



## RESEARCH PRESENTATION

### **Sustainability and Environmental literacy: Examining understanding, behaviour and attitudes of Preservice teachers around the Environment**

Dr Rachel Sheffield, Curtin University School of Education

#### **Abstract**

*Education for sustainability develops the knowledge, skills, values and world views necessary for people to act in ways that contribute to more sustainable patterns of living. Sustainability education is futures-oriented, focusing on protecting environments and creating a more ecologically and socially just world through informed action.*

*(ACARA, 2018)*

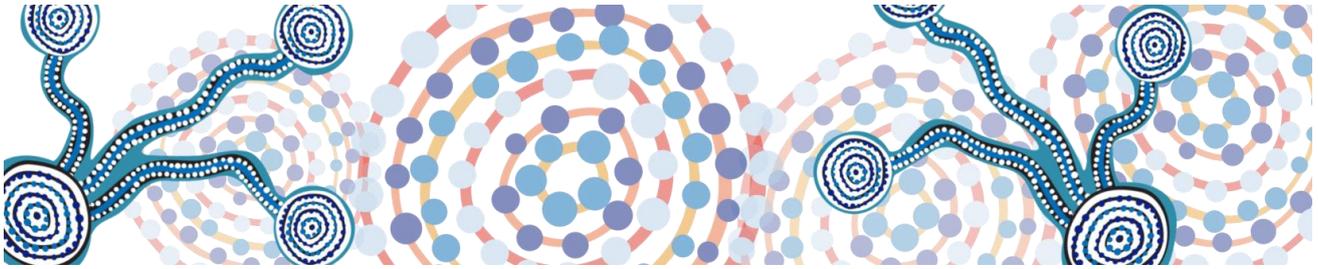
In the Australian curriculum the Cross Curricula priority of Sustainability seeks to help students to develop the knowledge, skills and world views to act to protect their world. To be able to do this, students must be supported by educators who have a strong sense of environmental responsibility and have the knowledge, attitudes and beliefs that will support this position. This research examines the knowledge, attitude and beliefs of over 500 1st year pre-service teachers. It postulates that if beginning teachers have a strong understanding of the environment, and are prepared to act, they will support students to develop beliefs and attitudes that will protect the environment and support the future. It was determined that whilst pre-service teachers displayed strong supportive beliefs around environmental issues, they lacked the background knowledge and were unwilling to practice sustainable behaviours. Previous research as eco-barometers around school students' environmental literacy across the world was collected in the 2018 PISA results (OECD, 2020). Within Australia, however, little has been done to consider the 'eco-barometer' of University students training to be classroom teachers.

#### **Acknowledgement**

Dr Rachel Sheffield acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet and pays respects to their Elders past and present.

#### **Speaker Profile**

Dr Rachel Sheffield is an Associate Professor in the School of Education at Curtin University in Perth. She researches and publishes in science, STEM education and professional identity and is currently exploring the



transversal competencies and their role in STEM. Through her research and grants in she has travelled to India, Indonesia and Malaysia supporting pre-service teachers and primary students develop expertise in STEM content and skills. The STEMInist group she co-founded supports women in STEM education and it was nominated for the 2019 Premiers Science Awards and the 2020 UNESCO Prize for Girls in Science for the impact on women in STEM. ([www.steminists.weebly.com](http://www.steminists.weebly.com)).

Dr Rekha Koul is the Dean of international in the Faculty of Humanities and an Associate Professor in the School of Education at Curtin University in Perth. She is an experienced Educational Leader, with Doctorate in Science Education and 30 years international experience as an academic, researcher, and practitioner, with extensive program management, publication and supervision experience. Associate Professor Koul current teaches various postgraduate units, HDR supervision, teacher professional learning and research. She is a co-founding member of the STEMInist group and works extensively internationally including India.

## Website links

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