

Preservice teachers' struggles in literacy curriculum-making: Moving beyond the 'delivery' of pre-made and commercial English materials.

The use of standardised and low-variance curriculum materials is becoming increasingly commonplace in Australia as systems prioritise 'evidence-based' approaches across classrooms, particularly in literacy instruction. The use of such materials is seen to ensure curriculum fidelity, while reinforcing the transmission of procedural, and testable, literacy knowledge and skills. Joining a crowded commercial marketplace of ready-made lesson resources, systems are heavily investing in the development and implementation of detailed lesson plans to support the explicit and systematic teaching of reading and writing (NSW Department of Education, 2024; Victorian Department of Education, 2025). While existing research has explored teachers' engagement with such materials, there are limited insights into the experiences of preservice teachers and the implications the shifting curriculum landscape has on their development as future curriculum-makers in English.

Through a qualitative, multiple case study approach, this study investigates how preservice teachers engage with standardised English materials during professional experience placements and the implications for their development as future curriculum-makers. From semi-structured interviews, we explore the reported experiences of 12 preservice teachers from New South Wales and Victoria, mapping them to a continuum of curriculum-making experiences. By then delving into three cases, we explore how standardised English materials are used by preservice teachers, highlighting the limitations of placement experiences that prioritise the sole delivery of such materials. We invite consideration to the potential longer-term implications where delivery, rather than critical adaptation, becomes the 'norm' in preservice teachers' engagement with these materials. We argue for greater opportunities for these future curriculum-makers to engage with these materials in ways that promote more responsive and contextualised forms of English instruction through curriculum-focused mentoring offered by both supervising teachers and teacher educators.

References

New South Wales Department of Education. (2024). *English K-2 units*.

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