

# **Finding their place: pre-service teachers navigating the history curriculum**

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**Abstract:** Implementation of the Australian Curriculum through approaches which standardise curriculum and potentially de-professionalise teachers' work have significant implications for teacher education. Teachers' agency in shaping the curriculum must be developed through their teacher education. History teaching requires navigating the opportunities and challenges of the curriculum in order to assert a strong rationale and connect students with their lived experiences and communities. Pre-service teachers need a critical understanding of History in light of contemporary social and environmental issues and education policy emphases. History teachers in particular, enact their professionalism in subject specific ways aligned to their curriculum aims (Hilferty, 2007). Active and informed citizenship is a dominant rationale for teaching and learning History. History is political, critical and activist in nature and teachers demonstrate these characteristics in their curriculum decision-making. This paper reflects on the place-based curriculum approaches and critical focus on active citizenship that adopted to engage pre-service teachers with teaching History in their North Queensland communities. Place-based education lacks a single theoretical tradition but applies to the experiential, transformative capacity of learning from and nurturing specific places and communities (Guenwald, 2003). How do pre-service teachers develop the dispositions, knowledge and skills to navigate standardized curriculum and connections to students' local spaces and places?