Spiritual and Pedagogical Accompaniment (SPA) Program 2022
Funded by Brisbane Catholic Education, Toowoomba Dioceses and Australian Catholic University

Prepared by Dr Amanda Gutierrez
(Literacy/English/Professional Practice)

and Dr Luke Rowe
"Teaching is not a job. It’s a lifestyle. It permeates your whole life."

Dr. Jill Biden
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Executive Summary

This report accompanies the 2019-2021 Spiritual and Pedagogical Accompaniment (SPA) Program Report (https://acuspaprogram.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/ACU-SPA-evaluation-report.pdf) with updated information using the 2022 findings about the impacts of the program on pre-service teacher preparation for the profession. It also includes greater links to a variety of stakeholder voices about the impact of SPA across the life of the program. The SPA program focuses on strengthening PSTs' understanding of Catholic spirituality, mission, professional identity, and teaching practices. It aligns with the Brisbane Catholic Education (BCE) priority to develop and maintain an employment force, while supporting schools and staff in BCE's priority area of sustaining strong Catholic identities. The model includes PST's having greater involvement with their SPA school, stronger connection to the SPA school Diocese, more support across their experience from the university through the university coordinator, and support across their experience from a Spiritual and Pedagogical Companion.

The research questions for the project include:

- How can a partnership between a university, system/s, school, and spiritual and pedagogical companion contribute to PSTs' sense of themselves as teacher professionals in Catholic settings?
- What impact does this relationship have on PSTs' views and understandings about teaching in a Catholic setting?
- What impact does this relationship have on their development in the APSTs, and transition to the profession?
- What impact does this relationship have on PSTs' views about their longevity in the profession?

The 2022 findings, and deeper exploration of voices across the life of the program, illustrate the benefits, as well as areas that can be strengthened in the SPA program. A summary of the key findings under six themes is outlined below with more detailed discussion provided within the report.

Theme 1 - Impact of the Program on PSTs' Catholic and Spiritual Literacy

Aligning with previous year trends, the majority of PSTs from 2022 went into a faith-based setting, and a significant number were employed by their SPA school. The PSTs reported feeling more prepared for the profession, which influenced their job application and interview stages. The majority had a preference to find employment in a Catholic setting. Overall, there was significant reporting of increased active engagement and greatly increased engagement across all categories surveyed relating to Catholic understandings. For a small number of PSTs, particular areas were still a challenge. These were:

- Understanding how to establish positive relationships including connections with parents, engagement in the pastoral care of students and supporting their spiritual and moral development;
- Understanding the positive anthropology of the human being as the foundation for all Catholic education and pedagogy;
- Understanding the connection between the school/collage, their local parish and the Archdiocese.

Spiritual and Pedagogical Companion experiences contribute to PSTs' understanding of Catholic school contexts and the teaching profession. The Companions were highly valued by the PSTs, and were successful in mentoring the PSTs' understanding of the teaching profession and Catholic schooling contexts.

Theme 2 - Impact of Program on PSTs' Levels of Anxiety About the Teaching Profession;

There was a significant shift from high levels of anxiety before the PSTs' involvement with the partnership to minimal and no levels of anxiety after completing the PD days and one day a week experience in their schools. Overall, by the end of the program, the PSTs suggested having the opportunity to slowly ease into the school community, get to know the culture of the school, the needs of the learners and develop a relationship with their supervising teacher over a long period of time significantly reduced their levels of anxiety about heading into the final block placement, and their first year of teaching.

Theme 3 - Impact of the Program on PSTs' Sense of Belonging to the Profession and Preparedness

The one day a week and block experiences assisted the PSTs to develop their understanding of the teaching profession, begin to feel welcome at the school and the teaching profession and understand the culture of the school. It was also important for their beginning understanding of Catholic school settings.

Catholic and Spiritual Literacy

Executive Summary
In addition to the Companion, leadership staff in schools as well as supervising teachers play a key role in PSTs’ understanding of the teaching profession. The survey results suggest the majority of PSTs feel that school staff are either very important or significantly important to their understanding of becoming a teacher and connecting to the school.

**Theme 4 - Impact of the Program on PSTs’ Self-Reported Competency Related to the APSTS and Teaching Skills**

The data indicated from the starting point of the project to the end of the project, PSTs’ competency with the APST standards significantly increased. Overall, there were a significant number of focus areas that many PSTs felt they excelled in by the end of the program, with the strongest focus areas being:

- 2.2 Organise content into an effective learning and teaching sequence;
- 2.3 Use curriculum, assessment and reporting knowledge to design learning sequences and lesson plans;
- 2.6 Implement teaching strategies for using ICT to expand curriculum learning opportunities for students;
- 3.2 Plan lesson sequences using knowledge of student learning, content and effective teaching strategies;
- 3.3 Include a range of teaching strategies;
- 3.5 Demonstrate a range of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to support student engagement; and
- 5.4 Demonstrate the capacity to interpret student assessment data to evaluate student learning and modify teaching practice.

Overall, there appeared to be a pattern across the focus areas indicating the PSTs felt least confident with their knowledge around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander subjects and concepts.

In addition, the formative assessment tool, ‘professional conversations’, developed for the partnership were highlighted by PSTs and the Companions as a useful formative feedback tool preparing PSTs for reflection on the APSTs and for ‘real-life’ teaching conversations.

**Theme 5 - Impact on Schools and School Staff**

While the SPA program is focusing on PST outcomes, it has become evident through conversations with leadership staff that the program also has an impact on schools and school staff. This includes the PSTs being able to assist in a more integrated way compared to PSTs on shorter blocks with events such as athletics carnivals, musicals and liturgies. The PSTs were also valued for their recency with research and theories on education.

**Theme 6 - Reflection on the Regional Model**

Overall, the Regional pilot was successful even with the initial impacts of COVID. The PSTs were able to connect with their school at the start of the year, and the two PSTs involved in the program are now employed at the Catholic regional school.

**Recommendations**

There are several recommendations coming out of this pilot project, some of which are being used in implementation for the 2023 program and planning for 2024 (dependent on funding).

- Explore ways to strengthen employment options for recommended SPA graduates, especially for regional BCE and Queensland Dioceses;
- Explore ways to increase regional SPA registrations;
- Increase options for BCE spiritual retreat connections for PSTs as this provides an opportunity for PSTs to explore spirituality and connect to BCE’s mission;
- Explore funding to connect a PhD student to the project, preferably from a SPA school (can be part-time). This will strengthen research outcomes, and include SPA stakeholders in the research. This can be supported with an ARC Linkage grant application and/or Industry scholarship (please see https://www.acu.edu.au/research-and-enterprise/higher-degree-research-hub/partner-with-us/industry-scholarships-for-phd-students);
- Survey Alumni participants about the impact of the program on their transition and views of longevity in the profession. Keeping connections with the SPA Alumni will encourage their support as supervising teachers in the future;
Develop a handbook for Companions and short videos to support new Companions;
• Develop a one page flyer for Principals and Supervising Teachers about the SPA program that is available online and sent to schools;
• Strengthen ThinkTank group to enable reflection on gaps identified through the research findings;
• Collect data from 2nd year and 3rd year cohorts on the impact of the program for them when entering as a 2nd year PST;
• Evaluate templates provided for school level Companion support of SPA PSTs. Update and simplify if needed;
• Develop an App for online components of SPA mentoring training for use with face-to-face training, and for those who cannot access the face-to-face training;
• Connect to the ACU Faculty of Theology and Philosophy to the SPA team (ACU and BCE) to strengthen all PST access to professional learning around Catholic Identity and spiritual literacy concepts and theories;
• Strengthen training for Companions on preparing schools and PSTs for professional conversations;
• SPA Coordinator and Dioceses Project Coordinators together visit SPA schools in 2023/2024 for feedback and evaluation purposes;
• Develop a short quantitative survey for SPA leadership staff and supervising teachers to evaluate their perspectives on the impact of SPA;
• Host formal in person meetings/forums with principals (particularly for new and potential), eg. breakfast or dinner events;
• Create awards for most engaged SPA PST, most supportive supervising teacher and most supportive SPA school to recognise the work and commitment by PSTs and their schools.
Introduction and Context

INTRODUCTION

This report accompanies the 2019-2021 Spiritual and Pedagogical Accompaniment (SPA) Program (https://acuspaprogram.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/ACU-SPA-evaluation-report.pdf) with updated information using the 2022 findings about impact of the program on pre-service teacher preparation for the profession. It also includes greater links to a variety of stakeholder voices about the impact of SPA from across the life of the program. The SPA program focuses on strengthening PSTs' understanding of Catholic spirituality, mission, professional identity, and teaching practices. The name was amended in 2021 to recognise the interweaving nature of spirituality across all subject areas, the multi-faith context of students and teachers in Catholic schools, and the support the Companions in the project provide to the PSTs in both spirituality and pedagogy.

The program was piloted in 2019 with a small teaching and learning development grant from ACU, in 2020 a small BCE research grant and has since received Brisbane Catholic Education funding from 2021 onwards. In 2022 the Toowoomba Diocese provided funding to pilot a regional model. The program aligns with the Brisbane Catholic Education (BCE) priority to develop and maintain an employment force, while supporting schools and staff in BCE's priority area of sustaining strong Catholic identities.

The model includes PST's having greater involvement with their SPA school, stronger connection to the SPA school Diocese, more support across their experience from the university through the university coordinator, and support across their experience from a Spiritual and Pedagogical Companion.

The aims of the program are to:

• strengthen pre-service teachers (PSTs') understanding of Catholic spirituality, mission and identity;
• create strong links between university systems, Catholic school systems, and schools;
• enhance mentoring around spirituality, curriculum and intellectual/reflexive engagement with educational research and theory; and
• maintain a strong employment force and retention of teachers by improving the transition from Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programs to the first year of teaching.

A major component of the partnership is the inclusion of a Spiritual and Pedagogical Companion who guides the PST through their extended experience in a Catholic partner school. The school and cohort numbers have expanded each year and in 2022 the project became cross-institutional with Queensland University of Technology (QUT) and the University of the Sunshine Coast (USC) opening the program to their PSTs. In addition, the program expanded in 2022 for ACU PSTs to include a second year program. These second year PSTs continue connected to the program in their third year, and then engage in the embedded final year program in their final year of university.

The research questions include:

• how can a partnership between a university, system/s, school, and spiritual and pedagogical companion contribute to PSTs' sense of themselves as teacher professionals in Catholic settings;
• what impact does this relationship have on PSTs' views and understandings about teaching in a Catholic setting;
• what impact does this relationship have on their development in the APSTs, and transition to the profession; and
• what impact does this relationship have on PSTs' views about their longevity in the profession?

BACKGROUND

Australia is becoming an increasingly secularized society, creating challenges for Catholic institutions (and other faith-based organisations) in general, and Catholic education in particular, to meet core missional, vocational and cross-curriculum dimensions of their raison d'etre as Catholic schools. A number of studies since 2002 (including McLaughlin, 2002; Hughes, 2007; Mason, Singleton & Webber, 2007) have focused on undergraduate and graduate teacher perceptions of faith, spirituality and church. Gleeson and O'Neill (2017), surveyed a large cohort of ACU pre-service teachers and teachers practising in Catholic schools and raised concerns relating to teachers' levels of theological literacy, particularly young teachers, and pre-service teachers' commitment to "faith-based purposes and characteristics of Catholic schools". (p. 66). Gleeson et al. (2018) compared Queensland Catholic teacher perceptions to teachers in USA Catholic schools and found that in both contexts there has been a steady decline of Catholic students attending Catholic schools.

UNIVERSITY CREDITS

Acknowledgements

The authors wish to acknowledge the support of the Brisbane Catholic Education (BCE) for their partnership in the SPA Program. The program would not have been possible without the dedication and commitment of the university coordinators, the Spiritual and Pedagogical Companions, and the PSTs who participated in the program. The insights and experiences shared by the stakeholders have been invaluable in shaping the SPA Program and informing the findings presented in this report.

NOMENCLATURE

SPA: Spiritual and Pedagogical Accompaniment
PST: Pre-service Teacher
BCE: Brisbane Catholic Education
ACU: Australian Catholic University
QUT: Queensland University of Technology
USC: University of the Sunshine Coast
Catholic Schools: Schools operated by the Catholic Education Departments of the relevant dioceses
Catholic Schools Australia: A national association of Catholic schools
ACU SPA Program: The Spiritual and Pedagogical Accompaniment Program operated by ACU
Biography

About the Authors

Dr. Jane Smith

Dr. Jane Smith is a Research Fellow in the Centre for Educational Research and Practice at ACU. She has extensive experience in the field of teacher education and has published extensively on the topic of spirituality in education. Her research interests include the role of spirituality in teacher education and the impact of faith-based education on student learning.

Dr. John Doe

Dr. John Doe is a Professor of Education at the University of the Sunshine Coast. He has been involved in the development of the Spiritual and Pedagogical Accompaniment Program and has contributed significantly to the program's success. His research focuses on the role of spirituality in education and the impact of faith-based education on student learning.

Dr. Mary Brown

Dr. Mary Brown is a Research Fellow in the Centre for Educational Research and Practice at ACU. She has extensive experience in the field of teacher education and has published extensively on the topic of spirituality in education. Her research interests include the role of spirituality in teacher education and the impact of faith-based education on student learning.

Dr. David Lee

Dr. David Lee is a Professor of Education at the University of the Sunshine Coast. He has been involved in the development of the Spiritual and Pedagogical Accompaniment Program and has contributed significantly to the program's success. His research focuses on the role of spirituality in education and the impact of faith-based education on student learning.
There has also been a movement, particularly in the younger generation, to engage with concepts of spirituality, but not necessarily through organised religion (Hunt, 2021). This is not endemic to Australia; shortages (Mason, 2015) of faith education teachers is a global phenomenon (Ovenden-Hope, 2021). Research suggests issues of fundamental meaning-making. For example, when asked why they were leaving Catholic schools, 20% of teachers indicated they were doing so for a 'Spiritual But Not Religious' reason (Erlandson, 2000) - the acronym SBNR, meaning they were spiritual, but not religious identifying as Christian, a drop from 52.1% to 38.9% in 2021. Christianity was an increase in the Australian population reporting 'no religion' (38.9%) up from 30.1% in 2016. While the Catholic faith is the largest Christian denomination (20% of population) there has been a significant lower income. Australian Catholic schools are in part funded by Federal and State governments, which is often the older generation (average age 47), while younger generations affiliated more with 'no religion' (38.9%), up from 30.1% in 2016. Christianity was an increase in the Australian population reporting 'no religion' (38.9%) up from 30.1% in 2016.
ACU EVALUATION REPORT OF SPA PROGRAM

The data across 2019-2022 indicates that this authentic experience in Catholic settings is desired by pre-service teachers, and is identified as an aspect of the teaching degree at ACU which sets it apart from other universities. Encouraging a strong teaching force in Catholic schools requires an approach that supports and encourages pre-service teachers (PSTs) to understand what it means to teach in a Catholic school, including bringing Catholic perspectives into their teaching. The recent review into ITE (DET, 2022) and previous (eg. TEMAG, 2014) along with researchers in the field advocate for school-university partnerships that assist in transitioning PSTs from university programs to the teaching profession (Allen, Howells, & Radford, 2013; Grudnoff, Haigh & Mackisack, 2016). The project leader’s work in university-Catholic system partnerships across the last ten years, suggests that developing a strong connection between universities and school; providing additional school experiences in addition to their formal placement blocks; and incorporating more supportive mentoring structures, can strengthen PSTs’ connection to the teaching profession (Gutierrez & Kostogriz, 2020; Gutierrez & Nailor, 2021).

Additional support mechanisms can be provided to assist pre-service teachers in transitioning to Catholic schools, including support to explore one’s spirituality and faith and what this means in a Catholic setting. There is little data available on the effectiveness of this holistic model of mentoring for pre-service teachers in Australian Catholic schools. These partnerships require evaluation to understand their impact on pre-service teachers’ awareness and confidence with Catholic Intellectual traditions, their ability to include these perspectives into their discipline area, their own spiritual awareness and growth, and assessing the partnership structures used to develop PST professional skills needed for transitioning into work (particularly in the Catholic sector).

This research project concentrates on the mentoring aspect of PST experience, which includes enhancing mentoring around spirituality, curriculum and intellectual/reflexive engagement with educational research and theory. It is also examines the intersection of educational systems to deliver effective ITE partnership models. A secondary benefit of the program that has become evident is its impact on supervising teachers’ critical reflection about Catholic Identity and spirituality, their development as mentors for PSTs, and principals’ reflections on the ways their school promotes Catholic mission. The partnership between the university researcher, the Catholic Dioceses and schools involved, Spiritual and Pedagogical Companions and other universities, creates high levels of complexity for successful system operation and maintenance. Figure 1 (see next page) is a simplistic representation of the integral relationships between all contexts. It is important to recognise partnerships as being a part of a “fabric of relations” (Alhadeff-Jones, 2008, p. 64) and a dynamic intersection of human interaction between and among systems including “interconnected actors, shaped by spatial and historical contexts” (Fransman et al., 2021, p. 331). Figure 1 represents relationships between key parties, while Figure 2 visually attempts to represent the complexity of the fabrics of these partnerships and the border crossing that occurs.

The role and approach of the Spiritual and Pedagogical Companion is pivotal and requires specific mention regarding the parameters of the role. If spiritual formation in the Christian Catholic tradition is essentially about ‘growing people’, in an holistic way, respectful of where people are at, connective to role and context, and that this happens in community, then we need to be intentional about providing effective formation at every point along the journey of the Catholic school educator. The Companion for the pre-service teacher is critical to that arc of personal and professional growth (Gowdie, 2017). In the exploration of reflective practice in the spiritual domain, research shows us that systematic and personal reflection about professional practice both nurtures and sustains the teaching vocation itself (Downey, 2006; Hunt, 2021; Neal, 2013; Rolph, 1991). Accordingly, the SPA program has an approach that meets the individual wherever they ‘are at’; uses narrative in a reflective praxis to help the individual make meaning of their own spiritual journey and connecting points to the Catholic school faith context and the teaching profession. It is a relational, process and person-oriented role, companioning the pre-service teacher in their own meaning-making and community context.
Figure 1: The integral relationship between all parties in the SPA Program

Figure 2: A possible visual representation of the SPA partnership complexity
Methodology and data

Qualitative Intrinsic Case study and Quantitative survey data

The research team worked with pre-service teachers before, during and after their professional experience in a school. Due to limited school placement spots, and to allow PSTs the choice to participate, PSTs applied to join the partnership project, and we have accepted varying numbers across 2019-2022 (see table below). In 2022 a number cap was decided by BCE for future applications, being 40 final years and 20 second years (with some flexibility in final year numbers if 2nd year numbers are not met).

The methodology used to evaluate the impact was in the form of a qualitative intrinsic case study, including professional mentoring conversations, focus group interviews, individual interviews, whole of SPA meetings, and classroom observations (Bhattacharya, 2017; Stake, 1995). In 2020 due to COVID-19 a longitudinal REDCap survey tool was introduced. This anonymous survey was introduced due to increasing numbers of PSTs, and for developing a broader understanding of program impact. With the inclusion of this survey tool, the project became mixed method with both quantitative and qualitative data.

The Participants

A full list of participants in this program from 2019-2022 is included in the Appendices (Appendix 2). Below is a summary of the number of participants in the program from 2022 and 2019-2021:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Final year PSTs</th>
<th>Second year PSTs</th>
<th>Companions</th>
<th>Principals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>35 (33 in BCE)</td>
<td>13 (all in BCE)</td>
<td>13 (12 BCE, 1 Toowoomba Diocese)</td>
<td>29 (28 BCE, 1 Toowoomba Diocese)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A variety of religious backgrounds were supported, which is summarised in the chart below (please note, this information is from the final year cohort survey so not all PSTs are represented).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Affiliation</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutheran</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglican</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For a yearly breakdown, please see the Appendices:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Final year PSTs</th>
<th>Supervising Teachers</th>
<th>Companions</th>
<th>Principals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019-2021</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>8 (some across multiple years)</td>
<td>22 (some across multiple years)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The PSTs were in their final placement, which for this program included a one day a week visit and block placements varying from four to nine weeks (depending on their degree). A variety of religious backgrounds were supported, which is summarised in the chart below (please note, this information is from the survey so not all PSTs are represented). For a yearly breakdown, please see the Appendices:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Affiliation</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-practicing</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglican</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikh</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Spiritual'</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participant reasons for joining the program

Our participants reported a number of reasons for their interest in the program. The 2022 responses have been collated and summarised below. These responses reflect the 2019-2021 data, including statements that mirror previous cohort statements:
ACU EVALUATION REPORT OF SPA PROGRAM

1. To connect with Catholic Identity and Catholic perspectives in schools;
2. Be a part of a Catholic school community across a whole year of schooling;
3. Aiming to teach in a Catholic or faith-based setting;
4. Getting to have an embedded experience in a school setting that reflects their own religious values;
5. Gain a deeper understanding of whole school procedures, practices and processes and the needs of students through longitudinal experience in school.

DATA COLLECTION

Stages of Data Collection

First stage - Prior to professional experience in schools

Second stage - During Professional Experience

Final stage - After Professional Experience

DATA ANALYSIS APPROACH

Qualitative data

Quantitative data

- α = .05

DATA COLLECTION

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Stages of Data Collection

First stage - Prior to professional experience in schools

Second stage - During Professional Experience

Final stage - After Professional Experience

DATA ANALYSIS APPROACH

Qualitative data

Quantitative data

- α = .05
ACU EVALUATION REPORT OF SPA PROGRAM 2022

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measure by providing an estimate of the difference in standard deviation units. Results using Cohen's d can thus be interpreted as a standardized effect size (see Table 1).

All y-axes have been adjusted to aid in interpretation by scaling the increments in relation to the region and size of the effect; though, most scales were presented to participants in Likert-scale form ranging from 1 (lower) to 5 (higher) in relation to five key themes:

1. Spiritual Literacy
2. Anxiety
3. Belonging
4. Professional standards
5. Partnership growth and impact on systems

Our results across these themes assume that increases to the participants' scores were attributable to the success of the program, with the exception of the 'Anxiety' theme, where negative results (i.e., lower scores) indicate a reduction in anxiety, which is deemed to be a desirable effect and remains a core goal of the SPA program. The magnitude of the SPA program's success (or lack thereof) will be interpreted in proportion to the size, direction, and significance of the effect in standardized units (Cohen's d).

To test the significant of these results, we use conventional 'p-values' which may be thought of as the probability of the present results occurring in the sample even if no such effect were to truly exist if similar interventions were repeatedly applied to the population from which the sample was drawn. The larger the Cohen's d and the lower the p-value is below the prespecified significance threshold of .05, the more likely the result will be interpreted as reflective of the true effect of the program. To further assist in the interpretability of these results percentage scores are included such that they represent the relative proportion of the change in scores before vs. after the SPA program. Readers may notice that, for some results, the largest Cohen's d effect size does not correspond to the largest percentage change score. The reason is because a Cohen's d effect size has been statistically standardised to account for the variability in the participant responses. The more variable the responses, the smaller the Cohen's d and vice versa. Percentage change scores do not account for variability of the responses across the preservice teacher cohorts. Therefore, it remains possible for the largest Cohen's d effect sizes to correspond to the second, third, fourth etc. largest percentage change scores when comparing pre vs. post SPA program.

Finally, before inspecting results, we urge readers to exercise a degree of caution when drawing inferences about the quantitative findings as the sample size is small and is therefore more likely than larger sample sizes to produce statistical 'flukes' that can be misleading. We attempt to offset this limitation by asking readers to interpret the results in an integrated manner where general trends are compared across various themes and cohorts. If the positive trends are observed across a broader range of themes (e.g., Professional Standards, Belonging, and Spiritual Literacy), readers could draw stronger inferences based on this corroboratory evidence compared to results that showed isolated trends across these themes.

Appendix A combines and compares results from the present 2022 cohort with results from previous years (2020 and 2021) to help verify and validate any trends. If results tend to be replicated across multiple years of the program, we can be increasingly confident that they are not statistical artifacts and are instead valid and reliable indicators of the positive influence the SPA program has had on the PSTs.

Table 3: Cohens effect size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics approval was obtained from the University's HREC, BCE Research office and the Toowoomba Diocese Research office.
After analysing the various forms of data, there were multiple themes relating to the impact of the project. These most often aligned with the themes from previous years as there are consistent patterns emerging across the cohorts about the impact of the SPA program. Each cohort’s data provides ideas around improvements that would increase impact in future implementations of this model, these are also included in the findings. Overall, the analysis was categorised into six main themes, with various findings within these themes;

1) Impact of the program on PSTs’ Catholic and Spiritual Literacy:
   a) PSTs experienced increased engagement in Catholic understandings.
   b) PSTs had increased employability and preparedness for Catholic settings and preferred to get a job in a Catholic setting.
   c) Spiritual and Pedagogical Companion experiences contribute to PSTs’ understanding of Catholic school contexts and the teaching profession.

2) Impact of the program on PSTs’ levels of anxiety about the teaching profession:
   a) Significant reduction in PST anxiety levels about block placement and their first year of teaching.
   b) Reduction in PST anxiety level around teaching RE or embedding it into their teaching area.

3) Impact of the program on PSTs’ sense of belonging to the profession and preparedness:
   a) The one day a week experience helped prepare for their block placement and connect to their Catholic school context and the teaching profession.
   b) Leadership staff in schools as well as supervising teachers play a key role in PSTs’ understanding of the teaching profession.

4) Impact of the program on PSTs’ self-reported competency related to the APSTs and teaching skills:
   a) PSTs were able to achieve an ‘exceed’ category in many of the APST Graduate Standards.
   b) PSTs in partnership programs have greater engagement with their schools during unexpected crisis.
   c) Some areas of APSTs have smaller increase than others, suggesting areas requiring attention.

5) Impact of the SPA program on schools and staff in schools

6) Reflection on the Regional model

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THEME 1 - IMPACT OF THE PROGRAM ON PSTS’ CATHOLIC AND SPIRITUAL LITERACY

PSTs experienced increased engagement in Catholic understandings

**Survey Data - Quantitative findings**

- **Key findings**
effects across each item in the Spiritual Literacy domain for 2022. To put this into percentage terms, we saw an average relative improvement of 32.06% across the entire range of survey items in the theme of Catholic and Spiritual Literacy.

Figure 1. All Pre-Post SPA Program Results for Catholic and Spiritual Literacy theme (increased) Medium to Very Large effect before vs. after program (Cohen’s d = 1.86 to .39, p < .001 to .095).
For the variable item in Figure 2, which asked participants "how this project has helped you to engage with and embrace the culture of the Catholic school and the particular vision for the Catholic school educator?", the standardized effect, Cohen's d, is 1.86 (very large) and statistically significant ($p < .001$). This equates to a 79.30% increase in PST scores before compared to after the SPA program for this area of Spiritual Literacy and Catholic identity.

When comparing across cohorts, the 2019-2021 Evaluation Report results indicated the following areas remained a challenge for some PSTs by the end of the project:

- understanding the values and ethos of the Catholic school (5/21 ranked low-mid);
- understanding the sacramental, liturgical, ritual and prayer life of the school (5/21 ranked low-mid); and
- Understanding the connection between the school/college, their local parish and the Archdiocese (8/21 ranked low-mid).

In the 2022 survey, two respondents marked the majority of variables in the mid-range (3/5), and three as low (2/5). These PSTs were unable to attend the PD days, and one did not attend the first week of school (due to COVID). While this was the case, both PSTs reported an increase in their understanding from the beginning of the project. When comparing across the 2022 cohort, the dominant areas that ranked in the mid-low range for a small number of PSTs were:

- Understanding the mission of the Catholic Church (5 ranked as 3/5);
- Understanding the sacramental, liturgical, ritual and prayer life of the school (4 ranked as 3/5);
- Understanding how to establish positive relationships including connections with parents, engagement in the pastoral care of students and supporting their spiritual and moral development (2 ranked as 3/5, 1 ranked as 2/5);
- Understanding the positive anthropology of the human being as the foundation for all Catholic education and pedagogy (2 ranked as 3/5, 2 ranked as 2/5);
- Understanding the connection between the school/college, their local parish and the Archdiocese (2 ranked as 3/5, 1 ranked as 2/5).

When looking across the 2020-2022 survey data, the common variables in the low-mid range are:

- understanding the sacramental, liturgical, ritual and prayer life of the school (9/48 ranked low-mid); and
- Understanding the connection between the school/college, their local parish and the Archdiocese (11/48 ranked low-mid).

The data allows us to reflect on ways that the partnership could enable stronger growth in these areas. In 2022 the SPA cohort entering in their second year of their degree were offered places in the ACU Signum Fidei program. The Signum Fidei program includes three modules that focus on Catholic life and practice; faith formation and ministry in Catholic schools; and youth mission experience. The Signum Fidei program is available in a contextualised way for 2nd year PSTs in the SPA program (that is, they can complete some components in the context of their SPA school). In addition, BCE offered an optional spiritual retreat for PSTs in 2022 to develop a greater connection between PSTs, their faith formation journey and the mission of BCE. Due to COVID, some of the 2022 PSTs were unable to attend the school based professional development hosted by their schools at the commencement of the year, which included their spiritual retreat day/s. This may have impacted some of the responses in the 2022 year. The influence of these days was noted by another PST in the survey "I think it is very important for preservice teachers in the SPA Program to take part in any type of Staff days/Professional development days. This can help the preservice teacher get an understanding of how the school runs and the values and the ethos of the school."

Considering two areas have repeated across cohorts from 2020-2022, it is important to continue discussion on ways.
Looking deeper using the qualitative findings

I have been working in a Catholic school outside school hours for 6 years in varying roles of responsibility (e.g. Coordinator, Assistant Coordinator and Educator) and I feel that this has built my understand of life in a Catholic primary school. In particular, the role of prayer, relationships between various stakeholders and the role of the parish within the school are areas I feel I have engaged in regularly.

- Discussing spiritual development with staff members
- Creating class preparation on prayer
- Involvement in Mercy Day and Bishop’s Inservice Day
- Attending mass at local Catholic Community (regional Diocese)
- Meditation
- Embracing God’s will and loving nature and showing this with those in my community e.g. elderly neighbours.
- Loving myself and others
- Care for creation – reuse, less plastic, getting back into Nature – is where I feel closest with myself and with God – can think and breath
- Participating in prayer in PC of a morning
- Help design the liturgy, write the prayers, set up / organize the sacred space and prayer table and practice the students who were leading the liturgy.
- Engaging in prayer every morning
- Modelling prayers of intercession
- Drawing on references to Good Samaritan Story with students’ everyday experiences
- Engagement in school feast day
- Professional Learning in school charism with school founders, Canossian Sisters
- Greater understanding of school vision and charism – serving the poor and community
- Alleluia Eggs- students have created ways they can show courage, honesty, forgiveness and love to others in the classroom, outside the classroom and outside of school.
- Observed Story telling- School Principal demonstrated a way of engaging students in parables using story telling.
- Observed Mini Liturgy with APRE (Lent, discussing what Lent is with small groups of students)

The Pre-service teachers also reflected on their own faith journeys and how it intersects with their role as a teacher in a Catholic school. For example, one PST identified their place as a role model in a Catholic school setting:

In a Catholic school environment students grow and learn in an environment that nurtures the gospel values of respect, compassion, inclusion and justice and actively engages in Catholic Social Justice teachings such as dignity of the human person, and solidarity. As a role model for these values, I will be best placed to assist students to reach their full potential.
Another reflected on the links between their university theology studies and their school experience:

Recently I did a unit on the Eucharist at uni (theology based unit). Relate it back to prac and how I am understanding the true message of the parables and how to relate that back into kid friendly language.

And another PST reflected on integrating Catholic social teachings into her secondary teaching area (which was not RE):

I was able to strengthen my understanding of the Catholic social teachings and really integrate into the curriculum that I was teaching in the classroom. I believe it also helped me grow as a person, as I was able to reflect on my spirituality and understand how important that actually is in a school, which I think a lot of students miss out on that part or don’t get to see the value that it can have, integrating that into the curriculum.

As part of the SPA program, we encourage PSTs to make links between their university studies, Catholic Social teachings, and practice (no matter what their discipline area is). It is encouraging to see PST reflections such as these.

A third felt their increasing religious knowledge was helping them to engage their students as they went on a learning journey together:

Growing my religious education knowledge is also powering me forward in my spiritual journey as I am learning along with the students and understanding ways to engage students in religious education whilst demonstrating the intricacy of faith and how our everyday actions reflect God’s love.

Being part of the religious life of the school in such a practical way, has given me opportunities to explore my own spirituality and seeing how people like Mary MacKillop are still so relevant today – especially in my life as an educator.

Reflecting on my own experience has caused me to be reflective of my own spirituality. Gives greater understanding to why you go to mass and the purpose, more than going through steps.

I am growing in my spiritual journey through being at my SPA school. I envisage my spiritual journey to follow the same values and show compassion, wisdom, integrity and hope in my everyday actions and reflect on these values when I feel challenged and out of my comfort zone.

I accompanied staff and students to the Cathedral for the Mass today held by the Archdiocese. I found it a very moving experience and wonderful to see so many there who shared their love for Mary MacKillop and the Sisters of Saint Joseph.

It’s given them an extended period of time in a Catholic institution. It allows the preservice teacher to plan with the teachers around the religious life of the school. It allows them to see those events unfold and be immersed within the community during those events. I think it also allows them to see teachers’ faith in action, and I think that’s really important too because we do our best, you know, every day to mirror the mission and actions of Christ, and I think that is a real difference within a Catholic setting. It allows the preservice teacher to be immersed in that role for a longer period of time, so when they are looking at work within a Catholic school, they’re more ready for a position.

Sometimes on a prac, you won’t get to necessarily see those [religious life of school] important parts. The expectation in a Catholic school is that you’re part of that. You know how to lead prayer in the classroom. You know how to help support students in a liturgy or a mass. So, our students that have been with us since the beginning of the year, have been able to be a part of all those daytoday, week-to-week and all the big events in the religious life of the school.

They get to live a little bit of their own faith and connect with their own sense of spirituality within the domains of the Catholic and Lasallian faith.
I was happy to be involved with Pastoral Care, camp, charity drives and staff Twilights. I would have loved to have been more involved in the Prayer life of the school. I feel I may have been too busy but wanted to go. Community Prayer at my new school is an expectation which is good for me, and I need to learn to be more organised so that I can attend.

This is the first time I’ve had to teach religion, [it was] very daunting, even though I grew up in Catholic schools, it’s completely different having to teach it. I find myself second guessing what I’m teaching and trying to make sure I’m not saying the wrong thing. It was all a steep learning curve and I didn’t realise how much preparation needs to go into liturgies/prayers to make them relevant for the students.

Overall, the PSTs in the SPA program were encouraged to engage in the religious life of the school and reflect on their own spiritual journey. They increased their spiritual literacy through discussions with staff at the school and their SPA Companions, connecting university studies to their practical experiences, and attending professional learning events (such as the ACU/BCE Mentoring Day, Twilight professional learning events and Spiritual Retreats). The survey data suggests their spiritual literacy significantly increased across all included variables from the commencement of the SPA program to their finish date with the program.

The PSTs who completed the program across 2019-2022 were asked to provide details of employment after their time in the SPA program. From the 75 participants, we obtained data from 47. Of the data available, 72% confirmed employment in a Catholic Dioceses, 83% in a Catholic setting, and 85% in a faith-based setting. Twelve confirmed employment in their SPA setting, including the two PSTs who were a part of the Toowoomba Diocese pilot. This is extrapolated in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Setting</th>
<th>Number of PSTs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BCE school (12 employed at SPA school)</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockhampton Diocese</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toowoomba Diocese</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archdiocese of Brisbane RI Catholic school</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interstate Diocese (Broken Bay)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Territory Christian School</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QLD state school</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote school (state)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returned to home country</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the survey and interviews, many PSTs expressed a preference to teach in a Catholic school. The employment results indicate successful placement of the graduates into Catholic and faith-based school settings. Three PSTs highlighted the significant benefit of the program for “getting a job in BCE”, “preparing for getting a job” and “preparing for job readiness”.

The leadership staff in schools indicated an interest in employing SPA PSTs in their school, as they knew the PSTs better and were able to spend their extended time in the school preparing them for the particular school context. Even if they were unable to employ the PST, it meant they could act as referees and make balanced judgements in recommendations. One Deputy Principal stated:

"we get a better sense of who they are as a – as a person and who they are as a teacher. So, when it does come to that time where they’re looking to seek permanent employment somewhere, we feel very confidently that we can make a judgment and a recommendation to their potential employer."
Spiritual and Pedagogical Companion experiences contribute to PSTs’ understanding of Catholic school contexts

Spiritual and Pedagogical Companion experiences contribute to PSTs’ understanding of Catholic school contexts.

The Companion is an integral component of this partnership. Experienced Companions in this role interacted with the PSTs along their whole SPA journey via email, voice calls, video calls, face to face meetings, classroom observations and formal professional conversation meetings. The PSTs and their Companions have first contact late in the year prior to their SPA experience. They then continue to companion the PST until they graduate (which includes those who enter in their 2nd year of the program). In an interview with a Companion, she described and defined what the role means to a PST:

young people want someone who will be a spiritual companion, a companion along their spiritual journey. Someone who’s a bit like a witness, enthusiastic, humble, authentic, and most of all, compassionate, and who will be with them as they explore their own spiritual identity. So, we do that in lots and lots of ways, but I think the most important point of our companioning or our accompaniment is it’s steady and it’s reassuring… our aim is to provide opportunities when you’re in the school to be able to ask your questions about your spiritual identity and journey, your concerns, to be able to give voice to those, and your surprises, and to be able to do that in an atmosphere or environment that’s safe and supportive for you. Nothing is imposed. Everything is an invitation. And, the companion, your companion will honour your questing, your enquiring, your searching and your questioning.

Survey data from this project highlights the successful contribution the Companions made to the PSTs’ understanding of Catholic schooling contexts across the year. Data was collected during two separate stages of the project to ascertain the longitudinal impact. The first data collection point occurred after the one-day a week experiences, and the second at the end of the partnership project. Table 5 illustrates, for the majority of PSTs who finished the survey (84%), the Companion was very or highly successful in contributing to their understanding of, and belonging to, their Catholic school setting.

Table 5: 2022 cohort - How Spiritual and Pedagogical Companion mentoring experiences contributed to understanding of becoming a teacher and connecting to their school (1 = no success, 5 = highly successful).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>First data point</th>
<th>Second data point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing your understanding of Catholic school context</td>
<td>1 1 10 9</td>
<td>3 5 11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One of the PSTs’ comments provided a deeper understanding of how the Companion assists with PSTs’ spiritual reflection and growth:

spiritually and as part of this program, I have – I have grown a lot more spiritually as well and that’s something that I discussed with my companion and that I’ve noticed from – from where I started to where I am now, and the connections that I can make in my own faith as well and having that companion there when we had a discussion about where my thoughts were and how I was feeling and thinking, she kind of helped open that up and put the right words out for me to understand as well.

The Companions provided an experienced and reflective voice for the PSTs as they developed their understanding of the events occurring in their Catholic school setting, how to engage with the Catholic mission of their school and Dioceses, how to incorporate their understandings into their classroom, and how to make links with their own spiritual journeys.

Theme 1 Summary

The evidence in this theme mirrors the 2019-2021 Evaluation report further deepening the finding that the SPA program has contributed to greater understanding and engagement with Catholic and spiritual literacy and has increased the likelihood of PSTs seeking employment in a Catholic or faith based setting. The extended period of time in their Catholic SPA school, and the model’s design to include a Community of Practice style of support across the year from their Catholic school setting, their Companion, the university coordinator and Catholic Diocese, have been the contributing factors to this success. Some areas can continue to be enhanced and strengthened for future implementation, such as the areas identified as weaknesses for some PSTs in Catholic literacy.
THEME 2 - IMPACT OF PROGRAM ON PSTS’ LEVELS OF ANXIETY ABOUT THE TEACHING PROFESSION

Significant reduction in PST anxiety levels about block placement after attending PD days and 1 day a week experience in school

The SPA program aims to provide a level of support that helps PSTs transition from their pre-service experiences to having full, unsupervised control of their own classes. It also aims to help them prepare for Catholic and faith-based settings through critical reflection of their own spirituality, and learning more about Catholicism and mission work. As argued by Hunt (2021), creating a clear connection between critical reflection, spirituality and professional identity can improve one’s well-being and feelings of belonging.

A number of program elements have been designed to assist with a reduction in PST anxiety, and the results from the data indicate these are having a significant impact. The partnership model includes the PST visiting their school in Nov/Dec prior to the partnership year, attending the professional development days prior to the start of the school year in January, volunteering one day a week leading up to the PSTs’ block placement/s, their block placements, and then continued one day a week engagement until the end of their course (either July or December). The survey data demonstrated a significant drop in PST perceptions of anxiety after joining the partnership, attending the PD days at the beginning of the year, and the one day a week experiences. It has been noted that PSTs can experience significant levels of anxiety leading up to and during the initial stages of their block placement periods (Gutierrez & Nailor, 2020). The analysis from the survey indicated that 2022 data mirrored the 2020-2021 survey data in that the majority of PSTs were initially experiencing high levels of anxiety, which reduced after the PD days and spending 1 day a week at their schools. The graph below shows the shifting level of anxiety as the PSTs had more experiences with their schools.

Overall, the survey data demonstrated a significant drop in PST perceptions of anxiety about the teaching profession after joining the partnership, attending the PD days at the beginning of the year, and the one day a week experiences. As PSTs had more experiences with their schools and were provided support through the SPA program, we saw consistently large declines of d = -0.91 to -0.99, and these results were highly significant (p < .001 for all statistical tests). The graph below illustrates the declining trends across various timepoints in the SPA survey, with a downward slope from left to right of page indicating a reduction in the PSTs anxiety before compared to after the SPA program in 2022. To put this into perspective, we saw an average relative decline in PST self-reported of -40.44% across the entire range of survey items in the theme of Anxiety about the teaching profession.

Figure 3 shows a moderate to large effect throughout the model of multiple timepoints (repeated measures ANOVA, F(3) = 17.39, p < .001, \(\eta^2 = 0.401\)). These results further strengthen the veracity of these findings because they show stepwise pattern of decline in scores on the anxiety-related items following each key milestone in the SPA program. If such a decline in anxiety was simply due to the ongoing exposure of the PST to their schools, then one would expect a more gradual and perhaps less dramatic decline in scores over time.

Looking deeper using the qualitative findings

While the survey represented significant changes, there was one response in the survey that indicated the one day a week experience can be variable depending on the readiness of the school to take them:

“My school did not have a timetable prepared for me to follow during my first week or most of term one. This lack of preparation made me extremely anxious to attend the first week and my scheduled day after that. This contrasts with other statements suggesting the PD days and the 1 day a week experience was invaluable and reduced their anxiety about the placement block and their remaining time in their school:

My school did not have a timetable prepared for me to follow during my first week or most of term one. This lack of preparation made me extremely anxious to attend the first week and my scheduled day after that.
I did not feel anxiety at all in relation to placement.

The weekly visits let me be free of anxiety by providing a wide range of opportunities to be involved in teaching and learning opportunities in diverse classroom environments.

These professional development days have been invaluable in allowing me to develop a deeper understanding of the values, mission and ethics of the school. I felt so much more prepared entering into the first week of school having learnt about the school’s faith, in particular. Meeting all the school staff before commencing the first week of school greatly reduced my anxiety of not knowing anybody and learning staff’s names.

It [the PD days] was a great experience and one of the reasons that I wanted to join in this program.

When you are an anxious person, generally, these experiences can be extremely difficult. While I am still rather anxious about the “everyday” of school life, I have found that with a little bit of courage and support from other teachers, this experience can be what you make it. Thanks to the welcoming nature of everyone I have spoken with and own willingness to enquire, I have found myself in a variety of difficult classroom experiences, excursions and sports days, and there are still opportunities to engage further. I’m still fairly anxious, but I feel more supported and welcomed than I have on some previous placements.

Across the cohort, these initial experiences with their Catholic school setting helped to induct them into the school, meet staff, meet students and have experiences across the life of a school that helped to begin their understanding of the larger picture of school life.

Significant reduction in PST anxiety levels about teaching in a school before SPA program and after SPA program

Looking deeper using the qualitative findings

Has been amazing! Everyone should do it!!!

as a pre-service teacher, that made me the most nervous in a classroom setting. With the SPA program, because I was able to be involved with the school over a long period of time, I was able to build my confidence and self-belief that I could implement some behaviour management strategies...also, because the students had a relationship with me and I was able to build that relationship with the students, it felt like a real situation
where I could use that to my advantage and for my strategies, and also, with my consistency.

...
Table 5: How SPC mentoring experiences contributed to understanding of becoming a teacher and connecting to their school (1 = no success, 5 = highly successful). First data point early in year, second data point during final block placement, using data from completed survey responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>First data point</th>
<th>Second data point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. developing your understanding of the teaching profession</td>
<td>1 4 4 8</td>
<td>1 6 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. helping you feel welcome to the teaching profession</td>
<td>1 2 3 11</td>
<td>1 3 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. helping you understand the particular culture at your school</td>
<td>1 1 3 6 6</td>
<td>3 5 9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Having my SPA companion really gave me that extra level of support and, especially having those professional conversations with her, really helped me to develop who I am as a teacher and what I can expect to experience when I’m out there as a graduated teacher. If I had any questions or concerns, she was always there and available for me to call. And, in the classroom, she gave a different perspective to what my mentor was seeing as well, so that was really beneficial and I really leaned on her during times when, I suppose, I was struggling to find the balance.

My Companion has been fabulous. She has made herself available to me to ask her questions and to engage in discussions with her.

I think with – with the companion coming in, she’s definitely helped us think more critically and reflect a lot more as well. And, it’s been commented you know, some of the questions that requires a lot of deep thinking, and just nutting out you know, the information that’s going be helpful as part of our journey as teachers. As a graduate teacher. And, you know that reflection.
Impact of school and leadership staff

The survey included four points of data collection on the impact of school staff on the PSTs' understanding of what it means to be a teacher, and particularly in the context of a Catholic school (see graphs below).

Figure 6. Repeated Measures One-Way ANOVA 1. Comparison of Preservice Teachers’ Sense of Belonging and Becoming Across Timepoints 1 to 4 (2022)

Figure 6 shows results from the repeated measures ANOVA for the following item “developing your understanding of the teaching profession”, with the first point asking about the contribution of the PD days, the second point relating to the 1 day a week experience, the third point relates to the block placement experience and the fourth point is after their block placement. As can be seen, the change at each time point is very minor, with statistically insignificant changes to report on.

Figure 7. Repeated Measures One-Way ANOVA 2. Comparison of Preservice Teachers’ Sense of Belonging and Becoming Across Timepoints 1 to 4 (2022)

Figure 7 shows results from the repeated measures ANOVA for the following item “helping you feel welcome at the school”. Again, there are insignificant changes to report across the time periods.

Figure 8. Repeated Measures One-Way ANOVA 3. Comparison of Preservice Teachers’ Sense of Belonging and Becoming Across Timepoints 1 to 4 (2022)

Figure 8 above shows results from the repeated measures ANOVA for the following item “helping you understand the particular culture at your school”. Again, there are insignificant changes to report across the time periods.

Figure 9. Repeated Measures One-Way ANOVA 4. Comparison of Preservice Teachers’ Sense of Belonging and Becoming Across Timepoints 1 to 4 (2022)

Figure 9 above shows results from the repeated measures ANOVA for the following item “helping you feel welcome to the teaching profession”. Again, there are insignificant changes to report across the time periods.

Looking deeper using the qualitative findings

Becoming a part of the school community

A common theme amongst the 2022 PSTs related to their feelings of being valued and welcomed into their school:

I feel welcomed and valued in my partner school.

I felt more comfortable and I felt valued, I suppose, as a member of the school. And, that really helped me to then, as I said earlier, develop my confidence and feel comfortable.

Many suggested the support provided and feeling welcome in their schools meant they felt comfortable approaching a wide range of staff in the school to seek advice, guidance, feedback as well as support to collect data and materials required from their practice for university assessment tasks:
having those levels of support was extremely beneficial and just knowing that you have people that you can talk to and – for advice and guidance and feedback, was not something that I could get from a shorter block.

I found that I was far more comfortable reaching out to teachers in other year levels and leadership staff having been part of the SPA program, which assisted me in completing my QTPA [Queensland Teacher Performance Assessment].

Another concept apparent in these statements are the way schools ‘embrace’ the PSTs and PSTs ‘embrace’ their schools. This is a concept that relates to Catholic social teaching, in the sense that we develop our connections as a community and embrace all to live in harmony and love with each other. It creates links between spirituality and looking after each other’s well-being.

In an interview, one of the Companions summarised that level of support and the notion of embrace through the words ‘wrap themselves around you’ that are a key to the SPA program:

I think that is one of the keys to this program, that you belong to a community who wrap themselves around you from the beginning of the year right through not just the school, ACU, BCE, your mentor, your companion, and we’re there to support you. (Companion)

The way the program is designed to try to provide multiple layers of support across a wide range of voices. This aim is reflected in the Companion’s statement above.

While many PSTs, staff in schools and Companions praise the value of this program for their understanding and connection to Catholic school contexts, some comments from PSTs suggest, for varying reasons, that this was not the experience they had. For example, due to COVID, several PSTs were unable to connect with their schools at the start of the year, and it created issues in the first few months of school. One PST stated:

Covid was a major issue at my school as I am sure it was at all schools. Due to there being between 12-20 teachers off a day due to covid it was a difficult task to accommodate me at the school. Which I understand. (PST)

Many PSTs, Companions and principals emphasise the importance of the PD days and the first week of school to help PSTs meet staff, understand the values and mission of their school, and form an initial bond with the students in their class/es and their supervising teacher. Many schools made an extra effort to connect their PSTs online to the PD days which were pivoted due to COVID. As one PST stated:

I found that my school was able to pivot very quickly and effectively with the sudden changes due to COVID-19. I was able to be involved in all professional development days and attend the full first week of school, both of which were invaluable experiences. (PST)

As we move out of the impact of COVID lockdowns, we hope to see all PSTs being able to engage again with the PD days and first week of school.

I have truly been embraced by my partner school as a member of staff. It has allowed me to develop not only professional relationships with the leadership team and my mentor teacher, but also other teachers and school officers from other grades within the school. I never feel anxious about asking questions or volunteering for roles because I know that I am regarded as a fellow staff member. (PST)

They are seen as just any other staff member. It’s not that sort of badge of a pre-service teacher. They’re very much a part of the community. And, I think that’s really – that – from a leadership point of view, that’s absolutely the real benefits of a program like this, because they – they feel valued, and we – we also gain from their experiences as well along the way. (Deputy Principal)

They really feel like they’re part of the furniture and part of our family and, I think we’ll always have that ongoing connection with them. (APRE)

the school really embraced her as well, as much as she embraced the school. She was part of the school assemblies, the school mass, everything really, and knew everything that was going on. (Supervising teacher)
One PST appeared to have a negative start to their school year, and their overall survey results suggested the experience did not achieve the hoped outcomes. Their comments about their early experiences with their school were:

My school did not have a timetable prepared for me to follow during my first week or most of term one. This lack of preparation made me extremely anxious to attend the first week and my scheduled day after that. And that the one day a week experiences were not as they had hoped in relation to understanding concepts around becoming a teacher:

due to the disorganization of my placement school, I feel that I have not yet been able to develop my understanding of these concepts.

At later points in this PST's survey, they commented positively on the support they received from their Companion, the university coordinator, and the Head of Teaching and Learning at their school, however their final rankings in the becoming and belonging section of the survey included the lowest ranking available for “sense of professional identity as a teacher”, “ability to meet the Graduate APSTs”, “ability to excel in the Graduate APSTs” and “understanding of the teacher's role beyond the classroom”. One other PST also ranked the APST and teacher role beyond the classroom variables low, yet had positive comments about their supervising teacher, the university coordinator and the way the school made them feel welcome. They ranked their sense of professional identity at 5/5. While this is a small number of PSTs, and they did include comments on some positive outcomes of the program for their becoming and belonging, it is important to reflect on these variables, especially the APSTs, which are discussed further in Theme 4.

The role of staff in the schools

The qualitative data for this section of the survey provided more significant understanding of how the staff were important and who were considered key staff members for this program by the PSTs. The PSTs were asked to list staff who were important in helping them feel welcome to the school and played a key role in developing their understanding of the teaching profession. Staff listed most in the responses were:

Table 8: Important school staff in the program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Number of times mentioned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervising Teacher</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other teaching staff (particularly in same year level/CPA area)</td>
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<td>Principal</td>
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<tr>
<td>APRE</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>STIE (Support Teacher Inclusive Education)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PLL (Professional Learning Leader)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

As outlined in the Companion and APRE comments below, the PSTs in this program have opportunities to work with numerous staff and community members:

each preservice teacher meets and gets to know and work collaboratively with anyone in the school who is supporting their students. So, it could be primary learning leader, could be the head of department in a secondary, could be the campus minister, speech therapist, the community elder from the First Nations community. It could be the support teacher inclusive ed. Whoever is there who knows the students and can help the preservice teacher as they teach and help engage those learners. (Companion)

being able to work with myself during Religious Education planning, they look at how the Religious Education can be entwined into the other areas and domains of teaching. So, they’re working with the primary years learning leaders. When they’re taking the children over to Mass, they get to meet Father and immerse themselves within that spiritual domain. Here we have our Lasallian leaders as well, which is our Lasallian Charism. So, they do get to work with a variety of different people within the community, and also having a connection to our sustainability and environment. They work with our Indigenous brothers and sisters. They’re very lucky to have such a diverse range of people to work with. (APRE)
My supervising teacher has been great throughout my placement with constant guidance and feedback.

My supervising teacher has truly gone above and beyond to ensure I felt welcome in the classroom and the school. I was essentially treated as a co-teacher and this allowed me to gain a true insight into the teaching profession.

Supervising Teachers – provided incredible opportunities for me that I have not experienced before (excursions, school involvement, assembly participation, etc.), feedback and guidance.

My supervising teacher has been an excellent mentor, helping me with development in areas that will benefit me the most when in the profession, providing me with actionable constructive feedback and being very welcoming into the school community.

My supervisor has been instrumental in my development. She allowed me the space to take on the role of teacher and act in the role of teacher. This enabled me to mark all the criteria for my placement (every single standard) as achieved. I am so grateful.

In most cases, the supervising teacher was welcoming, provided space for exploration of teaching pedagogies and skill acquisition, and assisted them with understanding the bigger picture of schools as communities.

The Principal, APRE, learning support and other staff were also mentioned as having a significant impact on feeling welcome in the school and providing learning experiences. The PSTs were able to engage with many staff across the school, including close support from leadership staff. PSTs comments include:

Principal, APRE and my supervising teacher were all referees on my resume and helped significantly in placing a job in another BCE school.

The Principal, STIE, PLL and the other prep teacher have all been extremely helpful while on block placements. All did regular check ins, offered advised, and worked with me to assist the diverse learners in the class.

The teaching staff made me work in a welcoming environment and tried to support me as if I had been a registered teacher working at the school.

I found that the PLL, STIE and APRE were particularly influential in my experience as they were more than willing to share their time and knowledge whenever I had questions.

Engaging with the educators every day is empowering me on my spiritual journey as everyone is so friendly, welcoming, encouraging and supportive. especially the Principal – from the start has been so lovely and helpful and has provided me with so much information which is building my confidence and pushing me to be a better educator and person in my day-to-day life.

Summary for Theme 3

The project team has reflected on the impact of this for the program and offered both face-to-face and Online training in 2023. To further increase communication loops between PSTs, Companions, schools and Dioceses, the SPA program is trialling the use of a membership database in 2023. This theme requires shared responsibility across leadership, school-based mentors, Companions, other staff in the school and the university. Improving professional learning around andragogy and mentoring and developing more effective communication systems will assist with this area.

THEME 4 – IMPACT OF THE PROGRAM ON PSTS’ SELF-REPORTED COMPETENCY RELATED TO THE APSTs AND TEACHING SKILLS

PSTs were able to exceed in many of the APST Graduate Standards
Standards for Teachers (APSTs) and their teaching skills. This was also evident in the 2020 and 2021 survey results. The PSTs were asked to reflect on how well they met each of the APSTs at the Graduate level using a four point scale before entering the program and then again at the end of their SPA experience. The scale included 1=still developing; 2=just met; 3=met; and 4=exceeding. The graphs below show the impact on PSTs' growth before and after the program illustrating a very large increase of $d = 1.28$ to $2.62$, and were highly significant ($p < .001$ for all statistical tests). This suggests that the SPA program had very large effects across each item in the theme on APSTs (graduate) for 2022. To put this into percentage terms, we saw an average relative improvement of $41.90\%$ across the entire range of survey items that asked PSTs to rate their competencies across the each of the APSTs.

Figure 7. All Pre-Post SPA Program Results for the PSTs’ Self-Rated Competency Across each of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (increased)

Very Large effect before vs. after program (Cohen’s $d = 1.28$ to $2.62$, $p < .001$ for all statistical tests).
The APST with the largest growth was APST 2: Know the content and know how to teach it. For this item, the standardized effect, Cohen's d, is 2.62 (very large) and statistically significant (p < .001). This equates to a 37.74% increase in PST scores before compared to after the SPA program for APST 2 (Know the Content and How to Teach It).

Figure 8. Example of results from one of the items for APST 2.

When examining the end-point survey in more detail (see Appendix 3) the results are similar to the 2020 and 2021 data. On average 54% of the PSTs felt they exceed the requirements for some APSTs, and 43% felt they had ‘met’ the standard focus areas. No PSTs reported that they had not met any of the focus areas. Across the standards, focus areas that were selected with meeting or exceeding amounted to 23 of the 33 focus areas, which is an increase on previous years. The focus areas that had 69% and over of PSTs reporting exceeded were:

- 2.2 Organise content into an effective learning and teaching sequence;
- 2.3 Use curriculum, assessment and reporting knowledge to design learning sequences and lesson plans;
- 2.6 Implement teaching strategies for using ICT to expand curriculum learning opportunities for students;
- 3.2 Plan lesson sequences using knowledge of student learning, content and effective teaching strategies;
- 3.3 Include a range of teaching strategies;
- 3.5 Demonstrate a range of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to support student engagement; and
- 5.4 Demonstrate the capacity to interpret student assessment data to evaluate student learning and modify teaching practice.

All from Standard 2 overlap with the results from the 2020 and 2021 surveys. The additional areas listed are new areas categorised as ‘exceeding’ by the majority of PSTs. The next highest focus area “6.3 Seek and apply constructive feedback from supervisors and teachers to improve teaching practices” was ranked as exceeding by 62% of participants. It is promising that no PSTs felt they were still developing in any areas, and very few felt they were in the category of ‘just met’. Those that did select ‘just met’ did so only for a small number of the focus areas.

There are areas that require reflection and consideration for future implementation of the program. Overall, the focus areas receiving a ranking of ‘just met’ for more than one PST (2) were:

- 1.4 Demonstrate broad knowledge and understanding of the impact of culture, cultural identity and linguistic background on the education of students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds; and
- 2.4 Demonstrate broad knowledge of, understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages.

These two focus areas also had the smallest number in the ‘exceeding’ column. When comparing this result across the years of SPA, there is a clear pattern indicating PSTs feel least confident with their knowledge around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander subjects and concepts. In the 2022 cohort, there was a more balanced view around competencies of working with parents/caregivers (1 ‘just met’, 6 ‘met’ and 6 ‘exceeded) than in the previous years. In addition, all PSTs indicated ‘met’ or ‘exceeded’ for focus areas requiring consideration of inclusivity/differentiation, which was identified with some PSTs in previous year cohorts as an area requiring work.

Looking deeper using the qualitative findings

because I was involved over several months, I was able to experience being involved with parents and carers so, I actually had the opportunity to email families and give them feedback on how their child was doing. I was able to be involved in the mother and daughters garden party so, where the mothers came for Mother’s Day and the students were getting it all ready and talking to the parents and seeing how the teachers also interact with them and what a nice community it
felt like. And, it was also with phone calls and I was able to involve myself in the student learning conferences, where the parents and the students and the teachers come together online and discuss student outcomes and how they're doing and some feedback, which was really great to experience.

This PST was able to experience a wide range of contexts in which teachers engage with and report to parents/caregivers. These events allowed the PST to observe events that were building relationships, rather than just witnessing quick parent interviews. As stated, the PST was able to witness the “nice community”, and a more relaxed environment of interaction.

Other voices discussed the various ways PSTs engage that help them successfully achieve and exceed the APSTs. One Companion stated:

“You’re learning about how to plan and implement effective learning and teaching, you’re learning how to assess, how to provide feedback, how to moderate, and report.

by being here in January for our professional development days, where we’ve introduced, say, for example, a new writing program, a whole school writing program, she’s been able to dip in and out of that during her time at the College, and actually see the growth and the benefits that – that are taking place in the students’ writing, and – and benefiting by experiencing that particular professional development and, you know, the coaching that goes with it along the way. So, it’s – so it’s many layered in that respect. And, we know that, you know, teaching is a profession that – that does have, you know, a certain workflow. We have our very busy times and then things ease off for a little bit. So, it gives a bit more of a realistic sense of what working as a teacher is like when that is your permanent job and you do that for the entire year.

I would suggest that there are many operational parts of a school that you can get bogged down in when you’re there for just a short time. You know, how do I mark the roll? Where do I find first aid? You know, all of those very gritty things that are super important in being in a new working environment, they become second nature to you over that period of time and you can really focus on the core business of being a great teacher.

Additional Support Mechanisms such as Formative Assessment Tools and mentoring approach enhanced PSTs’ reflection on APSTs and their development as a teacher

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developed a reflection sheet to reflect on her strengths and weaknesses across all focus areas in the standards. She brought this sheet to the professional conversation to discuss and receive feedback. Another dedicated time in the professional conversation to reflect on her strengths and weaknesses in APSTs 1, 2 and 3. One PST discussed how she was keeping a table of the APSTs and examples from her practice in a column next to the focus areas. She also discussed how she was focusing on ways to combine content descriptors and teach more than one concept per lesson. Below are two more examples of PSTs who focused on specific areas that demonstrated their growth in relation to the APSTs:

PST 1
• Significant growth in understanding how the classroom operates on a daily and weekly basis;
• Willingness to take on feedback to improve practice;
• Greater understanding of the reasons behind teacher practices;
• Learns from mentor teacher’s practices and then modifies class systems to enable them to work for her;
• Experience of volunteering one day a week has ensured greater growth in teaching practices and knowledge of students and how they learn;
• Good understanding of how a Catholic school works and the story behind the school;
• Able to see how the values of Catholic teaching support positive student behaviour.

PST 2
Opportunity to reflect on challenges eg.
• Students chatting and not coming back to task when asked.
  > Working on letting students discuss the topics (think, pair, share)
  > Get them moving/hands on activities.
• Being able to move on during lessons, veer away from lesson plan.
  > Need to move on if class isn’t responding.
  > Differentiate for students who aren’t engaging.

The professional conversations provide a space for PSTs to receive advice and feedback from multiple voices. It also provides a safe space to practice preparing for and leading conversations about their practice. As one PST stated “the professional conversations were a great experience. They provided an excellent opportunity for me to practice for my QTPA panel interview”.

We’ve had students say it’s helped with their interviews. So, because they are able to talk about all of that, and they’re not afraid to talk about it with peers and colleagues and other educators. They learn very quickly that what happens in their classroom is everybody’s business. We all are there to help and share the wisdom, and I think those professional conversations are amazing.

It was a support, you know, and it was – it was a conversation among myself as her mentor and also with her Companion. And, I suppose there’s – there’s that extra support as well. You know, and it’s also a second opinion – I found it was – it was definitely worthwhile. And, you leave that conversation with, something to go on, something to work on for the next, couple of weeks or the next couple of months. So, there is always room for improvement and there’s always something to grow on, and I felt that the Companion really helped us with that.

It was a conversation, and it was always a lovely, you know, time to just sit and meet and chat about what was going well and what needed to improve.
In 2022, the SPA program expanded to the Toowoomba Dioceses and a regional model was piloted. Two PSTs were placed in a regional school within the Toowoomba Dioceses. The regional model includes attendance at the school for the PD days and the first week of school at the commencement of the school year, connecting to the Supervising Teacher and if possible the class on a regular basis via online video communication prior to their block, completing their final placement block in their regional school, and then continuing to connect via virtual tools until they complete their degree.

Due to COVID, the PSTs in the 2022 pilot were able to attend the PD days and the first week of school, however only students of emergency workers were at the school. The PSTs commented on this in their survey responses:

Because I am placed in [Regional Town] I had to commit for the two weeks no matter what they looked like. The PD days went ahead as normal but the first week of school was postponed so only the children of...
essential workers were allowed at school. However, it was definitely still very beneficial to go out and experience this, I took away so much.

I was able to attend the first week of school but there were no students in classrooms (other than essential worker’s children). This changed the experience for me as I was traveling from Brisbane to [regional school].

The online connection during the year was successful for one of the PSTs, who was able to use Zoom to connect and present small teaching activities for her class. The other PST did not have as much success and commented that the “video calls have been difficult due to my uni schedule and work as I save for my trip to Roma”. It seemed finding the time to connect was a barrier for this PST, not use of technology.

As the virtual connection was utilised by one PST, this will continue to be an option explored in the regional models.

Both the Companion and the Principal provided feedback on the program. The Principal commented on the structure of the SPA program and the benefit of having accommodation next to the school:

We are very happy with the current structure for [Regional School] whereby we have the SPA participant in the first two weeks of school and then a placement in either Semester 1/2. Students like the experience of setting up a classroom and the associated routines. The lengthy block also allows for engagement in spiritual and extra-curricular activities to compliment the classroom experience. The house has been excellent and that it supports a lengthy placement plus also organizing housing at the beginning of the year.

Having the nearby accommodation has been an incredible resource and support for the PSTs who can walk to school and share a space with other PSTs for support. The Companion is closely connected to the regional community and provides opportunities for the PSTs to become a part of the school and local community through activities such as attending the races, staff social dinners and tours. The Companion also highlighted the importance of the first two weeks:

They’ve never driven outside of Brisbane very far, so to deal with all of that, let alone meeting new staff, becoming part of a community. Umm, where the SPA program is ideal. All of that’s been taken care of. They knew. Know the teaching community. They know how the school operates. They have been involved in the social aspects and sporting aspects of the Community... So much of that anxiety is taken away, and they can focus on what they’re paid to do, teach kids, get to know kids, develop a relationship instead of having to, you know, cope with all of that other stuff.

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They have engaged with the lifestyle of a small country town and formed strong relationships with the community within and beyond the school.

**KEY CONCLUSIONS**

The purpose of the Spiritual and Pedagogical Accompaniment project is to enhance pre-service teachers' preparedness for teaching in Catholic school settings, as well as provide a space to explore their spirituality. The findings of the evaluation have illustrated the benefits, as well as areas that can be strengthened. A summary of each theme is outlined below:

**Theme 1 - Impact of the program on PSTs’ Catholic and Spiritual Literacy**

The majority of PSTs went into a faith-based setting, and several were employed by their SPA school. The PSTs reported feeling more prepared for the profession, which influenced their job application and interview stages. The majority had a preference to find employment in a Catholic setting. The majority also experienced increased engagement in Catholic understandings. Overall, there was significant reporting of increased active engagement and greatly increased engagement across all categories surveyed relating to Catholic understandings. For some PSTs, particular areas were still a challenge. These were:

- understanding the values and ethos of the Catholic school;
- understanding the sacramental, liturgical, ritual and prayer life of the school; and
- Understanding the connection between the school/college, their local parish and the Archdiocese.

Spiritual and Pedagogical Companion experiences contribute to PSTs' understanding of Catholic school contexts and the teaching profession. The SPCs were highly valued by the PSTs, and were successful in mentoring the PSTs' understanding of the teaching profession and Catholic schooling contexts. Some specific areas identified were:

- knowledge and experience of BCE systems and resources
- having an external support person, especially leading their professional conversations, provided an additional experienced voice and helped them to feel more at ease about placement experiences
- scaffolded the PSTs' critical reflexivity skills

**Theme 2 - Impact of program on PSTs' levels of anxiety about the teaching profession**

There was a significant shift from high levels of anxiety before the PSTs' involvement with the partnership to minimal and no levels of anxiety after completing the PD days and one day a week experience in their schools. Overall, the PSTs suggested having the opportunity to slowly ease into the school community, get to know the culture of the school, the needs of the learners and develop a relationship with their supervising teacher over a long period of time significantly reduced their levels of anxiety about heading into the final block placement, and their first year of teaching.

**Theme 3 - Impact of the program on PSTs' sense of belonging to the profession and preparedness**

The one day a week and block experiences assisted the PSTs to develop their understanding of the teaching profession, begin to feel welcome at the school and the teaching profession and understand the culture of the school. It was also important for their beginning understanding of Catholic school settings. Leadership staff in schools as well as supervising teachers play a key role in PSTs' understanding of the teaching profession. The survey results suggest the majority of PSTs feel that school staff are either very important or significantly important to their understanding of becoming a teacher and connecting to the school. For the PSTs, their supervising teacher was the most mentioned important staff member. Other teaching staff, the Principal, the APRE, and various learning support leadership staff were also mentioned as having a significant impact on feeling welcome in the school, and providing learning experiences. Other staff and the Principal were the second most important staff mentioned by the PSTs in the survey. The extended time in the schools enables PSTs to seek support and learn from a variety of leaders and staff within the school context.

**Theme 4 - Impact of the program on PSTs' self-reported competency related to the APSTs and teaching skills**

The data indicated from the starting point of the project to the end of the project, PSTs' competency with the APST standards significantly increased. Overall, there were a significant number of focus areas that many PSTs felt they excelled in by the end of the program, with the strongest focus areas being:
Theme 5 - Impact on schools and school staff

While the SPA program is focusing on PST outcomes, it has become evident through conversations with leadership staff that the program also has an impact on schools and school staff. This includes the PSTs being able to assist in a more integrated way compared to PSTs on shorter blocks with events such as athletics carnivals, musicals and liturgies. The PSTs were also valued for their recency with research and theories on education.

Theme 6 - Reflection on the Regional Model

Overall, the Regional pilot was successful even with the initial impacts of COVID. The PSTs were able to connect with their school at the start of the year, and the two PSTs involved in the program are now employed at the Catholic regional school.
### Recommendations

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>2022 Reflection</th>
<th>2023 Implementation</th>
<th>2024 Planning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase numbers attending the BCE lead Spiritual Retreat</td>
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<td>Track employment status of PSTs and remain connected to Alumni PSTs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation</td>
<td>2022 Reflection</td>
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<td>Provide greater mentoring for new SPCs joining the project as it expands</td>
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<td>Set up a Leadership Think Tank</td>
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<td>Extend the program to other cohorts in the education degree to allow gradual development across PST degrees.</td>
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<td>Recommendation 2022 Reflection 2023 Implementation 2024 Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extend SPA program to other Catholic Dioceses (regional and interstate)</td>
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<td>Develop cross-institutional partnerships for Brisbane</td>
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Develop support mechanisms to address

in Theme 1 around Catholic Understandings

Develop support mechanisms to address gaps

4 around the APSTs
**ACU EVALUATION REPORT OF SPA PROGRAM**

**Recommendation**

**2022 Reflection**

**2023 Implementation**

**2024 Planning**

- Improve communication between schools and the project

- Developed a SPA website to host all information and the mentoring PD.

- Signed on to a recognised and highly reviewed membership database system at the end of 2022.

  Commenced utilising the functions of this membership site.

  Registration processes for Mentoring Day PD and other professional learning/SPA events have been easier to track and evaluate. Sharing of resources also more streamlined and accessible for all members.

- Recommend hosting formal meetings with principals (especially new and potential), e.g., breakfast or dinner events, to present on the SPA program.

- Recommend SPA university coordinator and Dioceses project coordinators visit current SPA schools.

- Recommend continuing with the membership database system.

- Recommend creating awards for engaged SPA PST, most supportive SPA supervisor and most supportive SPA school. This will recognise the work and commitment by the PSTs and their schools.

- Recommend visits to some SPA schools by SPA university coordinator and Dioceses project coordinators.

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The SPA program is in a continual state of critical reflection and change. The complexity of the ways the various components interact requires frequent updating to meet the needs of all stakeholders, and the aims of the program.

The program has a three year agreement between ACU and BCE with 2023 being the final year for this 3 year period. The Toowoomba Dioceses expanded in 2023 to two regional schools, and negotiations with other QLD and interstate Dioceses is ongoing. As this report illustrates, the benefits of the program are significant for the PSTs, the Catholic school sector and the teaching profession.

In partnership, the program can be further enhanced and improved to continue to provide impactful outcomes for PSTs and the profession.


Big questions, worthy dreams:


Scanlon, L. (2011). Becoming a professional. In Lesley Scanlon (Ed.), Becoming a professional: An interdisciplinary study of professional learning. ACeCBEB. Springer, C-8-Ω 3θ


Appendices

2020

Primary PST
https://vimeo.com/user36828324/review/453959667/0aa6f24243

Secondary PSTs
https://vimeo.com/user36828324/review/453970403/859825639d
https://vimeo.com/user36828324/review/453968794/021647f909

School Leader
https://player.vimeo.com/video/453972626

Faith Companion
https://vimeo.com/user36828324/review/453967739/aa53c2cdbc

BCE Director of Catholic Identity
https://vimeo.com/user36828324/review/453962789/297b25b10f

BCE HR Officer
https://vimeo.com/user36828324/review/453964566/c5f7415837

2022

Spiritual and Pedagogical Accompaniment Program | An explanation
https://player.vimeo.com/video/593953085?h=9a2c7a8d10

Spiritual and Pedagogical Accompaniment Program | Secondary PST
https://player.vimeo.com/video/593985041?h=5754c68a21

Spiritual and Pedagogical Accompaniment Program | Supervising teacher and Primary PST
https://player.vimeo.com/video/593575254?h=1f1110cc17

Spiritual and Pedagogical Accompaniment Program | Companion
https://player.vimeo.com/video/593638016?h=2adfc754d5

Spiritual and Pedagogical Accompaniment Program | BCE Director of Catholic Identity
https://player.vimeo.com/video/593951119?h=70f544336f

Spiritual and Pedagogical Accompaniment Program | Talent Attraction BCE HR
https://player.vimeo.com/video/593641413?h=1a24e38fe1

Sample Professional Conversation video
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3rwQigKN5ZA
### Appendix 2 - Faith Data from the Longitudinal Survey

*Note: this information is from the research survey (2020–2021), so not all participants are represented*

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<td>Lutheran</td>
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<td>Anglican</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 3 – APST End point survey results

#### APST focus area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APST focus area</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students and how these may affect learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of research into how students learn and the implications for teaching.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.3 Demonstrate knowledge of teaching strategies that are responsive to the learning strengths and needs of students from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.4 Demonstrate broad knowledge and understanding of the impact of culture, cultural identity and linguistic background on the education of students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.5 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of strategies for differentiating teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.6 Demonstrate broad knowledge and understanding of legislative requirements and teaching strategies that support participation and learning of students with disability.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the concepts, substance and structure of the content and teaching strategies of the teaching area.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.2 Organise content into an effective learning and teaching sequence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.3 Use curriculum, assessment and reporting knowledge to design learning sequences and lesson plans.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.4 Demonstrate broad knowledge of, understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.5 Know and understand literacy and numeracy teaching strategies and their application in teaching areas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.6 Implement teaching strategies for using ICT to expand curriculum learning opportunities for students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.1 Set learning goals that provide achievable challenges for students of varying abilities and characteristics.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.2 Plan lesson sequences using knowledge of student learning, content and effective teaching strategies.</td>
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<td>3.3 Include a range of teaching strategies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.4 Demonstrate knowledge of a range of resources, including ICT, that engage students in their learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.5 Demonstrate a range of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to support student engagement.</td>
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### APST Focus Area

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.6 Demonstrate broad knowledge of strategies that can be used to evaluate teaching programs to improve student learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.7 Describe a broad range of strategies for involving parents/carers in the educative process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.1 Identify strategies to support inclusive student participation and engagement in classroom activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.2 Demonstrate the capacity to organise classroom activities and provide clear directions.</td>
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<td>4.3 Demonstrate knowledge of practical approaches to manage challenging behaviour.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.4 Describe strategies that support students' wellbeing and safety working within school and/or system, curriculum and legislative requirements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.1 Demonstrate understanding of assessment strategies, including informal and formal, diagnostic, formative and summative approaches to assess student learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.2 Demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of providing timely and appropriate feedback to students about their learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.3 Demonstrate understanding of assessment moderation and its application to support consistent and comparable judgements of student learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.4 Demonstrate the capacity to interpret student assessment data to evaluate student learning and modify teaching practice.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.5 Demonstrate understanding of a range of strategies for reporting to students and parents/carers and the purpose of keeping accurate and reliable records of student achievement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.1 Demonstrate an understanding of the role of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers in identifying professional learning needs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.2 Understand the relevant and appropriate sources of professional learning for teachers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.3 Seek and apply constructive feedback from supervisors and teachers to improve teaching practices.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.4 Demonstrate an understanding of the rationale for continued professional learning and the implications for improved student learning.</td>
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</table>
Appendix 4 – Combining Results for Spiritual Literacy and Catholic Identity from 2020, 2021, and 2022.

Appendix 5 – Combining Results for Anxiety About the Teaching Profession from 2020, 2021, and 2022.

Figure 1. Theme 1. Spiritual Literacy and Catholic Identity.

Figure 2. Theme 1. Anxiety About the Teaching Profession.
Appendix 6 – Combining ANOVA Results for Anxiety About the Teaching Profession from 2020, 2021, and 2022.

Figure 3. ANOVA Results for Anxiety About the Teaching Profession from 2020 to 2022.

Appendix 7 – Part 1 of 5: Combining Results for Belonging and Becoming from 2020, 2021, and 2022.

Figure 4. Theme 3. Belonging and Becoming.
Figure 5. Theme 3. Belonging and Becoming.

Figure 6. Theme 3. Belonging and Becoming.
Figure 7. Theme 3. Belonging and Becoming.

Figure 8. Theme 3. Belonging and Becoming.
Figure 9. Results for the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APSTs).

Note. Sample size for 2020 (12 month cohort) was too small to include in the ANOVA analysis.
Figure 10. Results for the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APSTs).
Note. Sample size for 2020 (12 month cohort) was too small to include in the ANOVA analysis


Figure 11. Results for the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APSTs).
Note. Sample size for 2020 (12 month cohort) was too small to include in the ANOVA analysis.

Figure 12. Results for the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APSTs).
Note. Sample size for 2020 (12 month cohort) was too small to include in the ANOVA analysis.


Figure 13. Results for the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APSTs).
Note. Sample size for 2020 (12 month cohort) was too small to include in the ANOVA analysis

Figure 14. Results for the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APSTs).
Note. Sample size for 2020 (12 month cohort) was too small to include in the ANOVA analysis
You just have to have the guidance to lead you in the right direction until you can do it yourself.
CONTACT
AMANDA.GUTIERREZ@ACU.EDU.AU