

Thematic Review of Writing

Preparation to Teach Writing: Report of the Initial Teacher Education Review

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Introduction

Overview

This is the fifth in a sequence of reports that respond to recommendations made in the NSW Government's Great Teaching, Inspired Learning: A blueprint for action (2013) for an annual process to review and report on different aspects of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programs.

The report forms part of a broader thematic review of writing pedagogy being undertaken by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA). The thematic review also includes:

- a survey of teachers' writing pedagogy (the Australian Writing Survey)
- an academic literature review of writing pedagogy
- a detailed analysis of NAPLAN writing data
- case studies of schools with exemplary NAPLAN writing results
- analysis of available writing professional development courses
- a professional learning trial of the national writing progressions as the basis for teaching teachers about writing.

The report looks at approaches to the preparation to teach writing in a total of thirteen Primary Education and fourteen Secondary English initial teacher education programs from fourteen initial teacher education institutions in NSW. It also includes consideration of approaches taken in secondary learning areas other than English in these institutions.

Primary Education and Secondary English programs were chosen because the syllabus taught in these areas, the English K–10 syllabus, is the only source of detailed direction in the curriculum about how to teach and develop writing across the stages of learning to Year 10.

In the primary years the focus is on foundational knowledge and skills and building on them. By the end of primary school students are expected to be able to compose, edit and present well-structured and coherent texts using increasingly challenging topics, ideas, issues and language forms and features for a variety of audiences and purposes. The secondary English section of the syllabus then takes this level of capability and extends it into more sophisticated, creative and analytical kinds of writing where students are encouraged to increasingly acquire a greater degree of agency.

Secondary key learning areas other than English are also considered because the syllabuses in these areas require secondary teachers to teach the literacy (including writing) demands of their particular discipline. A collaborative effort across key learning areas is envisaged as a means to ensure that secondary school literacy standards are met. It is acknowledged in curriculum documentation however that the English key learning area has a particular role in developing literacy because of its inherent focus on language and meaning.

Methodology

NESA holds a great deal of information on ITE programs submitted by ITE providers as part of the program accreditation process. This information includes unit outlines and information relating to how programs address the national accreditation standards, which include the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers at the Graduate level.

However, the information submitted for accreditation purposes is necessarily limited to showing how a program meets all of the accreditation requirements and does not seek to highlight or showcase any aspect of a program. The documentation is designed to show that a program meets the minimum standards and so does not provide a comprehensive account of the breadth of coverage and depth of treatment in many crucial areas of teacher education. As such this documentation has not been used to assess coverage of writing within ITE programs.

Instead, in consultation with the NSW Council of Deans of Education (NSWCDE), each institution was asked to select one Primary and one Secondary English program and respond to a questionnaire developed by NESA¹ (see [Appendix 1](#)). The questionnaire sought information about the extent to which teacher education students learn to teach and develop the mechanics, basic building blocks and techniques of writing, and the kinds of writing required by the school curriculum.

The examination of questionnaire responses was based on the assumption that learning to teach writing is core content that Primary Education and Secondary English ITE students need to master in order to become effective teachers. It is also assumed that while the ability to teach writing effectively is dependent upon sound pre-service preparation, it must be further developed through continuing professional learning and reflective practice.

The questionnaire asked for information about the extent of content coverage in (and for some questions, time allocated to) the following key components of writing instruction: theoretical and pedagogical knowledge and understandings; core curriculum content related to teaching grammar, punctuation, text forms and features, handwriting and spelling; assessment of writing development including use of diagnostic testing data; differentiation in instructional practice to cater for levels of writing achievement; and practice in teaching writing in professional experience placements. It also sought information about the preparation of secondary ITE students to teach writing demands of key learning areas other than English.

These components were identified based on: NSW English K–10 syllabus requirements; Graduate Teacher Accreditation Standard 1 – *Know students and how they learn* and Standard 2 – *Know the content and how to teach it*; and Program Accreditation Standard 2 – *Program development, design and delivery* and Standard 5 – *Professional experience*.

Drawing directly on the information from institutions, the report examines and provides examples from each program of the coverage and treatment of each component. In doing so it attempts to accurately represent the range of effort that goes into the preparation to teach writing across programs. In the process gaps and variation in coverage and treatment are highlighted without identifying particular programs.

The intention is to provide a descriptive account of program inputs based on self-reporting by institutions. It is acknowledged that this kind of account is only part of the story: there is no

¹ Development of the questionnaire was supported with advice from Professor Mary Ryan, Head of Department, Educational Studies, Macquarie University; Associate Professor Megan Watkins, Institute for Culture and Society, Western Sydney University; and Dr Peter Knapp.

attempt to make findings directly on the quality of resourcing within programs, program delivery or graduate outcomes. However in the case of some program examples, judgments about quality may be inferred from the nature of the content or lack of it.²

Scope

Effective teaching of writing in schools is dependent at least on the following key elements:

- pre-service preparation at a standard that enables beginning teachers to be effective from day one
- clear direction for teaching and learning in syllabuses and support documentation
- instructional practice informed by evidence of what works
- beginning teacher induction calibrated to support and build on what beginning teachers know and can do linked to ongoing professional learning.

The main focus for this review has been on approaches taken in the critical pre-service preparation phase. However in the process, curriculum documentation and related guidance for teaching writing have also been examined because they inform the content and design of ITE programs as well as directing teachers' work. The availability of evidence of effective instructional practice in teaching writing and the need for effective ongoing support for beginning teachers that builds on their graduate level knowledge and skills are also considered.

The review recognises that close collaboration between initial teacher education institutions, NESA, school systems and schools is necessary to ensure that each of these interdependent elements supports quality teaching in writing. This is reflected in the report's recommendations.

Importance of effective writing instruction

The ability to write well is a critical skill for participation in schooling at all levels. It is a skill that students draw on to engage with curriculum content in day-to-day classroom activities, projects and assignments, and it is the key means by which students are assessed on their knowledge and understanding throughout their schooling.

Good writing contributes significantly to HSC performance which is assessed largely on the basis of written assessments, and it is an indispensable skill for success in tertiary and higher education. More broadly it is a life skill and a key enabler of workplace, social, civic and cultural engagement.

Writing is also an important tool for learning. Writing about what they are learning requires students to organise and sequence information, think through concepts, make connections amongst ideas and points of view, in the process consolidating their knowledge and understanding, and opening up avenues for further learning.³

² A small number of responses questioned the underlying premise of the questionnaire that specifics of the preparation to teach writing and time spent on them can be described in detail and quantified. This is due to the holistic, integrated nature of program approaches where content areas of literacy, language and literature are treated in relation to one another. While the review has noted this issue, it does not consider it unreasonable to expect that integrated content can be disentangled for the purposes of ensuring that key knowledge and skills are being adequately covered.

³ Meiers, M & Knight, P 2007, Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), Research Digest edition 2007/1: Writing to learn.

A recent Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation report on improving literacy and numeracy performance notes:

One area for professional learning that has been shown to lead to improvements in both literacy and numeracy at a whole-school level is the use of writing as a means of learning. The “write-to-learn” concept recognises writing as a tool for learning and a means to promote content learning across all disciplines and year levels ... The formal teaching of writing should not be confined to English classes alone as a function of learning to write. The approach to the teaching of writing should be school-wide, with each discipline teaching and assessing the requirements of writing that are specific to that discipline, as a means of writing to learn.⁴

Despite its central role in enabling learning, writing instruction has not received the degree of attention that it should given what the data is showing, especially when compared with the emphasis over the past decade or more on reading instruction.

NAPLAN data indicate that writing performance in NSW and nationally has remained static since 2011 with a marked decline consistently evident as students move through the junior secondary years.⁵

⁴ How schools can improve literacy and numeracy performance and why it (still) matters, Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, August 2016.

⁵ See [Writing performance in NSW schools](#) at page 13.

Summary findings and recommendations

Writing instruction content in programs

Each of the programs examined by the review includes writing instruction either as a distinct program component or as a focus within an integrated approach to program content. All programs recognise that the ability to teach writing is an important and necessary teaching skill.

However there is considerable variation across programs in the extent of content coverage, depth of treatment of relevant content and in what ITE students learn about effective teaching practice. A significant number of programs provide limited coverage of some key components of writing instruction and some programs omit some components altogether. [Detailed analysis](#) and [further discussion](#) is provided at pages 26–54 and 55–62 respectively.

Given the degree of inconsistency, it is proposed that core knowledge and skill specifications be developed to inform a base-line of required writing instruction content that all ITE students fully engage with in their pre-service education. Specifications for each program area should be developed collaboratively by NESAs, teacher employers and initial teacher education providers, and reflect a professional consensus.

The application of agreed specifications could be expected to require minor adjustment to aspects of some programs, more detailed adjustment to others, while a small number would require significant change.

Recommendation 1

That NESAs agree that:

1. minimum specifications for content knowledge and instructional practice for teaching writing be developed in 2018 through a collaborative process involving NESAs, teacher employers and initial teacher education providers
2. the specifications be included in the relevant NESAs policy for initial teacher education program accreditation for Primary, Secondary English and other Secondary teaching areas
3. the specifications be drawn from existing good practice in current programs and evidence-based effective teaching practice
4. the specifications include the necessity for providers to assess ITE students' developing capacity to teach writing at key stages of an ITE program
5. all initial teacher education providers be advised to ensure their existing programs transition to the new specifications in a set timeframe to ensure that current ITE students are adequately prepared to teach writing, and
6. the specifications form part of the NESAs initial teacher education program accreditation requirements and schedule of assessment by accreditation panels.

Theory and pedagogy

Different theoretical and pedagogical approaches influence the content of ITE programs and emphasis given to key components of writing instruction. Teaching practices that graduates take into classrooms vary according to the approaches that are advocated.

Major studies in Australia and internationally have identified that effective teaching in general involves monitoring and feedback, strong subject knowledge and explicit teaching.⁶ However, the review was not able to identify any large-scale, independent research into the nature and effectiveness of specific kinds of writing instruction practice in Australian classrooms.

The lack of a sound evidence base for writing instruction practice needs to be addressed.

Recommendation 2

That NESA:

1. in collaboration with the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation commission an independent investigation of writing instruction practices in schools to identify effective practice
2. ensure this work examines writing instruction practices in early years' acquisition of writing skills, later primary years writing development, and secondary writing development across the curriculum, and
3. apply the outcomes from this work to update instructional practice specifications for ITE programs, professional development and support material for teachers.

Support for teaching writing – NSW English K–10 syllabus and support materials

Information about teaching writing is presented throughout the NSW English K–10 syllabus in a way that supports a holistic, integrated model for teaching literacy, language and literature. This makes it difficult to readily draw from the syllabus a coherent account of the sequence of specific writing content that should be taught and assessed at each stage of learning.

A support document that brings together the teaching content for each of the key components of learning to write at each stage of learning is proposed. This would ensure that within an integrated model a sequenced developmental approach to teaching writing can be maintained.

⁶ Great Teaching, Inspired Learning; What does the evidence tell us about effective teaching? Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, 2013, pp 6–7.

Recommendation 3

That NESAs:

1. develop a scope and sequence document for teaching writing that brings together and details explicitly the knowledge and skills for learning to write that are expected to be taught at each stage of the English K–10 syllabus, and
2. make this document available to Initial Teacher Education providers as a resource for use in programs and to schools and school systems to inform teaching practice and professional development.

Support for teaching writing in secondary key learning areas other than English

Secondary teachers are expected to teach the writing requirements of their learning area. However little specific direction for teaching and assessing writing is provided in secondary syllabus documentation for key learning areas other than English.

Explicit information and direction commensurate with the expectation on secondary teachers is needed. This would establish an imperative to teach writing instruction in a more explicit way in secondary ITE programs, and support current teaching practice and professional development more broadly.

Recommendation 4

That NESAs:

1. develop additional explicit direction for teaching writing for each relevant secondary syllabus other than English, incorporated into syllabus content and elaborated in supporting documentation.

Professional experience placements

Questionnaire responses suggest that in many cases close collaboration between ITE providers and schools/practising teachers in planning professional experience placements is in the early stages of implementation only.

This has implications for the acquisition of effective instructional practice by ITE students.

Recommendation 5

That NESAs:

1. develop, in collaboration with ITE providers and employers, practical measures to strengthen overall the implementation of formal partnership arrangements between providers and schools in this critical component of initial teacher education, and
2. ensure the specifications proposed at Recommendation 1 include direction about practice in writing instruction in professional experience placements.

Connection to induction programs

There is no systematic approach to building on the knowledge and skills for teaching writing that beginning teachers have acquired in pre-service training.

Writing assessment and targeting individual student need are areas of critical importance once beginning teachers are involved in day-to-day teaching. These areas in particular should be a focus for further professional learning for Primary Education and Secondary English beginning teachers, along with a sustained focus on writing instruction in secondary learning areas.

Recommendation 6

That NESAs:

1. in collaboration with employers and Initial Teacher Education providers, lead development of specifications for induction phase support in teaching writing with an emphasis on writing assessment, strategies to support differentiated, targeted teaching of writing, and teaching writing in secondary key learning areas, and
2. ensure this work builds on and extends the agreed specification of knowledge and instructional practice for the pre-service phase proposed at Recommendation 1.

[Findings and recommendations](#) are discussed in detail at pages 55–62 of the report.

Background

Writing performance in NSW schools

Given the importance of learning to write well at school, and the emphasis given to writing development in the curriculum, it is of concern that NAPLAN data show no overall improvement in performance between 2011 and 2017:

Table 1: Mean scores for NAPLAN Writing in NSW and Australia, in 2011 and 2017

Calendar Year	School Year	Mean NAPLAN Writing scores in NSW	Mean NAPLAN Writing scores in Australia	Difference
2011	Year 3	429.2	415.9	13.3
	Year 5	492.6	482.6	10.0
	Year 7	527.5	529.1	-1.6
	Year 9	562.8	565.9	-3.1
2017	Year 3	420.8	413.6	7.2
	Year 5	477.6	472.5	5.1
	Year 7	516.8	512.9	3.9
	Year 9	558.6	552.0	6.6

There has been a decline in the mean NAPLAN scores for Writing in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in both NSW and Australia.

Table 2: Students in NSW and Australia who achieved the national minimum standard (NMS) for NAPLAN Writing, in 2011 and 2017

Calendar Year	School Year	NSW students who achieved the NMS (%)	Australian students who achieved the NMS (%)	Difference
2011	Year 3	96.5	95.3	1.2
	Year 5	95.0	92.5	2.5
	Year 7	92.1	91.1	1.0
	Year 9	84.9	84.8	0.1
2017	Year 3	96.5	95.5	1.0

Calendar Year	School Year	NSW students who achieved the NMS (%)	Australian students who achieved the NMS (%)	Difference
	Year 5	93.0	91.7	1.3
	Year 7	89.2	87.9	1.3
	Year 9	83.7	81.6	2.1

The percentage of students in NSW achieving at or above the minimum standard for writing has not improved, with 11 per cent of year 7 and 16 per cent of year nine students performing below the minimum standard in 2017.

Table 3: Students in NSW and Australia who achieved NAPLAN Writing scores in the top two bands, in 2011 and 2017

Calendar Year	School Year	NSW students in the top two bands (%)	Australian students in the top two bands (%)	Difference
2011	Year 3	55.9	46.1	9.8
	Year 5	25.4	22.6	2.8
	Year 7	21.2	22.6	-1.4
	Year 9	19.8	21.5	-1.7
2017	Year 3	48.8	44.6	4.2
	Year 5	17.6	15.8	1.8
	Year 7	17.6	16.5	1.1
	Year 9	16.8	15.4	1.4

The percentage of students in the top two bands in writing has declined for each of Years 3, 5, 7 and 9.

In NSW in 2017:

- 27 per cent of Year 7 students and 35 per cent of Year 9 students performed *at or below* the minimum standard for writing
- 34 per cent of Year 7 boys performed *at or below* the minimum for writing as opposed to 19 per cent of girls
- 43 per cent of Year 9 boys performed *at or below* the minimum standard for writing as opposed to 26 per cent of girls
- 39 per cent of the NSW Year 9 cohort achieved a Band 8 result or higher

- 32 per cent of boys achieved a Band 8 result or higher as opposed to 47 per cent of girls in the NSW Year 9 cohort.⁷

These results have clear implications for the teaching of writing in schools, especially given the requirement that from 2020 Year 12 students will need to have achieved a minimum standard in literacy and numeracy to be awarded an HSC. An intensified effort is required to improve writing skills across all stages of learning and particularly in secondary schools where the decline in writing performance accelerates. Inevitably quality teacher preparation and continuing professional support will be key factors in driving improvement.

Learning to teach writing

The English K–10 syllabus expects teachers to teach and develop increasingly sophisticated knowledge about and skills in writing as students move through the stages of schooling. Primary teachers and secondary English teachers have a critical role in establishing core knowledge and skills and building on them to give students increasing agency in applying their writing skills. Secondary teachers in the other curriculum areas have a responsibility to ensure that student writing is at a standard that maximises their participation in learning and meets the writing expectations of assessment tasks.

The syllabus content and expectations for writing development at each stage of learning highlight the complexity of the task teachers face, and the challenge for students. As Kellog notes:

Learning how to write a coherent, effective text is a difficult and protracted achievement of cognitive development that contrasts sharply with the acquisition of speech. By the age of five, spoken language is normally highly developed with a working vocabulary of several thousand words and an ability to comprehend and produce grammatical sentences. Although the specific contribution of a genetic predisposition for language learning is unsettled, it is apparent that speech acquisition is a natural part of early human development. Literacy (reading and writing), on the other hand, is a purely cultural achievement that may never be learned at all. Reading and writing are partly mediated by the phonological speech system, but an independent orthographic system must also be learned.⁸

⁷ Data on NSW NAPLAN writing test performance is derived from the 2017 ACARA NAPLAN national report.

⁸ Kellog RT 2008, Training writing skills: A cognitive developmental perspective. Journal of writing research.

Areas of focus for the review

International research shows that teachers tend to be more effective if their pre-service and in-service training focuses more on the content they will be delivering and the curriculum they will be teaching.⁹

Program content and related support

The basic premise of this review is that learning how to teach writing should be a key part of the content in both Primary Education and Secondary English ITE programs. It is also assumed that teacher education students in learning areas other than English will be learning to teach the writing demands of their key learning area.

It is unrealistic though to expect that an initial teacher education program can deal comprehensively and in depth with all of the writing instruction related content in the NSW English K–10 syllabus or the writing instruction skills required in other secondary learning areas. Developing the necessary skills to teach writing effectively should be seen as a longer term project that crosses the pre-service/ teaching career divide. Increasing expertise in teaching writing must be further developed through beginning teacher induction, classroom experience and ongoing professional development.

However, employers are entitled to expect that graduates will have knowledge and skills that can be applied immediately with positive effect and form a sound basis for further development within the profession.

Standards

Darling-Hammond and Bransford, in a comprehensive review in 2005 of the knowledge base for teaching and its implications for initial teacher education, recommended that teacher education programs should provide opportunities for the development of

*... knowledge skills and dispositions related to: learners and their development within social contexts; subject matter, including how students learn content specific knowledge and which subject specific pedagogies and curricula are appropriate to various educational purposes; and teaching, including how to create, use and interpret effective and appropriate instructional, assessment and management strategies.*¹⁰

Subsequent research points to a growing consensus around these elements as the basis for producing quality graduates.

The review notes that the Graduate Standards reflect this consensus. For example under Standard 2 – *Know the Content and How to Teach It* – graduates are expected to:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the concepts, substance and structure of the content and teaching strategies of the teaching area

⁸ Boyd D et al 2009, 'Teacher preparation and student achievement', *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 31(4); cited in *Great Teaching, Inspired Learning: What does the evidence tell us about effective teaching?* 2013, Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation.

⁹ Darling-Hammond, L & Bransford, J (eds) 2005. *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do.* Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA cited in *Best Practice Teacher Education Programs and Australia's Own Programs* ACER 2014 (above).

- organise content into an effective learning and teaching sequence
- use curriculum, assessment and reporting knowledge to design learning sequences and lesson plans
- plan lesson sequences using knowledge of student learning, content and effective teaching strategies
- demonstrate an understanding of assessment strategies, including informal and formal, diagnostic, formative and summative approaches to assess student learning
- demonstrate the capacity to interpret student assessment data to evaluate student learning and modify teaching practice.

It should be evident in ITE program content that teacher education students are given the opportunity to work towards and demonstrate these standards with writing instruction as a significant focus given its prominence as core syllabus content.

The review has sought to identify a coherent rationale in the sequence of units and other elements that focus on teaching writing. It is well recognised that coherence is an important feature of effective teacher education programs.¹¹ Sequencing and connectedness among units within programs and clear linking of taught knowledge, theory and practical skills with teacher education students' professional learning experience lead to better preparedness to teach.

It is noted that the Initial Teacher Education Program Accreditation Standards reflect this view. For example Program Standard 2.1 includes the requirement that programs:

- have a documented coherent rationale based on authoritative and evidence-based understandings of how the program will develop effective teachers
- reflect a coherent and sequenced delivery of program content including professional experience.

These elements of the Graduate and Program Standards provide useful points of reference for the review in examining the overall coverage of writing related content. However there are related issues that need to be taken into account. These go largely to the adequacy of coverage and the depth of treatment in each of the key components of teaching writing. The following section elaborates on these issues.

Writing instruction coverage and depth of treatment in programs

Grammar, punctuation, text forms and features, spelling and handwriting

Consistent with the expectations of the Graduate Standards, beginning teachers need to both know and understand the writing content of the syllabus and have strategies and instructional skills to teach it and to assess how students are progressing.

A key issue is how adequately the writing related content of the NSW English K–10 syllabus is covered in programs and at what depth to ensure that ITE students are able to provide

¹⁰ Ingvarson, L, Reid, K, Buckley, S, Kleinhenz, E, Masters, G & Rowley, G, Sept, 2014, Best Practice Teacher Education Programs and Australia's Own Programs, Department of Education, Canberra.

effective instructional practice. The syllabus requires teachers to know how to teach:

- sentence level grammar from simple to complex syntactic formulations
- the structures, grammatical and rhetorical features of the main kinds of texts used in schooling
- punctuation, spelling, handwriting and keyboard skills
- increasing agency and autonomy in student writing to suit differing purposes, creative intentions and audiences.

The syllabus rationale makes it clear that over the stages of learning school students will develop 'clear and precise skills in speaking, listening, reading, writing, viewing and representing, and knowledge and understanding of language forms and features and structures of texts.' In theory, beginning teachers need to have acquired knowledge and instructional skills for teaching each of these related domains.

The syllabus also anticipates that teachers and students will know relevant terminology related to grammar, text structures and other conventions of writing so that there can be a shared language for discussing writing development. For example, if a student does not have a correct tense sequence in a piece of writing the syllabus assumes that a teacher will be able to talk about it with the student on the basis of a shared knowledge and understanding of the conventions that apply.

The majority of syllabus content that focuses directly on writing is distributed across four content areas: Writing and Representing; Grammar, Punctuation and Vocabulary; Spelling; and Handwriting. These set out over approximately twenty pages of the syllabus the knowledge and skills that students are expected to acquire and build on from Early Stage 1 through to Stage 5. The syllabus also provides a range of support material including a seven-page Overview of Grammar and Punctuation Skills K–6 and an eighteen-page Glossary that includes all of the grammatical, text and related terminology used by the syllabus. Teachers can also purchase a support document – *Grammar, A Guide for Teachers K–6*.

How to include necessary writing content in programs as part of the broader content of the syllabus is a significant issue. This is particularly so when program time has to be allocated to a wide range of other content including the complex areas of learning about teaching reading and literary response. ITE programs face choices about what writing content it is essential to cover, at what depth, where to place the emphasis and how to structure writing into the broader program.

Theoretical perspectives and models for teaching English

The rationale for the NSW English K–10 syllabus includes the statement that

... the study of English in this syllabus is founded on the belief that language learning is recursive and develops through ever-widening contexts. Students learn English through explicit teaching of language and through their engagement with a diverse range of purposeful and increasingly demanding language experiences. The NSW English K–10 Syllabus enables teachers to draw on the methods of different theoretical perspectives and models for teaching English to assist their students to achieve the syllabus outcomes at the highest levels.

The openness of the syllabus to methods of different theoretical approaches and models would

appear to have the intention of accommodating, at least in part, differing views amongst the English teaching community about how language learning is best taught.

In respect to grammar and writing especially, syllabuses have taken a range of perspectives since the 1960s when traditional grammar and more direct writing instruction prevailed.¹²

The personal growth model of language learning became the mainstream approach during the 1970s and 1980s, remained influential well into the 1990s and beyond, and is still valued by many English teachers. It focuses on the way in which students use language to process experience and grow through English. It generally avoids systematic explicit instruction in grammar and structures of writing, favouring instead the concept of writing as a creative process with the teacher having an advisory or facilitation role in developing students' writing capability. It also places a significant emphasis on reading as a key driver of good writing.

Explicit models that highlight the genres and grammar of school writing began to gain traction amongst educators in the late 1980s/early 1990s. This included approaches drawing heavily on the concepts and terminology of Systemic Functional Linguistics, and other functional approaches that incorporated many elements of traditional grammar. Broadly speaking these models view writing as text production – a purposeful activity that takes account of and is shaped or influenced by different social, cultural and educational contexts – the specific language features of which should be taught explicitly.

Grammar in a systemic functional linguistic model is conceived of as a resource for making meaning in texts. It follows in this view that learning grammar needs to be contextually situated in the study of particular kinds of texts to be meaningful. Other approaches that are functionally oriented build up written texts from an understanding of sentence level grammar – parts of speech, sentence structure and correct syntax and treat them as features common to all texts or forms of writing.

The current Australian Curriculum: English and the recently revised NSW English K–10 syllabus are informed by a functional view of the way in which language works and within that model the use of traditional grammar in learning how to write is fully reinstated.

It is likely that amongst the English teaching community both primary and secondary, the various approaches that have prevailed over recent decades and up to the present have their advocates and detractors as well as many who take an eclectic approach. It appears from the available literature that systemic functional linguistic and genre-based models for teaching writing have considerable support in the teacher education academy and amongst many teachers.

Interestingly the question of what theoretical knowledge and related pedagogical practice may be most efficacious for teaching writing at the different stages of schooling is still open. Major studies both in Australia and internationally have identified that effective teaching involves monitoring and feedback, having strong subject knowledge, and use of explicit teaching techniques.¹³ However the review was not able to identify any large scale, independent investigation examining the nature and effectiveness of writing instruction in Australian classrooms. Malpique, Pino-Pasternak and Valcan note: 'There is a lack of empirical research

¹² For a more extensive and detailed account of the various permutations adopted in Australian English curricula with respect to teaching grammar and writing see: Bernard N 1999, *The Fall and Rise of Grammar in the Australian English Curriculum: Factors in a Continuum of Change*, La Trobe University.

¹³ *Great Teaching, Inspired Learning; What does the evidence tell us about effective teaching?* Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, 2013 pp 6–7.

examining writing instruction in Australian classrooms, with no systematic studies investigating the nature and frequency of teachers' writing instruction in primary and secondary schools.¹⁴

What remains most compelling is that over a period of six years of annual point in time NAPLAN assessment the writing performance of NSW school students overall has not improved. The review therefore has an interest in the way in which ITE programs direct students towards particular theoretical approaches and whether the pedagogical practices associated with them can be validated independently as effective teaching practice.

Assessment of writing

The Graduate Standards expect beginning teachers to demonstrate an understanding of assessment strategies, and the capacity to interpret student assessment data to evaluate student learning and modify teaching practice.

Learning how to assess writing development is a complex task that is integral to learning how to teach writing. Primary and Secondary English ITE programs should be expected to include a sufficient focus on assessing writing development and effectively using diagnostic data to drive targeted instruction in writing.

Research by Helen Timperley into the effect on student outcomes of teachers using high-quality assessment data found that student achievement gains accelerated at twice the expected rate, with greater gains for the lowest-performing students.¹⁵

However, evidence suggests that in general, initial teacher education across Australia has fallen short of providing graduate teachers with a sound knowledge of assessment practice. A 2015 Grattan Institute Report for example, cites a range of evidence indicating that:

- most initial teacher education courses generally do not do enough to train teachers in the theory or practice of collecting and interpreting robust evidence about learning
- new teachers tend to lack the practical understanding and experience needed to conduct assessment effectively
- new teachers are underprepared for interpreting assessment data and adapting their teaching in response to it – skills that are vital both to measuring progress and helping students to succeed.¹⁶

Furthermore, a recent Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation report highlights findings from a national survey on staff in Australian schools that: '... of the early-career primary teachers surveyed, only 27.2 per cent reported that their pre-service teacher education course was "helpful" or "very helpful" for interpreting national or state-wide assessment data, with 34.2 per cent stating that it was "not helpful".' It also notes though that: 'Views were more positive regarding preparation for making effective use of student assessment data, with 48.3 per cent finding it "helpful" or "very helpful"'.¹⁷ Results were similar for secondary teachers.

¹³ Malpique, A, Pino-Pasternak, D & Valcan, D June 2017, Handwriting, automaticity, and writing instruction in Australian kindergarten: an exploratory study, Springer.

¹⁵ Timperley, H 2009, 'Using assessment data for improving teaching practice', Paper presented at the Australian Council for Educational Research Conference, 16–18 August, cited in Great Teaching, Inspired Learning: What does the evidence tell us about effective teaching? Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation 2013.

¹⁶ Goss, P, Hunter, J, Romanes, D & Parsonage, H 2015, Targeted teaching: how better use of data can improve student learning, Grattan Institute.

¹⁷ P McKenzie et al, 2014, Staff in Australia's Schools (SiAS) 2013: Main Report on the Survey, Australian Council for Educational Research, commissioned by the Department of Education, Canberra, Table 6.4, p74 cited in What works best: Evidence-based practice to help improve NSW student performance Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation 2014. Goss et al (above at 12)

The key to effective assessment of progress in writing is a sound knowledge of what progression looks like in order to identify what students know and need to do next. The achievement bands for the NAPLAN writing and language conventions domains across Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 describe in detail, using the terminology of the syllabus, what students know and can do at each of those levels. Beginning teachers should understand how to make the best use of NAPLAN diagnostic reports on whole class and individual student responses to items. They should have the capacity to incorporate this information into their planning along with other assessment information to address particular student needs.

The draft national progressions trialled by jurisdictions in 2017 will provide an important additional resource once implemented fully with concerted professional learning support.¹⁸

The NAPLAN testing program assumes that teachers know about how to teach and develop knowledge of grammar, syntax, text conventions, punctuation and spelling. The national progressions also pre-suppose knowledge of how to teach the writing requirements set out at each stage of the syllabus.

As with learning other writing content, building a knowledge base in writing assessment is a significant issue for the design of Primary and Secondary English teacher education programs. Graduate teachers need to have sufficient depth of understanding and adequate practical strategies that they can apply from the start of their teaching with further structured development opportunities available to them through professional learning.

Teaching students with differing levels of ability in writing

Graduate Standard 1 – *Know students and how they learn* – requires that graduate teachers must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of strategies for differentiating teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities.

The spread of achievement in any given classroom is a significant issue in the context of considering how effectively teacher education students are prepared for teaching writing.

Goss and Hunter point out that achievement can be spread over five to six year levels in Australian classrooms.¹⁹ The Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation proposes that: 'One way to ensure all students achieve at their potential in literacy and numeracy is for schools to systematically implement targeted teaching. Targeted teaching refers to methods teachers use to lift the performance of students who are many years behind and also to challenge students who are already well ahead of year level expectations. Implemented school-wide, it is a means of not just delivering the year level curriculum, but extending the skills and knowledge of every student in every class regardless of their starting point.'²⁰

Beginning teachers entering an environment where writing ability varies markedly should be expected to have adequate knowledge of how to differentiate their teaching to support all students. This suggests that Primary ITE programs, as well as dealing with teaching the foundational elements of learning to write, should also ensure that beginning teachers have the

also drew on this survey in coming to their conclusion about the lack of adequate preparation in assessment practice.

¹⁸ ACARA, July 2017, National Literacy and Numeracy Learning Progressions Project Draft Version 1.1 National Literacy Learning Progression.

¹⁹ Masters, GN 2013c, Towards a growth mindset in assessment, ACER, accessed 21 July 2015, from <http://research.acer.edu.au> cited in Goss, P, Hunter, J, Romanes, D, Parsonage, H 2015, Targeted teaching: how better use of data can improve student learning, Grattan Institute.

²⁰ Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, 2016, How schools can improve literacy and numeracy performance and why it (still) matters.

knowledge and skills to extend writing ability, particularly as students with highly developed skills move into the later primary years.

It also suggests that Secondary English ITE programs should be covering the range of writing development described at each stage in the NSW English K–10 syllabus, including at the early stages, to ensure that beginning teachers can effectively teach students whose writing ability is below Stage 4 expectations. Similarly teacher education students in other learning areas need to understand how to develop writing particular to their KLA in circumstances where some students are likely to have only rudimentary skills.

Teaching writing across the secondary curriculum

The NSW curriculum expects that all teachers will address the literacy demands of their key learning areas (KLAs). The Graduate Standards and the NSW Elaborations in National Priority Areas further underline the expectation that literacy is the responsibility of all teachers.²¹

Literacy is defined specifically for each KLA in the list of cross curriculum general capabilities that teachers are expected to incorporate into their teaching programs. Writing is one of four domains that constitute the ‘literacy’ demands that are to be addressed, along with reading, speaking and listening.

In the case of English it is recognised that literacy is embedded throughout the NSW English K–10 Syllabus and relates to a high proportion of the content descriptions across K–10. It is acknowledged that ‘the English learning area has a particular role in developing literacy because of its inherent focus on language and meaning. However, all curriculum areas have a responsibility for the general literacy requirements of students as they construct meaning for themselves and others.’²²

The effective implementation of an across the curriculum approach to teaching the writing dimension of literacy is in practice dependent on significant input from teachers trained to teach the NSW English K–10 syllabus. Primary teachers teach writing in the context of all of the primary key learning areas as they develop students’ knowledge about writing in line with syllabus requirements. Secondary teachers in learning areas other than English build on this and work enabling students to apply and improve their writing skills in discipline specific contexts. At the same time their students continue also to develop their writing through the subject English.

The review has included a focus on the preparation of teachers to teach writing in secondary learning areas other than English, again from the perspective of how adequately writing is dealt with given the significant amount of discipline related content to be addressed.

There is a significant issue here for the effectiveness of a cross curriculum approach to teaching writing if English teachers and teachers of learning areas other than English are not adequately prepared to teach the mechanics and basic building blocks of effective writing. This issue is especially of interest to the review because of evidence cited earlier that writing performance declines noticeably between Years 7 and 9.

Professional experience placements

²¹ NSW Supplementary Documentation: Elaborations in Priority Areas, October 2014, New South Wales Education Standards Authority.

²² Cross-curriculum general capabilities, literacy statement English: Learning Across the Curriculum NSW syllabuses.

In the ITE programs under consideration in this report it is reasonable to expect that in the professional learning placements over the life of the program, the planned practice and learning outcomes developed by providers in collaboration with schools will include specific attention to teaching, assessing and targeting writing instruction.

This should occur in the context of what Darling-Hammond has identified as the key features that characterise professional experience in high quality teacher preparation programs.²³ She notes that they have in common:

- early and extensive professional experiences, with intensive supervision by experienced teachers
- close and genuine collaboration between universities and practising teachers in providing professional experiences
- carefully planned professional experiences that provide opportunities to connect coursework to practice.

The expectation that these characteristics should be evident in the professional experience aspect of ITE programs is made clear in the relevant Program Accreditation Standards.

For example Standard 5.1 requires that:

Formal partnerships, agreed in writing, are developed and used by providers and schools/sites/systems to facilitate the delivery of programs, particularly professional experience for pre-service teachers. Formal partnerships exist for every professional experience school/site and clearly specify components of placements and planned experiences, identified roles and responsibilities for both parties and responsible contacts for day-to-day administration of the arrangement.

And Program Standard 5.3 requires that:

For every professional experience placement, regardless of delivery mode, there are clear mechanisms to communicate between the initial teacher education provider and the school the knowledge, skills and experiences pre-service teachers have already developed in a program and the expected learning outcomes of that placement.

Accordingly the review has taken an interest in the extent to which professional experience placements are able to be linked back to specific course content and reflect careful planning in their preparation.

Other considerations

Connection to induction programs

As far as possible there should be continuity between graduate outcomes that provide sufficient knowledge and practical skills to make a confident start and subsequent support that beginning teachers receive in the initial phase of their teaching careers.

The way in which induction is conceptualised at both the national level and through GTIL lends itself very clearly to this kind of approach.

²³ Darling-Hammond, L 2006a, *Powerful teacher education: Lessons from exemplary programs*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

- The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership notes that: ‘The most effective teacher induction is extended (usually about two years), is embedded in daily practice, and emphasises skill development and inquiry into practice. Its focus is on maximising the teacher’s impact on learners, building on what pre-service teachers have learnt in initial teacher education programs. It addresses both the personal and professional demands of the role and involves a range of agencies and individuals in supporting the graduate. Induction is most effective when delivered in settings with a strong learning culture and strong professional relationships.’²⁴
- *Great Teaching, Inspired Learning* actions 6.1 and 6.2 commit to strengthened induction for all permanent and long term beginning teachers including structured induction programs that support teachers to develop skills and evidence of effective practice for accreditation as a Proficient Teacher. Similar support is envisaged for casual and short-term temporary teachers.
- Related actions 7.1 and 7.2 propose that the responsibilities or teaching loads for permanent, temporary and casual beginning teachers should be restructured so they can be supported by mentoring and collaborative practices.²⁵

Personal writing skills

A number of ITE programs have a personal literacy component incorporated into the program. Presumably at least in part this is a response to the requirement that teacher education students must meet a literacy and numeracy standard in order to graduate. Concerns about the academic capabilities of students coming into teacher education under highly variable entry standards have led to the implementation of a national literacy and numeracy test standard that ITE students must meet.

The review has an interest in the purposes that ITEs ascribe to these personal writing components and has sought to understand the role envisaged for them in also supporting the preparation to teach writing.

Unsurprisingly teacher literacy has been shown to correlate with student achievement – Hanushek for example found that highly literate teachers improved student achievement 0.2 to 0.4 grade levels more than teachers who were among the least literate.²⁶ A 2015 University of the Sunshine Coast study found that a program to improve the personal literacy of ITE students with a low ATAR, low socio-economic status profile from an Australian regional university, provided a successful example of how to increase the knowledge about language of marginalised groups of ITE students and ‘meet state and federal professional standards.’ It also found that ITE students’ measured improvement in the program ‘reliably predicted other academic competencies.’²⁷

However, it remains unclear as to what extent improvements derived from personal literacy programs of the kind described in the study translate to an enhanced capacity to teach writing (and other literacy domains). One question for the review has been to consider how a focus on personal literacy is seen to contribute to the preparation to teach writing. At the same time a

²⁴ Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership 2016. Graduate to Proficient: Australian guidelines for teacher induction into the profession.

²⁵ Great Teaching, Inspired Learning: A blueprint for action, 2013.

²⁶ Hanushek 1971 ‘Teacher characteristics and gains in student achievement: Estimation using micro-data’, *The American Economic Review* 61(2): cited in *Great Teaching, Inspired Learning: What does the evidence tell us about effective teaching?* Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, 2015.

²⁷ Carey M, Christie M & Grainger P October 2015, What Benefits can be Derived from Teaching Knowledge about Language to Preservice Teachers? *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*.

question arises as to whether there may be an impact on the program time available to directly prepare students to develop their skills in teaching writing.

NSW Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2017–2020

The review notes that the NSW Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2017–2020 aims to:

- ensure that graduating primary and secondary teachers are better prepared to teach literacy and numeracy by strengthening initial teacher education programs across NSW
- provide quality support materials and professional learning for teaching and assessing literacy and numeracy
- develop a framework for teaching and assessing writing in NSW from Kindergarten to Year 10 linked to the new literacy learning progression. The framework will be informed by a study and survey of NSW teachers' knowledge and understanding of writing, and how they teach and assess writing
- provide teachers with professional learning opportunities for teaching and assessing writing in secondary schools across key learning areas based on the new framework.

The framing of recommendations in this report has taken these aims into account.

Analysis of questionnaire responses

The following two sections provide detailed analysis of responses from institutions to the questionnaire at [Appendix 1](#).

The questionnaire sought information about the preparation of Primary Education and Secondary English initial teacher education students in the following components of writing instruction: theoretical and pedagogical knowledge and understandings; core curriculum content related to teaching grammar, punctuation, text forms and features, handwriting and spelling; assessment of writing development including use of diagnostic testing data; differentiation in instructional practice to cater for levels of writing achievement; and practice in teaching writing in professional experience placements. It also sought information about how institutions prepare ITE students to teach writing demands of key learning areas other than English.

Primary Education Undergraduate and Masters Program responses

The review examined responses to the questionnaire from eleven Primary undergraduate and two Primary Masters level Initial Teacher Education programs from thirteen NSW Higher Education providers.

Coherence and sequence of writing components

- Most programs cover all of the key components of learning to teach writing however there are significant differences across programs in the way in which they are organised and treated.
- Of the thirteen programs examined seven programs cover all of the components of learning to teach writing that are the focus of this review.
- Of the remaining six programs:
 - one does not cover NAPLAN
 - one does not cover handwriting
 - two do not cover the use of NAPLAN diagnostic information
 - one does not cover handwriting or require practice in teaching writing in the professional experience placement
 - one does not cover grammar and punctuation, assessment of writing or NAPLAN.
- The emphasis given to each of the areas of grammar, punctuation, forms and features of texts, handwriting, keyboard skills and spelling, varies within and across most programs. Similarly, writing assessment, use of data, and differentiating instruction in response to individual student abilities receive differing degrees of treatment.
- In some programs the preparation to teach writing is largely structured as part of an integrated approach that also involves learning to teach each of the other dimensions of literacy – reading, speaking and listening.
- Others that generally take some form of functional linguistic approach centre the

preparation to teach writing more directly on particular text forms and genres of school writing.

- In others ITE students learn to teach writing largely in the context of the broader study of language and literature.
- In one program a stand-alone unit separately deals with all of the components of teaching writing.
- Some programs take an eclectic approach mixing integrated learning with some stand-alone program units dealing with specific components.
- Most programs are oriented towards knowledge about writing (grammar, text structure, mechanics, assessment, differentiation of teaching) with less apparent emphasis given to explicit instructional practices in most components.
- Some programs explicitly separate the treatment of learning to teach writing (and literacy more broadly) into an early years focus and a later primary focus. In most other programs the focus appears to be on the broader scope of Early Stage 1 – Stage 3.
- In some cases where there is solely an integrated language and literacy approach it is difficult to discern the sequenced development through the program of knowledge and skills for teaching writing.
- Most programs reference the Australian curriculum: English and/or the NSW English K–10 syllabus and include the language, literature and literacy strands and the taxonomy of texts (informative, persuasive and imaginative) as organisers for the program content.
- Despite significant differences in the extent and depth of coverage of the key components of learning to teach writing most programs indicate an expectation that ITE graduates will be able to demonstrate capabilities in teaching writing that align with Graduate Standard 2 – *Know the Content and How to Teach It*.

Theoretical /pedagogical approaches

- Theoretical and pedagogical approaches drawing on established linguistic and literacy theory and practice inform the content and organisation of most programs.
- The majority include systemic functional linguistics based approaches either solely informing the treatment of writing or as part of a broader mix of theoretical perspectives utilised throughout the program.
- Functional linguistic based approaches are also prominent in the readings and texts used to inform students' knowledge and understanding of how language works and related pedagogical practice.
- Where programs are organised around a more unified theoretical and pedagogical approach there is generally greater apparent coherence in the structure and sequencing of content.
- Two programs claim not to be informed by any particular theoretical approach. One of these indicates that, 'the program is concerned with preparing students to implement the NSW curriculum and the English syllabus for the primary school. Students develop awareness of different approaches to writing such as the genre approach, personal growth and process writing.'
- Two other programs draw their approach directly from the 'models and theoretical underpinnings of the Australian curriculum: English and the NSW English K–10 syllabus.'

The following examples provide an indication of the range of approaches.

- 'The program uses: The NSW Quality Teaching Model to assist pre-service teachers in planning quality writing experiences; Cambourne's conditions for reading and writing for the teacher and the classroom; the Curriculum Cycle – (Derewianka, 2013; theories of literacy and teaching language and literacy (bottom-up theory – learning to teach phonics, decoding; top-down theory – to teach meaning and comprehension); the four-resource model devised by Luke and Freebody; the Halliday plus model (Egawa & Harste, 2001) including learning to use language to critique; and, seven steps to writing success (McVeity, 2015) providing building blocks as individual writing skills for students to complete writing tasks.'
- 'The evidence base is genre theory, socio-cultural theory, register theory (systemic functional linguistics) that underpin the Australian Curriculum and NSW Syllabus; relational approach to spelling.'
- 'The program uses an integrated approach that connects language to both reading and writing that is technical, conceptual and contextual. For example, Freebody and Luke's 4 plus 2 model to examine text as code maker, text analyst, text user and text participant plus interdisciplinary texts and transformational texts. Halliday's systemic functional grammar model is also taught in relation to types of texts for a social purpose. Developmental approaches to writing, drawing on the NSW Guidelines for Writing by Stages and in 2017 introduced students to the new layer of curriculum documentation, English Textual Concepts.'
- 'A balanced English pedagogy (including writing) and practice across the primary years of schooling – as identified in Seely Flint, A, Kitson, L, Lowe, K & Shaw, K (2014). Literacy in Australia: Pedagogies for engagement (1st ed). Milton, Qld, Australia.'
- 'The pedagogical approach is informed by a sociocultural model of learning (Vygotsky), and a functional theory of language (Halliday). This approach to the explicit teaching of writing is supported by research on what teachers need to know to teach writing and grammar effectively (eg Myhill et al); longitudinal studies of writing development across the school years (eg Christie & Derewianaka); a gradual release of responsibility model of teaching and learning (eg Pearson & Gallagher) and scaffolding principles applied to genre pedagogy (eg Derewianka & Jones, Martin & Rose).'
- 'The subjects are informed by a range of theoretical approaches as indicative of the complex and multidisciplinary nature of the language and literacy field. These approaches include socio-cultural approaches to literacy, educational linguistics, literary theory, multimodality and skills-based approaches. Coherence across these approaches in the subjects is achieved through adopting the three strands of the Australian Curriculum: English – language, literature and literacy. Our evidence base includes the meta-analysis informed Four Resources Model (Freebody and Luke 1990), Paris' theorising of constrained and unconstrained literacy skills (2005), Derewianka & Christie's mapping of writing development across the years of schooling (2008) and Hammond & Gibbon's scaffolding for EAL/D pedagogy (2005).'
- 'Systemic functional linguistics helps students understand how to use language meaningfully and appropriately to context. The genre-based pedagogy is a scaffolding literacy pedagogy which allows the explicit teaching of the writing expectation on students.'
- 'The unit adopts an approach that draws on Halliday's (1994) functional grammar to teach writing in context, focusing on the purpose, structural and language features of a wide range of texts. Drawing on research in linguistics and language education, it is widely acknowledged that the functional approach advocates the social view of language that underpins the NSW K–10 syllabus for the Australian Curriculum: English. In addition, it directs our ITE students' attention to focus on learning through language as well as

learning about language in their classroom practices. These focus areas address the key thrust of the Australian Curriculum: English on meaning making through language in the presence of other semiotic modes.

'The teaching and learning cycle (Zammit & Tan, 2016) is also introduced to ITE students as a pedagogical approach when they design a unit of work that develops primary school students' mastery of genre in a range of contexts, modes, media and critical understanding. The approach places a strong emphasis on guided instruction, drawing on Vygotsky's (1978) concept of zone of proximal development, Bruner's (1985) concept of scaffolding and Bernstein's (1986) concept of framing.'

- 'Four roles of the reader/writer, genre and text types and explicit teaching pedagogy with a link to range of theories for teaching English including behaviourist, sociocultural and nativist.'

Sentence level grammar and punctuation

- There is significant variation in the extent to which knowledge about sentence level grammar and punctuation and strategies for teaching these components are treated, in time allocated to them and in approaches to teaching about them in the program.
- In most programs the emphasis is on treating grammar and punctuation in the context of the study of the features of informative, persuasive and imaginative texts and/or in the broader context of the study of language, literature and literacy (reading, speaking and listening, the study of literary and other texts, and related theoretical and methodological approaches).
- There is a clear preference in most programs for contextualised treatment rather than, as one response put it, 'isolated mechanical knowledge for didactic teaching and learning treatment.'
- However in one program, grammar at the sentence level is dealt with in "weekly grammar activities" and in another, students engage in parsing and learn about direct instruction in teaching grammar and punctuation.
- In one other program grammar and punctuation are taught within a stand-alone unit dealing with writing.
- In some programs the personal literacy component of the program also has a function in ensuring that ITE students know about grammar and punctuation.
- Most programs do not appear to focus greatly on teaching the development of simple to complex grammar, punctuation and syntax. The focus appears to be mostly on the elementary structures and features of writing.
- In the majority of programs the focus appears to be more on *knowing about* grammar, punctuation and the grammatical features of texts rather than on learning *techniques for teaching* them.
- One program does not have a specific focus on sentence level grammar and punctuation. Another indicates that, 'knowledge about teaching grammar and punctuation is assumed except where remediation is necessary.'
- The allocation of time to grammar and punctuation varies significantly across programs (see below). Three programs were unable to specify the time allocated because of their integrated approach.

The following examples are indicative of the range of coverage and approaches.

- The program takes an explicit focus on systemic functional linguistic knowledge looks at sentence level grammar through metalinguistic terminology described as ‘Language for expressing ideas (participant, process and circumstance).’

In this particular program there is a significant focus on strategies for teaching – ITE students learn to ‘identify these (grammatical) elements in sentences in a text, discuss their functions and apply them in re-writing simplistic sentences to extend meanings of sentences, paragraph and whole text.’ The same strategies are applied for all the elements of sentence level grammar. Sentence level grammar and punctuation is **covered over one term in a linguistics unit and two weeks in an education unit.**

- The program covers the following areas over **approximately forty hours** of program time in the context of the study of texts and text analysis:
 - sentence/text grammar – text, clause/group and word level structures; nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, prepositions, conjunctions and their functions
 - expressing ideas in image and language – representing experience as processes, participants and circumstances; grammar and experiential meaning: noun groups, verb groups, adverbial groups and phrases
 - interacting with others through image and text: sentence functions – statement, question, offer, and command
 - exploring interaction in persuasive texts, narrative and response texts: creative and evaluative language
 - connecting ideas and creating cohesive and well-organised texts - simple, compound and complex sentences – combining clauses with conjunctions
 - quoting and reporting
 - structuring paragraphs with text connectives
 - text cohesion: word patterns and relations; image-language relations’

And ‘a range of strategies for classroom teaching of grammar in the context of written language use and syllabus expectations are (also) introduced’ **over twelve and a half hours.**

- Punctuation, sentence analysis and parts of speech, subject/verb agreement, pronouns, types of phrases, sentence structure, analysis and proofreading are covered over an allocation of **nineteen hours**. This also includes direct instruction, sentence parsing strategies and practice activities.
- A Writing Analysis Tool is used **over three weeks** of classes to analyse children’s writing in terms of text structure, sentence structure, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and handwriting. Students learn to identify the grammatical features associated with sentence structures through this process. **Another week** involves a practice exam where students collaboratively analyse children’s work samples and identify teaching priorities. There is an **additional five-week focus** on grammar and punctuation with an assessment item based upon grammar.
- ‘All grammar teaching is contextualised with authentic language use (written, spoken); draws strongly on everyday and literature texts and contexts. Grammar is considered as knowledge about language (KAL) rather than isolated mechanical knowledge for didactic teaching and learning treatment.’ Coverage in a grammar strand across three education units **equates to seven weeks.**

- **Over one semester** the program ‘revises the function of each part of speech, the elements of effective sentence structure, the linguistic elements most associated with different types of text. It also addresses the linguistic shifts between the spoken and written word.’
- Initially ITE students spend time examining their personal literacy competencies – includes understanding of the clause, its constituent elements and clause complexes, and punctuation. In their second year they revise the make-up of the clause through **a two-hour lecture, and a one-hour tutorial**. They also revise the structure of different sentence types, analyse children’s writing samples and look to the teaching implications of that analysis for future teaching. In their third year they design writing lessons **over eight hours of lectures and four hours of tutorials**. They also examine ‘the ways to teach about using different types of sentences to achieve different purposes across curriculum areas’ **over four hours of lectures and two hours of tutorials**.

In addition students learn about ‘nominal and verbal groups and adverbial phrases, different forms of clauses and the functions of embedded and interrupting clauses in terms of their contribution to meanings in a range of texts.’ As a writing task, they modify these existing texts to create a different relationship with the reader. This involves **a two-hour lecture and a one-hour tutorial**. An assessment task also focuses on these components.

- ‘Students participate in **weekly grammar activities** at sentence, clause, phrase/group levels, **for an hour** (out of a three hour tutorial) to ensure they understand, can recognise and teach explicit specific elements of sentence-level grammar. This continues for the semester.’
- Treatment over **a three-week period** is based on the English K–10 Glossary. It is ‘used within the content and across the unit to develop content knowledge and skills regarding grammar.’ The program also uses an English K–6 document – scope and sequence of Grammar and Punctuation and a Primary school focused grammar textbook.
- There is **one dedicated tutorial** on grammatical elements that make up a sentence. This focus is taught by deconstructing the language features of a book entitled ‘Fire’ written by Jackie French and Bruce Whatley. The intent is to teach grammar in context by focusing more on the functions than the forms. This tutorial is a continuation of the lecture on metalanguage for written texts. **Four and a half hours** in total is spent on sentence level grammar and punctuation (Masters).
- Grammar and punctuation is treated in a series of theoretical and methodology units over the course of a semester. A **time allocation could not be specified** due to the integrated nature of the approach.
- One program indicates that ‘knowledge about teaching grammar and punctuation is assumed except where remediation is necessary.’ One other does not cover sentence level grammar and punctuation.

Language forms and features of informative, persuasive and imaginative texts

- All programs cover the grammatical and structural features of informative, persuasive and imaginative texts consistent with the emphasis on these text forms in the English K–10 syllabus, and most teach strategies for teaching them.
- Approaches vary from integrated contextual coverage to explicit, distinct treatment. The emphasis ranges from extensive coverage and exposure to explicit models for teaching, to minimal coverage in a small number of cases.
- Most programs balance *knowledge about* the features of informative, persuasive and

imaginative texts and *techniques for teaching* them more so than they do in those units and components dealing with knowledge and strategies for teaching grammar and punctuation.

- Most programs teach students about various forms of pedagogic modeling, for example, demonstration techniques, modeling writing and joint construction strategies, to build students' capability to produce effective writing in the text categories identified.
- In most programs a focus on building increasing sophistication in writing these kinds of texts is not evident. With some exceptions the focus appears to be mostly on understanding and teaching elementary structures and features.
- There is a strong interest in most programs in ensuring that 'multimodal texts' are covered. It is noted that the NSW English K–10 syllabus encourages the development of multimodal texts from Early Stage 1.
- Time allocated in programs for this component varies considerably (see below).

The following examples are indicative of the range of coverage and approaches.

- ITE students examine the text, paragraph and sentence level structures, language features and punctuation across texts written to inform (information reports, procedures and protocols, explanations), persuade (arguments and responses), and to entertain (story genres, anecdotes and literary recounts). A major proportion of the subject time is allocated to this work (**sixteen hours of lectures and eight hours of tutorials plus self-study**). 'Macro genres or mixed texts commonly found in the upper primary and lower secondary curriculum', are also considered.
- They also study the text and sentence level structures, language features and punctuation usage by children in Early Stage 1, Stage 1 and 2 to inform future teaching **over six hours of lectures and three hours of tutorials**. And they examine the structures and language features of informative, persuasive, and imaginative texts in connection with the creation of resources to support student writing in Stage 2 and 3 over **two hour lectures for each text and two hours of tutorials**.
- An explicit focus on systemic functional linguistic knowledge allocates **two weeks to each** of the following:
 - 'information report (classificational and compositional), Explanation (sequential, factorial), Procedure and Procedural recount (Fair test)'
 - 'exposition (hortatory, analytical), Discussion, Text response (Personal response and Book/Film review)', and
 - 'recount (factual/personal/historical), Literary recount, Narrative, Exemplum, Anecdote.'
- An initial unit introduces students to 'the range of text genres used in primary schools (single purpose texts) and linked to reading in purposeful ways (how to read a genre, how to write a genre).' **In a follow-up unit**, 'students develop this further by looking explicitly at texts week by week (**a genre per week**). In each case, they look at text-based and organisational features (discourse level) as well as sentence-based language choices (grammar level). This is undertaken with imaginative, analytical and interpretative texts.' It was **not possible to specify time allocated over two integrated units**.
- Types of informative, persuasive and imaginative texts in primary curricula and their grammatical and multimodal features including strategies for teaching about their specific features are covered. Students are also introduced to a pedagogical model based on gradual transfer of responsibility from expert to novice focusing initially on explicit teaching,

demonstration and modelling, then scaffolded joint construction and guided activities, then supported independent individual and group activities across writing/composing/publishing processes. This involves **two hours of lectures, four hours of workshops**, with associated readings and activities, and related assignment preparation.

- The structure and features of these texts 'grammatical, syntactic, tense, voice, modality etc' are examined and students engage with teaching strategies that include 'deconstruction of texts, lesson planning for teaching texts, rubric co-construction, grading of texts, and moderation of texts using co-constructed rubrics.'
- Students are introduced to examples of text types that constitute these kinds of texts and tutorial activities are structured to: (1) deconstruct the structural features and language features; (2) deconstruct the multimodal meanings and (3) evaluate strategies to teach writing them. **Nine hours is allocated.**
- Knowledge about these kinds of texts is **acquired contextually** as part of the wider study of language and literature while 'the pedagogy of the teaching and learning cycle is taught – students engage actively in building the field, deconstructing and joint constructing phases.' **One third of one unit and part of another** covers this.
- 'All forms of types of text are covered through the Luke and Freebody model. The text *Language, Literacy and Literature* has chapters devoted to text types and also how they might operate in combination. The text forms the basis for technical and conceptual information. There is an assignment devoted to assessing narrative/persuasive text specifically.' **No time allocation specified.**
- Deals with these text categories 'in the context of teaching English as a discipline (this includes the theory and practice related to acquisition of reading, writing, speaking, listening and visual literacy).' They are also dealt with 'in the context of considering models of pedagogy for early language and literacy development eg literature-based, whole language, systemic and functional linguistics, genre-based, thematic, integration across the curriculum; visual language; vocabulary; alphabetic knowledge; responding to literature; figurative language eg poetry; listening and speaking interactions; oral presentations; reading processes; comprehension strategies.' **No time allocation was provided.**
- 'Audience, social purpose, text-type, text structure, language features' for each of these kinds of texts are dealt with over **four weeks** with an introductory unit dealing with introducing the text type concept.
- Learning about these texts is integrated in theoretical and methodology units dealing with literacy and a unit that 'encompasses the key skills of reading, writing, viewing, representing, speaking and listening framed by a multimodal perspective of language'.
- 'Text features and types' for each text category are covered with **two weeks allocated for each category.**
- Informative, persuasive and imaginative texts are covered 'in a general sense' within two subjects.

Handwriting and Spelling

- Handwriting and spelling are covered in most programs but with variation from adequate to (mostly) minimal treatment. Handwriting is not treated in two programs.

The following examples are indicative of the range of coverage and approaches.

- Letter formation, handwriting, pencil grip and body posture, and NSW Foundation Style are

addressed as part of a **two-hour lecture** focused on fluency in reading, writing and talking. ITE students also spend a one-hour tutorial designing writing lessons that include the teaching of handwriting for formation and fluency. Students also research and understand the range of spelling strategies in their first year and in Year 2 of the program they develop an understanding of different strategies for teaching spelling in lectures (**eight hours**) and tutorials (**three hours**). In the third year teaching about spelling looks to move students beyond a phonics approach to spelling and to focus on morphological, etymological and visual approaches in lectures (**six hours**), tutorials (**three hours**).

- Handwriting and spelling skills are covered **over three contact hours** plus nine and a half hours of personal study – readings, online activities, and related assignment preparation. This includes learning about phonological and graphological processing skills and expanding knowledge and vocabulary.
- **One week** is allocated to handwriting and keyboarding and **two weeks** to spelling including word knowledge (morphology), word origin, phonics and spelling teaching strategies.
- Hand writing and keyboarding are covered **over two weeks** and word knowledge (morphology), word origin, phonics, spelling teaching strategies are addressed **during a two-week period**.
- Handwriting is treated in a one and a half hour tutorial and related assignment and again in **a further one and a half tutorial** and spelling is addressed in **a one-hour lecture and a one and a half hour tutorial**.
- In other cases:
 - These skills are addressed through an online self-study unit.
 - These skills are covered within a 'session' entitled 'Writing and representing: handwriting, digital technology and writing and composing.'
 - 'The institution does not advocate teachers removing these technical aspects of writing from the larger task of composing, so handwriting and spelling skills are embedded in the larger context of learning about teaching writing.'
 - Handwriting and spelling are 'expected to be demonstrated and modelled through professional practice placements.'
 - These skills are specifically considered 'in one tutorial and then within the writing analysis processes across four weeks.'
 - Handwriting is treated 'with phonics, and spelling strategies and homophones are treated together.'
 - They are integrated in theoretical and methodology units and treated in a unit that 'encompasses the key skills of reading, writing, viewing, representing, speaking and listening framed by a multimodal perspective of language.'
 - Spelling is integrated into three units including one where 'personal spelling items are addressed as a topic by the principles used in teaching.'
- In two programs handwriting is not treated while spelling is addressed in one of them through an 'emphasis on relational work (morphology/etymology/inflectional etc) drawing from, *'Linguistically informed teaching of spelling'*, Herrington & Macken-Horarik 2015.'

Assessment of writing

- Most programs devote time to knowledge about and strategies for assessing writing. However treatment of writing assessment – formative assessment, summative assessment, developing writing assessment tasks and assessment rubrics, and using diagnostic data – again varies across programs in both content coverage and depth of treatment.
- In many programs learning about writing assessment is integrated with the treatment of other components of learning to teach writing and overall, learning about writing assessment does not appear to receive sufficient explicit treatment.
- While most programs introduce ITE students to the NAPLAN testing program, there does not appear to be a strong emphasis on teaching students to use diagnostic information on student and school performance.
- In three programs there is no treatment of NAPLAN and in two others the use of NAPLAN diagnostic information is not covered.

The following examples are indicative of the range of coverage and approaches.

- As part of a structured development approach to learning about teaching writing, ITE students, in their second year spend extended time analysing children's writing through a series of lenses related to the creation of text. For example, they will analyse a child's writing to assess their use of phonemic and phonological knowledge in order to identify future teaching implications; they will examine the grammatical structures evident in a student's writing and identify strengths and limitation in their knowledge. These types of tasks are applied to children's writing for different purposes across different age groups. All assessments are related to understanding a child's strengths and the next place to take them in their learning (**13 face to face hours** plus personal study time).
- Assessment of writing is a component within a unit that devotes **approximately three weeks** to writing focusing on the importance of pre-writing and early writing skills and **approximately six weeks** to teaching writing, discussing types of text and the various features, interdisciplinary types of text and assessment of writing.
- ITE Students examine the grammatical features evident in a student's writing for different purposes and age groups and identifying strengths and limitations with a focus on understanding a child's strengths and the next place to take them in their learning. They assess samples of student writing and recommending teaching strategies to further develop writing skills as part of as focus on planning and programming for explicit literacy teaching with children in the later grades of school.
- Covers co-construction of rubrics for the three writing types, and analysis of assessment tools used for writing. Students also investigate and analyse writing and how to assist the writer in improving their skills **over six classes**.
- Uses 'a writing analysis tool' to analyse children's writing in terms of text structure, sentence structure, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and handwriting and also focuses on understanding characteristics of literacy learning for students 3-6 using Australian Curriculum Level Statements and NSW Syllabus stage statements. Covered **within two program units**.
- Introduces students to strategies for teaching and assessing writing, spelling and graphological processing skills, embedded in a unit **over six hours**. Covers assessing samples of student writing from ACARA/NESA student portfolios according to curriculum achievement standards/syllabus outcomes and recommending teaching strategies to further develop students' writing skills over **twenty-five hours**.

- Allocates **two weeks** to assessing writing as a genre, at whole text, paragraph, sentence and word levels.
- Students **prepare an assessment task** for writing for a year level/stage linked to a teaching activity. They review assessments and samples for writing K–6 in tutorials, and examples are provided online to indicate outcomes and stages of writing. They also spend **one week** on assessing and keeping records.
- ‘Avoids redundant “gut instinct”, marks out of ten, letter grade approaches’ and favours ‘informal criterion approach and engagement with the writer’ and ‘students also work with formal criterion-reference schemes.’
- In other cases:
 - Writing assessment is integrated within all areas using assess-teach-assess pattern. There is an assessment lecture and tutorial totalling three hours.
 - Assessment of writing is addressed in Professional Experience placements where ITE students are expected to examine example of students’ work, and work alongside students over a period of ‘several’ weeks.
 - Writing assessment ‘is expected to be demonstrated and modeled through clinical and professional practice placement.’
 - Assessment focuses exclusively on NAPLAN testing where students are taught to interpret the assessment data from a sample NAPLAN Student Report and discuss intervention strategies to improve the student’s writing skills.
 - Assessment is integrated within three theoretical and methodology units.

Treatment of NAPLAN also varies as the following summary examples indicate.

- Students are taught to interpret the assessment data from a sample NAPLAN Student Report and discuss intervention strategies to improve the student’s writing skills.
- Students engage in assessing samples of NAPLAN writing and using the NAPLAN marking guide and criteria and planning assessment activities.
- Uses sample texts provided on the NAPLAN website to demonstrate different text types and different writing achievement levels. Dealt with **over two weeks**.
- In **one class, as part of one unit**, students look at the NAPLAN test and the various sections and explore expected standards for the domain of writing as part of co-constructing their rubrics for an assessment task.
- ITE students critically analyse the debates and issues around NAPLAN testing and grading systems commonly used in primary school settings in Australia. Students develop ‘a critical awareness of the usefulness of different approaches, the ethical implications of these approaches, and how they impact on various stakeholders.’ In this program students do not engage with the use of NAPLAN diagnostic information.
- Uses NAPLAN writing scales and rubrics ‘as a springboard into bringing larger ideas about assessment into dialogue with the teaching of writing in the primary school’. It also interrogates MySchool website ‘to look at results across the literacy area and consider writing as a literacy skill.’
- NAPLAN is integrated in theoretical and methodology units. This includes students providing a diagnostic analysis of a chosen school based on NAPLAN performances and school-based literacy development strategies and building a literacy profile of the school.

- There is **one assignment** where students examine two examples of student writing and report against NSW K–6 English Syllabus and NAPLAN criteria for Narrative/ Persuasive texts and students are graded against their ability to mark students' written work against the NAPLAN criteria.
- In other cases:
 - NAPLAN is treated in a **one and a half hour lecture** and a **one and a half hour tutorial** focusing on analysing an individual student's results. Critiques of the use of standardised tests and comparisons between formative and summative assessments of writing are also included in the lecture and tutorial.
 - The focus is on understanding the demands of the questions and the skills students need to know in **two lectures** and a **one-hour tutorial**.
 - NAPLAN is addressed in **one week** of an assessment information and communications unit and in **one week** of an English Education Issues unit.
- Three programs do not cover NAPLAN testing and in two other programs where NAPLAN testing is covered there is no treatment of the use of diagnostic information.

Strategies to cater for differentiation in writing ability

This component of preparation to teach writing is dealt with in most programs in an integrated way linked to aspects of writing assessment, lesson planning or as part of units dealing with teaching EALD students and culturally inclusive teaching.

The following examples are indicative of the range of coverage and approach.

- The program covers literacy for diverse learners (**one week**), literacy and culturally appropriate practices (**one week**), using a Writing Analysis Tool to analyse a variety of samples across a range of development from very early writing to accomplished writing at a Year 2 level (**three weeks**). An open book exam 'uses work samples of writing, spelling etc from two Year 1 children who are at very different stages of development. Data is analysed and teaching priorities identified.'
- The program looks at 'K–6 different stages, so that teachers can choose the stage that best suits the students/individuals in the class.' Catering for various needs in the classroom is dealt with specifically in a lecture/tutorial topic **over three hours** and within the topic of assessment as a fundamental principle. Students also undertake a semester unit, *Special Education: Inclusion*, that covers all aspects of catering for different needs of students, including literacy/writing and assessment.
- Students plan scaffolded writing activities for Years Foundation to six including how to scaffold writers for working above expected level, working at expected level, working below expected level. This occurs **over eight classes**.
- Students are introduced to strategies for teaching writing to diverse learners, focusing on EAL/D and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners such as using 'the mode continuum and teaching and learning cycle.'
- Students engage in planning for writing instruction through evaluating and selecting stage appropriate resources and strategies, writing lesson plans, designing sequences of teaching and learning.
- Students engage in understanding children's writing development and differentiating writing instruction **over four weeks** in the program.
- **Within each of five units** in the program students plan for writing instruction through

evaluating and selecting stage appropriate resources and strategies, writing lesson plans, designing sequences of teaching and learning or units/mini-programs.

- Learning about this aspect of teaching writing occurs **during Professional Experience**, and there are two assessment tasks that require students to program a unit of work, and to plan clearly differentiated learning experiences for various ability levels.
- As part of a structured development approach to learning about teaching writing **throughout the program**, ITE student focuses on differentiation in response to children's needs, abilities, interests and areas for strengthening their writing.
- In other cases:
 - Opportunities are provided to plan units and lesson sequences that require differentiation to be demonstrated in learning about planning lessons.
 - Differentiation is integrated with learning about assessment.
 - Differentiation is integrated in theoretical and methodology units.
 - Students are required to discuss a range of activities in an assessment task where they examine writing of different age groups and plan for specific needs.
 - **A section of one unit** deals with 'struggling writers' in terms of cognitive processing difficulties; motivation and engagement.
 - Students are required to discuss a range of activities in one assessment task which examines student writing of different ages and plan for specific needs
 - Students are given opportunities to plan units and lesson sequences that require this differentiation to be demonstrated.

Emphasis on writing across the primary key learning areas

- This component of preparation to teach writing in primary school appears to be treated in a consistent manner across most programs but with some variation in the extent of treatment.
- One program does not cover this component.

The following examples are indicative of the range of coverage and approaches.

- In all curriculum studies units students look at the specific writing demands needed for the KLA in the context of literacy general capability.
- Each KLA has one complete course/unit devoted to content and technical text types for that key learning area for example Science (Informative) and History (Historical recount).
- Students use the ACARA and NSW syllabus documents to identify the specific writing demands in curriculum learning areas. They learn about the different types of texts and their grammatical (and multimodal) features typical of writing in different curriculum learning areas. Teaching the specific writing demands is approached through the key genres of learning areas. Attention is given to accessing language resources for making meaning in subject-specific ways using a functional model of language.
- In the third year of their program, students investigate discipline specific literacies, drawing on contemporary curriculum materials such as the General Capabilities: Literacy and the NSW Literacy Continuum.
- Texts throughout the units draw on topics/subjects from across the curriculum. Text types

are looked at in a variety of disciplines. Discipline areas also deal with specific writing demands of their area, and students are able to apply what they have learnt about reading and writing to these contexts.

- Taught in the context of teaching the structural features and language features of the three types of text. In a final assignment, ITE students are required to plan lesson sequences that focus on teaching primary school students how to deconstruct and construct a multimodal text in the context of integrating one KLA with English.
- In other cases:
 - students take a literacy module over four weeks in common with Secondary ITE students and that addresses all KLAs primary and Secondary
 - occurs in planning an integrated unit for four or more key learning areas
 - ‘**Several sessions** put a strong emphasis on writing across curriculum areas.’
 - the unit outline is divided into modules according to writing demands in the English subject (Imaginative, Persuasive & Text Response), Science (Informative) and History (Historical recount)
 - ‘In all curriculum studies units students look at the specific writing demands needed for the KLA. One of the Australian Curriculum general capabilities is literacy and this is covered thoroughly in these units.’
- One program does not treat the writing demands of key learning areas.

Professional experience

- There appear to be varying degrees of collaboration between providers and schools to plan opportunities to practice aspects of teaching writing that have been learned in the program.
- However partnerships with schools to facilitate an effective professional placement experience do not appear to have been established to the level of expectation described in the program accreditation standards.

The following examples are indicative of the range of approaches.

- ‘Pre-service teachers in all four of their Professional Experiences are expected to participate in “the literacy session”, which includes daily writing. The requirement for taking on the teaching of writing increases over time, beginning with small group instruction in the first year, prescribed and supervised blocks of time in the second and third placements, and teaching an entire literacy session during the Internship.’
- ‘Students are provided with the skills and knowledge to implement literacy and English discipline content into the practicum, but in giving mentor teachers the responsibility for co-designing teaching experiences with the student-teachers, the university is not able to mandate the amount of support that is provided specifically in the teaching of writing. As writing is a mandated part of the curriculum, it is expected that mentor teachers would be providing opportunities for student-teacher development in teaching writing.’
- ‘As part of professional experience component in Primary Professional Practice 1 and Primary Professional Practice, ITE students are provided with opportunities from mentor teachers to learn about and practice aspects of teaching writing related to their placement class. Professional experience provides opportunities for ITE students to differentiate their teaching of writing to meet the specific needs of students with whom they are working.’

- ‘The opportunities afforded for practice would depend on the supervising teacher. By the final practicum or internship, it would be expected that students teach writing in all areas of the curriculum.’
- ‘Teaching writing is definitely incorporated into all professional experience settings, the emphasis, however, being somewhat dependent on the particular setting and the direction of the Supervising Teacher at the time. Certainly, with the implementation of our new Teaching Performance Assessment from 2018 onwards, there will be an emphasis on our ITE students setting writing tasks for small groups of students and then marking them.’
- There is considerable time and opportunity for engagement in teaching writing – hence the English units have a professional experience preparation role that is ‘full’ and ‘comprehensive’.
- One program advises that all students report they have had the opportunity to observe the teaching of writing, and to teach writing as per the individual unit sequence of the school at which they are teaching.
- ‘Students are expected to practice teaching in tutorials throughout the course. They prepare mini-lessons and role-play the teaching of writing to their peers.’
- Across the five-school placement opportunities students are encouraged to actively teach writing. Students negotiate to teach an extended sequence of English writing lessons in the mid-year placement of their third year. As this is not always possible, Mathematics is provided as an alternative.
- There are no mandated components that ITE students do to learn about and practice aspects of teaching writing. Mentor teachers are encouraged to let ITE students develop a full range of teaching skills.
- One program indicates that it does not provide opportunities for practising to teach writing in the professional experience placement.

Personal literacy component in the course

- Each of the primary undergraduate and Masters courses includes a subject, unit, component or focus that addresses the writing capabilities of ITE students. Undergraduate programs generally have a more structured approach.
- Programs typically deal with the forms and grammatical features of academic kinds of writing and involve feedback on the quality of written assessment tasks and grammar.
- In two programs ITE students are tested to determine areas for remediation and improvement.
- There is clear overlap in the writing content that ITE students are learning about to improve their own writing and the knowledge and understanding needed to teach grammar, syntax and text features relevant to the kinds of writing required by the school curriculum.

Secondary English Undergraduate and Masters Program Responses

The review examined responses from three Secondary English undergraduate and eleven Secondary English Masters Initial Teacher Education programs from fourteen NSW Higher Education providers based on the questionnaire at [Appendix 1](#).

In examining responses the review has taken account of the fact that Secondary English

programs have their main focus on Stage 4 and 5 requirements of the syllabus that assume a reasonable level of writing capability, and also deal with separate and complex requirements of Stage 6 English.

Coherence and sequence of writing elements

- All programs incorporate the preparation to teach writing as part of secondary teacher preparation, however in most programs coverage of each of the aspects of teaching writing is not consistently evident.
- Of the fourteen programs examined six cover all of the components of learning to teach writing that are the focus of this review.
- Of the remaining eight programs:
 - two do not cover keyboard and word processing skills
 - three do not cover NAPLAN and keyboard and word processing skills
 - one does not cover informative, persuasive and imaginative texts and NAPLAN
 - one does not cover keyboard and word processing skills and writing assessment
 - one does not cover sentence level grammar, informative, persuasive and imaginative texts, keyboard and word processing skills, writing assessment or NAPLAN.
- Where they are covered the emphasis given to each of the areas of grammar, punctuation, forms and features of texts, handwriting, keyboard skills and spelling varies across most programs. Similarly, writing assessment, use of data, and differentiating instruction in response to individual student abilities receive differing degrees of treatment.
- The treatment of writing in most programs occurs as part of an integrated approach that also includes each of the other dimensions of literacy – reading, speaking and listening.
- Some programs also incorporate writing within the broader scope of the study of language, literacy and literature ('embedded in the holistic teaching of English' is how one program describes the approach).
- Four programs identify components within units where aspects of teaching writing are dealt with specifically.
- In one case preparation to teach writing in Secondary English is part of a separate literacy course that is taken by all secondary method ITE students.
- In all but two programs there is little if any coverage of the basics of writing at the earlier stages of the syllabus (Early Stage 1 to Stage 3). One of these programs program has a focus on writing on the basis of the Years 7–10 requirements of the English syllabus but also delivers a unit that focuses on students with low-level literacy and strategies to support them. The other covers Years K–12 and therefore deals with the full spectrum of syllabus writing requirements.
- In one program twelve three-hour workshops provide an in-depth enquiry into pedagogy and content knowledge for teaching literacy in the context of the English classroom. In this program most of the components of writing identified above receive detailed attention, including in terms of instructional practice.
- In one other program 'English discipline specific writing focused on Stages 4, 5 and 6 is directly delivered in weekly topics on teaching strategies, assessment moderation, communication, literacy and numeracy, differentiation and embedded in lesson and unit

planning and most other topics in the unit covering teaching.’ The response notes that, ‘the subject is still somewhat reliant on this knowledge having already been attained in the undergraduate English units.’

- In another program ‘writing is addressed (mostly indirectly) through a range of units looking at: models for teaching English; English syllabuses; student diversity; literacy and the vexed question of grammar; and multiliteracies and multimodal texts.’
- One K–12 program addresses English content knowledge (including writing) in nine core subjects and includes ‘some focus on teaching writing’ in a parallel set of curriculum and pedagogy subjects.
- Despite significant differences in breadth and depth of writing coverage most programs indicate an expectation that ITE graduates will be able to demonstrate capabilities in teaching writing that align with the Graduate standards.

Theoretical/pedagogical approaches

The range of theoretical and pedagogical approaches that inform the content and organisation of programs draws on well-established English teaching traditions with more recent linguistic-based approaches also evident.

The following examples provide an indication of the range of approaches:

- Writing and reading are conceived of (in this program) as ‘intertwined and dialogic practices. Writers “rewrite the world” (including other people’s words) every time they set pen to paper or fingers to keyboard and readers re-write in their own minds what they read every time they set eyes to page or screen.’
- Two programs draw on ‘the models and theoretical underpinnings of the Australian Curriculum: English and the NSW K–10 English Syllabus which are understood to include: a range of models of English (Growth Model, Cultural Heritage, Cultural Analysis, Skills Approach); Systemic Functional Grammar (with terminology as adapted by the NSW K–10 Syllabus at clause, sentence, etc. level; socio-linguistic/cultural genre-based model of literacy: whole text conventions; text type/types of texts; a process writing model; Britton’s expressive/transaction/poetic continuum; Moffet’s Ladder of Abstraction; and Atwell’s writing workshop approach, mini-lessons and interventions.’
- ‘A constructivist paradigm underpins the program. However, students are exposed to a range of language learning theories so that they understand all aspects of language as a vehicle for communication. This includes theories on language acquisition, sociolinguistics, language proficiency, discourse analysis, and psycholinguistics. In regards to teaching EAL/D students, a communicative language teaching approach is advocated’.
- The program draws on ‘over a generation of work in English for Specific Purposes, enhanced by more recent work on Literacy and Multi-literacies’.
- Genre approach to writing is used in combination with a process writing approach, including context and purpose; social and linguistic conventions of texts combined with writing as a process covering the typical process steps of prewriting, drafting, editing, publication.
- The subjects are informed by ‘a range of theoretical approaches as indicative of the complex and multidisciplinary nature of the language and literacy field. These approaches include socio-cultural approaches to literacy, educational linguistics, literary theory, multimodality and skills-based approaches. Coherence across these approaches in program subjects is achieved through adopting the three strands of the Australian Curriculum: English – language, literature and literacy.’

- The approach is ‘to teach writing across a full range of writing contexts that would apply in a secondary English context. Literature is used as exemplar text(s) and students learn to teach a diverse repertoire of skills for English that focus on “shaping” and “effect” and that address the central concern of an English teacher, viz NOT “how to teach a (insert text type)” but rather how to produce a BETTER text and be a BETTER, more skilled, more versatile writer’.
- All courses teach and model a genre-based approach with the grammatical structures and features, including cohesive devices, aligned to the text’s purpose and audience.

Need: Teachers need explicit instruction in order to explain to students how to improve writing and correct errors. Research evidence: Harper and Rennie 2009, “I had to go out and get myself a book on Grammar” in *AJLL*, 32:1, pp 22–37. Also Jones and Chen 2012, ‘Teachers’ knowledge and language: Issues of pedagogy and expertise’ in *AJLL*, 35:1, pp147–172 and Macken-Horarick, Love and Unsworth, 2011, ‘A grammatics “good enough” for school English in the 21st century: Four challenges in realising potential’ in *AJLL*, 34:1 pp 9–23.

Approaches: Descriptive and productive, rather than prescriptive. Focus on using appropriate metalanguage and resources for writing as well as appropriate teacher-guided talk for modelling and analysis. Research evidence: Christie and Unsworth 2005, ‘Developing dimensions in an educational linguistics’ in Hasan, Matthiessen and Webster eds, *continuing Discourse on Language*, pp 217–230, Equinox, Sheffield.

- The program advocates a number of theoretical and pedagogical approaches to teaching writing. The scaffolding method advocated by Bruner (1976), is drawn upon, with progressively more complex models drawn from literature as a basis for imaginative recreation and analysis of writing. Another theoretical model explored is genre- based writing, where ITE students develop their ability to teach form, purpose and audience. ITE students also learn to develop students’ writing skills using the pedagogical approach of process writing (Graves, 1983).
- Two responses indicted that their programs are not informed by any particular theoretical view or pedagogical approach.

Sentence level grammar and punctuation

- With a small number of exceptions preparation to teach grammar and punctuation and related instructional practice in secondary English programs is contextualised within the broader study of literacy, language and literature. This mirrors the way in which secondary English is generally taught.
- Aspects of the earlier stages of writing development (Early Stage 1 to Stage 3) that would provide secondary English teachers with a knowledge and practice base for dealing with underperforming students entering secondary school are largely not dealt with.

The following examples are indicative of the range of coverage and approach.

- ITE students identify, employ and evaluate the impact of ‘nouns, verb types, thematic choice, tense ... types of clauses and sentences: simple, compound, complex noun groups, verbal groups; simple, compound and complex sentences.’ They do this through ‘contextualised activities using literature and other texts with grammatical concepts/knowledge mapped into workshop activities at relevant points.’ It was **not possible to specify a time allocation**.
- Two programs take very similar approaches in treating sentence level grammar through contextualised activities using literature and other texts with grammatical concepts/knowledge mapped into workshop activities at relevant points. **Neither was able**

to specify a time allocation due to the integrated nature of the programs. One noted that it ‘does not teach in atomised “bits and pieces”.’

- A full range of grammar knowledge is *potentially* covered in the program however the extent, areas of focus and depth of coverage depends on ‘the needs of the student cohort’. There does not appear to be any treatment of instructional strategies for teaching grammar and punctuation.
- **Thirty minutes** is devoted to the grammatical elements of a sentence; **thirty minutes** to phrases/groups and clauses; and, **one hour** to sentence structure. In each of these there is ‘discussion of how the mechanics of writing are best taught in the context of students’ own compositions, rather than in separate exercises and drills.’
- Students become familiar with the outcomes and content of the NSW syllabus and the HSC units of study. In doing this, they are taught the grammatical components necessary to teach in the classroom integrated with the focus areas on reading and writing. It was **not possible to indicate the time allocated** due to the integrated nature of the approach. In addition a literacy and numeracy across the curriculum unit provides a lecture and tutorial (totalling three hours) looking at sentence level grammar ‘when considering the movement from spoken to written language’.
- Coverage includes the earlier stages (up to stage 3) of learning grammar and punctuation including: the subject verb object structure of sentences; within-sentence level grammar; noun and verb groups plus adverbials; main versus dependent clauses; sentence structure analysis at clause level; types of sentences, including use of conjunctions and subordinating conjunctions; placing dependent clauses at the beginning of the sentence; identifying the nucleus of complex sentences and expanding noun and verb groups; main versus dependent clauses when focusing on coherence and cohesion.

Strategies for classifying, combining and improving clauses and sentences to suit meaning and genre and for providing explicit feedback to correct incorrect grammar are also included. The program also provides analysis of worked examples across the curriculum provide opportunities for grammatical analysis. **Approximately 10 hours is allocated.**

- Students learn to correct and improve sentences through: the review of the grammatical elements that make up a sentence; the use of adjectival and adverbial clauses; and through improving sentence variation in the writing of sentences and variations in syntax to improve sentences.
- Students are required to write and evaluate their own texts, then evaluate the standards in the Assessment Resource Centre website. They develop strategies to support the development of their students’ writing and teaching strategies that can be used in the secondary English classroom are modelled in tutorials. **Covered over a three-week period.**
- In a K–12 program a writing analysis tool is used **over three weeks of classes** to analyse children’s writing in terms of text structure, sentence structure, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and handwriting. Students learn to identify the grammatical features associated with sentence structures through this process. Another week involves a practice exam where students collaboratively analyse children’s work samples and identify teaching priorities. There is **an additional five-week focus** on grammar and punctuation with an assessment item based upon grammar.
- In other cases:
 - The program engages students with the English K–10 syllabus glossary where grammar terms have been annotated by an English Head Teacher to identify ‘those terms which a mid-range Standard English student should have already mastered.’

The program follows up on personal literacy gaps of ITE students through assessment of their writing. **Two weeks** of the program is devoted to these components.

- 'Students develop their grasp of these levels of language, in the context of various specialist language styles, throughout the course'.
- Grammar and punctuation **are addressed in one unit** and ITE students attend a **50-minute tutorial** looking at student samples. However ITE students 'are expected to begin their studies with some understanding in this area.'
- Grammar and punctuation are dealt with **in three hours of classes** on teaching 'basic skills'.
- In two programs ITE students do not engage directly with learning to teach grammar and punctuation. In one of these grammar and punctuation are dealt with in assignment feedback. In another grammar and punctuation are 'only incidentally covered'.

Forms and features of informative, persuasive and imaginative texts

- There is a common thread through most programs in the way in which ITE students learn about teaching these kinds of texts. Most programs draw on functional analyses of text forms and features and where there is substantive treatment, teaching strategies are also included.
- While there is some variation in the extent of preparation, most programs allocate a modest amount of time to this aspect of preparation to teach writing. There remains a question about how much time if any is spent in a number of programs on learning about the systematic development of writing skills in these text categories.
- Three programs provide only minimal or incidental coverage and two programs do not provide instruction on teaching these text categories.

The following examples are indicative of the range of coverage and approach.

- One program treats biographies, reflective writing under the informative text category; critical response, reviews, and debates under the persuasive category; and narratives, poetry, script writing and imaginative recreation under the imaginative category. The response states that: 'Each of these texts are considered through an evaluation of the standards required at each stage. Tutorials are spent reviewing the standards and devising strategies that improve the writing of these types of texts. Considerable time is allocated to teaching the pedagogical knowledge needed to teach each of these texts, particularly persuasive and imaginative texts. This is interwoven throughout the courses, with an emphasis on these forms of responding and composing **highlighted in at least 10 of the 12 weeks of each course.**'
- The program looks at teaching these kinds of texts in some detail. **Two weeks** is spent on the text features and types of texts in the categories of informative, persuasive and imaginative texts. For each category this is followed up with focused learning activities, including readings with exercises and assessments for **periods of up to 3–4 weeks.**
- Two programs provide very similar coverage as part of an integrated approach. They deal with factual, persuasive and imaginative texts in detail, including simple to complex grammatical features and structures. ITE students learn a wide range of strategies for teaching these kinds of texts to consolidate knowledge of forms and features and also to encourage creativity and increasing sophistication and independence in writing. It was **not possible to identify time allocated** due to the integrated nature of the approach.
- The program treats impersonal language features, the importance of text structure and

cohesive devices and the use of lexical chains in teaching about informative texts. It treats the use of persuasive devices in teaching about persuasive texts and tense consistency and variety of vocabulary in teaching about narrative texts. **Coverage is over four hours.**

- The program provides instruction on: the purposes of informative texts, and how to explicitly teach the structure and language features of texts that observe, describe, classify, compare, and the use of multimodal resources to construct informative texts, including the contribution of image; the genres of arguing and responding, and their different organisational patterns and language features and discussion of a range of persuasive texts for classroom learning, and dialogue on strategies to persuade; and ways of teaching students about the structural aspects of literary texts, with a focus on stories and poetry and how to teach students to discern literary techniques and language features. These are covered over **a period of four and a half hours.**
- The program allocates **thirty minutes to informative texts and one hour to each of persuasive and imaginative texts.** This includes both knowledge about grammar, structures and teaching strategies.
- The program devotes **one two-hour lecture and one fifty-minute tutorial to each of the text categories**, genres within the categories and 'hybrid texts, particularly textbooks that include image and verbiage (sic) with various purposes ... code shifting is discussed and analysed using students' textbooks from their method subjects.'
- ITE students '... become familiar with the demands of a variety of texts for subject English. Subject English is concerned with all texts, but does have an emphasis on the imaginative (Shakespeare, poetry, literature). This constitutes a greater proportion of content, but students are expected to write informative and persuasive texts in their responses to texts and consider how to support students to write these response texts.' This occurs **throughout four English method units.**
- The program, while **unable to specify the amount of time** spent due to the integrated nature of their treatment, nevertheless indicates that it covers the knowledge required to teach these kinds of texts and introduces students to strategies for teaching them.
- In other cases:
 - **Two weeks** is devoted to each text category.
 - Audience, social purpose, text-type, text structure, language features for each are dealt with **in a two-week period.**
 - There is 'engagement with text samples representing all of these types as part of the synthesis required by an assessment task.'
 - Students develop 'their grasp of these forms of text, in the context of various specialist language styles, **throughout the course.**'
 - Treatment of them while **not specifically dealt with** 'could arise in examining them as exemplar texts, especially imaginative texts'.
 - Students sort and classify texts but there is **minimal treatment** of approaches to knowledge about and approaches to teaching them, and
 - Coverage is '**incidental**'.
- Two programs do not provide instruction on teaching these text categories.

Keyboard and word processing skills

Responses indicate that this component in general receives minimal treatment.

The following examples are indicative of the range of coverage and approaches.

- The program provides an opportunity to address the teaching of keyboard and word processing skills when covering topics such as implementing ICTs, planning with technology and technology in the discipline area.
- The program provides 'minimal' treatment where the development of keyboarding and word processing skills is incorporated into lesson plans, units of works, and assessment tasks that the ITE students create. The program also covers 'use of the review function on Word for tracked changes, voice thread and other tools for annotating digital texts, providing feedback on their use as part of the writing process.'
- Basic formatting skills are covered in another program in a **one-hour session** but this seems to be directed at the ITE students themselves rather than looking at how to teach them in the classroom.
- One response advises that, 'This is mentioned in lectures in one week.'
- Another response (perhaps misreading the intent of the question) notes that, 'Competency in keyboarding and word processing is a course requirement as our courses are online.'
- The requirement to demonstrate skills in these areas is embedded across all subjects mostly through assessment expectations, but not taught directly. In one workshop however various technologies are examined for composing texts as teaching and learning supports.
- 'ICT personal skills and digital literacies are modelled and taught in other courses.'
- In seven of the programs examined, teaching keyboard and word processing skills are not dealt with.

Assessment of writing

- There is significant variation in the extent and depth of coverage and time allocated to preparing ITE students to assess progress in writing development, understand the NAPLAN testing program and use NAPLAN diagnostic information.
- Generally ITE students learn about applying assessment strategies to writing progress in the context of a broader engagement with assessment approaches across all aspects of teaching English.
- Two programs do not cover teaching about approaches to writing assessment.
- Overall a modest amount of program time is allocated to NAPLAN testing and use of pupil and school level diagnostic information where these are part of the assessment focus of programs.
- Five programs do not cover NAPLAN testing. And in two programs where NAPLAN is covered there is no treatment of the use of individual and school level diagnostic information.

The following examples are indicative of the range of coverage and approaches.

- Learning about writing assessment is integrated into workshops where students use NESA documents to establish knowledge of standards, explore and annotate work samples to identify strengths and areas for development, use annotated writing portfolios to map student progress, and plan lessons and unit sequences that reflect scope and sequence

for writing skills.

- Assessment of writing is addressed through the use of a writing analysis tool and the NSW literacy continuum, and ITE students apply them within an open book exam. The Australian Curriculum Level Statements and the NSW Syllabus stage statements are also used to develop an understanding of progression. Strategies for assessment of curriculum literacies form **part of one unit** and students may focus on learning to write as part of their case study on assessing students' evidence of learning.
- Assessment of writing is dealt with **over six hours** in the context of an EAL/D unit. Students are taught how to mark students' writing for macro and micro elements, identify mistakes, develop personal learning plans, develop class writing programs, assess student writing and develop rubrics and marking criteria, and to give feedback.
- **Three hours** is allocated to: instruction on assessment for learning, assessment as learning and assessment of writing skills – using a rubric that reflects the particular genre; the importance of sharing the rubric with the class beforehand so students know what they are aiming for and so they can assess their own work; and ongoing informal and formal assessment of the quality of the structure of the writing and language used by senior English students to express their ideas – importance of personal, constructive feedback. This is followed by **further coverage in tutorials**.
- The focus is on assessing students' writing 'in ways that moves their learning forward, i.e. focusing on improving specific aspects of their literacy development that can be incorporated into subsequent drafts (i.e. formative assessment, writer conferencing, peer and self-assessment, rubrics)'. This program also looks at assessing a variety of lower-level texts using NESA's Assessment Resource Centre.
- **Six hours** is spent on addressing the following questions: 'What do you learn from students' errors? and What does that mean for feedback?' In the process ITE students engage with modelling giving feedback and teaching students to be good self-editors.
- All four English units in the program contain components of assessment throughout teaching and assignments tasks. These include classroom practices for formative and summative assessment, HSC analysis and support, NAPLAN considerations, and strategies to support different needs in the classroom. Overall, **a fifth of the teaching and assessment** addresses assessment issues.
- **One week** in the program is spent on analysing the standards required of students using examples from the Assessment Resources Centre website. ITE students are required to consider examples of writing from each stage and each grade, and devise strategies to support the improvement of writing for each student whose examples they have read.

The program also uses sample student responses annotated to identify strength/areas for development and benchmarking against NESA standards, individualised writing surveys, contracts, reflective tasks, metacognitive guides and annotated writing portfolios to map student progress.

- In other cases:
 - ITE students engage with 'pupil difficulties as part of the synthesis required by a first assessment task and the production of remedial and extension material required by a second assessment task'
 - ITE students understand and apply the NSW literacy continuum; and
 - Students address writing assessment when they undertake their professional experience placements.

- One program response indicated that ‘some emphasis’ is placed on assessment throughout the various sessions and mentioned that writing assessment will become even more important when the institution moves to implementing Teaching Performance Assessment in 2018.
- Two programs do not cover teaching about approaches to writing assessment.

Treatment of NAPLAN also varies as the following examples indicate.

- Students practice programming to incorporate syllabus content and skills that could be examined in the NAPLAN literacy test ‘whilst maintaining syllabus alignment, creativity and student engagement and eschewing de-contextualised grammar exercises such as the textbook industry promotes’. Students also attend **a three-hour workshop** on NAPLAN tests, marking criteria and review of samples; **a one-hour lecture** on using diagnostic information; and explore in **a one-hour session** NAPLAN and MySchools data as part of 7–10 English lesson planning case studies.
- Examples from the NAPLAN site are evaluated to support understanding of the standards and use of diagnostic information **during a one-week course** that covers assessment more generally.
- Sample NAPLAN student and school reports are used to demonstrate analytic and diagnostic potential. Also dealt with through annotations on writing samples in Professional Experience, and through planning and implementing specific interventions for under-performing students.
- ITE students complete NAPLAN Language Conventions tests and discuss the standards expected of Year 9 students in relation to knowledge and understanding of the conventions of spelling, punctuation and grammar. They are also familiarised with the NAPLAN report that details the results of Year 7 and Year 9 students in all components of the NAPLAN tests. They write reflections in their Learning Journals on student performance, especially in writing.
- Students also engage in tutorial discussions on preparing students for NAPLAN, and they are subject to questioning on what steps are needed to ensure they are equipped to prepare Year 7 and Year 9 students for these tests. **Two hours overall** is allocated.
- NAPLAN is treated in a subject that compares and contrasts assessment and reporting strategies relevant to school education. Skills and practices required for effective assessing and reporting are explored with specific attention to identifying and understanding the challenges and complexities encountered by teachers when assessing and reporting on academic performance.
- In other cases:
 - There is **one lecture** on NAPLAN followed by a tutorial where ITE students look at NAPLAN examples on the ACARA website to discuss literacy demands and content specific questions in the reading and writing components of the assessment.
 - The program allocates **two weeks** to ‘NAPLAN and high stakes testing and classroom implications’.
 - In **a one-hour workshop** NAPLAN tests, marking criteria are explained and work samples are reviewed. A **one-hour lecture** looks at using literacy & HSC data for diagnostic purposes and in an English 7–10 lesson planning case study of one hour NAPLAN and MySchool data is explored.
 - NAPLAN is ‘discussed in two contexts’ over two hours in sections of units looking at national literacy standards and teacher data literacy.

- NAPLAN testing is **treated briefly within tutorials of four to six hours** that include the learning outcome.
- NAPLAN testing is included in general when considering assessment.
- Five programs do not cover NAPLAN testing.

Strategies to cater for differentiation in writing ability

- In general it appears that specific coverage and time allocated to learning how to plan writing instruction to cater for writing ability at different stages of learning is limited.
- This aspect of learning to teach writing is generally dealt with in a broader framework looking at inclusive teaching and or literacy teaching.

The following examples are indicative of the range of coverage and approaches.

- The program covers Years K–12. It introduces ITE students to teaching literacy for diverse learners and the use of culturally appropriate practices **over a two-week period**. ITE students also engage, **over a three-week period**, in the analysis of a variety of writing samples from very early writing to accomplished writing at a Year 2 level. An additional related component on differentiating instruction to cater for a range of abilities is covered **over a one-week period** with an accompanying assessment task. ITE students also undertake a Literacy Strategies for Learning subject that addresses knowledge and application of strategies in the middle years of schooling. It encompasses ‘practical strategies for literacy learning and use, especially in relation to written, spoken and visual texts that are subject-specific. Strategies include practices with digital technologies and texts’.
- **Over a three-hour allocation** students are taught about writing diagnostics and how to develop a unit of work that has written literacy skills embedded in the context of the unit. This involves looking at vocabulary, grammatical functions, sentence level text features, and whole text composition.
- **Over a two-hour allocation** ITE students ‘are instructed on how teachers offer different approaches to what individual students learn about writing, how individual students learn about writing and how individual students demonstrate what they have learned in formative and summative assessment tasks’. ITE students have opportunities to demonstrate how to cater for different student abilities in writing in their construction of junior English lesson plans and senior English teaching programs.
- **One week** is spent on analysing the standards required of students using examples from the ARC website. ITE students are required to consider examples of writing from each stage and each grade, and devise strategies to support the improvement of writing for each student whose examples they have read. ‘The teaching of a number of different theories of teaching writing also supports the ITE students’ ability to respond to the different needs and stages of learning of their students.’
- ITE students learn about task differentiation utilising different prompts and audiences according to student need. They also learn about establishing writing groups/student activities based on teacher assessment of student need, for example with a focus on tense, use of sentence variety and so on. These are dealt with through an integrated approach to literacy more broadly so the **time allocated cannot be specified**.
- Coverage occurs across all parts of the program – and specifically within two English K–10 units that total **twenty-one hours and six hours** respectively.
- Differentiation in instruction is principally **taught experientially as part of professional**

experience placements. With the assistance of their supervising teacher and their tertiary supervisor, ITE students learn within a specific learning environment about the need to cater for the wide range of levels of writing ability that can occur.

- A **focus of each unit** is on the differentiation of student learning. 'Within this context ITE students are given opportunities to plan units and lesson sequences that require this differentiation to be demonstrated'.
- One program offers that '**an assessment task** specifically requires students to apply their understanding of the specialist style characteristic of their discipline base to the production of remedial and extension material to deal directly with it. **The entire course is preparation for this task**'.
- This area is covered in a Literacy, Assessment and Information & Communication Technology session with **one-week** equivalent treatment. It is also dealt with in a Curriculum Specialisation: English session with again **one-week** equivalent treatment.
- Covered in depth in **a week** allocated to writing, including EALD learners. Also covered in depth for EALD learners at different stages of the EALD learner progression. There is also 'some discussion' in special education unit of how to cater for students with special needs, especially preliterate, learning delayed and dyslexia.
- Covered **within four units** where various learning needs in the English classroom are addressed largely focusing on EALD needs.
- Briefly covered 'in differentiation focus areas' and also **embedded in a unit** which requires ITE students to focus explicitly on improving writing. In another unit there is **one allocated tutorial** on 'scaffolding models for assisting students' different needs.'
- In an **unspecified amount of time** the program covers: 'differentiation of writing tasks; use of a wide range of print, visual and other media as models and stimulus; and writing groups/student activities based on teacher assessment of student need, peer feedback and editing protocols, self-evaluation protocols, use of syllabus outcomes and content, including Life Skills outcomes.'

Preparation to teach writing in other secondary learning areas

- Approaches to learning to teach writing the key learning areas units range from quite detailed treatment of the writing demands of the area and how to teach them in the majority of cases to minimal treatment in others.
- Learning to teach writing in other learning areas is mostly integrated with also learning about the other literacy demands of the area and in some cases also numeracy related demands.

The following examples are indicative of the range of coverage and approaches.

- One institution has a compulsory 'Literacies in Context' unit that includes a focus on: the explicit and systematic teaching of writing in secondary school teaching areas; use of the teaching and learning cycle – building knowledge of the field, modelling the genre, joint construction, independent construction of writing; and assessing writing – use of student work samples in secondary teaching areas.
- All learning areas treat the specific writing demands of the area, for example in History students learn about writing a historiographical response focusing on: generic structures at sentence; paragraph and full text level; crafting the cohesive features of this response type; use of subject specific vocabulary; paragraph structure and topic sentence; and organisation and selection of examples.

- A common unit is included on understanding the literacy demands of the content and concepts to be taught. It teaches: use of appropriate literacy strategies; modelling and demonstration; providing useful feedback to students; correcting errors and modelling appropriate strategies; providing opportunities for students to practise; and providing challenging tasks for students to refine their skills.
- Students cover the writing demands in the key learning areas for Stages 4 and 5 and Stage 6. In History for example, students are taught about a range of text types that senior students may encounter, such as writing an essay that draws upon critical analysis of historical documents and source evaluation (noting that this occurs in Stage 6 studies and not before).
- All secondary method students take a course that engages them ‘... in substantive exploration of the relationships between language, literacy, and numeracy, assessment and student learning, drawing on theory, research and practice related to assessing and teaching students with diverse language and literacy backgrounds and skills in a variety of secondary school contexts, complemented by school-based activities’.
- A common unit in method areas has these intended outcomes: ‘Students will be able to describe the language style characteristic of their chosen secondary subject and account for some of the difficulties the style causes for pupils; and students will be able to propose activities and approaches which will help pupils to overcome the language difficulties posed by the language style characteristic of the specific subject area while taking advantage of the subject’s potential for language development.’
- A core unit, *Literacy and Numeracy Across the Curriculum*, is designed specifically for students from all discipline/method areas to learn about the literacy demands of their area and how to support reading and writing. The unit asks students to identify the literacy (and numeracy) elements, consider what writing is appropriate to represent and display knowledge and key strategies to model and guide writing. As this unit is programmed in the first semester of the program, it provides the opportunity for students to build on these strategies throughout their ITE program and to use the knowledge and skills in their subsequent practicum experiences.
- Secondary methodology subjects have a three-hour literacy component embedded with direct tuition on the teaching of writing linked to the generic common core Literacy and Numeracy subject which teaches discipline specific genre-writing such as essays, reports, blogs etc in the three-hour differentiation focus in these subjects further looks at teaching strategies for the ‘incremental’ teaching of writing for different learners.
- In other cases:
 - A program that looks at integrating the general capabilities of Literacy and Numeracy and developing an appreciation of the need to teach the writing demands of their method area.
 - All method areas covered the particular writing demands of the area. For example, ITE History students review the standards of writing expected through an evaluation of examples from the ARC website.
 - There is ‘some emphasis’ on writing across the curriculum in all method subjects.
 - One week is spent on writing in all methods subjects
 - A common Literacy, Assessment and Information & Communication Technology unit has a section on teaching text types.
 - All Method areas look at literacy demands and how to support students.

- Literacy and Numeracy capabilities are covered in other method areas.

Professional experience

- In most programs there is some planning and collaboration with schools to ensure opportunities to practice aspects of teaching writing that have been learned in the program.
- However, in all but one case partnerships with school to facilitate an effective professional placement experience do not appear to have been established to the level of expectation described in the program accreditation standards.

The following summary examples are indicative of the range of approaches.

- 'A core component of this course is its integration into our School's INSTEP (in-service teacher education program), which provides MTeach students with the opportunity to be immersed in a school environment from the outset of their studies. The goal of INSTEP is to build the ability of ITEs and their school-based mentors to use assessment information and assessment for learning strategies to improve student literacy and numeracy learning. To this end, our MTeach students are placed at five different school sites.
- Over a nine-week semester, each ITE student is partnered with two or more secondary school students, for whom they act as a literacy support mentor one day a week, for a period of three consecutive hours. An integral part of the program is the pedagogical input provided to our ITEs by mentoring teachers at each school, who pass on key skills and strategies that they used to support their own students' language and literacy needs. During this training, ITE students are shown how to use available data on each student's literacy development (for example, teacher notes, progress reports or more formal verbal fluency tests and NAPLAN scores) to inform and target their support strategies. Throughout the program, students participate in a broad range of literacy support roles at each school, including in-class observation and assistance with literacy activities; facilitation of extended reading programs; assistance with personal interest projects, tutoring on critical thinking skills programs and homework support classes.'
- Through professional experience subjects it is expected that students in the English major teaching area develop and refine their knowledge and understanding of primary and secondary English students and how they learn, and their knowledge and skill of teaching with a focus on enhancing students' literacy learning. In each placement ITE students present evidence and are assessed on their progress towards and achievement of the Graduate Professional Teaching Standards.
- For English-method students, writing is probably the most common area they teach on practicum. Every unit taught would have some strong component of writing.
- Students have thirty weeks of professional experiences and are expected to teach complete units of work including writing. Feedback on the students' professional experience performance indicates that they are achieving the Standard.
- ITE students all complete one Professional Experience block in subject English. All 2017 students report they have had the opportunity to teach writing as per the individual unit sequence of the school at which they are teaching.
- Depends on the school, teacher, lessons being taught. ITE staff has no direct input into the micro-detail of what ITE students will teach. This is the domain of the school mentor teacher. All ITE students complete one Professional Experience block in subject English, along with an Internship in their first teaching area.
- Context specific, however students know they must embed literacy in their lessons and

Standard 2.5 needs to be demonstrated on practicums. One unit has an assignment that requires students to develop a lesson plan for their method, that includes specific strategies supporting literacy (whether those strategies relating to writing or other aspects of literacy is up to the student).

- On their professional experience placements, opportunities exist for ITE students to work with practising English teachers on teaching writing knowledge, understanding and skills to students in Years 7–12.
- A professional experience component is included in each year of the program. Students are provided with the skills and knowledge to implement literacy practices into the practicum, but in giving mentor teachers the responsibility for co-designing teaching experiences with the student-teachers, the university is not able to mandate the amount of support is provided specifically in the teaching of writing. As all discipline areas will ask for writing in some form, it is expected that mentor teachers would be providing opportunities for student-teacher development in teaching writing in that discipline.
- ITE Students on Field Experience give pupils a variety of writing opportunities and also mark samples of their work. This will vary from school setting to school setting.
- There are no mandated components that ITE students do to learn about and practice aspects of teaching writing. Mentor teachers are encouraged to let ITE students develop a full range of teaching skills.
- Throughout the course, students are expected to practice teaching in tutorials. They prepare mini-lessons and role-play the teaching of writing to their peers.
- Two programs were unable to confirm that teaching writing was either practised or observed during placements.

Personal literacy component in the course

- Most programs include specific units, components of units or support opportunities to ensure students are able to meet academic writing standards.
- One Masters programs notes that 'Feedback from lecturers, both academic and method, needs to more consistently identify personal writing problems and how to improve personal writing. The focus tends to be on content knowledge.'

Key findings: discussion and recommendations

Primary Education and Secondary English programs

On the basis of the information provided by institutions, it is not possible to conclude that all Primary Education and Secondary English initial teacher education programs demonstrate a sufficient standard in preparing ITE students to teach writing.

Of the thirteen Primary programs examined seven programs cover all of the components of learning to teach writing that are the focus of this review. Of the remaining six programs:

- one does not cover NAPLAN
- one does not cover handwriting
- two do not cover the use of NAPLAN diagnostic information
- one does not cover handwriting or require practice in teaching writing in the professional experience placement
- one does not cover grammar and punctuation, assessment of writing or NAPLAN.

Of the fourteen Secondary programs examined six cover all of the components of learning to teach writing that are the focus of this review. Of the remaining eight programs:

- two do not cover keyboard and word processing skills
- three do not cover NAPLAN and keyboard and word processing skills
- one does not cover informative, persuasive and imaginative texts and NAPLAN
- one does not cover keyboard and word processing skills and writing assessment
- one does not cover sentence level grammar, informative, persuasive and imaginative texts, keyboard and word processing skills, writing assessment or NAPLAN.

It is evident that there is significant variation across programs with respect to the extent of content coverage, depth of treatment of relevant content and in what ITE students learn about effective teaching practice. A range of theoretical approaches across programs also informs what ITE students learn about teaching writing and pedagogical practices they take into classrooms.

It is acknowledged that all programs face constraints in their capacity to effectively cover all of the writing content of the English K–10 syllabus. As noted in the background section of this report, learning to teach writing effectively is a complex task involving engagement with an extensive and detailed body of content knowledge set out in the syllabus. Realistically the expectations of the syllabus for teaching writing can only be fully addressed over time in a process that begins with initial teacher education and extends into the employment phase.

There are also time constraints within programs given the amount of other language, literacy and literature content to be addressed. Providers have to make choices about what to cover and the extent of coverage and how to prioritise and organise writing content into a broader program that covers the wider scope of the syllabus. It is evident that in Masters programs in particular, time constraints can impact significantly on the extent of coverage in key areas, more so than in undergraduate programs.

In the case of Secondary English programs, incorporating a focus on the mechanics, basic building blocks and techniques for writing is further constrained by the need to address Stage 4 and 5 writing requirements. These stages of the syllabus assume that junior secondary school pupils have mastered the basics of writing in the primary years, and provide direction on developing increasing sophistication and creativity. These programs also have to deal with the separate and complex requirements of Stage 6 English.

However these factors do not impact evenly on the programs examined. As noted above around half of the primary and secondary programs examined are still able to at least provide coverage of each of the components of learning to teach writing that are the focus of this report, albeit in varying degrees of detail and through a variety of approaches.

Writing across the secondary curriculum

All ITE institutions include a module in secondary learning area programs other than English that addresses the literacy demands of the particular area. This ranges from quite detailed treatment that focuses on the particular writing requirements of the area and how to teach them, to minimal treatment.

In secondary schooling the teaching of writing is conceived of in curriculum documents as a collaborative effort across the curriculum. Teachers in all key learning areas are expected to teach the kinds of writing required in those areas.

The effectiveness of a secondary cross curriculum approach is dependent upon English teachers *and* teachers of method areas other than English having the capability to teach writing effectively. In particular they need to be able to address the needs of secondary pupils who have not achieved the writing capability anticipated by the English syllabus at the end of Stage 3. As noted earlier in the report, in 2017 twenty-seven per cent of NSW Year 7 students were at or below the NAPLAN minimum standard for writing and by Year 9, thirty-five per cent were at or below the minimum standard.

The competing demands of coverage of method area content, dealing with the literacy requirements of the area and addressing other cross curriculum capabilities means that the treatment of writing in most instances is likely to be a minor part of any non English secondary program, even when addressed in some detail. At the same time Secondary English programs are (and need to be) focused on the English syllabus content from Stages 4 to 6 that does include writing but assumes competent writing skills.

There is a significant issue here about how to ensure that secondary ITE programs are able to adequately equip beginning teachers to improve the writing skills of a substantial group of secondary pupils who are underprepared for secondary school writing.

Specification of core knowledge and skill requirements for teaching writing

Given the inconsistencies within and across programs, core knowledge and skill specifications should be developed to inform writing instruction content in ITE programs. Specifications for Secondary English programs and other secondary programs should ensure that there is adequate coverage of the earlier stages of learning to write. The specifications should apply to the content covered in at least each of the component areas examined in the review.

The specifications should be made available to ITE providers to guide the development and

design of program content in Primary, Secondary English and other Secondary learning area programs, and to NESAs accreditation panels to support program accreditation and review. As such they would ensure greater consistency in what graduate teachers from all programs know and are able to do with respect to teaching writing.

Specifications for each program area should be developed collaboratively by NESAs, teacher employers and initial teacher education providers, and reflect a professional consensus. They should incorporate demonstrated good practice in current programs and be informed and updated over time by evidence of effective teaching practice.

This is not a proposal for program uniformity but rather for consistency in a base line of knowledge and practical skills that ITE students fully engage with in their pre-service education. It should achieve an agreed fit between what beginning teachers know and can do with respect to teaching writing and what employers and governments that fund and support initial teacher education are entitled to expect.

Based on the findings of the review, the application of agreed writing content specifications to existing programs could be expected to require minor adjustment to aspects of some programs, more detailed adjustment to others, while a small number would require significant change.

Recommendation 1

That NESAs agree that:

1. minimum specifications for content knowledge and instructional practice for teaching writing be developed in 2018 through a collaborative process involving NESAs, teacher employers and initial teacher education providers
2. the specifications be included in the relevant NESAs policy for initial teacher education program accreditation for Primary, Secondary English and other Secondary teaching areas
3. the specifications be drawn from existing good practice in current programs and evidence-based effective teaching practice
4. the specifications include the necessity for providers to assess ITE students' developing capacity to teach writing at key stages of an ITE program
5. all initial teacher education providers be advised to ensure their existing programs transition to the new specifications in a set timeframe to ensure that current ITE students are adequately prepared to teach writing, and
6. the specifications form part of the NESAs initial teacher education program accreditation requirements and schedule of assessment by accreditation panels.

Theory and pedagogy

The NSW English K–10 syllabus enables teachers to draw on 'the methods of different theoretical perspectives and models for teaching English to assist their students to achieve the syllabus outcomes at the highest levels.'

It is evident from responses to the review that different theoretical and pedagogical approaches influence decisions about the content of ITE programs, time allocated and emphasis given to key components.

Systemic functional linguistic and genre-based approaches are a common element through most of the Primary programs examined. Some programs adhere closely to particular theoretical and pedagogical approaches, most however include functional approaches within a more integrated mix.

In the Secondary English programs examined by the review, longer standing approaches associated with personal growth, cultural heritage and literary and cultural analysis models continue to have a significant influence. Functional linguistic and genre models for teaching writing are utilised but appear less prominent.

In most Primary and Secondary programs preparation to teach writing is integrated to varying degrees with learning to teach reading and other skills for teaching literacy and literature. This mirrors the kind of teaching practice that is envisaged by the NSW English K–10 syllabus. A number of responses from secondary English providers (and some primary providers) highlight the importance of contextualised, integrated teaching of writing. In this view learning about writing occurs in a dialogic relationship with reading and engaging with literary and other texts where grammar and other text features can be highlighted.

Some program responses are critical of the ‘simplistic use of generic scaffolds’ derived from functional linguistic pedagogies that are seen to be ‘increasingly present in schools in response to NAPLAN results’ and that apparently do not work as quick fixes to improve writing. Others do not support what they see as ‘isolated mechanical knowledge for didactic teaching and learning treatment.’

The review takes a disinterested view as to the efficacy of the various approaches in the programs examined. There are many research papers and case studies that find evidence for the value of particular approaches (usually conducted by or under the auspices of advocates for those approaches). This is not to suggest that the findings from them may necessarily lack credibility.

As noted in the background section of this report, major studies both in Australia and internationally have identified that effective teaching involves monitoring and feedback, having strong subject knowledge, and use of explicit teaching techniques.²⁸ However it remains an open question as to what specific kinds of writing instruction practice may be most efficacious for teaching writing at the different stages of schooling.

The review was not able to identify any large scale, independent investigation examining the nature of writing instruction in Australian classrooms.

An initiative of this kind is overdue. It would have the value of providing feedback to ITE providers to improve the instructional practice dimension of their programs. It would also enable school systems and schools to promulgate evidence-based practice through professional learning to the wider teaching profession.

²⁷ Great Teaching, Inspired Learning; What does the evidence tell us about effective teaching? Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, 2013, pp 6–7.

Recommendation 2

That NESAs:

1. in collaboration with the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation commission an independent investigation of writing instruction practices in schools to identify effective practice
2. ensure this work examines writing instruction practices in early years' acquisition of writing skills, later primary years writing development, and secondary writing development across the curriculum, and
3. apply the outcomes from this work to update instructional practice specifications for ITE programs, professional development and support material for teachers.

Support for learning to teach writing – NSW English K–10 syllabus and support materials

As noted earlier in this report the NSW English K–10 syllabus is an important and necessary source of content for Primary and Secondary English ITE programs and the primary source of guidance for teachers about teaching and developing student writing. The majority of the writing content is distributed across four content areas and related support material.

The information about teaching writing is presented in a way that supports a holistic, integrated model for teaching literacy, language and literature. While this approach may be helpful in promoting integrated teaching, it has the potential to work against sequenced, developmental instruction in learning to write. It is difficult to readily draw from the syllabus a coherent account of the sequence of specific writing content that should be taught and assessed at each stage of learning.

The report proposes development of a support document that brings together the teaching content for each of the key components of learning to write – sentence and text construction, grammar, spelling, handwriting and punctuation – at each syllabus stage.

The intent should not be to separate out the teaching of writing from other aspects of literacy, especially reading and responding to literary and other texts, but rather to ensure that within an integrated model a sequenced developmental approach to teaching writing can be maintained.

The review notes also work underway to implement the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) national literacy learning progressions. These describe developing sophistication in writing capability and will be a key resource for teachers in assessing writing. It is important to note that the learning progressions do not describe what to teach (this was made clear in the ACARA consultation document). The review envisages that a clear description of teaching content for writing at each syllabus stage would sit usefully alongside the writing aspect of the progressions as further explicit direction for teachers and ITE providers.

Recommendation 3

That NESAs:

1. develop a scope and sequence document for teaching writing that brings together and details explicitly the knowledge and skills for learning to write that are expected to be taught at each stage of the English K–10 syllabus, and
2. make this document available to Initial Teacher Education providers as a resource for use in programs and to schools and school systems to inform teaching practice and professional development.

Support for teaching writing in secondary key learning areas other than English

As noted above, secondary teachers in all key learning areas are expected to teach the writing demands of their discipline area. Some reference is made in secondary syllabuses other than English and related support material to the kinds of texts students should be learning to use. However references to writing requirements where they are included provide little specific advice about systematic teaching of writing relevant to the area.

The mandatory cross curriculum general capabilities also include a 'literacy' capability that is elaborated in each of its components of reading, writing, speaking and listening in a general way without specific advice about how to teach them.

Currently efforts to turn around writing performance in the junior secondary years are dependent in large part upon mobilising a collaborative effort across the curriculum. It is difficult to envisage this kind of approach being successful without the proposals at Recommendations 1 and 2 above, *and* without the additional benefit of more explicit direction and support in syllabus documentation.

The report proposes the development of additional information and direction for teaching and improving students' writing in secondary syllabus documentation commensurate with the expectation on teachers to teach writing in their discipline area. This will establish an imperative to teach writing instruction explicitly in secondary ITE programs and provide for the inclusion of specific content in them, and support current teachers and teaching practice more broadly.

Recommendation 4

That NESAs:

1. develop additional explicit direction for teaching writing for each relevant secondary syllabus other than English, incorporated into syllabus content and elaborated in supporting documentation.

Professional experience

Responses about opportunities for ITE students to practice skills in teaching writing during their professional experience placements indicate significant variation in the strength of partnership arrangements between ITE providers and schools.

In many cases arrangements do not appear to align with best practice principles and relevant

program accreditation standards discussed earlier in this report. The best research and practice places a premium on the quality of the partnership between the provider and the school.

In the case of most programs examined in the review it appears that close collaboration and planning between providers and practising teachers is in the early stages of implementation only. This has implications for the acquisition of effective instructional skills by ITE students.

Arrangements for the practical experience placement appear to be largely a matter for ITE students to negotiate with their supervisor in the school on the basis that the specifics of the placement are subject to a range of contingencies at the school level.

The review acknowledges that optimal arrangements in line with accreditation standards may be difficult to achieve. There are large numbers of ITE students needing to be placed, particularly with the build-up in enrolments in ITE over the past decade. There is also pressure on schools to ensure that there is enough appropriate supervision and to find alignment between teaching programs and the coursework and assessment interests of their student teachers.

On the basis of information provided to the review it would appear that the professional experience component of programs needs ongoing resourcing and support to ensure that sustained partnerships, collaboration and planning become established and accepted practice.

Recommendation 5

That NESAs:

1. develop, in collaboration with ITE providers and employers, practical measures to strengthen overall the implementation of formal partnership arrangements between providers and schools in this critical component of initial teacher education, and
2. ensure the specifications proposed at Recommendation 1 include direction about practice in writing instruction in professional experience placements.

Connection to induction programs

There is no systematic approach to building on the knowledge and skills for teaching writing that beginning teachers have acquired in pre-service training.

The development of explicit pre-service content and teaching practice specifications as proposed in Recommendation 1 would provide a useful basis for informing continuity with further professional learning in the beginning teacher induction phase. This work should also involve a collaborative approach bringing together expertise from NESAs, school systems and schools, and Initial Teacher Education providers.

In particular, structured further professional learning should be available in writing assessment and strategies for differentiating instruction in writing to target individual student need. These are two areas of critical importance once beginning teachers are involved in day-to-day teaching.

Separately there should be a sustained focus on writing instruction for teachers in secondary curriculum areas in recognition that the amount of time available in pre-service programs is limited due to the significant discipline based content required to be covered including Stage 6 content.

Induction phase support developed through this process should also inform targeted professional development for established teachers who may have not had sufficient exposure to core knowledge and skills in teaching writing.

Recommendation 6

That NESA:

1. in collaboration with employers and Initial Teacher Education providers, lead development of specifications for induction phase support in teaching writing with an emphasis on writing assessment, strategies to support differentiated, targeted teaching of writing, and teaching writing in secondary key learning areas, and
2. ensure this work builds on and extends the agreed specification of knowledge and instructional practice for the pre-service phase proposed at Recommendation 1.

Related observations

Personal writing

Most programs, including Masters programs, provide courses and or support for ITE students to improve their standard of academic writing and implicitly (and in some cases explicitly) their writing capability more generally. There is clear overlap in the writing content that ITE students are learning in order to improve their own writing and the knowledge needed to teach grammar, syntax and text features relevant to the kinds of writing required by the school curriculum.

While not stated explicitly in most responses it is assumed that personal writing components of programs are also intended to varying degrees to contribute to ITE students' knowledge base for teaching writing.

It seems intuitive that an emphasis on improving personal writing will assist ITE students' capacity to teach writing. However there remains a question here as to the efficacy of this approach if it is considered a proxy in programs for treating key components of learning to teach writing. Teachers of writing need to be more than competent writers themselves.

The review notes also that there is no external measure for how effective personal writing courses are in bringing ITE students' writing to an acceptable standard. The LANTITE test that all graduates are required to undertake prior to graduation does not test capacity to produce a sustained piece of writing.

National standards

NAPLAN trends for 2011–16 show that the lack of improvement in writing performance is a national issue. The issues raised in this report are likely to be indicative of similar issues in other jurisdictions.

The review notes the potential for a broader national discussion about the standard of preparation to teach writing provided by Australian Initial Teacher Education Institutions, education agencies, school systems and schools based on the findings in this report.

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Preparation of primary teacher education students to teach writing

Course name:

Accreditation date:

1. Please list the sequence of program units dealing directly with teaching writing (both stand-alone units and embedded components). Please briefly outline the content of each unit and identify the time allocation and mode of delivery.
2. Please briefly explain the rationale for the choice and structuring of the content of the units.
3. Does the program advocate a particular theoretical/pedagogical approach to teaching writing? Yes / No

Please outline the approach and the evidence base supporting its inclusion in the program.

4. What are ITE students expected to know about teaching writing on completion of the program?
5. What proportion of time in the program is spent on learning to teach writing as opposed to learning to teach reading? Please provide comment.
6. Please list key reference materials/resources used specifically to support ITE students' studies in teaching writing? Please provide a brief summary for each example.
7. Does the program include a component to improve ITE students' personal writing skills? Yes / No.

Please briefly explain why and what this involves.

8. Does the program include a component on teaching sentence level grammar and punctuation? Yes / No

Please identify the knowledge and strategies covered in the program for teaching:

- a. Grammatical elements that make up a sentence?
- b. Types of phrases/groups and clauses?
- c. Simple, compound and complex sentences?

How much time is allocated to each?

9. Does the program include a component on teaching the text structures, grammar and other language features of informative, persuasive and imaginative texts? Yes / No

Please identify the knowledge and strategies covered in the program for teaching:

- a. Informative texts?
- b. Persuasive texts?
- c. Imaginative texts?

How much time is allocated to each?

10. Does the program include a component on teaching:

- a. Handwriting? Yes / No
- b. Keyboarding? Yes / No
- c. Spelling? Yes / No

Briefly detail the extent of coverage and time allocated.

11. Do ITE students learn how to assess progress in learning to write? Yes / No

Briefly detail the extent of coverage and time allocated.

12. Do ITE students learn how to plan writing instruction to cater for students with writing ability at different stages of learning? Yes / No

Briefly detail the extent of coverage and time allocated.

13. Do ITE students learn about the standards expected for the domains of Writing and Language Conventions in the NAPLAN tests? Yes / No

Do they learn how to use NAPLAN diagnostic information about writing achievement?
Yes / No

Briefly detail the extent of coverage and time allocated.

14. Do ITE students learn about teaching the specific writing demands of all primary KLAs?
Yes / No

Briefly describe what they learn.

15. Does the program include opportunities in the professional experience components for ITE students to learn about and practice aspects of teaching writing? Yes / No

Please provide details of the opportunities provided.

Optional

16. Are there other aspects of the program related to teaching writing that you would like to highlight? Are there any issues you would like to raise in relation to the preparation of ITE students to teach writing?

Preparation of secondary English teacher education students to teach writing

Course name:

Accreditation date:

1. Please list the sequence of program units dealing directly with teaching writing (both stand-alone units and embedded components).

Please briefly outline the content of each unit and identify the time allocation and mode of delivery.

2. Please briefly explain the rationale for the choice and structuring of the content of the units.

3. Does the program advocate a particular theoretical/pedagogical approach to teaching writing? Yes / No

Please outline the approach and the evidence base supporting its inclusion in the program.

4. What are ITE students expected to know about teaching writing on completion of the program?

5. What proportion of time in the program is spent on learning to teach writing as opposed to learning to teach about responding to literature and other texts? Please provide comment.

6. Please list key reference materials/resources used specifically to support ITE students' studies in teaching writing? Please provide a brief summary for each example.

7. Does the program include a component to improve ITE students' personal writing skills? Yes / No.

Please briefly explain why and what this involves.

8. Does the program include a component on teaching sentence level grammar and punctuation? Yes / No

Please identify the knowledge and strategies covered in the program for teaching:

- a. Grammatical elements that make up a sentence?

- b. Types of phrases/groups and clauses?

- c. Simple, compound and complex sentences?

How much time is allocated to each?

9. Does the program include a component on teaching the text structures, grammar and other language features of informative, persuasive and imaginative texts? Yes / No

Please identify the knowledge and strategies covered in the program for teaching:

- a. Informative texts?

- b. Persuasive texts?

- c. Imaginative texts?

How much time is allocated to each?

10. Does the program include a component on teaching keyboarding and word processing

skills? Yes / No

Please describe the extent of coverage and time allocated.

- 11.** Do ITE students learn how to assess progress in learning to write? Yes / No

Briefly detail the assessment strategies covered and time allocated.

- 12.** Do ITE students learn how to plan writing instruction to cater for students with writing ability at different stages of learning? Yes / No

Briefly detail the extent of coverage and time allocated.

- 13.** Do ITE students learn about the standards expected for the domains of Writing and Language Conventions in the NAPLAN tests? Yes / No

Do they learn how to use NAPLAN diagnostic information about writing achievement?
Yes / No

Briefly detail the extent of coverage and time allocated.

- 14.** Do ITE students in secondary method programs other than English learn about teaching the writing demands of their method area? Yes / No

Please provide an example from one method area of the approach taken.

- 15.** Does the program include opportunities in the professional experience components for ITE students to learn about and practice aspects of teaching writing? Yes / No

Please provide details of the opportunities provided.

Optional

- 16.** Are there other aspects of the program related to teaching writing that you would like to highlight? Are there any issues you would like to raise in relation to the preparation of ITE students to teach writing?