

The impact of a nationally mandated assessment task on initial teacher educators' work using readers' theatre: Act 2'

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The Assessment for Graduate Teaching (AfGT) is an approved TPA developed by a national consortium of higher education institutions to determine the 'classroom readiness' of graduating teachers. Surveys and focus group discussions were conducted with stakeholder groups, including initial teacher educators, to explore their experiences of trialling and implementing the AfGT. Teacher educators identified several aspects related to implementation that had impacted the ways they work, which included a realisation that entire programs of study are impacted by the introduction of a TPA, and an increased workload in both supporting PSTs as they complete the requirements and subsequently assessing their work. Participants also referred to the level of support provided from across the Consortium as a positive characteristic, as was the strong connections that many PSTs were making between theory and practice. A semi-fictionalised narrative in the form of a readers' theatre script was developed to weave teacher educators' accounts together in an anonymised yet believable fashion for presentation at the 2019 AARE Conference.

Since then, the Quality Initial Teacher Education Review has been initiated by the Commonwealth Minister for Education, with the review's Expert Panel noting that teaching performance assessments (TPAs) "have made a significant positive contribution to the classroom readiness of teachers since introduction". The Expert Panel also posed a number of additional questions relating to the classroom readiness of graduate teachers, including the preparation of graduates for teaching diverse student cohorts, the suitability of current professional experience arrangements to support the preparation of ITE students for the classroom and school environment, and the extent to which ITE students are being introduced to evidence-based high-impact teaching strategies. But looming large among the Expert Panel's questions were those querying the benefits and costs of the number of TPAs in operation, as well as the fitness for purpose of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers – the very standards that underpin the design of the TPAs.

In this interactive session, the presenters re-visit the characters in the readers' theatre script and generate ideas about how they and their institutions might respond to the 2021 QITE Review's discussion questions and findings about classroom readiness.