

## Pre-service teachers' attention to the General Capabilities in the GTPA

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Consistent with many countries in the world, the General Capabilities (GC) are a feature of the mandated Australian Curriculum (Weldon, 2019). Guidance made available for teachers indicates that the GC should be addressed through the content of the learning areas (ACARA, nd), but some research indicates that teachers do not consistently plan and teach “with the general capabilities in mind” (Skourdoumbis, 2016, p. 548). Reflecting the importance of the GC in the Australian Curriculum, the Graduate Teacher Performance Assessment (created by the Institute for Learning Sciences and Teacher Education, Australian Catholic University, and implemented by a collective of universities) requires pre-service teachers (PSTs) to embed the GC in a planning, teaching and assessing cycle during a final year professional experience placement.

Data was drawn from GTPA submissions across the early childhood, primary and secondary PST cohorts of undergraduate ITE programs at one university. Selection of the submission for analysis was purposive, with samples (n=10) from well above the “meets” threshold chosen for inclusion. Our decision to select only high quality samples was based on our focus on identifying the range, not the absence, of practices. Content analysis (Krippendorff, 2018) was employed, generating initial coding categories based on the GC continua (ACARA, n.d.), manually coding, checking reliability and validity of the coding across the research team. Early findings highlight, first, some explicit attention to the embedding of the GC in the content areas of student submissions. Second, deeper analysis and cross referencing of student work with the GC continua and the relevant curriculum areas revealed a more extensive focus on the general capabilities, particularly, literacy, numeracy, personal and social capability, ICTs and critical and creative thinking. Third, while the GTPA assesses students on their attention to the GC in *Planning* and *Teaching* analysis identified some evidence of attention to the GC across all practices with a key focus on unit learning outcomes and the assessment tasks students were required to complete. Fourth, these PSTs justified their focus on particular GC essential in their curriculum area and the unit of work. Finally, evidence within the GTPAs highlights how these PSTs think through their planning and make *in the moment* decisions to scaffold student learning in relation to the GC.

These findings highlight that systematic attention to GC in relation to each curriculum area needs to remain a focus in ITE programs. Given that we chose to focus on high achieving students, the analysis does not tell us if all PSTs are embedding GC in the same way. Further research is needed to identify whether PSTs whose GTPAs are not considered high quality prioritise the GC in planning and teaching their students.

ACARA. (n.d.). *General Capabilities*. <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities/>

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