

Preface

Depending on where you are in your studies, you may have a considerable amount of theoretical and practical preparation gained from your university studies and practicum experiences, and you will be in the process of developing your teaching–learning philosophy and your professional teacher identity.

The most successful preservice teachers and early career teachers are those who are highly proactive practitioners and take responsibility for their own learning and development. Such people set out to make the most of every opportunity to learn about their profession, and consistently reflect on their own professional practices. This book is focused on helping you become a successful proactive practitioner.

We have found that preservice and early career teachers are often concerned that they might not be ready to deal with the day-to-day realities of working in schools. While many are relatively confident about their capacity to teach, they are less certain about their preparedness to deal with the variety of personal and professional demands that come with a teaching position. The nature of this uncertainty, about assuming a professional role and the responsibilities that come with it, can be gleaned from the type of questions asked by preservice teachers when considering applying for vacancies, and early career teachers during the induction phase of their first appointment.

The questions most often raised include:

- How can I best demonstrate that I have met the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST)?
- How can I be successful in getting a job?
- How much support will I get as an early career teacher?
- How can I best prepare for my first few weeks of teaching?
- What can I do to ensure my students are engaged in my lessons?
- How can I manage challenging behaviours in my class(es), and will I be supported in this?
- What steps can I take to be well prepared to teach students with special learning needs?
- How can I develop effective working relationships with the parents or carers of my students?
- What will be expected of me in terms of workload in my first year of teaching?
- What ethical challenges might I face as a teacher?
- What advice can you give me regarding teaching and living in the same community?

In providing adequate and realistic answers to questions such as these, we need to consider some of the fundamental aspects that make the work of the teacher so intrinsically complex and demanding, especially for the preservice and early career teacher.

In this book, we provide you with guidelines to help you gain insights into the nature of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers as they operate in the school and classroom context. We also include suggestions concerning how you,

a preservice teacher, can most effectively demonstrate your developing competency in selected Standards as you prepare job applications, respond to interview questions, and develop your professional portfolio. Furthermore, this support should help you, as an early career teacher, to take a more proactive role in the induction program offered in your first year of teaching.

The best advice we can give you after preparing this book is to be realistic about what you can and cannot do in your first months. Appreciate that you will need to give yourself time to come to know the curriculum, and how it is taught in your school. Over time, teachers develop their own approaches to what they teach, how they teach, and the strategies they employ. As you get to know your students, their interests and what engages them, you should be able to include many of the strategies in your lessons.

We hope this book helps you on your path to becoming a highly successful teacher.