



College of Education
Te Kura Akau Taitoka

Conceptual Framework for ITE Programmes



Principles of ITE design
and delivery, Te Kura
Ākau Taitoka ki Ōtepoti

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(July 2020)

Conceptual Framework for ITE Programmes

University of Otago College of Education (July, 2020)

Preamble

Since 1876, initial teacher education has been a significant feature of the Dunedin/Ōtepoti landscape. The University of Otago College of Education (UOCE) has proud traditions and a longstanding reputation for providing quality teachers for schools and early childhood centres across New Zealand. UOCE is located on two campuses, Te Kura Ākau Taitoka (Dunedin) and Te Kura Ākau Taitoka ki Murihiku (Invercargill). Te Kura Ākau Taitoka means the School of the Southern Tides. The Invercargill campus was also named historically by local iwi and former College of Education kaumātua, and is locally known as Ahauahu te Mātauranga, the nurturing and tendering of knowledge. The campuses offer a range of specialist teacher education facilities as well as excellent technology support. In Dunedin students may enter undergraduate and postgraduate initial teacher education (ITE) programmes in early childhood, primary, and secondary education. The campus in Invercargill offers undergraduate ITE in early childhood and primary education. The Te Pōkai Mātauranga o te Ao Rua (Primary Bicultural Education) programme is also offered at the Southland Campus, to enable interested students to develop a stronger understanding of te ao Māori in teaching and education. The programme enables graduates to teach in mainstream, bi-lingual and immersion schools dependent on their te reo Māori capabilities. Although both campuses have strong local identities, they are made up of many peoples because many students and staff of the University travel from elsewhere to work and study here. Otago and Southland have long established and significant Māori, Pasifika, Chinese, European, and Pākehā (originating from countries outside of Aotearoa) communities residing here.

Āta: The Basis of a Conceptual Framework for Initial Teacher Education at UOCE

Revised initial teacher education approval requirements from the Teaching Council of New Zealand | Matatū Aotearoa provide a catalyst for a new round of reflection and re-development of ITE directions and intentions for the UOCE. In embarking on this journey, teacher educators and colleagues have held to the principle of āta (Forsyth & Kung, 2007; Pohatu, 2004) to help guide decision making in our work. Invited by takata whenua to bring this principle to the centre of our ITE conceptual framework, we have deliberately recognised indigenous knowledge and thought (Pohatu, 2004) as central to educational success and advancement in Aotearoa. Āta, is described by Pohatu (2004) as a cultural tool guiding understandings of wellbeing and relationships. Forsyth and Kung (2007) add that the concept is about respectful relationships. Taken together we engage with āta as

a touchstone for examining all that we do such that our efforts may strengthen and promote individual and collective mana and wellbeing. Forsyth and Kung (2007) argue that āta offers a means of developing a “truly bi-cultural approach to teaching in Aotearoa/New Zealand” (p.5) which would support our capability to collectively address the professional standards (Education Council New Zealand, 2017) and contemporary cultural expectations (Education Council New Zealand and Ministry of Education, 2011; Ministry of Education, 2018; Rishel & Zuercher, 2016) of our profession.

Realising Āta in an Otago and Southland Setting

Āta provides us with a central touchstone for planning and conducting our work as teacher educators and within the broader ITE community in our regions. Next we explain interconnecting principles that woven together with āta provide a network of concepts we wish to uphold within our approaches to ITE. The principles are kaitiakitaka, equity, ako, and transformative practice. They provide guidance for how we, as teacher educators, will work with each other, mana whenua: Kāi Tahu, Kāti Māmoe and Waitaha, student teachers, and our colleagues in our shared endeavour.

The Principle of Kaitiakitaka

Toitū te marae o Tāne, toitū te marae o Tangaroa, toitū te iwi.

Proper use of Tane’s realm, of Tangaroa’s domain, ensures humanity’s survival.

(Kāi Tahu whakataukī)

We begin with a recognition of our obligations to place such that it may sustain and nourish the development of teachers and teaching now and in the future. The Otago Southland area covers 250 square kilometres of mountains, lakes, rivers, farms and shoreline from Dunedin to Invercargill. In expanding upon the meaning of the whakataukī above, Tau et al. (as cited in Riley, 2013) state that “the welfare of any part of the environment, from Tane’s jurisdiction of the forests to Tangaroa’s sway over the oceans determines the welfare of the people” (p. 827). In other words, the well-being of the physical environment and people in this environment are entwined. Through *whanaukataka* and *manaakitaka*, as you affect one, you affect the other.

A Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership is evident when student teachers uphold respectful engagements with each other and the community (Manning et al., 2020), their practicum/professional communities (Macfarlane et al., 2019), and through increased engagement with tākata whenua. Research has shown that as student teachers increase engagement with local physical environments, their interpersonal relationships grow (Manning et al., 2020; Smorti et al., 2013). Kaitiakitaka means making a commitment to thinking and doing things differently in order to create an environment that

sustains well-being. This principle extends to the physical, social, and emotional spaces of the University including professional experience settings that emphasise *kaitiakitaka* to ensure students' sense of belonging and holistic well-being (Durie, 1984; 1999; Pere, 1997). The principle of *kaitiakitaka* is the enactment of care for the environment to support, sustain, and build upon reciprocal relationships (Ritchie et al., 2010). As we care for the physical environment, it also cares for us by providing the shelter, sustenance, and air to breath. We extend this caring to ourselves and others within teaching and teacher education by recognising that understandings of place, of the importance of reciprocal relationships, and of ecological sustainability are critical elements for contemporary teacher education design in Aotearoa. Furthermore, our University's planning around sustainability initiatives encourages us to be bold in integrating sustainability principles and practices within academic policies, practices and programmes (University of Otago, 2017). Such a place-based focus on education (Hamer & Loveridge, 2017; McInerney et al., 2011; Peace & Shearer, 2017) will be enacted as student teachers engage with nature, *whakawhanaukataka*, and the community as part of their studies, and through the bringing of nature and the community into the college setting (University of Otago, n.d.).

The Principle of Equity

"Aroha tētahi ki tētahi"

To give aroha unconditionally, to one to another, always, in all things, so we know it is reciprocal and unconditional.

(Etuwhanau.org)

A second principle entwined with *āta* and supporting our teacher education design and practice is *equity*. Te Tiriti o Waitangi was signed in 1840 but it is evident that the educational structures and processes that evolved in Aotearoa New Zealand have denied many Māori opportunities to succeed (Education Review Office, 2010; Ministry of Education, 2009; Waitangi Tribunal, 2010). Research and assessment data collected over the 20th and early 21st centuries indicate that Māori learners in Aotearoa/New Zealand are over-represented in the group that experience the least equitable outcomes (Airini et al., 2007; Gordon-Burns & Campbell, 2014). Teacher education must work to help change the status quo. This is why equity is a central principle within our ITE conceptual framework.

Scholars from Aotearoa/New Zealand and around the world argue that more critical, justice, and equity-oriented practices in teacher education are needed (see for example, Banks et al., 2005; Cherng & Davis, 2017; Cochran-Smith, 2010; Conklin & Hughes, 2016; Gay, 2000; Gorski & Swalwell, 2015; hooks, 1994; Jones & Hughes-Decatur, 2012; Kumashiro, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2000; McDonald & Zeichner, 2009; Sleeter, 2012). These scholars call for the cultivation of new and different

ways of being and thinking for future teachers, including being aware of the impact of ongoing systems of oppression and acting to change them.

Kelly and Brandes (2010) note that many educational researchers have developed conceptual approaches to understanding equity. They report on the utility of anti-oppressive approaches to teaching for social justice. Florian and Rouse (2009) suggest that initial teacher education should not only prepare teachers to enter the profession but also to accept both individual and collective responsibility for improving the learning and participation of all children. Inclusive education scholars link the concepts of equity and quality teaching calling for ITE practices to support such aims (Gunn et al., 2020; Opertti & Brady, 2011). Opertti and Brady (2011) define an inclusive education system as:

not one which responds separately to the needs of certain categories of learners but rather one which responds to the diverse, specific, and unique characteristics of each learner, especially those at risk of marginalization and underachievement under common frameworks of setting and provisions. (p. 460)

Gunn et al. (2020) argue that inclusion is cultural politics. Both the Education Council (2017) and Opertti and Brady (2011) highlight that respect for cultural, local, and individual diversity is central to quality inclusive education. We believe that teaching for equity within ITE must be intentional, include elements of risk taking, and involve decision making that challenges and seeks to change institutionalised oppressions as and when they occur. Our practices seek to reflect the concept of *pono*, which in our deliberations has come to mean *being genuinely and sincerely concerned for social justice*, so that student teachers' *mana* is protected and promoted in every experience they have during their time at university, in early childhood education, or at school. For us, teaching for equity in ITE must be inclusive of every individual and must involve being committed to action. Our belief is that by designing ITE with such concepts in mind, we will support beginning teachers to practice in ways that address the Government's aspirations to improve the quality of teaching in New Zealand (New Zealand Government, 2010).

The Principle of Ako

Ko te ahurei o te tamaiti arahia o tatou mahi

Let the uniqueness of the child guide our work.

Ako is a traditional Māori concept that can be translated as Māori pedagogy. In traditional Māori society, ako was a process integral to the creation, conceptualisation, transmission and articulation of Māori knowledge (Pihema et al., 2004). Pere (1994) maintains that traditional (Te Ao Māori) learning relied on the understanding that every person is a learner from the time they are born to the time

they die. Furthermore, she maintains that every person is in a constant state of teaching. This view reflects the principle of ako as it is interpreted by us within UOCE ITE.

Ako is based on the understanding that both teacher and learner bring their own understandings and knowledge to learning interactions. New knowledge and understandings grow out of shared learning situations resulting in reciprocal moments of learning/teaching that strengthen respectful relationships (Pihema et al., 2004). Our ITE design acknowledges this and recognises that teacher educators (university, school, and early childhood education based) work in community with student teachers as we collectively develop teaching amongst us. Tuakana/teina relationships provide a model for interaction in our learning focussed community; as expertise develops amongst us, skills and knowledge are passed on to others through more wide ranging interactions. We aspire for the 'teina' to become the 'tuakana' as learners come to understand their responsibility of passing on knowledge, especially our student teachers as we engage with them over learning to teach.

For us, ako is inextricably linked to concepts of whanaukatakā and manaakitakā. Together these concepts ensure appropriate and correct practices/tikanga and interactions within our learning community. Manaakitakā is the practice of urging forward one's mana through correct behaviours (Matenga-Kohu & Roberts, 2003), thus grounding our expectations of professionalism, commitment, responsibility, and respect. Tikakā involves student teachers and teacher educators being responsible and hospitable, able to nurture safe and secure relationships, and to show kindness and care. Whanaukatakā recognises that such relationships support individuals as well as the collective good (Rangiahua et al., 2004). Within our ITE programmes, with āta underpinning our work, the flourishing of ako in a context of manaakitakā and whanaukatakā is made possible and seen in tikakā such as pōwhiri/mihiwhakatau (welcoming ceremonies), karakia (affirmation ceremonies), whakakāhau (entertainment), and marae wānanga. We also see it in engagement with mana whenua: Kāi Tahu, Kāti Māmoe, and Waitaha, allowing for the building of formal relationships and development of knowledge and understandings of place, environment, culture, whakapapa (geneology), and tikakā (cultural values, practices, behaviours, and practices). Through these activities, we strive to graduate teachers who will confidently uphold obligations to Te Tiriti o Waitangi through the protection of tikakā and te reo Māori.

The Principle of Transformative Practice

Thinking with outcomes that bear fruit

In our view, when the practices of a kaiako embrace principles of kaitiakitakā, equity, and ako, teaching can be transformative. Our aspiration for graduates is that they see themselves as teachers

capable making a difference (Shields, 2010), to be able to mobilise teaching practices that lead to transformative teaching/learning. For student teachers to develop such capability they need to experience transformation within their own learning journeys within ITE. To support our student teachers to do this, we design experiences that involve critical reflection on taken-for-granted practice, assumptions, beliefs, and values, and we expect students to consciously make and implement plans that bring about new ways of defining their worlds (Notman et al., 2017; Smorti et al., 2013).

As guardians (kaitiaki) of our teacher education programmes and our student teachers, we need to model and engage in transformative practices ourselves. We need to lead with moral purpose, aiming to protect and nurture a caring environment where people and ideas are valued, and relationships are strong – me whakataha tahi tātou honoka. From this position, we are able to reflect critically on and transform the practices of our institutions, our teacher education programmes, and ourselves to ensure the professional and academic acceptability of programmes and practices. Change is inevitable and constant. We recognise that our political, social, economic, technological, and knowledge structures are continuously developing (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2009). This means we need to support each other and our student teachers to achieve what Beyer (2001) calls the “practice of possibility” (p. 151), where, in one’s engagement with teaching, opportunities for future practices are made visible and considered. We want our ITE programmes to welcome change and difference so they can be focused not only on the present but also on future possibilities (Beyer, 2001). We believe teachers are people with plentiful opportunities to act as agents for positive social change in a future which will be characterised as one of continual change. We know we cannot teach our student teachers all they need to know, but we do need to help them to create learning climates where individuals and the collective become resilient and adaptive to change.

Conclusion

He ao te rangi ka uhia, ma te huruhuru te manu karere

As clouds bedeck the sky, so do feathers allow the bird to fly

(Only when one is properly prepared can they carry out their tasks.)

Our conceptual framework as described here and represented through its associated graphic, articulates principles for decision making and action within ITE at Te Kura Akau Taitoka. We outline this framework understanding it will act as both a launching point and touchstone for the ongoing development of ITE programmes, shared meanings, and practices in our regions.

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