

Inherent Requirement Domains for an Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Professional Practice: The Graduate School of Education, The University of Western Australia

Introduction

This document provides a detailed statement of the knowledge, skills and abilities that all pre-service teachers require for admission into an Initial Teacher Education Course and Professional Practice units in the Graduate School of Education at The University of Western Australia. The essential knowledge, skills and abilities are referred to as inherent requirements for professional practice.

Defining Inherent Requirements

Inherent Requirements are the fundamental parts of a course or unit that must be met by all students. In this context, they are the abilities, knowledge and skills needed to successfully undertake and complete a professional practice. The term emanated from the Disability Discrimination Act (1992). The Disability Standards for Education (DSE, 2005) sets out the obligations of education providers to assist disabled students with access to education, specifically targeting: enrolment; participation; curriculum development, accreditation and delivery; the provision of student services; and the prevention of harassment and victimisation. Higher education providers are required to make “reasonable adjustments” to courses and facilities to reduce the impact of a disability. Adjustments may include time and resources; however, they cannot undermine the academic integrity of the course in which a student is enrolled. In determining reasonable adjustments “the provider is entitled to maintain the academic requirements of the course or program, and other requirements or components that are inherent in or essential to its nature” (DSE, 2005, p.15). While the term developed in relation to disability support, the Graduate School of Education views this statement of inherent requirements as valuable by making explicit course requirements for **ALL** students.

An empirical process was used to identify these inherent requirement domains. Consultation occurred with stakeholders including Principals, Teachers, School-based Professional Practice Coordinators, Teacher Educators from The University of Western Australia (UWA) and other universities, Professional Practice Supervisors, Equity and Diversity Officers and Work Place Learning Coordinators from other faculties.

The following seven domains have been identified as inherent requirements for professional practice in Initial Teacher Education courses at The University of Western Australia. These are represented in Figure 1.

1. Legal prerequisites

2. Professional knowledge and cognitive skills
3. Physical, motor and sensory capabilities
4. Communication and relational capabilities
5. Self-awareness and self-management
6. Social awareness and situational management
7. Sustained professional conduct in complex educational settings.

The two domains of Legal Prerequisites and Professional Knowledge and Cognitive Skills must be satisfied prior to the commencement of any component of Professional Practice. All domains must be demonstrated during the Professional Practice. All students must comply with the Fitness to Practice Gateway Policy prior to commencement of any component of Professional Practice.

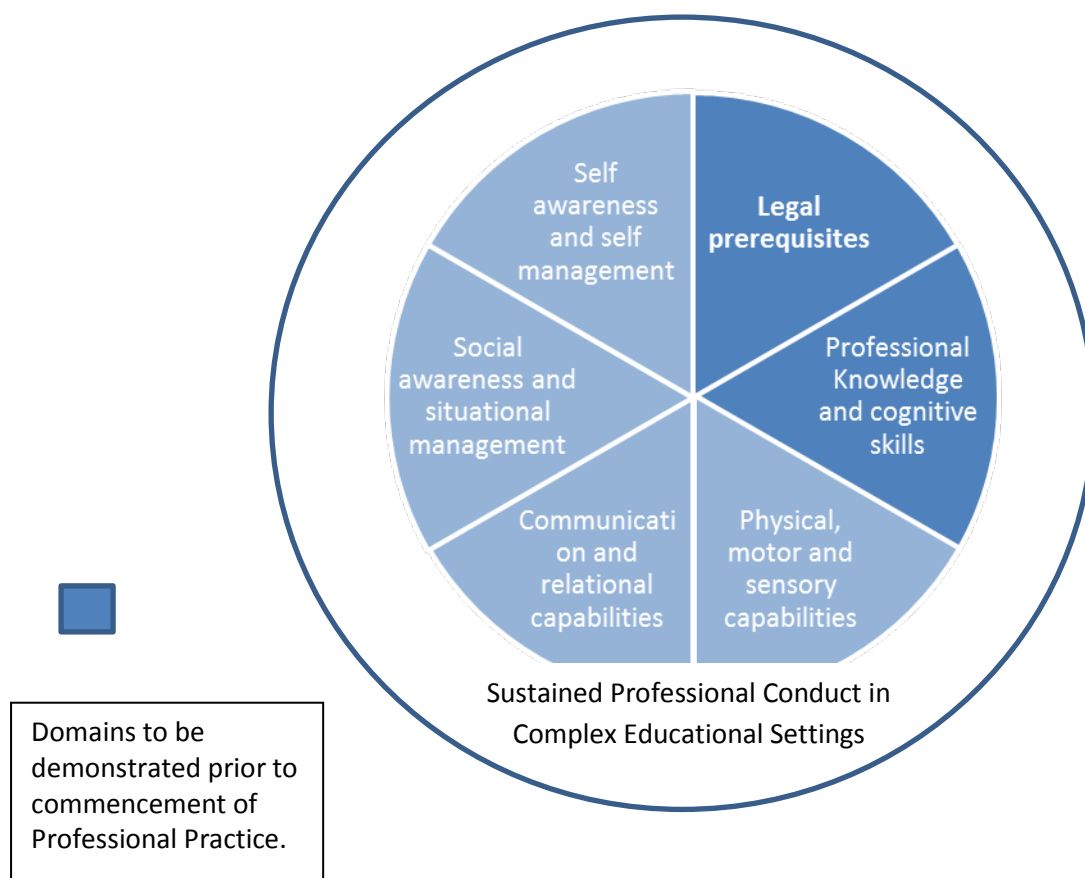


Figure 1: Inherent Requirement Domains for Initial Teacher Education Professional Practice

Demonstration of domains occurs through the completion of coursework prior to the commencement of a professional placement and through continuing assessment of performance by school-based and university staff during a professional placement. Details about the assessment of Professional Practice is provided in the UWA Professional Practice Handbook.

Reasonable Adjustments

The University of Western Australia welcomes the inclusion of students with disabilities by providing supports and reasonable adjustments to assist students fulfil course requirements. The university policy on Disability and Medical Conditions is available at: <http://www.universypolicies.uwa.edu.au/search?method=document&id=UP12%2F12>. This policy enables the provision of reasonable adjustments to be made for students who disclose a disability or medical condition. Documentary evidence may be required to support a request for reasonable adjustment. Disclosure of information by students is voluntary and any disclosures will be treated with complete confidentiality.

In determining whether an adjustment is reasonable, the University will take into account:

- a) the nature of the benefit or detriment likely to accrue or be suffered by any persons concerned;
- b) the effect of a disability of the person concerned;
- c) the options there are to meet the requirements of the person with a disability;
- d) the estimated expenditure by the University; and
- e) the effect (if any) on the academic integrity of a course.

Pre-service teachers who disclose to the Course Coordinator or the Professional Practice Coordinator a health condition or disability, supported by appropriate medical documentation, may be assisted by the provision of reasonable adjustments to meet the inherent requirements. The individual circumstances of the pre-service teacher will be examined and case managed. Where appropriate, input and advice may be sought from other support services, with the permission of the individual. Reasonable adjustments, in line with the University of Western Australia's policy, may include modification to assessment and provision of additional support services. Adjustments which would undermine the inherent course requirements and compromise the academic and/or the professional integrity of the course cannot be provided.

The University also recognises that in some instances there may be cultural or religious factors that impact on a pre-service teacher's capacity to meet the Inherent Requirements of Professional Practice. Early identification and disclosure of such constraints assist the University to make reasonable adjustments, where appropriate, to assist in meeting the IRs.

This document explains each of the seven inherent requirement domains for professional practice. The inherent requirement is described, justified and examples of behaviours consistent with the inherent requirements are provided. In most cases, two brief narratives are provided: one illustrating an aspect of the domain and another illustrating failure to demonstrate the domain. The examples and narratives provided are illustrative. They do not represent all possible behaviours.

1. Legal Prerequisites

Description: A pre-service teacher must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the legal responsibilities and professional pre-requisites of teachers in Australia and demonstrate conduct consistent with the legal requirements of fitness to practice as a teacher. Documentation must be provided to demonstrate compliance with mandated requirements for

interaction with children, as stipulated by legislation and the university prior to the commencement of any professional practice. These requirements are consistent with prerequisites for professional registration and expectations of employing authorities. Pre-service teachers must demonstrate that they have no convictions which would impact on the safety of children. In addition, they must adhere to ethical requirements for the conduct of research related to academic course completion.

No adjustments can be made for this requirement.

Justification: Teachers hold a position of responsibility and trust. They have a duty of care for the welfare of children. While pre-service teachers do not have a legal duty of care while on professional practice (this remains with the mentor teacher), they must demonstrate awareness of duty of care requirements and act in a manner consistent with duty of care expectations to demonstrate their readiness to take on a full duty of care in future employment.

The legal prerequisites domain will be evident through:

- Presentation of relevant legal documentation (Working with Children Card, police check or criminal clearance) prior to commencement of any component of Professional Practice.
- Satisfactory progress in course units.
- Appropriate professional interactions with students within all contexts.
- No convictions for sexual offences involving a child.
- Compliance with University Human Rights and Ethics requirements.
- Awareness of compliance requirements for mandatory reporting of sexual abuse policy.
- Awareness of compliance requirements with Australian Communications and Media Authority Ethical Online Conduct.

The legal prerequisites domain will be breached through:

- Failure to provide required documentation.
- Involvement in illegal activities; for example:
 - Conduct of a sexual or grooming nature with a student.
 - Provision of alcohol or drugs to any student in any context.
 - Past convictions deemed inappropriate by the Department of Education of Western Australia (see <http://det.wa.edu.au/policies/detcms/policy-planning-and-accountability/policies-framework/policies/criminal-screening.en?oid=au.edu.wa.det.cms.contenttypes.Policy-id-12562391>).
- Use of any form of discipline which involves corporal punishment, physical or emotional abuse.
- Interaction with students via social media that is not consistent with school and sector policies.

For further information about the Fitness and Propriety requirements expected for teacher registration, pre-service teachers are directed to the Teacher Registration Board of Western Australia (TRBWA): http://www.trb.wa.gov.au/teacher_registrations/Becoming_registered/registration_categories/provisional%20registration/Pages/default.aspx

Illustrative Narrative accounts

Domain **NOT** evident:

1301 Making it Interesting

I wanted to engage the students in a really interesting Science activity. They were clearly bored with the usual classes. I discussed my idea for the lesson with my mentor and he advised me that the activity could only be conducted if it took place in the fume cupboard. I thought about this, but decided to run the activity anyway. I gathered the students around the demonstration area and conducted the activity. Unfortunately, the experiment created a large volume of smoke and fumes which meant that the students in my room and the two adjoining rooms had to be evacuated. No one was harmed by the activity and it sure made the lesson more interesting, but my mentor and the university staff said it was dangerous and against occupational health and safety regulations. You can't do anything really interesting with kids these days.

1302 Teenage Consequences

I had a previous conviction for minor drug possession in my wild teens, but I don't touch drugs at all these days, and haven't for the last 20 years. I didn't think that this would be any problem. When I submitted my criminal screening application to the Department of Education, I was shocked that there was a problem. I was not able to get my criminal screening clearance before the commencement of Professional Practice and I was unable to complete my prac unit. In fact, I had to wait another 12 months before I was finally cleared. In the meantime, I kept going with my course work units, hoping that the clearance would eventually come through, but I had to go part-time and there was no guarantee that the approval would eventually come through. I understand the importance of being a fit and proper person to teach, but you just don't think about how the things you do as a teenager will come back to haunt you.

1303 Getting the Paperwork

I'm an international student; I've been studying in Australia for four years. While I've been here my marriage broke up and my wife and children returned overseas. The breakdown had been quite bitter. I applied for my Working with Children Clearance and was shocked when my application was rejected. My wife has placed a restraining order on me and has claimed that I have abused our children. This is just ridiculous. I'd never hurt them. But I am really angry that I cannot complete my course while this issue remains and it takes a long time for everything to go through the necessary legal processes. At the moment, I don't know whether to keep going with my course, hoping that my name will be cleared or whether I should just give up now?

2. Professional Knowledge and Cognitive Capabilities

Description: A pre-service teacher must demonstrate the knowledge and cognitive skills to provide appropriate emotionally and physically safe learning experiences to children. This includes knowledge of child development, pedagogy, curriculum, content, behaviour management, assessment, ICT and skills of critical thinking for planning, sequencing and delivering learning experiences. The required knowledge and skills must be demonstrated by successfully completing assessment tasks in course work prior to commencement of a professional placement. Continued demonstration of the knowledge and skills is required throughout the placement.

Justification: Pre-service teachers are responsible for the planning and delivery of effective learning experiences to meet the needs of children in an emotionally and physically safe environment. By the completion of the course, graduates must demonstrate the Graduate Standards of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (see Australian Institute for Teacher and School Leadership (AITSL), 2011 at <http://www.aitsl.edu.au/australian-professional-standards-for-teachers/standards/career-stage/graduate>

The Professional Knowledge and Cognitive Skills domain will be evident through:

- Satisfactory progress (passing all major assessments) in the course. Most units require all major assessment components to be passed in order to pass a unit. Failure of a component may constitute unsatisfactory progress and prevent placement on a Professional Practice.
- Demonstration of literacy and numeracy requirements within the top 30% of the population as required by AITSL. This may be demonstrated by university entrance requirements, undergraduate study, course entry testing and satisfactory fulfilment of in-course literacy requirements.
- Satisfactory performance on weekly school-based mentor reports and university supervisor reports (refer to Professional Practice Handbook and Professional Practice descriptors stage 1 and stage 2).
- Preparation of professional documentation (lesson plans, programs, curriculum resources presented in a Teaching File).
- Preparation and presentation of learning plans and materials consistently provided to mentor at least one day prior to delivery of lesson.
- Preparation and delivery of relevant learning experiences in a safe and controlled learning environment.
- Initiation of ideas for learning experiences and resource material.

The Professional Knowledge and Cognitive Skills domain will NOT be evident through:

- Failure to pass a required unit component or unsatisfactory progress within a unit.
- Unsatisfactory performance on weekly school-based mentor reports and university supervisor reports (refer to Professional Practice Handbook and Professional Practice descriptors stage 1 and stage 2).
- Unorganised/disorganised professional documentation or failure to present documentation.

- Inappropriate choices of lesson content, topics, resources and/or pedagogical strategies.
- Preparation or presentation of a lesson which places the safety of anyone at risk.

Illustrative Narrative accounts

Domain evident:

1304 Getting ideas on paper

I just passed my first assessment task and knew I had to work really hard to get through the second lesson programming task which was much bigger and harder. I have trouble saying exactly what I mean when I try to get my ideas down into words. I did a draft of the task and took it to my lecturer. He gave me some very clear feedback, but he also said that I needed to carefully edit my work because there were lots of spelling and grammar mistakes. I find it hard to concentrate on the content and the form of programming and my writing. I made an appointment to get some assistance from Student Services. They offer a range of workshops that help students with all sorts of skills. I really didn't have the time to spend on going to extra classes, but it was worth it in the end. I actually got a credit on the assignment and I learned so much – about making better plans for student learning and I'm making some slow progress with my writing.

*Domain **NOT** evident:*

1305 Back to the beginning

I developed a series of three lesson plans for a skills-based lesson for my curriculum unit in Physical Education. I spent a lot of time developing this assessment task and I couldn't believe it when I collected the task and found out I had received a fail. I saw the lecturer and she said that the lesson I had planned was dangerous and would put students at risk. She said the sequence of the activities was all wrong and that I didn't understand the requirements of the curriculum. I disagree entirely – and if she was a real teacher, she would see that my lessons are good. Anyway, she said I could resubmit the lesson plans but because I was resubmitting the best I could do was get a pass grade. I spent another week working on those lesson plans, not that they really needed any changing. When the lecturer failed the lesson plans a second time she said I could no longer pass the unit and I had to see the course coordinator. I made an appointment, but the course coordinator couldn't see how wrong the lecturer was. I now have to repeat the whole unit. It's so unfair.

3. Physical, Motor and Sensory Capabilities

Description: A pre-service teacher must demonstrate the physical, motor and sensory capabilities to provide learning experiences, interact with others, and safely supervise students in diverse settings, as relevant to the phase of learning and/or the curriculum specialisation. This includes the ability to receive information (hear and see) and produce intelligible speech. Having a physical, motor or sensory disability does not exclude a person

from Professional Practice. A pre-service teacher may have a degree of impairment which may not impact on capacity to meet IRs. All pre-service teachers will be required to complete a Fitness to Practice self-assessment and may request consideration for reasonable adjustment if they disclose and document a health or disability issue.

Justification: Pre-service teachers must be capable of visual and auditory supervision of students, vocal and motor responsiveness to students, and have fine and gross motor dexterity, relevant to the phase of learning and specialist learning areas. The requirements are phase of learning and discipline specific. For example, the ability to produce clear speech sounds is inherent in the early childhood phase when students are acquiring phonemic awareness. The ability to demonstrate gross motor dexterity is an inherent requirement of a physical education specialist, but may not be required by a Secondary English Teacher. These capabilities are essential to ensure the development of required skills and knowledge by school students.

The Physical, Motor and Sensory Capabilities domain will be evident by:

- Participation in and performance of tasks associated with classroom activities as required by the phase of learning and content specialist areas.
- Production of accurate speech for the delivery of content and instruction.
- Visual acuity, sufficient for safe supervision of students and the delivery of discipline/content specific skills.
- Auditory acuity, sufficient for safe supervision of students and discipline/content specific skills.
- Agility for movement around classroom or other learning environment, as required for phase of learning and subject specialisation.
- Fine motor skills of sufficient dexterity, as required for phase of learning and subject specialisation.
- Satisfactory performance on weekly school-based mentor reports and university supervisor reports (refer to Professional Practice Handbook and Professional Practice descriptors stage 1 and stage 2).

The Physical, Motor and Sensory Capabilities domain will NOT be evident through:

- Inability to participate in and perform tasks associated with classroom activities as required by the phase of learning and content specialist areas.
- Unclear/inaccurate oral production of speech.
- Insufficient agility due to mobility restrictions, such as obesity, especially in urgent safety situations.
- Inability to hear and respond to student communication, necessary for emergency situations.

Illustrative Narrative accounts

Domain evident:

1204 Building work

I was given a placement teaching Year 8 Mathematics. There were a lot of negotiations with the school and the university beforehand, because I have mobility issues that need to be taken into account. The school had recently retrofitted some of their buildings to be more accessible, so they were keen for me to 'test out' their facilities and made sure I was scheduled to teach in the wheelchair accessible parts of the campus.

What was more problematic was the need for my carer to attend the classes with me. My carer's presence has never been a problem at university. She has always accompanied me to class, and the university has made provisions for her to assist me during exams. I can read, write and communicate well on my own, but I need help getting things out of my bag, setting up my laptop and those sorts of mechanical tasks. The school allowed my carer to attend, but they were clearly curious about how we worked together. The principal sat in on my classes and the mentor teacher tried to talk to me through my carer, as if she was an interpreter. The students didn't know what to think about the extra pair of eyes on them. I am used to people feeling awkward around me, so I just got on with my work. Everyone else would adjust at their own pace.

Once everyone realised my carer wasn't doing the actual teaching work for me, but was just assisting with some physical tasks, the atmosphere lightened and I could tell I was being taken more seriously. The principal stopped visiting, my mentor teacher talked to me more naturally and the students looked more comfortable. I enjoyed my time there and had good evaluations for my classes. I noticed the school had started the building work to retrofit the remaining buildings, and I like to think I could work there sometime in the future.

*Domain **NOT** evident:*

1228 Turnaround time

I have a condition which makes it difficult for me to read or write for extended periods of time, and the university has provided me with extensions for assignments and adjusted examination conditions, which has been helpful. I have a First Class Honours degree in Geography, and I couldn't have achieved it without the adjustments.

I was disappointed, though, that I was not granted similar flexibility while I was on practicum. I was teaching a Year 11 Geography class, and I was not able to plan the lessons to the best of my ability because of the time constraints. The mentor teacher also expected me to mark assignments with a quick turnaround time. I could take breaks during the day, so I didn't get exhausted while I was teaching, but it was impossible to get the marking and preparation done quickly or thoroughly enough. This is a subject I am passionate about, so I was frustrated at how the circumstances prevented me from teaching it properly.

I talked to my supervisor about the problem. She was sympathetic, but said that there was only so much additional time I could have to do the work without it having an adverse impact

on the students or the academic rigour of the course. If I can't have more control over my working hours for my next practicum I will leave the course.

4. Communication and Relational Capabilities

Description: A pre-service teacher must demonstrate the ability to professionally communicate in English (orally, aurally, in writing and non-verbally) to diverse audiences (students, colleagues, caregivers, community members and other professionals). This includes demonstration of appropriate relational abilities for interpersonal communication, such as sensitivity and cultural competence. Pre-service teachers will demonstrate empathy by identifying situation causing distress, isolation or embarrassment and taking steps to ameliorate the situation.

Justification: Teaching requires clear communication (production and reception skills), interactive skills and the ability to work harmoniously with people of diverse backgrounds. Teaching requires the ability to build positive relationships with students, colleagues, caregivers, community members and other professionals through effective communication. Clear communication is required for instructional purposes.

The Communication and Relational Capabilities domain will be evident through:

- Demonstration of literacy requirements within the top 30% of the population as required by AITSL, including fluent spoken English and accurate written English skills. This may be demonstrated by university entrance requirements, undergraduate study, course entry testing and satisfactory fulfilment of in-course literacy requirements.
- Satisfactory progress (passing all major assessments) in course. Most units require all major assessment components to be passed in order to pass a unit. Failure of a component may constitute unsatisfactory progress and prevent placement on a Professional Practice.
- Satisfactory performance on weekly school-based mentor reports and university supervisor reports (refer to Professional Practice Handbook and Professional Practice descriptors stage 1 and stage 2).
- Polite, respectful and purposeful interaction with peers, university and school-based personnel (including visible, non-verbal expressions, facial and gestural).
- Professional tenor and register in communication for the intended audience.
- Adjustment of language and non-verbal behaviour for situation, purpose and audience.
- Awareness of and responsiveness to different cultural communication requirements.
- Production of logical and coherent professional documentation, such as lesson plans and learning resources.
- Comprehension of course materials and mentor instructions/directions.

The Communication and Relational Capabilities domain will NOT be evident through:

- Unsatisfactory performance on weekly school-based mentor reports and university supervisor reports (refer to Professional Practice Handbook and Professional Practice descriptors stage 1 and stage 2).
- Unclear /inaccurate oral speech or written production.
- Repeated intrusion into the personal space of colleagues and peers.
- Inability to interact professionally with school, university staff or peers.
- Inaccurate, illogical or incoherent professional documentation.

Illustrative Narrative accounts

Domain evident:

1211 Just a student

I was doing some preparation one afternoon in the classroom after everyone else had left when a parent came in and demanded to talk about how their child was doing, and to query the result of the last in-class test. I knew who the student was, but I wasn't comfortable talking about their progress without the mentor teacher present. I told the parent I was just a student and couldn't help, but that I'd ask the mentor teacher to contact them the following day. The parent wasn't happy and started shouting at me. I stayed calm and said I was sorry, but that that there was nothing I could do to help without the mentor teacher present. Eventually the parent left. I could understand the parent's frustration, but I didn't have enough background information or the necessary authority to speak about the student. I told the mentor teacher about the visit, and she was pleased I hadn't gone into any specifics with the parent.

1221 Proceed confidently

I was anxious about my practicum. Year 12 History was my favourite subject and I looked forward to teaching it, but I had concerns. I have dyslexia, so it takes me longer than most people to do written work. I kept on top of things for a week or so, but after that I could not put together decent lesson plans in time. I also made some embarrassing errors on the board – like saying a “Siberian” nationalist shot Francis Ferdinand or referring to the spread of “extremist wives”. The mentor teacher and supervisor both noticed I was floundering, and they said that if things continued the way they were it would be difficult for me to pass.

I had not told anyone at university about my disability before, but decided I needed to now. My supervisor then put me in touch with one of the disability advisers, who suggested some strategies specifically for a practicum environment.

I started preparing classes well in advance in order to keep up, and although I had to work many late nights it meant I didn't walk into a classroom unprepared. I also bought a hand-held spellchecker that made a world of difference when I had to write on the board. I could proceed confidently with my lesson, knowing the students wouldn't be sniggering at what I had written.

*Domain **NOT** evident:*

1219 Politically charged

I've been involved in student politics throughout my degree. I have the right to express my opinions about society and I am used to defending my position, vigorously if necessary. I know better than to bring politics into the classroom, though, and I expect others to respect that as well.

I had a placement teaching Year 10 History. The students liked the mentor teacher, but she presented the material in a way that was too politically charged for my liking. I wasn't going to challenge her there in the class, so I asked her to see me afterwards. We went into an empty classroom; I closed the door behind me and told her what I thought.

In my subsequent feedback I was told I was aggressive and threatening. I was disappointed: it was such a blatant attempt to silence me and to continue indoctrinating the students. I wasn't surprised when the supervisor sided with the mentor teacher, as I had suspected they had an ideological affinity. I hope in my next practicum I can be allocated a mentor and a supervisor who aren't affected by political prejudice.

5. Self-awareness and Self-management

Description: A pre-service teacher must demonstrate personal insight and self-management in order to make decisions and demonstrate conduct appropriate to challenging professional settings. This requires the ability to manage emotions, work under pressure, multi-task, receive performance feedback and retain a professional demeanour. It involves the ability to critically reflect on actions and decisions taken and consideration of alternative courses of action. Teachers require the ability to manage their behaviour in order to fulfil role requirements by managing time and fulfilling organisational commitments.

Justification: Teachers decision making and actions impact on the children in their care and the colleagues they work with. Personal insightfulness is necessary to ensure that teachers are aware of how their behaviours may be interpreted and impact on others. They require insight to enable reflection on their actions and interactions from a range of alternative perspectives. Teachers need to manage stress and emotions to preserve optimal learning environments for students and to maintain productive relationships with colleagues and parents. Teachers must present themselves as professionals to uphold the integrity of the profession.

The Self-awareness and Self-management domain will be evident through:

- Satisfactory performance on weekly school-based mentor reports and university supervisor reports (refer to Professional Practice Handbook and Professional Practice descriptors stage 1 and stage 2).
- Management of emotions and reactions in diverse and stressful situations.
- Insightfulness into the impact of personal conduct on others.
- Responsiveness to feedback.
- Maintaining a professional demeanour.
- Demonstration of insightfulness and constructive, critical reflection in a teaching journal and discussion with university and school-based staff.

- Organisational competence, demonstrated through completion of tasks on time (including submission of university assessments) and presentation of professional documentation (lesson plans, programs, curriculum resources) in a Teaching File.
- Professional presentation (choice of attire and attention to personal hygiene).

The Self-awareness and Self-management domain will NOT be evident through:

- Uncontrolled outbursts during professional discussions and feedback on performance.
- Lack of or untimely preparation/completion of tasks.
- Choice of attire which is not consistent with the standard of professionals within the school environment.
- Withdrawal from interaction with students, school-based or university staff.
- Failure to attend meetings to discuss performance issues.
- Uncritical reflections which focus on a limited range of areas of performance.

Illustrative Narrative accounts

Domain evident:

1208 Dressing for teaching

Just before I was due to go out on my first practicum I was asked to go talk to the university practicum coordinator. I thought something was wrong with my placement. I could see the coordinator wasn't comfortable, but she managed to say – in a firm but friendly way – that I needed to “invest in a more professional wardrobe” and went through the kinds of things I needed to consider when dressing for teaching. I knew I had to dress differently at work, but the instructions she gave me were much more prescriptive than I had expected. I couldn't afford to buy new clothes at that point, so I borrowed other items of clothing from friends that first term. I felt very conservative, but decided that was preferable to being considered unprofessional.

1215 No time for dinner

It was my final practicum and I was looking forward to finishing my degree. It had been a rough year: my relationship broke down, which changed my life around. I was past all that, though, and started my practicum confidently.

I started working later and later. I didn't have time to see my friends or prepare dinner. The mentor teacher commented that my lessons were good, but that she was worried about how tired I looked. I didn't think much of it: everyone gets tired sometime or another. As the weeks went on I became increasingly exhausted during the day and I found myself dreading going home to an empty flat. I realised it was the first practicum I had had to go through alone: I had no one to talk to and no other reason to get out of bed than teaching.

I didn't want to let anyone down, but in the end I had to go see a counsellor at university, and I took two weeks off to recover. I moved in with my brother and made an effort to reconnect with my friends. The rest of the practicum was easier once I had people around me. It has taken time, but I have learnt that I need social contact to manage my stress.

Domain **NOT** evident:

1209 Due respect

I was not happy with my placement. My mentor teacher was too young to have any valuable experience, and I couldn't take her seriously. She may have been a better match for one of the younger students, but I have higher standards. I couldn't raise the issue with the supervisor – she had been complicit in the placement selection and couldn't be unbiased – so I contacted the Dean of the Faculty straight away when I found out what had happened. She just referred me to the course coordinator, which was a little disappointing, but at least it did put them on notice.

I was called in to meet with the supervisor because of what the mentor teacher considered my "attitude problem": she said I didn't show her "due respect" and that I hadn't been taking any feedback on board. That wasn't true: I had addressed whatever comments I agreed with. I suspected it was all to do with me causing trouble for the pair of them earlier, and decided it was safest not to respond to the supervisor and contacted the University's student advocate instead.

6. Social awareness and responsiveness

Description: A pre-service teacher must demonstrate awareness and understanding of complex social, instructional and professional situations. This includes the ability to monitor changing behaviours of self and the reactions others and to adjust flexibly to complex, culturally diverse and rapidly changing professional situations. Teachers require the ability to monitor, interpret and quickly respond in classrooms, with colleagues, parents and caregivers, community members and other professionals.

Justification: Teaching is an inherently social activity, requiring interactions with individuals, small and large groups. An awareness of and ability to positively manage the dynamics of social interactions is essential for the provision of quality learning experiences for students and the creation of a harmonious and productive work environment.

The Social awareness and responsiveness domain will be evident through:

- Satisfactory performance on weekly school-based mentor reports and university supervisor reports (refer to Professional Practice Handbook and Professional Practice descriptors stage 1 and stage 2).
- Through appropriate collegial interactions with peers, school-based and university personnel.

- Constructive, productive, social and professional interaction with colleagues, caregivers and other professionals.
- Cultural competence (understanding and acceptance of cultural diversity, demonstrated through appropriate interactions with others).
- Adaptability/flexibility to changing situations.
- Working collaboratively to achieve positive outcomes.

The Social awareness and responsiveness domain will NOT be evident through:

- Continued reluctance to engage and participate in tasks and interactions when informed of expectations by school-based or university staff.
- Unlawful discriminatory interaction or unlawful discriminatory use of language, for example, language or behaviour that serves to alienate, divide, or isolate on the basis of an aspect of the person's identity.
- Use of offensive language or attempts at humour which cause offence.
- Repeated intrusion on personal space after being informed of expectations by school-based or university staff.
- Use of social media for interaction with students that is inconsistent with school, University and sector policy.
- Inability to adjust behaviour to a variety of professional contexts and roles.
- Acting beyond the role requirements of a pre-service teacher.

Illustrative Narrative accounts

Domain evident:

1211 Just a student

I was doing some preparation one afternoon in the classroom after everyone else had left when a parent came in and demanded to talk about how their child was doing, and to query the result of the last in-class test. I knew who the student was, but I wasn't comfortable talking about their progress without the mentor teacher present. I told the parent I was just a student and couldn't help, but that I'd ask the mentor teacher to contact them the following day. The parent wasn't happy and started shouting at me. I stayed calm and said I was sorry, but that that there was nothing I could do to help without the mentor teacher present. Eventually the parent left. I could understand the parent's frustration, but I didn't have enough background information or the necessary authority to speak about the student. I told the mentor teacher about the visit, and she was pleased I hadn't gone into any specifics with the parent.

*Domain **NOT** evident:*

1201 A delicate matter

From the first day my mentor teacher made references to "professional presentation" and "personal hygiene", but it was hard to tell whether she was serious or not. I always dressed neatly, so I didn't think much of it. After a couple of weeks my supervisor asked to see me. He said it was about a delicate matter: students had complained about my body odour and the mentor teacher was finding it hard to work with me because of it. It was humiliating. I didn't

know how I could face any of them again. I tried conforming for a while, but in the end I objected to being held to some outrageously high standard of cleanliness, and refused to let the school dictate my life down to the frequency of showers and shirt changes.

1205 Clean slate

I was finding it difficult getting work with my existing degree, so I needed a new qualification quickly. I didn't want to live with my parents any longer than I had to. My Mum thought teaching would be the way to go, so I enrolled.

I had some difficulties in my practicum: the mentor teacher agreed I wrote good lesson plans, but I found it frustrating when the students didn't follow the plan. I also didn't like explaining the same things over and over again to the dumber students, so I started to just address the ones who were keeping up. It was unreasonable to expect me to teach students of different abilities at the same time: once I had my own class after graduating I'd have a clean slate and could teach all of them properly from the start so these problems wouldn't arise. I toned it down when the mentor teacher asked me to so that I'd pass the practicum, but in the end she still wasn't happy. The supervisor got involved. He said I needed to reconsider whether teaching was really the right career for me. I'm not going to back down now: I've only got one more semester to go and then I can be in charge of my own class.

7. Sustained professional conduct.

Description: A pre-service teacher must sustain professional and ethical conduct for the duration of a full time teaching practicum (over 5 day blocks of attendance). This involves the ability to sustain the preparation and delivery of learning experiences with behavioural stability for the required teaching load and length of the practicum. It includes the ability to work constructively and respond appropriately with students, colleagues and others. They need to demonstrate objectivity and resilience over the course of a day and for the duration of the teaching practicum. They need to demonstrate independence, competence and management of the workload over time.

Justification: Teachers work both independently and collaboratively in settings which can be unpredictable, diverse and challenging. They need to provide stability and consistency in their interactions with students and colleagues to ensure the physical, psychological and emotional well-being of all parties.

The Sustained professional conduct domain will be evident through:

- By fulfilling the requirements for ethical conduct as described in the Graduate standards of the APST.
- Satisfactory performance on weekly school-based mentor reports and university supervisor reports (refer to Professional Practice Handbook and Professional Practice descriptors stage 1 and stage 2).
- Reliable and punctual attendance.
- Consistent preparation and diligence.

- Consistent demeanour in interaction with students and others.
- Perseverance.
- Ability to problem solve to overcome challenges.
- Attention to privacy and confidentiality requirements of the profession.
- Honesty and integrity.
- Responsiveness to performance feedback.

The Sustained professional conduct domain will NOT be evident through:

- Unexplained absences.
- Repeated incidents of inappropriate emotional reactions.
- Erratic/inconsistent conduct or comments.
- Helplessness or inaction demonstrated by lack of ability to seek out appropriate assistance and support.
- Excessive dependence on others.
- Dishonesty or corrupt/criminal practices.
- Inconsistent or inequitable management of student behaviour.

Illustrative Narrative accounts

Domain evident:

1214 Moments of triumph

I was placed in a rough school in a small regional town. As the days went on and the students still wouldn't respond to my lessons I started to doubt myself. I decided I needed to focus on what an incredible learning opportunity the placement was and think about all the progress I had made – not just during the practicum but over the whole course – and to use all those positive things to motivate me further and keep working harder to connect with the students.

I designed lessons complete with back-up activities and supplementary materials and became good at adapting the lessons depending on how the class responded. I looked out for the students' individual moments of triumph over particular problems to remind myself of the whole point of teaching in the first place. After a while the students became more engaged in lessons and I started to understand their individual approaches to learning in more detail. By the end of the practicum I had learnt more than in any of my previous practicums, and I knew I had made a real difference in the students' lives as well.

*Domain **NOT** evident:*

1226 Left out and lonely

I was placed in a small rural school several hours away from the city. The principal picked me up from the airport. He was cheery and gave me a welcome pack the teachers and students had put together: maps, photos, local anecdotes, cartoons. They all meant well, but the school came across as more run down than I had expected, and the teachers seemed rough, too. It was late and a long drive, so I pretended to sleep.

Arriving in town confirmed all my fears about the place. Everything was dirty and old and no amount of friendly chatter from the staff would change that. I was due to stay with my mentor teacher, but she had some urgent family business in the city so I had the first night on my own. It was wrong, me staying in her house while she was where I was supposed to be. I thought about the things my friends would be doing, and I felt left out and lonely.

I didn't want to pull out of the prac before it began, so I waited until I had observed a couple of classes before I called my supervisor and said I was homesick and had suffered mental health issues before. When I got back home the supervisor fixated on my mental health – whether my family knew about it or if I had seen a specialist – when the problem was that the school was wrong for me.

1220 Playing favourites

I had some difficulty with my mentor teacher: he didn't treat me as an equal and he tended to be abrupt with the students, too. When one of the students told me they all preferred me to the mentor teacher I wasn't surprised, and I said as much. It's important to encourage students to speak their mind, so I talked for a while about how unfriendly the mentor teacher was.

It turns out the student went and told the mentor teacher about it. I denied saying anything damaging, and pointed out it wouldn't have been the first time a student tried to play favourites. The mentor teacher let it be, but he kept a closer eye on me from then on. I grumbled something about being kept on a tight lead to one of the teacher's assistants, and when that got back to the mentor teacher he contacted my supervisor. The mentor teacher didn't want me back, so I had to go on another placement. I realised the full implications of what I'd done when I heard the school didn't want any practicum students for the rest of the year. It took me a couple of weeks to come to terms with what had happened, and then I went to see the original mentor teacher to apologise. It was tough, but I'm pleased I did it.