

Preparing pre-service teachers for professional experience expectations: Online preparation modules

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Aims

The project aims to prepare NSW Education students such that they are “work-ready” for their professional experience placements, through the completion of four online modules, encompassing:

- Professional Standards in Teaching
- Legal Responsibilities of Teachers: Duty of Care
- Legal Responsibilities of Teachers: Child Protection
- Managing Relationships.

Rationale

Contexts:

- The professional experience is one of the most demanding components of an ITE program.
- Pre-service teachers are required to develop content and pedagogical knowledge, understanding of theories of learning and development, and practical classroom skills
- In addition, they are expected to conduct themselves as “professionals” in the field.
- This requires an understanding of what it means to be a professional, as well as the social skills required to work as a member of a team in an educational context.

Rationale

Challenges:

- To provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to develop these understandings...
 - in the context of a crowded degree program and busy student schedules; and
 - “just-in-time”, before commencing prac.
- The need for a more efficient, flexible means of delivering a growing body of essential information
 - to support Ed Studies units and Prac briefings (not to replace).

Methodology

Focus Groups:

- FXP coordinators at Strathfield.
- Groups of students from Undergraduate and Graduate Entry programs.

Focus Group Findings

Issues identified:

- Students wanted to see:
 - reminders re professional conduct and expectations
 - reminders / hints for managing behaviour
 - guidelines for managing professional relationships
 - guidance for managing their own responses / minimising stress
 - advice from other students.

Focus Group Findings

Issues identified:

- FXP coordinators identified gaps in some pre-service teachers' understandings of:
 - professional conduct and expectations
 - legal responsibilities of teachers
 - practical strategies for behaviour management
 - professional relationships.
- Wanted to address these BEFORE placement, in order to minimise problems.

Outcomes

Online modules:

- A team of experienced Professional Experience coordinators at the School of Education in NSW developed a set of 4 online preparation modules.
- The online learning model is designed to enable students to undertake this preparation in a self-directed manner, and facilitate the efficient delivery of large amounts of information.

Content

Professional standards:

- The Professional Standards framework
- Program-specific responsibilities and expectations
- Professionalism on Professional Experience
 - Attendance & punctuality
 - Attitude
 - Attire
 - Diplomacy
 - Preparation
- Prohibited Practices.

Content

Duty of care:

- Scope of duty of care
- Playground supervision
- Safety in the classroom environment
- Safety in the classroom environment
- Excursions and camps; sporting activities
- Safety in the classroom environment
- Ill, injured or upset students
- Anaphylaxis e-training.

Content

Child protection:

- Responsibilities of teachers
- What constitutes professional and ethical conduct?
- Appropriate management strategies
- Electronic communication / appropriate use of social media
- Appropriate relationships
- Privacy considerations
- University Policy.

Content

Child protection:

- Inappropriate behaviours / Prohibited behaviours
 - Drugs
 - Alcohol
 - Tobacco
- Protecting children and yourself.
- Mandatory Reporting:
 - What constitutes abuse?
 - “At risk” – when to report
 - “At risk” – what to do / what NOT to do.

Content

Managing Relationships:

- Managing behaviour
- Managing relationships
 - Tertiary Supervisor
 - Supervising Teacher/s
- Managing your responses
- The Reports
- At Risk procedures.

Content

Managing Relationships:

- “How to have a successful prac”: advice from students
- What to do if experiencing difficulties:
 - Talk to your Tertiary Supervisor
 - Make an appointment to talk to a Counsellor at ACU
 - Talk to your Professional Experience Coordinator.

Implementation

Pilot to full implementation:

- Modules 1 & 4 were piloted in Sem 1, 2013, in 2 cohorts, prior to students commencing their block pracs.
- Modules 1 – 4 were trialled in half the cohorts in Semester 2, 2013.
- All modules were rolled out across the majority of cohorts Sem 1 2014.
 - Not 100% uptake by all FXP Coordinators.

Implementation

Mode of implementation:

- Modules are set up on a LEO site which is copied multiple times and all pre-service Education cohorts enrolled.
- Students view a recorded ppt presentation and undertake a multiple choice quiz (approx. 20 qs).
 - 95% is required to Pass.
 - Students must pass Modules 1-3 before undertaking their first school placement.
 - Students must pass Module 4 before undertaking their first block prac.
 - <http://leo.acu.edu.au/course/view.php?id=9427>

Evaluation

Positive outcomes:

- Coordinators report having to deal with fewer issues re professional conduct, expectations and relationships
- Some students report that the content is thorough, and they were feeling well prepared / informed
- Some report finding Module 4 particularly reassuring.

Evaluation

Challenges:

- The usual suspects re technology:
 - Coordinators and students needing PD in how to operate.
 - Need for Systems support in enrolling cohorts.
- Challenge of monitoring / record keeping
- Time consuming:
 - need for additional admin support.

Future Directions?

Challenges:

- Evaluation:
 - planned for Sem 1 2015
 - need wider staff / student / school (?) perspectives.
- Updating content:
 - in line with changes (e.g., Australian Professional Standards terminology).
- Modifying content:
 - to suit cohorts across a range of programs (e.g., Early Childhood) and contexts (e.g., other jurisdictions?)

Questions / comments?