A Learning Community in Teacher Education: from Behaviour Management to Cultural Work

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Abstract

This study explores understandings of a group of pre-service teachers who participated in an informal learning community. The learning community formed the basis of this case study. As the professional practice component of their teacher education program progressed, the learning community became an intervention in the development of the participants’ professional understandings about what it means to be a teacher who is also a cultural worker (Freire, 1998). Although the capacity to cater to the needs of diverse learners is promoted in the Australian education system, monocultural, exclusionary teaching practices persist (Churchill & Keddie, 2011). The current study highlights the essential role of democratic learning communities in teacher education to provide sustained, collaborative opportunities for pre-service teachers to construct understandings of how to foster productive and inclusive classroom cultures that meet the needs of Australia’s increasingly diverse and global student populations. Data in this qualitative case study were thematically analysed. Four recurring, and inextricably linked themes were identified: Engaging the dynamics of culturally and linguistically diverse teachers and students/teaching and learning; Reaching and teaching all students requires meeting with ‘others’; Educating as a social/isation process; and, Being a teacher and learning to teach. A further level of analysis revealed the importance of re-examining the cultural work of teachers through a cosmopolitan lens. In addition, the results support a strong argument for the integration of learning communities linked to professional practice as essential, non-assessable components in teacher education. The contribution of this study is that despite moves by teacher education programs to respond to the needs of contemporary classrooms, diversity remains poorly understood and enacted. The research will benefit teacher educators and pre-service teachers.
Declaration

This is to certify that:

i. This thesis comprises only my original work towards the Master of Education;

ii. Due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used;

iii. The thesis is less than 30,000 words in length, exclusive of appendices.

Margaret Callingham

February, 2012
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Chapter 1 Framing the study

Introduction

This study explores some of the ways in which professional practice experiences are understood by a group of pre-service teachers in a newly designed Master of Teaching program at the University of Melbourne, Australia, as they participate in a voluntary learning community that has been designed to assist in their understandings of, and responses to, classroom behaviour. Classroom behaviour in this study is not separated from issues of diversity and in(ex)clusion. The study highlights the essential role of sustained, collaborative opportunities for pre-service teachers to focus on ways to engage positively and productively with students in order to reach and teach all learners. Currently in Australian schools, diversity is increasing (Churchill & Keddie, 2011), and exclusion is growing (Graham & Sweller, 2011; Slee, 2012). In this context concern has also been raised “that ‘troublesome’ children are less welcome in their local schools than those with mild disabilities, or those whose diagnostic classification attracts significant teacher aide time” (Graham & Sweller, 2011, p. 951). The current study examines factors that either enhance or inhibit pre-service teachers’ abilities to develop their understandings of student diversity and classroom behaviour as they undertake the professional practice component of the Master of Teaching (Primary). Although the capacity to meet the demands of contemporary classrooms and respond to diverse learners is promoted in the Australian education system, the study argues that parochial, teacher-centred, exclusionary teaching practices are likely to prevail without an emphasis on factors that enhance, and an addressing of factors that inhibit pre-service teachers’ development as cultural workers. In addition, the study argues that within the design of teacher education programs there needs to be opportunities for ongoing, collaborative learning communities where pre-service teachers can candidly inquire into, and reflect on, their professional practice and development as teachers, free from hierarchical power relations and the judgment of high stakes assessment.

Contemporary classrooms

Despite moves by teacher education programs to respond to the needs of contemporary classrooms, the extent of diversity experienced there makes it challenging for pre-service teachers to develop productive classroom cultures that accommodate the learning needs of all students (Townsend & Bates, 2007). Education in Australia, as in
many countries around the world, has been influenced by globalisation and “the scale of social, political, technological and economic change” (Reid & O’Donoghue, 2004, p. 564). In addition, education has been subject to government policy mandates such as the integration of previously segregated students into mainstream schooling (Carrington, 2007; Moss, 2011; Slee, 2007; Wells, 2002). These influences have resulted in more pronounced heterogeneity in many Australian school and classroom populations (Evans, 2010; Moss, 2011; Ramsay, 2000), which in turn, has resulted in varied demographic differences between students and their teachers, including pre-service teachers, the majority of whom are from the dominant culture (Allard, 2006).

The ever increasing diversity, particularly in government school populations, has added a new level of complexity to teaching, making it progressively more challenging even for experienced teachers to engage with the range of students in their classrooms in order to teach them. Within complex classroom dynamics, it can be especially difficult for pre-service teachers to comprehend students’ developmental needs (Larrivee, 2009), and interpret students’ behaviour (Boutte, 1999) without making deficit assumptions (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Kamler & Comber, 2004). Preparing pre-service teachers to teach increasingly diverse student populations is what Cochran-Smith (2004) describes as the demographic imperative for teacher education:

In short, it is the recognition that bridging the chasm between the school and life experiences of those with and without social, cultural, racial, and economic advantages requires fundamental changes in the ways teachers are educated. (p. 7)

Hence, teacher education programs have needed to continue to develop their capacities to prepare pre-service teachers with the “tools for building inclusive schools and classrooms” (Slee, 2012, p. 2).

**Contemporary teacher education design**

The Master of Teaching was introduced in 2008 as a flagship program within the Melbourne Graduate School of Education. It is a two-year, post-initial degree that prepares secondary, primary, and early childhood education graduates. This post-degree model of teacher education has evolved due to funding restrictions which made it too expensive for universities to continue to conduct four-year integrated teaching degrees (Reid & Sriprakash, 2012). The Master of Teaching program highlights the development of competence in teaching to diversity and the Master of Teaching
Chapter 1: Framing the study

(Primary) Handbook (2010) states that “[s]pecial emphasis will be placed on the students’ capacity to teach the diverse range of students, and to promote equity in education” (pp. 4-5). It is when the Master of Teaching teacher candidates are on professional practice placements in schools that they come face-to-face with the reality of trying to engage with, and teach, a diverse range of students, and this can appear particularly daunting in school environments with a diversity of languages, social backgrounds, cultures, and faiths. To support teacher candidates in their development, the Master of Teaching has instituted a number of contemporary teacher education design features. Three of these features are discussed: extensive time in schools; school-university partnerships; and cohort approach. I also refer to the responsibilities of the statutory authority that oversees the regulation of teaching and teacher education in Victoria.

**Extensive practical training**

The first contemporary design feature, which is a major change in teacher education worldwide, is that pre-service teachers spend more time in schools (Darling-Hammond & Hammerness, 2005; Lunenberg & Korthagen, 2009). This is based on the understanding that learning to teach is an ongoing, developmental process that continues as you practice in the profession (Britzman, 2003; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Dewey, 1959/1975; McGill, 2011; Moss, 2011; Shulman, 1999). Contemporary programs that adhere to this philosophy involve pre-service teachers in active learning, in acknowledgement that they need time and “opportunities to link previous knowledge with new understandings” (Cochran-Smith, 2004, p. 11). Such opportunities often foster reflective practice, in recognition that “experience precedes full understanding” (Loughran & Russell, 1997, p. 164), and reflection promotes “learning through and from experiences” (Loughran & Russell, 1997, p. 164). The additional time spent in schools also comprises a variety of experiences including school and community orientation, observations, classroom teaching, small group assignments, development of portfolios of professional practice, and opportunities to conduct research (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Korthagen & Wubbels, 2001). The clinically-based approach of the Master of Teaching program includes extensive practical training in schools in the two years of the program, with four semester-long placements involving many of the experiences outlined above. These placements comprise 2 days per week in schools from the beginning of semester, and on three occasions, lead to blocks of time at the
end of the semester. A clinical approach to teacher education is compared with a medical education model:

Like a physician whose practice evolves as scientific studies refine or transform our understanding of the body and health/disease, the clinical professional’s repertoire evolves as understanding grows about how teachers support diverse students to learn complex subject matter. (Whitcomb, 2010, p. 602)

This clinical-professional approach to teacher education is professed to involve “both carefully guided practice in evidence-based pedagogies and sustained inquiry into one’s own practice” (Whitcomb, 2010, p. 602). The Master of Teaching has instituted several structures to support teacher candidates in the development of their practice.

**School-university partnerships**

One of these supports for teacher candidates, which is the second design feature, is that earlier and more sustained time in schools relies on strong school-university partnerships. The liaison within these partnerships aims to maintain productive communication channels over the long-term, and also to foster congruence between the theories and research-based practices advocated in the clinical-professional teacher education programs, and the teaching methods modelled by practicing classroom teachers (Beck & Kosnik, 2006). Within the Master of Teaching, the school-university liaison is carried out by Teaching Fellows, who are teachers selected by school principals on the basis of their teaching expertise, in partnership with Clinical Specialists selected from the teaching staff of the Master of Teaching program, and Mentor Teachers from within placement schools.

**Cohort approach**

The third design feature, which is another structure of support, is cohorts of teacher candidates. Cohorts in teacher education seek to enhance social relationships and address the issue of isolation that students can feel at university, and in school placements (Beck & Kosnik, 2006). One way this is achieved is that pre-service teachers are clustered in schools in cohorts, and they work under the guidance of a small team of educators (Beck & Kosnik, 2006). This is the model used in the Master of Teaching program. A Teaching Fellow, together with a Clinical Specialist, works with a cohort of 20-25 teacher candidates from Partnership School Groups. In addition, a Clinical Specialist works with the cohort in the “Professional Practice and Seminar”
subject. This subject involves 8-10 hours of seminars and “provides an integrated focus on all subjects taught in the semester and addresses Teacher Candidates’ developing understandings of professional knowledge, professional practice and professional engagement” (Handbook, Professional Practice and Seminar, 2010, p. 1). Another aspect of the clinical specialists’ role, that is consistent with other clinical-professional models, is that they visit the site of candidates’ professional placements so that they can integrate theoretical insights from university subjects with professional practice (Whitcomb, 2010).

**Regulation of teacher education**

A further feature of contemporary teacher education in Australia and worldwide is the review of their courses as part of government regulation of the teaching profession (Bates, 2007). The government rhetoric associated with this regulation is its necessity “for the improvement of educational performance in schools through the improvement of teacher preparation” (Bates, 2007, p. 129). The statutory authority for the regulation of the teaching profession in Victoria is currently the Victorian Institute of Teaching. With reference to teacher education, Victoria has Standards for Graduating Teachers (VIT, 2009) that specify the competencies pre-service teachers should develop as a result of their teacher education. In addition, the Institute has the authority to review and approve teacher education courses based on their capacity “to demonstrate that graduates meet these standards” (VIT, 2009).

All of the features in the Master of Teaching that I have discussed aim to develop pre-service teachers who will teach and lead change in contemporary classrooms:

> You will become a master teacher who has the capacity to respond to the demands of the contemporary classroom and lead change, taking the teaching profession to new levels. (Master of Teaching Brochure, 2010, p. 2)

However, despite all these innovations, anecdotal evidence in the Master of Teaching indicates that a number of teacher candidates continue to be challenged by the demands of contemporary classrooms, particularly how to foster productive and inclusive classroom cultures to meet the needs of diverse student populations.

1 Characteristics of Teaching, para. 4
Diverse student populations

Australia is a “culturally, economically and racially diverse” (Arthur, Gordon, & Butterfield, 2003, p. 8) society. Diversity, however, has many other aspects or dimensions, which has led to the contention that “‘diversity’ is a problematic term for which there is no common agreed upon definition” (Santoro & Allard, 2005, p. 865). Wubbels (2010), who undertook to review the diversity that was referred to in educational literature, compiled a list of eleven dimensions: “cultural, linguistic, ethnic, racial, social class, socioeconomic status, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, and disability” (p. 518). Within the power relations that operate in society, and hence in schools, people are unequal based on such dimensions (Arthur, Gordon, & Butterfield, 2003), which have different histories:

[S]ome dimensions have been a matter of concern for many years and are therefore the subject of considerable research and literature. Others are more recent concerns and consequently much less has been written on them. Some dimensions are the subject of … legislation (e.g., ‘race’, gender and disability), others are the subject of recent or imminent directives from the European Union (e.g., religion, sexual orientation, age), yet others are not yet subject to legislation as such (social class, bilingualism). (Menter, Hartshom, Hextall, Howell, & Smith, 2006, p. 274)

Teachers and school communities can find it challenging to engage with learners who display or embody diverse dimensions, and at times they can essentialise, devalue, marginalise, or exclude learners who deviate from the mainstream. In contrast, teachers and school communities that model the principle of inclusion endeavour to engage with each learner as a human being, and to “eliminate social exclusion” (Ainscow, 2005, p109).

Inclusion

The principle of educational inclusion is described as “the biggest challenge facing school systems around the world” (Ainscow & César, 2006, p. 231). At a local level, within individual schools, inclusion entails, but is not limited to:

[T]he tendency to reduce all forms of exclusion and demeaning of children, be it for their disability, race, gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion or anything else, for that matter, which could for some children make their school life unnecessarily difficult. (Lesar, Ćuk, & Peček, 2006, p. 389)
More broadly, “inclusion is about a philosophy of acceptance where all people are valued and treated with respect” (Carrington & Elkins, 2002, p. 3). Hence, inclusion is “concerned with all learners and with overcoming barriers to all forms of marginalisation, exclusion and underachievement” (Ainscow, Booth, & Dyson, 2006, p. 5).

The term inclusion, as with diversity, does not have a fixed meaning, and yet, inclusion has “status as a global descriptor” (Vislie, 2003, p. 18). This occurred at the Salamanca World Conference on Special Needs Education in June, 1994. The aim of the conference was to contribute to the agenda of “Education for All” by considering the policy shifts required to promote inclusive education, and to make schools educationally effective for all (Mayor, 1994). The outcome of the conference was the adoption, by an international community of 92 governments and 25 international organisations, of the Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education and a Framework for Action (Mayor, 1994). Speaking on behalf of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) regarding the outcome of the conference, Mayor concluded:

All concerned must now rise to the challenge and work to ensure that Education for All effectively means FOR ALL, particularly those who are most vulnerable and most in need. (1994, p. iv, emphasis in original)

According to Vislie (2003), the reason UNESCO adopted the term inclusion in preference to the term integration, which had been a descriptor for western countries for over two decades, was to avoid the association the term integration had with the system in western countries of segregating people with disabilities into separate institutions. In the 1960s, after a century of segregation, western countries, including Australia, instituted the principle of integration to reform the education system for people with disabilities, which meant, whenever possible, their integration into local mainstream schooling (Vislie, 2003). The process of integration has since been recognised as reform at the system level, and while many students who previously attended special schools did enter mainstream schools, there was no obvious reform at the school or classroom levels. For this reason, Wells (2002) claims that the mainstreaming of students, “as far as teachers are concerned, [is] perhaps the most difficult form of diversity” (p. 207).
Chapter 1: Framing the study

The main distinction between integration and inclusion is that integration emphasised children with disabilities attending, and “fitting into” their local, mainstream schools, whereas inclusion emphasises local, mainstream schools catering to the educational needs of all children (Ainscow, 2006; Carrington & Holm, 2005; Lesar, Čuk, & Peček, 2006; Slee, 2007, 2011). According to the Salamanca Statement and Framework, this calls for major reform of mainstream schooling to ensure the fundamental right of every child to inclusive and responsive education:

The guiding principle that informs this Framework is that schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote and nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalized areas or groups. (UNESCO, 1994, p. 17, emphases in original)

Hence, the challenge for mainstream schools is to learn how to embrace their diverse student populations, how to draw on students’ knowledge and experiences to provide rich learning opportunities, and how to cater to the diverse range of social, emotional and academic needs and behaviours in the classroom. This is a challenge that many pre-service teachers are unprepared for, and under-prepared for, when they are on professional practice placements in schools.

Research interest

I first became aware of the ways pre-service teachers articulated their professional practice experiences when I was a tutor in the Master of Teaching (Secondary) in 2008. I noticed that when teacher candidates returned to the university each week following their two days of placement in schools, many were eager to discuss their teaching experiences, especially experiences related to diverse student behaviours that had confused or challenged them. However, several factors stifled these voices. The first was that the Master of Teaching program had such a tight academic schedule on the three days a week teacher candidates were at the university. This press for knowledge acquisition was the result of the reduced duration of contemporary teacher education programs, combined with the extended amount of time candidates spend in schools. A second contributing factor was the consequent rationalisation of the curriculum, combined with its narrowing to focus on preparing teacher candidates to meet the
Standards for Graduate Teachers (VIT, 2009). This left little space in the curriculum for reflective practice, learner-centred inquiry, or needs-based learning. A further factor that inhibited teacher candidates’ voices was a certain intimidation based on “dominant discourses of teacher ‘effectiveness’ and classroom ‘management’” (Reid & Srirakap, 2012, p. 26). This left teacher candidates reticent to communicate their challenges to the Clinical Specialists, Teaching Fellows, and Mentor Teachers who were allocated to support their teaching, because the people in these roles were also allocated to assess their competency to teach. Britzman (2003) observed that an aspect of teacher education which is rarely discussed, or is even avoided, is that “trying to teach is deeply unsettling and conflictive” (p.3). Consequently, I began to think about ways that teacher candidates in the Master of Teaching could be assisted to explore the aspects of student diversity and classroom behaviour they found challenging while they were on professional practice placements in schools.

Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden (2005) recommend opportunities for pre-service teachers to reflect on and inquire into their teaching experiences, so that “problems of practice can be raised, analyzed, and addressed” (p. 31). I reasoned that a learning community in a teacher education program would have the potential to facilitate opportunities for collaborative reflection and inquiry into aspects of student diversity and classroom behaviour that pre-service teachers found challenging. This was not to undermine their agency by telling them how, or to disenfranchise them by making them feel that they were wrong, or to critique their practice and give them feedback, but to uphold their sense of agency, to privilege their voices, and to stimulate their thinking. Hence, the aim of the study became to explore the interpretations of volunteer teacher candidates as they participate in a learning community to understand student diversity and classroom behaviour.

The Professional Practice Seminar is one example of a formalised learning community in the Master of Teaching program. The difference between this learning community and the one in the study is that the former is teacher-directed, curriculum-driven, and has a focus on the preparation of teacher candidates to be assessed against the Standards for Graduating Teachers, and the latter is learner-centred, responsive, and unfettered by the hegemony of assessment. The definition of learning community used in the study is a democratic community, learning collaboratively toward the common goal of enhancing teaching knowledge and practice (Vavrus, 2002).
Using a qualitative case study of a learning community in a teacher education program, with Teacher Candidates in the Master of Teaching (Primary) as participants, I sought to answer two key research questions.

**Research Questions**

1. In what ways do pre-service teachers interpret student diversity and classroom behaviours when they are on professional practice placements in schools?

2. How does a learning community in a teacher education program assist pre-service teachers’ understandings of, and responses to, student diversity?

**Structure of the Thesis**

In Chapter One I have framed this study in the context of contemporary classrooms and a contemporary teacher education program in Australia, and I have identified the research questions in relation to the importance of the study. Chapter Two is a review of the literature that is central to this study: diversity; inclusion; classroom and behaviour management; and learning communities in teacher education. In Chapter Three I discuss the methodology and methods used to answer the research questions. In this chapter I describe the study, the methods of data collection, data sources, and methods of analysis. Chapter Four is a presentation and analysis of the research findings. In Chapter Five I provide a synthesis of the themes that have arisen in the analysis of the data. Chapter Six discusses the overall key findings of this research, and I make recommendations which teacher education programs might adopt in order to assist pre-service teachers to foster productive and inclusive classroom cultures that meet the needs of Australia’s increasingly diverse student populations.
Chapter 2 Literature Review

Introduction

This study is concerned with the ways a group of pre-service teachers understand student diversity and classroom behaviours when they are on professional practice placements in schools. The review of literature presented in this chapter begins with an outline of the notions of diversity and in[ex]clusion in Australian education, because it is often students who deviate from the “norm” or dominant culture who are positioned as problem students, or as having problem behaviour, or coming from problem backgrounds. Consequently, classroom behaviour cannot be separated from a consideration of issues of diversity and in[ex]clusion (Ainscow, Booth, & Dyson, 2006; Lesar, Ćuk, & Peček, 2006; Slee, 2011). I then discuss literature that considers factors that inhibit pre-service teachers’ abilities to develop inclusive education, focussing on literature where the main consideration is cultural and social incongruence, and also the socialisation of pre-service teachers’ into traditional teaching practices. From there, I go on to outline literature that considers the factors that influence pre-service teachers’ classroom management practices, including literature that focuses on teachers’ judgements of, and responses to, classroom behaviour, and a discussion of the ways classroom and behaviour management are represented in Australia’s professional standards for graduating teachers. I end the chapter with literature on learning communities in teacher education programs. I begin by discussing the theoretical foundations of learning communities and the possibilities within constructivist theory to provide progressive, inclusive practices to enhance pre-service teachers’ developing capacity to accommodate the needs of diverse learners. I include literature that investigates both face-to-face and on-line learning communities and I discuss the benefits, limitations and cautions associated with learning communities in teacher education programs. I conclude with a focus on literature that promotes the role of learning communities in teacher education to progress educational reform.

Diversity and in[ex]clusion in Australian classrooms

In Australian schools, with diversity “unprecedented [and] growing” (Churchill & Keddie, 2011, p. 547), national and state governments are addressing diversity and inclusion in their education policies. One national policy, the “Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians” (MCEETYA, 2008), recognises that
contemporary education is taking place in an increasingly diverse world, and it clearly articulates education’s fundamental responsibility: “As a nation Australia values the central role of education in building a democratic, equitable and just society” (MCEETYA, 2008, p.4). More recent government policies also address diversity and inclusion. The “National Safe Schools Framework” (MCEECDYA, 2010) states:

In a safe and supportive school, the risk from all types of harm is minimised, diversity is valued and all members of the school community feel respected and included and can be confident that they will receive support in the face of any threats to their safety and wellbeing. (MCEECDYA, 2010, p. 2)

To comply with this policy, schools are required to demonstrate “respect and support for student diversity in the school’s inclusive actions and structures” (MCEECDYA, 2010, p. 5). In yet another policy document, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) identified as one of its five high-level outcomes, that “schooling promotes social inclusion and reduces the educational disadvantage of children, especially indigenous children” (COAG, 2008, p. 3). With so many government mandates addressing diversity and inclusion in education, it follows that professional standards for teachers also specify the attainment of these outcomes as key competencies that teachers must demonstrate. For example, Victoria’s Standards forGraduating Teachers (VIT, 2009) state that graduating teachers will “have an understanding of cultural and religious diversity and of socioeconomic factors which may influence the students they teach” (Standard 32). In addition, graduating teachers will “be aware of and can use a range of strategies to establish a positive and inclusive learning environment where all students can learn and are challenged” (VIT, 2009, Standard 53).

As mentioned previously, to ensure graduating teachers are prepared to meet Victoria’s professional standards, the Victorian Institute of Teaching reviews teacher preparation programs to assess their capacity to provide pre-service teachers with the essential knowledge and practice they require (VIT, 20094). It is not surprising, therefore, that teacher education programs, such as the Master of Teaching at the University of Melbourne, address diversity and inclusion in their program literature and course content. Yet, even with the emphasis on inclusive educational practices in government

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2 Bullet point four
3 Bullet point three
4 Standards, para. three

Chapter 2: Literature Review
policies, teacher standards, and teacher education programs, it appears that the building of teacher expertise needed to engage with diversity, and to include all students, is not happening quickly enough, or widely enough.

Although diversity in Australia’s student population has continued to increase, the majority of experienced and pre-service teachers has remained Anglo-Australian, monolingual, middle-class females (Churchill & Keddie, 2011; Moss, 2011; Santoro & Reid, 2006). This situation is claimed to have led to an “enduring social inequity of classroom practices” (Churchill & Keddie, 2011, p. 547) that results in enduring disparities in educational outcomes of students who are not white and middle class:

First, Australia has failed to improve educational outcomes for many Indigenous Australians and addressing this issue must be a key priority over the next decade.

Second, … Australian students from low socioeconomic backgrounds are underrepresented among high achievers and over-represented among low achievers.

(MCEETYA, 2008, p.5)

Recent research indicates that there is “a shrinking conception of normality” (Graham & Sweller, 2011, p. 951) in Australian schools. Students who do not conform to the so-called “norm” can feel disenfranchised in mainstream schooling and “without appropriate attention to cultural issues concerned with the meaning of people’s lives, motivation and attention become problematic and alienation becomes a likely outcome” (Bates & Townsend, 2007, p. 732). Feelings of alienation can result in a breakdown in classroom relations that manifests in student behaviour as either disruption of teaching, or withdrawal from learning. Pace and Hemmings (2007) found that students who felt disenfranchised in mainstream schooling and chose to resist through disruption, created trouble for teachers and for themselves that ultimately perpetuated social inequity (p. 17). Slee (2012), drawing on recent Australian research such as Graham, Sweller, and Van Bergen (2010), reported "that in all states and territories, the greatest number and rate of diagnoses of special educational need is in the area of behaviour disorders” (Slee, 2012, p. 9). In addition, an Australian government publication reported that “many of the most difficult children and young people in the education system have left or been expelled by age 12-14” (Downey, 2007, p. 18). Further, researchers voice their concerns that many school children categorised under emotional disturbance and behaviour disorder graduate into the juvenile justice system (Graham, Sweller, & Van Bergen, 2010; Larrivee, 2009; Slee, 2012). These alarming findings indicate that many
Australian schools are not fulfilling their obligations of: being educationally effective for all students; giving all students an equal opportunity to achieve; and, addressing educational disadvantage (Productivity Commission, 2011).

Despite a long history of policy attempts to address educational disadvantage, outcomes of disadvantaged groups – particularly Indigenous students – still fall well below the rest of the student population. (Productivity Commission, 2011, p. XXXVIII)

**The challenge to develop inclusive education**

I now turn to literature to consider the reasons why Australian education, in general, is not successful in providing inclusive education, and to understand from this, factors that inhibit pre-service teachers’ abilities to rise to this challenge.

Educational research and literature have identified a number of reasons why the Australian education system remains entrenched in traditional, teacher-centred, monocultural practices that do not meet the needs of diverse learners. One reason is the composition of the teaching workforce which, although experiencing some increase in ethnic diversity (Reid & Sriprakash, 2012), remains predominantly Anglo-Australian and middle-class. Another reason is that teaching, including that found in teacher education, is generally a conservative profession and so critical, progressive teaching can be hard to find (Moss, 2008). A further reason is that teachers, who were taught to teach middle-class children from the dominant culture (Townsend & Bates, 2007), may not have had access to professional learning to either develop the essential knowledge and dispositions to cater to diverse learning needs, or to upgrade their knowledge of inclusive, social constructivist models of learning and teaching.

Another implicating factor in the adherence to conservative teaching practices is the highly public nature of international and national test results. Australia participates in the international study Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), and has its own national study, National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). In Australia, schools’ performances, based on their students’ NAPLAN results, are published on the MySchool website. The public nature of each school’s academic performance can incline schools to use repetitive, traditional teaching

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methods to “teach to the tests”, in order to push for attainment on these high profile assessments (McGonigal, Doherty, Allan, Mills, Catts, Redford, McDonald, Mott, & Buckley, 2007; Slee, 2011). A school’s drive for its students to be seen to perform well on these tests can also override equity issues (Churchill & Keddie, 2011) and can lead to “more children becom[ing] surplus to the capacity of the school to deliver its targets” (Slee, 2011, p. 87). An additional reason that traditional practices prevail is that pre-service teachers, who are predominantly the product of traditional teaching practices, are generally placed in classrooms with teachers who model traditional, monocultural practices. This is the case because professional practice placements are generally based on the availability of classrooms, rather than on quality teaching (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Manouchehri, 2002).

Research confirms the importance of pre-service teachers having ongoing opportunities to apply, and refine the learning of their coursework through classroom experience, and yet a number of studies caution that a disadvantage of this experience can be pre-service teachers’ socialisation into the dominant cultures, and teaching practices, of schools and classrooms that do not represent inclusive practices and reform-based teaching (Britzman, 2003; Churchill, 2011; Korthagen & Wubbels, 2001; Putnam & Borko, 2000; Reid & O’Donoghue, 2004). Britzman (2003) claims that because pre-service teachers have little comparative experience, and often lack the necessary support to encourage them to implement practice that is outside the status quo of classrooms, they can “see no way out of this reproductive cycle while they are student teaching” (p. 236). Hence, with few models of progressive, inclusive education available, it can be challenging for pre-service teachers to apply the theories and practices upheld in their teacher education programs (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, & Bransford, 2005).

**Pre-service teachers, traditional or progressive?**

In many teacher education programs around the world, including the Master of Teaching from which this study draws its participants, pre-service teachers are introduced to progressive, generally social constructivist theories of teaching and learning (Beck & Kosnik, 2006; Kaufman & Moss, 2010; Reid & O’Donoghue, 2004). However, research has found that once pre-service teachers are in schools, many of them operate from a traditional, teacher-centred paradigm (Kaufman & Moss, 2010). This finding was consistent across a range of literature which claimed that many pre-
service and beginning teachers believed that, in order to teach, they needed to impose their authority and establish control (Britzman, 2003; English, Longaretti, & Moss, 2004; Larrivee, 2009). Other findings identified that part of the early development of learning to teach is the concern of pre-service teachers to present as authentic teachers who can control a class (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2005; Oplatka, 2004). For many pre-service teachers, and indeed some experienced teachers, the thought of not being able to get students to do what they need them to do is an alarming prospect, and “fears about classrooms run amok often lead them to view control of students as a primary goal” (Kaufman & Moss, 2010, p. 132). In pursuit of this goal, the early focus of a majority of pre-service teachers is on establishing rules, expectations, and consequences, which they do autocratically, not as constructivist, student-centred co-creation (Kaufman & Moss, 2010).

Kaufman and Moss (2010) identified that operationally, the pre-service teachers in their study defined classroom management as “maintaining discipline and controlling behaviour” (p. 127). This was in spite of being exposed to theories that emphasised the development of classroom behaviour within communities of learning that supported “student independence and self-responsibility” (Kaufman & Moss, 2010, p. 122). One explanation for the inconsistency is that when pre-service teachers are on professional placement in schools, they succumb to the pressure of the surveillance and critique of their classroom practices which includes their ability to keep the students under control. The majority of pre-service teachers know, from their own schooling, that schools have a preoccupation with regimentation and order (Pace & Hemmings, 2007), and so they tend to choose the conservative option of having their teaching conform to normative practices that, from an assessment perspective, will count as competent teaching. This, according to Knowles and Cole (1994), is “one of the most powerful socialization factors in preservice teacher preparation” (p. 117).

Socialisation into a traditional standpoint of teaching and learning positions the teacher as an authority figure, and the students as submissive subjects, working quietly and independently in their seats (McCaslin & Good, 1992). This style of teaching tends to advantage conforming, print-oriented students. In their review of authority in classrooms, Pace and Hemmings (2007) found that “[t]he progressives rejected traditional authority because it … perpetuated discrimination against students different from the mainstream” (p. 9). In contrast, a progressive standpoint promotes inclusion,
cooperation, and collaboration, as teachers and students intermingle, communicate, and co-construct knowledge (Larrivee, 2009; McCaslin & Good, 1992).

Differing theoretical standpoints also promote differing approaches to behaviour intervention. From a traditional standpoint, behaviour problems are generally perceived as threats to the teacher’s authority and control, which require extrinsic, often punitive, interventions to suppress their recurrence, and command compliance (Knowles & Cole, 1994; Kohn, 1999). In contrast, from a progressive standpoint, behaviour problems are perceived as “moments of resistance” (Van de Kleut & White, 2010, p. 448) that if investigated, can become opportunities for reflection, learning, and restoration (De Jong, 2005; Drewery & Kecskemeti, 2010; Larrivee, 2009; Mackay, 2006; Van de Kleut & White, 2010; Wachtel, 1999; Wilkinson & Meiers, 2007), and as occasions for the development of life skills such as problem-solving, interpersonal communication, and coping strategies. Teachers perceptions of, and responses to, classroom behaviour influence pre-service teachers’ developing understandings about classroom and behaviour management.

**Teachers’ interpretations of and responses to classroom behaviour**

The extent and severity of a behaviour intervention is usually based on a teacher’s judgement about the cause of the problem and a student’s culpability. This positions the teacher’s causal attributions of problem behaviour as a socially-situated interpretive act and, as Shay (2008) emphasises, “[a]n interpretive approach assumes discrimination … to be an unavoidable dimension of the judgment-making process” (p. 162). According to Britzman (1994), “the thinking of teachers cannot be understood without acknowledging that teachers are raced, classed, sexed, and gendered, and that these social markers organize teachers’ thoughts” (p 70).

There has been extensive research into teachers’ judgements and choices of interventions related to classroom behaviour (Bibou-Nakou, Kiosseoglou, & Stogianidou, 2000; Ho, 2004; Lewis, Romi, Qui, & Katz, 2005; Mavropoulou & Padeliadu, 2002). Findings have revealed that, in the majority of cases, teachers are likely to nominate student and family related factors, such as a student’s disposition or upbringing, as the causes of problems (Bibou-Nakou et al., 2000; Ho, 2004; Mavropoulou & Padeliadu, 2002). In a study that compared Australian and Chinese teachers’ causal attributions for behaviour problems, the results showed that teachers
from both cultures attributed students as most responsible for poor behaviour, for
example due to lack of self-discipline, and themselves as least responsible (Ho, 2004).
Similarly, it has been found that teachers are likely to judge student failure as related to
student or family factors, such as lack of intelligence or parental indifference (Pransky
& Bailey, 2002). These studies concluded that such deductions can prevent teachers
from examining personal, professional, systemic, and contextual contributors (Ho,
2004; Mavropoulou & Padeliadu, 2002; Pransky & Bailey, 2002).

Individualism, as a dominant discourse in education, overshadows a relational view in
which “both the environment and the teacher are involved in the construction of failure
and success” (Edwards, 2011, p. 54). As noted earlier, judgements are value laden, and
when the focus of the judgement is on the individual student in isolation, the danger is
that educational inequalities remain unscrutinised, unproblematised, and consequently,
unaddressed (Nguyen, 2010). Research indicates that teachers’ causal attributions result
in interventions that are focussed on individual students as the source of perceived
problems. For example, with academic failure, interventions are likely to target
remediation; and with behaviour, most interventions “attempt to ‘fix up’ deficits in his
or her behavioural repertoire” (Arthur, Gordon, & Butterfield, 2003, p. 5). In schools,
we see enacted Foucault’s (1975/1995) growth of disciplinary networks (p. 306), with
education, medicine, psychology, and social sciences sharing power and resources as
part of the proliferation of academic, behavioural, and medical interventions. Research
in Australia revealed that “the ‘possibilities’ for children to be considered ‘abnormal’ or
‘pathological’ are much more prolific than ever before” (Krieg, 2010, p. 64). The label
that categorises an individual who “qualifies” for intervention has power; “it produces
reality” (Foucault, 1975/1995, p. 194), and as a result, the specifications of a generic
label are often privileged above the qualities and potential of an individual. Hence, the
belief by some that a label conceals more than it reveals (Dixon & Sanjakdar, 2004).
Compared to the amount of multiple interests in educational interventions that operate
from a standpoint of exclusion, there is minimal investment in exploring multiple ways
that education can build its capacity to include (Macfarlane, 2010). Classroom
behaviour is one domain of classroom life that indicates whether schools and teachers
operate from a standpoint of exclusion or inclusion, and whether a child will be
“humanized or de-humanized” (Ginott, 1972, p. 16).
Research has established that in Australia, punitive interventions prevail (Lewis et al., 2005). A study conducted by Lewis et al. (2005) examined data from teachers and students across Australia, Israel, and China, to identify the use of behaviour interventions. The data from teachers revealed that “[p]unishment … ranks as the most common [disciplinary] strategy in Australia, and the fourth and fifth most commonly used strategy in Israel and China, respectively” (Lewis et al., p. 736). This was the case even though, according to the reports of the teachers in the three countries, there were “no statistically significant differences in the perceived levels of classroom misbehaviour” (Lewis et al., p. 734). The Australian students, more so than the students in Israel and China, reported that their teachers used fewer non-interventional and interactional strategies, such as hinting and discussion, and more punishment (Lewis et al.). In the light of the previous observation that traditional, teacher-centred practices remain entrenched in the Australian education system, it is not surprising to find that traditional, authoritarian behaviour management strategies also predominate.

To examine Australia’s current educational policy positions regarding classroom and behaviour management, and the standpoints they align with, I compare an example from the current Victorian Standards for Graduate Teachers (VIT, 2009) with one from the forthcoming National Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2011), to analyse the ways they depict classroom and behaviour management at the graduate teacher stage. “A discourse becomes powerful when it is institutionally sanctioned” (Britzman, 2003, p. 39), and this is especially so with the nationally endorsed standards as they purport to present “a common understanding and language for discourse between teachers, teacher educators, teacher organisations, professional associations and the public” (AITSL, 2011, Teacher Standards, Overview). In the table below, the current Victorian standard is presented first, and the forthcoming national standard, second.

Table 1: Example standards for graduating teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VIT (2009)</th>
<th>AITSL (2011)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Standard 3</td>
<td>Teachers at graduate career stage will “demonstrate knowledge of practical approaches to manage challenging behaviour.” (See</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Victorian standard is written from a broad, educative perspective that is commensurable with the complexity of teacher-learner relationships, teaching and learning content, and teaching-learning contexts. The wording “be aware of” indicates an expectation that graduate teachers are reflective professionals, conscious of, and attentive to, possible challenges which could impact on teaching and learning. This awareness enables proactive responses to prevent these challenges, or to minimise them and to support learners through them. In contrast, the national standard focuses on challenging behaviour, and its wording depicts this behaviour in isolation, disembodied, and disassociated from the multidimensional nature of teaching and learning.

Teachers at graduate career stage do need knowledge of practical approaches to manage challenging behaviour, whether this behaviour emanates from students, parents, staff members, or the wider school community, but this knowledge and these approaches need to take into consideration a range of possible causative factors deriving from the complex interrelationship between learning contexts, teaching programs, and classroom relationships (Larrivee, 2009). A review of the two standards indicates that they have different theoretical positions. The current Victorian standard emanates from a conception of teaching that depicts teachers as reflective professionals who manage teaching and classrooms to facilitate teaching and learning, whereas the forthcoming national standard emanates from a conception of teachers as practitioners who manage behaviour. The national standard represents the practices that, I would suggest, the majority of pre-service teachers would have been exposed to in their school days, and are still exposed to in schools today. To disrupt such systemic socialisation, and to open pre-service teachers to the complexity of a progressive, inclusive theoretical position would seem to involve ongoing opportunities for them to reflect on, and discuss their daily classroom experiences, because:

[I]t is a challenge to accept and celebrate differences and demonstrate an appropriate level of sensitivity to individual needs…. knowing how and when to respond, and determining what are “appropriate” responses and levels of sensitivity are issues that teachers daily grapple with. (Knowles & Cole, 1994, p. 141)
One process that facilitates pre-service teachers’ ongoing inquiries is learning communities. The aim of learning communities is for participants to learn from, and with others through social interaction.

**Learning Communities in Teacher Education**

From a postmodern perspective, learning is understood as a social and cultural process of “meaning making rather than truth finding” (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 1999, p. 23). Such a theory of learning recognises the use of cultural tools, such as language, in producing and constructing meaning (Britzman, 1994; Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 1999). Further, it is acknowledged that, “in interacting together people construct their worlds” (Trowler, 2008, p. 149). Theories such as these have philosophical and psychological roots that can be traced back to Dewey and Vygotsky.

Dewey (1959/1975) reasoned that the learning process has a psychological side and a social side, and he stressed that neither one should be subordinated or neglected. He also proclaimed the fundamental role of language as the social tool through which learners come “to share the ideas and feelings of others” (p. 27), and consequently he concluded that education was a social process and the school was a form of community life. Vygotsky’s (1926/1997) contention was that human learning and development happen twice, first socially, between people, and then psychologically, within. Vygotsky (1926/1997) articulated the importance of a dynamic social environment to stimulate collaboration between students and teachers, especially collaboration that assisted learners to master concepts and accomplish tasks beyond what they could accomplish on their own.

The theories of these two scholars were in contrast to the traditional pedagogy and orthodox psychology of their times because they advocated for students to be central and active in the learning process. From the perspectives of both Dewey (1959/1975) and Vygotsky (1926/1997), the role of teachers is to facilitate learning based on students’ own experiences that have derived from their social and cultural histories. A later progressive educationalist, Freire (1994), was also a vocal proponent of education starting from learners’ knowledge of lived experience and the cultural contexts from which that knowledge generated: “What is impermissible is the attempt to transcend it [lived experience] without starting with it and proceeding by way of it” (p. 70). From a progressive perspective, social interaction and culture are recognised as intrinsically
embedded in teaching and learning, and in the construction of knowledge, hence, social constructivist approaches to teaching and learning are promoted (Beck & Kosnik, 2006).

In teacher education, this constructivist position recognises that pre-service teachers can actively co-construct understandings of teaching through collaborative reflection and inquiry into the theory and practice of their own teaching (Beck & Kosnik, 2006; Cochran-Smith, 2004; MacNaughton & Williams, 2009). One process that is based on social constructivist theory is learning communities. The foundational premise of learning communities is that learners learn best when they interact with others and share responsibility for learning (Hramiak, 2010; Rogers, 2000). The social and relational processes within a learning community are believed to address the isolation and individualism that is recognised as a problem in school teaching (Britzman, 2003; Cochran-Smith, 2006; Shulman, 2004), and in university study (Beck & Kosnik, 2006; Britzman, 2003; Mann, 2008). Beck and Kosnik (2006) contend that social constructivist approaches to teaching and learning need to begin in teacher education, and they need to begin in community. This is because cohort communities in teacher education that practice social constructivist approaches to knowledge construction, model inclusive, generative processes that can be applied both to participants’ ongoing development throughout their careers as teachers, and to the communities they may seek to foster in their classrooms over that time.

In learning communities, knowledge is recognised as distributed among participants (Rogers, 2000), which leads to a democratic environment where “[n]o one individual (including the teacher), is burdened with the task of ‘knowing it all’” (Rogers, 2000, p. 384). Consequently, learning communities in teacher education are considered instrumental in diminishing hierarchical roles so that teacher educators become facilitators of learning and co-learners with pre-service teachers (Beck & Kosnik, 2006; Vavrus, 2002). Such egalitarianism in learning communities was found to be an important factor that influenced the level of engagement of participants, and hence the level of learning, in a learning community (Maloney & Konza, 2011). An environment that is free from hierarchical power structures, both enhances “social-cultural links between participants” (Loughran, 2006, p. 164) and promotes a safe environment where pre-service teachers can share critical teaching incidents without their competence being assessed.

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*Chapter 2: Literature Review*
The freedom to reflect collaboratively on teaching failures and struggles is considered essential to extending pre-service and beginning teachers’ thinking beyond the myriad emotions these incidents engender. In addition, in an environment where teacher educators are facilitators of learning, they are recognised as available to progress conversations beyond the level of sympathetic support that is often given when pre-service teachers lament with peers (Loughran, 2006). A key factor for teacher educators, therefore, is to not be tempted to offer advice because this creates an expert/novice divide that privileges a monologic encounter and one-sided knowledge construction (Sarja & Janhonen, 2009). Rather, they are to guide reflection and inquiry so that pre-service teachers see for themselves the critical, substantive aspects of incidents (Cochran-Smith, 2006; Loughran, 2006). These same principles apply to virtual communities that utilise state-of-the-art information and communications technology (ICT).

ICTs have extended the engagement in learning communities beyond face-to-face and into on-line, global collaborations. Rogers (2000) investigated such a virtual community with 26 teachers and administrators from North America, Europe, Asia, and the Caribbean. His aim was to explore whether the characteristics that Wenger (1998) maintained must be present in the practice of a coherent community: mutual engagement, shared repertoire, and joint enterprise would be found in an on-line workshop that was conducted via the World Wide Web. Rogers (2000) analysed the dialogue patterns of participant posts and concluded that the three characteristics were present in this on-line community. In another study that stayed within local boundaries, Hramiak (2011) investigated a learning community in a two-year teacher education program that comprised face-to-face and on-line collaboration. These findings indicated that the learning community was successful in sustaining participants’ social connectivity throughout the duration of the program, and in addition, it achieved the dual aims of reducing pre-service teachers’ sense of isolation, and increasing their level of support, while they were on professional practice placements. The success of the learning community in achieving these aims was claimed to be due to the program’s focus on collaboration and interaction, and to the activities, both face-to-face and on-line, that were specifically designed to build a sense of trust and respect amongst participants before they went on placement.
The building of trust and respect amongst participants has been found to be something that needs to be astutely considered, and meticulously planned for, in both face-to-face and online learning communities, so that collaboratively, participants ensure that all voices are heard. Vavrus (2002) cautions that teacher educators may need to have professional development in ways to facilitate learning communities so that dominant perspectives are not reproduced, and so that they learn how to negotiate the tensions learning communities generate “between potential for growth and maintenance of the status quo” (McKinney, 2003, p. 295). In addition, teacher educators may need professional development to learn to negotiate the complexity when multiple perspectives are encouraged and expected (Vavrus, 2002). This is so that they facilitate verbal and non-verbal communication in learning communities that are respectful of, and sensitive to, minority groups and heterogeneity, and so that no person or group is violated, dominated, or excluded (Narayan, 1988).

From a social constructivist perspective, learning communities that uphold these principles will nurture growth and development in pre-service teachers and also support them to “engage in constant critique of social and educational institutions” (Beck & Kosnik, 2006, p. 13). From this perspective, learning communities in teacher education have been recognised as providing ongoing opportunities for working with pre-service teachers to increase their awareness of diversity issues in teaching, and to progress social justice in education (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Vavrus, 2002). Beck and Kosnik (2006) go so far as to claim that “building community is the single most important means of fostering inclusive attitudes and practices among student teachers” (p. 97). Even though researchers and educators confirm the benefits of learning communities in teacher education programs, there is a need, however, for more institutional support for them, especially in times of tight budgets and increasing workloads (Beck & Kosnik, 2006; Vavrus, 2002).

This chapter has outlined literature pertaining to notions of diversity, inclusion and exclusion in Australian education. It also discussed social and cultural incongruence in the classroom, and pre-service teachers’ socialisation into traditional teaching practices. The chapter then went on to consider how classroom and behaviour management are represented in professional standards for graduating teachers. The chapter finished with a focus on the role of learning communities in teacher education from a progressive, constructivist perspective.
The next chapter describes the methodology and methods used to answer the research questions.
Chapter 3 Methodology and Methods

Introduction
In this chapter I describe the methodological positioning of the research. I begin with a discussion of the qualitative paradigm upon which the study is based, and the choice of case study to answer the two key research questions. Following this, I detail the ethical issues that were taken into consideration. I then describe the research context and I outline how the participants were recruited. From there, I introduce the participants. I then go on to describe the study. I finish the chapter with a discussion of the data, including the methods of data collection, the data sources, and the techniques of data analysis.

Methodology and methods used to answer the research questions
In order to explore the understandings of a group of pre-service teachers who participated in an informal learning community, I have chosen to use qualitative research because it entails researchers studying people and practices “in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 4). Qualitative research is a broad category within which a range of different approaches fall. Case study is one of those approaches. The learning community in this study naturally formed the basis of a case study; consequently, case study was chosen to answer the two key research questions:

1. In what ways do pre-service teachers interpret student diversity and classroom behaviours when they are on professional practice placements in schools?

2. How does a learning community in a teacher education program assist pre-service teachers’ understandings of, and responses to, student diversity?

Case study has been defined as “the examination of an instance in action” (Walker, 1980, p. 33). Such specificity within case study is considered both its weakness and its strength. Weakness due to the inability to generalise from a specific instance, and strength due to the depth of insight it gives into that instance (Stake, 2008; Walker, 1980). Due to its small-scale, this study does not aim to be generalisable beyond its own learning community. However, a number of the lessons learned from this single
case may have warrant more broadly. The pre-service teachers in this study initiate learning community conversations by sharing a real life instance from their professional practice experiences in schools. They then participate in collaborative reflection and inquiry in order to gain insight into, and from, these experiences. The learning community opens a collaborative space for pre-service teachers to reflect on, and inquire into their own teaching, and the teaching that was being modelled in schools, rather than unquestioningly reproducing traditional teaching approaches (McWilliam, 1994). As a consequence, the generalisability in this study becomes what the participants themselves decide to discard or include in their personal ideology, what to reject or add to their teaching repertoire, and what is applicable and generalisable to their own teaching contexts. According to Walker (1980):

The ‘generalisability’ problem can be to some extent ameliorated if the initial audience is confined to those involved in the study. The final report then becomes a report on the process of research and publication becomes part of that process. (p. 39)

Those involved in the study, the volunteer teacher candidates, are participants who contribute in the study with the aim of benefiting from it. The benefits for the teacher candidates derive from the research design. First, its workshop designed to address their perceived immediate need of assistance with classroom behaviour. Second, its sustained, collaborative learning community designed to assist the teacher candidates with their understandings of, and responses to, student diversity and classroom behaviour. Together, these work to enhance participants’ teaching knowledge and practice. This research design is in contrast to a research tradition in which participants are positioned as objects to be observed, and the only beneficiary is the researcher (McWilliam, 1994). A non-authoritarian, non-assessable, respectful, safe space is essential in a collaborative learning community in order to facilitate the participants’ candid sharing of, and reflection and inquiry into, their teaching experiences (Loughran & Russell, 1997). My role is to facilitate and contribute to this process, which positions me as a participant/observer. This situates me in the research, not as an observer outside of it looking in. These participant and researcher roles align with a relational view of research as described by Miles and Huberman, (1994):

Researchers taking a relational view stress equal-status collaboration; researcher and researched are now more symmetrical. Fieldwork seeks to avoid imposition of
any sort, and reports serve to “confirm,” support, or even celebrate people who are defined as “friends.” (p. 289)

I have sought to use the case study instrumentally to pursue the research aim. In an instrumental case study, “[t]he case is of secondary interest” (Stake, 2008, p. 123) and its purpose is to facilitate the understanding of a primary research interest, in this case, to explore the interpretations of teacher candidates as they voluntarily participate in a learning community to understand diverse classroom behaviour.

**Ethics**

Ethical considerations are essential before research is undertaken, particularly regarding potential risks to participants in the study. In consideration of confidentiality and anonymity safeguards, participants, their students, and their teachers, have all been given pseudonyms, and the professional practice schools have been referred to by their sectors and geographic locations. However, due to the small number of international students enrolled in the Master of Teaching program, it cannot be guaranteed that a participant may not be able to be identified from the information given in this thesis. There were no other anticipated risks to participants, and, as discussed above, the research was designed to build in benefits from participation. Ethical clearance for the research was sought and gained from the University of Melbourne Human Research and Ethics Committee.

**Context and recruitment**

The Master of Teaching (Primary) that the participants were undertaking was a two year, full-time program aimed at graduates from any discipline who aspired to become teachers. In the cohort that was approached for the study, there were 105 teacher candidates, including 19 males, 86 females. Thirteen candidates were studying on international student visas. The average age of the cohort was 27 years. These teacher candidates were in the second semester of the first year of the Master of Teaching, and they were invited to participate if they had found responding to classroom behaviour a challenging aspect of their teaching while they were on professional practice placement in the first semester. The Master of Teaching is an intense program and participation in the research would involve an additional time commitment of an initial twelve hours to attend a workshop titled ‘Managing Classroom Interactions’, followed by regular learning community sessions through semester one, 2010. Teacher candidates were
informed of the study at the end of a lecture and those who were interested collected information as they left. There were thirteen prospective participants and from that number, six committed to participate.

The Participants

The volunteers who participated in the study comprised six females whose cultural and linguistic diversity included one participant who was Anglo-Australian and the other five who were born overseas, one where English is the first language and four where English is a foreign language. In addition, four participants were bilingual and two were multilingual. One participant was an Australian national, two were nationalised Australians, and three were international students. In the brief portraits of the participants that follow, the academic, cultural and intercultural capital that each participant brought to the Master of Teaching (Primary) is highlighted.

Anka was 45 years old when she commenced the Master of Teaching. She had completed a Bachelor in Russian Language and Literature in Moldova in 1986, and had taught for four years in government secondary schools. Anka, her husband, and their two boys lived in Israel for eight years before they moved to Australia in 2003. In addition to English, Anka speaks Moldovan, Russian, and conversational Hebrew. The family speak English at home in order to improve their proficiency with the language. They are now Australian citizens and live in a south-eastern metropolis of Melbourne which has around 40% of the state’s industry and approximately 55% of the residents are from overseas. Anka had been away from university for 22 years, and many of the technological advances utilised in educational environments were new to her. In addition, Anka had not previously studied in Australia, although she did have a familiarity with the Australian education system through her boys’ schooling.

Bessie Jo was studying in Australia on an International Student visa and she had not previously studied in Australia or been in an Australian school. English is her native language and it had only been 18 months since she had completed a Bachelor of Arts and Sciences in her home country, the United States of America. Bessie Jo commenced the Master of Teaching at age 23. She has Spanish as a second language and during her university years in Ohio she was a founding member of Spanish in Elementary Schools.

6Data obtained March 1, 2011, from http://www.liveinvictoria.vic.gov.au

Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods
(SITES), and was a volunteer kindergarten Spanish teacher. Other voluntary commitments were as a counsellor on camps for underprivileged girls, plus coaching and refereeing basketball. Since moving to Australia in 2007, Bessie Jo’s volunteer roles have included basketball coaching and tutoring English as a Second Language (ESL) at a Sudanese-Australian Integrated Learning (SAIL) program. Bessie Jo and her partner live in an inner northern suburb of Melbourne which has a big European community, and has become a popular suburb for students to live in7.

**Chris** was the only participant who was born in Australia. She grew up in Melbourne’s south-east and completed all of her education in Melbourne. Teaching was in Chris’s family. Her grandfather had been a teacher, and her mother and brother were teachers. After completing a Bachelor of Arts in 2006, Chris wanted to take a break from study so she decided to give teaching a try by teaching English overseas. Chris and her partner both obtained positions in Korea. The first, for a period of 18 months, was teaching English at a private institution, and the second, for six months, was in a government school. Chris has Spanish as a second language and her partner’s family are from Chile, so they spent six months in Chile, Peru and Argentina. On another occasion they did two ‘Work and Stay’ positions in Spain. Chris commenced the Master of Teaching at age 25. At this time she and her partner lived in an inner-western suburb of Melbourne known for its culturally diverse population. During the program Chris worked part time at an Outside of School Hours Care (OSHC) program.

**Dandan** had not previously studied in Australia, nor did she have experience of Australian schools. In addition, English was not her native language. She had been away from university for five years when, at the age of 29, she commenced the Master of Teaching. Dandan completed a Bachelor of Arts (English Language and Literature) in China in 2004, and taught English to primary aged students at a non-government school in Beijing for two years before moving to Australia with her husband in 2006. At the commencement of the Master of Teaching program Dandan had a one-year-old daughter who was born in Australia, and she and her husband had been granted permanent residency status. Dandan’s first language is Mandarin and the family speaks Mandarin at home. In Australia, Dandan teaches Mandarin at a weekend Chinese Culture School to primary aged students. She lives in an eastern suburb of Melbourne.

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*Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods*
which has a mixture of established and new housing. Approximately 25% of the population in this suburb are from overseas.

**Ling** was studying in Australia on an International Student visa, the Australian education system was new to her, and English was not her native language. Ling completed a Bachelor of Teaching in China in 2007, and she moved to Australia in 2008. In China, Ling taught Mandarin to Koreans who were living in Northern China and were studying to pass the Chinese language proficiency test, which is a prerequisite for applying for permanent residency status in China. Ling commenced her study in Australia with a three-month English language course to attain the prerequisite English proficiency required for the Master of Teaching. Ling commenced the Master of Teaching at age 24. In Australia, Ling teaches Mandarin at a weekend Chinese Culture School to primary aged students, and she has volunteered at a non-government school in Melbourne, teaching Mandarin to primary school children under the Languages Other Than English (LOTE) curriculum. In 2009 Ling lived with her partner in Melbourne’s central business district (CBD), which has the distinction of having Mandarin, Cantonese and Indonesian as the majority languages spoken at home.

**Qing**, the youngest participant, was age 22 when she commenced the Master of Teaching. She was the third participant on an International Student visa, the fourth who was not a native speaker of English, and the fifth who had not previously studied in Australia. Qing completed a Bachelor of English Education in China in 2008, and towards the end of this course she entered a teaching competition and was awarded first prize. Before moving to Australia in 2009, Qing undertook several teaching assignments including teaching Mandarin to teenage Tibetan orphans, English to college students, and Mandarin to foreign business people. In Australia, Qing teaches Mandarin at a weekend Chinese Culture School to primary aged students. Qing has also continued to teach English to Chinese recent arrivals to assist them to sit the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). Although Qing’s native language is Mandarin, at school she also learned English, in which she has high proficiency, and German, in which she has limited proficiency. Qing arrived in

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Australia three days before commencing the Master of Teaching and in 2009 she lived in Melbourne’s CBD.

**The Study**

The study design comprised a 12-hour workshop to address the participants’ perceived immediate needs for assistance with classroom behaviour, and ongoing participation in a learning community designed to facilitate participants’ inquiries as they sought to understand and respond to student diversity and classroom behaviour. Both the workshop and the learning community were based on an understanding that there is no “one right answer”, or single model that can prepare teachers for every situation they will encounter while teaching, or for every eventuality in the classroom (Arthur, Gordon, & Butterfield, 2003; Drewery & Kecskemeti, 2010; English, Longaretti, & Moss, 2004; Fraser, 2001; Korthagen & Wubbels, 2001; McNally, l’Anson, Whewell, & Wilson, 2005; Slee, 1995; Wilkinson & Meiers, 2007). Rather, it was understood that a reflexive attitude to their teaching experiences within a collaborative community could lead to insight into what may be the best course of action considering the intricacies of each unique situation, the complexities of the teaching and learning context, and the individual needs of the learner (Korthagen & Wubbels, 2001; LePage, Darling-Hammond, & Akar, 2005; Van Manen, 1990).

**The workshop as starting competence**

The 12-hour workshop, titled “Managing Classroom Interactions”, was conducted by educational consultant and author Jenny Mackay (2006, 2011). The workshop was based on the belief that to establish and maintain positive learning relationships with students, teachers need to positively and effectively manage classroom interactions, and in order to do this, they need to understand behaviour and its motives (Mackay, 2006). Jenny’s workshop covered background information to help participants understand and identify for themselves a range of possible motives and causative factors underlying and maintaining behaviour. It also outlined a “solution-focused approach” (Porter, 2007) to managing classroom interactions. The theory behind this approach is that disruptive behaviour recurs when the teacher-student interactions are caught in a “dance”, an ongoing performance of disruption and correction. The performance is viewed as the problem, not the individual student or teacher, but it is the teacher’s
responsibility to learn how to interact differently so that the dance ends (Porter, 2007, p. 22). According to Mackay (2006):

The interactive management process guides teachers in the skilful management of classroom interactions. Teachers learn to be aware of the impact of their responses on student behaviour – the need for skilled responses, the importance of managing themselves and of understanding their students and their needs. (p. 13)

I knew of Jenny’s work from the time when she had been employed as a consultant in a program of whole school change in 2003. After I had become principal of a school which had a discipline policy that included corporal punishment, Jenny assisted in the process of school culture change. This change needed to go deeper than simply rewriting policies. It required, amongst other things, that staff make a shift from a position of controlling students and behaviour, to a position of understanding students and behaviour, and using this understanding to negotiate classroom interactions from a relational, rather than authoritarian perspective.

The workshop that Jenny conducted in September 2009 as part of the research included: rights, responsibilities and routines in the classroom; proactive engagement strategies; working from a positive mindset; applying interpersonal skills; and the role of reflection in proactive planning. Jenny used the metaphor of teachers wearing invisible coats, coats with many pockets, and in each pocket teachers have stored a skill, a technique, or a strategy that could be drawn on to enhance their classroom interactions (Mackay, 2006). The practical orientation of this 12-hour workshop was designed to develop participants’ starting competence (Korthagen & Wubbels, 2001), that is, to establish a common language and knowledge base to support the collaborative activity in the learning community, and to assist participants to feel safe, which is considered a prerequisite for thoughtful reflection (Loughran & Russell, 1997). The participant-generated reflection and inquiries that took place in the learning community facilitated the participants’ growth competence, that is, “the ability to continue to develop when the preparation program is over” (Korthagen & Wubbels, 2001, p. 47). The design of the study, with its initial workshop and the ongoing learning community, recognised the developmental nature of learning to teach (Britzman, 2003; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Dewey, 1959/1975; McGill, 2011; Moss, 2011; Shulman, 1999), and that this “cannot simply occur through the acquisition and development of skills and strategies … but via

Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods
informed analysis of the nature and causes of classroom interactions” (Moore, 2007, p. 574).

At the conclusion of the 12-hour workshop, the learning community inquiry process was introduced.

**The Learning Community as growth competence**

To commence the process of learning community inquiry, Jenny asked if anyone was experiencing a behavioural difficulty in their class. A difficulty may occur when there is a mismatch between a behaviour encountered, and a teacher candidate’s experience of understanding or responding to it. Collaborative inquiry into such behaviours can help to resolve a teacher candidate’s quandary, and at the same time, help other participants to think about issues that may arise in their own teaching. Qing volunteered to provide an example. Qing’s professional placement was in a Prep class. Prep is the first year of primary school in the state of Victoria and with the academic year commencing at the end of January, the Preps had been attending school for eight months.

I don’t know what to do with this boy who doesn’t write, and cries and disturbs the other students at his table. (Field note, 28/9/2009)

As each participant, in turn, generated a new idea, thought, insight, or consideration, Qing wrote down each one. This promoted a generative, inclusive, egalitarian, and safe learning community environment, since the input of each participant was listened to and treated equally, and no participant’s voice was silenced, excluded, ridiculed, or overruled. It has been found that active learning is enhanced when not all dialogue goes through a teacher (Loughran & Russell, 1997), and “the more students’ ideas and responses are used, the more students become involved in group learning” (Loughran & Russell, 1997, p. 170). This is in contrast to the usual hierarchical power relationships in education that are governed by curriculum, time and assessment constraints, and in which the students are trying to deduce what knowledge and dispositions they need to apprehend to successfully complete assessments. Overall, the learning community process demonstrated the necessity that the learning community be a social space, where “the student is engaged in social relations with others who are also in the process of learning and inquiring” (Mann, 2008, p. 144).
At the conclusion, Qing had twenty-eight points in total and she remarked, “I can’t wait to go back to school to try these out” (Field Notes, 28/9/2009). The number of points that Qing wrote down demonstrated the generative power of collaboration, and also reinforced the underlying message that there are always alternative perspectives and responses. The collaboration resulted in a range of alternatives for Qing to reflect on in the light of the boy’s behaviour in order to proactively plan to support him. Being proactive means “being solutions-oriented and forward thinking” (Mackay, 2011, p. 341).

A key characteristic of the learning community that was demonstrated was that participants retained their agency. Qing would be the one to choose the course of action that she considered appropriate to support the individual needs of that boy, and his particular circumstances, within the learning context of their classroom. The importance placed on participants retaining their agency was premised on the understanding that “[o]thers may share ideas, skills, strategies and techniques, but you are in the best position to know, understand, assess and make decisions regarding student behaviour in your own classes” (Mackay, 2011, p. 341).

A further aspect of the learning community that was demonstrated was its practical, learner-centred orientation. The learning community opened up a time when participants could ask for help, raise questions, share stories of their teaching and observations in schools, vent feelings, and generally debrief on the experience of teaching. In this time, Qing was able to initiate a topic that was meaningful to her as she sought to understand and respond to the behaviour of a boy in her class. By being candid in her not knowing, Qing experienced the inclusiveness of a community where she was listened to and assisted by her peers, and by gaining peer input specific to her need, her outlook changed from one of pessimism, “I don’t know what to do with this boy,” to one of optimism, “I can’t wait to go back to school to try these out.”

The learning community was also a space for knowledge generation, as participants shared insights, readings, and resources (Appendix 2). In addition, in my capacity of participant/observer, I also shared insights, readings, and resources based on topics, concepts, and subjects that teacher candidates initiated.

Learning community sessions were conducted in semester one, 2010, while teacher candidates were participating in their third professional practice placement. The
sessions provided sustained, collaborative opportunities for pre-service teachers to use their continuing practice to focus on ways to engage positively and productively with students. Participation in the learning community was to involve a weekly one-hour session, however, due to the research being conducted outside of the Master of Teaching program, the sessions needed to fit around the timetable of the Master of Teaching, the rhythms of the university calendar, and the teaching and academic demands on the participants. For example, the 12-hour workshop was conducted over two Fridays in September, 2009. Following this the teacher candidates were in schools for a three-week block placement. When the teaching block ended, in October, we met informally to celebrate what Ling described as “surviving from the placement” (Email, 23/10/2009). With the block placement completed, it was final assessment time. On the afternoon that the final assessment was due we met again, informally, as the participants anticipated a well-earned vacation at the end of their first year in the Master of Teaching program.

In order to prepare for the learning community sessions to commence in 2010, we met for a revision session at the end of February, prior to university recommencing. This was an opportunity to reconnect as a community, and to revise key concepts from the 12-hour workshop. Jenny was able to join us for part of this time. Participants shared concepts, strategies, stories, and observations about how to maintain positive, engaging, respectful communities of learning in their classrooms. Notes were compiled from the session and were disseminated to participants (Appendix 1). At this session we also reached a consensus that it would be most manageable for teacher candidates if we met fortnightly for 2 hours throughout semester one, except for the two-week term break and the three-week block placement. The table that follows contains the semester one, 2010 session schedule.
Table 2: Learning community sessions 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revision Session</th>
<th>February 26</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 1</td>
<td>March 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 2</td>
<td>March 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term 1 Break</td>
<td>March 29 – April 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 3</td>
<td>April 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 4</td>
<td>April 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 5</td>
<td>May 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 6</td>
<td>May 14 at LMERC(^{10})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching block</td>
<td>May 17 – May 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 7</td>
<td>June 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In recognition of the tightness of their timetables on the days the teacher candidates attended the university, and to create a productive yet congenial space between the busyness of course commitments, food and drinks were always provided at learning community sessions. In addition, to facilitate the planning of lessons with a focus on inclusive practices, the session prior to the May 2010 block placement relocated from the university to the Languages and Multicultural Education Resource Centre where we explored resources relevant to participants’ classrooms. Participants borrowed kits, books, and posters that acknowledged and celebrated the variety of cultures and languages represented in their classes.

In keeping with the heart of both learning and community, learning community sharing was not restricted to the professional domain of teaching, or the academic domain of studying, but also encompassed the personal domain of living. Freire (1998) affirmed a holistic orientation when he wrote:

> [W]e study, we learn, we teach, we know with our entire body. We do all these things with feeling, with emotion, with wishes, with fear, with doubts, with passion, and also with critical reasoning. However, we never study, learn, teach, or know with the last only. (page 5)

Hence, the learning community was a space that, “value[d] the social, embodied and evolving self over the disembodied cognitive self, and assert[ed] dialogue and interaction as the place where the individual can ‘move in the gap’ between present and

\(^{10}\) Languages and Multicultural Education Resource Centre

Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods
future” (Mann, 2008, p. 144). This gap between present and future was also acknowledged in the personal domain when we celebrated Chris’s wedding and Ling’s engagement.

I remained aware that the research was an extra obligation that this group of teacher candidates had undertaken in addition to a very demanding teacher education program, and I always respected that the commitments of the Master of Teaching were their main priority. Due to the additional pressures on the teacher candidates in semester two, 2010, because it was the final semester of the Master of Teaching program, we decided not to attend sessions but to continue in community less formally using email and phone contact, and to meet socially during vacations when participants had a break from the constraints of time that resulted from full-time study, part-time work, and social life. The social events we had in semester two were: Collingwood Children’s Farm in July, Footscray Market in September, Yum Cha in September to celebrate Ling gaining permanent residency status, and a farewell in October.

The design of the study contributes to an understanding of the case, and the processes from data collection to data analysis all contribute to answering the research questions.

The Data

A characteristic of this study, as is consistent with qualitative case studies, is the variety of data sources that contribute to the descriptive nature of the research (Merriam, 2009). The table below details the dates that data collection was undertaken, the methods of data collection utilised, and the data sources.

Table 3: Data collection – dates, methods, sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21/9/2009</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>• Limited-response questionnaire (Appendix 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Open-response questionnaire (Appendix 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26/2/2010 – 4/6/2010</td>
<td>Audio Record (learning community sessions)</td>
<td>• Digital audio recordings that were transcribed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/11/2010</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>• Limited-response questionnaire (Appendix 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Open-response questionnaire (Appendix 6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods
The inclusion of email and mobile phone communications is indicative of the possibilities that information and communication technologies have opened to researchers (Moss, 2008). These modes of technology were spontaneously utilised by participants as their means of remaining networked and connected, and as such, they opened opportunities for participants to communicate on their own terms and not just within the boundaries of formal research times and spaces. Bullough (1997) found that electronic mail was used by pre-service teachers as a tool to extend conversations following peer observations of micro-teaching experiences (pp. 25-26). Participants in the current research used email and mobile phone communications to initiate and extend learning community conversations beyond the face-to-face of learning community sessions, and as such, these communications were treated as dialogue for data purposes (Helfich & Rice, 2001).

The other source of dialogue in the study comprised audio recordings of learning community sessions. These recordings were transcribed and analysed. Transcription is recognised as an interpretive and representational process (Green, Franquiz, & Dixon, 1997). Green, Franquiz, and Dixon (1997) argue that “a transcript is a text that ‘re’-presents an event …. [and] what is re-presented is data constructed by a researcher for a particular purpose, not just talk written down” (p. 172). As such, analysis of a transcript is recognised as a subjective, value-laden, political act that comprises choice and interpretation (Green, Franquiz, & Dixon, 1997).

The study also included two types of surveys: limited-response, and open-response. The limited-response questionnaire (Mackay, 2009)(Appendix 4) was a checklist for participants to self-assess their perceived classroom management knowledge and practices at the beginning of the study, and then again at the end. This questionnaire used a five-point Likert response scale in which participants indicated their perceived level of strength on 43 items. The format of the Likert response scale was: Not Strong At All; Not Strong; Managing; A Strength; and Great Strength. A disadvantage of limited-response questionnaires can be a possible lack of depth of thought to the responses (Campbell, 2007), but the limited-response questionnaire in this study was not utilised to provide a researcher with an in-depth analysis, rather, it was designed to
give participants an opportunity to consider any changes in their knowledge, expertise, and confidence over time.

Two open-response questionnaires were utilised. The first open-response questionnaire (Mackay, 2009)(Appendix 5) was administered at the beginning of the study and it was an opportunity for participants to identify their perceived immediate needs in the areas of student behaviour and classroom management. The second open-response questionnaire (Mackay, 2009)(Appendix 6) was designed to gather participants’ feedback on both their perceived learning as a result of participation in the study, and on the research process. This questionnaire was administered at the end of the study.

As is the situation with qualitative research, data analysis was not a final stage (Stake, 2008) but was an integral aspect throughout the study. Analysis evolved in much the same way as described by Stake (2008): “Issue development continues to the end of the study, and write-up begins with preliminary observations” (p. 132). This study utilised two strategic methods of analysis, the first method had a qualitative focus of “look[ing] for the emergence of meaning in the single instance” (Stake, 1995, p. 76), and the second method had a quantitative focus of “look[ing] for the emergence of meaning from the repetition of phenomena” (Stake, 1995, p. 76). Case study research, contends Stake (1995), depends on both of these methods (p. 74).

The first method of data analysis involved using the “stories” participants shared and analysing them “to understand the meaning of the experiences as revealed in the story” (Merriam, 2009, p. 23). The second method is known as thematic analysis and it involved reading data sources from the audio record and document collection and giving them descriptive classifications. This method of data analysis, according to Van Manen (1990), “is not a rule-bound process but a free act of ‘seeing’ meaning” (p. 79). Such a process is also recognised as part of the reflective process of qualitative case study, with data “continuously interpreted, … again and again” (Stake, 2008, p. 128). Over time, through this continuous process of reflection and interpretation, classifications were allocated, revised, or amalgamated, until patterns emerged and key themes were discerned.

This chapter has described the methodological positioning of this study and the methods used to answer the two key research questions. In addition, the chapter
described the research, the techniques of data collection, and the methods of data analysis.

In the chapter that follows, I present the first level of data analysis and interpretation of the research findings.
Chapter 4 Research Findings

Introduction

The findings for each method of data collection are presented with an initial level of analysis and interpretation.

Surveys 21/9/2009

At the beginning of the study the participants were given two surveys to complete. The first was a limited-response questionnaire, and the second, an open- response questionnaire. Below, I discuss the format of each questionnaire and present the findings.

Limited-response questionnaire

The limited-response questionnaire (Appendix 4) contained 43 items related to classroom management practices. Participants were required to assess their perceived present level of strength in each item using a five-point Likert response scale. This questionnaire can be described as a participant perception exercise because it gives a picture of the students’ perceptions of their practices rather than an indication of the practices themselves (Kaufman & Moss, 2010, p. 124). For me, the limited-response questionnaire gave an indication of participants’ perceived levels of strength at the beginning of the program. For the participants, the potential benefit of completing the questionnaire was to be gained once they repeated the exercise a second time, at the end of the study, and compared their responses. The table below indicates the points on the Likert scale where participants tended to locate their perceptions of their capabilities.

Table 4: Limited-response questionnaire - 21/9/2009 findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-assessment</th>
<th>Not Strong At All</th>
<th>Not Strong</th>
<th>Managing</th>
<th>Strength</th>
<th>Great Strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anka</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bessie Jo</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dandan</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qing</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As can be seen from the table, at the beginning of the study, all but one participant considered they had strengths to draw on, and three participants considered there were areas in which they were not strong all.

**Anka** self-assessed that she was Not Strong in: Planning for behaviour; Being consistent in my management; and Acknowledging students’ attributes, strengths, and abilities.

**Bessie Jo** identified that she was Not Strong At All in: Planning for behaviour; Offering students choices; and Applying consequential learning, but she identified as Great Strength: Understanding behaviour; and Responding to behaviour.

**Chris** also recognised that she was Not Strong in: Planning for behaviour, and she considered she had Strength in: Management of students, behaviour and classes; and Applying affirming skills.

**Dandan** noted that she was Not Strong At All in the use of: Follow through skills; Affirming skills; and some Assertive skills such as Self talk and ‘I’ statements. Dandan, did, however, identify that she had Great Strength in: Professionalism; and Awareness of the impact my responses can have on students.

**Ling’s** initial checklist responses fell into the categories of Managing; Strength; and Great Strength. Ling considered that she had Great Strength in: Planning for behaviour; Understanding behaviour; and Responding to behaviour.

**Qing** regarded that she was Not Strong in areas such as: Ability to convey a sense of control; Clearly stating guidelines and expectations for behaviour; Planning to enable behaviour change; and Giving constructive praise. Qing considered that she had Strength in: Awareness of the impact my responses can have on students; Awareness of the need to teach and enable acceptable behaviour; and the application of Assertive skills such as gesture, facial expressions and proximity.

**Open-response questionnaire**

The open-response questionnaire (Appendix 5) was an opportunity for participants to identify their perceived needs in the areas of student behaviour and classroom management at the beginning of the study. The wording and participants’ responses
from this questionnaire are documented in the table below, followed by an analysis of the findings.

**Table 5: Open-response questionnaire - 21/9/2009 findings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List what you would like to focus on/develop skills for/improve on in the areas of student behaviour and classroom management as you work throughout this project.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anka</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bessie Jo</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chris</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dandan</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ling</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Qing</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional comments, observations, suggestions you would like to make with regard to students, behaviour, classroom, school management, prior to commencing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bessie Jo</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ling</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A key part of the teacher candidates’ responses indicates that the ability to maintain control of a class is a powerful, pervasive, and guiding concern. As outlined in the literature, this is not unusual. Several items that the teacher candidates listed as wanting to work on were also consistent with literature which revealed that when pre-service
teachers were asked to specify the steps they would follow to manage their classrooms, they similarly focused on rules, expectations, and consequences (Kaufman & Moss, 2010). Bessie Jo mentioned a progression of rights, which would seem to derive from a theoretical model of authoritative classroom management that proposes “extending more responsibility and control to children as they develop more self-control and … become capable of handling more responsibility” (McCaslin & Good, 1992, p. 13). The rules and structures of this model are described as “scaffolding” that is adjusted “so that students progressively assume more responsibility for self-control” (McCaslin & Good, 1992, p. 13). In this, and other models (cf. Kaufman & Moss, 2010), teachers support students to develop self-control so that they can take ownership of their own learning.

The responses that had an interpersonal orientation all came from the Chinese participants, which might be suggestive of a cultural influence. In order to consider the possible nature of this influence, I referred to findings from two cross-cultural studies. The first was a comparative study of the classroom discipline strategies utilised in Australia, China and Israel (Lewis, Romi, Qui, & Katz, 2005). The results of this study indicated that the teachers from China appeared “more inclusive and supportive of students voices when it comes to classroom discipline, and are less authoritarian” (p. 738). The second study was a comparison of Australian and Chinese teachers’ attributions for students’ problem behaviours (Ho, 2004). The aim of this study was to gain “insights into the motivational processes and the associated cultural values underlying teachers’ discipline strategies” (Ho, 2004, p. 377). These findings revealed differences in causal attributions between Australian and Chinese teachers, and they indicated that teachers’ cultural values of individualism or collectivism influenced their thinking about student problems (Ho, 2004). Whatever the reason for the interpersonal orientation of the Chinese participants’ responses, it was an early reminder that no enterprise is neutral; it is always influenced by cultural values and ideologies (Cochran-Smith, 2006).

Dandan demonstrated an astute understanding of what she wanted to gain from the research, which is in agreement with Larrivee (2009) who states, “[a]n important dimension of classroom management involves developing strategies for maintaining personal relationships with students” (p. 34). This was also an underlying conviction of the research project. Bessie Jo’s reflections under “Additional comments” indicated that coming face-to-face with disruptive behaviour in Australian schools was a new
experience that needed some thought. The study would provide Bessie Jo with an opportunity to consider, collaboratively, ways to reconcile the management of disruptive behaviour with her expressed desire to maintain positive and affirming interactions that would enable students to shine. Similarly, Ling’s additional comment is related to how to maintain relationships while managing behaviour. Ling’s question is in line with an example used by Korthagen and Wubbles (2001), where a group of pre-service teachers “may formulate as a principle that a teacher should both create a pleasant atmosphere and at the same time ‘be in control’ ” (p. 38). Korthagen and Wubbles (2001) maintain that when pre-service teachers are given both time to reflect on what this might look like in the classroom “in terms of concrete behavior” (p. 38), and opportunities to practice, they can formulate how this might be achieved. The 12-hour workshop would go some way towards helping Ling to develop a repertoire of practice, while the professional placements within the Master of Teaching would provide opportunities to practice, and the learning community would afford Ling an assessment-free space to reflect on and analyse her practice in relation to the teacher role identity she sought to develop.

The teacher candidates’ voluntary participation in the research, and their responses to the open-response questionnaire, demonstrated a proactive approach to their teacher development (Knowles & Cole, 1994), an inquiring attitude to their teaching practice (Korthagen & Wubbels, 2001) and a preparedness to invest in “understanding the messiness of learning to teach” (Britzman, 2003). Their participation in the learning community would seek to build on these qualities by providing participants with collaborative opportunities, free from hierarchical power relations, to reflect on, inquire into, and develop their knowledge and practice over time.

**Learning community dialogue**

The sustained, collaborative nature of the learning community entailed ongoing dialogue. As discussed previously, the data sources of this dialogue comprised audio recordings that were transcribed, emails, mobile phone text messages, and field notes. Two methods were used to analyse the data, “direct interpretation of the individual instance” (Stake, 1995, p. 74), and immersion in the data to identify recurring patterns (Merriam, 2009). In this chapter, I concentrate on the findings of the first method. The findings of the second method, thematic analysis, follow in the next chapter as a discussion of the key research themes.
In this chapter I have selected four instances, or stories, which are presented as narrative descriptions (Merriam, 2009). I acknowledge my own investment in the selection (Allard & Santoro, 2004) of the stories. By way of explanation, I note that the four stories have been selected because I interpreted that they contributed to an understanding of the case. That is, they gave insight both into the ways pre-service teachers interpreted student diversity and classroom behaviour while they were on professional practice placements in schools, and into how the learning community assisted their reflections and inquiries into the behaviours, interactions, and practices they experienced. According to Stake (1995), “[w]e are trying to understand behaviour, issues, and contexts with regard to our particular case” (p. 78). Hence, stories have been selected to “provid[e] the reader with a sense of the human engagement and endeavour that took place” (Gill, 1996, p. 38). The table below provides contextual information on the participants’ professional practice schools in semester one, 2010.

**Table 6: Professional practice schools – semester one, 2010**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anka</th>
<th>Undertook school observations at a government primary school in an outer south-eastern suburb of Melbourne.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bessie Jo</strong></td>
<td>340 enrolments&lt;sup&gt;11&lt;/sup&gt; Northern metropolitan government school About 15 Turkish, one Indigenous, and the rest Anglo-Australian, Lebanese, Greek, Slovenian, Asian, Indian, and Pacific Islander. Two students had intellectual disabilities, one had autism, and one had an acquired brain injury from a car accident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yr 3 / 4</td>
<td>26 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chris</strong></td>
<td>273 enrolments Western metropolitan government school One Anglo-Australian and the rest Vietnamese, African, Indian, Pacific Islander. One student was being assessed for special needs assistance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep</td>
<td>14 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dandan</strong></td>
<td>270 enrolments Eastern metropolitan government school 22 Anglo-Australians, one Thai, one Spanish, and one Sri Lankan. One student had autism and one had an aid, he was timid and had a problem speaking in public.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yr 3 / 4</td>
<td>25 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ling</strong></td>
<td>1352 enrolments South-eastern metropolitan, non-government K – 12 school 15 Asian, two Anglo-Australian, and two Indian.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep</td>
<td>19 students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>11</sup> Enrolment data for Table 6 obtained from [http://www.myschool.edu.au/](http://www.myschool.edu.au/)
This girl goes unnoticed

In this first story, Bessie Jo notices how the conditions when two teachers combine their classes to form a composite Year 3 / 4 class with 50 students and two teachers, worked against a new girl feeling included. This story highlights the benefit of having a more experienced teacher/teacher educator participating in the learning community, and the role this participant/observer can play in following up resources specifically related to teacher candidates’ experiences, in order to enhance their understanding of these experiences or to draw their attention to children’s books that can be used to enhance their own students’ understanding of real life issues they may face, or be facing.

This girl Meg had just come to the school… and every time I’ve spoken to her she tells me about her old school and how she misses her old school and every time I walk up she’s writing on an ‘I miss you’ card to her old school, and I’ve noticed that she goes unnoticed, she’s just staring off into space the entire time, and with fifty kids, you can imagine…. But, yeah, Meg, I just noticed that she sort of sits there and I’ve tried to ask her who she came over from [country town, four hours from Melbourne] with. With her mum and her brother and I said, “Oh, I lived with my mum and brother as well.” She really seemed to latch on to that but there’s no enthusiasm for anything thus far. (Meeting 1, 12/3/2010)

On the basis of Bessie Jo’s initial observation, Meg’s behaviour seemed to display signs that she was grieving for the old, her class in a country school, while getting lost in the new, a large class in an inner-city school with fifty students and two teachers. In the learning community we discussed how an attentive teacher can go up and gently touch a student who is staring off into space, in order to bring her/him back to the learning (Session 1, 12/3/2010). We also discussed how grief was an emotion that was rarely explicitly acknowledged at school, or in children’s lives generally.

I think from the other things I’ve gathered about this girl’s life, there would be grief. She’s also the one I was sitting next to and having a chat and there was a nit in her hair, so I told her teacher and we called home. It’s the second time she’s had nits in two weeks…. Apparently she didn’t have friends at her old primary school, she just sort of imagined that she did or that she has important connections to it….
The teacher says the report says she didn’t have any particular social connections…. Her mum, who’s a recovering addict, has moved in with her sister who is also a recovering addict and has had her kids taken by DHS [the Department of Human Services]. (Session 1, 12/3/2010)

Bessie Jo had tried to connect with Meg, and although there was the commonality of both living with a mother and brother, Meg’s lack of enthusiasm to take this any further perhaps indicated that she understood this was where the similarity in their lives ended. Bessie Jo’s mentor teacher had background information about Meg’s previous school, and the family circumstances associated with her relocation to the city, but from Bessie Jo’s account, this information was not used to assist with Meg’s transition or to meet her particular needs, and so she was going unnoticed by the two teachers. This additional information, however, did indicate that there was possibly more than grief influencing Meg’s behaviour, and the learning community discussion focused on how, for children like Meg, “if there’re lots of issues happening then school is not their reality, particularly if there’s been trauma and neglect in their past and they’ve learned to shut off and shut down for survival” (Session 1, 12/3/2010). After only one more teaching day at this school, Bessie Jo’s placement was changed at her own request because, according to Bessie Jo, “I don’t think I’m wanted” (Session 1, 12/3/2010). In the email Bessie Jo sent through about the move, she referred to Meg.

My placement was switched today. As of tomorrow, I will be at [inner city government primary school]. I am quite sad to be leaving the kids at [previous school]. So you won’t hear about “Meg” anymore, though I don’t think I will be able to stop thinking about her. I did take up the suggestion with her today – gently touching her shoulder, and explicitly talking about anger (we didn’t get into grief), she just exudes pain. (Email, 15/3/2010)

Downey (2007) also expressed that “much of the behaviour of traumatised children is pain-based” (p. 29). Bessie Jo had initiated an important topic, with “statistics indicat[ing] that the challenges faced by today’s students are greater than those of previous generations” (Larrivee, 2009, p. 2). Bessie Jo’s observation of Meg’s behaviour highlighted how easily children like Meg can be overlooked in classrooms, and how this further disengages them from the learning. According to MacGrath (1998/2001):
[If a pupil views him or herself as an outsider, his or her behaviour is likely to reflect this in some way. Either the pupil will appear withdrawn and quiet, excluding him or herself from the community of the class, or the behaviour will invite the teacher to exclude the pupil by sending him or her out of the class. (p. 14)

As a direct result of this topic, in the following learning community session we looked at a number of resources that covered some of the challenges faced by today’s students, including domestic violence, parents with mental illness, children orphaned and abandoned due to parental drug use, and parents in prison (Appendix 2). We also looked at a variety of children’s picture books that explicitly discussed children’s grief and confusion as a result of parental separation and divorce, death, and illness in the family (Appendix 3). As well as the books, we looked at a topic search from a community library using the terms “separation” and “divorce” that resulted in the details of 24 books with recommended age levels. In addition, participants were each given a copy of a free booklet published through the Office of the Victorian Child Safety Commissioner titled “Calmer classrooms: A guide to working with traumatised children” (Downey, 2007). The Foreword of this booklet explains:

By understanding and building relationships with traumatised children, teachers can make an enormous contribution to their lives. Children who develop an attachment to their school and a love of learning will have greater resilience in the face of adversity than those who do not. (Geary, 2007, p. i)

After the mid-semester break, at her new placement school, Bessie Jo found that she again had a new girl in her class, and she described the actions she took to help this girl to forge an attachment to her new school.

First two days back were good – lots and lots of learning. Had a new girl put into our class midday on Monday. I wrote her a letter on Monday evening, just saying how happy I was that she joined us – it seemed to make her feel wanted. But man did it take a lot of work to make sure she wasn’t excluded, that she had the right books, that she knew what was going on – I can hardly imagine how I’d find the time to nurture her appropriately, and explain everything if I was the only teacher in the classroom. Giving her a buddy worked great, and it helped that she asked a lot of questions. Anyhow, lots to learn! (Email, 13/4/2010)

Bessie Jo’s community sharing and email both expressed her desire to include rather than exclude and they also expressed her recognition of the enormity of this task within
the busyness and complexity of the teaching day. By participating in the learning community, Bessie Jo and the other participants had the space to learn more about how to include students like Meg, who can so easily be missed in the classroom, misunderstood in their behaviour, or misrepresented by their life’s circumstances, all of which lead to their becoming disengaged from learning and school.

I don’t know how I can get them to just do it

In this second story, Chris shares openly about behaviour she was finding challenging. This story highlights how the peer support and collaboration in the learning community privileged Chris’s voice, upheld her agency, and stimulated her thinking about other ways to interpret the students’ behaviour, and to engage them in the learning.

At the beginning of March in 2010, Chris commenced a professional practice placement in a Prep class at an inner city government school in Melbourne. In 2010, 81% of students in this school were identified as from Language Backgrounds Other than English (LBOTE)\(^{12}\). To be eligible for Prep, children must turn five years old by the first of May, which means that some children may be age four when they commence. Chris sent an email of her reaction after her first day in the class.

My class of 14 students are all ESL students except 1! It will be a real learning curve for me. (Email, 2/3/2010)

During literacy time on the 2 days a week Chris was to teach in this class, she was given a group of five students to work with who had limited or no English. Two of these students were Vietnamese background, one was African, and two were Indian. Chris talked about her experiences in the learning community.

These kids’ English is so limited and if I’m not one-on-one with them they just sit there, and I’m like, “Jordan, turn around, and Lena, turn around.” (Session 2, 26/3/2010)

Chris outlined the literacy lessons she had been teaching:

Basically what I do with them every day is we look at a picture and they name what they can in the picture, or I give them the vocab. And then they draw a picture for themselves, sometimes it’s related to what we’ve done but often it’s not because they just go and draw whatever. And then they tell me a sentence about

\(^{12}\) http://www.myschool.edu.au/
their picture and I write the sentences down for them, and they trace over that to practice writing. And then I write the sentence again and I cut it up into words so then they have to re-make the sentence. (Session 2, 26/3/2010)

While Chris related her routine, she expressed increasing frustration:

But if I’m not there next to them, on top of them, helping them, they’re just, they’re not naughty, they don’t move anywhere, they just sit there, sort of looking around. They know what to do because the minute I’m next to them they start doing it. But I don’t know how I can get them to just do it, because I can’t be one-on-one with them all the time. (Session 2, 26/3/2010)

Anka checked whether the students wanted to do the work and Chris replied, “They do want to, and they really are experiencing a lot of success, and they feel great about themselves and, I don’t know, I find myself getting frustrated. I’m like, ‘Turn around Jordan,’ all the time” (Session 2, 26/3/2010). Bessie Jo and Ling thought of a number of strategies that might encourage the Preps to work more independently, and although Chris’s initial reaction was positive, these did not seem to address the problem as Chris interpreted it.

That’s a great way to do it … but I can’t, they really need the one-on-one because … it’s not just language, they’re very behind in development in a lot of areas so they really need the one-on-one badly and I do it as much as I can, but when I’m with someone else you know, I can’t be, I can’t do it. (Session 2, 26/3/2010)

Bessie Jo then suggested that if the four students who weren’t one-on-one with Chris were confused, they could ask others in their group, and anyone at the table could then answer. From this position, came the concept of them working as a group on game-based learning activities so that they would be engaged in learning while Chris took each aside for one-on-one work. The mention of group learning activities and resources suitable for English language learners led to a query about whether the school had an ESL specialist, because Chris would not be expected to already know appropriate games and have resources.

ESL, I don’t think so but language, I think they do have a language lady, she pulls kids out, it’s not for ESL though, it’s … I don’t know. (Session 2, 26/3/2010)

Chris seemed to dismiss this as a possible lead and her thoughts returned to an alphabet game that had been suggested.
The alphabet thing was great, but I would think, out of five, one might be able to do it…. and it’s also a matter of motor skills. (Session 2, 26/3/2010)

Chris’s assessment led to ideas for a variety of manipulative, tactile, fine and gross motor activities based on the letters of the students’ names (Session 2, 26/3/2010).

During this discussion, Chris seemed to come to a realisation:

Mm, have them do something, it’s something they can do … Yeah, that’s the problem, they can only do it with guidance, and I guess they’re not used to; they’re not used to having something they can do. (Session 2, 26/3/2010)

This realisation was the beginning of a shift for Chris, which became evident in an email that arrived the following day.

School was good today. I had asked my teacher if I could take a whole block so today I took the middle 2 hour block. I was happy with the lessons and my teacher was too. I was worried about them as I hadn’t been given much direction, but it all worked out well. I did one of the activities we had spoken about – using playdough, string, sand etc. to make (in this case) the numbers 1-9. It worked very well with the lower group. (Email, 27/3/2010)

From the beginning, Chris had interpreted the problem behaviour, the students’ turning around, as the result of their lack of English. At no stage did anyone in the learning community actually ask Chris what other messages the Preps’ behaviour might be suggesting. Chris’s overall assessment of the Preps’ ability suggests that she accepted the deficit discourse prominent within schools that students who deviate from the mainstream of white, middle-class, and print oriented, are lacking, academically and developmentally (Allard & Santoro, 2004). Chris felt a heavy burden that, as their teacher, it was her responsibility to redress their perceived lack. This is a common issue for pre-service teachers that Britzman (2003) describes as the myth that “everything depends on the teacher” (p. 223), and she contends that it compels pre-service teachers to “control what is to be learned” (p. 225).

As a consequence of Chris’s positioning of the students and of herself-as-teacher, she could not conceive of constructing a learning environment from a foundation of the students’ capacity, which would have freed her to “explore with students the dangerous territory of the unknown” (Britzman, 2003, p. 224). Initially, Chris’s need for the learning environment was expressed as, “I don’t know how I can get them to just do it” (Session 2, 26/3/2010), and the learning community discussion went into some detail.
about strategies to address this need. What this suggests is that, even so early in the Preps’ school experience, Chris and the other participants held to the individualistic notion of learning that is dominant in many schools. One of the strategies discussed, which was used at Ling’s placement school, was to place a soft toy on the table to watch the students do their work. Chris’s response, although initially positive, indicated that the need was more complex than motivating the students to work independently when she was not there watching them. As Chris talked through her thoughts, it became clearer that in her interpretation, the problem stemmed from the Preps’ developmental need for one-on-one work, and the dilemma for Chris was that she did not know how she could teach one-on-one to five students.

It was then that Bessie Jo seemed to realise that the students may be lost in the learning, and she proposed that the Preps talk to the soft toy, and that Chris encourage them, “if they’re confused, to ask a question of Mr Polka Dots” (Session 2, 26/3/2010). The outcome of this proposal was the agreement that any of the Preps at the table could then help the student who was confused. The impact of this agreement was that it changed the learning environment from one of the Preps needing to be independent, to one of them interacting and supporting each other as a group. In effect, this opened the possibility of a transformation in the learning environment, “from silence to shared, constructed knowing” (Preskill & Smith, 2001, p. 145). With the focus now on the Preps working as a group, the concept of game-based learning activities was discussed. Each time the discussion led in new directions, Chris strived to understand how she could address the needs of students she perceived as “very behind in development in a lot of areas” (Session 2, 26/3/2010). Over the course of the discussion, however, Chris came to realise that not all the learning is about what she does; it is also about “something they can do” (Session 2, 26/3/2010). From this realisation, Chris added active learning to her teaching repertoire and she incorporated it into a numeracy lesson the next day. In this numeracy lesson, instead of Chris teaching to the students who were unfamiliar with the English numerals, she planned something they could do, by organising a variety of materials so that the students could actively participate in their learning by experiencing, manipulating, and making the numbers one to nine.

Chris may have been able to access other active learning ideas for English language learners from the schools' language specialist, and yet, on the two occasions the concept of speaking to a specialist for ideas and resources was mentioned, it was not
taken up (Session 2, 26/3/2010). This suggests that Chris herself had internalised an orientation of individualism, and in so doing, she held to the norm of the teacher’s isolated classroom existence (Britzman, 2003). Although unspoken, the school and the classroom teacher reinforced this discourse. Chris, who was to be teaching in the class for a semester, had not been introduced to the language specialist as part of the professional team that worked with the Prep students; her mentor teacher had not arranged for Chris to collaborate with the language specialist as a part of a multidisciplinary team, even though Chris was to be teaching literacy to students who did not have English; and no one in the school had explained to Chris the language support aspect of the Preps’ education, as evidenced when Chris did not know what the lady did who pulled the kids out (Session 2, 26/3/2010). Chris’s email (27/3/2010) also alluded to her isolated classroom existence when she commented that, “I hadn’t been given much direction.” The dominant culture that was being reproduced was the culture of isolation as opposed to collaboration.

Chris, however, did experience collaboration in the learning community as she shared the emotions she was experiencing in trying to teach literacy to Preps for whom English was, in effect, a new language. Moore (2007) maintains that “emotional, affective aspects of classroom experience and professional learning are typically overlooked, marginalized and even pathologised by those other voices telling us who and what we should be” (p. 573). For Chris, the learning community provided a safe place where she did not need to maintain the façade of coping, that results from both “the institutional push to present a stable appearance” (Britzman 2003, p. 224), and the institutional pressure to be assessed as competent. The learning community, which had been designed to assist teacher candidates in their understandings of, and responses to, student diversity and classroom behaviour, was a place where Chris could be open about not knowing. Beck and Kosnik (2006) observed that a positive impact of the learning community in their program, was that pre-service teachers could share about “specific difficulties they are experiencing in teaching” (p. 13). Neither Anka, Bessie Jo, Ling, or I, had experience of teaching literacy to Preps who were English language learners, so no one felt confident in her ability to the teach these Prep students, and yet, the discussion that ensued after Chris’s initial comment of “I don’t know how I can get them to just do it,” gave Chris the opportunity “to clarify [her] own thinking and understanding, both publicly and privately,” (Loughran & Russell, 1997, p. 170). This
group learning process helped Chris to notice that the Preps could “only do it with guidance”, and with this noticing came the realisation that she was controlled by the thought that everything depended on her. This understanding supported Chris to move away from a totally teacher-centred, transmission style of teaching, based on the myth that everything depends on the teacher, to a more active learning approach.

This golden group

In the third story, Anka shares about the behaviour of a group of students that she has a problem with, and yet, within the classroom teacher’s hierarchical positioning of students, this group maintains a privileged position. Beck and Kosnik (2006) found that the pre-service teachers in their research also brought up for discussion, as Anka does, conditions in schools that were “less than ideal” (p. 13). This story also demonstrates the democratic and collegial nature of the learning community: democratic in participants’ initiation of topics about situations and incidents from their placement schools that troubled or perplexed them, and collegial, in participants’ sharing of resources and also in a participant’s choice to remain connected. By way of introduction to Anka’s story, I return briefly to Chris’s Prep class. This class was not unusual in its allocation of students into ability groups for literacy and numeracy, which is called streaming in Australian schools. Chris’s email (27/3/2010) outlined a numeracy activity she had planned for “the lower group,” and although Chris would not refer to the group by this label in the classroom, according to Jackson (1968/1990), “[b]efore much of the school year has gone by the identity of the ‘good’ students and the ‘poor’ students has become public knowledge in most classrooms” (p. 21). Anka found that this was the case in a Year 3 / 4 class.

In this particular class, the teacher divided the class into four groups, as many schools probably do. Gold house, green house, every day. In gold house she appointed the best students and in this manner all the other students. They had their tables separated – no mixed groups, gold house here, green house here. After the teacher explained the new material she did some interactive activities. Then she gave them instructions and sent them to do some work at their tables. I noticed this golden group, it’s like the ‘elite group’, they sat there and they talked and they talked about everything and they were automatically doing the task the teacher gave them. So I thought it’s better to mix the groups, to have mixed ability groups because, in a way, I felt that this is something a little bit weird what happened in
this class. All the groups they all did the same task. Of course these golden ones they did it really nice, perfect, neat, no questions asked about their work. But they sat there like they were in some kind of social occasion. (Session 2, 26/3/2010)

Although we all laughed at Anka’s observations, her concern about this inequitable practice was evident and Chris questioned, “But why put them in different groups if you’re not going to then give them different tasks?” Everyone agreed, and Anka’s response was, “They actually weren’t challenged enough and they just sat there and had a good time, so I thought it was a little bit weird what she was doing, but I’m just an observer” (Session 2, 26/3/2010). After comments about the importance of thoughtful observations and a questioning stance, the discussion focussed on how the classroom could have been set up to encourage self-motivated learners who make good use of their learning time, and we referred to a set of Early Learning sheets that Anka had emailed two weeks earlier. One sheet offered ideas to promote extended, open-ended learning, for example to research an interest, inspire a passion, and invent! Another sheet included examples of questions to ascertain how much of the lesson content students could subsequently apply, including: “Can you give me examples of that in real life? Can you explain that in your own words?” (Email attachment, 14/3/2010).

Anka’s observation of an inequitable and unproductive classroom practice led to the discussion of, and referral to, practical ways to encourage self-motivated learners and promote a stimulating learning environment.

Anka’s sharing of the Early Learning resource indicated that the collegiality of the learning community had extended beyond formal session times, and the sheets had been helpful to refer to. A further factor that indicated the collegiality of the learning community was that at this time, Anka was not officially enrolled in the Master of Teaching program. Anka had been unsuccessful in her semester two, 2009 professional practice placement, and after consultation, she had chosen the option of undertaking school observations for a semester before re-taking the placement in semester two, 2010. Anka’s continued participation in the learning community was a means of her processing her observations, and it also meant that she remained connected with others in the Master of Teaching program.
I’m a little overwhelmed

This fourth story illustrates how learning community communication, when maintained by email, continued to provide a safe space for Chris to candidly share her experiences, reflections, and feelings, when she was 150 kilometres from Melbourne. Chris was successful in her application for a Special Internship in semester two, 2010. The subject description for the Special Internship noted:

The intern will assume teaching duties in collaboration with an appropriately qualified mentor... The intern attends the school for three days a week for the full school semester and has a teaching load equivalent to approximately 50% of a normal weekly teaching load over the three days. (Master of Teaching, Special Internship Primary 2010, p. 2)

This country internship was in a Year 4 / 5 class at a regional government school. At the beginning of the term, Chris was clearly concerned:

Boy oh boy, what a class! One boy, who is visually impaired, is autistic and has cerebral palsy! And that’s just one kid! A couple are medicated for ADHD and one is medicated for tourettes. There are a few from families in crisis - e.g. drug and alcohol issues and violence. So yeah, I’m a little overwhelmed and wondering how on earth this class is going to go. (Email, 9/7/2010)

The education system, the school, and the authoritative “voice” of Chris’s mentor teacher were conduits to these young people and their families being positioned as outside the boundaries of normal, and this positioning clearly overwhelmed Chris. Graham (2007) professes that “[a] deeper understanding of the power of language is important for teacher to be able to avoid being conduits and instead to become critical circuit breakers” (p. 48).

My response to Chris’s initial email was to encourage her to refocus her attention onto the human beings and develop personal connections and relationships with each young person and his or her family. Van Manen (1991) professed the view that “I do not really experience the subjectivity of the other until I am able to overcome the centeredness of my self” (p.140). He explained:

It is when I see that the other is a person who can be hurt, distressed, pained, suffering, anguished, weak, in grief or in despair that I may be opened to the
essential being of the other…. With this recognition of the other comes the possibility of acting for the sake of the other. (Van Manen, 1991, p. 140)

Three weeks into term Chris shared that she was struggling, but she planned to implement strategies that other participants had found helpful to make personal connections with students:

I need to establish some routines and this is my focus this week. I'm going to set up a feelings chart where every morning they move their photo into a section of the chart that depicts how they are feeling.... I also want to set up a mailbox where the kids can write me letters and I [can] also write... to [them].... Little things like this... I think, will make a difference to the behaviour in the class as I'm struggling with this at present. And on top of all this I have to teach the curriculum.... I can recognise where I'm going wrong. Let's hope this week is more successful for me, and the kids! (Email, 1/8/2010)

The language in this email is robust with feelings, reflections, plans, and potential. When Chris shared that she was struggling with “the behaviour in the class” she used the collective noun which indicated that she did not blame the students for the behaviour. This meant that Chris was focussed on doing something about the situation, rather than blaming the students and feeling that she needed to do something about them. Chris’s email expressed that she maintained a relational teacher-student position in which she proactively sought success for both herself “and the kids!” By noting that she recognised where she was going wrong, Chris understood that teaching is also a process of learning and developing:

Each act of teaching, of caring, of supporting, is also an act of learning: learning about the students, learning about the situation, and learning about oneself. Or at least that is the myth.... If it were true, then there would be a lot more variation in practice from day to day than there actually is, a lot more experimentation, and a lot more pleasure from teaching. (Mason, 2002, p. 7)

Two weeks on, Chris noted positive outcomes, she expressed optimism, and her encouragement of students to express their feelings led to a domestic violence disclosure:

I'm making connections with the students and got some lovely letters in the class 'mailbox' that I set up. There are some boys I'm going to have to work really hard to get on side but I've managed to hook one of them, so I have hope for the rest.
I’ve never had to work so hard to win kids over but I guess it’s understandable considering a lot of their family situations. One student told me this week that his stepdad hit him over the head that morning. (Email, 13/8/2010)

This email indicated that Chris remained proactive and felt hopeful as she worked to get “on side” with the kids. Chris used the word “understandable” when she expressed a “sympathetic orientation” (Van Manen, 1991, p. 97) towards kids from difficult family situations. MacGrath (1998/2001) contends that understanding may be a key to assisting a pupil with undesirable behaviour:

I am not suggesting that disruptive behaviour should be sanctioned. Far from it. The point I am making is that understanding the thinking behind undesirable behaviour may provide a key for relating to the pupil in such a way that he or she is more likely to adopt acceptable behaviour in the future. (MacGrath, 2001, pp.10-11)

The following week, Chris sounded surprised as she realised what had happened:

The ones I thought I’d struggle with are doing really well. (Email, 19/8/2010)

This was a positive email from two perspectives. First, it indicated that Chris’s initial thinking had been turned around so that it did not become a self-fulfilling prophesy. Second, it indicated that she was monitoring her students’ progress. Two weeks before the end of term, Chris’s attitude had become positive and future oriented:

It has been a very rewarding term and I’m planning and looking forward to next term already! (Email, 13/9/2010)

Hammerness (2006) found that “whether teachers feel efficacious may in large part be determined by whether they are making progress toward their ideals and feel closer to enacting their vision of good practice” (p. 9). Between July and September, 2010, Chris communicated her efforts to form relationships with her students in order to teach them. At no time did she label or blame the students as she strived for her teaching to be more successful for herself and the kids. “Caring in teaching,” says Nodding (2001), “implies a continuous drive for competence” (p. 101). The transformation in Chris’s perception from feeling overwhelmed, to feeling positive, was the direct result of her hard work to make connections and form relationships with the students, and to not perpetuate deficit discourses, and barriers to students’ participation. Ongoing, collaborative
communication by email assisted Chris to set aside deficit positioning in order to “meet” with the students in her class on a personal level.

The findings from the surveys that follow provide further insight into the study.

**Surveys 19/11/2010**

At the end of the study, participants were again given two surveys to complete. The first was the limited-response questionnaire they filled out at the commencement of the study, and the second was an open-response questionnaire. Ling did not realise that there was a second page to complete following the limited-response questionnaire, but when she completed this questionnaire she wrote a follow-up to her previous additional comment, which follows. I will discuss this comment along with the other findings.

As a teacher, you should distinguish your personal lives with classroom teaching. Be firm with the students when delivering (new) knowledge and dealing with behavioural problems. But you also need to be friendly/kind to the students as you are learning with them in a harmony environment (to build good relationship). The boundary of being firm and nice is built up through every day. (Ling, 29/9/2010)

**Limited-response questionnaire**

The limited-response questionnaire (Mackay, 2009) (Appendix 4) required participants to indicate their perceived present level of strength on 43 behaviour management practices at the end of the study. This time participants completed the questionnaire using different coloured pens so that they had a visual indication of any perceived changes to their practices over the time of the study. The findings of this questionnaire do not constitute in-depth research analysis because, with so much input into their pre-service teacher development, there was no way of identifying whether the teacher candidates’ perceived changes occurred as a direct result of their participation in the study. However, some general findings can be noted.
The limited-response questionnaire provided an opportunity for participants to self-assess their perceived present practice in the first year of their pre-service teacher education program, and again at the end of their second and final year. As can be read from the table, all participants perceived an increase in their level of strength in behaviour management practices over this time.

**Anka’s** second self-assessment indicated that she had developed Great Strength in the areas of: Understanding behaviour; Responding to behaviour; and in applying aspects of Assertiveness skills; Supportive skills; and Affirming skills.

**Bessie Jo’s** second assessment either remained the same or improved. For example, her areas of Great Strength remained consistent but with the addition of: Professionalism; Acknowledge students’ attributes, strengths and abilities; and Positive focus. Bessie Jo rated herself as Not Strong in: Regularly reviewing a Behaviour Framework for each class; Self-talk; and Punishment, next to which she wrote the comment, “I have found myself punishing.”

**Chris**, who had not previously acknowledged any areas of Great Strength, now identified: Management of students, behaviour, and classes; and the application of
aspects of Understanding behaviour; Responding to behaviour; Assertive skills; Supportive skills; Follow through skills; and Affirming skills.

Dandan, who previously nominated only two aspects of Great Strength, now acknowledged others that included: Management of students, behaviour and classes; Understanding behaviour; Responding to behaviour; Assertive skills; Supportive skills; Follow through skills; and Affirming skills.

Ling’s responses either remained the same or increased, except for two where she readjusted her assessment down from Great Strength. These two items were: Tactical ignoring, which was readjusted to Managing; and, Consistent in my management, which was readjusted to A Strength.

Qing’s second self-assessment indicated an increase in all responses and she rated herself as having Great Strength in: Responding to behaviour; and aspects of Management of students, behaviour and classes; and Applying assertive skills.

For participants, this exercise highlighted their growing competence, confidence, and even growing self-awareness of areas to work on, as indicated by Bessie Jo’s comment about punishment and Ling’s reassessments of her strengths.

Open-response questionnaire

The second open-response questionnaire (Mackay, 2009) (Appendix 6) comprised items designed to gather feedback from the participants about the application of the learning in the study to their teaching, and also about the research process. The table below presents the findings related to the teacher candidates’ perceived learning as a result of participation in the study.

Table 8: Open-response questionnaire –19/11/2010 findings on the impact of the study on learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The application of my learning into practical situations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anka</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What I have changed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not use punishment, deal with disruptive student in positive way, give chance to start from the beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What I plan to still change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I plan to build my own classroom interaction/management plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bessie Jo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What I have changed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What I plan to still change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dandan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What I have changed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What I plan to still change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The study’s overall impact on my teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dandan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The study’s overall impact on my teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal reflection and assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bessie Jo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dandan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The questionnaire responses that related to the application of the learning to the participants’ teaching indicate an increase in their confidence, along with some relinquishing of control. This may be attributable to the practical orientation of the study, since literature indicates that pre-service teachers who are provided with concrete help, experience a decrease in anxiety (Beck & Kosnik, 2006).

Anka’s articulation of what she has changed speaks of a shift from a punitive, or imposed form of discipline, to a positive perspective, and Qing’s personal reflection gives a clear picture of how the design of the study with its workshop and learning community support, worked together to give her a more positive outlook. Several responses referred to students as individuals with personalities, needs, and feelings. This seems to indicate a growing realisation that students are individuals, not “undifferentiated similars” (McConnell, 2000, p. 111), and when pre-service teachers become attuned to individual differences, they are in a better position to foster an inclusive classroom culture that is needs’ based (Arthur, Gordon, & Butterfield, 2003), and “assumes that all students will require support or assistance at some time” (Keeffe, 2007, p. 27).

Bessie Jo’s vision of what she plans to still change indicates her desire to keep working towards increasing student-centred opportunities, even though she continues to express concern about chaos in the classroom. The fact that Bessie Jo is prepared to give this priority over her concern is a sign of her development. Kaufman and Moss (2010) found that pre-service teachers who allowed fears about uncontrolled behaviour to take precedence, were not confident to pursue constructivist, student-centred teaching practices (p. 131).

The reported impact of the research on Chris’s confidence to experiment in her teaching could also be attributed to the communal and collegial nature of the study. Beck and Kosnik (2006), similarly, discovered that one of the impacts for pre-service teachers of learning in community was being prepared to take risks during practical placements. Anka’s personal reflection also reveals a benefit of communal sharing, that exposure to the practices and experiences of others can help participants to understand themselves. In addition, Qing’s comment about feeling safe highlights an important feature of the learning community, because feeling safe to share experiences has been found to be a key prerequisite for learning from those experiences (Korthagen & Wubbels, 2001; Loughran & Russell, 1997).
A sign of Chris’s development can be gleaned from her reflection that structure and routine are areas she plans to still change. A study by Kaufman and Moss (2010) revealed that pre-service teachers can mistakenly equate organisation with the control of behaviour, rather than as an important condition that can eliminate many behaviour problems (p. 131). Chris’s shift from a focus on establishing rules and expectations, to establishing a more structured routine, may indicate a developing understanding that an efficient and organised classroom enhances student learning and engagement, which in turn, leads to less need to control.

Ling and Qing, the two youngest participants, continue to work on their teacher role identity and how to present as a teacher who is firm, yet friendly and sensitive.

Dandan’s use of the words “negotiate”, “enable”, and “trust” in her responses, suggests the fostering of a classroom culture that promotes communication; personal responsibility, and respect. Developing a supportive, non-violent, learning environment also promotes a productive learning environment (Moss, 2011, p. 162) in which the classroom culture promotes behaviour change, rather than the teacher enforcing it (Arthur, Gordon, & Butterfield, 2003).

Qing described the impact of the research on her teaching as an increase in her confidence to communicate in the school environment. This amounted to a significant impact because, as was noted in Qing’s profile, she had arrived in Melbourne as an international student just 3 days before the commencement of the Master of Teaching program, and she was placed in her first professional practice school 4 weeks later. In a very short period of time, Qing had to learn to negotiate different roles in multiple and alien cultural contexts, including the role of a resident in the city of Melbourne, a student at the University of Melbourne, and a student-teacher at a government primary school. Each of these roles was complex and multifaceted, but particularly that of student-teacher in the school environment. There, Qing was subject to various, competing, and spontaneous demands as she strived to gain a sense of her role and responsibilities within the school in general, and the classroom specifically. Even within the university context, which, like many universities worldwide, is constrained by “the tyranny of time” (Mann, 2008, p. 144), the pace and volume of the curriculum and assessments to be covered would leave very little time for “the dialogic inquiry process to unfold” (Mann, 2008, p. 144). Qing, however, volunteered to participate in a study that provided her with a time and a space for inquiry, and from a teaching
perspective, she assessed that her participation resulted in increased confidence to communicate with the three main stakeholders in the Australian school context, students, staff, and parents.

Following, I have documented participants’ comments obtained from the open-response items designed to gather specific feedback on the research process. The participants were asked to comment on: The Process; Content/Information; and Group Interaction. There was also an opportunity to add a General Comment.

**Anka** responded that she found the process “engaging, friendly, practical,” and the content/information “helpful.” She also commented that she found the group interaction “engaging, friendly, fun.”

**Bessie Jo** commented that “the relaxed and reflective sessions felt really indulgent – to have a space to talk and listen about others experiences was fantastic and valuable.” Her response regarding the content/information was, “all of the content was presented as ‘extra’ ways to be more inclusive, and it was all valuable insight.” Bessie Jo described the group interaction as “key to this learning community – absolutely key, we craved the opportunity to share and listen and learn from talking about our experiences.” Under General Comment, Bessie Jo wrote, “this would be a fantastic addition to the official MTeach course.”

**Chris** said that she found the process “valuable and practical” and her response regarding the content/information was, “lots of resources offered, very relevant and tailored to our needs.” Chris regarded the group interaction as an “opportunity to connect with peers in a professional manner.” Under General Comment, Chris wrote, “very helpful, valuable.”

**Dandan** responded that, “this is a supportive program,” and she found the content/information provided “good classroom management strategies which worked in my classrooms.” The group interaction that Dandan found helpful was, “getting feedback from Maggie.” Under General Comment, Dandan wrote, “I am glad I have joined this group.”

**Qing** wrote that the process, “had been well-structured. We didn’t feel like our time had been taken up and we were all able to follow the process of the workshop,” and she responded that the content/information “has been beneficial.” Regarding the group interaction, Qing commented, “the facilitator has endeavoured to promote communication amongst group members. Structured communication has been happening a lot in the group.” Under General Comment, Qing wrote,
“Thank you. I felt really lucky to participate in this workshop. The knowledge of communication will benefit not only in teaching but also in life.”

The open-response questionnaire findings on the research process indicate that, overall, the participants regarded the process as rich and informative. Responses revealed that the research provided a supportive space for volunteer teacher candidates to engage in communication that involved sharing, listening, and connecting as professionals. In this space, this group of pre-service teachers was able to attend collaboratively and reflectively, over time, to the construction of knowledge and understandings of learning to teach more inclusively within the diversity of contemporary Australian schools and classrooms. A point to reiterate is that this study was an additional commitment the participants made in a demanding teacher education program at Master level. Nevertheless, all participants indicated a high level of satisfaction with the study and its benefits. In addition, two participants commented on the potential of such a study in the Master of Teaching program.

This chapter presented findings and initial data analysis and interpretation across the methods of data collection. In the next chapter I present a discussion based on the themes that emerged through thematic analysis of the data.
Chapter 5 Discussion

Introduction

This chapter is a discussion of the themes that have been identified as the result of immersion in the data. As noted earlier, the reflective characteristic of case study research is that data analysis, interpretation, issue development, and write-up are continuous throughout the research. This study set out to explore understandings of a group of pre-service teachers who participated in an informal learning community. The learning community formed the basis of a case study that sought to answer two research questions: In what ways do pre-service teachers interpret student diversity and classroom behaviours when they are on professional practice placements in schools? and How does a learning community in a teacher education program assist pre-service teachers’ understandings of, and responses to, student diversity?

In this chapter, as I discuss the key themes that have been identified through thematic analysis, I draw on data collected during the study and produced by it. Merriam (2009) contends: “Findings are these recurring patterns or themes supported by the data from which they were derived” (p. 23). Four recurring, and inextricably linked themes have emerged from the data:

1. Engaging the dynamics of culturally and linguistically diverse teachers and students/teaching and learning
2. Reaching and teaching all students requires meeting with ‘others’
3. Educating as a social/isation process
4. Being a teacher and learning to teach

Each theme is discussed separately below, and findings have been selected as examples that typify it. However, due to the overlapping nature of these findings, examples may fit into more than one theme.

Engaging the dynamics of culturally and linguistically diverse teachers and students/teaching and learning

This is the largest theme that emerged from the data and it is discussed in each of its parts, not because there is considered to be any division between them, but rather, to indicate how harnessing the dynamics of culturally and linguistically diverse teachers and students, can enhance the dynamics of culturally and linguistically diverse teaching and learning.
Culturally and linguistically diverse teachers and students

This part of the theme is not surprising considering, first, that of the six participants, five were born outside of Australia; four were bilingual, two were multilingual; and all had lived and worked outside of Australia; and second, the city of Melbourne and the state of Victoria are multicultural and multilingual with Victorians coming from more than 200 countries, and speaking 230 languages and dialects (Evans, 2010). Even Chris’s upbringing in Australia and her own experiences through the Australia education system had not prepared her for contemporary Australian classrooms, as evidenced by her comment about the learning curve for her in a class with all ESL students except one (Email, 2/3/2010). Chris’s reference to a learning curve indicated that she was prepared to learn. Whereas Chris, from Australia, was in a classroom with only one Anglo-Australian student, Ling, from China, was in a classroom in which 15 of the 19 students were from Asian backgrounds. Qing, who was in a classroom with only one Chinese student, commented that this girl seemed to love seeing a familiar face in the classroom (Field note, 1/5/2010).

A comment Ling made, after she relayed a story about how she was able to assist one of the Chinese students with a confusion during a writing class, gave insight into her perspective of being both a culturally and linguistically diverse teacher and student: “I really want to help ESL students because I understand how hard it is for them” (Field note, 26/2/2010). Ling’s comment infers that as a teacher in Australia, she perceives herself to have skills to assist students for whom English is a second language, and as a student herself for whom English is a second language, she has insight into how difficult this can be for ESL students. On another occasion, Ling expressed her difficulties in the classroom due to being unfamiliar with aspects of Australian culture:

    It’s harder for me because I’m not from the culture. When the kids talk about something like cartoons or TV shows or something they like to do, I’m not quite familiar with them. So I have to catch up with them after and have to ask them” (Meeting 5, 7/5/2010).

Just as Ling was proactive in seeking out students to ask them about the aspects of their lives that were culturally unfamiliar to her, Bessie Jo was also proactively investigating students’ lives that were unfamiliar.
Bessie Jo was a native speaker of English, but because she was teaching in a classroom with culturally and linguistically diverse students, she sought to learn more about the students’ cultures by accessing information through the World Wide Web. Bessie Jo explained that on the weekend she had begun compiling a document on her computer:

> Just learning about Lebanese culture, about Turkish culture and … for me it’s so ignorant as to sort out which words are appropriate to use between Muslim, Islam, and Arabic. There’s just so much I have to learn. (Session 2, 26/3/2010)

The conversation continued:

> Bessie Jo: I feel like it’s my political duty to know.
> Chris: Yeah, you’re better off, and they’re better off if you know.
> Bessie Jo: If I can’t figure out what they’re coming to the table with, I can’t help them.
> Chris: No
> Bessie Jo: And it’s my political responsibility to know where they’re coming from.

(primaryKey: 26, date: 3/26/2010)

Bullough (1997) contends, “[p]rinciples emerge from practice; we practice our principles” (p. 13), and so Chris, Ling, and Bessie Jo’s attitudes towards learning more about the cultures of their students in order to better teach them, were articulating the ethical and political principles which were forming the foundations of their teaching practice. A contrary position is intolerance of diversity which, according to Wells (2002), is one of the “almost insuperable difficulties” (p. 206) of transforming classroom practice.

Rather than being intolerant of difference, some teachers embody it, and at times, in a classroom, mutual recognition and acknowledgement of each other’s diverse characteristics can lead to students feeling less isolated. Below is a story about Anka, and how her embodiment of difference was a catalyst to a major breakthrough for a boy from India.

Ajay and his family arrived in Australia from India late in 2009, and soon after he commenced school in a composite Year 3 / 4 class at a government school in an outer south-eastern suburb of Melbourne. There were very few students at this school who were new arrivals to Australia. While in class, Ajay remained mute by choice. In 2010, he stayed in the same classroom with the same teacher to reduce the amount of change, so when Anka was undertaking observations in this
Chapter 5: Discussion

classroom, Ajay had been in it for nine months without talking. Once Anka arrived and Ajay heard her interacting with some students, he went to her and asked what country she was from. Anka explained that she was from Moldova, and she asked where he was from. “India,” Ajay replied. When his classroom teacher became aware of this conversation she was amazed, and, wanting to encourage this breakthrough, she asked Anka to work alongside Ajay. Over time, he began to speak more in class and to participate. Anka reflected, “I think he was self conscious to speak because he had an accent, but when he heard that I had an accent, and I was a teacher, he felt more comfortable to speak with his accent.”

(Field note, 19/11/2010)

Anka and Ajay connected at a global level, as fellow global citizens. Anka’s accent was the catalyst for their mutual recognition, and also for the realisation that his accent need not inhibit his inclusion in a predominantly Anglo-Australian classroom. Anka’s accent, however, did lead to her exclusion from a predominantly Anglo-Australian profession. When Anka returned to the Master of Teaching program to re-take her professional practice placement, her oral communication skills and teaching were again assessed as unsatisfactory for teaching in Australian schools. As a consequence, Anka was unable to pass the professional practice component of the Master of Teaching, and she was counselled to withdraw from the program. Anka’s professional practice placements were all in schools in eastern metropolitan Melbourne that had predominantly Anglo-Australian students. For example, Anka’s final placement was at a school where 82% of the families had incomes in the highest quartile, and 82% of families were from English speaking backgrounds. Conversely, a primary school in Anka’s home locality, when randomly selected, indicated that 8% of families had incomes in the highest quartile, and 80% of families were from language backgrounds other than English. In the context of predominantly monocultural professional practice placements, Anka’s enthusiasm, drive, talents, and intercultural capital were not recognised, and were not sought. One initiative that is currently being considered to address imbalances in teacher supply to disadvantaged schools is “Growing your own”. This is a program to encourage students from disadvantaged areas to enter the teaching profession because they are “more likely [to] be familiar with the community

13 http://www.myschool.edu.au/
14 http://www.myschool.edu.au/
conditions and be motivated by a desire to make a difference to their own community” (Productivity Commission, 2011, p. 182).

Monocultural perspectives, however, were not restricted to one sector or one geographic location.

**Culturally and linguistically diverse teaching and learning**

Culturally and linguistically diverse teaching and learning, became conspicuous through its absence in the classrooms, and was made visible by the participants despite this absence. The first issue that has been identified in this study through the data analysis, is that the teaching practices in the school classrooms and the teacher education program remained predominantly monocultural and teacher-centred. This reinforces the contention that there are few models of multicultural practices available to pre-service teachers (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, & Bransford, 2005). The learning community, however, did model a practice that was learner-centred, inclusive, and embraced heterogeneity. As participants shared their professional practice experiences in the learning community, they realised that from the perspective of culturally and linguistically diverse teaching and learning, *they* were able to model within their schools.

As participants reflected on their experiences, other participants gained cultural insights. For example, Ling described an occasion when she was able to assist a Chinese student with language incongruence, and from this example we all got a lesson on how easily language confusions can occur. Ling explained that after her mentor teacher had introduced a writing activity and set the students to work, she noticed that one of the Chinese students had a confused expression, and so she asked the girl if anything was wrong. In Mandarin, the girl explained that she didn’t know how to write older sister. Ling enlightened those of us who didn’t speak Mandarin that in the Chinese language there are different words for older sister and younger sister. Replying in English, Ling explained that in English the word is just sister (Session 2, 26/3/2010).

Through the openness about language and culture in the learning community, the participants began welcoming other languages into their classrooms. They would often share these experiences, including how their teachers embraced these initiatives.
Ling:
My students, every morning I do the roll they say hello in Mandarin to me because most of them their backgrounds are Chinese so I think it’s quite a nice way to engage them in the school day and my supervising teacher said to me that we could learn a little bit of Mandarin. (Session 5, 7/5/2010)

Bessie Jo:
I got International Greetings going every morning … I used the poster from LMERC for the kids who didn't know another language …. It became a great chance to congratulate the kids on trying new things, and for inspiring curiosity - the kids wanted to know where all the countries were on a map, how come the "ch" sound in Turkish is written as a symbol (not letters like we are used too), how the "sh" sound in "shalom" is similar to other "sh" words... so much to jump off of!… and then my supervising teacher said she could say it in French and so she chimed in in French…. The next day she said, “You know I was sitting on the tram thinking how good that was… and I was thinking about how global things are really important and about how I can bring in some more global things.” (Session 5, 7/5/2010)

On another occasion Bessie Jo invited the students to bring in their favourite books from home, including books in other languages. One girl brought in a book in Tamil, a boy a Bible in Maori, and another girl a workbook in Arabic. Bessie Jo recounted the classroom reactions when the first non-English book, in Tamil, was shared.

[Mary] had the entire group entranced, and they were calling out, “What does that mean? What did you just say? What does that mean in English?” and she was the expert. She was the one saying, “Well, what I just read means, the girl had four friends in English. And you see, here’s the girl and here’s her four friends.” And the kids were totally engaged …. and I looked over at my supervising teacher and made eye contact with her, like, “Do you see what’s going on here?” … And, I think it’s something that we’ve talked about in the past, it was a moment where I saw the gears in my supervising teacher’s brain turning. (Transcript, 12/7/2010)

These findings, when placed in both the context of this minor study outside of the official Master of Teaching program, and the context of the absence of culturally and linguistically diverse teaching and learning modelled in either the professional placement school or the teacher education program, signify inroads to culturally and linguistically diverse teaching and learning. The data indicates that, in the learning
community, participants were assisted to be proactive in seeking understanding of diverse behaviours, and to discover the cultural and linguistic tools and dispositions they had to draw on to give cultural and linguistic diversity a visible presence in their classrooms. In doing this, they modelled inclusive practices to their mentor teachers. Through ongoing collaboration in the learning community, participants gained an understanding of what it means to be a teacher who is also a cultural worker. Teachers who are cultural workers teach in the traditions of Dewey, Vygotsky, and Freire, as they work to build shared understandings based on their students’ cultural values and identities at a personal level, one-on-one; at a relational level, as a classroom community, and at the academic level, as they seek to build on these understandings in the curriculum. Teachers who are cultural workers operate from a progressive standpoint in which social interaction and culture are recognised as intrinsically embedded in teaching, learning, and the construction of knowledge.

**Reaching and teaching all students requires meeting with ‘others’**

This second theme recognises the increasing diversity of students in classrooms since the late twentieth century (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Wells, 2002), which is attributed to “large-scale population movements … the increasing gap between rich and poor … [and] the ‘mainstreaming’ of students who were previously segregated” (Wells, 2002, p. 207). These factors have contributed to the complexity of teachers’ work, making it increasingly challenging for Anglo-Australian, middle-class, predominantly female teachers to recognise their students. This can lead to “othering”, which Moss (2011) defines as:

> The practice of comparing oneself to others and at the same time distancing oneself from them. The social and/or psychological ways in which one group excludes or marginalises another group. (p. 141)

If students constitute unknown ‘others’, then it is increasingly difficult for teachers to meet the needs of these learners (Moss, 2011). According to educators and researchers, to meet the needs of all learners would entail a commitment by teachers to support and accept each student, emphasise student strengths, and encourage diverse student perspectives (Banks, Cochran-Smith, Moll, Richert, Zeichner, LePage, Darling-Hammond, & Duffy, 2005; Knowles & Cole, 1994). These often run counter to the labels and deficit discourses in schools, as Chris found in semester two, 2010. The
classifications that Chris had been given to describe the young people in her Year 4 / 5 class, exemplify Krieg’s (2010) assessment that in contemporary Australian educational institutions, “definitions of what constitutes ‘normality’ are being refined in unprecedented ways” (p. 57). Racism is another form of othering that was left unchallenged in a staff meeting at an inner city government school: “This hideous quote from a meeting this week, “Aboriginal people are just like children it’s just their nature. I felt like saying, Sorry I missed how that comment helps you to better teach your aboriginal students!??? Sad” (Mobile phone text message, 25/10/2010).

Bessie Jo was also exposed to othering in her Year 3 / 4 class when Meg’s needs were not catered for: as a new student to the school, as a child who had recently moved to the area, and as a student from a difficult home situation. When Bessie Jo’s mentor teacher described Meg’s home situation, it was not with any strategies to engage Meg, either relationally into the classroom, or academically into the learning. Rather, it was used as a justification for Meg’s non-engagement, which seemed to shift the responsibility for her this away from the teachers, who had the means to do something about it, and on to Meg, who was not in a position to turn her experience of schooling around.

At other times, it was students’ misbehaviour in the classroom that positioned them as unknown others. One example came via email from Bessie Jo when she was unable to attend a session. In the email Bessie Jo explained that she needed ideas to cater for some students in her class, “One kid in mind has 2 weeks of timeouts15 piled up because his classroom teacher doesn’t seem to realise that giving him timeouts as punishment for being angry and calling out isn’t working” (Email, 22/4/2010). The teacher had no insights to offer Bessie Jo on ways to understand the resistance (Van de Kleut & White, 2010) of students who were positioned, and were positioning themselves, as others in this classroom.

This leads to the second issue that has been identified in this study, the lack of positive models of inclusive teaching to meet the needs of all learners. In contrast, what was more often modelled were exclusionary practices such as deficit labelling, shifting of

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15 Timeout is a punishment that involves withdrawal of a privilege as a consequence of inappropriate behaviour. The boy in this example kept being given ‘timeout’ from a portion of his play at lunchtimes, and these timeouts had accumulated so that he had 2 weeks of them.
responsibility on to students and their families, and punishment. As with the first theme, the teacher candidates came to realise that they were the models of inclusive teaching in their schools. Ongoing, collaborative learning community reflections, inquiries, and the majority of shared resources (Appendix 2), were focussed on ways teacher candidates could teach inclusively and engage all learners. Beck and Kosnik (2006) contend that “building community is the single most important means of fostering inclusive attitudes and practices among student teachers” (p. 97).

**Educating as a socialisation process**

Educating is a social process, and as such, it “is closely involved in cultural reproduction” (Anh & Marginson, 2010, p. 5). Pre-service teachers’ socialisation into the dominant cultures and practices of schools (Britzman, 2003; Churchill, 2011; Korthagen & Wubbels, 2001; Putnam & Borko, 2000; Reid & O’Donoghue, 2004) has been referred to as “the baton [being] passed from one generation of educators to the next” (Reid & O’Donoghue, 2004, p. 565). However, learning communities in teacher education, based on the premise that knowledge is socially constructed, work both to support pre-service teachers to think and act as teachers in order to come “to feel part of the profession” (Bullough, 1997, p. 22), and to reflect on the culture and practices of the profession in order to resist enculturation (Putnam & Borko, 2000).

Findings revealed that the learning community provided a medium for teacher candidates to question and reflect on the culture and practices in classrooms and schools. One example was the learning community conversation that followed Anka’s questioning of a teacher’s streaming of students. At other times, it was the students’ socialisation that teacher candidates had to contend with, as Chris found. In her internship school, Chris’s aspirations to take on the full responsibilities of a teacher, and to implement the constructivist model of teaching advocated by the university, were thwarted by difficulties with classroom behaviour and management.

I kept saying to [mentor teacher], “It’s better but they don’t work very well in groups or in pairs,” and she said, “It’s like that throughout the whole school actually, so it’s not you. It’s something we’re trying to combat in the school so I can’t tell you any more, you’re doing your best.” (Transcript, 14/7/2011)

The mentor teacher’s comments indicated that the problems Chris was experiencing with group and pair work were due to the students’ socialisation into passive learning
and their lack of experience with active, participatory learning, which were not established in the classroom or school. Consequently, not only could Chris’s mentor teacher not model the constructivist teaching practices promoted by the university, neither could she render Chris any assistance beyond superficial hints and tips, which ultimately proved ineffective to help Chris overcome the students’ socialisation into the teacher-centred culture of the classroom and the school. Reid and O’Donoghue (2004) profess the view that to develop the teaching practices of pre-service teachers, without also developing those practices within the schools where they are to teach, “is a recipe for failure” (p. 565).

A further level of student socialisation was revealed in a learning community conversation that included Bessie Jo, Chris, and Ling:

In the SPC [Social and Professional Contexts] class, we were saying that it’s the first time where we actually feel like the teachers palm their teaching off onto groups, but it’s worthwhile because each week, like my group did sexual orientation and gender issues in primary schools but other groups did racism, other groups did indigenous education. The group last week did inclusive education and they showed us some YouTube videos and the whole point was to see the ability not the disability. (Session 5, 7/5/2010)

This comment indicates that teacher candidates are themselves socialised into passive learning approaches and hence, they perceived the approach in the core subject SPC as “teachers palm[ing] their teaching off onto groups,” and, by inference, not doing their job, which is to teach the class. The comment also highlights that although progressive approaches were promoted to the teacher candidates for their own teaching, they had not been helped to make the connection that these approaches were effective across the entire spectrum of education, from pre-primary through post-secondary. This emphasises the importance of teacher educators making explicit the connections between the teaching approaches utilised, and the theories that informed them (Loughran, 2006; Russell, McPherson, & Martin, 2001).

A further finding from the research was the level of focus in the Professional Practice and Seminar subject to regulating teacher candidates towards competency standards. As noted earlier, the Professional Practice Seminar was designed to address teacher candidates’ developing understandings of professional knowledge, professional practice and professional engagement (Handbook, Professional Practice and Seminar, 2010, p.
1), the three themes of the Victorian Standards for Graduating Teachers (VIT, 2009). The seminar, with its Clinical Specialist and cohort, had the potential to be closely aligned to inquiry into the teacher candidates’ developing practice, and yet, it was aligned to the competency standards. There is little scope for creativity, risk taking, critical reflection, or agency within “these new mechanisms of normalising judgement” (Foucault, 1975/1995, p. 183). As Bessie Jo prepared her practicum exhibition, which was one of the final assessment requirements of the Professional Practice and Seminar subject, she explained her dilemma in trying to make her theory and practice of teaching fit into the Standards:

With the practicum thing, I’m struggling a little bit ‘cos I know the kind of teacher I want to be and I find that this group especially reinforces my intuition which I find really important, but I have a hard time justifying it in terms of what big wigs are talking about. The stuff we’re talking about, the terms they use sort of … describe what we talk about but to me, the word that comes to mind is how best to nurture the kids in order to put them in an emotional space where they’re ready to learn. (Session 4, 30/4/2010)

In order to “pass” the assessment requirement, Bessie Jo felt under pressure to make the individual kind of teacher she was working to become, fit into the prescribed characteristics of the Standards (VIT, 2009). This process positions the locus of control within the Standards, with the aim to assess which characteristics of the Standards the individual graduating teacher conforms/perform to. An alternative process would be to position the locus of control within the individual graduating teacher, and the aim become to assess which characteristics of the Standards fit within this grand narrative.

**Being a teacher and learning to teach**

It is no surprise that being a teacher and learning to teach was a recurring theme in the research. As Britzman (2003) contends, “[l]earning to teach—like teaching itself—is always the process of becoming” (p. 31). Prior to commencing the Master of Teaching, two participants had teaching qualifications and all had teaching experience. Three participants continued to teach throughout the two years of the program. From a progressive standpoint, learning is to start from, and proceed with student’s lived experience (Freire, 1994; Vygotsky, 1997). But, in the Master of Teaching program, prior teaching qualifications and experience were rendered invisible. In the learning community, however, participants were encouraged to reflect on all of their
experiences. Qing, for example, reflected on ways to engage her weekend students because, “[s]ituations in Chinese school can be even trickier than normal primary schools because students feel like it’s an add-on to them and they don’t take weekend schools seriously” (Email, 7/3/2010). For Ling, an important aspect of being a teacher was to understand her students’ lives outside of the classroom. Mahn and John-Steiner (2002) suggest that “[t]eachers are able to collaborate with students in creating environments conducive to transformative teaching/learning if they attempt to understand their lived experiences, knowledge and feelings” (p. 53). This depth of interest in children’s lives is not dependent on being familiar with the culture of the country in which you are teaching; it is dependent on the heart with which you teach:

An understanding heart is everything in a teacher, and cannot be esteemed highly enough. One looks back with appreciation to the brilliant teachers, but with gratitude to those who touched our human feelings. The curriculum is so much necessary raw material, but warmth is the vital element for the growing plant and for the soul of the child. (Carl Jung 1942 cited in Mackay, 2006, p. xii)

Snippets of communication gave an insight into the experiences of the participants who were learning to teach in a non-native language. Qing explained, “English is a second language for me and the language in teaching is also like a new language, therefore I really have to keep on practicing both of them” (Email, 6/10/2009). For Dandan and Anka, it meant spending their summer holidays reading, but with different foci. Dandan was trying to get ahead with the academic readings, “I was told by some last year students that this term’s academic work is going to be even more intense. Since English is my second language I have to cope with the advance English literature, therefore I have been trying to pick up some readings” (Email, 16/2/2010). Anka read children’s books aloud in order to practise her English pronunciation (Field note, 26/2/10). The participants who were native speakers of English also shared their challenges of learning to teach: Chris, “I feel as though I have so many ideas... but I just can't get them into action” (Email, 1/8/2010); and Bessie Jo, “I find there’s so many good ideas you know, from lectures or speaking with other people, and I think oh, if only I could implement all of them” (Session 2, 26/3/2010).

At times, learning to teach involved finding an interpersonal style, as Dandan articulated through her experience in a Year 3 / 4 class: “I have been trying to establish a friendly relationship with the kids in the classroom. I have never scolded any one of
them, I have been trying to focus on positive behaviours and I think that works. Children’s behaviours rely on how we position them” (Email, 17/5/2010). At other times, being a teacher meant coping with incidents that participants were previously unprepared for, as was the situation for Ling when a girl in her class vomited. Ling was not satisfied with the way the classroom teacher dealt with the situation and she asked for ideas from the learning community, “I think it would be better if I ask all the girls to leave their tables and come to sit on the mat. So they won’t be distracted or uncomfortable. However, I wonder if there are some other better ways to deal with this kind of situation” (Email, 29/3/2010).

On other occasions, learning to teach involved participants realising that they were not learning in the present to teach in the future, they were teaching and learning in the present towards achieving their vision of teaching and learning in the future. Bessie Jo first realised this when notes from a learning community session were disseminated as reminders of what was discussed, “Thank you for the document that you sent through. … it really legitimizes our experiences and interactions with the kids, and reminds me of how much power I have, even as a student teacher, to positively affect my students” (Email, 15/3/2010). Hence, in the learning community, with its focus on development as opposed to assessment, being a teacher and learning to teach were treated as one ongoing, collaborative, life-long enterprise. This is in direct contrast to the Master of Teaching program, where learning to teach was a continuous process of appraisal and assessment. One example is seen in the roles of Mentor Teacher, Clinical Specialist, and Teaching Fellow, which, paradoxically, were meant to support teacher candidates’ teaching practice while they were on professional practice in schools, and assess their teaching practice. These three roles constituted both structures of support and structures of surveillance, which exist in an uneasy tension that works against teacher candidates being open and honest about their not knowing, not coping, and still learning.

This chapter has provided a detailed discussion of the four themes that arose in the analysis of the data. The next chapter discusses the key findings and recommendations of this research.

Chapter 5: Discussion
Chapter 6 Conclusion

Introduction

This instrumental case study has served “to help us understand… [and] to concentrate on relationships identified in our research questions” (Stake, 1995, p. 77), which are: In what ways do pre-service teachers interpret student diversity and classroom behaviours when they are on professional practice placements in schools? and How does a learning community in a teacher education program assist pre-service teachers’ understandings of, and responses to, student diversity? To answer these questions, this thesis has investigated the understandings of a group of pre-service teachers in Australia. These pre-service teachers are all global travellers who represent cultural and linguistic diversity. In contemporary times, they can be described as cosmopolitan. According to Hansen (2010), “[t]he cosmopolitan resources of ‘ordinary’ people constitute soil in which local, practical enactments of democratic life can be rooted” (p. 24).

Development of teachers as cultural workers with cosmopolitan perspectives

The findings of this study indicate, that a pre-service teacher’s professional practice experiences are often characterised by the overwhelming reality of coming face-to-face with a diversity of students and behaviours within the mainstream classroom. The research reveals that the majority of professional practice classrooms operated from dominant, middle-class cultural repertoires (Lareau, 2003) that were counter to the development of teachers as cultural workers. Ochoa (2010) claims “that it is no longer sufficient to hide behind a wall of silence and accept ethnocentric ways of training present and future teacher candidates” (p. 110). Consequently, I argue for teacher education programs to address this by re-visioning the cultural work of teachers through a cosmopolitan lens. A cosmopolitan lens provides just one possible outlook but it is one that does not exclude others (Hansen, 2010), and that “suggests a willingness to learn from or with other traditions and human inheritances” (Hansen, 2010, p. 6).

Rizvi (2009) contends that “cosmopolitan learning necessarily challenges the prevailing orthodoxies both about education and about cultural formations” (p. 265). One challenge to orthodoxy in education is Luke’s (2004) contemplation of teaching, not as
a profession, but as a social field (p. 1429), which would “refigure teaching as a complex set of relational exchanges between heterogeneous and differentially positioned human subjects” (Luke, 2004, p. 1429). Rizvi (2009) considers relationality as one of two important features of cosmopolitan learning; the second is reflexivity. Rizvi (2009) stresses that these need to be developed “within a pedagogically open framework that explores the dynamics of cultural interactions in an on-going fashion” (p. 267). From a social constructivist perspective, I suggest that a dynamic forum for sustained exploration is a collaborative learning community.

**Provision of space for a visible, non-assessable learning community**

The research indicates that the combined push of curriculum and assessment in the teacher education program, left limited time, and opportunities, for pre-service teachers to candidly reflect on their understandings of, and responses to, the student diversity they encountered during their professional practice placements. However, the findings reveal that the learning community in the study did assist participants’ understandings of, and responses to, student diversity and classroom behaviour, by providing them with a space for inquiry into their teaching that was uninhibited by dominant discourses, uncluttered by curriculum, and unburdened by assessment. Even though the content of learning community inquiries was not controlled, and participants were not assessed, it did not mean that the learning was not important, or that it was not engaged with proactively. On the contrary, the evidence reveals that participants were freed to think creatively, and constructively, about their teaching.

In teacher education, the provision of a collaborative, democratic space to inquire into teaching experiences free from the hegemony of assessment, is an uncommon design feature. Within the Master of Teaching program, for example, all of the positions that were designated to support teacher candidates’ teaching while they were on professional practice placements in schools, were also implicated in the assessment of that teaching. However, within this study, a group of teacher candidates in the Master of Teaching (Primary) volunteered to participate in an assessment-free community to reflect on, and inquire into, their teaching. Hansen (2010) contends that “[t]eachers constitute an already existing cosmopolitan community” (p. 22), and he explains that many teachers “have an abiding disposition to share ideas, methods, and philosophies across any number of cultural and other markers of identity” (p. 22). This was found to be the case in the learning community in the study. Hansen (2010) further contends that
teachers “seem to draw pleasure, insight, and edification from this transcommunal and transpersonal exchange” (p. 22).

Rizvi (2009) specifies that to promote cosmopolitan perspectives and insights, transcultural collaborations are best, because they encourage participants to “think outside their own parochial boundaries and cultural assumptions” (p. 265). Such expansive thinking is inhibited when the function of a learning community is not the exercise of agency to inquire into the personal, professional, and political issues related to teaching, but conformity to programmatic and professional standards. The focus of contemporary teacher education in Australia, and many other countries, is on pre-service teachers’ attainments of prescribed performances based on competency standards. This reveals the human capital focus of formal education from a neo-liberal perspective (Luke, 2004) that focuses attention, and value, on what is produced, rather than on ways of being. Hansen (2010) refers to this as the “persistent tension between education as a functionalist instrument and as an end or way of being in its own right” (p. 23). What is argued from the results of this study is the need to provide an additional space in teacher education for the latter. This would be a space for a non-prescribed, non-assessable learning community in which teacher educators and pre-service teachers continuously and constructively appraise their “symbolic, cultural and social capital” (Luke, 2004, p. 1429) through a cosmopolitan lens. Evidence from the study suggests that this will promote an agentive, professionally critical, and expansive educational enterprise, as teacher educators and pre-service teachers seek to work more equitably, constructively, and creatively, with a diversity of students, and through a diversity of contexts, within the realities of teaching in challenging global times.

**Recommendations**

As a result of these findings, two recommendations are made. I acknowledge that this is a single case study and not generalisable, however, “people can learn much that is general from single cases” (Stake, 1995, p. 85). The findings of this case study indicate that despite moves by teacher education programs to respond to the needs of contemporary classrooms, diversity remains poorly understood and enacted. This study proposes that in order for teacher education to be more responsive to the diversity in contemporary Australian classrooms, two factors need to be accounted for in the design and enactment of teacher education programs:
1. Development of teachers as cultural workers with cosmopolitan perspectives; and

2. Provision of space for a visible, non-assessable learning community within teacher education.

**Research Contribution**

This study has demonstrated, that although the capacity to meet the demands of contemporary classrooms, and respond to diverse learners, is promoted in Australia’s teacher education programs, without ongoing, collaborative, assessment-free spaces for teacher educators and pre-service teachers to develop as cultural workers with cosmopolitan perspectives, parochial, teacher-centred, exclusionary teaching practices are likely to prevail.
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Appendix 1  Revision Session

February 26, 2010

I have tried to put together a summary of points revised/discussed. You will note that, for confidentiality reasons, I have used participants’ pseudonyms.

What participants have found helpful from the workshop:

Remembering to catch them doing it right. It is much more powerful to give attention to correct behaviour than giving attention to poor behaviour. Part of this is also the importance of reinforcing the classroom/school expectations. For example, if you overheard a student talking unkindly to another student, you could say, “We show respect in our school by talking kindly to each other.”

Remembering to state an expectation, finish with thank you and then continue on your way, giving the student/s ‘take up’ time to do it. This gives the expectation that it will be done, rather than ask with a please, because a student can say, “No” if you ask.

Remembering to use constructive feedback (rather than “Well done” or “Good girl”) so that students learn what they’re good at, what their strengths are, and in what ways they have been helpful.

Remembering positive self talk (p. 9 of course notes). If you want to read more about how you can remain optimistic, Jenny suggested the following book, ‘Learned Optimism’ by Martin Seligman, which is in the university library.

Remembering the Egg – Don’t ask why when the egg is high. Give students ‘space’ so that their feelings can settle down and they can think through what happened. This ‘space’ or ‘time out’ isn’t a punishment; it is simply time to ‘cool down’. This is also an opportunity for you to use empathic skills such as, “I can see that you are still upset/angry/sad about what happened. Take some time on the cushions until you feel better and we’ll talk about it later. As you see the student starting to take an interest in the learning task, you can encourage them by saying, “Great to see that you’re following our learning, are you ready to join in?” If they’re not, say “That’s ok; it’s great that you’re watching what we’re doing and you can join us when you’re ready.” This interaction maintains relationship with the student and engenders trust because the teacher isn’t trying to control him/her. The teacher has been perceptive enough to know that the student is upset, and the teacher has enough self esteem to give the student
space, rather than panicking that this student isn’t doing what all the other students are doing. It is very important for teachers to learn to ‘read’ their students’ body signals and emotional triggers and to explain these to the student as well, so that they can learn how to self manage.

Remembering to have your teacher eyes roving the room at all times. This is called withitness. Studies of excellent teachers found that they were always aware of what was happening in the classroom, and therefore they were able to manage situations before they escalated. Withitness gives the students the security of being in a well run classroom in which their learning can proceed and they feel safe.

Remembering that the goal is for non-obtrusive intervention which means that if possible, the teacher should use strategies that maintain the flow of learning. For example, if a group of students seem to be chatting and off task, the teacher may only need to walk over and stand near these students.

Remembering to use questions rather than commands. With the example above, the teacher might walk over and ask, “What part of the learning task are you up to now?” Or, for a student out of their seat a question like, “Where are you meant to be?” or “What are you meant to be doing?” is a helpful way to refocus the student.

**Sharing of Helpful Ideas from teaching:**

Having the expectation that all the children are listening and all eyes are on you so don’t continue until you see this happening.

Having a book with rhymes and actions (e.g. Leaning with Rhymes) that you can refer to when you need to fill in time, for example, while you are waiting for the students to go to a specialist. These are also good for left and right brain activity.

Having a laminated sheet with ‘What to I do when I finish my work?’ It has such suggestions as: Write a journal; Write a story; Practice spelling; Practice times tables; Read; Draw. This allows the teacher to concentrate on assisting students who need encouragement and support to finish.

Laminating pictures of equipment such as ruler, scissors, glue stick, coloured pencils, textas, grey-lead pencil, rubber, workbook etc. On the board next to the activity the students will be doing, put up the tools they will need for that activity. In this way, the students don’t have lots of distracting equipment on their tables while you’re teaching.
and when they’re set to work, they look at the board to see what ‘tools' they’ll need to take to their work area.

A Year 1 teacher had taken photos of the storage shelves in the classroom. These photos were enlarged and laminated. When it was time to pack up, if students forgot where equipment was stored they referred to the photos. The first time the teacher observed a boy using the photos and putting the equipment back she stopped the class and asked the student to explain what he had done to know where his piece of equipment went. This withitness on the part of the teacher was an example of ‘catching them doing it right’ and by the boy explaining what he did to the whole class, it encouraged other students to have a go. This is an example of ‘student led independence’.

The laminating of pictures of equipment and the photos of shelves are examples of teaching practices available from The Project for Enhancing Effective Learning (PEEL) database which has search fields to find innovative teaching practices and procedures relevant to searchers’ particular students and classrooms.

Restorative Justice questions are helpful for students and teachers to use in the classroom and in the yard. These could be laminated for the classroom with the language modified for younger year levels:

- What happened?
- How do you feel about what happened?
- Who has been affected?
- How have people or things been affected?
- What can we do about fixing any harm done?

**Participants’ Stories**

**Story 1**

A young boy at Chinese school complained to Qing that she never gave him incentive stickers. The boy was generally uncooperative so the Qing responded by saying, "Why do you think I never give you one?" Feeling bad about this response, Qing spoke to another teacher who advised her to always leave the students feeling encouraged and
she suggested that instead, Qing could have said something like, "I want to give you one but you've got to earn it."

*Story 2*

Chris shared about a girl in her outside of school hours’ care program who often had a very serious, even negative demeanour. Chris always had a very happy and positive demeanour and so she encouraged the girl to see the brighter side of situations and life in general. Chris thought the girl seemed very intelligent and she was interesting to be with but more than once this girl had turned to Chris and said, "I hate you." Thinking back to Jenny’s workshop, we realised that a learning opportunity for this little girl would be to use an ‘I’ statement such as, "I really enjoy being with you, you're intelligent and interesting to be with, and so when you say 'I hate you' it makes me feel sad and I wonder why you would say such a hurtful thing." This may encourage the girl’s positive attributes and also give her the opportunity to reflect on the reaction her words have on the feelings of others, and why she feels the need to say hurtful things.

*Story 3*

Qing shared about the way students in Chinese school were not taking responsibility for the room and arriving to class with a negative attitude, not willing to engage. Qing decided to use the strategy of not doing things for the students so she set up responsibilities within the classroom, such as a class monitor to help with things like putting up the chairs. When students have roles to play it can make a big difference to their participation and engagement.

Qing’s story led to further examples. Jenny shared about a school where the teachers were very creative and put in a lot of time and thought but the students were passive and not engaged because the teachers did everything for them.

From this example, Anka shared about the Prep class she is observing in 16. In this classroom the students get a dust-pan and brush to clean off their tables after they have eaten. These preps are just 1 month into the school year and are showing independence and responsibility in keeping their classroom tidy. (The colourful little dustpans and brushes are available in Dandenong, on Lonsdale Street in a shop called Yen Houd Gift

16 The university had not commenced but for schools the year commenced on January 28, 2009 and so Anka had organised to do teaching observations as soon as school started back.
shop. It is called a Computer Brush and dust-pan and it costs $1. You can find another version of the little brush with dust-pan on the same shelf, but a little bit further into the shop).

Jenny then gave another example from the school she had described, where an older student broke a beaker in the science room. The teacher got out the dust-pan and brush and gave them to the student. The student swept up the broken pieces and gave the dust-pan and brush back to the teacher to put away. Note the difference in development of independence skills at these schools.

Some key points we discussed from this conversation:

- Don’t do anything for the students that they can do themselves
- Think: If the students can do it, why am I?
- PARTICIPATION leads to OWNERSHIP which leads to RESPONSIBILITY

*Story 4*

And finally, a story from Bessie Jo which is a reminder of some of the techniques we have discussed i.e. use of questioning; getting alongside rather than confronting; allowing students to save face, and giving students take up time.

Matt and Jesse were dismembering their pens, comparing the insides. They were entirely distracted, and beginning to distract others as well. They were meant to be researching their topic for the subject of "Change." I asked them if they had an idea why I might be inquiring about what they were getting up to, and so they described that I probably didn't like them breaking down their pens in the middle of Integrated Studies. I agreed, but suggested that they research the change to pens. By embracing the distracting element, I didn't create a them vs. me scenario. It worked well to de-escalate the situation and though they didn't choose to research the change to pens, they got back on task. That suggestion worked markedly better than in the previous week with Matt when I took the pieces of his pen and returned them at the end of the day. That gave Matt license to obsess about getting his pen back.

Thank you to everyone for your contributions, which help us all to focus on maintaining positive, engaging classroom communities.
Appendix 2  Resources shared in response to topics raised in the learning community

The following is a list of teacher oriented resources that were shared. A separate list has been compiled of picture books that were shared for classroom use.

Negative Thoughts

In the workshop Jenny mentioned the importance of a teacher’s self talk and one participant shared that she did not often have positive self talk. Jenny recommended the first book, which I borrowed from the library to look at in the first meeting, along with the second one.

- Anxiety Association of Victoria Inc at www.adavic.org.au

Setting up your classroom for independence and responsibility

This topic was raised in the Revision Session.

- The Project for Enhancing Effective Learning (PEEL) http://www.peelweb.org/

Emotions in teaching

  
  Page 21 was shared to open the discussion of emotions, mistakes, voice, and development in learning to teach outside of pre-existing models:

- 5 steps to happier students (2010), *Shine* (p. 31). *Shine* magazine, monthly publication of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Participants were given a copy.

Diversity and Difference

We were a culturally diverse community seeking to cater to students’ needs in culturally diverse classrooms and schools.
At the revision session participants from cultures outside of Australia mentioned that they didn’t know the Australian chants, rhymes and finger plays to use in their junior primary classrooms. When I went to the library to borrow some books to share at the next meeting, I found one that promoted the use of rhymes from a variety of cultures:


**We also looked at books with popular Australian rhymes:**


**Cultural and Linguistic Diversity**

We had a meeting at the following resource centre:

- Languages and Multicultural Education Resource Centre (LMERC)  

Bessie Jo mentioned a book related to culture in the classroom that she had been given when she completed secondary school and I borrowed it from the library to share:


Qing wrote, “English is a second language for me and the language in teaching is also like a new language.” We discussed how parents can also feel this way, particularly parents from overseas who are unfamiliar with Australian schools and the Australian education system. This can even be the case if they speak English and so the participants were encouraged to offer to arrange for an interpreter to attend parent meetings and also to offer to have parent information translated through the Education Department interpreting and translating service, which can be contacted on 1300 739 731.

Other resources shared:

  Outlines differing cultural experiences of commencing school. Participants were given a copy.
  Features Leonardo da Vinci, Sir Isaac Newton, and Albert Einstein. Participants were given a copy.
Appendix 2: Resources shared in response to topics raised in the learning community

- **Poster - Top tips to make your home a reading home.**
  
  Features books in several languages and encourages parents to read to their children every night in whatever language the parent is comfortable with. Participants were given a copy.


Bessie Jo shared that she didn’t know about Muslim and Islam and just after that there were two articles that we were able to read and discuss:


**Gender Orientation**

Bessie Jo shared a poem by Brenda Brooks titled ‘Little Girl’ and she mentioned a website to support lesbian, gay, bi, trans (LGBT) young people through their teen years.


**Tourette Syndrome**

Information about this condition was shared in Meeting 5 because it is a condition that can be misinterpreted as misbehaviour.


- The Tourette Syndrome Association of Victoria’s catalogue of publications [http://www.tsavic.org.au/](http://www.tsavic.org.au/) Participants were given a copy.

**ADHD**

Many participants mentioned that they had students diagnosed with ADD and ADHD.

- Graham, L. (2006). *From ABCs to ADHD: The role of schooling in the construction of ‘behaviour disorder’ and production of ‘disorderly objects’.* A paper delivered at the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE)
Classroom Interactions

In the workshop Jenny drew our attention to the following two books so I had them available for referral:


The next resource was shared to emphasise the importance of learning about students’ lives outside of the classroom


A child’s private logic

On several occasions we discussed the importance of teachers understanding that a student’s behaviour, although at times frustrating or baffling to the teacher, usually makes perfect sense according to the student’s view of the world (Chew, 1998).


According to Chew, a teacher’s job is not to jump to conclusions but to observe and ask perceptive questions in an attempt to understand the student’s logic.

Below are two examples which were shared:

1. Anka shared this story from a book she was reading: A boy kept asking to go to the toilet when he was back in the classroom after recess and lunchtimes. The teacher was confused about why this was happening and so the next time it occurred he asked the boy. The boy’s response was that there were mean boys in the toilets during breaks and he didn’t want to go to the toilet when they were in there. The book Anka was reading was:

2. Bessie Jo shared the second example which was from a lecture in the subject Social and Professional Contexts. The lecture was on the topic of inclusive education and
a visiting speaker gave the example of her daughter who was in an early intervention program before she went to school. The teachers in the program kept calling the mum in saying that Sophie wouldn’t cut and paste and these were important gross motor skills. The mother’s response was, “She likes doing puzzles; it’s the same motor skills. What’s the problem? Just do puzzles with her.” But they kept calling her in, saying that Sophie needed to cut and paste; it was an important skill. Finally the mother said, “My daughter doesn’t like cutting and pasting; she thinks the activity’s stupid.” Sophie’s at real school now, in Year 2, and she loves cutting and pasting because she’s cutting words out and putting them in sentences and she can see a purpose to it.

Below are also details of a book and a link that Bessie Jo shared on the subject of children’s logic:

- **Medicine:** A *Child’s Private Logic*, in Time Magazine: [http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,817964,00.html](http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,817964,00.html)


Other books Anka shared on this topic were:


**Families**

Several participants had students in their classrooms who were experiencing difficult social and family situations and this led to the exploration of resources on family situations that can lead to children and families being misunderstood in the education system.


**Background of abuse and neglect**

Bessie Jo enquired about an order that had been put in place with a family following a domestic violence incident.

- Intervention Order which is part of the Magistrates’ Court Family Violence Protection Act 2008.

- Child First pamphlet which outlines the Victorian Government’s Child, Youth and Families Act 2005. Participants were given a copy.

Appendix 2: Resources shared in response to topics raised in the learning community


Mental Illness


Single parent families

- Parenting Research Centre (2009). *Single mothers: A resource for parenting solo*. East Melbourne, Australia: Parenting Research Centre. Participants were given a copy.

Teaching with Hope

In the process of supporting, encouraging and engaging students, the aim is to give them a sense of hope. The following resources were shared.


Emotional Intelligence


Rewards

Qing experienced discomfort after being instructed to allocate reward stickers in a Prep class on the basis of merit. Insights from the following book were discussed:

Enhancing Engagement and Metacognition

Participants recognised that planning for engagement, metacognition, and cooperative learning was a key means of catering for students’ individual differences and needs. The resources we looked at are listed in alphabetical order:


- Brain Gym – a program to enhance the brain’s neural pathways & connections through movement to promote improvements in concentration, memory, learning, organising, and physical coordination [www.braingym.com.au](http://www.braingym.com.au/)


Appendix 2: Resources shared in response to topics raised in the learning community


Appendix 3  Picture Books shared in response to topics raised in the learning community

These picture books were shared for classroom use. A separate list has been compiled of teacher resources that were shared.

Difference, Diversity & Human Rights

  This story illustrates the way teachers can misinterpret a child who responds differently and how this can lead to false assumptions about a child’s ability and life trajectory.

  This book illustrates a diversity of family composition and parental separation.

  This book celebrates cultural diversity through the naming of grandmothers. The back of the book has grandmother in 32 languages plus some other popular names grandmothers are called.

  This book celebrates the diversity of cultures around the world.


Issues that can lead to feelings of grief

Orphaned or abandoned due to parental illicit drug use and children living with kinship carers


A parent in prison

- Tucker, K. *Rhiannon & Sasha visit mum*. Deer Park, Victoria: The Dame Phyllis Frost Centre.
  This children’s book was originally written by a mother who was sentenced to a
term in prison. She wrote it to answer her children’s questions about what it was like for her in prison and also to explain the process for them to visit her.

Parents’ Separating


  This story illustrates a child’s fear that it was his fault his dad left. The back of the book has a page on how to talk to children about divorce.

- Family Court of Australia (2001). *Questions & answers about separation for children.* ISBN 0 642 25204 1


  This book starts with a page on ways to talk with and support children who are experiencing grief as a result of a family break-up.

In addition to the books on Separation above, participants were given a list that was the result of a literature search of a children’s literature guide: [www.magpies.net.au](http://www.magpies.net.au) This was an example of how helpful literature searches can be. The search term ‘Divorce’ provided the details of eight children’s books with their recommended age range. The search term ‘Separation’ delivered sixteen results.

Death

We spoke about how important it was to inform parents that a book which features death is being read and discussed so that at home parents can ask about the story and discussion.

Death of a pet


  This book uses a strategy of linking colours to emotions/feelings.

Death of a grandparent


Death of a classmate


  This book journeys with a class through their classmate’s time in hospital and his death.
Life and death


  A book about life and death, in nature and with humans.

**Anger**


**Anxiety**


  The back of this book has three additional ideas for overcoming Mr Worrythoughts.


**Illness**

**Hospital**


  At the back there is a page on how to use the book and another page with details of associated books and resources.

**Alzheimer’s disease and Death**


  The back of this book has a page on the effects on families who are caring for people with Alzheimer’s disease with the phone number of the Alzheimer’s Association.
Appendix 4  Limited-response Questionnaire

**BME TEACHER’S MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEACHER’S ASSESSMENT</th>
<th>1</th>
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<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In my management of students, behaviour, classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Communication through voice, gesture, dress, stance etc</td>
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<td>2. Respectfully to students - personal acknowledgement</td>
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<td>3. Ability to convey sense of control, of knowing/managing</td>
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<td>4. Professionalism - lead by example, model respect etc.</td>
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<td>In PLANNING for behaviour I have ...</td>
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<td>5. Behaviour framework for each class - regularly reviewed</td>
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<td>6. Rules established - for students &amp; self</td>
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<td>7. Rituals to celebrate, affirm belonging etc</td>
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<td>8. Clearly stated guidelines/expectations for behaviour</td>
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<td>9. Consequences that teach able behaviour in change</td>
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<td>10. Responsibilities emphasised - rights earned</td>
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<td>11. Expectations for students to ‘get it right’/to behave</td>
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<td>12. Individual behaviour plans/programmes when needed</td>
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<td>In UNDERSTANDING behaviour ... I realise ...</td>
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<td>13. Behaviour is contagious ... A to decode students’messages</td>
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<td>14. The need to pick up on messages to prevent misbehaviour</td>
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<td>15. Many factors affect behaviour and time into these</td>
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<td>16. Unfair needs result in unconscious acts of misbehaviour</td>
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<td>In RESPONDING to behaviour ... I am ...</td>
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<td>17. Aware of the impact my responses can have on students</td>
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<td>18. Aware of need to teach/enable acceptable behaviour</td>
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<td>19. Consistent in my management ... aim to be fair &amp; firm</td>
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<td>20. Aware of the importance of feeling valued &amp; competent</td>
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<td>Applying ASSERTIVE SKILLS ... I use ...</td>
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<td>21. Self-talk</td>
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<td>22. Gesture, facial expressions, proximity etc</td>
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<td>23. Directness, questions, casual statements etc</td>
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<td>24. Tactfully urging, blocking,</td>
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<td>25. Decides</td>
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<td>26. ECA</td>
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<td>27. I Statements</td>
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<td>28. Other ...</td>
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<tr>
<td>Applying SUPPORTIVE SKILLS ... I use ...</td>
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<td>29. Acknowledgement ... statement, difficulty, feeling etc</td>
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<td>30. Open responses - enable student to manage emotions</td>
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<td>31. Open questions e.g. what when etc ... to get direction</td>
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<td>32. Problem Solving</td>
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<td>33. Other ...</td>
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<td>Applying FOLLOW THROUGH SKILLS ... I use ...</td>
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<td>34. Consequential learning (consequences that teach)</td>
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<td>35. Problem solving</td>
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<td>36. Class discussions</td>
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<td>37. Praise</td>
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<td>38. Other ...</td>
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<tr>
<td>Applying AFFIRMING SKILLS ... I always ...</td>
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<td>39. Acknowledge student’s (a) attributes, strengths, abilities</td>
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<td>40. Catch students doing it right (not wrong) ... positive focus</td>
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<td>41. Reframe mindset, change negative labels, respectful messages</td>
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<td>42. How construct use praise</td>
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<td>43. Initiate trust</td>
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<td>44. Other ...</td>
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</table>

Appendix 4: Limited-response Questionnaire
## Appendix 5  Open-response Questionnaire – 21/9/2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BME 5 STEP PROJECT</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>INITIALS</th>
<th>TEACHER’S PERSONAL ASSESSMENT &amp; FEEDBACK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. List what you would like to focus on / develop skills for / improve on – in the areas of student, behaviour and classroom management, as you work throughout this year on this project.

2. On the Teacher’s Checklist (see over) assess your present knowledge and management.

3. If you have any additional comments, observations, suggestions you would like to make with regard to student, behaviour, classroom, school management, prior to commencing this project, please write below.
### Appendix 6  Open-response Questionnaire – 19/11/2010

**BME 5 STEP PROJECT**  
**DATE:**  
**TEACHER'S PERSONAL ASSESSMENT & FEEDBACK**  
**INITIALS**

At the conclusion of the workshop sessions I would like to say .......... about the program we have undertaken .... e.g.

1. the process,

2. content/information,

3. presentation/facilitation,

4. group interaction,

5. personal reflection and assessment,

6. the application of my learning into practical situations etc.
   - i. What I have changed
   - ii. What I plan to still change

7. its overall impact on my teaching

8. Additional / General Comments
## Appendix 7  Glossary

**Block Placement**  
A block of professional practice time, for example, a 3-week block placement.

**Clinical Specialist**  
An academic staff member, involved in teaching the coursework components of the Master of Teaching program, who also liaises with a school’s mentor teacher and clinical specialist and observes teacher candidates’ teaching, providing feedback and assessing their teaching practice. Also coordinates and conducts the subject Professional Practice and Seminar.

**Composite Class**  
A class which teaches students from more than one year level in the same class, for example, a composite year 5 / 6 class.

**ESL Student**  
A student for who is learning English is a Second Language.

**Government School**  
A school which is operated by the relevant State or Territory government.

**Indigenous Student**  
A student who identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

**LBOTE Student**  
A student who is identified as having a language background other than English because either the student, or the student’s parents/carers, speaks a language other than English at home.

**Master of Teaching**  
A two-year teacher education program offered by The University of Melbourne for graduates from any discipline. The program has three streams: Early Childhood; Primary; and Secondary.

**Mentor Teacher**  
A teacher in the placement school responsible for guiding a teacher candidate’s teaching, providing feedback, and assessing teaching practice.

**Non-government School**  
A school which is operated under the authority of a State or Territory government but not operated by government education departments. Non-government schools may operate as individual schools, in groups, or as a system such as those coordinated by
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Education Commissions in each State and Territory.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership School Group</td>
<td>A group of schools which, for the purpose of providing professional practice for teacher candidates, are coordinated by a Teaching Fellow. The teacher candidates in Partnership School Group schools come together as a cohort for professional practice seminars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary School</td>
<td>A school with classes that start with pre-Year 1, referred to as the preparatory or Prep year, and finish with Year 6. Sometimes referred to as a P – 6 school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Practice</td>
<td>The practical component of the Master of Teaching involving teaching practice in a school context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Terms</td>
<td>Victorian schools have two semesters separated by a short midyear vacation and a long summer vacation. Each semester comprises two terms that have a short vacation between. The academic year commences after the summer vacation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Candidate</td>
<td>A pre-service teacher enrolled in the Master of Teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Fellow</td>
<td>A teacher who coordinates the professional practice program for a Partnership School Group (usually four schools) and the teacher candidates placed in their group (around 20-25). Liaises with each school’s mentor teachers and clinical specialists and observes teacher candidates’ teaching, providing feedback and assessing teaching practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT)</td>
<td>A statutory authority responsible for the regulation of the teaching profession in the state of Victoria.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Author/s:
CALLINGHAM, MARGARET

Title:
A learning community in teacher education: from behaviour management to cultural work

Date:
2012

Citation:

Persistent Link:
http://hdl.handle.net/11343/37244

File Description:
A learning community in teacher education: from behaviour management to cultural work

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