

Exploring the Culture of Out-of-Field Professional Education for Mathematics Teachers

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The current teacher shortage facing Australia and many other countries is leading to desperate measures to get teachers in front of classes. A common solution has been to assign teachers to teach subjects or levels of schooling for which they are not qualified—that is, to teach out-of-field (OOF) (Hobbs, 2013). Recent data suggests that potentially 40% of Mathematics teachers are teaching OOF. OOF teaching has been linked to low academic performance of students (Van Overschelde, 2022), teacher attrition (Sharplin, 2014), and poor teacher confidence and sense of belonging (Du Plessis, Carroll & Gillies, 2015). Existing upskilling programs, like graduate certificates and micro-credentials, may have limited impact on the phenomenon due to cultural norms that do not recognise or value teacher specialisation (Hobbs et al., 2022).

In this round table, we wish to share insights gained as we work to map the educational ecosystem that creates and supports the OOF phenomena, inviting the audience to contribute to mapping this complex ecosystem. Participants will be asked to share their insights about the out-of-field teaching phenomenon, knowledge of local responses and their opinions as to what might influence teachers to seek professional learning.

References

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