from the survey mapping process to be presented,

- discussion of perceived barriers and facilitators to including relevant content across a range of undergraduate and graduate programs,

- the establishment of networks to explore future actions and directions; and

- the identification and promotion of good practice in the delivery of child protection content in teacher education.

At the completion of the forum, expressions of interest were invited for future collaborative ventures within and between Schools/Faculties and the Australian Centre for Child Protection, together with nominations for membership of a collaborative network.

Stage 3 of the research process addressed the analysis, evaluation, reporting and dissemination of results. Building on the findings and input from teacher educators possible future directions are being investigated.

Participants in the Project

Participants across all universities in Australia that offer teacher education programs were invited to participate in the mapping of child protection content. Surveys were sent to 41 universities across Australia that offer undergraduate, graduate or postgraduate teacher education programs. A high return rate of 80.5% was achieved, with 33 Universities returning a total of 292 surveys.

Response patterns revealed that 17 of the 33 responding universities provided data for 100 per cent of teacher education programs offered by their School or Faculty of Education. Overall 72.7 per cent of the universities provided data for more than half of the teacher education programs offered.

High returns were recorded from South Australia, Western Australia, New South Wales and Victoria, which are among the largest providers of teacher education programs in Australia.

The problematic nature of reporting on types of teacher education programs across Australian Universities became apparent during the initial exploration of data. Issues related to discrepancies between States and Territories became evident in regard to: the organisation of school structure; the inclusion of specialisations that prepare teacher educators to teach over a broad range of year levels; and in some instances an overlap of teacher education programs that prepare teaching graduates for a broad range of year levels e.g. middle primary and secondary or early childhood and primary.

Examination of the data confirmed that the majority of programs represented in the sample could be categorised. It was therefore considered appropriate and efficient to assign all programs to one of three broad categories - Early Childhood, Compulsory Years of Schooling and Secondary Schooling.

Roundtable Participants

All Schools of Education who responded to the survey were invited to participate in a National Roundtable Forum to further discuss the facilitators and barriers to including child protection content in teacher education. The Forum was facilitated by 4 representatives from the Australian

Centre for Child Protection. A total of 28 participants attended, including representatives from 15 universities and 3 teacher accrediting agencies from around Australia.

Findings related to the delivery of child protection-related content

As a result of trialling and refinement, the survey instrument was organised into 5 sections.

Section 1A identified discrete or stand alone courses specifically addressing the prevention, identification and response to child abuse and neglect. Findings from this section revealed that –

- 76.6 per cent of teacher education programs in the sample did not include any discrete child protection related content,

- of the 23.4 per cent that reported providing discrete child protection curriculum content, two-thirds allocated less than 7 hours to the teaching and learning of the associated content throughout the entire award program.

Furthermore, the data showed that the majority of discrete units were described as identification and reporting training sessions, and that this trend was most prevalent in States and Territories where legal requirements for identification and response training exist as a prerequisite for teacher registration. Further support for the notion that child protection teaching and learning is primarily limited to identification and response training was provided by data that showed a higher percentage of non-university based employees facilitated the teaching of the child protection content.

In extrapolating these findings to the overall teacher education graduate population, the data suggest that of the 14,500 potential teacher education students graduating annually, approximately 1,200 students will have been exposed to a day or less of dedicated teaching related to discrete child protection content. Similarly it can be inferred that only around 850 students will have experienced more than 8 hours of discrete child protection content. With regard to the remaining 12,450 graduates, the exposure to dedicated learning related to child protection issues is unknown due to the lack of information provided in this regard.

In contrast to the provision of discrete courses, Section 1B identified courses, units or subjects offered that addressed child protection issues explicitly but in an integrated teaching and learning context. On one hand, encouraging findings were revealed in that 47 per cent of teacher education programs reported integrating elements of child protection content within a semester course or unit. On the other hand, further analysis revealed that the majority of these courses or units allocated as little as 10-15 per cent of the unit to the specific teaching of child protection related content.

When considering a typical course structure, in reality this may equate to as little as 2.5-4 hours of time allocated to the integrated discussion of child protection related content. Additionally, it is important to note that in some programs, this may be the only exposure to child protection issues a student experiences throughout the entire teacher education award program. This raises concerns related to the time constraints and the restricted opportunity students have to engage in deep learning about child protection related issues.

On the basis that many child protection issues and concerns may be discussed incidentally throughout an award program, Section 2 listed a number of risk factors and proactive strategies associated with child abuse and neglect that could potentially be addressed but not documented in course curriculum guidelines. The format adopted utilised a model, which placed the child within the family and the community. Thus, the respondents were asked to record if the strategies and

factors listed in this section were '*taught but not linked*' to child protection or if, in fact, the issues were explicitly '*linked*' to child protection. The findings from this data revealed that students who are enrolled in early childhood programs or four-year undergraduate programs have greater exposure to a range of risk factors and strategies than students in other teacher education award programs. The data, however, does not support the notion that these factors and strategies are necessarily linked explicitly to child protection within related discussions, nor that the students may appreciate the inherent connections between the factors and the need to respond to the issues.

Further, it was acknowledged by a large number of participants in the forum that generally the factors and strategies listed were not typically considered as indicators of adversity. However, by making the links to child protection explicit it was considered that this may help to broaden the notion of child protection in future discussions with students. It was further considered that in cases where factors and strategies were taught but not linked to child protection, the process of making explicit links to child protection would, in reality, require minimal investment of time and resources within current curriculum constraints.

The final two sections provided the opportunity for respondents to record comments, issues or concerns related to child protection in teacher education curriculum, and to discuss any curriculum issues that their school or faculty were interested in exploring at a Roundtable forum[1].

[1] These issues and concerns were further explored by participants attending the National Teacher Education and Child Protection Forum.

Facilitators and barriers to change

A range of barriers and facilitators were raised in the survey responses and the National Teacher Education and Child Protection Forum.

Barriers
- Overcrowded Curriculum
- Lack of Ownership
- Lack of Consistency in Delivery and Approach
- National Inconsistencies in Legal Requirements
- Narrow Perceptions of Child Protection
- Negative Societal Perceptions

Facilitators
- Working together to meet Professional Needs
- Potential for Workplace Learning
- Quality Support for Novice Teachers
- Networks and Resources
- Professional Development

Future Research Directions

Given the issues discussed and the need for quality research in this field, it was concluded that the teacher education community would benefit from further exploration of the following issues –

- effective utilisation of discrete or integrated approaches that best support the teaching and learning of child protection content

- relevant pedagogies that support
  - the teaching of sensitive and often controversial issues inherent in child protection
  - effective student learning in this domain and the influence it has on future teaching practices and epistemological beliefs
  - consistency and quality of teaching, particularly when there are numerous delivery agents from various disciplines and with varying qualifications

- compelling concerns about overcrowded curricula, time and resource constraints, consistency and quality of content across teacher education programs and how these issues can be addressed effectively

- establishing if the necessary skills are developed that enable graduates to address confidently and adequately the needs of vulnerable and at risk children within educational settings.

Conclusions

The numerous issues reported on and discussed throughout this research study highlight the complex and multifaceted nature of child protection in teacher education. The data collected from the curriculum mapping process provides a snapshot of the current coverage of child protection in teacher education. Furthermore, the findings, discussions, insights, and suggestions raised, in both the survey instrument and roundtable forum can help to inform future directions and approaches to the development of child protection related content.

Notwithstanding uncertainty about the most efficient and effective way to address and deliver child protection content in teacher education programs, a commitment to exploring and improving the current approaches was shared.

Although recent international studies have begun to inform this debate, further Australian research in this area would provide much needed insights into the benefits and challenges associated with the inclusion of child protection content in teacher education. The merits of providing discrete child protection content as opposed to integrating child protection content, and multidisciplinary as opposed to domain specific approaches, consistently emerged as areas requiring further investigation within an Australian context.

Furthermore, while the importance of child protection content in teacher education was undisputed, issues related to ownership and responsibility for incorporating and overseeing the inclusion of this content, both within and across disciplines was perceived by respondents as generating substantial challenges. Further discussions with tertiary educators and relevant stakeholders were recommended in order to find acceptable and feasible solutions to the issues.

There was recognition among participants that this is a highly sensitive, and often controversial, area of discussion for both students and educators. Subsequently it was felt there is a need to

carefully consider the philosophy and the most effective pedagogies that will support the effective teaching and learning of child protection content.

Another consistent concern raised by survey respondents and forum participants was the need for accrediting and registering bodies to work towards consistency across States and Territories with regard to policies and professional responsibilities. In particular the mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect, and the associated requirements for teacher registration. It was noted that the current move towards a national accreditation and registration system may be able to address many of these concerns.

The benefits of having school educators who are well informed about child protection issues, and can competently respond to the needs of vulnerable and at-risk children within school contexts was strongly supported.

Recommendations emerging from the Study

In order to ensure teacher education graduates have the knowledge base and the confidence to competently meet their legal obligations, and to address child protection related issues in educational settings that improve the learning outcomes for all children experiencing adversity due to abuse or neglect:

1) the narrow perceptions of child protection need to be challenged

2) child protection should remain on the agenda for universities, teacher registration and accrediting bodies, schools and governments

3) ongoing collaboration and consultation between all educational stakeholders should continue, and be a matter of high priority

4) further consideration should be given to undertaking a range of research investigations in accordance with the suggestions and areas of identified interest outlined herein.

Introduction

Background

The Australian Centre for Child Protection, located at the University of South Australia, is funded through the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST). The Centre's Professional Education initiative aims to assist a broad range of professions to prepare graduates and practitioners who are equipped to prevent and respond to child abuse and neglect effectively. The professions include teaching, nursing, psychology, social work, childcare, medicine and allied health workers.

In support of this mission, the Australian Centre for Child Protection is working with educational providers, accrediting agencies and professional organisations to:

- map how the prevention, identification and response to child abuse and neglect is addressed within undergraduate and graduate education programs across a broad range of professions

- explore how professionals can be best prepared for working with vulnerable children and families

- identify elements of good practice, exemplary teaching and learning practices, and resource development opportunities for the promotion of effective practice in relation to child abuse and neglect issues across a broad range of professional programs.

This investigation is underpinned by three key questions –

1) What is currently being taught about child protection within professional education programs?

2) What do professionals know, think and do about protecting children?

3) Where does child protection fit into the respective professional education programs and who takes responsibility for its delivery?

Australian Context and Impetus for Change

In Australia significant concerns have been raised in recent years about the educational and life outcomes of children who are victims, or considered to be vulnerable and at-risk of abuse and neglect. In response, the Australian Government commissioned two key Senate Committee reports, 'Forgotten Australians: A report on Australians who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children (Commonwealth of Australia, 2004) and Protecting Vulnerable Children: A National Challenge (Commonwealth of Australia, 2005). The reports recommend that tertiary institutions establish courses of study that focus on child protection in a range of disciplines. With regard to teacher education programs, the reports propose that the longer term effects of child abuse or neglect and being a child or young person in care be included as components of teacher education.

In light of these recommendations, and in support of the Centre's mission, all Faculties/Schools of Education across Australia were invited to help map child protection curriculum content in teacher education programs. This publication describes the analysis and results of the survey data, and outlines the issues raised in the subsequent National Teacher Education and Child Protection Forum.

Children needing Protection

Teachers have more contact with children and young people than any other profession (Gilligan, 1998). In 2006, for example, there were 3,392,566 students (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2007b) enrolled, and approximately 270,000 teachers working in schools across Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2007a). With respect to protecting children, teachers across Australia have a professional Duty of Care for every one of these students irrespective of the State or Territory jurisdiction or employing body. Essentially, *Duty of Care* is a common law concept that outlines the responsibility of school personnel to provide students with adequate levels of protection against harm. When working with students, therefore, those working in school contexts are required to ensure that the physical and emotional welfare of students is safeguarded both within and beyond the school setting (DECS/AISSA/Catholic Education, 2005)

The Contemporary Role of Teachers

Teachers play a significant role in equipping students to lead fulfilling, purposeful and productive lives. Fundamentally the teacher's role is to help all students learn by instilling knowledge, shaping principles and values, developing skills, building the ability to think and understand, and nurturing creativity and talent (Teaching Australia, 2007).

Amid calls for greater accountability, increasing expectations of schools and teachers to meet the needs of diverse school populations, and rapid changes in discipline and pedagogical knowledge, it has been posited that the long-established perception of educators as carers and nurturers is no longer germane (ACDE, 2005). It is in this climate that, at the time of writing this account, teacher accrediting bodies and teacher education providers across Australia were engaged in consultations to determine quality in both teaching and teacher education, and develop a set of professional standards and indicators that can be adopted nationally (AFTRAA, 2006; Teaching Australia, 2006).

It is an optimal time, therefore, to examine the perceptions, and practices associated with improving educational outcomes for all children, together with all the allied implications. With regard to helping all students to learn, for example, an important message consistently emerges in contemporary

educational research studies. Namely, that if teachers are to deal proactively with the issues of poor academic, educational and life outcomes then they need to understand and attend to the underlying causes and the processes over which they can exert some control rather than the all too obvious and widely reported failures (Long, 1990).

To this end, initial and ongoing professional development emanating from quality research findings and evidence-informed policies is needed if teachers are to meet the demands of providing all Australian children with appropriate opportunities to achieve their full academic and life potential. This professional development cannot be a 'one-size fits all' approach, as not all teachers have the same experiences or background, and not all the children they work with have the same needs. Therefore, whether the educational focus is on engaging or re-engaging the 'dis-engaged', improving literacy and numeracy skills, or promoting critical and higher-order thinking skills that enable students to learn and function effectively in rapidly changing and complex environments, there is a need to explore and understand potential factors and appropriate teaching approaches that can assist children. From a child protection perspective, this encompasses helping teachers to -

- recognise risk and vulnerability due to abuse or neglect and take appropriate action to prevent and reduce future abuse and its consequences, and

- understand and work effectively with at-risk, abused or neglected children, who because of factors beyond their control, encounter obstacles that impede their efforts to achieve their educational and life potential.

Who are the students that teachers should be concerned about?

Fortunately, many children entering school have experienced supportive relationships and are positively oriented to learning, exploring the world around them with confidence and enthusiasm. Formal schooling for these children is generally a positive and rewarding experience, as they are ready for learning and predisposed positively towards the nature of schooling.

For children, however, who have had poor social, or less supportive, experiences in early life that set in motion negative perceptions of self and learning, school can be a confusing and bewildering place. It can be a place where they may feel misunderstood and disconnected. The result can be a dramatic drop in orientation towards learning and school, which by early adolescence manifests in a view that learning and school is something to be avoided if possible. Not all students who present with such a profile will have experienced abuse or neglect. Studies suggest, however, that family trauma, mobility and pre-occupation with problems at home significantly interrupt any child's learning (Hill, Comber, Louden, Rivalland, & Reid, 2002), and this finding is highly applicable to children who are vulnerable or at-risk of abuse or neglect.

How do teachers recognise vulnerable or at-risk students in schools and classrooms?

The hallmarks of adversity are a major single, or series of, events or circumstances marked by misfortune, calamity or distress. In adopting this description, there is little doubt that a child or young person, who is suspected of being, or has been, abused, neglected or otherwise harmed; or whose parents cannot, or are unable to provide adequate care or protection, faces considerable adversity.

Many children who face such adversity attend school regularly and generally value the importance of education (Harker, Dobel-Ober, Berridge & Sinclair, 2004). In such instances, school can offer

stability and serve as an important protective and preventative resource (Harker et al, 2004). Others, however, present with extreme disturbances in functioning, many of which can be traced back as far as conception (Melrose, 2006). These disturbances include, but are not limited to, an inability to build and maintain relationships with peers and adults, abnormal emotional or behavioural responses, depression, anxiety, or destructive behaviours. As a result many of these children experience difficulty interacting with peers and complying with teacher demands and school/classroom expectations. Over time, these students can become labelled as 'disruptive' and ultimately face exclusion, or suspension from school as a result of their inappropriate, or socially unacceptable, behaviour. The role and attitude of the teacher and other school personnel is a critical factor in how these students view school, as evidenced in the following reflections of young people who were taken into care because of abuse or neglect.

Reflections on school (abstracts from Chapter 7 Taking Care of Education)

"Most of my teachers tried to help, but some of them didn't seem to understand how many worries I had and why I couldn't concentrate"

"Some teachers I'd say that they didn't really like me because I was in care – they thought I was a troublemaker. Like [teacher] had to choose between either me or [classmate] to kick out because, fair enough we were sometimes a pain together, but I do think she chose me because she thought I'd get lower grades 'cos I wasn't in a stable family"

"I never stopped going to school, even when I was being moved from pillar to post. School was the only place I felt at home. My friends knew what was going on and so did the teachers and they all really helped me…I never used to want to come home at the end"

(abstracts from Harker et al (2004) Chapter 7 - Taking Care of Education)

For educators and others interested in helping this group of children and young people achieve their educational potential providing a safe and supportive environment at school is highly desirable. In recognising the need to keep classrooms safe for all children thereby excluding those who pose a threat or danger to others, schools and classrooms may be the safest and the most grounded places these children have access to (Melrose, 2006), and formal or informal exclusion may exacerbate their vulnerability and negatively impact on their wellbeing.

The reality, however, is that the educational needs of children experiencing abuse and neglect and placed under guardianship or statutory custody orders continue to be unmet and they remain among the most educationally disadvantaged in our society (AIHW, 2007b). In general, their education and lives have been, and continue to be, characterised by fragmentation, disruption, unacceptable levels of academic failure and school exclusion compounding in subsequent poor life outcomes. Of significant concern is that the trend continues notwithstanding the commitment and ongoing efforts of governments and statutory bodies to provide access to, and participation in schooling.

Increasing notifications and substantiations

Furthermore, the number of children we are concerned about in regard to abuse and neglect is increasing steadily. Since 1992, the number of notifications of suspected child abuse or neglect incidents, as outlined in Table 1.1, increased significantly in all States and Territories. Similarly, the number of children on care and protection orders across Australia from June 1997 to June, 2006

increased from 15,718 to 27,188 representing an increase of 73% (AIHW 2007a), with 76 per cent of these children being of school age (i.e. aged 5-17 years) as at June 2006.

Table 1.1 Number of Notifications and Substantiations Nationally (Source: AIHW, 2007a)

Year	Notifications	Substantiated	
1992-1993	55,895	25,630	(46%)
1999-2000	107,134	24,732	(23%)
2000-2001	115,471	27,367	(24%)
2001-2002	137,938	30,473	(22%)
2002-2003	198,355	40,416	(20%)
2003-2004	219,384	na	
2004-2005	252,831	46,154	(18%)
2005-2006	266,745	55,921	(21%)

There is no clear or validated evidence available to explain this increase. It is likely, however, that the reasons are multi-faceted. For example, (a) an actual increase in the number of children requiring statutory protection due to increased incidents of abuse or neglect associated with a range of parenting and social factors; (b) increased awareness and willingness of professionals to report incidents as a result of identification and response training; or (c) changes in reporting and systems.

With respect to the awareness and willingness of professionals to report suspected instances of abuse or neglect, school personnel are the most common source of notifications that result in finalised investigations by statutory authorities (AIHW, 2007a).

The iceberg syndrome

A further concern relates to the 'tip of the iceberg' notion (Walsh, Farrell, Schweitzer & Bridgstock, 2005; Briggs & Heinrich, 1985) as the number of notifications and substantiated reports may not represent the full extent of child abuse or neglect or its consequences. On the surface, it may appear that only a small number of children in schools will be the subject of a substantiated investigation thereby requiring special consideration from an education perspective. Teachers, however, will continue to work with those children who for whatever reason are considered vulnerable and at-risk but do not pass the critical benchmark for statutory investigation that leads to substantiation. They will also continue to work with and support children that they may be concerned about but for a range of reasons do not officially notify authorities of these concerns. Therefore there are potentially a much larger number of Australian children who teachers may consider to be educationally disadvantaged and require specific support due to abuse or neglect related issues than represented by the official notification statistics.

Substantiated Cases

Concerns resulting in notification but not substantiated

Concerns but no notification made
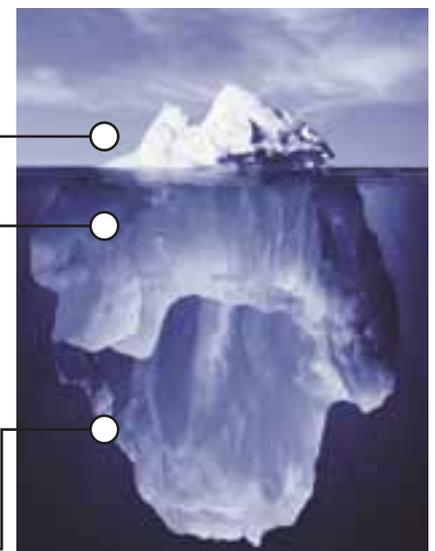
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Educational Outcomes of Children in State Care

With increasing numbers of children being defined as vulnerable and at-risk of abuse and neglect, how educators work towards reducing the associated educational and social disparities is a critical issue. This is particularly crucial in light of the increasing body of compelling evidence highlighting the poor educational and life outcomes of Australian children living in State or Territory statutory care as a result of substantiated abuse or neglect. Australian children in State or Territory care, for example, when compared with all children in the same or a similar cohort or jurisdiction are more likely to -

- achieve below the national benchmarks for reading and numeracy across nearly all year levels (AIHW, 2007b)

- experience poorer academic success (AIHW, 2007b) and achieve 'below' or 'well below' average at school (de Lemos, 1997)

- leave school early without qualifications (Commonwealth of Australia, 2004)

- experience significant disruptions in schooling and gaps in learning because of multiple placements necessitating school transfers (Delfabbro, Barber & Cooper, 2000; CREATE, 2004)

- display high levels of behavioural or discipline problems (AIHW, 2005)

- be suspended or excluded from schooling (e.g., Osborn & Delfabbro, 2005, in a national sample reported that 34 per cent had been suspended and 12.7 per cent excluded from school up to 25 times).

Based on these findings and the growing number of notifications and substantiations, recommendations have been made to (a) review how child protection is addressed in teacher education programs and (b) consider new models for the education of vulnerable children and those in State care (Commonwealth of Australia, 2004, 2005).

Teacher Education and Child Protection

Teacher education in Australia provides the foundation learning for graduates who will be at the centre of realising these recommendations.

Like teaching in schools, teacher education is an increasingly complex profession that plays a central role in preparing teachers to develop the diverse skills and pedagogical knowledge essential to maximise learning for a diverse range of child and adolescent needs.

Over recent years, between 9,000 and 11,000 students have completed undergraduate initial teaching education, and this trend is expected to continue over the next few years. A further 3,500 graduate and postgraduate students have also completed their initial teaching education award in the last few years, but a slight decline is projected over the next few years to around 3,000 annually (see graphs and DEST projections below).

Undergraduate teacher course completions by course type, actual and projected, Australia, 1997 to 2008
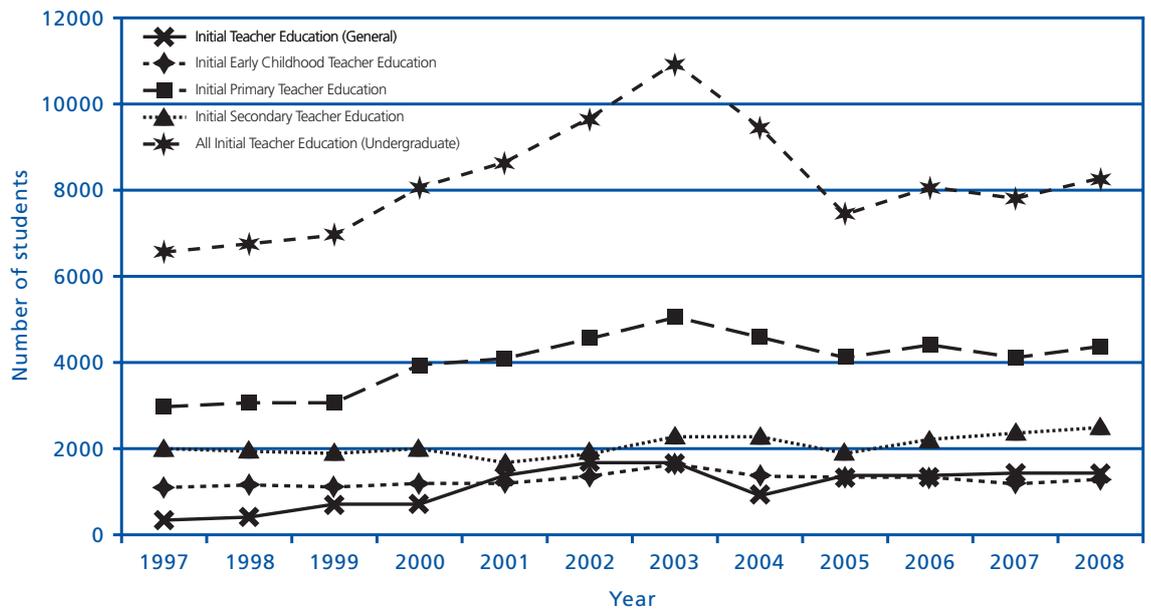
Postgraduate teacher course completions by course type, actual and projected, Australia, 1997 to 2008
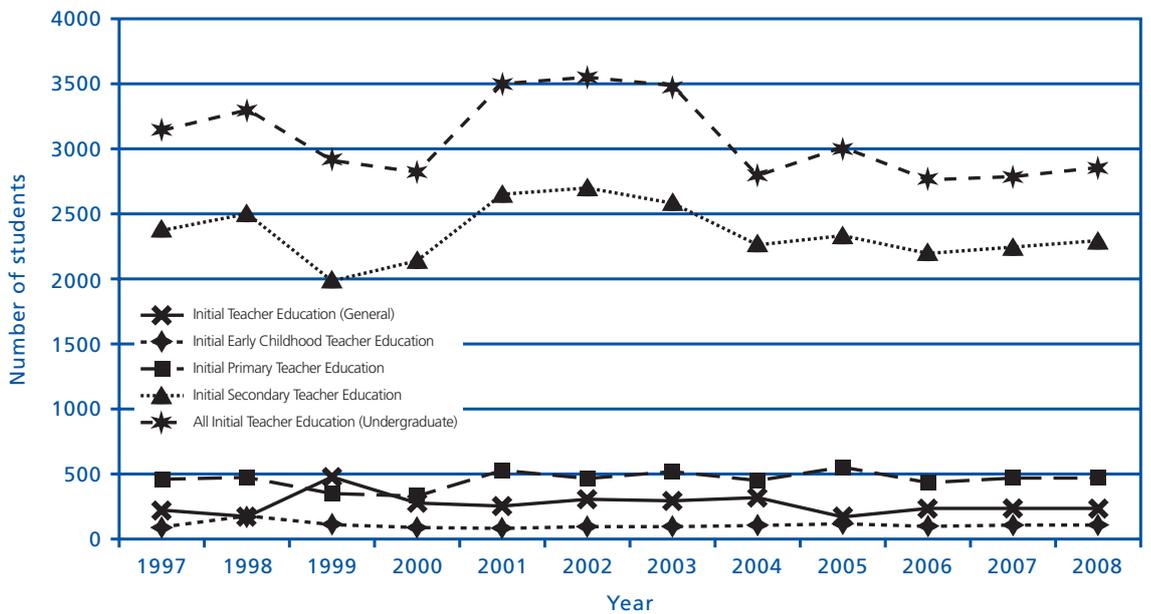
Source: Higher Education Statistics, unpublished, University Statistics, DEST, 2005, plus DEST projections

Given the significant number of teachers currently working with children, and the number of novice teachers entering the profession, there is a concomitant need to assist higher educators to prepare graduates who can understand and respond effectively to the needs of the increasing number of students facing adversity in Australian society, as outlined in the previous section.

Australian Studies of Child Protection in Teacher Education

To date there has been no comprehensive examination of the child protection content included in teacher education courses offered by Australian Universities. Furthermore, while child protection has been highlighted as a primary policy issue for teachers and schools for a number of years (Briggs & Hawkins, 1997), only a small number of Australian-based reviews, research projects or evaluation studies of child protection in teacher education and professional development have been published.

The few studies that have been published include -

1) Farrell's (2001) review which called for a greater educative focus on child protection issues in light of new child protection legislation in Queensland;

2) Walsh, Farrell, Schweitzer & Bridgstock's (2005) investigation of the critical factors influencing teachers reporting of child abuse and neglect involving 254 primary school teachers based in South-East Queensland that found teachers felt unsure of their ability to accurately identify child abuse and neglect and received little training in this regard;

3) Singh & McWilliam's (2005) case studies of primary teachers in Queensland that reported greater teacher awareness of child protection issues in combination with perceptions of increased responsibilities, inadequate professional development and heightened professional risk;

4) evaluations of mandatory notification, identification and response training programs conducted in pre-service teaching contexts - e.g.,
   • Clarke and Healy (2006) - University of Western Sydney
   • Potter and Brown (2006) - University of Southern Queensland
   • McCallum (2000) - University of South Australia

5) Hansen & Mulholland's (2005) study which examined the career pathways of male elementary teachers and highlighted their feelings of vulnerability; and the importance of child protection issues being specifically addressed in teacher education.

Notwithstanding the value of each review or study, in general they have been limited to one or all of the following parameters –

- examination of the child protection curriculum offered by a single school

- explication of one State or Territory's child protection legislation and policy requirements

- evaluation of undergraduate students' knowledge and understanding of legal requirements and procedures relating to child protection following compulsory identification and report training

- investigation of failure to report, or poor reporting patterns of pre-service or in-service teaching professionals following identification and report training.

International Studies of Child Protection in Teacher Education

Like much of the Australian research, overseas studies (e.g., Baginsky, 2000; Smith, 2006; Scottish Executive, 2002) suggest educational professionals do not always feel confident or skilled to identify, respond to, or address child protection issues or incidents, even after engagement in child protection training or professional development programs.

Mary Baginsky with Patricia Macpherson (2005) and Keith Hodgkinson (2000), for example, examined child protection training in initial teacher education programs in the United Kingdom. With regard to curriculum content, Baginsky and Hodgkinson (2000) reported that *little attention was paid to the provision of child protection training in initial teacher education courses*.

Where training existed, it was found to favour the 'permeation' model in which child protection issues were integrated into core curriculum rather than the development and delivery of discrete courses specifically designed to address relevant aspects of child protection. Serious concerns were

raised with regard to the impact of the permeation model. In particular the evidence linking the adoption of permeation models to ignorance and serious misconceptions about the nature and incidence of child abuse in the minds of the students and some course tutors. Furthermore, it was reported that many graduates entering the teaching profession were unskilled and unprepared for the contribution they "could and need to make to child protection" (p.279). In a subsequent study, Baginsky and Macpherson (2005) found that a significant number of students expressed a degree of anxiety and confusion about child protection issues, even amongst those who indicated a high level of confidence for dealing with abuse and neglect, and that students generally thought they needed more training on how to talk with and support children in this context.

In the United States, both Portwood (1999) and Smith (2006) examined students' knowledge and understanding of child maltreatment across a range of disciplines, including initial teacher education. Similar to the United Kingdom research, Smith's (2006) results suggested that *graduates may be entering their careers with limited confidence and assuredness of what does and does not constitute maltreatment.*

Additionally, on the basis of Portwood's (1999) study and her own research, Smith recommended that courses should focus on helping students to distinguish between their own personal beliefs about maltreatment and the legal definitions of maltreatment.

An earlier US study by Hillman & Siracusa (2001/1995) also outlined several factors that influence teachers' willingness to be involved in child maltreatment issues. These included: a lack of adequate knowledge about child abuse; negative consequences of reporting (e.g., fear of reprisals against the child or teacher and damage to the parent-teacher or teacher-student relationship); and a perceived lack of community or school support when reporting a suspicion or making an allegation.

Conclusion

Overall the findings reported in such national and international studies regarding novice teachers' feelings of inadequacy, confusion and professional vulnerability for protecting and meeting the needs of vulnerable and at-risk children and young people within the school context confirms the need to –

- examine how child protection issues are currently being addressed in teacher education programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels

- explore ways to assist teaching graduates to develop the skills and strategies to work effectively and confidently with vulnerable children and families in their professional capacity.

Aims and Purpose of Research

Prior to this initiative, the extent to which child protection issues have been included in the curriculum of pre-registration or initial teacher education courses and programs had never been mapped at the national level, and therefore called for investigation.

As so little was known about the ways in which child protection issues are addressed in teacher education, the principle aims of the study were to -

- identify discrete, integrated and incidental child protection course content

- examine perceived facilitators and barriers to the inclusion of child protection course content

- investigate planned and potential future directions and resource requirements for the effective inclusion of child protection components.

The initial emphasis was on surveying the curriculum content of teacher education programs to determine what was being taught, who was teaching it, and how much time was allocated to the topics and issues.

In addition to the collection of national survey data, an important aspect of the initiative was to organise a national forum to discuss ways to promote quality child protection curriculum content within and across University-based teacher education programs. In support of this outcome, the forum was organised to facilitate further examination of issues raised in the survey responses, explore strategies for advancing child protection and student wellbeing in teacher education, and assist in the preparation of graduates who feel confident and competent to work with abused and neglected children effectively.

Key issues:

- abused and maltreated children experience poor educational and life outcomes

- increasing notifications suggest teachers will be called upon more than ever before to meet the educational and social needs of children and young people considered to be vulnerable, or at-risk, of abuse or neglect

- teachers' feelings of inadequacy, confusion and professional vulnerability with respect to protecting vulnerable and at-risk children and young people is reported nationally and internationally

- child protection content in teacher education has never been examined at the national level

Professionals Protecting Children: A Model

Underpinning the design and methodology utilised in this study is the following model detailing the critical role that teaching professionals play in child protection.

Essentially the model demonstrates that teachers working across the early childhood, compulsory and secondary years of schooling come into contact with children from diverse backgrounds who present with varying educational needs.

Within any school or classroom context a teacher may become concerned about the wellbeing of a particular child. Once identified as vulnerable or at-risk of abuse or neglect, the teacher as a mandated notifier will proceed with a formal notification.

The reality for the teacher, however, is regardless of whether the notification results in any form of tertiary or statutory response from the relevant welfare agency, meeting the educational and wellbeing needs of the child remains a crucial aspect of the teacher's ongoing professional role.

Although considerable emphasis is placed on training teachers to identify and notify child abuse and neglect, we contend there is a concomitant imperative for teachers to receive professional training and support to develop strategies and processes that meet the needs effectively of this educationally disadvantaged group of students.
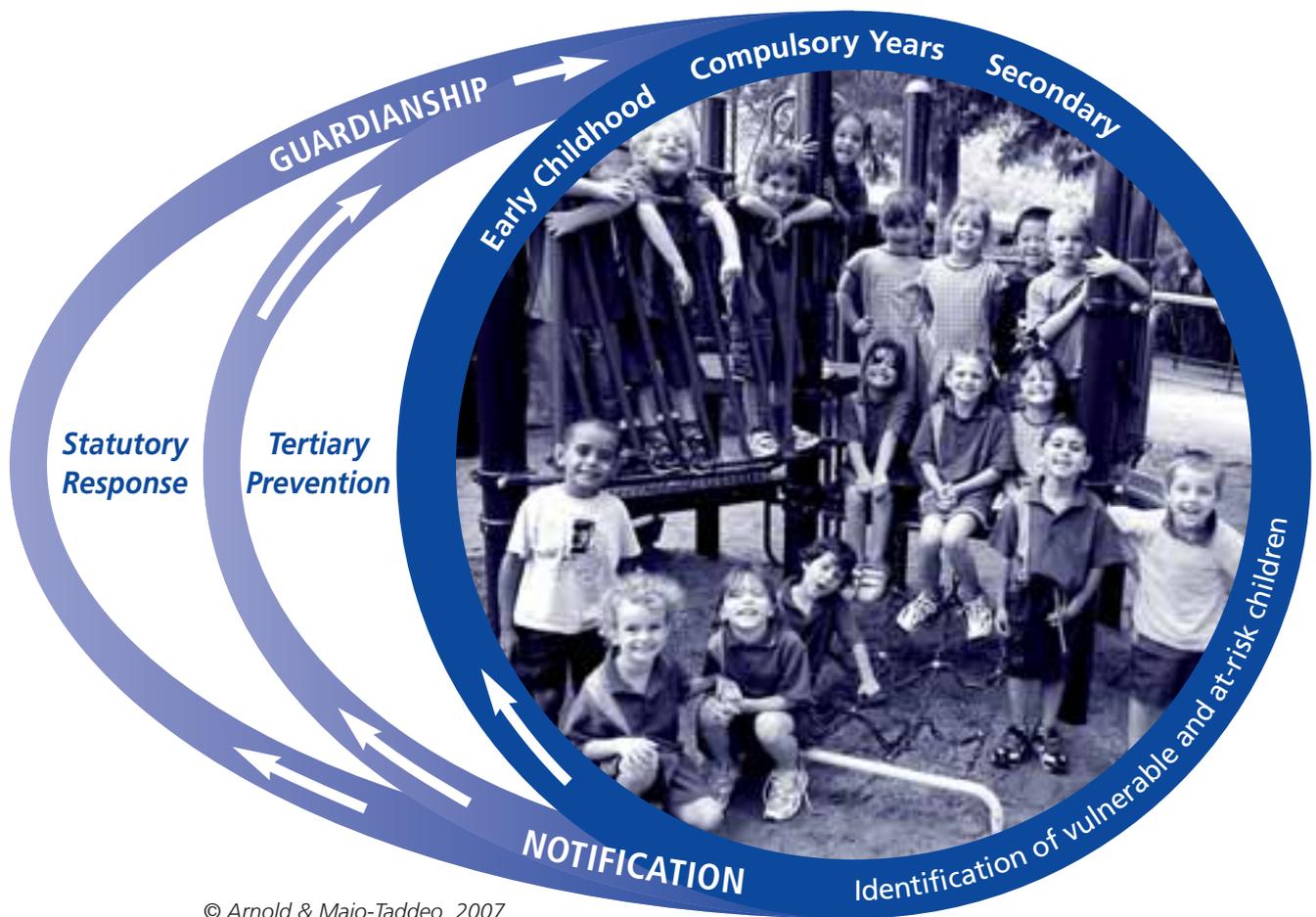
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Design and Methodology

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Three key questions underpinned this study:

1) What aspects of child protection are being addressed currently in teacher education courses across Australia, and how are they delivered within the curriculum?

2) What are the perceived facilitators or barriers for the inclusion of child protection content into the core curricula of teacher education?

3) What does the teacher education community recommend to facilitate the advancement and effective inclusion of child protection components into future pre-service teaching programs?

Two key methods were adopted within this study: curriculum mapping and a roundtable approach. The rationale for these approaches is discussed in the following sections.

Curriculum Mapping

Overview

Curriculum, whether documented or not, is the sum total of decisions made about which activities are included or excluded (English, 1980) in an educational program.

Curriculum mapping is a systematic approach used to describe the content taught, the sequence in which it is taught, and the amount of time spent teaching it (English, 1980). The underlying thesis is that the quantity of instructional time affects student knowledge and achievement in an identified area of learning, and that any judgements or future actions should be based on accurate information of what actually happens (Clough, James, & Witcher, 1996) rather than simply examining course outlines of intended curriculum.

Essentially when collated and analysed, curriculum mapping data can indicate the time spent and the order in which students encounter topics. It also permits estimations of the amount of variance within and between functional units of analysis, that is, faculties, schools, courses, lectures or tutorials. Fundamentally, the data generated by curriculum mapping techniques can be used to identify and address curricula gaps, overlaps, and desired as opposed to inadvertent repetition.

Curriculum mapping can be applied at two distinct levels of interest – the macro (e.g., national, state or discipline) and the micro (e.g., faculty, school, or classroom) level. Though the macro and the micro levels are connected, and the functional units of analysis at each level is interchangeable according to context (i.e., a faculty may be defined as macro in a local university study but as micro within a national or international study) the process nevertheless provides the same picture (Jacobs, 1997). Namely, the process makes the curriculum transparent and provides a broad picture of what students experience within a particular context or program of study.

It is important to note, however that in general, curriculum mapping techniques will tell us what, when and in which sequence content is provided to students but not what they have learned. Notwithstanding this limitation, the curriculum mapping approach was considered an effective and theoretically appropriate way to map when and how child protection content is delivered at the national level for two reasons.

First, the process promotes the identification of resource requirements and may potentially support the effective inclusion of child protection components in programs.

Second, in adopting the curriculum mapping approach there is the potential to promote 'second-order' change. This type of change both defines a given problem, and challenges the status quo of practice in order to find a solution (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005). In particular, it is contended that participation in curriculum mapping initiatives can be the process by which we reflect upon, revise or change fundamental assumptions, perspectives and views (Weinbaum, 2004 cited in Hale, 2006). According to Hale (2006) curriculum mapping initiatives, therefore, can form the cornerstone of sustainable change when combined with sound leadership, the development of a shared vision and collaborative inquiry. It was considered therefore that such an outcome would serve the Centre's mission of highlighting the need for child protection curriculum content within and across University-based teacher education faculties and schools, thereby providing further support for the adoption of the proposed research method.

The Process in Action

When designing and undertaking a curriculum mapping study, there are three fundamental stages in the process:

1) the research and development stage which involves the -

- investigation of previous studies and consideration of the findings

- scoping the range of participants

- determination of the content to be mapped

- establishment of timeframes for implementation

- planning subsequent actions and outcomes

2) the actual mapping stage during which-

- survey instruments are developed, trialled and evaluated

- curriculum maps are generated based on skills, processes and content actually taught

3) the analysis, evaluation, and dissemination stage which incorporates -

- reflecting upon the curriculum taught, methodologies, materials and standards being met

- reporting of the findings

- planning to revise or re-evaluate as appropriate.

Examples of Curriculum Mapping in Similar Contexts

Curriculum mapping processes have been used recently in various university contexts to demonstrate how faculties and schools are developing graduate knowledge and skills. For example, the mapping of graduate attributes in the medicine, nursing and health sciences postgraduate coursework degree curriculum at Monash University (Krasey, Jackson & McCall, 2006); the generic skills fostered in the B.Ed. (Early Childhood) curriculum at Macquarie University (Sumsion & Goodfellow, 2002), and the graduate attributes in the Arts curriculum offered at the University of New South Wales (Forsyth, 2006).

Although the curriculum mapping process is descriptive by nature and does not perceive teaching and learning as static, there are some issues in applying the process to content that is -

a) not necessarily core to the education award or program, and

b) which can be interpreted or delivered in highly idiosyncratic ways.

Comparisons, for example, can be drawn between the mapping of child protection content and the mapping of non-discipline specific graduate qualities in higher education courses. Specifically, like the 'top down' approach prevalent in the adoption of graduate qualities outlined by Barrie (2006), many education faculties and schools have responded to legal mandates that child protection issues be addressed. In many States and Territories, for example, it is a requirement that teachers undergo police checks, and child protection identification and response units be completed prior to students entering workplaces where children may be present. Beyond meeting such legal requirements there may be no single understanding of child protection held by academics asked to contribute data to a curriculum mapping exercise. Furthermore, it was anticipated that the extent and manner in which university teaching and learning processes actually develop child protection related knowledge and outcomes would be unclear and contestable in the same way that Barrie (2006) argued in regard to the development of graduate qualities.

The considerations of such issues suggested that simply asking for information about child protection courses could yield little valuable data. Given that people could perceive child protection differently, it was determined that the concept needed to be contextualised and made explicit within the proposed curriculum mapping process. In support of this aim, it was decided to conduct a trial to determine the most effective way of meeting this requirement (see Research and Development Section for details).

Roundtable Approach

Overview

A Roundtable is designed to bring together and engage interested participants in a structured discussion.

The process is intended to provide a 'safe space' for the consideration of how change may be managed and its likely outcomes and impact (McAvinia, 2003). The process offers additional benefits including –

- the opportunity to collate extensive information about the facilitators that may progress, and the barriers that may impede, any planned or desired change in practice

- a collective knowledge base and group who can prioritise issues and generate feasible solutions that take into account resource implications

- the dissemination of information by members of the Roundtable through their personal and professional networks

- the facilitation of structural change within their respective institutions

(Centre for Learning and Teaching, 2002)

Carter and Mistry (2001) noted that respondents in their study distinguished between Roundtables as an 'approach' and a 'methodology'. The former was perceived as an opportunity to articulate aspirations and associated with dispersed leadership and collegiality, while the latter notion suggested managed directiveness. On the basis of this finding, the notion of a Roundtable 'approach' was adopted as being an option fully consistent with the Centre's aims and mission.

Research and Development

Feasibility

It was determined that a truly national and comprehensive depiction was required. To this end strategies to gain the support of teacher education providers were explored.

Given the issues raised in the previous section, and the diverse range of teacher education courses and pedagogical approaches adopted across Australia, it was determined that the curriculum mapping survey instrument needed to simultaneously -

- contextualise child protection broadly to include preventative and proactive approaches in addition to identification and response training

- provide multiple pathways for respondents to report both explicit and implicit coverage of child protection topics and issues.

The first stage of the curriculum mapping initiative, therefore, was to develop and trial a survey instrument that could meet these requirements and procure the information required in an effective and efficient manner.

Survey Design and Development

Through an iterative process of development, trial and refinement, the survey was designed to extrapolate the nature and extent of child protection content included in teacher education programs across Australia. It was determined that one survey should be completed for each teacher education award or program offered by the identified School or Faculty.

The first two sections, namely Sections 1A and 1B, sought details of courses that have elements of child protection explicitly stated in course curriculum outlines or program syllabi. The next section, Section 2, asked for information about issues which may be raised or covered throughout the teacher education program but not explicitly stated in any course or program documentation. The final two sections, Sections 3 and 4, provided an opportunity for respondents to raise issues, concerns or share information regarding the School's approach to child protection not covered in previous sections. The following overview provides details of the type and nature of data collected. A copy of the survey instrument is provided in Appendix I.

Section 1A – Discrete Courses

Section 1A identified discrete, or stand-alone, courses specifically designed to address the prevention, identification and professional response to child abuse and neglect

Examples of courses for inclusion in this section were:

- compulsory child abuse identification and reporting programs, or 'one-off' mandatory notification training courses

- courses in which the content is **dedicated fully** to the exploration of the prevention, identification or response to child abuse and neglect within a professional context.

Section 1B – Integrated Approaches to Child Protection

In Section 1B respondents were asked to indicate courses, units or subjects offered within the nominated teacher education program that addressed child protection issues explicitly within an integrated teaching and learning context.

This enabled the identification of broader courses/subjects/units that **specifically listed** one or more child abuse and neglect topics in the course booklet as part of a lecture, tutorial and or assessment tasks. Examples included:

- the impact of abandonment, parental substance abuse and domestic violence on learning and development is listed in Week 2 of a semester-long Child Development course

- the curriculum and learning needs of a child that is deemed at-risk/vulnerable to child abuse or neglect is identified as an integral part of a professional practice course.

Section 2 - Child Protection-related Content

In order to contextualise child protection issues in multiple ways, a number of risk factors and proactive strategies associated with child abuse and neglect were listed in Section 2. The list was drawn from contemporary literature and existing categorisations of child protection-related risk factors and indicators, particularly Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 Broad categorisations of Child Abuse and Neglect Indicators and Risk Factors

Source	Broad Categories of Risk Factors
Warner, J. (2003) An Initial Assessment of the Extent to Which Risk Factors, Frequently Identified in Research, Are Taken into Account When Assessing Risk in Child Protection Cases *Journal of Social Work*, 3 (3): 339–363	Child Parent/Carer Demographics Environment
Cameron, G. & Karabanow. J. (2003) The Nature and Effectiveness of Program Models for Adolescents at Risk of Entering the Formal child Protection System *Child Welfare*, LXXXII, No. 4, July/August	Childhood and adolescent problem behaviours Difficulties with Peers Parents substance abuse & maltreatment history Family Problems Step-parents Lack of social integration Neighbourhood disintegration Lack of economic resources
Powell, C. (2003) Early Indicators of Child Abuse and Neglect: A Multi-Professional Delphi Study *Child Abuse Review*, 12: 25–40	Physical Behavioural and Developmental Parental factors Other

Respondents were asked to record if any factors listed were referred to, or discussed with students during the course of the teacher education program. For example, the impact of developmental delay on a child's educational progress may be **discussed** in various contexts throughout the degree/ award program **with no reference to child protection**. If the respondents believe this to be the case they were asked to mark the box in the first column: '*Taught but Not Linked*'

If, however, developmental delay on a student's educational progress is discussed **explicitly in terms of child abuse and neglect factors**, such as substance abuse or physical violence experienced by the mother during pregnancy, then respondents were asked to mark the box in the second column: '*Linked to Child Protection*'.

It was also made clear to the respondents that only one box should be marked for any factor or strategy.

As the list of risk factors and proactive strategies associated with child abuse and neglect provided in this section cannot be comprehensive or exhaustive of all possible issues covered, extra spaces were provided for participants to nominate additional factors or relevant strategies.

Section 3 - Comments, Issues and Concerns

This section provided the opportunity for respondents to record any comments, issues or concerns related to child protection in teacher education curriculum. In addition, any future curriculum changes that may have been planned or innovative approaches that the respondents wanted to share could be included in this section.

Section 4 - Further Exploration

The final section invited respondents to discuss any Child Protection curriculum issues that their school or faculty were interested in exploring further. It also provided an opportunity to record any opportunities, challenges or dilemmas that they wished to raise or discuss at the Roundtable forum.

Trial of Survey Instrument

The survey instrument was evaluated prior to distribution to Universities across Australia by means of a small-scale trial. The purpose of the trial was to –

- evaluate the design and format of the survey instrument

- identify any gaps or omissions in instructions or data entry requirements

- establish the average time required to complete the survey

- determine the relevance and quality of data the survey would yield.

In support of the above outcomes, the child protection content was mapped by a small sample of teacher education programs. The programs mapped during the trial included undergraduate and graduate courses offered to approximately 2000 students enrolled in early childhood, junior primary, primary, middle, and secondary years teacher education programs.

On the basis of feedback, minor modifications were made to the survey instrument.

Seeking Support

Following the trial, the Board of the Australian Council of Deans of Education was provided with copies of the proposed survey instrument, and information explaining the intended purpose and outcomes of the curriculum mapping initiative. Feedback was invited. Subsequently the Board gave support in principle to the curriculum mapping initiative. The support included agreement that the Deans would provide the name and contact details of a key liaison person in their respective school/faculty to facilitate dissemination and return of the surveys.

Roundtable Approach – Procedure

The second stage of the process involved the organisation of a National Teacher Education and Child Protection forum to support -

- the dissemination of preliminary survey results

- a structured discussion of how teaching graduates can be better prepared to meet their 'duty of care' and respond effectively to child abuse and neglect both legally and educationally within classroom/school contexts

- the exploration of strategies for advancing child protection and student wellbeing in teacher education programs that build on current good practice in a collegial atmosphere

- the identification and prioritisation of resource needs (i.e., what participants believe is needed to make child protection an integral part of teacher education)

- the development of a collaborative network of researchers, teachers and faculties/schools to support the ongoing process of integrating child protection into teacher education.

The forum was hosted by the Australian Centre for Child Protection. Invited participants included the Dean of Education (or his/her nominee) and one staff member from each School/Faculty that provided data, together with a representative of the Teacher Registration body of each State or Territory.

The organisation of the 4-hour forum included a keynote address by an international educator, a national overview of child protection, and presentation of the preliminary results of the curriculum mapping survey. The information session was followed by whole group and small group sessions designed to generate further discussion, ideas and strategic pathways and solutions.

At the completion of the forum, expressions of interest were invited for future collaborative ventures within and between Schools/Faculties and the Australian Centre for Child Protection, together with nominations for membership of a collaborative network.

The Mapping Process

All university-based Schools of Education were invited to participate in the mapping of child protection content in teacher education programs offered across Australia.

Selecting Participants

As part of the initial process of inviting faculties and schools of education to participate in the initiative, an email was sent to the Heads of Schools requesting their support and the nomination of a contact person to whom all future correspondence could be directed. Those who did not respond within a specified time received a follow up reminder via email, and if after some time no details regarding a contact person had been received, a phone call was made requesting the relevant information.

A list of teacher education programs identified as relevant to the mapping of child protection content offered by each School of Education was generated by accessing University websites and searching the list of awards and programs. An email was then sent to the nominated liaison person to –

- confirm the list of teacher education programs

- ensure that the list of programs was current, and did not include any discontinued programs and

- ascertain that all teacher education programs were included in the sample.

Any programs not verified were deleted from the curriculum mapping list.

Mail out of Surveys

From May - August 2006, printed surveys and return postage paid envelopes for each of the verified teacher education programs were posted to the contact person in each university. A period of 6 weeks was allowed for the return of surveys. Those who did not return surveys within this timeframe received follow-up emails and/or phone calls.

As survey forms were returned each program was allocated a unique code. Information recorded on the front page of the survey form was confirmed and updated where appropriate on the relevant confidential databases.

An email was then sent to the liaison person confirming the receipt of the surveys. This email also provided details of the unique code assigned to each survey returned by them. By quoting this code the School can request information regarding their survey response patterns in the future should they wish to do so.

Response Patterns and Trends

Surveys were sent to 41 universities across Australia that offer undergraduate, graduate or postgraduate teacher education programs. Subsequently 33 Universities returned a total of 292 surveys.

Response Rates

The responses rate for teacher education programs offered by the responding universities in each State and Territory are shown in Figure 3.1.

Undergraduate and graduate teacher education courses leading to formal teacher registration across Australia are strongly represented in the sample. Significantly high returns were recorded from South Australia, Western Australia, New South Wales and Victoria. It is important to note that these States are among the largest providers of teacher education programs, and that together represent 76.6% of the data reported herein.
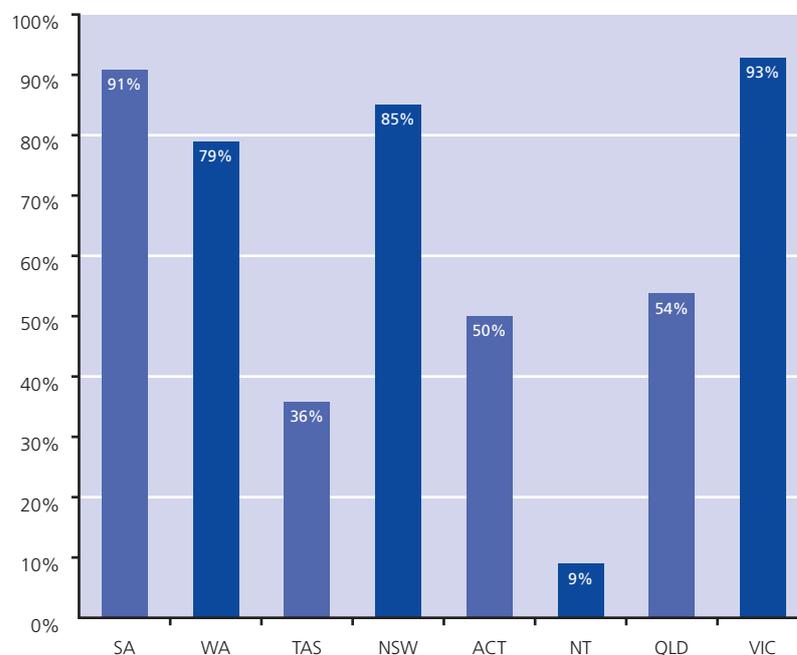

Figure 3.1 Response rates for teacher education programs by State and Territories

Teacher Education Programs Represented in the Sample

Universities were also asked to specify the program type on their survey responses. Determining how to group the programs for reporting purposes was problematic for a range of reasons including

- discrepancies between States and Territories with regard to the organisation of schooling (e.g., Year 7 forms part of the primary school in several states but is part of secondary schooling in others; similarly early childhood and pre-school programs are included in some primary school education contexts and not others)

- an overlap of some teacher education programs that prepare teacher educators for a broad range of year levels e.g., middle primary and secondary, or early childhood and primary

- teacher education programs that prepare graduates for specialisations across a broad range of year levels (e.g., music, health and physical education, and special needs).

Preliminary exploration of the data confirmed that the majority of programs could be classified as early years, primary/middle years or junior/senior secondary years. Subsequently all programs were assigned to one of the three broad categories as detailed in Table 3.1 in order to address State and Territory differences, avoid confusion, and facilitate future discussion of findings.

Taking into account the higher number of junior, primary and middle primary teacher education programs provided by Australian Universities, reference to Figure 3.2 shows that 72.1% of survey responses were received from teacher education programs placed within the compulsory years of schooling category.
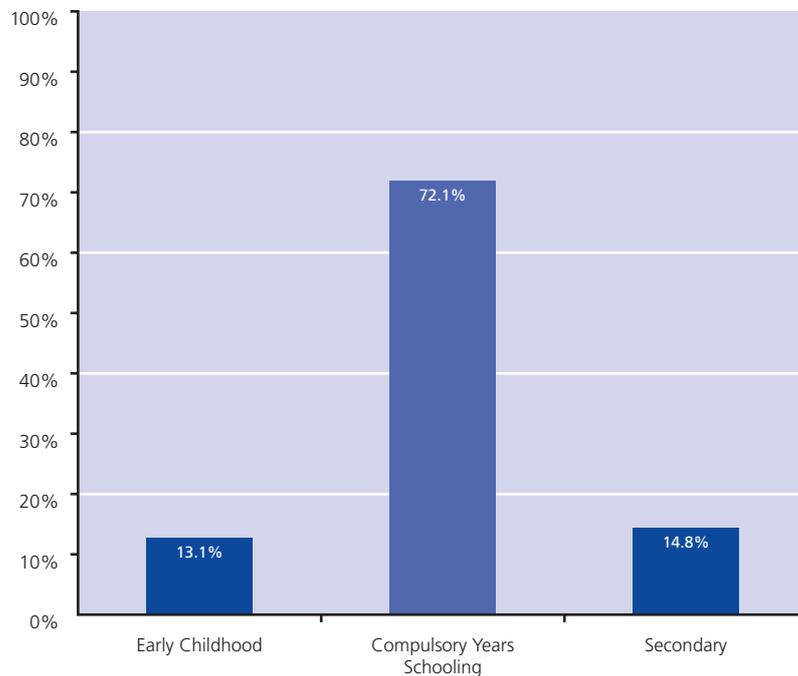
Figure 3.2 Surveys returned by broad categories of teacher education

Table 3.1 Description of Broad Categories

Broad Category	Description
Early Childhood	Master of Teaching (Early Childhood) Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood 3 and 4+ year programs Bachelor of Early Childhood Studies Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood Teaching Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) 1 year programs Bachelor of Teaching (Early Childhood Education) Bachelor of Early Childhood Studies (Child and Family) Bachelor of Learning Management (Early Childhood) Bachelor of Education (Pre-service Early Childhood) Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood (Graduate Entry) Graduate Entry Early Childhood (up to 3 years) Graduate Diploma in Education (Early Childhood Studies)
Compulsory Years Schooling	Master of Education (inc. all specialisations) Master of Special Education and Master of Educational Practice Master of Learning Innovation (inc. all specialisations) Master of Lifelong Learning or Postgraduate certificate in Lifelong Learning Master of Online Learning and Master of Educational Technology Master of Teaching (inc. all specialisations) Master of Catholic Education and Master of Religious Education Master of Education Studies Master of Campus Ministry Master of Education Management Master of Guidance Counselling Bachelor of Education (Graduate Entry) inc. all specialisations Bachelor of Education in Primary Teaching (Graduate Entry) Bachelor of Education in Primary Teaching 3 - 4+ year Bachelor of Learning Management Bachelor of Education (Graduate Entry) Bachelor of Teaching (Inc all specialisations e.g. Special Needs) Bachelor of Education (Conversion) and (Upgrade) 1-2 year programs Bachelor of Teaching (Primary) Bachelor of Education (K-12 Middle Schooling) or (Middle School) Bachelor of Teaching and Diploma of Teaching (Anangu Education) Bachelor of Human Movement Bachelor of General Education Studies Bachelor of Physical Education Associate Degree in Education Studies Diploma of Education Graduate Diploma of Education 1 - 4 yr programs (inc. all specialisations) Graduate Diploma in Education and Graduate Diploma in Educational Studies Graduate Diploma in Teaching Graduate Diploma of Learning and Teaching (All 0.5 – 1 year programs) Graduate Diploma and Graduate Certificate in Christian Education Graduate Diploma and Graduate Certificate in TESOL Graduate Diploma in Education (inc. all specialisations) Graduate Diploma in Christian Education Graduate Diploma in Creative Arts Therapy Graduate Diploma in Education Studies Graduate Diploma in Educational Management Graduate Diploma in Teaching of Critical Thinking Graduate Diploma in Professional Studies Graduate Diploma in Language and Literacy Postgraduate Diploma if Education (inc. specialisations) Postgraduate Diploma in Education

Education Graduate (Primary and Secondary)
Graduate Entry Bachelor of Teaching / Graduate Certificate in Teaching Studies
Graduate Certificate in Education (inc. all specialisations)
Graduate Certificate in Visual and Performing Arts or Drama Education
Graduate Certificate in Learning Technology or Flexible Delivery
Graduate Certificate in Special Needs
Graduate Certificate in Education
Graduate Certificate in Educational Foundations
Postgraduate Certificate in Educational Technology or Online Education
Postgraduate Certificate in Religious Education

Secondary	Bachelor of Teaching (Secondary) or Master of Teaching
	Bachelor of Education (Graduate Entry) Secondary
	Bachelor of Education in Secondary Teaching 3 - 4+ year programs
	Bachelor of Education (Secondary - inc. all specialisations)
	Bachelor of Learning Management (Secondary and VocEd Training)
	Diploma of Education in Secondary Teaching
	Graduate Diploma of Education (Secondary) 1 & 2 year programs
	Graduate Diploma of Education (Secondary) Pre-service

| Other | Master of Psychology / Graduate Diploma in Education |
	Bachelor of Science / Bachelor of Teaching
	Bachelor of Arts/ Bachelor of Teaching
	Bachelor of Business / Bachelor of Teaching
	Bachelor of Science / Diploma of Education (inc. specialisations)
	Bachelor of Arts / Diploma of Education (inc. specialisations)
	Bachelor of Commerce / Diploma of Education (Secondary)
	Bachelor of Business Administration / Diploma of Education (Secondary)
	Bachelor of Mathematics / Bachelor of Teaching
	Bachelor of General Studies / Bachelor of Teaching
	Bachelor of Music / Bachelor Teaching
	Bachelor of Teaching / Bachelor of Health and Physical Education
	Bachelor of Teaching / Bachelor of Early Childhood Studies
	Bachelor of Teaching / Bachelor of Arts (inc. all specialisations)
	Bachelor of Teaching / Bachelor of Music
	Bachelor of Teaching / Bachelor of Fine Arts
	Bachelor of Teaching / Bachelor of Science
	Bachelor of Teaching / Bachelor of Mathematical and Computer Sciences
	Bachelor of Teaching / Bachelor of Economics
	Bachelor of Teaching / Bachelor of Health Sciences
	Bachelor of Commerce / Bachelor of Education
	Bachelor of Arts / Bachelor of Education
	Bachelor of Music / Bachelor of Education (inc. specialisations)
	Bachelor of Science / Bachelor of Education (inc. specialisations)
	Bachelor of Visual Arts / Bachelor Education (inc. specialisations)
	Bachelor of Information Systems / Bachelor of Education (inc. specialisations)
	Bachelor of Sport & Outdoor recreation / Bachelor of Education
	Bachelor of Education / Bachelor of Teaching
	Bachelor of Teaching / Bachelor of Design and Technology
	Bachelor of Arts / Bachelor of Education (inc. specialisations)
	Bachelor of Exercise Science / Bachelor of Education
	Bachelor Human Services in Child-Family Services / Bachelor Education (Primary)
	Bachelor of Education / Bachelor of Science
	Bachelor of Education / Bachelor of Economics
	Graduate Diploma in Further Education and Training

Type and Length of Degree and Awards represented in the sample

Universities were also asked to indicate the type and length of the degree on the survey form. While acknowledging the potential merit of specificity, given the diversity of awards under consideration, each degree program was assigned to one of the following descriptive groupings in order to simplify the reporting of data and findings –

Table 3.2 Broad categories for type and length of degree or award

Category	Type of Award
Undergraduate programs	3 - 4+ - year Bachelor awards
Graduate programs	Graduate Entry/Certificate/Diploma awards
Postgraduate programs	Masters and Doctorate programs
Other	≤ 2 year and 5+ year programs
Unknown	Type or length of the program unspecified

The distribution demonstrated in Figure 3.3 is not surprising and is explained by the significantly higher number of 3-year and 4+-year Bachelor programs, and Graduate programs, offered by Australian universities when compared to the alternative educational pathways to teacher registration.
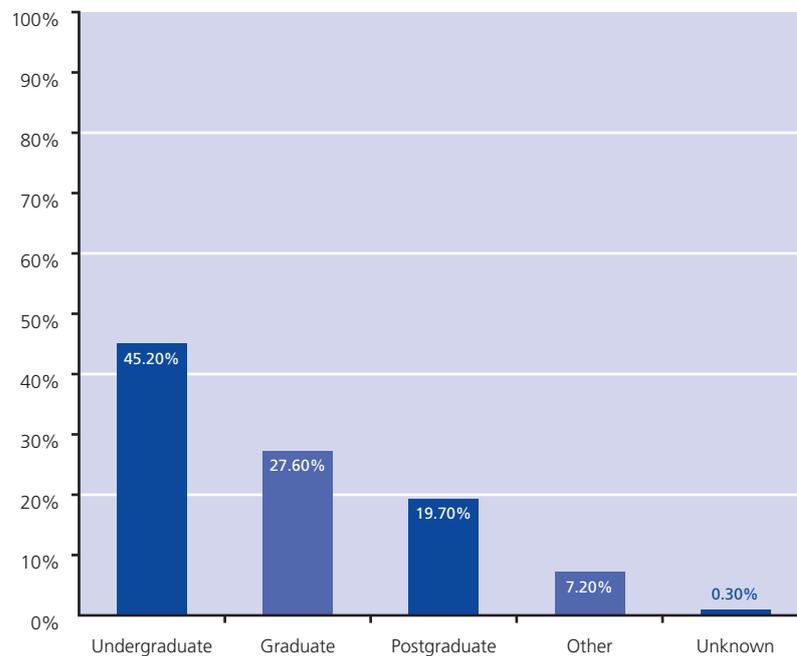
Figure 3.3 Surveys returned by type of degree

Response Patterns by University

Response patterns detailed in Figure 3.4 show that 17 of the 33 responding universities provided data for 100 per cent of teacher education programs offered by their School or Faculty of Education, and that 72.7 per cent of the universities provided data for more than half of the teacher education programs offered.

N.B. In order to ensure confidentiality the one to two digit number used in the unique coding system has been used in Figure 3.4 to identify individual Universities rather than names or campus locations.
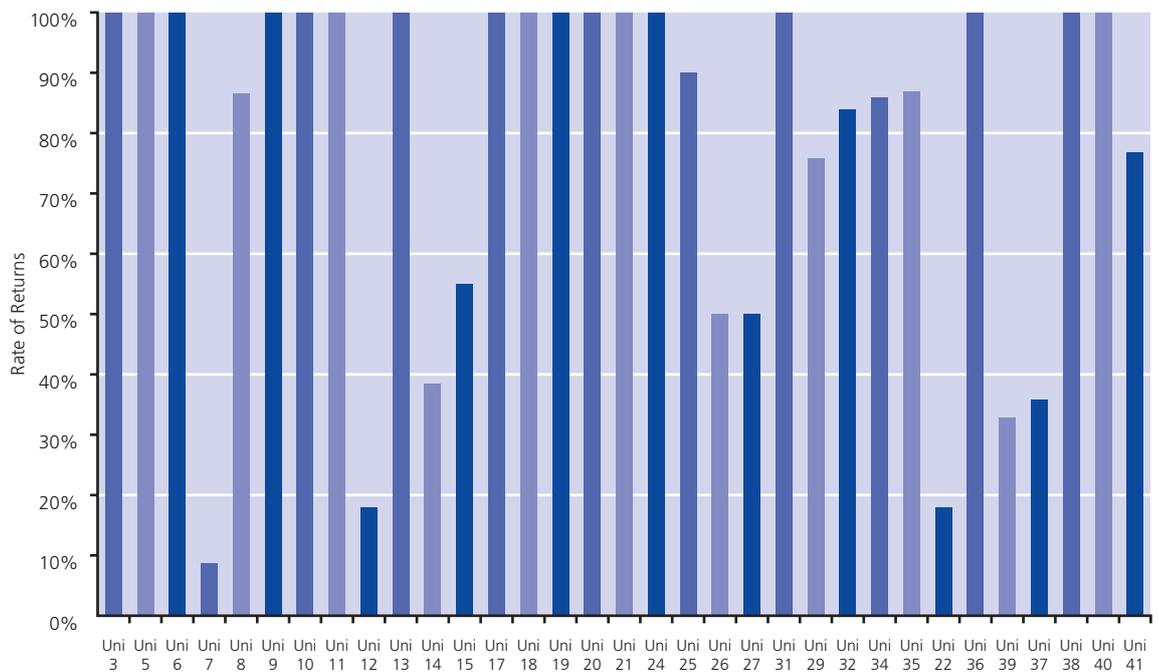
Figure 3.4 Surveys returned by Universities

Key results:

- Surveys were distributed to 41 Universities who offer initial teacher education programs

- A total of 292 surveys were returned from 33 Universities representing an 80% response rate at the University level

- The majority of teacher education programs offered in all but two States/Territories were mapped

- 72.7% of all universities that returned surveys reported on 50% or more of teacher education programs offered at their university

Analysis of Data and Results

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In order to facilitate discussion and reflect the data collection process, the analysis of data is organised as follows:

- Section 1A   Discrete Child Protection Courses
- Section 1B   Integrated Approaches to Child Protection
- Section 2   Child Protection-related Content
- Section 3   Comments, Issues and Concerns
- Section 4   Further Exploration

The discussion of the Roundtable National Teacher Education and Child Protection forum follows the report of survey analyses.

Software Packages

Analysis of the data was undertaken using SPSS version 14 (2005) and Microsoft Office Excel (2003, SP2).

Overview of Data Entry and Analysis

In order to ensure the accuracy of the data being analysed, a double entry process was adopted, which verified a 100% accuracy rating.

Various analytical techniques were then utilised to facilitate the analysis of the data, including descriptive, frequency, and cross-tabulation procedures. Although many other options for analysis were available, these were not utilised for two reasons. First further comparative analyses, such as analysis of variance or correlation procedures, were not considered necessary or useful in reporting the data for the purposes of this research study. Second, there was concern that some forms of analysis could compromise the confidentiality of universities and schools given the small number of providers in some States and Territories.

Throughout Sections 1A and 1B percentages have been used consistently to promote effective comparative analysis across and within areas of interest within the study. In section 2, however, it was considered more appropriate, in some instances, to weight the cases in order to minimise the possibility of skewed results.

In order to determine the extent of discrete or stand-alone courses offered to teacher education students across Australia, Schools and Faculties were asked to identify courses that specifically addressed child abuse and neglect issues. For each course or program identified, specific information was requested that detailed the following –

- the timing of the unit within the overall teacher education program

- the number of hours dedicated to the unit or course

- who was responsible for delivery of the content, i.e., university staff or external providers

- if the course of study was core or elective, and

- the average number of students who participate in the course annually.

Discrete Child Protection Units/Courses

Initial analysis of data (see Figure 4.1) revealed that 76.6 per cent of schools and faculties of education that returned survey data do not provide any form of discrete child protection content within their teacher education programs.
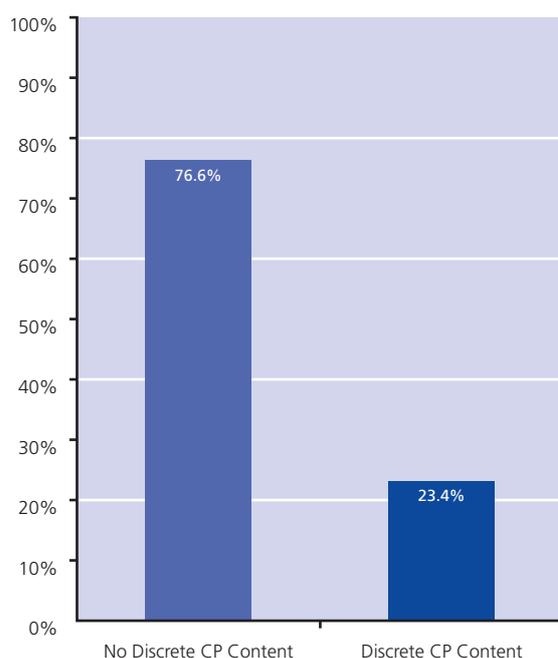
Figure 4.1 Discrete child protection content

When the data was inspected according to type of degree that students enrolled in, the analysis demonstrated that of the 14,500 students who potentially graduate annually from teacher education programs across Australia, over 70 per cent do not engage in any formal or discrete learning about child protection within the programs offered by their Education School or Faculty (see Figure 4.2).
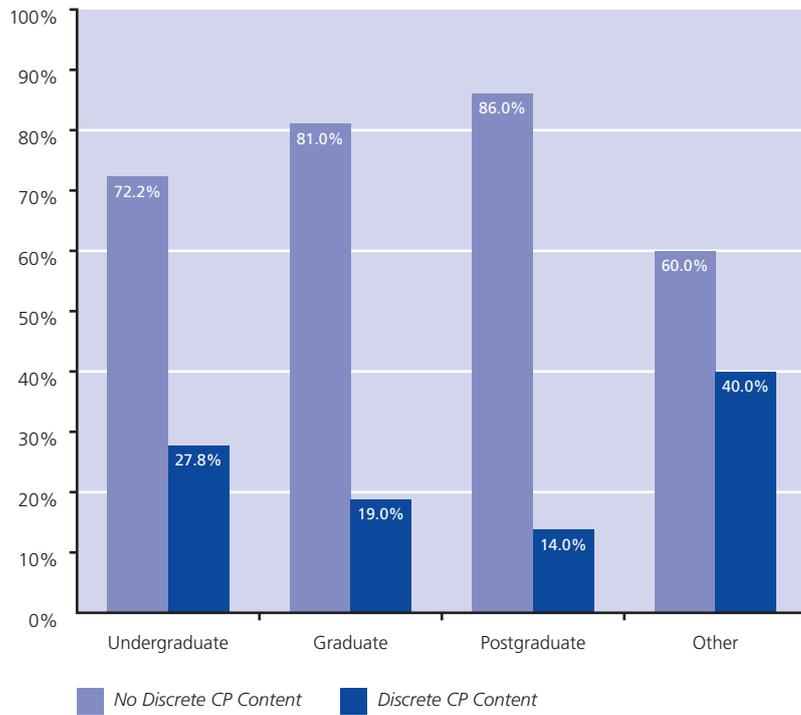
Figure 4.2 Discrete child protection content by type of degree

Examination of the provision of discrete child protection content across the broad categories of teacher education program, namely early childhood, compulsory years of schooling and secondary schooling as detailed in Figure 4.3, indicates that irrespective of the schooling focus, the majority (≥ 67.4%) offer no discrete child protection content.
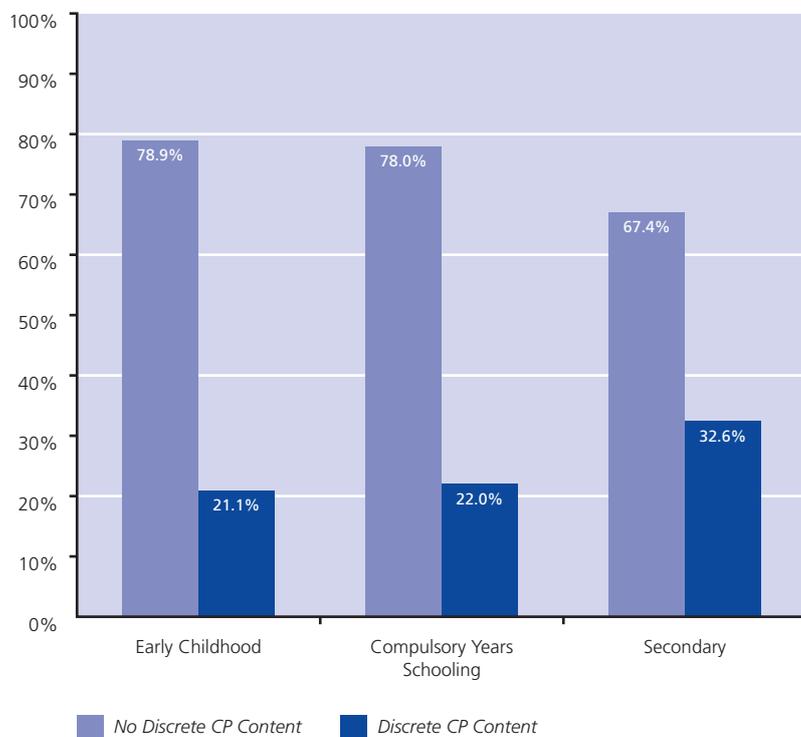
Figure 4.3 Discrete child protection programs by type of teacher education program

Although visual examination of Figure 4.3 suggests that teacher education programs that focus on secondary schooling methods and practices (i.e., 32.6 per cent) report greater emphasis on the provision of discrete child protection content, analysis of variance procedures revealed that the difference is not significant and that all teacher education programs report similar patterns in this regard.

In examining State and Territory differences, reference to Figure 4.4 shows that teacher education providers in South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory offer a higher percentage of discrete child protection courses, that is 61.5 per cent and 66.7 per cent respectively. In comparison, less than 20% of teacher education programs offered in Western Australia, Tasmania, New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria reported providing any form of discrete child protection course options.
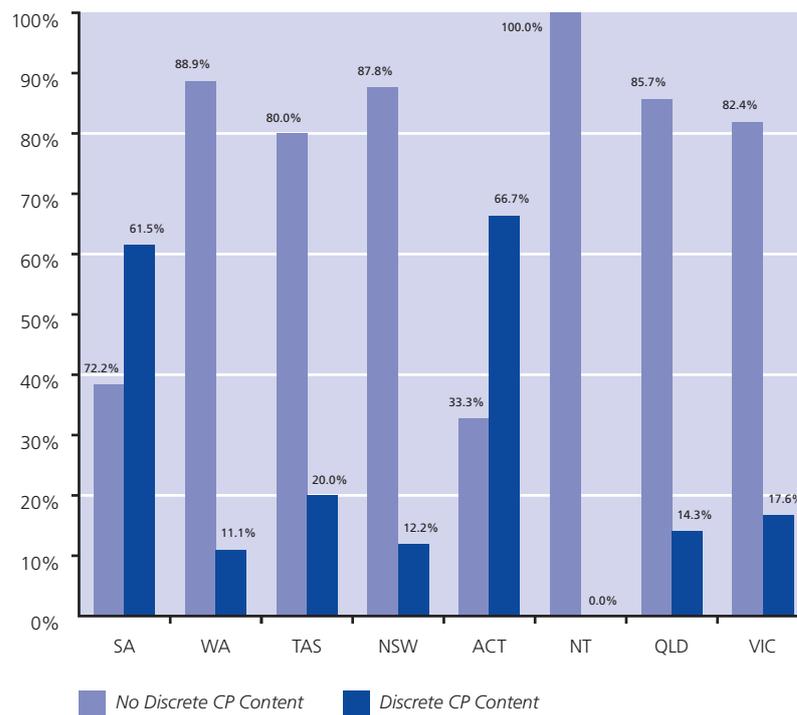
Figure 4.4 Discrete child protection content by States and Territories

N.B. Caution is required when interpreting the results reported in the above Figure. Reference to Figure 3.1 in the previous chapter, which details response rates for each State and Territory is highly recommended in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the trends reported.

Where discrete child protection courses or units are provided the extent to which university staff deliver the content in contrast to specialists from outside agencies or employer groups was mapped. The results outlined in Figure 4.5 indicate that 39 per cent of discrete child protection content were delivered by external providers and that 24 per cent of the content was delivered collaboratively by university and external lecturers and tutors.
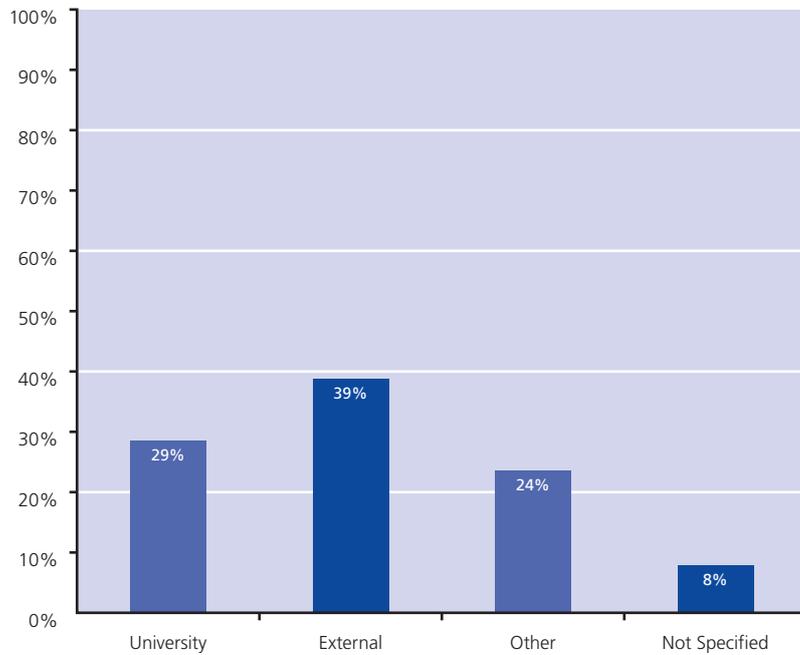
Figure 4.5 Discrete child protection content by delivery agent

In addition, the core or elective status of discrete child protection content provided by schools and faculties was identified. The results detailed in Figure 4.6 show that 79% of the content is required learning offered within a core curriculum program.
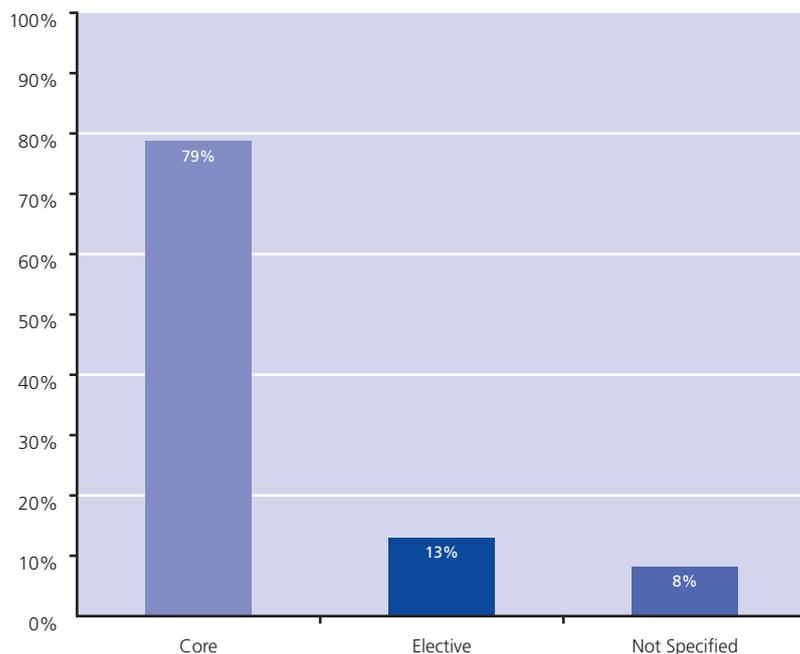
Figure 4.6 Discrete child protection content by course type

On initial inspection the number of core units of study relating to discrete child protection content appears high and very promising, however, the reader is reminded that the 79 per cent recorded is situated within the 23.4 per cent of overall teacher education programs that offer any relevant course content. Therefore in real terms, approximately 18.5 per cent of discrete child protection courses or units offered within teacher education programs are, in fact, core units of study.

In order to further facilitate the discussion regarding the extent to which students experience discrete child protection content, the number of hours allocated to content delivery was grouped into 4 categories –

- 1 to 4 hours
- 5 to 7 hours (includes courses run over a half to a full day)
- 8 hours to the equivalent of 1 week (includes courses run across multiple sessions times)

According to the response patterns outlined in Figure 4.7, it can be inferred that approximately 65 per cent of students enrolled in a teacher education program have the opportunity to participate in a one-off, discrete child protection unit. However, students may be engaged in that learning program for as little as one hour or at best to a maximum of seven hours. As previously noted, these findings need to be contextualised by previous results reported herein. For example, it can be conjectured that even when the highest number of teacher education students graduate in a year, that is 14,500 across Australia, only around 1200 students have experienced one day or less of dedicated teaching of child protection content. In addition, only 850 students have experienced more than 8 hours of discrete child protection instruction. With regard to the remaining 12,450 graduates, the exposure to dedicated and discrete learning related to child protection issues is unknown.
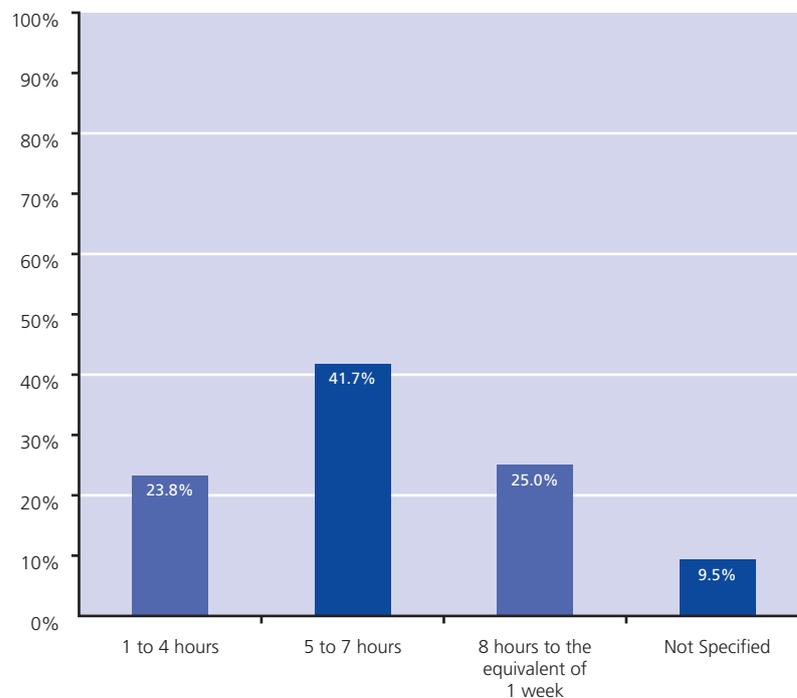
Figure 4.7 Discrete child protection content by time allocation

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that the high prevalence of 1-7 hour discrete child protection courses or units runs parallel with the time requirements of child protection identification training programs required prior to students undertaking practicum placements in schools or early childhood settings, and teacher registration in some States and Territories across Australia. While no definitive conclusions can be drawn from the available data, the observable trend does suggest that the primary focus of discrete child protection content is identification and response rather than any educational issues related to working with children at risk because of abuse or neglect.

Further analysis to explore how the number of hours dedicated to child protection content is distributed across the types of teacher education programs demonstrates that programs addressing

the compulsory years of schooling favour the 5-7 hour delivery approach (see Figure 4.8). On the other hand, the early childhood programs are more likely to allocate 1-4 hours to child protection content, and the secondary awards tend to equally distribute child protection content across the 5-7 hour and 8 or more hour categories.

1 to 4 hours *5 to 7 hours* *8 hours to the equivalent of 1 week*
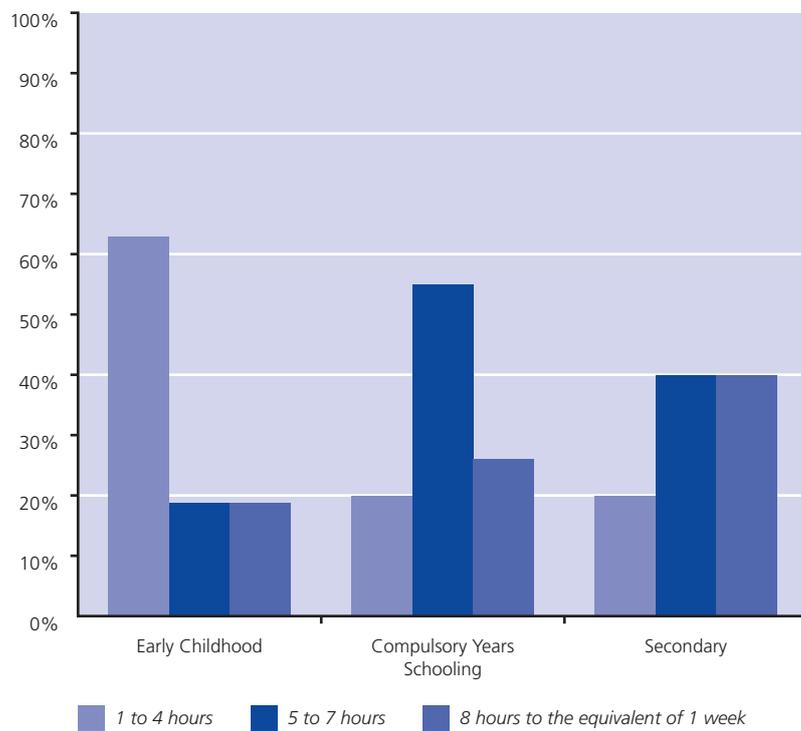
Figure 4.8 Time allocated to discrete child protection content by program

Lastly, examination of the breakdown of hours allocated across types of degrees, suggested that regardless of the type of program undertaken, the majority of students still experience the equivalent of a half to a full day of dedicated discrete child protection content.

Key findings:

- Over 70 per cent of potential teacher education graduates do not engage in any discrete learning about child protection

- Of the 23.4 per cent of teacher education programs that reported providing discrete child protection content, 79 per cent form part of the core curriculum and 65.5 per cent allocate between 1-7 hours to the program

- 63 per cent of discrete child protection content is provided by external providers or university employees working together with external providers

In contrast to discrete child protection content, the extent to which child protection is integrated into teacher education courses across Australia, the Schools of Education were asked to identify courses/units that addressed child abuse and neglect issues in an integrated approach. For each course or program identified, specific information was requested that detailed the following –

- the timing of the unit within the overall teacher education program

- the percentage of time dedicated to the unit or course

- who was responsible for delivery of the content, i.e., university staff or external providers

- if the course of study was core or elective

- the average number of students who participate in the course annually.

Initial inspection of Figure 4.9 shows that just over half of the teacher education programs profiled in survey responses provided no form of integrated child protection content.
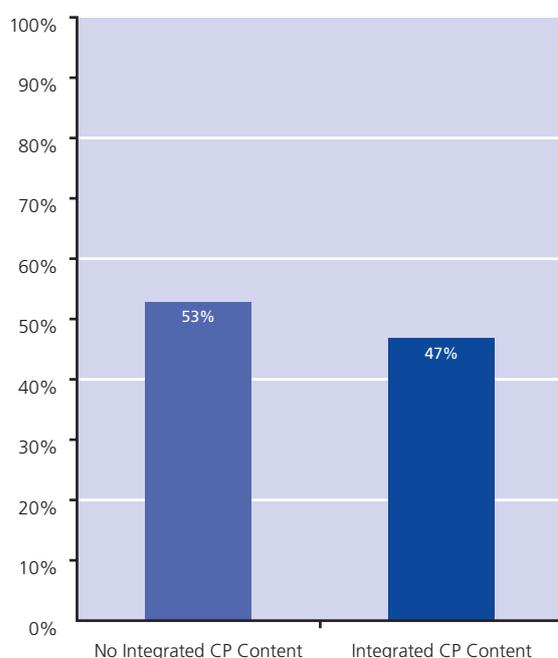
Figure 4.9 Integrated child protection content by cases

Of the 47 per cent that did offer some form of integrated child protection content, an analysis across the broad categorisations of teacher education programs, as detailed in Figure 4.10, revealed that this integration was distributed across the birth to 18 year education spectrum. The highest rating was recorded for early childhood teacher education programs.
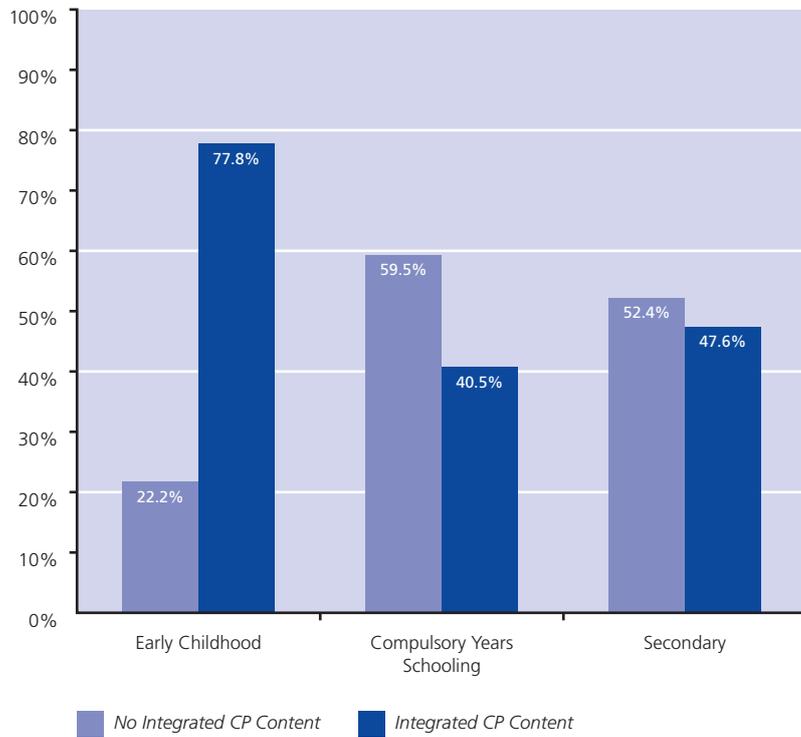
Figure 4.10 Integrated CP content by type of teacher education program

When analysing the same integrated child protection content by type of degree (refer to Figure 4.11) it can be seen that a greater number of undergraduate degrees reported providing integrated child protection content. In contrast a large number of graduate, postgraduate, and 'other' degrees reported they did not provide any integrated child protection content.
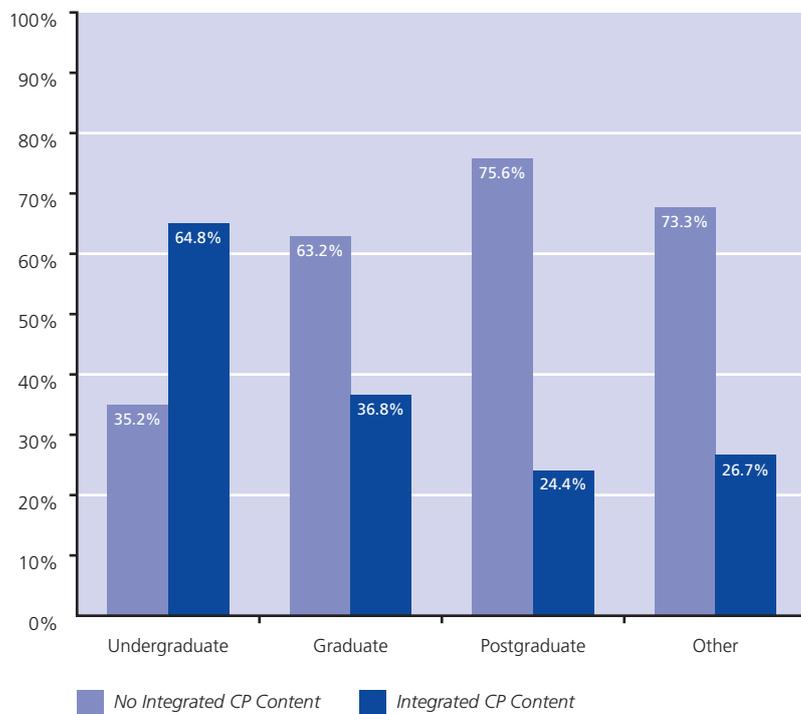
Figure 4.11 Integrated child protection content by type of degree

Furthermore, reference to Figure 4.12 shows that the teacher education program profiles returned from the Australian Capital Territory (83.3 per cent) and New South Wales (53.5 per cent) reported the highest level of integrated child protection content. Whereas, more than half of the teacher education programs in South Australia, Victoria, Tasmania, Queensland, Western Australia and Northern Territory did not report any integrated child protection content.
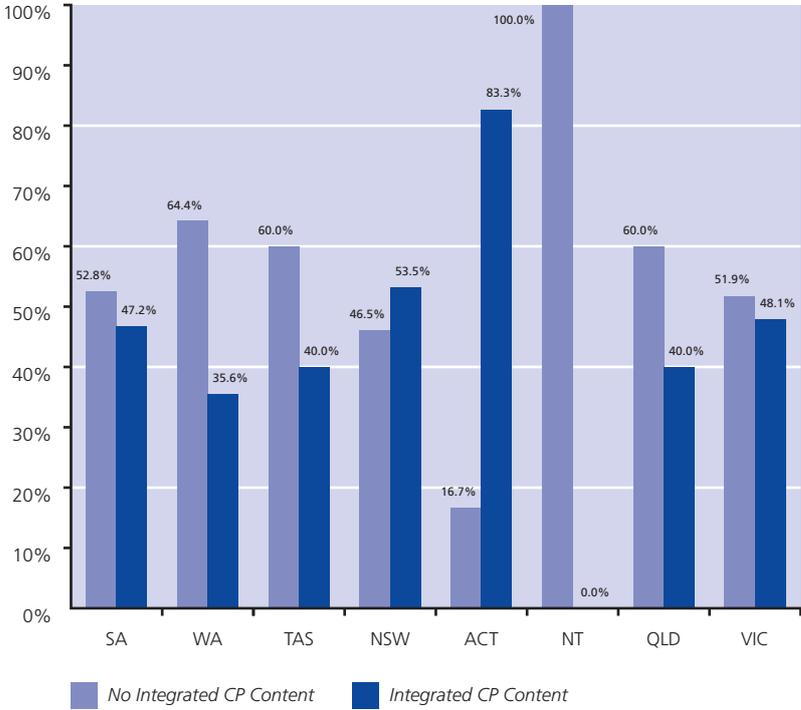
Figure 4.12 Integrated child protection content across States and Territories

N.B. Caution is required when interpreting the results reported in the above Figure. Reference to Figure 3.1 in the previous chapter, which details response rates in order for each State and Territory is highly recommended to gain a comprehensive understanding of the trends reported.

In addition to the above analysis, where schools and faculties indicated the integration of child protection content into courses or units, the extent to which university staff or external providers delivered the content was mapped. The results outlined in Figure 4.13 indicate that approximately 80 per cent of integrated child protection content is delivered by university staff across the three broad categories of teacher education programs.
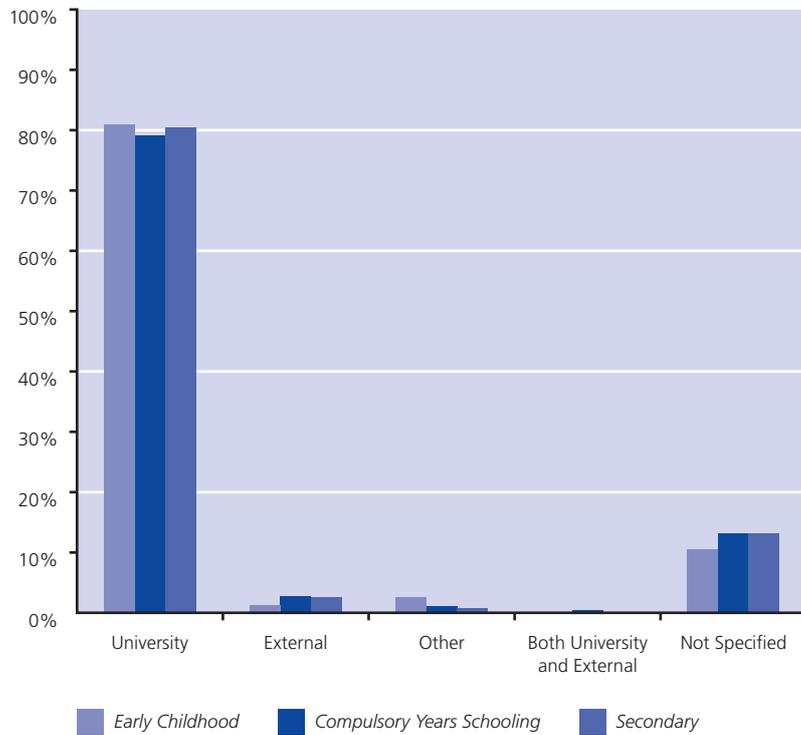
Figure 4.13 Integrated child protection by delivery agent

In addition respondents were asked to indicate the core or elective status of the course into which the child protection was integrated. Reference to Figure 4.14 shows that over 76 per cent of integrated child protection units offered across the three broad categories of teacher education were provided as core components of the curriculum while less than 10% were incorporated into an elective program.
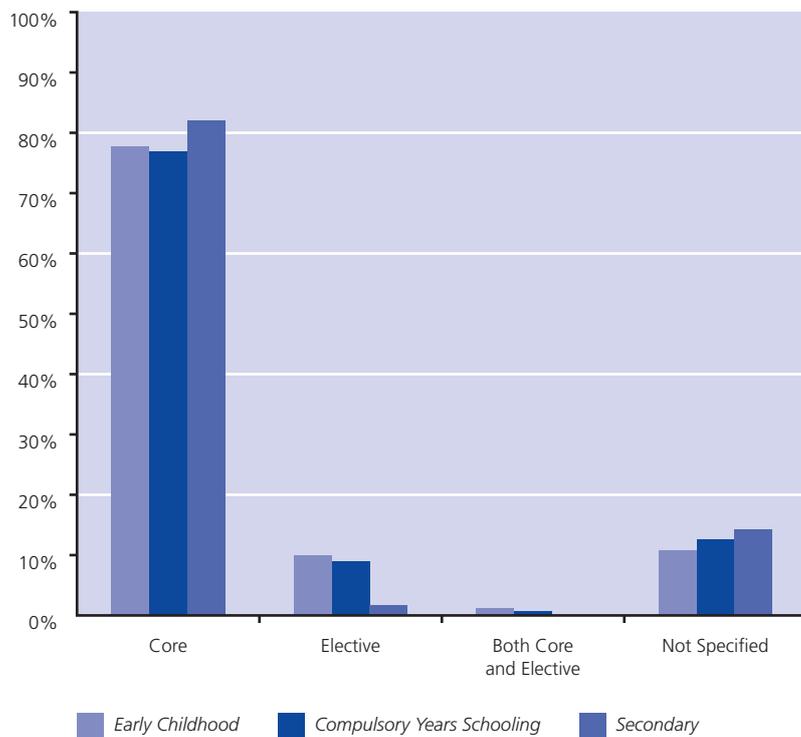
Figure 4.14 Integrated child protection by course type

Although initial examination of figure 4.14 suggest that a high percentage of core units of study integrate elements of child protection content, it is important to note that the 75 per cent or more of programs are positioned within the 47 per cent of overall teacher education programs that offer any such course content. Therefore in actual terms, only around 35 per cent of integrated child protection content provided to students is located within core units of study.

To enable additional analysis of the data, and to further facilitate the discussion regarding the extent to which students experience integrated child protection content, the percentage of time allocated to integrated child protection was grouped. Reference to Figure 4.15 shows that the majority of teacher education programs reported allocating less than 30 per cent of time to the delivery of integrated child protection content, with a large number falling within the 3-20 per cent range.
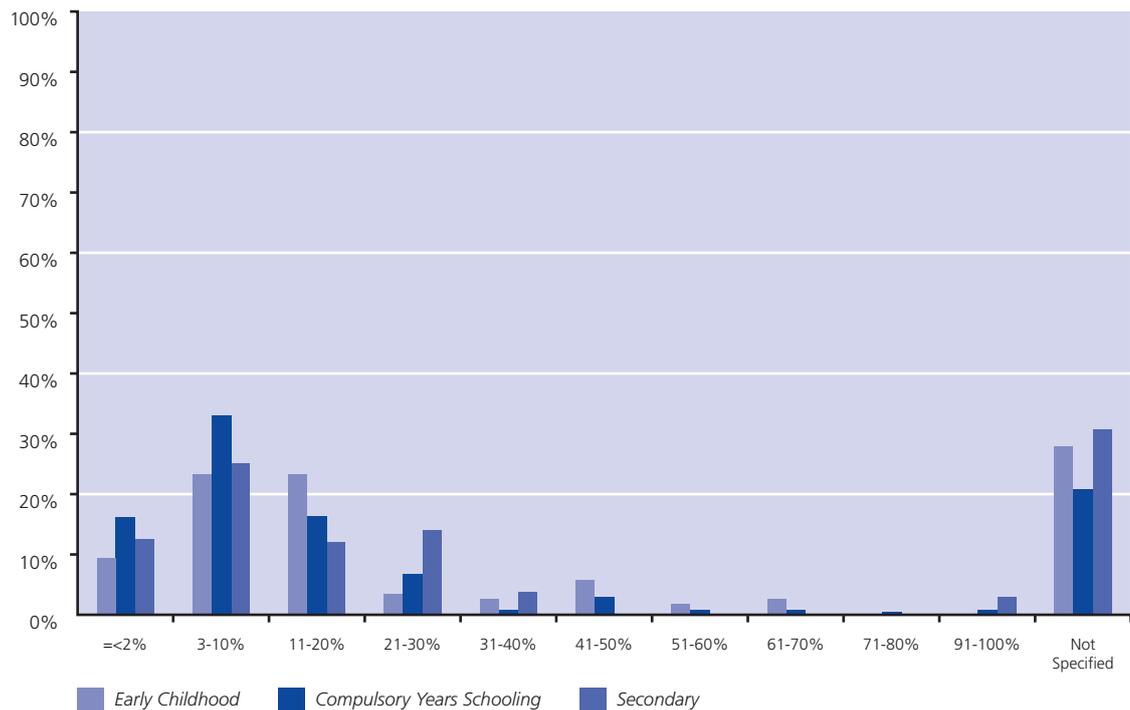
Figure 4.15   Time allocated to integrated child protection by type of program

Specifically, further analysis of the data trends revealed that 59.7 per cent of early childhood programs, 73.1 per cent of compulsory years of schooling programs, and 62.9 per cent of secondary years programs provided less than the 30 per cent of time dedicated to the integration of the child protection content referred to above.

Furthermore, the pattern of 30 per cent or less of time allocated to integrating child protection content when examined by the type of degree program appeared to remain stable. That is, the majority of undergraduate and graduate programs similarly recorded less than 30% of course or unit time as being allocated to the integration of child protection content.

Key findings:

- 47 per cent of teacher education programs reported providing integrated child protection content

- Of the 47 per cent of teacher education programs that recorded integrating child protection content

  - 76 per cent of the umbrella units were core curriculum

  - generally less than 30 per cent of course time was allocated to the teaching of the content

  - largest number indicated between 3-20 per cent of course time allocated

  - approximately 80 per cent of integrated child protection content was delivered by university-based employees

On the basis that many child protection issues and concerns may be discussed incidentally throughout an award program, Section 2 of the survey listed a number of risk factors and proactive strategies associated with child abuse and neglect that may be addressed but not documented in course curriculum guidelines.

In order for the factors and strategies to reflect the child within the family within the community, the individual items have been organised as outlined in Table. 4.1. Furthermore, to facilitate discussion of data in accordance with major areas of interest, such as neglect, violence and child development issues, an additional intermediate level was incorporated.

Table 4.1 Categorisation of child protection-related content items

| Macro Level	Intermediate Level	Micro Level
Child-centred Issues	Child Development	low weight for age / failure to thrive premature birth, low birth weight, sibling mortality slow to walk, talk, poor literacy / numeracy for age learning or physical disability - child learning or physical disability - parents / primary caregiver / siblings aggressive / high levels of conflict undue fear of adults excessive shyness / timidity withdrawn or wary / lacks curiosity miserable, unhappy extreme anxiety about abandonment resilience (very high or very low) low self esteem / poor self perception unrealistic parental expectations of the child
	Mental / Behavioural	school attendance problems sudden significant changes in academic progress depression, anxiety, ADHD, hyperactivity cruel to animals sudden changes in behaviour extreme attention seeking behaviour persistent anti-social behaviour / bullying foraging or hoarding food/eating disorders substance abuse rocking / head banging / self harm stealing / making up stories running away inappropriate sexualised behaviour encopresis (soiling) / enuresis (bedwetting)
Family / Environmental Issues	Family / Community	family structure - stable / transient / reconstituted maternal youth / teenage parents / sole parents low income / benefit dependent / financial problems parents / caregivers socially isolated serious parent-child and/or interparental conflict role of child in family (e.g. child as carer) inadequate medical treatment or basic health care inadequate supervision or safety provisions in home parent / carer abused in out of home care as a child poor housing, community resources or networks

	Family / Community	mental health problems-parents / siblings substance abuse - alcohol drug problems in the family
Family / Environmental Issues	Violence	exposure to physical violence in family exposure to excessive physical / emotional punishment exposure to extreme / uncontrolled anger and aggression exposure to constant criticism, belittling, teasing of a child exposure to media abuse / violence (e.g. TV / internet) exposure to parental aggression / conflict with people in authority criminal record / criminal activity in the home
	Neglect	parental inability or disinterest in caring for children parent / carer who puts their own needs first child not collected from school, public places, other homes

	Dealing with Difference	dealing with difference - gender - using non-sexualised language
		societal expectations
		socialisation - femininity / masculinity
		sexuality and homophobia
		disadvantage - economic/ social
		cultural and linguistic diversity
		racism (vilification, stereotyping)
		providing a safe and inclusive environment for all
		developing effective social skills
		implementing specialised learning programs - individualised plans
		    for student under guardianship
		implementing specialised learning programs- special needs / disability
		    programs (e.g. negotiated curriculum or education plans)
		impact of isolation, exclusion, remote/regional locations

Professional	Prevention Strategies (school-based)	health and wellbeing programs breakfast and / or lunch initiatives mental health awareness projects bullying and personal protection programs sexual or gender-based harassment inclusivity initiatives protective behaviours programs parenting programs (inc literacy and numeracy programs) community partnerships, building and planning initiatives

	Professional Roles
	and Responsibilities
		knowledge of school policies, programs and procedures
		knowledge of school policies, programs and procedures contributing
		    positively to school values, ethos, culture, structures
		student welfare and wellbeing
		establishing positive relationships with students
		establishing positive relationships with parents / caregivers /
		    extended family
		establishing positive relationships with community members
		harm minimisation / risk management
		addressing / managing incidents of victimisation and abuse
		negotiation and conflict resolution

Analysis of Risk Factors and Strategies

In examining the trends across items at the micro level of analysis, the means of the total number of all factors across types of teacher education programs, and types of degrees, were calculated. Furthermore several factors were weighted to enable accurate comparisons and analysis to be undertaken. The results of these analyses are presented in Tables 4.2 and 4.3 and Figures 4.18 to 4.22.

Child Protection-related Content: The Early Years to Secondary

First, examination of how child protection-related content was distributed across the types of teacher education programs indicated that early childhood teacher education programs reported addressing a greater number of risk factors and proactive strategies associated with child abuse and neglect (see Figure 4.16).
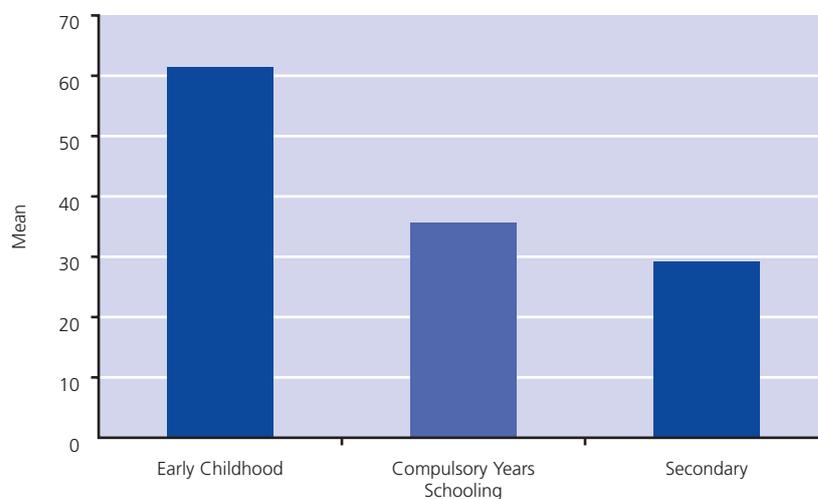
Figure 4.16 Total mean of CP factors by type of teacher education program

In order to determine the extent of the apparent difference, the data was subjected to analysis of variance (ANOVA) procedures, and a significant difference between groups was found, $F_{(2,289)} = 6.67$ $p < .001$. In order to further understand the results Tukey-HSD post hoc analysis procedures were conducted. This analysis confirmed that, in terms of addressing abuse related risk factors and strategies, the early childhood teacher programs were in fact significantly higher at the $p < .05$ level ($M = 61.46$) than the compulsory ($M = 35.7$) and secondary years ($M = 29.6$) of schooling teacher education programs, and that no other differences were statistically significant.

What this analysis suggests is that early childhood education students are exposed to a greater number of individual child protection-related issues throughout their initial professional education. However, this result cannot be interpreted as supporting the notion that the risk factors and issues are linked explicitly to child protection concerns within the early childhood programs. In fact, visual examination of the trend patterns reported for individual items suggests that a similar pattern of 'links to child protection' responses are evident across all teacher education programs. It is suggested therefore that the higher number of reported topics 'taught but not linked' explicitly to child protection in the early childhood area contributed to the observable and significant difference evident in the data.

Child Protection-related Content: Undergraduate to Postgraduate

Analysis of how child protection-related content was addressed within the various types of teacher education degrees provided was undertaken. Figure 4.17 shows that students participating in undergraduate programs mapped were more likely to be exposed to a range of associated issues.
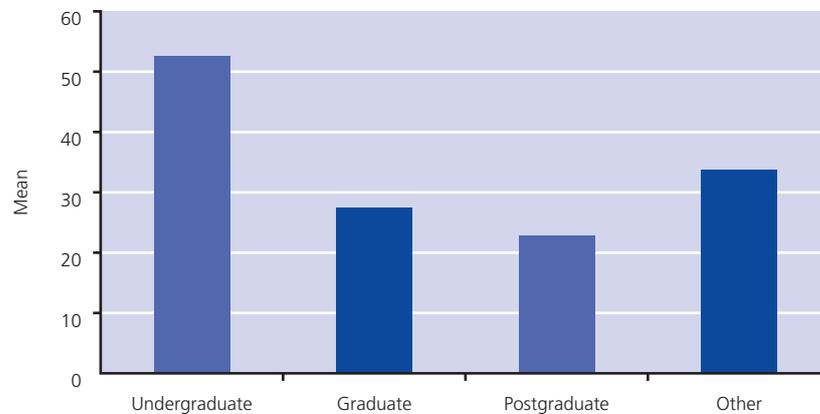
Figure 4.17 All child protection-related factors by type of degree

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicated a significant difference between groups $F(2,273) = 14.7$ $p< .001$. The Tukey-HSD post hoc analysis procedures confirmed that, in terms of addressing child protection-related risk factors and strategies, that students enrolled in undergraduate teacher programs were in fact significantly higher at the $p< .001$ level ($M = 53.3$) than the graduate ($M = 27.2$) and postgraduate ($M = 22.3$) students, and that no other differences were statistically significant.

Grouped Risk Factors and Strategies: The Early Years to Secondary

To further analyse the specific risk factors and proactive strategies listed in section 2 the items were organised into three major factors at the macro level. That is, child centred issues, family/ environmental issues, and professional issues.

Again examination of how child protection-related content was distributed across the types of teacher education programs at the macro level within each of the three major factors, established that early childhood teacher education programs consistently reported addressing a greater number of risk factors and proactive strategies associated with child abuse and neglect (see Figure 4.18).

As in the previous example to determine the extent of the apparent difference, the data was subjected to analysis of variance (ANOVA) procedures, and a significant difference between groups was found for each of the factors –

Child-centred Issues	$F(2,289) = 6.2$ $p< .05$
Family / Environmental Issues	$F(2,289) = 8.9$ $p< .001$
Professional Issues	$F(2,289) = 4.2$ $p< .05$

Tukey-HSD post hoc analysis confirmed that, in terms of addressing child protection-related risk factors and strategies, the early childhood teacher programs were in fact significantly higher for:

- child-centred issues at the p< .05 level (M = 22.03) than the compulsory (M = 12.31) and secondary years (M = 9.09) of schooling teacher education programs

- family/environment issues at the p< .001 level (M = 15.24) than the compulsory (M = 7.61) and secondary years (M = 5.30), and

- professional issues at the p< .05 level (M = 24.19) than the compulsory (M = 15.75) and secondary years (M = 15.16).

and that in all instances no other differences were statistically significant.
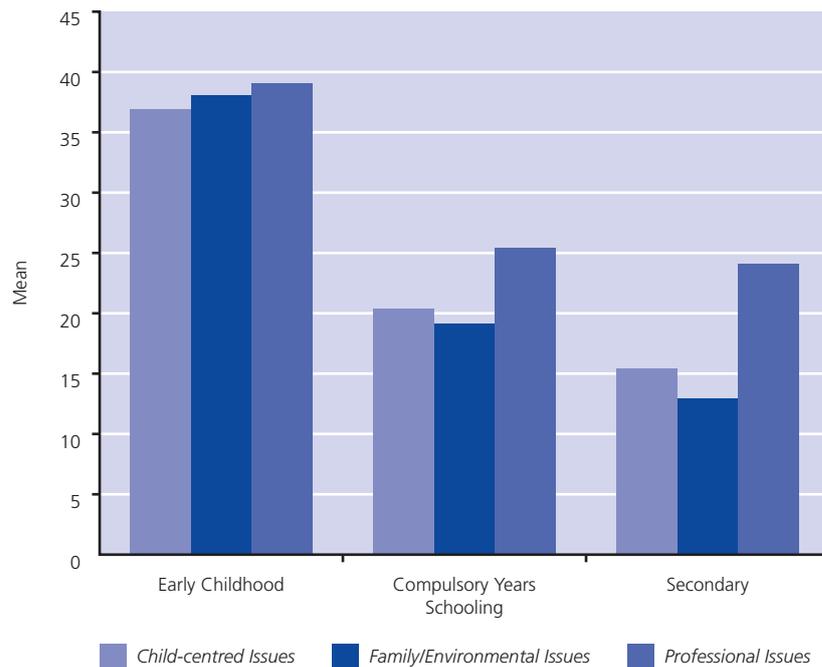
Figure 4.18 Grouped child protection factors by type of teacher education program

Grouped risk factors and strategies: Undergraduate to Postgraduate

Examination of how child protection-related content was distributed across the types of teacher education degrees at the macro level within each of the three major factors established that undergraduate programs consistently reported addressing a greater number of risk factors and proactive strategies associated with child abuse and neglect (see Figure 4.19).

Again to determine the extent of the apparent difference, the data was subjected to analysis of variance (ANOVA) procedures, and a significant difference between groups was found for each of the factors –

Child-centred Issues	$F_{(2,273)} = 12.82$ p< .001
Family / Environmental Issues	$F_{(2,273)} = 13.30$ p< .001
Professional Issues	$F_{(2,273)} = 13.21$ p< .001

Tukey-HSD post hoc analysis confirmed that, in terms of addressing abuse related risk factors and strategies, the undergraduate teacher programs were in fact significantly higher for:

- child-centred at the p< .001 level (M = 18.89) than the graduate (M = 9.01) and postgraduate (M = 6.86)

- family/environment issues at the p< .001 level (M = 12.7) than the graduate (M = 5.22) and postgraduate (M = 5.25), and

- professional issues at the p< .001 level (M = 22.14) than the graduate (M = 12.93) and postgraduate (M = 10.20) degrees.

and that in all instances no other differences were statistically significant.
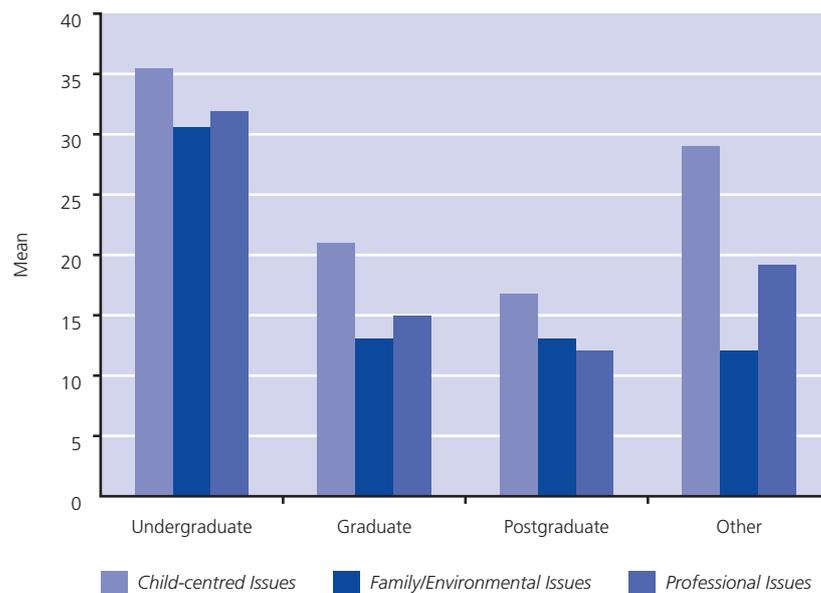
Figure 4.19 Mean of grouped child protection factors by type of degree

Subcategories of Risk Factors and Strategies

To further understand the ways in which child protection-related issues have been addressed within teacher education programs, analyses of the risk factors and proactive strategies listed in section 2 of the survey instrument were further factored into intermediate subcategories as outlined in Table 4.1.

Subcategories of Risk Factors and Strategies: The Early Years to Secondary

The results of the analysis of variance for these factors are reported in Table 4.2. As the table shows early childhood teacher education programs have the highest mean across all categories of risk factors and strategies, and that a statistically significant difference was found between groups on all subcategories except the 'dealing with difference' category.

Table 4.2 Means, SD and ANOVA results for Types of Teacher Education Program

	Early Childhood N = 37		Compulsory Years N = 212		Secondary N = 43		ANOVA df 2,289
	M	**SD**	**M**	**SD**	**M**	**SD**	**F**
Child Development	11.3	10.7	5.9	8.3	4.7	6.6	7.5***
Violence	7.0	6.2	3.3	5.0	2.4	4.1	9.9***
Neglect	1.9	2.4	1.2	2.0	0.7	1.5	3.7*
Mental / Behavioural	10.8	12.9	6.4	9.4	4.4	7.2	4.6*
Family / Community	6.4	7.1	3.1	5.1	2.2	3.5	7.6***
Dealing with Difference	8.6	7.5	6.1	6.6	6.6	6.0	2.2 (NS)
Prevention Strategies	6.2	5.8	4.1	5.2	3.5	4.0	3.3*
Professional Roles and Responsibilities	9.4	7.1	5.5	6.0	5.1	5.0	6.9***

*p<.05   **p<.01   ***p<.001

Subsequent Tukey-HSD post hoc analysis revealed that, in terms of addressing the sub-categorised risk factors and strategies, the early childhood teacher programs were in fact significantly higher at the p< .001 than both the compulsory and secondary years programs, and that in each instance no other differences were statistically significant for the following categories:

- Child development
- Violence
- Mental / Behavioural
- Family / Community
- Professional roles and responsibilities

With regard to issues categorised as neglect and prevention strategies, however, the analysis revealed that the early childhood teacher education programs were in fact significantly higher at the p< .05 level than the secondary years programs but that this difference was not evident between the early childhood and the compulsory years teacher education programs.

Subcategories of Risk Factors and Strategies: Undergraduate-Postgraduate

The results of the analysis of variance for sub-categories across the undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate types of teacher education degrees are reported in Table 4.3. From the results it can be seen that undergraduate teacher education programs have the highest means across all categories of risk factors and strategies, and that a statistically significant difference was found between groups for all subcategories.

Tukey-HSD post hoc analysis revealed that, in terms of addressing the sub-categorised risk factors and strategies, the undergraduate teacher programs were in fact significantly higher at the p< .001 than both the graduate and postgraduate programs and that in all instances no other differences were statistically significant (see Table 4.3).

Table 4.3 Means, SD and ANOVA results for Types of Degree

	Undergraduate N = 127		Graduate N = 105		Postgraduate N = 44		ANOVA df 2,273
	M	**SD**	**M**	**SD**	**M**	**SD**	**F**
Child Development	9.3	9.6	4.3	7.7	3.2	5.8	14.1***
Violence	5.4	5.6	2.4	4.5	2.3	4.3	12.4***
Neglect	1.9	2.2	0.7	1.7	0.8	1.6	11.9***
Mental / Behavioural	9.6	10.6	4.7	9.1	3.6	6.9	10.3***
Family / Community	5.1	6.2	2.1	4.3	2.2	4.6	10.2***
Dealing with Difference	8.4	6.8	5.1	6.6	4.2	5.4	10.9***
Prevention Strategies	5.9	5.4	3.2	4.9	2.6	4.0	11.6***
Professional Roles and Responsibilities	7.8	6.3	4.7	5.9	3.5	4.4	12.9***

*p<.05   **p<.01   ***p<.001

Further Comments recorded in Section 2

In addition to the nomination of curriculum content, space was provided at the end of Section 2 of the survey for respondents to nominate other factors or strategies that were not recorded previously but were considered relevant to the teacher education program being mapped.

No additional risk factors or strategies were listed by any of the respondents.

Key findings:

Analysis suggests that

- Early childhood education students are exposed to a greater number of individual child protection-related issues

- Students enrolled in undergraduate programs are also more likely to be exposed to a range of child protection-related issues

(however in both instances it cannot be confirmed if these factors and issues are explicitly linked to child protection)

Time constraints

Issues concerning the perception of an already over-crowded curriculum were expressed by a small number of respondents, particularly in teacher education programs conducted over shorter time periods, such as Graduate Programs.

In addition, some respondents expressed the difficulty of introducing child protection issues in a broad sense in contrast to providing a breadth and depth of coverage of the many and varied topics and issues.

Reviewing and shaping new teacher education programs

In the case of newly developed courses it was noted that ongoing evaluation and further refinement may occur which is not reflected in the responses.

Researcher Comment – In acknowledging that this issue is valid, the mapping process was not designed to be a predictive analysis. Rather it is a reflection of what teacher education students have and are currently experiencing with relation to child protection. Therefore the lack of such information does not impact negatively on the results reported herein.

Cross-discipline and specialisation

It was noted that students may be exposed to child protection content through engagement with study in other disciplines or specialisations, and that this experience was not necessarily reflected in the responses provided regarding a particular teacher education degree or award.

Similarly it was noted that in most cases, child protection issues would only be addressed in a Honours, Masters or PhD program if a student chose to research issues that were relevant to the area.

It was also noted that courses such as Bachelor (In-service) programs are professional development courses which do not address child protection issues. It was suggested by some respondents, however, that the opportunity exists for students to investigate child protection related content in an independent study component of a course.

Meeting legal and course requirements

A range of issues were raised concerning identification and report training programs for students graduating and subsequently seeking registration and employment and, in many instances, engaging in professional field experience programs offered throughout the award program. The mandatory nature of this requirement in many States and Territories was linked to the importance of working closely with education employers to ensure that students and graduates meet the legal requirements for working with children in any professional situation.

The importance of clarifying the legal obligations of educational researchers who undertake data collection in the area of child protection was also identified.

A small number of respondents further elaborated on practices within their particular setting. For example, an experienced lecturer in the field of child protection provides an initial, compulsory

session on Child Protection and a signed letter of acknowledgement is given to all students attending and participating in the session.

Issues related to child protection content

Some non-teaching degrees, for example the Graduate Certificate in Special Education Studies, do not address any child protection content.

It was recognised that in some instances the focus on child protection content is minimal, and that generally only specific aspects are addressed, such as the legislative and policy frameworks related to child protection. The point was made, however, that this occurs primarily at an introductory level.

Many respondents acknowledged the importance of child protection and, based on the interaction with the mapping process, subsequently expressed an intention to allocate more time and resources to child protection content within the associated teacher education program.

Furthermore, although not claimed to be explicitly taught, it was suggested that students are exposed to varying degrees of child protection content across a wide range of organisations through the practicum programs provided within teacher education awards.

Child Protection Curriculum Issues of Interest

A range of diverse and inter-related issues were raised by respondents. These comments have been collated and subsequently grouped as follows:

Course content

Interest was expressed in relation to

- extending and providing more explicit discussions of child protection and related issues in teacher education programs

- examining the merits of child protection training as a prerequisite for teacher registration (at least an eight hour program) and further exploring appropriate pedagogies for teaching sensitive issues

- addressing child protection issues in a holistic approach to help students develop broader understanding of factors that can impact on student behaviour, relationships and learning within the school context

- expressing the positive value of a compulsory one-off child abuse and neglect identification and reporting workshop for students

- identifying and addressing specific child protection issues such as resilience and bullying

- identifying ways of integrating child protection practices within a broader sense of teacher professionalism.

Professional Practice

Comments in this category related to recognising and acknowledging the…

- importance of incorporating recommendations in the Senate Committee Reports, *The Forgotten Australians* and *Protecting Vulnerable Children*, that child protection issues be specifically addressed in teacher education

- importance of universities accepting the responsibility to educate future teachers not only about legal procedures and requirements but also about the broader implications of child protection on student learning and educational outcomes

- issues and challenges related to inconsistencies when addressing child protection policies and procedures across Australian States and Territories, particularly in regards to legal requirements

- need to investigate the impact of teachers' perceived lack of investigation and action in response to their reports of child abuse and neglect, and any associated negative effects on teacher morale

- need for awareness of current, and future, research in the area of child protection, particularly research undertaken in Australian contexts

- necessity of exploring ways of addressing child protection content in all workplace learning programs prior to pre-service teachers entering schools, particularly the potential for this to be part of the briefing or induction process.

The Challenges

Concerns and issues were raised relating to the need to consider or investigate -

- ways of addressing the different state legislation, terminology and expectations related to child protection issues and responsibilities

- strategies for recruiting greater numbers of male primary teachers

- how to keep abreast of the rapidly changing legal requirements

- how to address child protection issues including those which have previously had little emphasis, such as neglect and emotional abuse

- best practice for embedding child protection content in units, for example, the merits of dedicated or integrated content throughout pre-service and in-service teacher education

- how to put in place procedures that enable educators to monitor carefully students' knowledge of child protection issues, including their understanding of legal responsibilities

- the importance of understanding and investigating how novice teachers view their role and how to address issues in light of
  - the climate of fear induced by the media
  - the public perception of risk in child protection, and
  - the impact these issues have on male teacher education students

- explore strategies to manage time and resource constraints particularly in an already overcrowded curriculum

- ways to address the complexity and interrelatedness of issues which need to be addressed in child protection

- ways that can assist higher educators to provide a strengths-based discourse that can underpin work with undergraduate teachers in the child protection area.

Suggestions directly quoted from respondents:

Taking a 'Child Protection across the curriculum' approach would allow more time to be allocated to extending and deepening knowledge of these issues in all courses

A focus on a child-centred approach would highlight the significance of child protection

Providing a program designed for qualified teachers, not pre-service teachers

The need for further clarification, to help determine the most effective way to ensure consistency, particularly with regard to content agendas in the area of child protection

Every course should have at least one core discrete unit that addresses key child protection issues

The importance of shifting the focus of child protection, that is, child protection should not be purely about legal obligations or compliance issues but also develop students' understanding of the broader issues that underline the child protection agenda for educators

Raising students' awareness and knowledge about the importance of community services that support the needs of children and families effectively

Section 4 Further Exploration

On the 1st December, 2006 a National Teacher Education and Child Protection Forum was held at the National Wine Centre in Adelaide from 10.00 am – 2.00 pm.

All Schools of Education that had responded to the survey were invited to participate. Subsequently the Forum was attended by a total of 28 participants including representatives from 15 Universities and several State/Territory teacher accrediting agencies.

Discussion

The discussion focused on:

- the need to consider and clarify the philosophy of child protection content in teacher education programs

- the importance of identifying the most effective and efficient way to address child protection related issues so that teachers have a strong disciplinary base and can confidently and competently deal with child protection issues.

Topics

Issues that the participants identified and spent time considering included…

- the contextual and practical issues, for example class sizes and time constraints within teacher education programs

- the need for access to professional resources to support the teaching and learning of child protection content

- the need to clarify terms, legal responsibilities and the role of schools and professionals when dealing with child protection issues.

Suggestions and Future Planning

Participants in the Forum made several suggestions for addressing many of the issues. These included exploring:

- the possibility of addressing the issues in a multi-disciplinary approach

- the acquisition of teaching development grants to support investigations of best practice

- the option of 'buying into' and marketing a school's approach to help identify and promote programs that are scaleable into other schools

- the importance and ways of 'interrupting the discourse of fear'

- issues related to child protection content and the impact this has on the recruitment and retention of male teachers

- current programs that address child protection content and conducting evaluations of their effectiveness in terms of teaching and learning

- ways to provide additional training and professional development opportunities for higher educators in the area of child protection

- the possibility of awarding a discrete certification, possibly from the Australian Centre for Child Protection that each School or Faculty could present to students and staff upon completion of requisite content and learning.

Discussion and Conclusion

chapter 5

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Throughout the curriculum mapping and national forum process we increasingly came to appreciate the commitment and support of the professional teacher educators who willingly collaborated with us to provide the data and associated findings detailed in this publication. On this basis the conclusion and recommendations presented here are based as much on the survey respondents and forum participants' ideas and suggestions as our own interpretation of the data.

The findings from the study are drawn together and discussed in relation to the three key questions, namely:

1) What aspects of child protection are being addressed currently in teacher education courses across Australia, and how are they delivered within the curriculum?

2) What are the perceived facilitators or barriers for the inclusion of child protection content into the core curricula of teacher education?

3) What does the teacher education community recommend to facilitate the advancement and effective inclusion of child protection components into future pre-service teaching programs?

Essentially the data and findings reported herein have provided valuable insights to all three questions thereby realising the aims and purpose of the study.

Furthermore, the high rate of returns provides a realistic representation of the way in which child protection was being addressed within teacher education programs across Australian universities at the time of data collection.

In reading this discussion and any conclusions presented here, it should be noted that the primary aim of the curriculum mapping process was to identify child protection content in teacher education programs. The advantage of the survey design was that it enabled specific and important details to be analysed and subsequently discussed related to the teaching and learning approach; allocation of time; delivery agents; course status, and enrolment details.

The longer term outcomes and benefits anticipated from the study and any subsequent actions related to expanding or enriching child protection content in Australian teacher education programs are to -

- support the preparation of graduates who feel confident and competent to work in an educational context effectively with children who face adversity due to abuse or neglect, and

- promote greater opportunity for this disadvantaged group of students to realise their full personal and academic potential within supportive and positive educational contexts.

These outcomes align with the recommendations of the Senate Committee Reports which highlighted the poor educational and life outcomes of Australian children in State or Territory statutory care and for children considered vulnerable and at risk, specifically calling for:

- components of teacher education courses conducted at the tertiary level to raise greater awareness of child protection related issues and the effects in the longer term for a child or young person in care

- Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments to consider new models for the schooling and education of children in out-of-home care, particularly children who have been classified as high-risk children.

(Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee, 2005)

In addition the roundtable forum provided an opportunity for participants to elaborate on the barriers and facilitators of change in this area. Suggestions provided by forum participants provided valuable insights that have, and will continue to inform future directions and strategies for incorporating child protection content in higher education. It is in this way that we look forward to working collaboratively with teacher educators across Australia in the future.

What aspects of child protection are being addressed currently in teacher education courses across Australia, and how are they delivered within the curriculum?

The findings discussed in this section provide insights into the nature and extent of child protection content addressed in teacher education, and issues related to delivery of the content, which were revealed by the study. It is important to note that in determining the amount of exposure higher education students have to child protection related content, no conclusions about the benefits or limitations of any particular approach have been drawn by the researchers.

Aspects addressed

The need to prepare future teachers who can identify and report child abuse and neglect, as well as feel confident in responding to the learning needs often evident in cases where children are, or have been, victims of abuse or neglect was identified as a fundamental responsibility of educators.

In order to meet this fundamental responsibility the data revealed that:

- nearly all teacher education programs reported including some element of child protection content in a discrete, integrated or incidental way at some point during the course of study

- early childhood teacher programs reported significantly higher incidents of reference to the risk factors and strategies listed below than programs offered to students focussing on the compulsory and secondary years of schooling
  - child development
  - violence
  - mental wellbeing
  - family
  - professional roles and responsibilities

- undergraduate teacher programs were significantly higher than both graduate and postgraduate programs in terms of addressing the following risk factors and strategies
  - child development
  - violence
  - neglect
  - mental wellbeing
  - family
  - dealing with differences
  - prevention strategies
  - professional roles and responsibilities

When the data was grouped in various classifications at the macro-level and micro-levels, similar patterns and trends were observed. Essentially the findings suggest that early childhood programs addressed greater numbers of child protection-related issues throughout their initial teacher training than students enrolled in other award programs. Undergraduates enrolled in 4+-year courses similarly experienced greater exposure to a range of child protection issues when compared with course content offered to graduate and postgraduate students. This trend no doubt reflects the increased opportunities available for discussing such issues in a course running over several years, as opposed to the time constraints prevailing in shorter 18 month to 2 year programs.

Importantly, and notwithstanding the positive finding that many students are exposed to some element of child protection content regardless of type of teacher education program or type of degree undertaken, the result needs to be treated with some caution. For example, the findings cannot be interpreted as necessarily supporting the notion that the mention of these risk factors and strategies are in fact being linked implicitly or explicitly to child protection concerns. Examination of the data trends in fact suggests that the higher incidence of topics **addressed but not linked** to child protection contribute to the observable and significant patterns revealed by the data.

So, while there may be many opportunities within current course curriculum content to address child protection, the opportunities may not be fully realised. In this case, student and novice teachers may not make the connection that these factors or strategies are aspects of concern and should be considered when identifying and responding to the needs of students experiencing adversity due to abuse or neglect.

Such concerns that emerged from examination of the data were mirrored during discussions with teacher educators. In particular, the implications for students who are not prepared or feel confident enough to address child protection issues adequately or appropriately become apparent. The negative impact, both personal and professional, this can have for teachers was discussed and recorded as a significant issue requiring further investigation.

Similarly issues related to the raising of the awareness of child protection issues which are not typically considered or addressed, or that previously have had little emphasis in teacher education programs, were identified as being important. These concerns were accompanied by perceptions of the need to challenge any misconceptions and broaden the knowledge base as crucial in changing not only beliefs but also practice.

Delivery Approach

Issues related to the discrete or integrated approach to curriculum content delivery were raised in both survey responses and forum discussions in terms of concerns regarding overcrowded curricula; time and resource constraints; consistency and quality of content across teacher education programs; and how these issues can be addressed effectively.

Analysis of the delivery approaches revealed that:

- 76.6 per cent of teacher education programs did not allocate any time to the teaching of discrete child protection content

- in the 23.4 per cent of cases offering discrete child protection content
  - the majority dedicated less than seven hours to this activity
  - the pattern in time allocated to discrete child protection content is consistent with the time allocated to legally required identification and reporting sessions
  - this translates to approximately 10,150 of the 14,500 potential teacher education graduates in a given year who may not be exposed to any discrete teaching or learning in the area of child protection
  - a higher percentage of non-university based employees facilitate the sessions again suggesting it may be time allocated to legally required identification and reporting

- while encouraging findings reveal that 47 per cent of teacher education programs integrated child protection content within a semester course or unit
  - further analysis however revealed that the majority of these courses or units allocated as little as 10-15 per cent of the unit to the specific teaching of child protection related content
  - considering a typical course structure, in reality this may equate to as little as 2.5-4 hours of time allocated to the integrated discussion of child protection related content

When considered together the results suggest that a large number of graduating teachers have not been exposed to any discrete teaching that explicitly addresses child protection issues. When this number is combined with the potential number of graduates who similarly do not have any exposure to integrated child protection content throughout their course of study, the implication is that there is a heavy reliance on incidental teaching and learning about child protection. However, it is concerning that the data trends suggest the opportunities for explicitly linking the incidental learning to child protection issues are not necessarily maximised. Furthermore, these concerns are exacerbated by the fact that the quality or nature of such incidental teaching has the potential to be highly variable and problematic for a number of reasons. These include the capacity, willingness and knowledge of ongoing, contract or hourly-paid staff to address sensitive and often controversial issues with varying degrees of support and access to quality resources.

A further compounding factor that consistently emerged in the data was the lack of time for students to engage in deep learning about child protection related issues. With the best of intentions, even the most experienced and committed teacher educator may feel there is inadequate time and resources

to prepare graduates adequately to recognise and respond to the educational needs of vulnerable and at risk children.

These concerns were considered particularly significant in a nation that prides itself on actively promoting and supporting children's rights. For it stands to reason that all children, including children who face adversity, are entitled to trained educators who can address their learning needs effectively. Similarly in light of research that shows a growing number of children facing adversity in Australia, how we prepare teachers to draw upon a body of knowledge and skills that will enable them to meet the needs of this group of students effectively was of considerable concern to the higher educators participating in this study.

What are the perceived barriers or facilitators for the inclusion of child protection content into core curricula?

A range of barriers and facilitators were raised in the survey responses and the National Teacher Education and Child Protection Forum.

Barriers

Overcrowded Curriculum

Throughout the mapping process and at the national forum it became clear that although participants did not dispute the importance of addressing child protection related content, barriers existed to its development and inclusion in teacher education programs. Central to these concerns were the practical complexities of refocussing current content or incorporating additional content in what is strongly perceived to be an overloaded curriculum.

Lack of Ownership

Issues were also raised regarding ownership and placement of child protection content within teacher education. It was generally agreed that there is a need for groups and individuals within these schools and faculties to accept responsibility for coordinating, promoting, and further developing child protection curriculum. Just as important, however, is the need for higher educators to be supported, acknowledged and rewarded for their efforts.

Lack of Consistency in Delivery and Approach

As evidenced in the survey responses, the focus of different issues within child protection content is varied, not only across different types of teacher education programs but also across the different types of awards. Although participants perceived the task to be challenging, they considered it to be important nevertheless to aim for consistency both in content delivery and approach, as well as ensuring that content is not duplicated or omitted across or within programs.

A further issue raised related to multidisciplinary approaches. It was considered that the aims and objectives need to be clearly outlined to avoid child protection content either being overlooked on the assumption that the issues were addressed in another course, or alternatively the duplication of child protection content. Furthermore, gauging students' prior knowledge about child protection

content, particularly in cases where students have either attended other higher education institutions or been awarded prior qualifications or status, is difficult to determine and measure unless it has been a clearly defined specialisation.

National Inconsistencies in Legal Requirements

Furthermore, participants raised concerns regarding the need to address inconsistencies across States and Territories' legal requirements and professional responsibilities for child protection in educational settings.

Narrow Perceptions of Child Protection

They also acknowledged that there are factors not generally linked to child protection in teacher education, such as aspects of family/environmental issues, mental/behavioural issues and neglect, which highlights the need to broaden the notion of child protection in education. By broadening educators' knowledge base the participants conjectured that teachers in the future may be better equipped to identify children and young adults facing adversity, and promote early intervention where appropriate.

Negative Societal Perceptions

Concerns regarding the role of the media were also raised both in the survey and at the forum. Participants acknowledged that although in some instances the media raised the profile of child protection issues it was at times fundamentally responsible for cultivating a climate of trepidation and fear. The impact this has on teachers, in particular male teachers, was highlighted. The need to explore and research the impact of child protection related issues on the retention and recruitment of males in the teaching profession was also noted.

Facilitators

Working together

Participants recognised the need and acknowledged the benefits of higher education institutions, teacher accrediting agencies and employing bodies working together to plan future directions in the development of child protection related content. The importance of meeting the professional needs, both of students and practising teachers was highlighted.

Potential for workplace learning

The role and benefits of practicum units in teacher education programs was acknowledged as potentially providing valuable exposure to aspects of child protection within workplace contexts. It was noted, however, that although such exposure can help broaden perceptions of child protection it has significant implications for educators. These include the need to document accurate records of which child protection issues students are exposed to in this way, so that gaps can be identified and addressed within the university context. Furthermore, investigating ways to determine and evaluate the quality and nature of learning that students develop based on this exposure poses substantial challenges.

Quality Support for Novice Teachers

It was recognised that it is important to prepare students to deal with child protection related issues and provide adequate support for novice teachers. In particular, quality and timely support for male teachers was seen as a fundamental responsibility of higher education institutions and experienced practitioners, particularly with regard to improving retention rates.

Furthermore, it was considered that teacher education students will be better prepared to deal with their legal responsibilities, and identify and manage the needs of vulnerable and at-risk children if they are exposed to broader notions of child protection. In particular the need to recognise that children who face adversity often experience learning and behavioural difficulties that need to be addressed and responded to effectively and appropriately.

Networks and Resources

The need to access current resources and support networks that are appropriate for educators at all levels was noted as a requirement for the successful inclusion of child protection related content.

Professional Development

In noting the increasing expectation of teachers to respond to social issues, participants agreed that addressing the implications these changes have for teacher education programs is a necessary component of professional development. In particular, participants highlighted the importance of addressing the changing role and responsibility of teachers, when dealing with child protection issues.

> ### *What does the teacher education community recommend to facilitate the advancement and effective inclusion of child protection components into future pre-service teaching programs?*

Given the questions outlined above and the need for quality research in this field, it is considered that the teacher education community would benefit from further research in these areas. In particular, investigations are called for regarding –

- effective utilisation of discrete or integrated approaches that best support the teaching and learning of child protection content

- relevant pedagogies that support
  - the teaching of sensitive and often controversial issues inherent in child protection
  - effective student learning in this domain and the influence it has on future teaching practices and epistemological beliefs
  - consistency and quality of teaching, particularly when there are numerous delivery agents from various disciplines and with varying qualifications

- compelling concerns about overcrowded curricula, time and resource constraints, consistency and quality of content across teacher education programs and how these issues can be addressed effectively

- establishing if the necessary skills are developed that enable graduates to address the needs of vulnerable and at risk children confidently and adequately within educational settings.

Strengths and limitations of the Research study

With regard to perceived strengths and limitations of the study it is important to consider these in light of the aims, purpose and key questions outlined at the beginning of this chapter.

Due to the changing nature of the structure and curriculum content of teacher education programs, however, it is important to note that the information gathered and findings relate to a particular point in time, and that changes in content and approach may have subsequently occurred in various teacher programs being offered across Australia. Nevertheless this research project has a number of strengths:

- the high rate of returns provides a realistic representation of teacher education programs across all universities

- there is a wide coverage of teacher education programs across States and Territories, types of degrees and types of teacher education programs

- there was a high rate of attendance at the roundtable forum, and a range of representatives from universities across Australia in attendance

- two different methods were utilised in the collection of data, namely surveys and a roundtable forum that enabled triangulation of relevant information

- the study contributes to the knowledge base of content and practice regarding child protection in teacher education across Australia

- innovative and successful practices in the area of child protection in teacher education programs were shared across Schools of Education.

Notwithstanding the many strengths identified, due to the nature and purpose of this study, it is acknowledged that many important questions related to child protection and teacher education remain unanswered and therefore call for further investigation. For example:

- What are the perceived, or actual, merits associated with providing discrete or integrated teaching of child protection content within a teacher education program?

- What do students learn or understand about child protection issues as a result of exposure to the content within and across teacher award programs?

- What is the quality or nature of the teaching of child protection content within and across teacher education programs?

- When and how should child protection curriculum content be incorporated into a teacher education program, and what is the minimal level of understanding required by a graduating teacher?

Conclusions

The numerous issues raised and discussed throughout this research study highlight the complex and multifaceted nature of child protection in teacher education. While the data collected from the curriculum mapping process provides a snapshot of the current coverage of child protection in teacher education, the findings, discussions, insights, and suggestions from both the survey and roundtable forum will help inform future directions and approaches to the development of child protection related content.

While uncertainty about the most efficient and effective way to address and deliver child protection content in teacher education programs prevailed, the commitment to exploring and improving the current approaches was a commonly held tenet.

Although recent international studies have begun to inform this debate, further Australian research in this area would provide much needed insights into the benefits and challenges associated with the inclusion of child protection content in teacher education. The merits of providing discrete child protection content as opposed to integrating child protection content, and multidisciplinary as opposed to domain specific approaches, consistently emerged as areas requiring further investigation within an Australian context.

Furthermore, while the importance of child protection content in teacher education was undisputed, issues related to ownership and responsibility for incorporating and overseeing the inclusion of this content, both within and across disciplines was perceived by respondents as generating substantial challenges and barriers. Further discussions with higher educators and relevant stakeholders are recommended to find acceptable and feasible solutions to the issues.

There was recognition amongst participants that child protection generally is a highly sensitive, and often controversial, area of discussion for both students and educators. Subsequently it was felt there is a need to consider carefully the philosophy and most effective pedagogies for supporting the teaching and learning of child protection content in undergraduate and graduate programs.

Another consistent concern raised by survey respondents and forum participants was the need for accrediting and registering bodies to work towards consistency across States and Territories in regards to policies and professional responsibilities such as mandated reporting, and requirements for teacher registration. It was noted that the current move towards a national accreditation and registration system may be able to address many of these concerns.

The benefits of having school educators who are well informed about child protection issues, and can competently respond to the needs of vulnerable and at-risk children within school contexts was strongly supported.

Recommendations emerging from the Study

In order to ensure teacher education graduates have the knowledge base and the confidence to competently meet their legal obligations, and to address child protection related issues in educational settings that improve the learning outcomes for all children experiencing adversity due to abuse or neglect:

1) the narrow perceptions of child protection need to be challenged

2) child protection should remain on the agenda for universities, teacher registration and accrediting bodies, schools and governments

3) ongoing collaboration and consultation between all educational stakeholders should continue, and be a matter of high priority

4) further consideration should be given to undertaking a range of research investigations in accordance with the suggestions and areas of identified interest outlined in this report.

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Survey Instrument

Title Page:
Child Protection and Teacher Education

Code *(assigned by researchers upon receipt of completed survey)*
University
Faculty / school
Campus
Degree award
Program length
FTE student enrolment

Section 1A: Child Protection
- Discrete courses / subjects / units.

(Please attach relevant course/subject/unit outlines and documentation)

Course title
Study period / semester
Year (1-4)
Course duration (weeks / hours)
Delivered by (e.g. uni staff / external provider)
Core / Elective
Number of places available annually and
If Elective - Average annual enrolment

Section 1B: Integrated Approach to Child Protection
- courses / subjects / units.

(Please attach relevant course/subject/unit outlines and documentation)

Title of course unit
Study period / semester
Year (1-4)
Course duration (weeks / hours)
Delivered by (e.g. uni staff / external provider)
Core / Elective
Number of places available annually and
If Elective - Average annual enrolment

Section 2: Child Protection-related Content.

Only one box should be marked for any factor / strategy.
(N.B. If not addressed – leave both boxes blank).

Taught but not linked to CP / Linked to Child Protection.

Developmental Delay
Low weight for age, failure to thrive
Premature birth, low birth weight, sibling mortality
Slow to walk, talk; poor literacy / numeracy for age

Learning or Physical Disability
child
parents / primary caregiver / siblings

Child's personal, social and emotional development
- aggressive / high levels of conflict
- undue fear of adults
- excessive shyness / timidity
- withdrawn or wary / lacks curiosity
- miserable, unhappy
- extreme anxiety about abandonment
- resilience (very high or very low)
- low self-esteem/poor self-perception

Unrealistic parental expectations of the child

Domestic / Family violence: exposure to
- physical violence in family
- excessive physical / emotional punishment
- extreme / uncontrolled anger and aggression
- constant criticism, belittling, teasing of a child

Exposure to media abuse/violence (e.g.TV/Internet)
Parental aggression/conflict with people in authority
Criminal record / criminal activity in the home

Neglect
Parental inability or disinterest in caring for children
Parent / carer who puts their own needs first
Child not collected from school, public places, other homes

Mental / Behavioural issues
Child-centred
- depression, anxiety, ADHD, hyperactivity
- cruel to animals
- sudden changes in behaviour
- extreme attention seeking behaviour
- persistent anti-social behaviour / bullying
- foraging or hoarding food / eating disorders
- substance abuse
- rocking / head banging / self-harm
- stealing / makes up stories
- running away
- inappropriate sexualised behaviour
- encopresis (soiling) / enuresis (bedwetting)

Mental health problems – parents / siblings
Substance Abuse - alcohol / drug problems in the family
School attendance problems
Sudden significant changes in academic progress

Family / Environmental Issues
Family structure - stable / transient / reconstituted
Maternal youth / teenage parents / sole parents
Low income / benefit dependent / financial problems
Parents / caregivers socially isolated
Serious parent-child and/or inter-parental conflict
Role of child in family (e.g. child as carer)
Inadequate medical treatment or basic health care
Inadequate supervision or safety provisions in home
Parent / carer abused / in out-of-home care as a child
Poor housing, community resources or networks

Dealing with Difference
Gender
- using non-sexualised language
- societal expectations
- socialisation – femininity / masculinity

Sexuality and Homophobia
Disadvantage - economic/social
Cultural and linguistic diversity
Racism (vilification; stereotyping)
Providing a safe and inclusive environment for all
Developing effective social skills
Implementing specialised learning programs
- individualised plans for student under Guardianship
- special needs / disability Programs: e.g. Negotiated Curriculum / Education Plans
- impact of isolation, exclusion, remote/regional locations

Proactive School-based prevention strategies
Health and wellbeing programs
- nutrition – inc. breakfast and / or lunch initiatives
- mental health awareness projects
- bullying and personal protection programs
- sexual or gender-based harassment
- inclusivity initiatives
- protective behaviours programs

Parenting programs (inc. literacy and numeracy programs)
Community partnerships, building and planning initiatives

Professional Development - Role / Responsibilities
Knowledge of school policies, programs and procedures
Contributing positively to
- school values, ethos, culture, structures and
- student welfare and wellbeing

Establishing positive relationships with
- students
- parents / caregivers / extended family
- community members

Harm minimisation; risk management
Addressing / managing incidents of victimisation and abuse
Negotiation and conflict resolution

Other:

Section 3

Comments / issues / concerns related to child protection in teacher education curriculum. *(Discuss any future curriculum changes that may be planned or innovative approaches that you want to share here).*

Section 4

Child protection curriculum issues that your School / Faculty is interested in exploring further:
(Detail any opportunities, challenges or dilemmas here that you may wish to discuss in a future Roundtable meeting).

Professionals Protecting Children