

# PREPARATION OF THE PRE-SERVICE TEACHER TO DELIVER RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION: LESSONS FROM CURTIN UNIVERSITY, AUSTRALIA

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## Background/Purpose:

Throughout Australia, most initial teacher training programs inadequately prepare pre-service teachers to deliver relationships and sexuality education (RSE) within the school context. Programs that do provide such instruction, do not routinely share their teaching and learning content, or report evaluation findings.

## Approach:

Since 2014, Curtin University has provided an undergraduate unit for pre-service teachers focused specifically on RSE. This unit spans twelve teaching weeks, aligns with international evidence-based principles for sexuality education, prioritises experiential learning and requires students to complete authentic assessment tasks. It is offered to all pre-service teachers (early childhood, primary, secondary) regardless of learning area specialty.

## Outcomes/Impact:

A summary of unit learning outcomes, weekly content and assessment tasks will be shared. Formative, process and short-term impact evaluation data, based upon five years of unit delivery, have been collated and will also be reported. Students completing this unit reported statistically significant improvements in attitudes associated with school-based RSE. They also report greater comfort to facilitate all domains of learning, specifically RSE-related knowledge, attitudes, and skills. Thematic analysis of student reflection papers highlights a myriad of positive outcomes for ongoing RSE delivery.

## Innovation and Significance:

Specific instruction in relationships and sexuality education is a vital concept for all initial teacher training programs to provide. It is a core competency that all educators, regardless of teaching speciality, should develop. Our immersive and practical approach has demonstrated great utility for pre-service teachers in relation to their future careers as educators and should be replicated more widely in initial teacher training programs.

## Disclosure of Interest Statement:

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