Creating Local Pathways in University Teacher Education: Planting the Seed

Abstract This chapter shares the very beginnings of the partnership journey, metaphorically as a seed which incrementally developed as opportunities were presented. The university classes for the semester swimming unit EDF2611 were redesigned to create a pathway with the swimming and water safety course qualification—Swim Australia Teacher. Careful mentoring enabled the implementation of 'hands on' practical teaching and learning experiences for the university Initial Teacher Education pre-service teachers, quality swimming lessons at no cost for local primary school children (from a disadvantaged socio-economic region), and professional development for teachers.

This partnership journey began small, metaphorically as a seed which incrementally developed as opportunities were presented. It was always the intention of the programme leader to manage partnerships, and consequently, maintain quality assurance and suitability for university ITE. The long-term plan was for programme sustainability involving more schools, children, and a wider range of health and physical education (Fig. 2.1). Discussion of the community collaboration partnerships is in reference to the International Civil Society Centre 'Nine building blocks for successful partnerships' (2014, p. 14).

The original problem identified by the author was that university students were developing knowledge and skills within the unit EDF2611 'Experiencing aquatic environments', yet were not recognised within the industry, and therefore, not by the state education institute. Subsequently, students were required to spend $350 in addition to their university fees to gain a swimming and water safety instructor qualification. This requirement was mandated by the VIT (VIT 2008) for teacher registration as a Primary School Physical Education teacher. This qualification was valued by the programme leader, especially within the Australian context. Furthermore, the programme leader maintained the belief metaphorically speaking that practice sessions should resemble as much as possible the real game. Hence, applying theories in practice provided the challenges necessary for preparation of quality teachers.

Actors

Leadership

Swim instructor providers were contacted to investigate the possibility of ITE pre-service teacher 'recognition of prior learning' (RPL) for the swimming and water safety knowledge and skills underpinning EDF2611. Furthermore, recognition of a possible pathway between the content covered within EDF2611 lectures and workshop, and the RTO's swimming and water safety industry units of competency. This unit/module at the Monash University Gippsland campus previously required that students complete swimming and water safety accreditation during their own time and present evidence of the qualification. The leader was a pioneer in what appeared to be a common sense connection and socially just cause within the socio-economically disadvantaged region.

Correspondence with RTO providers was initiated in January 2011 through phone calls and e-mails. It was anticipated by the leader that all providers would share similar swimming and water safety educational aspirations. AUSTSWIM informed the programme leader, who had held a swimming and water safety AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety Teacher qualification for over ten years and had various experiences of teaching swimming and water safety spanning from early years to higher education, that he could complete Course Presenter Training, qualifying him for training AUSTSWIM swim instructors (pre-service teachers). The prerequisites for a Course Presenter included:

- Holds or is willing to work towards a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAA40104) or holds a Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training (BSZ40198)
- Current AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety Teacher Licence
- At least two years of school-based teaching experience encompassing a minimum of 300 hours (with a range of age, ability, and class sizes). (personal communication, 31 January 2011)

The programme leader travelled interstate (state of Queensland) to complete the Course Presenter Training over two days, consisting of both theory and practical components. This involved formative assessment during the two days, an assignment completed following the training, and additional 'on the job' training hours. The author completed the weekend AUSTSWIM Course Presenter Training and assessment for $320 and also completed the necessary Certificate IV in Training and Assessment in Melbourne for $1600. A Certificate IV is Level 4 on the Australian Qualifications Framework where Level 1 is a Certificate 1 and Level 10 is a doctoral degree:

- Level 1—Certificate I
- Level 2—Certificate II
- Level 3—Certificate III
- Level IV—Certificate IV
- Level 5—Diploma
- Level 6—Advanced Diploma, Associate Degree
- Level 7—Batchelor Degree
- Level 8—Batchelor Honours Degree, Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma
- Level 9—Masters Degree
- Level 10—Doctoral Degree (http://www.aqf.edu.au/aqf/in-detail/aqf-levels/)

The time involved and cost for Certificate IV were major barriers to creating a pathway opportunity within the Gippsland region. However, the Best Start programme leader believed it to be worth the time and cost for the opportunities created for both the university students and the local primary school children.

AUSTSWIM while the most prominent swimming and water safety provider within Gippsland and rural Victoria was not the only provider

of instructor qualifications. There were two programmes associated with courses and qualifications for teaching swimming and water safety in Australia which included:

- AUSTSWIM training of teachers of swimming and water safety
- Australian Swimming Coaches and Teachers Association (ASCTA) Swim Australia Teacher (SAT)

With both courses offering identical units of competency (Table 3.1), the difference other than ASCTA being more affordable for the students was that ASCTA duration of the qualification was four years rather than AUSTSWIM's three. Discussions with ASCTA regarding possibilities of pathways for Monash University Gippsland students, and specifically, gaining SAT qualifications were encouraging. The leader applied for 'Course Presenter Swim Australia Teacher' and was successful. Previous experiences (RPL) was acknowledged which included the AUSTSWIM Course Presenter Training course in Brisbane, Certificate IV (TAE401 10), teacher registration (ability to work with children), and details of at

Table 3.1 Comparison between providers

Registered Training Organisation (RTO)	AUSTSWIM	ASCTA (Australian Swimming Coaches and Teachers Association)
Course	AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and water safety	Swim Australia Teacher (SAT)
Minimal cost required by provider	$215	$100
Cost for university students	$215	$100
Amount of time valid	3 years	4 years
National recognition	RTO 104975	RTO 20948
International recognition	–	International Federation of Swim Teachers Association (IFTSTA)
Units of competency	SRC AQU 003B	SRC AQU 003B
	SRC AQU 008B	SRC AQU 008B
	SRC AQU 009B	SRC AQU 009B
	SRC AQU 0010B	SRC AQU 0010B
	SRC AQU 0011B	SRC AQU 0011B
	SRC AQU 013B	SRC AQU 013B
	SRC CRO 007B	SRC CRO 007B

least five years of specific swimming and water safety experience. ASCTA is Australia's peak professional swimming body and courses are recognised by International Federation of Swim Teachers Association (IFTSTA), thus providing a world-class curriculum for all stakeholders in support of the commitment to action in achieving the Educational Goals for Young Australians.

Swim Australia (ASCTA) was "launched in 1997 by the Federal Minister for Sport and Recreation to assist develop the Learn to Swim program in Australia to its full potential. ASCTA is a not for profit, membership based organisation that strives to achieve the World's best swimming and water safety Teachers and highest performing swimming Coaches" (ASCTA 2011). Swim Australia's aim is for all Australians to learn to swim and gain water safety knowledge through safe, enjoyable, and quality swimming lessons. ASCTA is an Australian RTO offering 35 units of competency, delivered in all states and territories (Australian Government 2011). SAT courses included:

- SAT directed at 4–12 years,
- Swim Australia Teacher of Babies and Toddlers (SAT B & T) directed at 0–4 years,
- Swim Australia Teacher of Competitive Swimming (SAT CS) directed at 7–12 years,
- Swim Australia Teacher Adolescents and Adults (SAT AA) directed at 14 and above,
- Swim Australia Teacher Learners with Disability (SAT LWD), and
- Swim Australia Teacher Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (SAT CALD) (ASCTA 2011).

The Best Start programme leader established pathways with ASCTA for a number of reasons, namely, the financial benefits provided for the university students (ITE) and possibility of the pre-service teachers providing lessons for local primary school children. Such lessons contributed towards ITE pre-service teacher 'On the job competency' assessment, a requirement for the SAT qualification. SAT course applicants were insured for the ASCTA SAT course from enrolment up to one month after course requirements; this included any lessons for local primary children during this time. Furthermore, SAT was nationally and internationally recognised as an equivalent qualification to AUSTSWIM.

Partners

Ideas rapidly evolved, enabling the planned pathway between Monash University Gippsland students and ASCTA SAT to come to fruition. This pathway partnership involved the university students offering lessons to local primary school children. After initial discussions with AUSTSWIM and ASCTA SAT, the third provider to be contacted was Royal Life Saving Society Australia (RLSSA), which in the state of Victoria is known as Lifesaving Victoria. Courses in relation to Swimming and water safety Lifesaving Victoria provided at the time included; Keep Watch, Swim, and Survive, Bronze Medallion (BM), Junior Lifeguard Club and Grey Medallion.

What Lifesaving Victoria offered to the partnership was an opportunity for the students to complete their Resuscitation (RE) qualification during the university workshops, greatly reducing the cost of the course necessities. The students required a current RE accreditation to obtain a SAT qualification; thus, the provision of this training by the Best Start leader enabled a pathway within a pathway. The pre-service teachers also had the option of a BM pathway at the reduced cost of $15.70 (recommended retail price of $150) and RE at the reduced cost of $10.50 (recommended retail price of $50).

Again, because the leader was willing and committed to up-skill, and in this case, became an endorsed service member with Lifesaving Victoria for the cost of $55, he was then qualified to endorse the BM, Resuscitation (RE) and Bronze Rescue (BR) courses. This level of service member involved the leader successfully completing a weekend Bronze Instructor course with RLSSA. Also, the leader needed a current BM qualification and a Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) certificate, to be renewed every 12 months. Hence, pathways created included the opportunity for the university students to obtain qualifications in ASCTA—SAT, RLSSA—BM and RLSSA Resuscitation (RE) courses.

Another partner essential to the Best Start programme was the venue, the local health industry (local leisure and sports centre). This involved establishing a working relationship with external swimming instructors employed at the venue, who initially requested responsibility for the collaboration with the local primary schools. Contact with the local leisure centre was at first made by informal introductions with the centre manager, followed by e-mail and phone calls, which culminated with a formal

Table 3.2 VIT specialist area guidelines (VIT 2015, p. 6)

Physical Education (Primary Teaching)

Major study in Physical Education
The major study should include study in human movement (e.g. growth and motor development, exercise physiology, skill acquisition) and in the skill activity areas of aquatics, games, fundamental motor skills, fitness education, dance, athletics, ball handling, and sport education
A current first aid certificate (Emergency First Aid Level 2) and a current AustSwim Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety certificate (or a current Australian Swimming Coaches and Teachers Association (ASCTA)—SAT certificate) are required

face to face meeting prior to the beginning of Semester One at the local leisure and sports centre (Wednesday 16 February, 2011). This meeting was productive as it ascertained each stakeholder's purpose of collaboration, established the combined resources and skills, identified advantages for stakeholders and prioritised inclusiveness.

Another stakeholder was VIT who informed the programme leader in semester 1 2011 that they supplemented the VIT Specialist Area Guidelines (Appendix B) under the sub-heading 'Physical education (Primary Teaching)—Major study in Physical Education', to include the ASCTA SAT (swimming and water safety) qualification (Table 3.2).

Process

Goal-Setting

The programme leader deliberately began the initiative with low set goals. This alleviated any pressure on teachers and schools. Furthermore, it increased opportunities for programme success and stakeholder commitment. Minimising pressure and demands was essential for building trust with schools: principals, teachers, and parents. The leader previously worked as a classroom teacher, HPE specialist teacher, and school leader, and thus had 15 years primary school experience to draw upon. This assisted the leader in understanding the demands, priorities, and pressures of classroom teachers.

During the face-to-face meeting with staff from the leisure centre, the programme leader was able to share his vision of involving local primary

schools during the unit (at no cost) which was fully supported by the leisure centre's manager. The leisure centre valued providing the swimming pool for the local schools without a charge. It was agreed that the Faculty of Education (Monash University) would hire three lanes during the semester's workshops, and that in the final three weeks when the local school children were to be invited everyone involved in the lessons could use the entire pool for no extra charge. The leisure centre's manager also gave the programme leader a tour of the pool area, showcasing swimming aids and equipment, inviting the leader to utilise these during the workshops for no cost. Facilities, costs, equipment, insurance, access, and spaces were discussed and either finalised or monitored.

It was collaboratively decided that the Best Start programme leader provide the dates and times for the primary schools' free lessons (conducted by the ITE pre-service teachers) to the swimming supervisor who would use the sports centre's contact with the schools, through swimming lessons facilitated during the year, to organise the lessons for children. Priority was to be given to year levels that would otherwise miss out on the opportunity.

Funding

At this initial stage, the resources and skills offered by partners, especially the leisure centre, were sufficient. That is, there was no supplementary financial funding necessary to conduct the university unit EDF2611 and/or the free lessons for the nearby local primary schools. The leisure centre provided swimming and water safety equipment and resources during lessons. Monash University covered regular payments for the pool hire, which included a function room where a portable projector and laptop could be set up by the programme leader.

The two schools arranged by the leisure centre's swimming supervisor were Churchill North primary school (Years 2 and 3) and Lumen Christi Catholic primary school (Years 3 and 4). Both schools were within close proximity to the pool and at walkable distance, which saved money on bus transport. However, the Best Start leader was aware that if the programme was to successfully increase, funding would be essential for future sporting equipment and transport of children from other schools. There were initial costs for the programme leader, such as Certificate IV, Course Presenter course, CPR and BM, and financial course expenses which were reimbursed by Monash University.

Management

As a 'Course Presenter Swim Australia Teacher' and lecturer, EDF2611 unit lectures and workshops for the semester were carefully redesigned using the SAT Course Presenter Kit (ASCTA 2010). Hence, a pathway was created between the university unit objectives and ASCTA RTOs swimming and water safety course units of competency (Appendix A). The SAT course required the pathway involve: ITE pre-service teachers observing lessons delivered during workshops in the public pool by qualified instructors (side-line observations); ITE pre-service teachers (second and third year) recognised for previous Professional Placement experiences with children during their ITE course (teaching competency); it was acknowledged that as a requirement of their Education course that all pre-service ITE teachers had received a working with children (WWC) check; also that they were providing low-ratio quality lessons for local primary school students over the final three weeks (shadow and micro teaching). Lesson plans required satisfactory 'On the job competency' assessment. A lesson plan assignment supplemented the EDF2611 unit's first assessment task in preparation for the lessons over the last three weeks. Furthermore, 'On the job competency' checklist criteria assessed by the programme leader (ASCTA assessor) evidenced: being a responsible teacher; safety; respect; and awareness; competency at lesson preparation and teaching delivery; communication skills; and professionalism in presentation and behaviour.

The ASCTA SAT pathway required the ITE pre-service teachers to supplement the theory covered in workshops by completing the ASCTA SAT CD-ROM and assessment. The self-paced CD ROM was provided within their kit as part of the $100 special university student SAT fee (recommended retail price of $250). The CD-ROM was designed for home study of the theory, to be completed prior to attendance at any SAT course. The Course CD ROM provided video content along with questions at the end of each module of study. Instant feedback was provided to participant's incorrect responses, reinforcing the correct information. Theory acknowledgement included five module topics: The Aquatic Industry, Practical Biomechanics, Introduction to Water, Water Safety and Aquatic Survival, and The Swimming Strokes. This blended learning delivery was successful in other SAT courses, and has been acknowledged for providing theory consistency regardless of where a course is conducted or who presents the course.

Also within the SAT kit was an Accumulative Training Record (ATR) where the university pre-service teachers recorded details throughout the

unit/module of their various experiences evidencing requirements of the SAT course. At the end of semester the university ITE pre-service teachers handed the ATR to the programme leader who read through and signed authenticity as the assessor. The ATRs were then returned to the students who were responsible for sending these into ASCTA along with their CPR certificate and copy of their completed CD-ROM theoretical component. Final administration in the pathway was then between the student and ASCTA office.

The programme leader was also careful not to be involved in any finances. Payments were managed by the Gippsland campus online store, managed by the Finance hub (independent secretariat). The students had the choice to participate in all, some, or none of the ASCTA SAT, RLSSA BM, and the RLSSA CPR course pathways. They were provided a link to the on-line platform where they could make their payment using e-cart and were issued a receipt. They presented a copy of the receipt either electronically or a hard copy to the programme leader to receive their ASCTA SAT Kit or had their name recorded for the RLSSA courses. At the end of the course, the students' names and student ID were forwarded to the respective RTO. Monash University was then invoiced for the exact number of participants, and the funds from the Finance hub was used to make the payment. This professional management process utilised the administration skills of the employees at Monash University and made the process practicable for the programme leader.

Monitoring, Reporting, Evaluation, and Learning

If each actor, participating in the partnership, in a national platform publishes what they are going to contribute to the national development plan, they are then accountable in each year that they produce. Have they done what they actually said they were going to do?

Absolutely, we need participation from the vulnerable groups and as a child focused agency one of the things we have been fighting for is to have participation always from, always for children. Particularly, the most vulnerable, because children, as they keep saying to me, they are not citizens of tomorrow, they are citizens of today. (Badenoch 2015).

There were various strategies utilised for monitoring during the first semester for swimming. These included a reflective journal maintained by the leader, regular observations, and informal semi-structured interviews

held with all stakeholders, namely, the pre-service teachers, teachers, school principals, swimming instructors and leisure centre staff, children, and parents. Feedback from the various stakeholders evidenced that the swimming programme was a success.

Optimal mentoring was planned for from the outset. The swimming lessons were held in the last three weeks of semester, allowing nine scheduled face-to-face weeks for ITE preparation. This enabled time for building all university pre-service teachers' swimming and water safety confidence and competence. It gave the programme leader time to assess whether they were ready to implement the lessons with maximum safety. As the university pre-service teachers were in the second and third year of their Bachelor of Education course, they had successfully completed a number of teaching placements. The swimming unit/module assessment required planning three swimming and water safety sequential lessons as the first piece of assessment and constructive feedback was provided. The class-time preparation involved sharing lesson segments and activities through peer teaching and learning episodes, allowing for suggestions, possible alternatives, or improvements to be offered by peers. The pre-service teachers were encouraged to use professional judgement with the children they had never met and to bounce ideas off the leader if they required reassurance.

The children from the local primary schools were excited to be taught by the pre-service teachers during the three-week lessons. Parents came to support their children, and comments from teachers, teaching assistants, parents, and the children expressed gratitude for the lessons provided. The leader and pre-service teachers were regularly thanked personally and formal appreciation was corresponded to the leader. For example, one teacher e-mailed; "My kids had a ball with the swimming. They were disappointed that it was only for the extra two weeks (one week was a holiday for this school). Like I said to you then, any time you need children feel free to approach us. We are very willing to assist." (personal communication, 23 July 2011).

Mediums for monitoring, reporting, and evaluating were not explicitly shared or discussed amongst stakeholders. However, data collection was always a priority for the programme leader, who innately believed that this was a good research opportunity. The leader deliberately did not discuss data gathering with stakeholders as he did not want to supplement pressure or burden school communities with extra time and effort requirements.

While success of the programme was discussed between stakeholders, the means of measuring success was not confirmed. It was essential that the schools found the effort of walking to the pool for the lessons, during school hours, valuable. First trust needed to be built amongst stakeholders before extra demands were made.

There were established procedures for monitoring and evaluating the course/programme's success within the Swim Australia (ASCTA) swim instructor course and Monash University. Data were gathered from the participants of both courses and programmes which offered robust and measurable indicators. The leader was commended by the CEO of Swim Australia (ASCTA), Mr. Ross Gage, based on the feedback the education student participants expressed in the SAT student evaluations summary (personal communication, 24 June 2011). The overall satisfaction for the quality of the course received a very high 4.7 out of 5 in the SAT participant evaluations summary (1 being unsatisfactory to 5 excellent). Course value was evidenced by comments made in the ASCTA SAT course evaluations summary. The most helpful aspects of the course included; "Explanations, videos and working with students from primary schools" (SAT evaluation 2011, p. 1); "To be able to understand how to perform the swimming strokes and be able to practise them before teaching" (SAT evaluation 2011, p. 1); also, "Being taught the correct swimming movements, then being able to practice them before micro teaching" (SAT evaluation 2011, p. 1).

This feedback was reinforced in the Monash University SETU, a survey of student satisfaction with the quality of teaching and learning. "The data may be used by Faculty and other University staff within contexts such as (but not limited to) unit enhancement, strategic planning, course and unit review and staff development" (http://www.opq.monash.edu.au/us/surveys/setu/setu-purpose.html). Monash University explicitly state that SETU data may be used for the purposes of research. Thus, feedback from the pre-service teachers offered valid and reliable data.

This unit was offered biennially, and the last time this unit (EDF2611) was taught at the Gippsland campus was in semester 1 in 2009. The overall satisfaction with the quality of the unit median in 2009 (with the same facilities) received 2 out of 5 (5 being strongly agree that they were satisfied with the quality and 1 being strongly disagree). Hence, the unit was not considered by student feedback to be satisfactory. The ITE pre-service teacher overall satisfaction with the quality of the swimming and water safety unit in semester 1, 2011, received a median of 4 out of 5.

This was a 100 % increase from the last time this unit was offered in 2009. It is important to note that all survey feedback referred to in this paper sits within the Gippsland campus category of over 15 enrolments and 10 or more surveys completed.

According to the SETU qualitative data, the best aspects of the units included "Obtaining my SAT certificate and CPR certificate. Overall, fun and educational, with a teacher with clear, precise explanations and relating the coursework to field based examples" (SETU EDF2611 2011b, Q11). Other students commented "The practical elements of the class, improving swimming skills, learning CPR and being able to practise teaching children while at university with the support of the lecturer" (SETU EDF2611 2011b, Q11); "Being able to implement our lesson plans with children from primary schools" (SETU EDF2611 2011b, Q11); and "The practical side was very rewarding and confidence building in both personal and social spheres" (SETU EDF2611 2011b, Q11). Another comment synthesised various aspects:

> Learning how to teach swimming and the opportunity to teach kids how to swim in prac. All aspects that we learnt about related to teaching primary kids (which hasn't happened in the last two years of PE). Explanations and teaching was fantastic with the use of his prior experiences etc. And also his hard work to help us reach success in all tasks (SETU EDF2611 2011b, Q11).

As is recommended, it was the purpose of the leader to "be transparent in communicating successes and drawbacks, strategies, reports and evaluations" (ICSC 2014, p. 25). This was achieved in a paper presented and discussed at the 'Research in Educational Issues' Education for Regional Sustainability Congress held at Monash University in November, 2011. Subsequently, the leader published the chapter 'Investigating a win, win situation: delivering quality swimming experiences for children in local primary schools within the Gippsland region, via teacher education', in the book, 'Developing sustainable education in regional Australia'. (Lynch 2014) Also, the article 'Rips, currents and snags: Investigating the delivery of educational goals for young Australians in the region of Gippsland, Victoria' communicated successes and drawbacks and was published in the Australian and International Journal of Rural Education (Lynch 2012). Following on from these publications came three smaller professional journal articles published in the Swimming in Australia: Journal of ASCTA (Lynch 2012a, b, d).

There were setbacks and barriers to overcome which will be discussed in more detail in Chap. 10. As a result of the programme evaluation, the leader decided to liaise with the primary schools in future collaborations rather than allowing this to be the responsibility of the pool swimming instructors.

Early responses from stakeholders suggested that they were appreciative of the learning experience that the swimming lessons provided, and that partnership efforts should continue. Hence, the initial stages of partnership were established and the goal for swimming lessons achieved. The children from the local primary schools were excited, evidenced by attendance and preparation for the lessons, and smiles on faces. Parents also attended lessons to support their children, and many thankful comments were made by teachers, teaching assistants, parents, and the children.

As previously mentioned, the programme leader deliberately began the initiative with low-set goals. This alleviated any pressure on teachers and schools. Furthermore, it increased opportunities for programme success and stakeholder commitment. Minimising pressure and demands was essential for building trust with schools: principals, teachers, and parents. Furthermore, all publications and discussions held were transparent, and feedback from stakeholders and readers were at all times welcome.

This initial community collaborative effort assisted with building relations for future partnerships. The next community collaboration involved six rural primary schools during semester 1, 2012 (Chap. 7). Not only was sport used to build partnerships but also to deliver quality health and physical education lessons, again offering children sporting opportunities that they may otherwise not receive. Hence, relations with the sports centre and two of the local primary schools continued to grow the following year.

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