

# ***Education, Practice and Place:***



## ***International Partnerships in a Pre-Service Teacher Education Course***

**Debra Tyler and Paul Molyneux**  
**Melbourne Graduate School of Education**  
**The University of Melbourne**

**NAFEA Conference**  
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- **Master of Teaching, Melbourne Graduate School of Education.**
- **A select entry elective for those interested in Indigenous or international education (12.5 point subject).**
- **Aims: to engage teacher candidates in place-based teaching with an emphasis on flexibility, adaptability and intercultural awareness.**
- **Two-week teaching placements in Indigenous and international school sites.**
- **Selection process: competitive process, information evening, expression of interest, interviews.**
- **Primary and Secondary teacher candidates.**

- Students can apply for either an international or an Indigenous placement.
- A two page expression of interest is called for.
- Applicants are asked to respond to the following:
  - Clearly identify why you want to participate in this elective.
  - Detail the qualities and talents you believe you bring to the school site you have nominated.
  - What educational issues do you anticipate in your chosen location and how might you respond to these?
  - What challenges do you anticipate on this placement and what might you do to minimise or overcome these?

Location	Timing	Primary	Secondary	Total
Hermannsburg (NT)	June 8 – 19 <sup>th</sup>	4	-	4
Mildura, Victoria	June 13 – 25 <sup>th</sup>	4	4	8
North East Arnhem Land (NT)	June 13 – 25 <sup>th</sup>	4	4	8
India	November 4– 20 <sup>th</sup>	4	4	8
Myanmar	November 4– 20 <sup>th</sup>	4	4	8
Thailand	November 4– 20 <sup>th</sup>	-	8	8
Total		20	24	44

**“place-based pedagogies foreground the local and the known; they allow teachers to structure learning and communication experiences around the things that are most meaningful to their students: their own places, people and popular culture and concerns”.**

**Comber, B., Reid, J. & Nixon, H. (2007). *Literacies in place: Teaching environmental communications.* Newtown, NSW: PETA.**

- emerges from the particular attributes of place;
- is inherently multidisciplinary;
- is inherently experiential;
- is reflective of an educational philosophy that is broader than “learning to earn”;
- connects place with self and community.

Gruenewald, D. A. (2003). The best of both worlds: A critical pedagogy of place. *Educational Researcher*, 32(4), 3-12.

- **Assessment Task 1:**  
**Planning for Place-based Teaching.**  
**2000 word paper.**  
**50% of result.**
- **Assessment Task 2:**  
**Place-based Teaching.**  
**50% of result.**



- Regular team meetings that address the local and societal context of the placement.
- Readings and resources that support knowledge of history/politics, literature, culture and arts, contemporary society and placement specifics.
- Rich discussions around the ethics of short-term placements, challenging deficit notions associated with non-dominant communities.
- Formation of teaching groups comprising both primary and secondary teacher candidates.
- Liaising with partnership schools: drafting a teaching program.
- Planning programs of relevance to the language and learning needs of the students.
- Resources to take to support teaching: books, stationery, musical instruments, sports equipment, printer, art materials.



- Our institutional partner: the Katha Lab School, Delhi.
- Team teaching structure (paired teacher candidates working with Indian teachers).
- Classes comprise children aged 8-15.
- Teaching underpinned by story-based and place-based pedagogies.

- Putting Master of Teaching knowledge to work in a new and challenging environment.
- Interventionist principles: building on assessment of children's abilities, needs and interests; maximising opportunities for engaged, active learning.
- Drawing on professional knowledge around language and literacy development; beliefs around access and inclusion.



- **A longitudinal study (commenced in 2012).**
- **Aim: to investigate the collaborations that take place on placement in India each year and outcomes.**
- **Focus: the nature of the teacher candidates' collaborative work (with each other and with the Indian teachers), their professional growth, and the targeted learning initiatives they tailor to the needs of the students.**
- **Methods: individual interviews, questionnaire/ reflections, document analysis.**

**“The experience strengthened my ability to be open minded, aware, and respectful of difference, employing sensitivity ... towards staff and students, at the Katha Lab School. I recognized the importance of literacy, not only in the traditional sense but through non-verbal practices, as a form of communication widely recognized across many diverse cultures and student backgrounds.” (Kate, 2014).**

**“I deem one of my greatest successes to be the relationships that I developed with both the male and female students within this classroom. Strong student-teacher relationships became foundational to successful learning outcomes within this placement because it correlated with student engagement. Respectful relationships from both ends were pivotal because it meant communication was more easily facilitated.” (Sarah, 2014).**

**“The way you teach, the way you speak in English all the time to the students, it becomes a routine for them, a habit. We notice there is less hesitation, they will have a try and not fear getting into trouble.”**

**(Monika, 2015)**

**“When I sat down with the Australian teachers to plan, it wasn’t as simple as I thought it would be. The mixing of cultures, ideas, skills and knowledge was quite difficult, but it got easier over the two weeks.”**

**(Richa, 2015)**

## For the teacher candidates:

- Stronger understandings of teaching linguistically and culturally diverse learners (reflecting place-based pedagogies).
- Challenges (with support) soon-to-graduate teachers' professional knowledge and identity.
- Increases cross-cultural awareness and sensitivity.
- Recognition of diverse forms of knowledge (that of the Indian teachers and the students at the school).
- Greater appreciation of the benefits of team teaching.

## For the Indian teaching partners:

- Affirmation of their professional knowledge and depth of understanding of local community and needs.
- Broadened perspectives on teaching and learning.
- Developed an awareness of the power and potential of team planning and teaching.

## For the University and Graduate School of Education:

- Supports institutional goals around internationalisation and engagement with Asia.
- External funding sources ensure that teacher candidates who participate are those that *want to* rather than those who can *afford to*.
- Program provides a much-needed course focus on educational equity and diversity in challenging international settings.
- In terms of teacher preparation, affirms the value of field experiences that confirm and challenge soon-to-graduate teachers' professional knowledge and identity.