Transforming Perceptions and Responses to Student Difference: The Journey of Seven Beginning Teachers

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Abstract

Studies and policies in Australia have addressed the educational needs of all students for the 21st century. Further, there have been movements to address academic underachievement that has been identified by these studies and policies. However, the deficit model of learning often underpins decision-making in education and threatens the successful implementation of inclusive education. This study claims that it is significant to investigate the factors that promote or restrict a move from a deficit model of learning to an inclusive model of learning. It is noteworthy to investigate these factors as they impact on beginning teachers as a means to support policy changes that inform education in the 21st century.

Drawing on critical social theory and transformative learning, this study investigates the factors that enable a move away from the deficit model of learning. Using the rhizomatic model developed by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) the fluid conception of identity and the varying subject positions occupied by beginning teachers is examined as they challenge structural ideologies and their personal belief systems. This study argues that a move from the deficit model of learning will provide opportunities for teachers' practice to remain open to alternate and equitable opportunities for those students experiencing learning difficulties. Teachers need to engage in critical reflection to consider how their assumptions, pedagogical choices, and institutional structures shape their behaviour. This study examines how to achieve this goal of equitable practice.

In order to do so, I explore the sociocultural factors that support or challenge beginning teachers' perceptions of learning and teaching for students experiencing learning difficulties. The study argues that personal factors such as, their belief systems, sense of efficacy, and their pedagogical knowledge and skills impact on how beginning teachers respond to diverse learners and how they position themselves in their roles as teachers. Systemic and school factors such as job security, school context driven by strong leadership, collegial support, and the provision of ongoing professional development influence how beginning teachers manoeuvre themselves as agentive.

This is a multicase study that reports on data from seven participants as they transitioned from preservice training into the role of beginning teachers. Each

participant was considered to be a case. Each case was constituted of multiple data sets including individual interviews, reflective diaries, and classroom observations. The multiple data sets were gathered from participants in their roles as student teacher, intern and beginning teacher. Data analysis followed the constant comparative method and drew on the rhizomatic model to illustrate the complex and interrelated nature of the identified themes and the recursive nature of the process of analysis. Individual case analysis was undertaken prior to cross case analysis to ensure that each case was understood in depth from the perspective of sociocultural factors that impacted on beginning teachers and from the perspective of critical social theory.

The findings highlighted that beginning teachers, who engage in critical reflection within a moral, ethical, and political context, can expose the ideological assumptions and hegemonic practices within institutions. The findings provide valuable insight into relevant sociocultural factors that enabled beginning teachers to become reflective practitioners and more inclusive teachers. This study enhances other studies that emphasise that beginning teachers need ongoing support and professional development to expand their professional knowledge and practices to become inclusive teachers.

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List of Abbreviations

AITSL   Australian Institute for Teachers and School Leadership

C2C   Curriculum into the Classroom

DDA   Disability Discrimination Act, 1992

NAPLAN   National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy

QCT   Queensland College of Teachers

Statement of Original Authorship

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

Signature: _Lorraine M Kay_

Date: _29. 08. 2013_

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> Completing this thesis has changed the way I view the world. It has provided
> me with the confidence, optimism, knowledge and skills required to support
> ... the quest for more humanising practices.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This research investigates the sociocultural factors that both contribute to the transformation of beginning teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning, and influence their classroom practices, particularly with regard to students experiencing learning difficulties. The sociocultural factors that emerged from this study fall into two categories: personal factors and school/systemic factors. Personal factors include the beginning teacher's beliefs system, their sense of efficacy, and their pedagogical knowledge and skills. School/systemic factors include the employment opportunities and related job security of the beginning teachers, school leadership, ongoing support and professional development made available to beginning teachers, and staff attitudes. However, while presented here as two separate entities for practicality, it will become evident there is a close relationship between these factors and what emerges is a complex, fluid movement within the beginning teachers' development. The messiness of the process is examined using Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) rhizomatic model.

This chapter provides an overview of the thesis. First, it outlines the background and the significance of the research and indicates the research questions underpinning the study. Second, the context of the study is discussed revealing the influence of special education on current educational discourse and the counter views proposed by inclusive education proponents. Third, the researcher's perspective is disclosed and an overview of the study provided. The theoretical framework, methodology, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures are outlined in the overview. Finally, a summary of each chapter is presented.

Background

As scholars such as Elkins (2007), Ellis (2005), and Westwood (2008) note, the term *learning difficulties* is difficult to define and often used interchangeably in the literature with the term learning disabilities. However, these terms have varying interpretations. The literature suggests the greatest percentage of students who have difficulty accessing and successfully interacting with the curriculum, and potentially experiencing exclusion are students experiencing learning difficulties (Twomey,

2006; Wallace, Anderson, Bartholomay & Hupp 2002; Watson & Bowan, 2005; Westwood 2004). Nonetheless, confusion surrounding the terminology used in association with learning difficulties makes it difficult to determine an accurate incidence level for such students (Elkins, 2007; Ellis, 2005). A small percentage of students may experience learning difficulties due to a specific learning disability (caused by central nervous system problems) which results in reading, writing, speaking, listening, reasoning, or mathematical difficulties. However, learning difficulties are more likely to be attributed to environmental factors such as social disadvantage, decisions about curriculum implementation, inadequate teaching, or lack of positive support for learning (Ellis, 2005; Westwood, 2008).

In this research, students are considered to be experiencing learning difficulties when their academic progress is deemed to be below their expected potential or the expectations of same age peers, particularly in the areas of literacy and numeracy. Also included in this definition are students whose academic success is at risk due to their limited social skills and/or behaviour. Several separate or interwoven factors may contribute to limitations in academic and social performance. These may include students having difficulty understanding and following instructions, and lacking effective learning strategies, which result in persistently low achievement (Twomey, 2006; Westwood, 2008). The problems encountered by students experiencing learning difficulties may also be compounded by the subsequent behaviour that results from their emotional reaction to ongoing lack of success (Munns, 2007; Westwood, 2008).

Significance

Despite legislation, policy and guidelines to support inclusive education at a local, national and international level, the major tenets of inclusive education are not a reality for some students where the deficit view of learning limits the availability of opportunities and experiences. A move towards inclusive education is a means to counter the deficit view of learning that may limit the opportunities for some students experiencing learning difficulties. Currently, research exists to support inclusive practices in schools and the benefits to students. The influence of teachers' values, attitudes, and beliefs in how they shape inclusive practice is also well documented. Teacher education research supports the importance of considering the impact of belief systems on teachers' practice throughout teacher training and how this can

contribute to the development of inclusive practices. It is also promoted in the literature that the subject positions or identity that beginning teachers accept can be impacted by school-based influences. Studies from this literature are examined in Chapter 2.

A notable and common thread throughout the literature is critical reflection and the importance it plays in the transformation of teachers' beliefs and practices. However, there is little evidence to explain or examine the factors that contributed to preservice teachers' perceptions of teaching students experiencing learning difficulties or any changes in their perceptions as they commenced teaching. No research could be found that specifically examined beginning teachers' perceptions of teaching students experiencing learning difficulties or the transformation in their perceptions that may or may not occur as they transition from preservice status. Thus, this research contributes to scholarship in the fields of teacher education, beginning teaching, and developing inclusive responses to student difference. Figure 1.1 presents a pictorial representation of the literature informing this research and the gap identified that informed the research question.
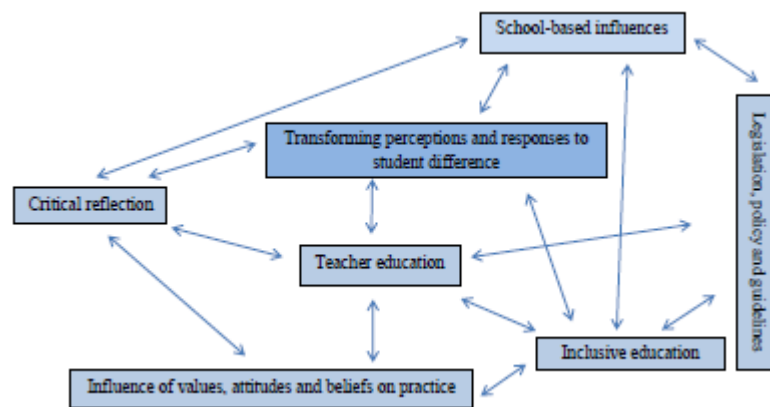
Figure 1.1. Identifying the gap in the literature.

The recently released report *A Shared Challenge: Improving Literacy, Numeracy and Science Learning in Queensland Primary Schools* (Masters, 2009) recognised the importance of *personalisation* of teaching: "targeting teaching on students' current level of readiness and need" (p. 77). Masters (2009) contends,

> highly effective teachers work at understanding the knowledge, skills,
> beliefs, interests and motivations that students bring to the classroom and
> pay attention to the individuals' incomplete and naïve conceptions. This

requires much more of teachers than the creative delivery of subject matter: highly effective primary teachers actively inquire into students' understandings and create classroom activities capable of revealing student thinking. (p. 78)

Within educational literature and political commentary there has been increasing attention given to the importance of quality teaching and its relationship with understanding students as individual learners. Preservice teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning and the factors that contribute to transforming these perceptions to create more effective responses to students experiencing learning difficulties are important considerations in the professional development of becoming a teacher. Learning difficulties can contribute to lifelong disadvantage such as long-term unemployment and socioemotional difficulties (Commonwealth of Australia, 2008). This highlights the importance of educational institutions, including schools and teacher training facilities, proactively providing opportunities for preservice and beginning teachers to critically reflect on their personal traits as well as the environmental factors that can create barriers to learning for some students. In addition, preservice and beginning teachers need opportunities to critically reflect on how these factors can limit their practices and responses to student difference. In light of such issues, this study aims to identify the sociocultural factors that contribute to the transformation of beginning teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning that influence the provision of effective teaching for students experiencing learning difficulties.

The Research Questions

The **major research question** of this study is

What sociocultural factors contribute to the transformation of beginning teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning, and how do these factors influence the provision of effective teaching for students experiencing learning difficulties?

Reference to the participants' perceptions of teaching included what they considered the teacher contributes and what roles they occupy throughout the learning process. Perceptions of learning included how the participants considered learning occurs and as a result what conditions were important for them to provide as teachers. Perceptions of learning and teaching are tightly interlinked and overlap.

In an attempt to address the main question four subsidiary questions guided the researcher. These included

1. What factors do preservice/beginning teachers attribute to the development of learning difficulties?

2. What do preservice/beginning teachers see as essential elements of learning and the learning environment for students experiencing learning difficulties?

3. How does the school culture influence preservice/beginning teachers' decision-making, including their role, in teaching students experiencing learning difficulties?

4. What personal attributes influence preservice/beginning teachers' decision-making, including their role, in teaching students experiencing learning difficulties?

Context

Inclusive education

Australia's population is becoming increasingly diverse due to a number of factors including changing social and economic conditions and migration. This diversity is evident in classrooms where teachers are frequently faced with the challenge of providing learning experiences that cater for a variety of learner styles, cultural differences, and abilities. In addition, changes in legislative policies and social attitudes have also contributed to a transformation in special education. Students with disabilities, previously educated in segregated environments, are now being educated in regular classes. Learning communities that respond to the challenges posed by diverse populations and create environments where all participants have full citizenship are considered to be providing inclusive education (Queensland Department of Education and Training, 2005).

The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) promoted early support for inclusive education. It called for schools, globally, to accommodate all children, regardless of difference in physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other conditions. The call was backed by the claim that schools with an

inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system. (UNESCO, 1994, p. ix)

The backbone of inclusive education is the "social learning processes within a given workplace that influence people's actions and, indeed, the thinking that informs these actions" (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010, p. 403). Therefore, inclusive education is a culture, a philosophy, and a political stance aimed at the social inclusion of all citizens (Armstrong, Armstrong, & Barton, 2000). It requires schools to rethink "approaches to curriculum planning, pedagogy and decision-making" (Slee, 2011, p. 172).

Inclusive education is a term widely used in education today and has come to mean different things to different people (Ainscow & Miles, 2008). Schools provide inclusive education when they foster learning communities that question disadvantage and challenge social injustice, and maximise the educational and social outcomes of all students through the identification, reduction, or removal of barriers to learning (Queensland Department of Education and Training, 2005). This includes the close analysis of the curriculum, and reflection on pedagogy and assessment (Meo, 2008). It also involves ensuring all students and staff members understand and value diversity so they have the knowledge and skills to participate fully in a just, equitable, and democratic global society (Ainscow, 2007; Booth & Ainscow, 2002; Queensland Department of Education and Training, 2005; Slee, 2005). Inclusive education is a requirement in a democratic and just society, as it opens the gates to life choices and provides access to full membership within that society (Booth & Ainscow, 2002; Lipsky & Gartner, 1999).

Inclusive education includes but goes further than the disability debate (Forlin, 2006) and "is not a reform of special education" (Lipsky & Gartner, 1999, p. 15). Slee (2011) suggests, however, that to move beyond the language of special needs to an agenda that includes democratic processes the meanings and objectives of inclusive education need to be closely examined. Inclusive education seeks to counter the numerous ways students experience marginalisation and exclusion in

schools (Broderick, Mehta-Parekh, & Reid, 2005; Forlin, 2006). This could be related to age, gender, race, socioeconomic status, religious and cultural beliefs, or disability. As a consequence inclusive education needs to be considered within the reform agenda for general education which includes educating communities about exclusion (Slee, 2011). Exclusion can also result from particular classroom practices.

Inclusive practices are realised when teachers use their understanding of their learners to create responsive teaching episodes within a safe, supportive environment. This can have a monumental influence on broadening the lesson goals, teaching approaches, and assessment techniques so the number of students operating on the periphery and experiencing marginalisation and exclusion is reduced (Alton-Lee, 2003; Brimijoin, 2005; Meo, 2008). Boundaries that can limit classroom opportunity and learning include, for example, the teacher's choice of classroom material. For some students, particular texts may be difficult to access due to the student's reading difficulties, cultural differences, or the style of presentation selected by the teacher. Other boundaries may be related to classroom procedures, such as how students are grouped and assessment practices.

Inclusive education is at the forefront of educational discussions in response to increasingly diverse classroom populations. Changes to discrimination laws and education policies particularly with regard to special education, increasing numbers of first and second generation migrants, and the widening gap in socioeconomic status amongst the Australian population are all factors contributing to the diverse student population. However, this situation is not unique to Australia.

At an international level, wide spread reform occurred in special education during the 1970s and 80s as a result of growing advocacy for social justice, equity, and human rights (Christensen, 1996; Tomlinson, 1985). This contributed to considerable policy development around these issues (Peters, 2007). Several key international declarations, in particular the *Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (1994)*, specifically addressed the area of "special educational needs" (p. viii) and were the genesis and driving forces of the philosophy of inclusion. Although students with disabilities form only one aspect of diversity, special education has had an historical, cultural, and political influence on the inclusion debate and the ideological assumptions that underpin some decision-making in education

(Tomlinson, 1985). The following discussion outlines the history of special education, its influence on the inclusive education movement, and its potential to influence teachers' perceptions about teaching students with learning difficulties.

The history of special education

Within the Western context, changes brought on by the enlightenment era required education to be available for all (Skrtic, 1991). Compulsory education contributed to the growth and focus-shift of special education (Christensen, 1996). Special education was introduced to provide alternative education in segregated settings for those students whose needs could not be met in regular educational environments (Florian, 2007; Tomlinson, 1985). Schools were under pressure to accommodate the growing number of students and also their diverse needs as access to education grew.

When the school system could not cope with particular students who were considered unwilling or incapable of achieving even low level academic goals the problem was addressed by restructuring schools to create sites for special education (Christensen, 1996; Tomlinson, 1985). As Skrtic (1991) argues the emergence of special education was the direct result of institutional restructuring based on the need for efficiency and control. A consequence of human problems being linked to pathology was a special education discourse that sanctioned four key thoughts supporting ideological assumptions in education. These sanctions include:

- Disabilities are pathological conditions that students have.
- Differential diagnosis is objective and useful.
- Special education is rational and provides services that benefit diagnosed students.
- Progress results from rational technological improvements in diagnosis and instructional practices (Skrtic, 1991, p. 152).

These key sanctions continue to influence the ideological assumptions and deficit discourse used in education today. They help to perpetuate the current dilemmas teachers face in accepting responsibility for dealing with students who are experiencing learning difficulties (Woolfson & Brady, 2009).

Peters (2007) provides simple models of disability that informs discussion about disability in education; deficit and social. The deficit model focuses on an individual who needs fixing whether by therapy, medicine, surgery, or special treatment. It has a strong focus on what the individual cannot do. The social model, however, draws on a broader conceptualisation of difference and considers what is needed to support the individual's learning. It does not dismiss disability as an element to be considered in the learning process. It opens thinking to consider other aspects of the individual's learning environment that could assist in the learning process and ways to minimise the challenges that may be experienced because of the disability (Florian, 2007). Thomas and Loxley (2007) discuss more complex models suggested by Söder (1989) and Slee (1998) who also agree that the deficit and social models are prominent. Special education discourse, which draws from the deficit model, has justified the position that students experiencing learning difficulties should receive their education or at least part of it in a separate setting through a program of diagnosis and treatment (Corbett & Slee, 2000).

Special education has been simultaneously praised and criticised for its contribution to fair and just educational provisions (Florian, 2007). The deficit model situates the learning problems within the child and so placing the child in a setting which caters for the *broken* child has advocates. However, when problems with learning are considered from a social model perspective, where the problem lies within the approach to learning or the environment (Twomey, 2006), then the provision of segregated environments to improve learning is problematic.

Historically, the provision of special education reinforced exclusion of those individuals identified as having a disability. However, shifting from a technical to political discourse allowed consideration of exclusionary practices that existed and provided opportunities to challenge the taken for granted assumptions upon which some practices and discourses have developed (Paugh & Dudley-Marling, 2011). An example includes the employment of labelling and the subsequent use of these labels as derogatory terms (e.g. retarded, simple). As the social movement gained momentum, people with disabilities began to have a greater voice and consequently a greater impact on practices and policies impacting their lives.

In Australia, legislation such as the *Disability Discrimination Act* (1992) and their associated standards (Disability Standards for Education, 2005) are designed to protect individuals from discrimination based on their disabilities, but unless the values and beliefs of teachers are aligned with policy underpinning such initiatives, their effectiveness within education is diminished. Policy may be enacted through administrative and technical decisions such as the provision of additional resources and pedagogical choices. However, the emotional climate of the classroom which is controlled by the teacher will not enhance learning opportunities of students unless the teacher's values and beliefs align with the intentions of the policy. Teachers' beliefs about inclusion and diversity influence how they respond to students in the classroom. This discussion is expanded in Chapters 2 and 3.

From segregation to integration to inclusion: Theoretical influences

Special education has had an historic journey through several phases; segregation, integration, and inclusion. Primarily these changes resulted from of political influences and social attitudes rather than from psychological or educational perspectives.

The widespread international reforms of the 1970s and 80s, which resulted from an increase in advocacy for social justice, equity, and human rights did little to enhance the educational experience or opportunities for students with disabilities (Florian, 2007). Oliver (2000) claimed real reform could not occur until the notion of disability was reconceptualised from the individual personal tragedy (deficit model) to social oppression (social model). The latter analyses institutional, ideological, structural, and material barriers that result in disabling, oppressive social conditions (Barton, 2003; Tomlinson, 1988).

From a sociological perspective, special education can be examined through questions and assumptions of power, politics, and social control (Barton, 2003). Earlier, special education policy and related practices within the deficit model were accepted as beneficial for the pupils involved and the actual system as a whole (Florian, 2007). There was very little input from the recipients or their families. The deficit model was used as a platform for understanding the significant issues in terms of experiences and opportunities of students with disabilities (Barton, 2003). Subsequent decisions based on this understanding provided a very limited view of

disability. As a result, discriminatory conditions continued to prevail in education and society in general.

Inclusive education continues to be a contentious issue in education (Florian, 2007) with the potential threats to inclusion being both attitudinal and pedagogical (Lambe, 2011). The movement towards inclusive education reflects the current views generally held in Western society concerning human rights, equity, and social justice. However, an educational environment that may suit one student in fact may be quite limiting for another despite the schools best intentions to create an inclusive culture. Through consideration of these same principles that underlie inclusive education it becomes evident that selecting an educational environment regardless of an individual's ability or disability should be a choice with consideration given to the individual's current needs (Low, 2007). Therefore, support for some form of special education as an optional model of education remains for some students (Bina, 1995; Rimland, 1995; Wing, 2007).

However, McGregor and Vogelsberg's (1998) synthesis of research that investigated the efficiency and outcomes of inclusive schooling found the effects of various aspects of inclusive schooling are generally beneficial for students with a disability and typically developing students. Similar results were found by Jackson (2008) who reviewed studies specifically relating to the inclusion of students with intellectual impairments. He found students with an intellectual impairment benefitted academically and socially from inclusion. While Jackson (2008) found the majority of studies showed inclusion had a neutral or positive impact on non-disabled peers' academic gains, the social impact was consistently positive and widespread. Nevertheless, McGregor and Vogelsberg (1998) found some students with disabilities felt more isolated and did not always show academic gains in regular settings. Jackson (2008) reported adult intervention had a significant impact on the quality of social inclusion. Changing beliefs about inclusion and more education programs promoting social inclusion may explain this discrepancy as many research programs cited were post 2000 (e.g., Carter, Hughes, & Copeland, 2001; Fredrickson & Turner, 2003; Messiou, 2008). The importance of collaboration and mutual support between regular and special educators was recognised as a significant factor in successfully including students with disabilities.

However, the focus of inclusive dialogue must now stretch beyond the consideration of those people who have disabilities "to a focus on all learners who are vulnerable to exclusion and to exclusionary pressures within society" (Lambe, 2011, p. 976). Particularly in Australia, with its increasingly diverse population, the needs of students for whom English is an additional language, refugees and migrants, students from low socioeconomic or those from indigenous backgrounds are at risk of being excluded. The education of these groups needs careful deliberation so they too may gain maximum benefit from their school experience (Tomlinson, 1988).

According to Allan (2008) the doubts about the effectiveness of inclusive education are a result of four territories of failure: "confusion, frustration, guilt and exhaustion" (p. 9). Confusion exists over "how to create inclusive environments within schools and about how to teach inclusively" (Allan, 2008, p. 10). The accountability culture, challenging student behaviours, large class sizes, lack of in-class support and a public perception about teachers' poor performance has contributed to frustration towards the inclusive movement. Many teachers are nurturers and join the ranks of teaching to make a difference in the lives of children. When teachers are time poor they are forced to make decisions about who is worthy of their time which may leave some students without support. Teachers may experience resentment of a student whose behaviour is making their job seem impossible and respond negatively to that student. These two factors have the potential to produce a sense of guilt in the teacher because there are students who are being let down. There are many text books, methods books, and curriculum guides that "construct inclusion as a technical matter" (Allan, 2008, p. 19) that often simplify inclusion. This limited view overlooks the emotional and physical demands on teachers and is "likely to entrench teachers' sense of failure in the long term" (Allan, 2008, p. 19) and contribute to teachers' exhaustion and burnout.

Emotions are "a significant part of being a teacher" (Flores & Day, 2006, p. 220). The emotional climate of the classroom is determined by the interplay of students, teachers, administration and other staff, and parents. Added to this social junction are structural, political, and economic factors that may work to strengthen or diminish the emotional capacity of teachers, particularly when long held principles and beliefs are challenged, or their confidence in their pedagogy is eroded (Flores &

Day, 2006). This highlights the importance of attending to attitudes as well as skill development at preservice level of teacher education.

Current influences on inclusion in Australia

The Australian Labor Party launched an education initiative called the *Education Revolution* in the lead up to the 2007 Federal election. Since coming to power the Government has released its initiative *Quality Education: The Case for an Education Revolution in our Schools* (2008) which notes the need to develop a culture of high expectations for students and teachers. It also indicates the prevalence of learning difficulties affecting student achievement and performance in Australian schools is proportionally higher in some areas linked with geographical location and socioeconomic status of the community.

In Australia, high rates of academic underperformance amongst groups of students are linked with social disadvantage (Garrett, 2012). Students experiencing learning difficulties are especially concentrated amongst those from families regarded as having low socioeconomic status, those living in remote locations, and those from Indigenous backgrounds (Masters, 2009). This is evident in data from the National Assessment Program in Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). NAPLAN is used in Australia to provide information on how Australian students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 are performing in numeracy, reading, writing, spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

In Queensland, approximately 25 to 35% of Indigenous students fail to reach minimum standards in literacy and numeracy compared to 5 to 10% of non Indigenous students (Masters, 2009, p. 36). Location is linked with student achievements. Indigenous students from remote and very remote areas fall in the bottom 10% and 5% respectively of all students nationally (Masters, 2009, p. 38). Also noted is the under representation of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds among high achievers. In addition, there is an over representation of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds who exit school early, remain in unskilled labour employment, or who experience ongoing unemployment. Schools in lower socioeconomic areas perform less successfully on national testing and have higher percentages of students experiencing learning difficulties than those situated in more affluent areas (Boston et al., 2011; Masters, 2009). This highlights the

importance of addressing the gap in students' levels of achievement and responding positively to assist students experiencing learning difficulties.

Many teachers contend they do not have the pedagogical skills to cater for students who do not fit the expected norms of the classroom (Allan, 2006a; Loreman, Deppeler & Harvey, 2005; Westwood, 2008). Some teachers see students who are experiencing significant learning difficulties as the responsibility of another professional who may work in a support role (Jordan, Kitcaali-Iftar & Diamond, 1993; Westwood 1995). These views are driven by the deficit model of learning. However, Twomey (2006) challenges this view and contends it is important for teachers to understand the backgrounds of students and the characteristics of their learning difficulties so they can meaningfully be addressed through classroom-based approaches.

While one single factor cannot be attributed to students experiencing success at school, the teacher plays an important role (Alton-Lee, 2003; Hattie, 2003). However, if the historical influences of special education continue to impact on how students experiencing learning difficulties are perceived then teachers are likely to underestimate their ability to make a difference to that student's learning. Therefore, it is important for teachers to challenge the deficit notion of learning that surrounds students who experience learning difficulties. Challenging the deficit view may involve identifying, and responding to, factors within their personal belief system and the school environment. This may require a critical response to the ideology that surrounds some systemic decision-making.

The government asserts it aims to build a *fairer* Australia by raising the skills and capacity of all Australians particularly those with low skill levels. It claims this is "essential to ensuring equity in the economic, social and political life of the nation" (Commonwealth of Australia, 2008, p. ii). However, many of the practices in place to reach these targets are exclusionary and threaten the growth of inclusive cultures in schools. One example is the national testing program (NAPLAN). While providing useful data of achievement levels across various sectors of schooling and limited curriculum areas, some researchers claim there is a real threat to quality education and inclusive cultures if NAPLAN testing results continue to be used in

Australia to measure and report on school performance (Dulfer, Polesel, & Rice, 2012).

NAPLAN testing in itself is not really the threat to inclusive education. In fact, a highly regarded study in America carried out by the National Centre of Educational Outcomes and covering the 50 states found high stakes testing that encouraged the participation of all students (including those with disabilities) was positively linked to a) the use of student assessment data to inform decision-making, b) emphasis on inclusion and access to the curriculum resulting in an increased number of students in general education classrooms, c) increased matching of Individual Education Program goals and curriculum instruction to grade level expectations, d) increased use of research-based *best practices* and e) improved alignment of professional development (Altman et al., 2008). However, recently in Australia, research indicated NAPLAN testing, considered by teachers to be high stakes testing, is supporting an increased focus on literacy and numeracy but at some cost to other subject areas and more creative teaching strategies (Dulfer et al., 2012). This has the potential to exclude or limit some learners. In addition, the perceived power the results wield, and the misuse of its data to rank and report on schools through league tables encourages unhealthy competition amongst schools. This can be very detrimental to the development of inclusive cultures.

In Australia, the inclusive education debate has also been fuelled by policy and political discourse. In 1989 *The Hobart Declaration on Schooling* identified as one of its 10 major goals promoting equality in educational opportunities, and providing for groups with special learning requirements. Ten years later the reviewed goals in *The Adelaide Declaration on the National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century* had a much stronger focus on students and their learning outcomes and reflected a clear recognition of the particular learning needs of students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds who appear to be marginalised by the current system. It is noteworthy that the *National Goals for Schooling* should draw emphasis to students and their learning outcomes and perhaps this emphasis has added to the perception of the student deficit model rather than consideration of outside factors such as the learning environment or obstacles posed by curriculum (Twomey, 2006; Westwood, 1995). *The Adelaide Declaration on the National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century* alludes to inclusive education practices

declaring schooling should be socially just,– free from discrimination, and improve the outcomes and opportunities of students deemed educationally disadvantaged and those from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background.

The most recent in this suite of documents is *The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (2008). It notes, "improving educational outcomes for all young Australians is central to the nation's social and economic prosperity and will position young people to live fulfilling, productive and responsible lives" (p. 7). The document has two explicit goals. The first, "Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence" (p. 7) shifts the focus of education from the deficit model to one on wider contextual issues: quality teaching, improved schooling including accountability and transparency, and the role of parents, which can help to improve outcomes for all children. However, the deficit model and labelling are still used in many instances to allocate funding for students who are considered to require additional support to achieve their educational goals, and this helps to perpetuate such a model. Appendix A presents the categories used to identify students for funding and resource allocation in government funded schools in each Australian state and territory. While physical, visual, hearing, and intellectual impairments and autism spectrum disorder are categories common to all states, some variations occur. Mental health is not included as a disability category in Queensland, Victoria, South Australia, or Northern Territory. However, these states, excluding Queensland, have a general category that may extend to cover this area. Northern Territory is the only state to mention learning disorder as a funded category. Private and independent schools, funded by religious or independent bodies, may have variations to the funding models used by the government funded schools.

Education in Australia is undergoing major changes as we move towards a national curriculum in mathematics, English, science, and history, in contrast to the individual state mandated curricula that have been used up until 2012. In 2008, Australian governments agreed that a national curriculum would play a key role in the provision of a quality education for all young Australians and better prepare young people for their participation in a changing and increasingly globalised world. Although education ultimately remains the States' responsibility, the shift to a national focus on curriculum, is also accompanied by a national focus on teacher

standards and accountability which is further described in Chapter 2. It remains unclear how the national focus on streamlining education will extend to the definitions, access to funding and support for students who require additional support with learning.

Moves that mirror the national strategy outlined in *The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (2008) have also occurred at a state level in Queensland. The Department of Education, Training and Employment (2012a) includes in its strategic plan 2012-2016 a goal that "Every young Queenslander will be prepared with the educational foundations for successful transitions to further education, training and work" (p. 2). Social justice, equity and inclusivity also featured prominently in the recommendations from the Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study (Lingard et al., 2001).

Cochrane-Smith and Lytle (2009) argue that despite current educational policy and the political climate in the United States of America that link education directly to the country's economy and test-based accountability, and a market driven educational approach which has elevated the science of education and narrowed curriculum goals, practitioner research is pushing back against these constraints. Similar claims have been made in the Australian setting where teachers and researchers find ways to consider how equity, engagement and agency can be enacted within educational settings (Moss, 2011). The importance of the positioning and perspectives of teachers in Australia as they face ongoing reforms and increasing accountability is paramount because they are the drivers of change. Cochrane-Smith and Lytle (2009) call for emic views of educational research. They challenge the privileged position of professional knowledge created through scientific methods and assert that "through inquiry, practitioners across the professional life span make their own knowledge and practice problematic and also make problematic the knowledge generated by others" (Cochrane-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 131). This requires critical reflection. Knowledge as problematic allows teachers to challenge the requirements of their role and adapt rather than absorb or blindly accept changes within educational policy and practices.

Employing research-based best practice teaching methods such as explicit, direct teaching of reading skills, followed by guided practice and time for mastery for students experiencing learning difficulties is linked to improvement in student performance (Alton-Lee, 2003; Hattie, 2003; Watson & Bowman, 2005; Westwood, 2008). However, teachers who make pedagogical choices informed by the deficit model and situate the learning difficulty within the child may be less likely to seek or consider different strategies because they see the learning problem as originating from and inherent within the child and thus resistant to amelioration (Westwood, 2006). If teachers view students experiencing learning difficulties through the deficit model, they may limit their pedagogical choices, which in turn may transfer to limited academic opportunities and growth for the student (Hart, Drummond, & McIntyre, 2007) and teacher.

Conceptual Framework

A number of interrelated factors inform this study. The research problem both informed and was informed by the literature review. As the research problem became more refined and its significance became more obvious certain assumptions deemed as being important to the study were able to be drawn from the literature and helped to shape the research questions. These factors combined to ensure the methodology, methods, and data analysis were carefully considered, well aligned and an appropriate fit for the research design.

The Researcher

The research question grew from my experiences as a primary school teacher and later as a university tutor and lecturer. In my first year as a beginning teacher I was told by a senior guidance officer to *grow up and accept* that a student with a profound hearing loss in my class would never maintain the academic level of her same age peers. I intuitively felt this was not acceptable and became highly aware of the injustices that prevailed in the education system in which I worked. Over the next 20 years my awareness of and concern for the large number of students who were performing well below the grade level expectations and /or disengaged from school and who did not seem to *fit* the system was heightened. I made honest attempts to accommodate these students but felt a sense of frustration from the controlling structures of the school environment.

As a mentor to beginning teachers, I recognised firsthand the difficulties these teachers experienced in their initial teaching year; ineffectively catering for difference and struggling to manage the resulting behavioural issues. The research question was fuelled further by my experience as a university tutor, teaching final year preservice teachers in a core course that addressed student diversity and inclusive education. Many of these preservice teachers reported their practicum experiences reinforced the misconception of some class teachers that *no one in this class has any disabilities so we do not need to differentiate the curriculum.*

As my academic role expanded and interaction with a growing number of preservice teachers exposed the uncertainty and fears they held about how they would manage the student diversity in their classrooms. It was also clear that preservice teachers were often unaware of the multitude of factors that contribute to student difference but they held preconceived assumptions about why some students did not succeed in school. When asked, many preservice teachers could not articulate how they came to the preconceived assumptions they held about particular students as learners. My prior experiences have helped to shape this study and are discussed in Chapter 4.

Theoretical Framework

This research is set within a social constructionist epistemology and is based on the foundation that knowledge is socially constructed, and the construction is influenced by both historic and cultural influences (Young & Collin, 2004). Preservice teachers enter university with individual ideologies which have been constructed through social interactions and experiences. These ideologies include values, beliefs, judgements, feelings and attitudes, and all these influence how individuals interpret the world. The assumptions drawn from our experiences are influenced by cultural and psychological factors and are usually adopted unchallenged. However, assumptions can be changed if they are found to be *faulty*. Based on the understanding that assumptions have been socially constructed, it is plausible to assume they too can be deconstructed and challenged through a process of critical reflection (Hoffman-Kipp, Artiles, & López-Torres, 2003).

This research is informed by a critical social theoretical framework. Through critical reflection, led by the researcher acting as a critical friend, this research

provides a lens for the participants to explore various ways of thinking and behaving. In this case, it provides preservice/beginning teachers with a critically reflective lens to explore a range of explanations for students' learning difficulties and alternative pedagogies with which to approach teaching. Challenging and questioning their beliefs may lead to modified teaching practices. Critical reflection is pivotal to the process of change.

Transformational learning provides a framework for examining change. Critical research is not used merely to describe a situation or phenomena but to enable change so that the situation or phenomena can become more equitable and democratic and those previously oppressed feel empowered to contribute to the change (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). This research describes the transformation of preservice teachers' perceptions about teaching and learning as they transition from preservice teacher into the role of beginning teacher. It also examines the sociocultural factors that contribute to that process.

Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) theorisation of the rhizome is used as a lens to understand the experiences and growth of the preservice teachers as they transition into the role of beginning teacher. The rhizome illustrates the fluid, nonlinear process of transformation and the ongoing nature of learning to be a teacher in an inclusive environment. As Allan (2011) contends "rhizomatic learning is always a process, having to be worked at by all concerned, and never complete" (p.156). Rhizomatic learning aligns well with Booth and Ainscow's (2002) view of inclusive education as an ongoing process towards an ideal that schools and individuals should continue to aspire.

Identity/ positioning

Critical social theory has been influenced by postmodern thought and philosophers. Of particular relevance to this study is the postmodern concept of fluidity of identity (Miedema & Wardekker, 1999) and the contributing nature of social influences. Miedema and Wardekker (1999) assert "individual nature is created again and again, for a short period, in a specific situation, and before a specific public ... the result of which is always only a local stability" (p. 79). Davies and Harré (1990) agree stating the way we see ourselves "is not a relatively fixed end product but ... constituted and reconstituted through the various discursive practices"

that produce social meaning (p. 46). Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) and Zembylas (2003) identify feedback from significant others, such as the principal and colleagues, as an influencing factor on how teachers perceive and position themselves as effective educators.

The way teachers position themselves is noteworthy because it influences how they understand the role of teacher and the sense of agency that can accompany it (Zembylas, 2003). Teachers, who see themselves as agentive, as people who can enact change, will continue to seek solutions to obstacles and question how their behaviour impacts on the learning process. Therefore, how teachers position themselves, such as agentive or obedient technicians, influences their perceptions of teaching in terms of what they contribute and what is possible in their classrooms. Hence one's perceptions of learning and teaching are closely linked. Beliefs about how learning occurs will also influence the position teachers take in their role. Some may position themselves in the role of facilitator while others take on a more controlling role of director. Their roles as teacher are not static. They are subject to change through discursive practices and cultural norms (Zembylas, 2003). Shifting subject positions will be influenced by transforming perceptions of teaching and learning.

The view of fluid identity is supported by Gee (2000) through his four notions of identity; nature, institution, discourse, and affinity identity. Nature identity (N-Identity) is created with attention to nature or the genetic makeup of the person, over which they have no control but is only made meaningful through the three other identity sources. Institutional identity (I-Identity) is created by the power generated from rules, responsibilities, and expectations of particular positions within organisations. The discourse perspective (D-Identity) is created through social interactions. The source of the power is drawn from how individuals interpret situations. The affinity perspective (A-Identity) is created and sustained through a set of similar interests or shared culture. Gee asserts though that these are interlinked. Davies and Harré (1990) take on the term *positioning* to explain the idea of identity and this is the term I use throughout this study to highlight the fluidity of the subject positions beginning teachers assume within different roles. Positioning recognises the political and cultural influences in identity development (Burr, 2003; Davies, 2008; Miedema & Wardekker, 1999). In addition, Davies and Harré (1990) maintain

that personal experience also influences the extent to which individuals occupy particular positions. It is "these subject positions, offered, claimed or accepted" (Burr, 2003, p.114) that defines the identity of the teacher and constrains or enables various practices.

Positioning contends that teachers have the capacity to view themselves differently within their role and suggests the social context of the work environment is influential in this process (Zembylas, 2003). Davies and Harré (1990, p. 59) argue, "The possibility of choice in a situation in which there are contradictory requirements provides people with the possibility of acting agentically," as they move through a process of transformation impacted by multiple factors. Therefore, the perceptions developed about teaching and learning are influenced by the way beginning teachers' position themselves in their roles (Zembylas, 2003). Beginning teachers who position themselves as agentive are more likely to consider wider possibilities of what is possible in the teaching and learning process as they identify and address structural, cultural, and personal obstacles they encounter.

These differing, complex perspectives inform our understanding of the dilemmas of producing theory in the fields of teacher education and student diversity. Deleuze and Guattari enable a rhizomatic way of thinking beyond the structures of traditional teacher education and limitations of deficit discourse. Different ways of thinking by teacher educators, teachers, and preservice teachers provide prospects for change within teacher education and inclusive education so opportunities for renewal and transformation, which may be overlooked through traditional research frameworks, become evident.

The process of personal and professional transformation is both complex and messy and this is examined through the rhizome model presented by Deleuze and Guattari (1987). The rhizome model, described further in Chapter 3, explains how preservice teachers deal with, and manage links between, the traditional deficit model and new ways of thinking about and responding to students who are experiencing learning difficulties.

This research has emancipatory intent in unearthing social consciousness of preservice/beginning teachers' responsibilities and capabilities towards students in their class who experience learning difficulties. It draws on critical pedagogy as it

enables questioning of the dominant ideology of the school. It acknowledges dominant ideology is not neutral and does not generally serve the needs of all students. Teachers who become critical pedagogues come to recognise the injustices that occur in schools, especially with regards to school and classroom practices, that can limit students who are experiencing learning difficulties. These constructs are discussed in Chapter 3.

Methodology

The research is an emergent design because of the acknowledged multiple realities it is attempting to investigate. Multicase study design (Stake, 2006) was employed, and deemed suitable according to the epistemological and theoretical approach of the study. Case study allows the researcher to gather a deep insight to a situation from the perspective of the participant (Cohen, et al., 2000; Merriam, 1998). Multicase study aims to provide a full picture of a situation (Stake, 1994). Each case was a preservice teacher who was transitioning into the role of beginning teacher. The multicase study constituted seven individual cases. Data were collected through semi structured interviews, reflective diaries, and classroom observations. Data analysis occurred both inductively and deductively and was guided by techniques described by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Braun and Clarke (2006) which involved a recursive process of coding, categorising, analysing, and yet further data collection. The narratives of the participants combine with the interpretations of the researcher. This allows the researcher to identify the sociocultural factors that contribute to the transformation of beginning teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning, and how these factors influence the provision of effective teaching for students experiencing learning difficulties.

Thesis Outline

Chapter 2 reviews the literature pertinent to this research. Key tenets of inclusive education, the influence of personal belief systems, and characteristics of effective teaching are reviewed. Their influence in teacher preparation and significance to beginning teachers is examined. The chapter concludes with a discussion that outlines the confusion surrounding learning difficulties and the various impacts this has on teaching.

Chapter 3 provides the theoretical framework of the study. Critical social theory, transformational learning theory, and Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) rhizomatic theory which illustrates the fluidity of various subject positions occupied by participants during transformation, are all examined. Their potential for answering the research question is argued.

The methodology and method are outlined in Chapter 4. Here I present the epistemological stance and argue the suitability of case study design to investigate the research problem. The participants of the study are introduced before the data collection tools and analysis process are outlined. Ethical considerations and the trustworthiness of data collection and interpretation conclude the chapter, illustrating the rigour of the study.

The next three chapters present the data and discussion around the three major junctures of data collection. Chapter 5 contains the data collected while the participants were practicum students. Chapter 6 contains the data collected while the participants were interns. Chapter 7 contains the data collected while the participants were beginning teachers. Each chapter follows a similar format and the embedded discussion in each responds to the four subsidiary questions of the study.

In the final chapter, I summarise the research findings and respond to the overall research question, linking results to the literature. The limited scope of the research is also addressed along with the contribution to the fields of teacher preparation and inclusive education. The chapter concludes with recommendations for further research.

Chapter 1 provided an outline of the proposed thesis and has detailed the background of the study, described the contextual influences, and established the research question and subsidiary questions. The methodology of the study was briefly outlined following the researcher's biography. The conceptual framework introduced the interrelated nature of the components of this study and was followed by an overview of the thesis chapters.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter presents the literature review pertinent to this research. The major question that underpinned this research was

What sociocultural factors contribute to the transformation of beginning teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning, and how do these factors influence the provision of effective teaching for students experiencing learning difficulties?

Sociocultural factors stem from the individual and their prior experiences, as well as the environment within which the individual lives and works. Therefore, factors relating to personal belief systems, teacher education programs, and teaching environments are considered in the literature review. The role of personal beliefs, attitudes, and values and their link with teaching is reviewed first, followed by an evaluation of the literature regarding teacher preparation and early career experiences. Next, literature related to elements of effective teaching and inclusive school environments is examined. The chapter concludes by exploring various aspects of learning difficulties and the implications for teachers and students.

Personal Belief Systems

Belief systems are complex entities that govern our behaviour. In this study I am using the term belief systems to mean an interrelated mix of beliefs, values, and attitudes, with one having influence over the other (Ajzen, 2005; Pajares, 1992). Because beliefs influence behaviour, and therefore teachers' decision-making, any change in teaching practices to make education more inclusive for students experiencing learning difficulties, must be supported by changes in teachers' beliefs if the new practices are to be sustainable (Beswick, 2003). The interwoven nature of beliefs with values and attitudes necessitates that change occurs throughout the belief system.

In the following section, I provide a definition of each component of the belief system, illustrate their interconnected nature, and outline their relevance to teaching. Later, in Chapter 3 I make links and expand the discussion about how and why belief systems may change in the section about transformational learning.

Beliefs

Beliefs are difficult to define and consequently there is a lack of consistent definition in the literature (Beswick, 2003; Pajares, 1992). In this research, beliefs are regarded as assumptions or perceptions that a person holds true. They develop over time through interactions, observations, and inference processes (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Beliefs that are held true for a long period of time become core beliefs and are more difficult to change, whereas, newly formed beliefs are more malleable (Pajares, 1992). This implies that beliefs formed early in a teacher's career may be more susceptible to change. Furthermore, Beswick (2003) suggests the relationship between beliefs and practice is significantly influenced by the constraints within the school setting. Moreover, Silverman (2007) contends because beliefs influence behaviour, and therefore the decision-making by the teacher, this has the potential to affect classroom climate and student outcomes. Some seminal studies undertaken are reviewed below.

Silverman's (2007) study of 71 preservice teachers in the United States of America investigated the nature and strength of the relationship between epistemological beliefs and attitudes towards inclusion. Data analysis conducted on two questionnaires indicated that preservice teachers with positive attitudes towards inclusion generally had beliefs about teaching and learning that reflected high epistemological beliefs. That is, they a) held a broader understanding of the complexities of knowledge construction, b) they understood that learning occurs over time and that everyone has the capacity to learn, and c) they viewed the role of the teacher as a coconstructor of knowledge. The implication of Silverman's (2007) study relevant to the context of the current study is positive attitudes towards inclusion and high-level epistemological beliefs are central to effective, inclusive teaching. The current study builds on Silverman's findings by investigating the relationship between preservice/beginning teacher perceptions about learning and teaching and their influence on inclusive teaching practices and the sociocultural factors that influence their transformation.

Clark's (1997) American based study of 97 general education elementary school teachers indicated, at least in part, that the way the teacher responded to students with learning disabilities was due to the beliefs they held about the learners. Using eight hypothetical vignettes, Clark found teachers' beliefs about learners based

on their characteristics influenced how they responded to students in terms of feedback, expectations, and sympathy.

Clark found teachers made causal attributions that influenced their behaviour towards students with learning disabilities partly due to the beliefs they held that the students with a learning disability will fail more, deserve more pity and less anger, and should be rewarded more than their nondisabled peers. The message this sends to students with learning disabilities is that they are less competent than their nondisabled peers and should expect less from themselves than their peers. The attributional messages teachers send to students regarding effort, ability, and outcomes have the potential to shape the beliefs students form about themselves as learners. Although these messages may be unconsciously transmitted by the teacher they can hold serious repercussions for how students come to view themselves. Given the power of attributional messages critically reflecting and understanding one's personal beliefs about learners and learning is crucial for teachers.

Woolfson and Brady (2009) investigated the factors impacting on 199 mainstream teachers' beliefs about teaching students with learning difficulties in Scotland. Using questionnaires, including a modified questionnaire used by Clark (1997), they investigated the relationship between experience and professional development, and the teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, coping, interactions with people with disabilities, and optimism. Their results indicated a strong relationship between teachers' beliefs about their efficacy, lower levels of sympathy and the teacher attributing difficulties with learning to factors external to the student such as the teacher or curriculum. They also found training and experience, in general, did not necessarily have a strong impact on teachers' beliefs but found successful experiences were more influential.

However, in an earlier study Brady and Woolfson (2008) investigated the influencing factors relating to teachers' attribution of learning difficulties. This study involved 44 general, 33 mainstream learning support, and 41 special education teachers (Brady & Woolfson, 2008). The Scottish study explored the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy, attitudes towards disabled people, teaching experience and training, and the role these factors play in influencing how teachers attribute children's difficulties in learning. Their findings showed teachers with more

than 15 years of experience viewed children's difficulties as more internally attributable. Westwood's (1998) work in Australia, now over thirty years old, also found teachers predominantly blamed factors from within the child for learning difficulties. However, Brady and Woolfson (2008) also found those teachers with less than 15 years of experience were less likely to view students' difficulties as internally attributable. One explanation of this difference was attributed to the current focus on preservice courses that promote more inclusive models of education.

Brady and Woolfson (2008) also found teacher self-efficacy was a better predictor of teacher attributions than the teaching role they performed in schools. Teachers in their study with high efficacy were found to attribute students learning difficulties more towards external factors. This indicated that teachers who felt more competent had greater confidence in accepting some responsibility for the difficulties some students experience, but again their study did not illustrate how this influenced teachers' practices.

Teachers who demonstrated low levels of sympathy towards students experiencing learning difficulties viewed the learning difficulty as more open to change. These attribution messages are significant as powerful sources of information upon which students base their perceptions of their competence (Clark, 1977; Woodcock & Vialle, 2010). Teachers who display pity and sympathy, or project low expectations to students based on the notion that a deficit exists that is beyond the capabilities of the teacher to fix, may unknowingly send very detrimental messages to students experiencing learning difficulties. These messages manifest in students' "self-esteem, expectations for their own future success or failures, and their classroom performance" (Clark, 1997, p. 77).

The use of vignettes in studies by Clark (1997), Woolfson and Brady's (2009) and Brady & Woolfson (2008) did not allow them to capture the dynamics of the classroom and the results may be expected to be different in varying contexts when the teacher is responding to multiple features of the classroom and demands of the students simultaneously.

Jordan & Stanovich (2001) also investigated the influence of teachers' beliefs on their practice. In their Canadian study of nine elementary school teachers, they investigated the relationship between teachers' beliefs about learners, patterns of

interactional episodes, and the possible impact of instructional interventions on students' self-concepts. The first two areas of investigation are relevant to the current study. The Pathognomonic-Interventionist Scale was used to measure the teachers' beliefs about their roles and responsibilities in working with students with disabilities. At one end of the scale was PATH beliefs which are those linked with the belief about learning difficulties being permanent characteristics of the student. At the opposing end of the scale was INT beliefs. Interview transcripts were coded on a Likert-type scale where teachers' beliefs were extrapolated from their descriptions of their practices. The study aimed to investigate the relationship between teachers' beliefs about learners and their responses to students who were deemed to be at-risk. These beliefs were linked with views about learning difficulties being amenable to instructional intervention and the influence of attributional messages on students' self-concept. Teachers found to hold a PATH perspective viewed their role as insignificant to the learning outcomes of students with disabilities. In contrast, teachers who held an INT perspective view considered all students could learn and saw it as their responsibility to adapt instruction to meet the needs of all students in their class. These findings confirmed earlier findings by Jordan, Kircaali-Iftar and Diamond (1993).

Jordan et al. (1993) used similar data collection methods with 27 elementary teachers almost ten years earlier. They found teachers who located the problems as beyond their own domain of responsibility were more likely to prefer the withdrawal of certain students from their classes. Jordan & Stanovich (2001) also found teachers who attributed learning difficulties to permanent characteristics of students that were beyond the teachers' mandate (PATH view) interacted infrequently with students and at a lower level of cognitive engagement. Therefore, there is research to suggest teachers' beliefs impact on their practice. This is relevant to this current study that investigated the sociocultural factors that can influence beliefs and contribute to the transformation of preservice/beginning teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning and how this influenced their practice in relation to students experiencing learning difficulties.

Collections of beliefs connect within an attitude and network across other attitudes which broaden one's view of a particular issue. This suggests that teachers do not necessarily sit at extreme ends of the PATH/ INT continua. For example,

certain beliefs about social justice, roles of families in education, causes of learning difficulties and personal efficacy may influence a teacher's attitude towards inclusive education. Opportunities for critical reflection during preservice teacher training, to scrutinise the relationship between beliefs and practice is useful to help preservice teachers to develop of positive attitudes towards inclusion (Hoffman-Kipp et al., 2003; Silverman, 2007).

Attitudes

Attitudes are multidimensional; they contain affective, behavioural, and cognitive components (Haddock & Maio, 2007; Loreman et al., 2011). Like beliefs, they are formed through direct experience, other influences such as media or significant others, and through personal thinking and reflection. Because attitudes are learnt through socialisation, they can be changed (Loreman et al., 2011). Attitudes are evaluative in nature and can be expressed through both verbal and nonverbal behaviour (Ajzen, 2005), so actions and words are representative of attitudes.

Adding another dimension to the concept of attitudes is the notion that positive and negative attitudes are housed as separate elements within the belief system (Haddock & Maio, 2007) rather than on a continuum. This means one dimension attributes a high or low level of positive elements to the attitude, while the other attributes a high or low negative element to the attitude. This is significant because when a person attributes both strong positive and negative elements to the attitude it makes the attitude more vulnerable to change. It also accounts for variance in attitudes in a variety of contexts.

The affective dimension of attitudes triggers the emotional arousal and response to a phenomenon. When teachers respond to classroom situations using their *gut instincts* or make decision because *it feels right* they are using their affective domain. The cognitive element of attitudes helps one to make sense of the world and determines how we judge or make connections to various situations (Loreman et al., 2005). The behavioural element of attitudes determines how we respond and act in various situation once the connections are made. Attitudes are also influenced by the values we hold.

Values

Values underpin our attitudes; they guide what we come to believe and feel about a situation and the judgement we make about it. As such, a value could be seen as a single belief. Beliefs may become values when they are evaluative, comparative, or judgemental (Pajares, 1992). Values manifest in behavioural and emotional responses to various situations (Loreman et al., 2005) and influence intuitive actions and behaviours (Brookfield, 2000) linking them to the affective domain of attitudes.

Belief systems have a significant influence on the way we think, feel, and act. However, they are not developed in isolation; rather, they are formed through the interactions individuals encounter within their cultural context. The cultural influence is embedded within structural features of society governed by various social, political, and economic factors (Thompson, 2011). This suggests life experiences, both professional and personal, and the work environment may provide certain sociocultural factors that influence the belief systems beginning teachers develop with regards to inclusive education and the practices they adopt for students experiencing learning difficulties. Lambe (2011) reports "potential barriers to inclusive practice have been identified as both pedagogical and attitudinal" (p. 976) requiring both to be addressed by teachers aiming to create inclusive environments for all students. Essential in overcoming these barriers is critical reflection, a major component of effective teaching (Toomey, 2007), and therefore an essential skill to be addressed as part of teacher education programs.

Teacher Education

Teacher training has two main components: the development of knowledge and understanding drawn from theory learnt at university and the development of knowledge and skills linking theoretical understanding drawn from practical experience in school settings. However, there is often a perceived mismatch between what is learnt in the two contexts (Flores & Day, 2006; Sutherland, Howard, & Markauskaite, 2010). This may be due to limited resources such as funding and time (Walkington, 2005) which reduce effective communication between school and universities. However, it may also be a result of limited opportunities to develop the skills and dispositions required for preservice teachers to engage with critical reflection to make evident the links between theory and practice.

Cochrane-Smith and Lytle (2009) argue that despite current educational policy and the political climate in the United States of America that link education directly to the country's economy and test-based accountability, and a market driven educational approach which has elevated the science of education and narrowed curriculum goals, practitioner research is pushing back against these constraints. Similar claims have been made in the Australian setting where teachers and researchers find ways to consider how equity, engagement and agency can be enacted within educational settings (Moss, 2011). The importance of the positioning and perspectives of teachers in Australia as they face ongoing reforms and increasing accountability is paramount because they are the drivers of change. Cochrane-Smith and Lytle (2009) calls for emic views of educational research. They challenge the privileged position of professional knowledge created through scientific methods and assert that "through inquiry, practitioners across the professional life span make their own knowledge and practice problematic and also make problematic the knowledge generated by others" (Cochrane-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 131). This requires critical reflection. Knowledge as problematic allows teachers to challenge the requirements of their role and adapt rather than absorb or blindly accept changes within educational policy and practices.

Critical reflection and challenging beliefs

Reflection, critical reflection, and critical self-reflection are terms used frequently and interchangeably in discourse surrounding teacher education and effective teaching practice. However, like so many terms in education, they come to represent multiple meanings (Brookfield, 2000; Thompson & Pascal, 2012). Throughout this thesis critical reflection is referred to as an attempt to reflect within the moral, ethical, and political contexts of teaching (Howard, 2003). Within a moral domain, teachers reflect on their belief systems and how they influence their behaviour and choice of pedagogies. When teachers critically reflect within an ethical domain they consider how their behaviour impacts on elements of learning and teaching such as student achievement and engagement, and classroom relationships. This may also include reflecting on the technical aspects of teaching. These two aspects require self-reflection. Within a political domain, critical reflection includes an analysis of power within the learning context to uncover the hegemonic assumptions and ideologies embedded in decision-making and practice

(Brookfield, 2000; Hoffman-Kipp et al. 2003; Thompson & Pascal, 2012). The three aspects of critical reflection are closely interwoven.

Critical refection is a skill that needs to be taught explicitly during teacher preparation through a set of scaffolded experiences (Hoffman-Kipp et al., 2003; Larrivee, 2008; Russell, 2005). This could be achieved at university through the provision of models or structures to shape the reflection (see Bain, Ballantyne, Mills & Lester, 2002; Larrivee, 2008), deconstructing exemplars to identify salient features of the reflection (Ryan, 2011), and providing scaffolding by means of guiding questions to provide depth to the reflection (see Carrington & Selva, 2010; Larrivee, 2008; Russell, 2006). Flores and Day (2006) and Noble and Henderson (2012) suggest teacher preparation programs need a more concentrated focus on opportunities for preservice teachers to critically reflect on the relationship between their personal belief systems and the realities of schools, and how to manage any discrepancies that exist. Walkington (2005) contends it is the responsibility of both universities and schools to develop the skills required for reflective practice.

Service learning programs embedded within teacher training programs have been identified as a pedagogical approach that allows preservice teachers to "become more aware of their beliefs and practices and those of others, and how they can contribute to a more socially just society" (Carrington & Selva, 2010, p. 3). By engaging with their community, as a volunteer in a service organisation, preservice teachers may be able to develop new subject positions as they form greater links between theory and practice and learn to identify societal inequities. Service learning has transformative potential because it provides opportunities for preservice teachers to realise the interconnection between the theory learnt at university and real world experiences through a scaffolded process of critical reflection (Carrington & Iyer, 2011). These types of programs, while beneficial may be limited by the assessment oriented nature of academia and the influence this could impose on one's sense of purpose and openness during critical refection.

Preservice teachers need to be provided with opportunities to critically reflect for the value it offers in developing their understanding of what it means to be a teacher and how it can assist them in negotiating the challenges they will face in their role as teacher (Larrivee, 2008). Education Commons (Noble & Henderson, 2012) is

an initiative that offers this opportunity. Education Commons is offered as an opportunity for learning, separate to course requirements, during the preservice teacher training. It is a voluntary program that uses a two-step process. First a panel of educators come together at the university and engage in an open-ended discussion that finds its direction from the panel members and audience. The second step has the goal of encouraging dialogue and reflection in a bid to develop a professional identity and build the capacity of preservice teachers (Henderson, Noble, & Cross, *in press*). The success of this program relies, to some extent, on the initial interest of the preservice teachers to be involved and therefore the value they place on the process of reflection.

Education Commons (Noble & Henderson, 2012) provides opportunities for preservice teachers to engage with other professionals to discuss important educational issues and enhance critical reflective skills. When considered in terms of Gee's (2000) discursive perspective (D-Identity) preservice teachers are expected to take on the discourse of *teacher* (Noble & Henderson, 2012) which allows them to explore the multiple perspectives that inform their practice and the practices of others. This has the potential to develop beginning teachers who are critically reflective, and consequently more informed in their practice and more flexible in their approach (Noble & Henderson, 2012). This is significant given the complexity of contemporary classrooms and the challenges this presents for teachers' beliefs. However, while early data in Education Commons indicates the program has provided some benefits to beginning teachers, the program is in its infancy and data on the program's success is limited.

The likelihood of discrepancies between personally held beliefs about teaching and the expectations of the role of teaching is high because of the diverse nature of society and needs to be addressed through critical reflection (Kurz & Paul, 2005). The expectation teachers will cater for diversity in schools is addressed at a national level in Australia by the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (2011) developed by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) and endorsed by Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA). As a Government initiative, the professional standards form part of the National Partnership on Improving Teacher Quality program designed to support the goals of the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational*

Goals for Young Australians (2008). This discussion is expanded in Chapter 3. The *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (2011) elucidate the skills and knowledge teachers are expected to develop throughout their careers in seven areas and reflect the aspects of effective teaching discussed later in this chapter. These standards present four levels of competency expected at various junctures throughout the teachers' career; graduate, proficient, highly accomplished, and lead teacher. One purpose of the Standards is to raise the professionalism of teaching with the intent to raise teacher quality. As such, the graduate standards serve two purposes. First, they underpin the accreditation of teacher education programs in Australia. Second, they provide a guide to the requisite knowledge and skills graduate teachers need to demonstrate to successfully complete their course.

The Queensland College of Teachers (QCT) monitors the approval process for teacher employment eligibility in Queensland government and nongovernment schools. QCT approval of a candidate's qualifications is a compulsory requirement to teach in Queensland. In 2013 QCT adopted the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (2011) for registration purposes. While the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (2011) provides a guide of what is expected of teachers at various stages of their career in terms of their professional knowledge, professional practice, and professional engagement, teaching involves more than mastering skills on a checklist. Universities must endeavour to produce teachers who think critically rather than those who act as *obedient technicians* (Giroux, 1988) so education can continue to evolve with the changing demands and dynamics of contemporary society. This highlights the importance of the critical nature of this study.

In an Australian study, involving 220 students at one university Carroll, Forlin, and Jobling (2003) noted teacher preparation programs had limitations in equipping teachers for inclusion. They suggest factors such as discomfort, fear, uncertainty, sympathy, vulnerability, and coping may be important considerations in programs that may be overlooked. Carroll et al. (2003) looked specifically at preservice teachers' attitudes towards training in special education and disability. More recently, however, universities in Australia working within the mandatory AITSL requirements for teacher training accreditation, provide a broader focus of diversity and diverse student needs than students with a disability. Graduate teachers of contemporary teacher training programs are required to possess the requisite

knowledge and skills to plan for and manage learning programs for students across a full range of abilities, and it is implied teachers will promote pedagogical practices that create inclusive classrooms (AITSL, 2011). While the importance of teachers responding to diverse students' needs is being addressed through accreditation processes, Bartolomé (2008) suggests more time needs to be given during teacher training to investigate the "hegemonic ideologies that inform ... perceptions and treatment of subordinated students" (p. x). This would help to disrupt unchallenged assumptions preservice teachers hold about learners often influenced by their own schooling experiences.

Sosu, Mtika and Colucci-Gray (2010) examined the extent to which preservice teachers' attitudes towards inclusion changed over the course of their four year Bachelor of Education training in Scotland. In a context where inclusion is set within a broader human rights agenda and driven by policies similar to Australian education, the goals of teacher training with regards to developing teachers with positive attitudes towards inclusion are reportedly similar. Using a mixed method design Sosu et al. (2010) found elements of initial teacher education can impact on preservice teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. A cross-sectional comparison was conducted on first year (n=125) and fourth year (n=71) students enrolled in the program. Variations in findings may have occurred if longitudinal data had been used using the one cohort. Nevertheless, their findings indicated course work provided opportunities for preservice teachers to challenge their beliefs and understanding about inclusion. However, it did not necessarily provide them with confidence and skills to implement the practicalities of inclusion and how it works. The current study built on the Sosu et al. (2010) research by investigating the sociocultural factors, including the impact of their teacher education, on preservice/beginning teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning and its impact on classroom practice.

Positive values, attitudes, and beliefs towards inclusive education are crucial if preservice teachers are to adopt the social model of learning which seeks to overcome potential barriers to learning. It is only then teachers can consider alternate ways of teaching to cater for students experiencing learning difficulties. It appears this mindset or the skills required are not readily developed *on the job* and need particular settings, support, and experiences during teacher training to develop (Carrington & Selva, 2010).

Studies in Australia and internationally have confirmed many preservice teachers attribute the causes of learning difficulties as located within the child. In Woodcock's (2008) study of 667 preservice teachers in New South Wales, Australia, he investigated possible influential relationships between preservice teachers' attitudes and efficacy and their relationship with attributional responses and instructional strategies for students with learning disabilities. He uses the term learning disability to refer to problems with learning that stem from a neurological functioning disorder that does not improve over time. This is a small sub group within the definition used in this study.

He found the expectations preservice teachers held of students with learning disabilities did influence the choices they made in the classroom and were related to their sense of efficacy in teaching students with learning disabilities. While preservice teachers in Woodcock's study showed increased sympathy and provided more positive feedback to students with learning disabilities they also had greater expectations of school failure for this group. Moreover, the attitudes of the preservice teachers influenced their pedagogical choices, preferring to use teacher-centred, rather than learner-centred approaches with lower cognitive demands of students they perceived as having learning disabilities. Woodcock (2008) found a strong correlation between high teacher efficacy and their choice of high cognitive level instruction for students with learning disabilities. His study of preservice teachers also supports the findings of Beswick (2008), Clark (1977), and Woolfson and Brady (2009). They found teachers can sub-consciously transmit messages to students with learning disabilities/ difficulties that they are less competent that their peers without learning disabilities and as such should be expected to achieve less as a result. However, his findings also have similar limitations to the in-service teacher research as the use of vignettes may provide different responses to actual classroom experiences.

In a study of 40 third year preservice teachers studying secondary science teaching at a university in Israel, Penso (2002) investigated how, and how frequently preservice teachers identified students experiencing learning difficulties and what teachers perceived to be the cause of the difficulty. Penso's (2002) research into preservice teachers' belief into the causes of learning difficulties in students reflects the findings of research into in-service teachers' beliefs into the causes of learning

difficulties in students (Westwood, 1995; Woolfson & Brady, 2009). However, there was a stronger focus on the learning difficulties being situated within the student in lessons taught by the mentor teacher than in those lessons taught by the preservice teacher.

Analysis of participants' diaries used to document episodes of students experiencing learning difficulties witnessed during observation of the mentor teacher's lesson and their own lessons found preservice teachers could identify students experiencing learning difficulties during lessons conducted by their mentor. However, Penso (2002) found the general demands of teaching made it difficult for preservice teachers to identify students experiencing learning difficulties while they were teaching.

Also notable in Penso's research is the frequency with which participants related the learning difficulty to learner characteristics. Although this was higher during the observation diaries than in the teaching diaries it does show some links to Westwood's (1995) earlier studies described later in this chapter. Westwood (1995) found teachers' attribution of learning difficulties was predominately situated within the student. However, attribution of the learning difficult in the teaching diaries was directed more towards the quality of instruction the students received suggesting the preservice teachers may have taken some of the responsibility for the learning difficulties experienced by the students in the lessons they taught.

It is difficult to determine whether this shift in thinking is a result of more contemporary views about learning difficulties that may have been drawn from their preservice training (Sosu et al., 2010) or simply related to their lack of efficacy at this stage of their career. The current study adds to the findings of Penso (2002) and Woodcock (2005) by identifying the sociocultural factors that influenced the preservice/beginning teachers transforming perceptions of teaching and learning that influenced their classroom practices with regards to students experiencing learning difficulties.

Professional experience

Professional experience in the classroom is a compulsory component of preservice teacher training in Australia. Sociocultural factors that may influence the transformation of preservice teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning are likely

to be drawn from past experiences and the environment within which beginning teachers' work, and therefore, the context of their professional experience is significant.

The professional experience usually involves preservice teachers being assigned to a mentor teacher and involves a combination of classroom observations and opportunities for teaching in small group and whole class situations, as well as opportunities for critical reflection. The minimum requirement of professional experience in an undergraduate course in Australia is "80 days of well-structured, supervised and assessed teaching practice in schools" (AITSL, 2011, p. 14). The major assessment decisions regarding the preservice teacher's performance and the provision of feedback to the preservice teacher usually rest with the mentor teacher. Although the purpose of the preservice experience is to provide real experiences for preservice teachers it can be seen as a faux situation.

The power imbalance between mentor teacher and preservice teacher contributes to this false environment. Lesson planning, reflections, and observations are often seen as requirements of the experience to be evaluated and not as an essential part of preservice teachers' professional growth. Therefore, this threatens to devalue the process and creates additional stress on the preservice teacher. This tension is also exacerbated by the constant process of being evaluated by administration, staff, and teachers and judged by students. This situation can have a major impact on the development of preservice teachers' self-confidence. The perceived success of the preservice teacher to manage and cater for students experiencing learning difficulties, and the support they receive from those in more powerful roles, would presumably influence their feelings of efficacy. This, in turn, could impact on the development of their attitudes and beliefs regarding how they attribute the causes of learning difficulties, their role in teaching students experiencing learning difficulties, and their pedagogical content knowledge.

The growth of pedagogical content knowledge relies on an awareness of the complexities of the learning process through evaluation and reflective thinking. Preservice training must expose students to situations where they encounter, observe, and learn to effectively respond to students experiencing learning difficulties (Kurz & Paul, 2005; Penso, 2002). Particular areas of learning that are challenging as a

result of a learning difficulty must be identified so preservice teachers can utilise the information to consider accommodations and adjustments in the lesson planning stage to reduce the demands placed on the teachers' time during the teaching process (Penso, 2002). Greater success may be experienced which could lead to greater efficacy and sense of agency (Woolfson & Brady, 2009). This would influence their subject positioning as they move from preservice teacher to beginning teacher.

In a quantitative study of 573 Australian preservice teachers, O'Neill and Stephenson (2012) found the majority of final-year preservice teachers felt confident that they could significantly influence the education of their students. Their study included the same sense of efficacy scale as Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) used with in-service teachers that found efficacy beliefs of novice teachers was less than that of more experienced teachers. Items on this inventory included aspects of how efficacious beginning teachers felt about engaging and motivating students who appeared to have a low interest in their school work and adjusting lessons to the levels of the students. In addition, O'Neill and Stephenson (2012) used an efficacy sources inventory that concentrated on identifying factors that preservice teachers attributed to their confidence in behaviour management. Their findings suggest preservice teachers felt most efficacious with teacher controlled tasks such as establishing routines and less confident managing students who displayed challenging behaviour. O'Neill and Stephenson (2012) also reported the feedback provided by the mentor teacher was a significant source of information upon which preservice teachers determined their success. Given this finding, the choice of mentor teacher could be seen as crucial to the positive experience of preservice teachers in the practicum and therefore a sociocultural factor that could contribute to the transformation of preservice teachers' perceptions about teaching and learning. The current study adds to the findings of O'Neill and Stephenson by identifying the sociocultural factors that contribute to the sense of efficacy preservice teachers develop and how this influences their response to students experiencing learning difficulties.

Walkington (2005) suggests the mentor teacher and preservice teacher need to develop a level of trust so open communication is possible and ideas, expectations, and new opportunities can be examined. Discussions that involve a two way dialogue may be more empowering for preservice teachers who are guided to find their own

solutions. This form of mentoring contributes to the development of skills in critical reflection. It allows for preservice teachers to problem solve, experiment with new ideas and pedagogies, and challenge the established practices rather than merely shadowing the teacher in an act of compliance. A professional mentoring relationship allows the preservice teacher to feel valued and confident to take risks. Successfully experimenting with alternate pedagogies while under the guidance of a mentor teacher may allow the preservice teacher to develop the confidence they need as beginning teachers to continue to seek alternative approaches for students experiencing learning difficulties (Walkington, 2005).

Gardiner and Robinson (2009) advocate pairing preservice teachers during the professional experience to promote professional growth. In their research, they found paired placement provided greater opportunities for reflection through discussion and encouraged collaborative practices. They found, with peer support preservice teachers were more willing to take risks to experiment with new pedagogy which facilitated the development of student-centred practices. The American study included eight preservice teachers who had little prior experience in planning or implementing lessons. Participants were placed in pairs with a mentor teacher who the principal considered was effective with children. Data were collected for each participant using classroom observations (biweekly for 10 weeks) and an in-depth interview followed the practicum experience. In addition field notes, journal entries, surveys and samples of students' work also provided data. Although a small study, it is supported by literature that endorses collaboration as a process that helps teachers manage the complexities of the contemporary classroom and reduces feelings of isolation (Larrivee, 2008).

Collaboration is an important aspect of successful inclusive education (Booth & Ainscow, 2002; Brownell, Adams, Sindelar, Waldron, & Vanhover, 2006; Devlan, 2008). Learning to work collaboratively and experiencing the benefits as a preservice teacher may help to encourage this practice once preservice teachers move into the profession. Like critical reflection, learning to work collaboratively is also a skill that needs to be taught at preservice level. As Gardiner and Robinson (2009) found, preservice teachers who worked collaboratively broaden each others' perspectives on teaching and learning. It could be implied from this that peer support during preservice and the beginning teaching year could be an influential sociocultural

factors on beginning teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning that will influence the provision of effective teaching for students experiencing learning difficulties. A peer support network may also help to reduce the challenges many beginning teachers face in the first year. Simply by having a colleague who can empathise with them could reduce feelings of isolation. It may help overcome other challenges preservice and beginning teachers will face as they move into the role of teacher.

From preservice to beginning teaching

Despite some stories of success (Hebert & Worthy, 2001), the first year of teaching presents a number of challenges and is a difficult one for most graduates (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009; Flores & Day, 2006). Teachers receive varying amounts of induction into the profession (Ingersoll, 2012). Most beginning teachers assume the role similar to that of more experienced teachers despite their status as novice (Shoffner, 2011). In a longitudinal study of 14 new teachers conducted during their first two years of teaching. Flores and Day (2006) reported preservice teacher training appeared to have little impact on how "new teachers approached teaching and viewed themselves as teachers" (p. 224). This may suggest it is the personal belief systems developed through life experiences that shape beginning teachers' views of themselves as teachers and the benchmarks for judging their effectiveness. Many new teachers reported feeling inadequately prepared to deal with the demanding role of teaching (Flores & Day, 2006). Ongoing mentoring, therefore, would be beneficial for beginning teachers to come to terms with the complexity of the role in the early years of their careers.

In a study of 273 transitioning preservice to in-service teachers in the United States of America, Meister and Melnick (2003) identified three major concerns of beginning teachers: managing behaviour and diverse needs of students, time constraints and workload, and conflicting with parents and other adults. Similarly, Fantilli and McDougall (2009) found in a mixed method study of 86 prospective teachers in Canada that employment practices, including late notice of employment and difficult class assignments made their initial role in teaching difficult. They also found new teachers struggled with differentiating instruction, dealing with difficult students, and communicating with demanding parents. Many of these difficulties were related to lack of confidence which also exacerbated feelings of anxiety

associated with constantly feeling the need to seek support and guidance due to the absence of a mentor. Studies by Flores and Day (2006), Fantilli and McDougall (2009) and Meister and Melnick (2003) illustrate how a mentoring program for beginning teachers may be a sociocultural factor, within the school, that may enhance the professional growth of beginning teachers and influence their perceptions of teaching and learning, and therefore their classroom practices.

In an attempt to describe the professional growth of novice and beginning teachers, D. M. Kagan (1992) reviewed 40 studies published between 1987 and 1991. Her research identified the preservice and first year of teaching occurred as a single developmental stage. During this time beginning teachers acquired knowledge and developed three responsibilities related to teaching. They first develop knowledge of their pupils, which they used to modify and reconstruct their personal image of themselves as teacher. In addition, they develop basic routines that combine classroom management and instruction. D. M. Kagan (1992) argued that novice teachers were unable to attend to student thinking until they developed their identity or sense of self as a teacher and concluded the initial focus on the development of self was crucial in the initial stage of teacher development. Levin, Hammer and Coffey (2009) challenge Kagan's research and argue that novice teachers "have abilities for attending to student thinking" (p.151) but what they notice in class depends on how they frame the situation.

Levin et al. (2009) used video recordings, in-class observations, course-based assessment papers regarding teaching pedagogy, interviews, and comments from seminar discussions to gather data relating to nine paid interns. This is an American study and the participants work in a part-time paid capacity as intern while they complete their courses and may have had more opportunities for autonomous teaching and may have felt less pressure to perform and conform than the interns in the current study. The purpose of the research was to examine the robustness of stage-based theories regarding the abilities of novice teachers. Their research provided evidence to challenge accounts of developmental limitations. It supported the claim that beginning teachers can attend to students' thinking and be flexible in their lesson presentation, and therefore, responsive to students' needs. They referred to this as framing. However, they did find this skill was episodic rather than consistent.

Framing refers to the teachers' perception of what is going on at a particular time in a particular situation and is influential in how novice teachers attend to student thinking (Levin et al., 2009). By focussing on student learning preservice teachers construct their own identities as teachers. They contemplate their own role in the teaching and learning process as they consider how learning occurs. Teachers who use their knowledge and understanding of student diversity to frame the behaviours of students experiencing learning difficulties are more likely to consider a broader range of options that may result in greater success with those students. Enhancing student engagement and learning would foster a greater sense of efficacy, (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) which may contribute to beginning teachers adopting an agentive position in their role as teacher. Kurz and Paul (2005) suggest while "novice teachers struggle to identify all students' abilities" (p.15) they agree with Levin et al. (2009) that it is quite possible to develop in preservice teachers given the right context and training. This research investigated the sociocultural factors that create this context where opportunities for training are provided so perceptions of learning and teaching may be broadened and framing may be enhanced.

Behaviour management has been shown to be a major concern for beginning teachers (Meister & Melnick, 2003; Melnick & Meister, 2008) and disruptive behaviour is often exhibited by students who experience learning difficulties, generally as a self-protective mechanism or a sign of disengagement (Munns, 2007). Preservice and novice teachers who frame this negative behaviour as the result of the student's frustration, anger, and embarrassment experienced due to lack of success may be able to see the behaviour as a call for help and may remain open to new ways of responding (Davies, 2008). These teachers are more likely to modify their teaching to address the real cause of the behaviour which is difficulties with learning. An understanding of the impact of pedagogy on student outcomes and engagement, and how well supported the teacher feels, influences the way preservice and novice teachers position students and themselves as they respond to various classroom situations. This influences the effectiveness of their teaching.

Characteristics of Effective Teaching

Effective teaching, responsive to student's needs, has a strong link with student improvement (Alton-Lee, 2003; Hattie, 2003; Schussler, 2009). In the context of the

needs of students in New Zealand, a context fairly similar to Australia, Alton-Lee conducted a synthesis of international literature that demonstrated links between pedagogical practice and student achievement outcomes (including social outcomes). She drew from this synthesis a set of interrelated findings about what works as quality teaching for diverse students. Alton-Lee identified ten research supported characteristics of quality teaching and claimed up to 59% of variance in student performance is attributable to differences between teachers and classes (p. v). She identified the quality of the teaching and the relationships between teachers and students as significant factors in student achievement.

The following presents a summary of the ten characteristics identified in Alton-Lee's (2003) synthesis of literature on quality teaching. Underlying each of these principles is the teacher's ability and propensity to engage in critical reflection. Only through critical reflection can teachers be flexible enough to appreciate and respond to the diverse needs of students within the complexities and demands created within the school setting.

1. Quality teaching is focused on raising student achievement, including social outcomes, and facilitates high standards of student outcomes for diverse learners.

2. Pedagogical practices enable learning to occur in caring, inclusive, and cohesive learning communities.

3. The cultural context of the school and other cultural contexts relevant to the students are considered and linked to facilitate learning.

4. Quality teaching is responsive to all students and their individual needs. This considers the way students learn and their interest areas. Selected teaching strategies respond to this.

5. Sufficient time and effective learning opportunities are provided. Time for revision and application is made available.

6. Teaching links to and builds on prior knowledge. A variety of strategies and student groupings facilitate learning.

7. A whole school focus underpins planning and teaching so curriculum goals, resources, and teaching practices are aligned.

8. Pedagogy scaffolds and provides appropriate feedback on students' task engagement.

9. Pedagogy promotes learning styles, student self-regulation, metacognitive strategies, and thoughtful student discourse.

10. On-going assessment drives teaching. Teachers and students work together to establish learning goals.

While Alton-Lee identified the characteristics of effective teaching using a synthesis of existing research, Schussler identifies similar characteristics using the voices of teenage students. The students in Schussler's research attended an alternate educational setting in the United States of America that catered for students who had been identified previously as being at educational risk due to disengagement from school behaviourally, emotionally, and cognitively. These students are now successfully reengaged in their own learning.

According to Schussler (2009), teaching is most likely to be effective when the flexible pedagogical choices of the teacher provides opportunities for students to succeed, access information and resources, and promotes engagement of all students in ways that facilitate learning related to curriculum goals. She contends teachers can create environments conducive to student engagement when these elements are present. The elements identified by the students are well supported in the evidence drawn from the findings of Alton-Lee's (2003) synthesis.

Teacher efficacy, supportive classroom climate, high expectations of all students, and deep pedagogical knowledge are all factors associated with effective teaching (Alton-Lee, 2003; Hattie, 2003; Schussler, 2009). In addition, teachers' capacity for critical reflection has been identified as an important element of effective teaching (Toomey, 2007; Silverman, 2007). It may help to overcome the risk, noted by Devos (2012), of "collapsing 'diversity' and 'good teaching' and normalising equity work within mainstream [teaching]" (p. 963). She claims blending the discourse of the two ideas threatens the key understanding that certain forms of teaching more successfully support and include students operating at the

periphery of the class. Devos (2012) and calls for ongoing critique of "what constitutes good teaching" (p. 963). This requires teachers to engage in critical reflection. It is explored in the next section with other components of effective teaching.

Critical reflection

The importance of developing the skill of critical reflection in preservice teacher has been argued. The focus now turns to the importance of teachers continuing this practice throughout their career. Toomey (2007) and Larrivee (2000) suggest quality teaching depends on the teacher's capacity for critical self-reflection. This requires thoroughly analysing and monitoring personal beliefs (moral domain) and teaching practices (ethical domain). However, Brookfield (2000; 2005) and Thompson and Pascal (2012) contend reflection is not critical without an analysis of the power relations and influences that exist within the learning and teaching environment.

Cranton (2006) reports critical reflection is common in teachers considered authentic in their practice. These teachers questioned themselves, others, and social norms by critically reflecting on their behaviour and how it impacts on their relationships with their students, their interpretation of student characteristics, and the context of teaching. Cranton (2006) claims if teachers' values are at odds with their actions as a teacher they can no longer remain authentic in their practice and they are merely performing a role. This threatens the strength of the relationship between teacher and student and the effectiveness of their communication, and therefore has the potential to threaten opportunities for learning. When teachers' personal judgements about their ability to advance student learning is compromised their sense of efficacy is also threatened (Knoblauch & Woolfolk Hoy, 2008).

Teachers with high self-efficacy

Teachers' sense of efficacy is drawn from their belief systems. It is a personal "judgement of [one's] capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning, even among those students who may be difficult or unmotivated" (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001, p. 783). Hoy & Woolfolk (1993) identified two dimension of teacher efficacy: general teaching efficacy and personal teaching efficacy. General teaching efficacy is concerned with the impact

teaching can have on specific outcomes, while personal teaching efficacy is more closely related to how an individual judges their own ability to bring about improvements in student outcomes. General teaching efficacy is therefore closely linked to teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education. Hoy and Woolfolk's (1993) quantitative study of 179 elementary teachers in the United States of America, found the personal attributes of the teacher as well as various school factors influenced their personal teaching efficacy. School factors included the teacher feeling supported by school leadership and staff attitudes that promote high academic expectations. Because teachers with a high sense of efficacy believe they have influence over the improvement of students' progress they challenge the notion of fixed-ability and labelling and instead focus on the potential for change in current levels of achievement (Hart et al., 2007; Hattie, 2003; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001; Woolfson & Brady, 2009).

Woolfolk Hoy and Burke Spero (2005) claim some of the most powerful influences on the development of teachers' sense of efficacy occur early in their careers, even as early as their teacher training. Little is known, however, about the context variables that affect efficacy and therefore this research addresses the gap in the literature. Efficacy impacts on teachers' perceptions that influence teaching practices. Therefore, perceptions of teaching and learning related to students experiencing learning difficulties are influenced by teachers' sense of efficacy. The various sociocultural factors that influence teachers' efficacy are a significant consideration in this study.

The relationship between experience and efficacy is not clear. While some studies show the number of years a teacher has been teaching increases efficacy (Tuchman & Isaacs, 2011), other studies suggest experienced teachers are more likely to view the causes of learning difficulties through the deficit lens which could lower their sense of efficacy in this context (Brady & Woolfson, 2008). Teachers' sense of efficacy is thought to be a stronger predictor of teacher attributions of learning difficulties than the teaching role they perform, whether in special education, mainstream classroom, or learning support (Brady & Woolfson, 2008; Hattie, 2008). This could be linked to a perceived ongoing lack of success they experience teaching students who experience learning difficulties. Tuchman and Isaacs (2011) drawing on the work of Bandura (see Bandura, 1997) note four major

sources of influence on efficacy beliefs. They include mastery experiences where one personally experiences success, vicarious experiences where success is observed by others, verbal persuasion through social interactions with others, and internal interpretation which includes attention to physiological and emotional states. Single factors or a combination of these factors may be influential on efficacy beliefs (Tuchman & Isaacs, 2011).

Beginning teachers have been found to experience lower efficacy beliefs during their first year of teaching compared to those held upon completion of their practical experiences whilst at university (Woolfolk Hoy & Burke Spero, 2005). This could be attributed to the increased challenges, demands, and responsibilities of teaching without the protection and ongoing feedback from a mentor teacher or the discrepancy between their perceived ideals of becoming a teacher and the actual experience. This has implications for the beliefs beginning teachers may hold for some learners given Brady and Woolfson's (2008) link between teachers' high efficacy and their attribution of learning difficulties as being situated outside of the child and therefore possible to influence through effective teaching.

If vicarious experiences and verbal persuasion are influential on teachers' efficacy beliefs then it could be inferred that for preservice teachers and beginning teachers to develop a strong sense of efficacy in teaching students experiencing learning difficulties they need to be exposed to quality models of inclusive education. In these settings both the students experiencing learning difficulties and the teacher are likely to be experiencing success enabled by feedback and support. Positive feedback about performance from peers, administrators, and parents is likely to enhance teacher's sense of efficacy, particularly in the early stages of their career when they rely on additional support from colleagues (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Availability to resources that support student learning, and a work environment where deficit discourse is challenged are other contextual factors that may increase teachers' sense of efficacy (Woolfolk Hoy & Burke Spero, 2005).

Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) contend teachers with a strong sense of efficacy take a more flexible approach to teaching and experiment with new methods to suit the needs of their learners. Persistence, resilience, and patience for students who struggle to understand particular concepts, and enthusiasm and

commitment to teaching in general, are attributed to a teacher's sense of efficacy (Brady & Woolfson, 2008; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Walkington (2005) suggests "confidence is enhanced by having a feeling of freedom to take risks based on their beliefs about their teaching role" (p. 62) and leads to more proactive rather than reactive decision-making. Clearly, students who experience learning difficulties would benefit from being taught by teachers with a strong sense of efficacy who show confidence in decision-making when faced with challenges in the classroom. The findings described here were determined predominantly from quantitative research. The current study uses a qualitative approach in order to provide deeper insight into how certain sociocultural factors influence preservice/beginning teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning and the provision of effective teaching for students experiencing learning difficulties. The discussion now turns to factors within the classroom, related to the teacher, that have the potential to enhance students' outcomes.

Supportive classroom climate

Building a class community that is supportive takes time and skill on the part of the teacher (Loreman et al., 2011). However, the time invested in establishing a harmonious classroom by establishing routines, rules, and expectations is an investment in learning as more time can then be spent on instruction rather than management issues. This has been shown to improve student outcomes (Fullen, Hill & Crévola, 2006). Teachers who build strong classroom communities encourage collaborative learning experiences; provide open lines of communication with the students and their parents and other family members; engage with students and the community with respect and honesty; affirm the positive actions of others; establish, in conjunction with the students, a clear code of expectations where consequences avoid punitive responses and favour learning opportunities (Hattie, 2003; Loreman et al., 2011). A cohesive class unit can function more successfully than a classroom built on competition (Hart et al., 2007).

Hart et al. (2007) contend teachers' thinking and practices, students' self-perceptions and aspirations, and the curriculum are influenced negatively and perpetuated by fixed-ability thinking which aligns with the deficit model of disability. They proposed an alternative to fixed-ability thinking and related practices by deconstructing the practices of nine teachers, who they considered were already

implementing successful classroom practices that challenged fixed-ability thinking. Over the course of a year through collaboration, observations, and interviews with teachers and pupils, key elements of inclusive teaching that focused on learner capacity were identified.

They found effective teachers, who challenged fixed-ability thinking, based their teaching on three principles; everybody, co-agency, and trust. Everybody matters in the group. Teaching is based on the idea that as a collective the group can function more successfully than a classroom where individuals compete as single units. This principle can be challenging for teachers faced with high stakes testing (Barton, 2003), grading, and the competitive focus within and amongst schools.

Co-agency calls for education to be a joint endeavour between teachers and students where responsibility is shared. Educators working as co-agents with their students allow the students to have input in planning the learning process and managing the learning environment to fully engage the students. Teachers know their students well. They design learning experiences that offer alternative tasks and choices that cater for a variety of learning styles and differences in a way that is accessible to all students (Meo, 2008).

Trust is the third principle (Hart et al. 2007). Teachers trust students will be involved fully in their own learning process. Open lines of communication, flexibility, respect for others' opinions and viewpoints are dimensions of trust that can create conditions where individuals can flourish beyond the limits imposed by fixed-ability thinking and pedagogy (Hattie, 2003).

Hart et al. (2007) contend the pedagogical principles when simultaneously employed will guide decision-making about action in the classroom and will lead to an enhanced capacity in student learning. Their research identified key elements of effective teaching based on the current practices of established teachers. The current research adds to these findings by identifying the sociocultural factors that contributed to the transformation of beginning teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning and how they influenced the provision of effective teaching for students experiencing learning difficulties. This approach to teaching supports the social model of disability and is at the heart of inclusive education. The principles that

support the approach suggested by Hart et al (2007) rely heavily on strong teacher–student relationships.

As part of the *Fair Go Project* working with primary schools in disadvantaged communities in South-western Sydney, Australia, Munns (2007) investigated how classroom pedagogies, processes and relationships can limit or lift student engagement and motivation. The ethnographic research suggests a disruption to traditional processes of power with teacher control being transformed to teacher–student negotiations and shared responsibility. Key elements of this practice include 1) opportunities for student self-assessment where students are encouraged to take responsibility for judgements about learning, 2) a community of reflection where students' voices are heard and are part of the decision-making in the classroom, 3) teacher inclusive conversations where power is shared with the students rather than held over them, and 4) teacher feedback is tied to recognising the learning process and effort. These elements are closely linked with elements of quality teaching identified by Alton-Lee (2003) in her synthesis of research into quality teaching for diverse students. The current research will investigate the sociocultural factors that contribute to beginning teachers being able to build harmonious classrooms that enable effective teaching and learning to occur for all students and in particular students experiencing learning difficulties.

In a three year longitudinal study of students deemed to be at academic risk in the United States of America, Hughes (2011) found positive teacher–student relationships impacted on educational outcomes of the 714 ethnically diverse students. The students were considered at education risk based on their performance on the grade one entrance exam. These students performed below the expected level of achievement for that grade in aspects of literacy and numeracy. Their low performance may have been linked to limited skills in using the English language or perhaps due to social disadvantage as 66% (Hughes, 2011, p. 44) of the students came from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

Hughes (2011) reported significant improvements in how students perceived their academic competence, their levels of classroom engagement, and student achievement. Improvements were found to be higher in students who developed positive teacher–student relationships. However, the impact on achievement was

reportedly slightly less. This supports Alton-Lee (2003) and Fullen et al. (2006) who suggest quality relationships are but one of the multiple factors that contribute to improvement in student outcomes. The current study will provide deeper understanding of the sociocultural factors that may influence the development of quality teacher–student relationships, an essential element of quality teaching for students experiencing learning difficulties.

Relationships with students

The quality of teacher–student relationships is an important predictor of academic and social adjustment (Alton-Lee, 2003; Ertesvåg, 2011). Building quality relationships with students requires a positive classroom climate developed through authenticity. Cranton (2006) identified five components of authenticity: self-awareness, awareness of others, relationships, context, and critical reflection. Being aware of the belief system one brings to teaching is crucial to understand how we come to act or respond in a particular way, and make certain decisions, and is important for the success of inclusive education (Brady & Woolfson, 2008). Self-awareness allows teachers to ensure their decision-making and teaching practices are based on the needs of the students and not based on unchallenged, yet influential assumptions. Authentic teachers know their students. They are aware of the interests, learning styles, and needs their students bring to the classroom and make teaching decisions accordingly. They also use this information to build relationships.

Positive relationships between teachers and students contribute to students' academic success (Alton- Lee, 2003; Hughes, 2011; Snowman et al., 2009). Listening, caring, empathising, and displaying a positive regard for others are identified as skills teachers need to develop positive relationships with students (Hattie, 2008). Cranton (2006) reports on personal dilemmas teachers face when building relationships with students. She identified grading and reporting as examples of when the natural imbalance of power can challenge the boundaries of classroom relationships. Critical reflection is required to challenge and address this power imbalance. Ertesvåg (2011) suggests by developing authoritative relationships in the classroom, teachers are able to establish higher standards and communicate higher expectations of students. Authoritative relationships are characterised by "warmth, acceptance and openness" (Ertesvåg, 2011, p. 52) and promote student autonomy through shared decision-making (Snowman et al., 2009).

Classroom management

Classroom management practices are significant in the development of learning environments where intellectual engagement and motivation have the potential to thrive given that time on task is one variable that impacts on students' outcomes (Fullen et al., 2006). Gore and Parkes (2008) contend when student behaviour and engagement is addressed through consideration of suitably engaging and stimulating teaching practices a more just, political order results. Nichols (2006) claims teachers who develop supportive learning environments try to limit personal competition amongst students, seek alternatives to external reward systems, and provide a sufficiently challenging curriculum to keep students motivated and engaged.

Hattie (2008) links higher academic success and fewer behaviour problems to high student engagement and respect between the teacher and students, and also amongst students themselves. In addition, Schussler (2009) contends when teachers provide a combination of care, flexible learning approaches, and high expectations for students, with opportunities to experience success, it raises students' level of engagement and results in increased opportunities for student to reach their full potential.

When students disengage from the learning process the teacher needs to find alternate ways of capturing and reengaging the student. Hart et al. (2007) claim "trust sustains teachers' beliefs that young people will choose to engage if the conditions are right" (p. 507). This may seem a little idealistic and appear to put the responsibility squarely with the teacher, but it should be remembered that the joint construction of the learning environment also calls for shared responsibility and commitment to the process from students and parents, highlighting the importance of developing authentic relationships within a supportive classroom community.

Developing the skills and knowledge to establish a supportive classroom are important for beginning teachers. However, managing behaviour and diverse needs of students, including aspects such as motivation and engagement, has been shown to be the biggest concern for beginning teachers (Meister & Melnick, 2003; Melnick & Meister, 2008). Nevertheless, Gore and Parkes (2008) warn against treating behaviour management as a separate entity to effective teaching and claim

management of student behaviour is a product of good pedagogy that correlates with student achievement. When viewed through this lens the ideological construct of classroom control, where students are seen as passive learners who wait patiently while the teacher acts as the puppeteer dominating and directing all classroom activities, is minimised. Teachers who are successful classroom managers are able to proactively address student engagement as part of their teaching practices, therefore, reducing the need to attend to student misbehaviour and increasing time on instructional tasks (Gore & Parkes, 2008).

High expectations of all students

High expectations are clearly linked with quality teaching and improved outcomes for learners (Alton-Lee, 2003; Fullen et al., 2006; Hattie, 2003). Alton-Lee's (2003) synthesis of international research relating to aspects of quality teaching recognises the important link between teacher expectations and student achievement. However, she does note that "while teacher expectations for high standards are necessary, expectations alone are insufficient to facilitate achievement" (Alton-Lee, 2003, p. 19) and must be accompanied by suitably matched teaching practices. Teachers need to have a clear understanding of students' strengths and weaknesses gained through formative assessment, a sound knowledge of a variety of suitable instructional approaches, and well established classroom routines and structures where learning time is maximised (Fullen et al., 2006). In addition, effective teachers who expect students experiencing learning difficulties to improve, communicate high expectation for students and develop in their students self-belief in their abilities and make explicit the learning goals they are required to meet (Ertesvåg, 2011; Hart et al., 2007; Masters, 2009).

Popp, Grant, and Stronge's (2011) research considered the features of effective teaching for students considered at educational risk. They identified what distinguished effective teachers of students who were at risk due to factors that were not within their control. For example, students may have come from families that were highly mobile, from low socioeconomic, or other disadvantaged backgrounds. There is a high correlation in Australia between these factors and students who experience learning difficulties (Masters, 2009; Garrett, 2012; Boston et al., 2011). Popp et al. (2011) deconstructed the approach of six teachers in America who had previously been recognised through national/ state awards as being particularly

effective with at risk students. Data were collected in classrooms using observational scales and interviews with teachers.

Effective teachers were found to cater for the affective and academic needs of the students and therefore placed a high value on classroom relationships. Generally these teachers viewed students as being able to improve their performance given time and effective instruction. As a consequence, they frequently engaged all students in higher order thinking activities that reflected the high expectations they held for students' level of engagement and achievement. These teachers viewed assessment as an integral part of their teaching and planning and they drew from a variety of teaching techniques. They held a strong sense of efficacy and tended to look beyond the student when they didn't succeed. Although a small study, the findings of Popp et al. (2011) generally support the literature regarding the features that constitute effective teaching. The current study will examine the sociocultural factors that enable beginning teachers to employ effective teaching strategies and how these factors influence their practice in relation to students experiencing learning difficulties.

Deep pedagogical knowledge and teachers' capacity

While effective teaching is seen to be quality teaching for all learners by some researchers (Ainscow & Miles, 2008), others warn against this generalisation which may limit deeper consideration of how certain forms of teaching more successfully support and include students who face challenges in the classroom (Devos, 2012). There is limited evidence to suggest specific special needs pedagogy is necessary or effective (Lewis & Norwich, 2005). However, this is contested by some educators. Some claim specific special needs pedagogy designed to *fix* broken students supports the notion of fixed-ability (Hart et al., 2007; Kurz & Paul, 2005) and acts as a barrier that hinders the enactment of inclusive philosophy (Florian, 2007). Others suggest specific needs pedagogies can enhance learning if selected to meet needs of the learner (Bina, 1995; Ellis, 2005; Rimland, 1995).

Although it is expected that teachers will refine and develop their skills in the initial years of teaching, primary teachers need sufficient training to begin their career with at least threshold knowledge about teaching key areas such as literacy and numeracy (Masters, 2009). This is not only important for the success of the

students they teach but for their own success and the development of their own sense of efficacy. Deep pedagogical content knowledge includes "knowing how students' understandings in a subject typically develop, how to engage students and sequence subject matter, the kinds of misconceptions that students commonly develop, and effective ways to teach a subject" (Masters, 2009, p. IX). This is also supported by Hattie (2003) who reported after a meta–analyses of 500 000 studies that teachers do make a difference not just by their content knowledge but because of their pedagogical content knowledge; the way knowledge is used in teaching situations.

Many teachers report they do not feel adequately prepared or skilled to manage students with special learning needs (Carroll et al., 2003). Furthermore, Flores & Day's (2006) study supported earlier findings that preservice teachers do not feel their university training prepared them for the "complex and demanding nature" (p. 224) of teaching due to the mismatch between theory and practice. Recently programs have been introduced into some Australian schools that focus on building teachers' capacity to identify and assist students experiencing learning difficulties. However, it has not been uncommon in the past for budget allocations earmarked for professional development to be traded for additional support for the classroom teacher through employment of additional teacher aides. Nevertheless, specialist teachers are now being trained to work alongside teachers to assist in building capacity of the entire school to improve literacy and numeracy (Hall & Simeral, 2008; Masters, 2009). Mentoring, in the form of literacy and numeracy coaches, is part of the National Partnership Agreement in Australia where teachers work with coaches to improve their own skills in teaching literacy and numeracy to raise student performance in these areas. Building the capacity of staff raises teachers' self-efficacy and is linked with increased student outcomes (Hall & Simeral, 2008). If teachers' efficacy is increased they are more likely to accept responsibility for the education of all students in their class rather than pass them off to another educator which has been the trend in the past.

There is evidence to suggest that the success of teaching students who are experiencing leaning difficulties relies heavily on quality teaching practices (Alton-Lee, 2003) and teachers' positive dispositions toward inclusion (Jordan & Stanovich, 2001). These two factors stem from the teachers. However, they will be influenced by sociocultural factors found within the school setting.

Inclusive Environments

Better student learning outcomes are closely aligned with school improvement research (Lewis & Batts, 2005; Lingard & Mills, 2007; Masters, 2009) which in turn is closely aligned to research espousing qualities of inclusive education practices (Ainscow & Miles, 2008). While there is no single model of what constitutes a *best practice school* shared characteristics have been identified (Masters, 2009). These include strong leadership; collaboration amongst staff; a safe, caring learning community typified by a strong, shared values base; and authentic relationships (Ainscow & Miles, 2008). The following discussion examines these characteristics.

Strong leadership

Strong school leadership is evident in high-performing schools and is a key factor associated with improving outcomes for students (Ainscow & Sandhill, 2010; Masters, 2009; Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd 2009). The influence of the principal allows change to occur and be maintained over periods of time by setting high expectations for student behaviour and achievement and shared leadership amongst members of the school community (Ainscow & Miles, 2008). Shared values are identified and realised through a team/ community approach within a supportive environment.

Strong leadership is essential for sustainable reform (Causton-Theoharis & Theoharis, 2008). Leaders must create settings where teachers feel supported to explore more effective ways of reaching and engaging all learners. This includes creating time, space, and a climate of trust where teachers can engage in professional dialogue (Bourke, 2010). This allows opportunities to develop a shared language to communicate, problem solve, celebrate success, and explore new possibilities (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Thoonen, Sleegers, Oort, Peetsma, & Geijsel, 2011). The space would provide opportunities for teachers to challenge their taken for granted assumptions about learners and explore alternate pedagogical practices and curriculum that are inclusive (Ainscow & Miles, 2008). However, it may also be filled with conflicting agendas contributed to by deeply formed beliefs of the establishment and those who yield certain powers or strong influences. For example, a long standing senior teacher may have a strong influence on school decision-making. She may have more traditional ideas about teaching and learning and resist

newer approaches. Managing these conflicts is the challenge for school leaders who seek to support a successful learning culture replete with sustainable approaches to inclusion and quality teaching (Robinson et al., 2009).

Professional learning communities

Strong leaders contribute to the development of professional learning communities by providing opportunities for teachers to develop a shared vision and work collaboratively to improve teaching practices (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Booth & Ainscow, 2002; Cranton, 2006; Thoonen et al., 2011). All members of a community present with individual values, beliefs, and assumptions that are a result of personal experiences. Authentic relationships develop through the evolution of respect, trust, and open communication, where new understandings, shared values, teamwork, and acceptance of difference are acknowledged. Authentic relationships allow individuals to question, discuss, and share information openly with the imbalance of power acknowledged but not abused (Cranton, 2006; Devlan, 2008). A community built on authentic relationships creates an environment for increased communication and reflection (Thoonen et al., 2011) where positive attitudes towards teaching are more likely to develop (Flores & Day, 2006). Inclusive education has the potential to exist within such a community (Carrington & Robinson, 2006).

Collaboration amongst teaching staff is seen as an important aspect of inclusive education and teacher development because it provides opportunities for skills, knowledge, and expertise to be utilized to create optimum learning opportunities for all students (Booth & Ainscow, 2002; Brownell et al., 2006; Devlan, 2008). Collaborative relationships between the regular teacher and special educator is a critical component of inclusive education but can be threatened by unresolved philosophical, instructional, and territorial issues (Salend, Gordon, & Lopez-Vona, 2002). In addition, some teachers may have to develop certain skills to allow successful collaborative activity to occur, therefore, time and space definitely need to be provided by a supportive administration team (Paulsen, 2008).

Evidence within the literature also indicates teachers' attitudes and beliefs about inclusion influence their confidence to respond to diverse students' needs. Avramidis et al. (2000) conducted a study of 81 primary and secondary teachers in

schools considered to be actively implementing inclusive programs from one education authority in England. Using survey questions designed to address the multidimensional nature of attitudes they sought to investigate mainstream teachers' attitudes to inclusion of children with special educational needs, and how these attitudes may be influenced by independent variables, such as gender, grade level taught and class size. The study also questioned the extent previous experience working in inclusive settings and special educational needs training contributed to more positive or negative attitudes towards inclusion. However, these studies did not connect beliefs about inclusion or perceptions of learner difference to classroom practice. The current qualitative study will add richness to the existing literature by exploring sociocultural factors that contribute to the transformation of preservice/beginning teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning that influence the provision of effective teaching for students who are experiencing learning difficulties.

Learning Difficulties

Confusion surrounding learning difficulties

In this research, students are considered to be experiencing learning difficulties when their academic progress is deemed to be below their expected potential (benchmark) or the expectations of same age peers, particularly in the areas of literacy and numeracy. Also included are students whose academic success is at risk due to their limited social skills and/or behaviour. Students with learning difficulties may have problems understanding and following instructions, or lack effective learning strategies, which results in persistently low achievement.

The term learning difficulty is frequently confused with the term learning disability. In Australia, students with a learning disability refers to a small group of students who are described as having a neurological basis to their learning difficulties, and have persistent long-term needs in one or more of the areas of literacy, numeracy, and learning how to learn (QSA, 2007). They demonstrate idiosyncratic learning styles which are said to be determined by the nature of their specific learning problems and thus inhibit their learning at school (QSA, 2007). This includes students who have difficulties in literacy due to a diagnosis of disorders such as dyslexia or dysgraphia, or difficulties in mathematics due to dyscalculia, or a

reason that cannot be identified (Elkins, 2002). However, in Australia it generally does not include students with an intellectual impairment.

In the United States of America, the term learning disabilities was originally used to refer to students who had difficulty acquiring literacy and numeracy skills and who might also have problems with perception, memory, co-ordination, and information processing. However, the definition became blurred and eventually students with general learning difficulties and specific learning disabilities were identified under the same label probably as a result of funding allocation requirements for additional support (Elkins, 2002; Westwood, 2008). As a consequence, the United States of America has abandoned its strict application of the definition and some students with mild intellectual disabilities are now included (Westwood, 2008).

The use of the terms learning difficulty and learning disability in the United Kingdom adds even greater confusion to the terminology. Their use of the terms refers to students with an intellectual disability. Currently in the United Kingdom the term specific learning disability is used to refer to a wide range of problems related to literacy and numeracy which impedes their performance in these areas compared to their performance in other areas of schooling. Other related issues include limited short-term memory, difficulties being organised and poor co-ordination (Westwood, 2008).

Prevalence of learning difficulties in Australia

Although an absence of a clear definition of learning difficulties and learning disabilities both internationally and within Australia makes it difficult to accurately assess its prevalence, the Queensland Studies Authority (QSA) estimates approximately 20% of Queensland school population makes up this category of which 90% of cases are boys (QSA, 2007, p. 2). Although not quite as high, and presented in more specific areas, the 2012 NAPLAN results indicated from around 7% to 15% of Australian students, across primary and secondary school grades, were not reaching even the basic grade level expectations across various aspects of literacy and numeracy. The 2011 data presented as part of the Gonski Review into educational funding claimed one in seven Australian students were at risk of not achieving at the level required to participate in the workforce in the 21st century

(Boston et al., 2011). A much older Australian national survey of special education (Andrews, Elkins, Berry, & Burge, 1979) suggested levels of 11% with numbers escalating to 30% in some classes. This variance in prevalence rates could be attributed to the complexities of modern society or because of varying definitions of learning difficulties. Regardless of the exact percentage a considerable number of students experiencing learning difficulties currently present in Australian classrooms (NAPLAN, 2012) and more prevalent within some communities.

According to Masters (2008), in Queensland, by year 5 the gap between the highest and lowest achieving 20% is equivalent to 2.5 years of school (p. vi). The disparity between the top and bottom 5% is about five years of school (p. vi). The gap continues to widen during the secondary years because students who experience learning difficulties in primary school enter high school with a double disadvantage; they are unable to cope with the secondary curricula due to their learning difficulties and, after a number of years of being unsuccessful, are often unmotivated (Masters, 2009). There is a strong correlation between students experiencing learning difficulties and student characteristics such as Indigenous status, low socioeconomic background and remote geographical location (Masters, 2009). However, students who experience learning difficulties are not limited to these groups, and students within these groups do not all have learning difficulties.

Systemic responses to learning difficulties

A response to learning difficulties from a more social model is becoming more evident in Australian education at a policy level and reflects the wider aspects of difference that need to be considered for students who are experiencing learning difficulties. The more recent approach focuses on what students can do and what needs to be done, such as environmental and pedagogical changes to enable the student to achieve the best chance of success. Growing demand on financial resources has been one factor that has influenced this change (Bourke, 2010).

Since 2009, some Queensland schools have received additional funding from the federal government under the National Partnerships agreement with the goal to improve educational outcomes for students by improving teaching quality, develop literacy and numeracy skills in students, and provide specific support for students from disadvantaged areas (DETE, 2012a). The National Partnership has a strong

focus on the contextual factors that impact on learning and provides a three prong approach to improving learning outcomes; strong leadership, high expectations and differentiated intervention. Some schools have funded, designated literacy and numeracy coaches whose role is to enhance teachers' capacity through the provision of various professional development programs, as well as in class support and training.

Several State reviews preceded the national partnership initiative and each of these has contributed to changes in how funding allocations are distributed. The Tasmanian government commissioned a report to consider the services provided across the department for students with "Special and/or Additional Educational Needs" (Atelier Learning Solutions Report, 2004). It found current resource allocation, based on an individual needs model, failed to resource the inclusive learning approaches and programs. It identified a need to support teachers through capacity building. The individual funding model helped to perpetuate the thinking that the responsibility for teaching students experiencing learning difficulties can be passed on to another person, namely the learning support teacher. A funding model based on an identified needs basis rather than a categorisation based model led to more equitable funding and allowed the use of resources to be allocated into capacity building of teachers (Atelier Learning Solutions Report, 2004).

Progress towards a more social model of disability in Queensland is gradually making inroads, and attitudes towards students experiencing learning difficulties are changing at least at a policy level. The process of appraisement, a lengthy process previously carried out by the support teacher to identify learning deficits, and bitsy remediation programs, conducted by explicitly trained teachers, such as Reading Recovery, are out of mode. Based on the deficit model of disability these programs and diagnostic tools are being recognised as ineffective for today's classroom and wider community and are cost prohibitive. Rather, there is a move to support classroom teachers to develop the knowledge and skills used in these programs. The principle behind this is to build the capacity of teachers so they may feel more confident and capable towards managing the diverse needs of learners in modern classrooms (Masters, 2009).

Following the review of literacy, numeracy, and science standards in Queensland primary schools (Masters, 2009) strategies were introduced into all Queensland State schools to lift accountability standards. This includes focusing leadership towards whole school systems and processes to help raise educational outcomes for all students (DETE, 2012b). Literacy and numeracy coaches support this process in some schools.

Placement of literacy and numeracy coaches is determined by school data, either academic or socioeconomic, which also dictates funding at both State and Federal levels. There is also staff allocated to provide support to address the needs of students who experience learning difficulties, and their teachers, but specific additional funding is not available for these students as individual cases. According to the Department of Education, Training, and Employment (2012c) in Queensland Government schools "the Support Teacher: Learning Difficulties can assist the class teacher to build support into the class environment and into their units of work." The number of hours a support teacher is available in each school varies and is calculated as part of the school's overall staffing allocation. These staffing and funding decisions will influence the level of support available to teachers at each particular school site.

Teachers' ability to recognise the factors contributing to learning difficulties and responding appropriately is essential given the fact that students experiencing learning difficulties are so prevalent. Responding to students' needs both positively and flexibly is paramount to students' future academic success. Therefore, the purpose of this research which was to investigate the sociocultural factors that contribute to the transformation of preservice and beginning teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning, and how these factors influence the provision of effective teaching for students experiencing learning difficulties is clearly significant.

Theories, features, and consequences of learning difficulties

Twomey (2006) reports three models of learning theories that relate to learning difficulties. These include the deficit model; the ineffective learner model; and the instructional setting account. The deficit model posits students fail to learn due to a deficit within the student or his/her culture. Elkins (2007) and Westwood (2004)

suggest teachers have a tendency to subscribe to the deficit model blaming students for low levels of motivation and ability.

In an Australian study of 311 primary and secondary teachers from government, catholic, and independent schools, Westwood (1995) found approximately 62% of teachers identified causality of learning problems to factors within the student. Although this study included some first year teachers, the age range and experience of the participants was not recorded. Therefore, it is difficult to make links between teachers' beliefs about the causality of learning difficulties and the number of years teaching experience. However, Brady and Woolfson (2008) suggest it is the teacher's sense of efficacy rather than years of experience or the role they fulfil that is more likely to influence how they determine the cause of the learning difficulty.

Students experiencing learning difficulties are often considered to be inactive learners. However, lack of motivation for students can be a result of continued lack of school success or a lack of emotional attachment and commitment to education (Munns, 2007). These factors could be attributed to a self-protective mechanism resulting from experiencing years of difficulty and the beliefs students hold about themselves based on feedback supplied, either consciously or unconsciously, by significant others such as teachers (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Clark 1977).

The ineffective learner model contends that rather than an inability to learn, these students fail to plan or select appropriate strategies for learning. Students experiencing learning difficulties often fail to monitor their own performance, so self-correction is rare (Knight & Galletly, 2005). While still placing this problem within the student it does suggest, with focused intervention on the use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies, learning may improve (Ellis, 2005).

Off task behaviour and being easily distracted are also common characteristics of students experiencing learning difficulties that may be included in this model. Off task behaviour compounds the students' difficulty by contributing to a secondary issue: behaviour management. Students who present with difficult behaviour can challenge the relationships between teachers and students. The classroom teacher's attitude towards students experiencing learning difficulties and their teaching practices appear to have a major impact on student academic achievement and school

retention rates (Watson & Bowman, 2005). However, ongoing learning difficulties that manifest as behaviour problems can change the teachers' focus away from curriculum adjustments and more towards behaviour management (Westwood, 2008). To complicate matters further, behaviour is seen as a major concern for new teachers and can shift the teachers' focus from addressing academic needs (Meister & Melnick, 2003; Melnick & Meister, 2008).

The final theory attributes the origin of the learning problems to the instructional setting and is drawn more from the social model of disability. It proposes students fail to learn because of obstacles within the school setting (Twomey, 2006; Westwood, 2006). These obstacles include "flawed demonstrations of knowledge or skills; instructional climates that do not facilitate students' engagement with the curriculum; low teacher expectations conveyed to students; unsupportive feedback to students; and environments that reduce students' control over their learning" (Twomey, 2006, p. 94-95). This aligns with the findings of the synthesis of research conducted by Hattie (2003) and Alton-Lee (2003) that quality teaching and classroom interactions can make a difference to student outcomes. The role of the teacher and how their perceptions influence their classroom approach is of particular interest to this study. How preservice teachers perceive students who are experiencing learning difficulties undoubtedly impacts on the ways they interact and the expectations they hold for these students.

More is being required of schools as they prepare students for the 21st century (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). Attention to standards in education and student outcomes has a prominent position in political and social discourse. Government leaders, professional organisations, and parent groups question how schools and teachers are preparing students for an uncertain future where they will be required to engage with and contribute to more complex environmental, financial, political, and social challenges. Basic skills of reading, writing, and numeracy must now be complemented with higher-order thinking skills of analysis and problem solving which ironically are dependent on mastery of the basic skills (Masters, 2009; Trilling & Fadel, 2009). Understanding the unique needs of individual students and the provision of effective teaching in primary schools is essential. Slower rates of improvement in literacy and numeracy in the secondary years suggest that students

who do not acquire basic skills in primary school are unlikely to close the gap in secondary settings and are more likely to become disengaged (Master, 2009).

Addressing learning difficulties is essential as long-term negative consequences influence an individual's quality of life. Learning difficulty is a common feature of students who disengage and leave school early. Students experiencing learning difficulties are overrepresented in long-term unemployment figures and those identified with mental health problems as a result of their social and emotional problems (Council of the Australian Resource Educators' Association, 2000). Students who continue to experience learning difficulties often experience low self-esteem and negativity to learning. Learned helplessness and socioemotional problems also manifest in their persona (Westwood, 2004). Because of the long-term negative impact of learning difficulties, it is essential they are addressed early if students are to become contributing members of society. The deficit model's attribution of learning difficulties must be challenged as quality teaching can effectively address the outcomes of students experiencing learning difficulties (Alton-Lee, 2003; Ellis, 2005; Hattie, 2003; Masters, 2009; Watson & Bowman, 2005).

Teacher responses to students experiencing learning difficulties

Teachers' beliefs about students who are experiencing learning difficulties significantly influence their decision-making in the classroom (Beswick, 2008; Woodcock, 2008). Similarly, teachers' responses to students' performance impacts on the ways students perceive themselves as learners. Teachers' low expectations of students affect their self-concept, motivation, and performance (Cambourne, 1990; Munns, 2007). Beswick's (2008) study of 22 primary (n=13) and secondary (n=9) teachers used an intervention study to assess the malleability of beliefs teachers held towards certain practices in mathematics teaching and about learners. Professional development was found to be useful in changing some deficit views about mathematic learners and enhancing the expectations some teachers felt towards students who experience difficulties in mathematics. However, some beliefs about innate ability and mathematics success remained resistant to change. These types of beliefs may be linked to lower expectations and learning opportunities for some learners. In addition, teachers' preconceptions of students' ability affects their behaviour towards students (Lambe, 2011).

There is no single approach that can be identified as best practice when dealing with students experiencing learning difficulties, although a meta-analysis of research suggests a balanced or combined approach has been found to be the most effective (Ellis, 2005). This includes a well-planned, integrated selection of research-based practices and principles applied to curriculum design, pedagogy, and assessment (Lewis & Batts, 2005; Meo, 2008). Teaching approaches based on direct instruction and strategy instruction produce more positive results for students experiencing learning difficulties (Ellis, 2005). Strategy instruction focuses on cognitive, metacognitive, and self-regulatory skills. Cognitive strategies include developing skills in how to undertake classroom tasks, such as skimming and scanning, and summarising. Metacognitive strategies include developing skills in how to plan and manage classroom tasks through self-monitoring and selection of appropriate strategies. Self-regulation strategies are the thoughts, feelings and actions that assist the student in achieving set goals. An awareness of the attributes of the learner is paramount when selecting these methods. Figure 2.1 illustrates the approaches suggested by Ellis (2005).
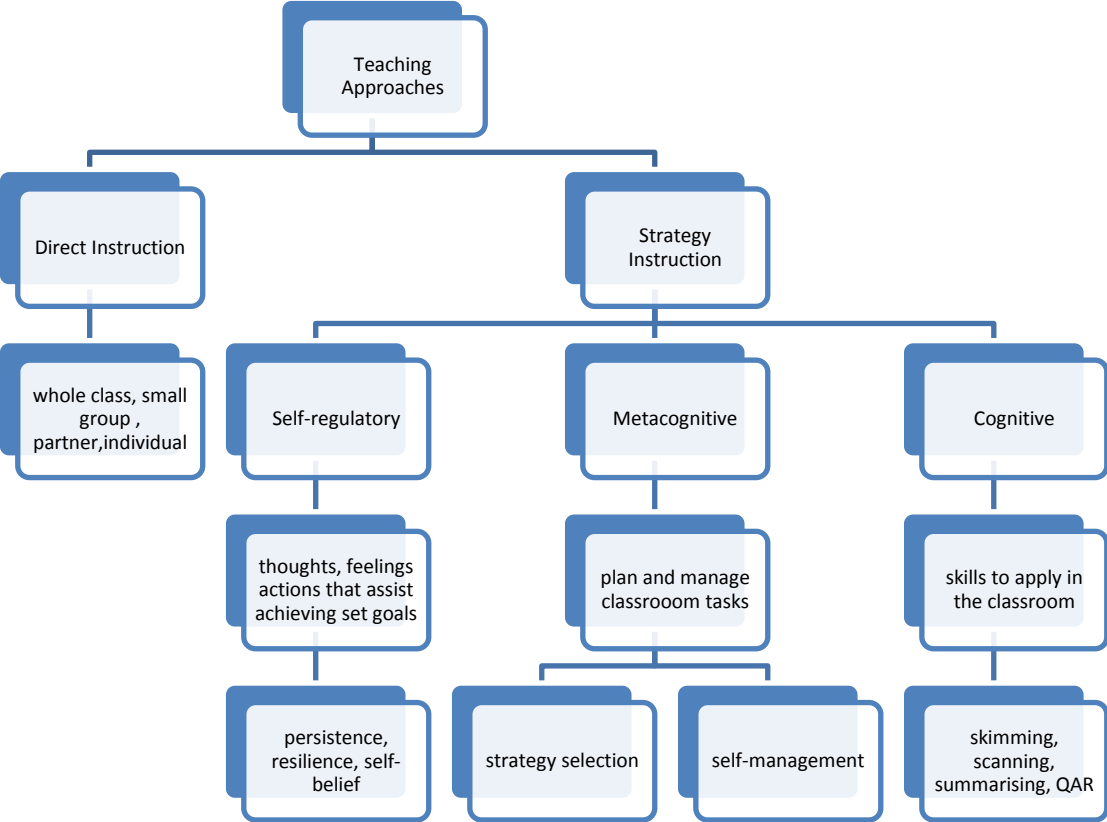
Figure 2.1. Teaching approaches to address learning difficulties.

Teachers who have strong theoretical and pedagogical knowledge and skills are able to combine these approaches more effectively and produce better outcomes for students experiencing learning difficulties (Ellis, 2005). A positive attitude towards students experiencing learning difficulties and a belief that all students can learn is essential for student success and requires an epistemological shift from the deficit model of disability to the social model which underpins inclusive education.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) aligns with the principles of inclusive education and encourages decision-making regarding curriculum development that maximises the learning potential of each student and gives all individuals equal opportunities to learn (C. A. Tomlinson, 2005). Drawn from the field of architecture and design, where barriers within the built environment were identified and modified to increase accessibility, UDL applies these principles to learning and instruction (Meo, 2008).

When applied to the curriculum UDL principles include providing all learners with multiple representations of the information to be learnt, flexibility to enhance engagement and motivation in learning, and multiple opportunities to show their understanding of the clearly articulated goals. Consideration of these principles is prominent at the planning stages of unit development where obstacles to students' learning are addressed and modified (Meo, 2008). Students experiencing learning difficulties benefit from this approach because teachers adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of the learners rather than expecting the learners to adapt to an inflexible curriculum (Meo, 2008; C. A. Tomlinson, 2005). Differentiation to the curriculum can occur in a number of ways.

Adjustments to the content being taught, the process or pedagogy being used, the tools used for evaluating learning (McLeskey & Waldron, 2006) and the physical characteristics of the learning environment form a useful framework when considering the adjustments necessary for students experiencing learning difficulties. Modified learning goals, reduced amount of content being covered, auditory and visual representations of content, flexible groupings, independent learning contracts, and adjusting questioning are just some strategies teachers can employ to differentiate the curriculum. Essential to this process is ongoing assessment and

review of data so the needs of students can be identified and targeted through the differentiation strategies (Lewis & Batts, 2005; Popp et al., 2011).

However, this may be challenging for beginning teachers given the range of additional obstacles they often face (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009; Kurz & Paul, 2005). Class size, additional time demands for lesson preparation, classroom management issues, broad ability spread of learners, and students resisting the adjustments are some of the classroom characteristics and issues that may add to the complexity of differentiating instruction. In many instances teachers need support to enact this process.

A critical theorist's viewpoint attributes learning difficulties to social, economic, and political structures of a society as much as anything inherent in the child (Tomlinson, 1987) therefore, squarely challenging the deficit model of learning. In addition, the critical model allows for critique to examine the "social processes by which achievement is defined" (Tomlinson, 1987, p. 34) and examination of the long-term social consequences of poor education.

Critical social theory provides a platform to question the role of professionals and practitioners in reproducing elements of society sustained through hegemony. It provides a theoretical framework within which educators can question their values, beliefs, and assumptions about learners so their practices may align with those that foster inclusive education. Critical social theory, critical pedagogy, and transformational learning theory and their links to inclusive education form the theoretical framework of this study and are discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 2 provided a comprehensive review of the literature pertinent to the study. A strong argument exists to suggest teachers' belief systems play an important role in the decisions teachers make in the classroom and therefore impact on their practice. Effective teaching practices characterised by supportive classroom climates, high teacher expectations, and strong pedagogical knowledge are important features of inclusive learning environments. When these conditions avail, more positive learning environments for students experiencing learning difficulties are created.

The literature revealed the complexity of responding to students who are experiencing learning difficulties in contemporary classrooms. It illustrated that the deficit model of learning pervades the thinking and practices of many educators, and therefore it is important teachers becoming critically reflective practitioners to challenge the limiting situations that can arise.

Chapter 3 presents the theoretical framework underpinning this research. Critical social theory, transformational learning theory and Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) theory of rhizomatic growth are tendered as elements of an interconnected model. This model is used to consider the transformation of beginning teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning and how those changing perceptions reflect the subject positions adopted by the beginning teachers as they respond to student difference.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

The literature review in Chapter 2 illustrated the deficit view that surrounds learning difficulties. The negative consequences of this on teachers' practice was highlighted and related to the influence teachers' values, attitudes, and beliefs have on their decision-making. Inclusive practices and their alignment with effective teaching were offered as a means of countering the negative consequences those who experience learning difficulties endure across a life span. However, I argue the challenges this presents to teachers, especially beginning teachers who face numerous challenges of their own, requires much more than current theories on inclusive education. Also required is a means to identify, and respond to the personal, social, cultural, and institutional barriers that can present limiting situations for some students.

This chapter explores the theoretical framework for this study which draws from critical social theory and highlights the importance of critical reflection as a tool to challenge how individuals understand themselves, their actions, and the influences within the world they inhabit. This includes their perceptions of teaching and how they position themselves in this process. It also includes their perception of how learning occurs and factors that may impede some students. Critical social theory challenges the status quo of education and the deficit view of learning so that more just learning environments can be created. The specific theories within critical social theory draw upon Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) construction of the rhizome as well as transformative learning theory (Cranton, 2006; Mezirow, 1995). I begin by introducing an overview of the purposes of education and briefly reviewing the key goals of the *Melbourne Declaration* (2008). This situates the discussion in a contemporary context and illustrates the reproductive role education plays in creating oppressive situations in society, while simultaneously offering potential opportunities to create change.

Purpose of Education

Education is "a function of historical forces and societal contexts" (Cooper & White, 2004, p. 20) and as a result various philosophical outlooks of education have emerged. Cooper and White (2004) identify four main, often interrelated, educational

philosophies or purposes for education: rationalist, practical, progressive, and critical. The following discussion is based on their synthesis of the four philosophical viewpoints. The rationalist approach has the goal to improve knowledge, abstract thinking and intellectual skills. The curriculum subjects are delineated with greater emphasis on abstract thought.

The practical approach to education focuses on skill development; particularly in literacy, numeracy, history, and science. The teacher takes on the role of expert and the more able students are extended in preparation for roles in the workforce. Grouping of students is usually on an achievement basis and curriculum is driven by the workplace preparing students for practical, technical, or professional roles. Freire (1970) referred to these methods as the banking model of education.

Progressive education nurtures learners as unique individuals and fosters reflection. The teacher's role is to facilitate learning. The curriculum is student-centred with a strong links to students' interests and background. Collaboration and community are valued, while problem solving and inquiry learning are preferred pedagogical choices of progressive teachers. Finally, the critical view of education seeks to bring about positive social change. The focus is on the whole child with the goal of developing students who can function in an ever changing world as participant and leader. The curriculum promotes self-agency and connects experiences at a local and global level. These models align more closely with problem posing education advanced by Freire (1970).

Education in Australia is currently undergoing major changes as we move towards a national curriculum in Mathematics, English, Science, and History, as opposed to the individual State mandated curricula that have been used up until now. In 2008, Australian governments agreed that a national curriculum would play a key role in the provision of a quality education for all young Australians because it would prepare young people for their participation in a changing and increasingly globalised world. This commitment is captured in the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (2008) which states two key goals for schooling; Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence, and all young Australians become successful learners, confident, and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens. *The Melbourne Declaration* also states, "Australia

values the central role of education in building a democratic, equitable, and just society" (*Melbourne Declaration*, 2008, p. 4).

The purpose of education is to improve educational outcomes for all young Australians as it is central to the nation's social and economic prosperity (*Melbourne Declaration*, 2008). However, currently in Australia as explained in Chapter 2, there is a considerable percentage of students deemed not to be achieving to the minimum standards required at certain junctures (Boston et al., 2011; Masters, 2009). Clearly if the goals outlined in the *Melbourne Declaration* (2008) are to be realised, and the negative consequences of underachievement are to be avoided, changes need to occur in education. Therefore, building a democratic, equitable, and just society through the vehicle of education will not be successfully achieved unless changes occur at policy and classroom level (Luke, 1999). Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, those from remote areas, refugees, homeless young people, and students with disabilities often experience educational disadvantage and have a high representation amongst students experiencing learning difficulties. The significance of the consequences of underachievement for both the individual and society as a whole highlights the importance of disrupting the status quo of education and supports the critical nature of this study.

Standards and accountability measures are not enough to ensure realisation of the goals for schooling outlined in the *Melbourne Declaration* (2008). Also required is a rethink about how the structure and organisation of schools, and the role of teachers and their teaching practices, advance or hinder the learning opportunities for all students. Teachers are a product of history and their belief systems have been influenced by the political, economic, and social forces that shaped their own education (Cooper & White, 2004; Monchinski, 2008; Thompson, 2012). Therefore, if their belief systems remain unchallenged then teachers remain a reproduction of their time. To challenge the barriers that threaten inclusion and equity, reinforced by unchallenged beliefs, teachers need to engage in critical reflection. This allows teachers "freedom of thought and speech ... and freedom to learn" (Cooper & White, 2004, p. 20). Critical reflection allows teachers to secure their own philosophical slant on education which inevitably drives their practice (Hoffman-Kipp et al., 2003). It helps to break the cycle of imitation where teachers come to accept the status quo

of education and opens thinking to new possibilities. Critical social theory provides a lens within which to explore the alternatives.

Critical Social Theory

Critical social theory has its roots in The Frankfurt School which challenged capitalist domination and "sought a new moral social order, a social emancipation from the various economic, social, and cultural oppressive qualities, such as social prejudices and economic inequalities" (Kanpol, 1994, p.29). The Frankfurt School introduced the notions of critique, hegemony, and critical thinking.

Drawing mainly on the Frankfurt School the central foci of critical social theory has been around drawing lessons from the past to raise awareness of the present forms of oppression. The aim is to enable more possibilities to be envisaged and enacted for the future. It questions the limitations and constraints imposed by the structures of institutions. It also serves to illustrate the ideological, hegemonic, linear thinking that is promoted by rational and positivist thinking. To counter these, critical social theory defends the need to pinpoint, illuminate, and address injustices in a way that could enable change. Critical social theory places the individual at the centre and argues that through dialectical engagement with oppressive structures the individual is able to perceive sites of struggle and the possibility of empowerment (Agger, 2006). Critical social theory examines the struggle of race, class, gender, and religion with the result that various interpretive theories belong to its tradition, predominantly postmodernism, feminist studies, and cultural studies.

Critical social theory is based on the premise that society is structured and operates as a result of historical forces which also function to maintain the status quo. Research in this domain has an emancipatory purpose and aims to identify the social, cultural, and political domination that restricts individuals from making change by challenging this domination (Leonardo, 2004).

Critical theory aims to challenge the way human beings act so that their decision-making is more thoughtful. More deliberate decision-making provides individuals greater control over the events that shape their lives. Left unchallenged decisions that mechanically follow the general expectation within the organisation or social sphere have the potential to limit control (Dant, 2003). "Critical social theory disrupts the current organisation of knowledge and creates procedures by which

traditions, discourse, and practices are analysed for how they function to include or exclude certain meanings, produce or prevent particular ways of being, behaving and imagining" (Segall, 2008, p. 15). This is particularly useful when contesting the deficit view of learning and considering how inclusive education can become a reality for students who may be operating on the periphery, such as students experiencing learning difficulties.

Critical social theory allows us to challenge our taken for granted assumptions and provides the capacity to unsettle education's discourses (Segall, 2008). It provides a vehicle to recognise and examine the origins of assumptions that shape people's lives, institutions and systems, such as schools, in order that they can be challenged. This is significant for teachers and teaching, as incongruence often exists between espoused and enacted beliefs of educators (Carrington, 1999) who "tend to be unaware of the assumptions, theories or educational beliefs and the implications of these for behaviour and practice" (Carrington & Robinson, 2006, p. 325). By recognising and examining the origins of their assumptions, teachers may be able to gain a greater understanding of how their decision-making in the classroom contributes to the inclusion or exclusion of some students (Cooper & White, 2004). Through a process of critical reflection and praxis teachers can engage with critical pedagogy and challenge the status quo of educational institutions that limit the opportunities of some students and teachers.

Critical pedagogy

Kanpol (1994) describes critical pedagogy as "the doing of critical theory" (p. 27). It is a recursive process of action and reflection that allows deliberate decision-making that draws together theory and practice. Freire (1970) referred to this notion as praxis. Praxis is the implementation of theory and practice which raises critical consciousness and demands action to address the limiting situations that can arise when ideology is uncontested. It is based on the understanding that knowledge, socially constructed and validated by power relations, is able to be changed (McLaren, 2007; Monchinski, 2008). This allows for consideration of new approaches to teaching and may lead to more equitable opportunities for students working on the fringes. Duncan-Andrade and Morrell (2008) claim equity lies at the heart of critical pedagogy. Interestingly, equity is also a sought after goal of inclusive education but one that is threatened by institutional practices that reflect current

views of social order. For example, competition a consequence of the contemporary focus on high stakes testing threatens the principles of inclusive education.

The current social system is maintained through two phenomena: democracy and realism (Masschelein, 1998). As Australians we are told we live in the *lucky country* where opportunities are abundant for all to live a safe, comfortable life where our voices are heard through a democratic political system. While we are told we have the freedom to be who we want to be, in reality many Australians, approximately 1.9 million or almost ten percent of the population, live on or below the poverty line (Australian Council of Social Service, 2007) and have very limited life choices. This is often a result of a poor education (Commonwealth of Australia, 2008) and in many cases, an education that failed to consider or attend to the learning difficulties experienced by these individuals. This myth of freedom is perpetuated by hegemony and therefore the system remains intact and unquestioned. This can be challenged through critical pedagogy where many aspect of the problem are examined through a social lens and often linked to class, race, and gender considerations (McLaren, 2007).

The second phenomenon that maintains the current social system is realism: the idea that something is impossible because it is given as impossible (Masschelein, 1998). Westwood's (1995; 2006) research shows teachers' ideas about why children do not learn are often attributed to deficits within the child. This is an idea that has been reinforced through practices within the organisation such as pullout programs in schools where students have been exposed to specialised teaching programs to fix these inherent problems. Teachers' expectations of students experiencing learning difficulties have also been seen to be lower than for students who do not experience learning difficulties (Westwood, 2006; Woodcock, 2008). Both the teacher and the student eventually accept realism that students experiencing learning difficulties cannot learn to the standard of their same age peers because it is given as impossible. Many of the students who experience learning difficulties are represented in low socioeconomic groups, students from non English speaking backgrounds, and refugees. Realism can be extremely detrimental to their education. A challenge to realism can be drawn from critical pedagogy.

Critical pedagogy is ultimately concerned with the relationship between power and knowledge (McLaren, 2007). A major focus of critical pedagogy in education has been to identify and challenge the reproductive role schools play in political and cultural life that limits social mobility (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008). Currently, public education provides very little mobility to the working class and other oppressed groups. It is a strong breeding ground for the replication of dominant ideologies from the ruling groups and needs to be challenged for a fairer, more inclusive, and just society (Freire, 1970; Monchinski, 2008).

Dissatisfaction with existing conditions that limit educational opportunities and experiences is the genesis for critical pedagogy as it "respond[s] to the need for a possible point of departure for resistance and for education as a humanizing practice" (Masschelein, 1998, p. 523). Humanising practice recognises the worth and value of all individuals, including those experiencing learning difficulties, and problematises teaching to understand and unleash the potential of all students. Humanising practice realises human potential and acknowledges potential can be limited due to social, cultural, historical, and institutional/ structural obstacles (Hoffman-Kipp et al., 2003). The organisation of schools is one potential obstruction to humanising practice.

Schools are organised on a scientific management structure based on a functionalist/ rational approach designed with a focus on efficiency. Functionalism regards social and human problems as pathological because social reality is objective, inherently orderly, and rational (Riddell, 2007; Skrtic, 1991). When the availability of education grew and increasing numbers of students were seen as difficult to teach, school failure was reframed as two interrelated problems: ineffective organizations and deficit students (Skrtic, 1991: Winzer, 2007). This resulted in a focus on organizational efficiency based on principles of scientific management (Riddell, 2007; Skrtic, 1991) which allowed the deficit model of disability to influence education unchallenged (Winzer, 2007). The deficit model of disability could be regarded as a politically rational system. Labelling students with various forms of deficit is beneficial in a political sense as it targets funds and other resources that would be otherwise unavailable. However, the social implications for students who are labelled *deficit* can be quite detrimental. It may influence the

expectations that teachers hold for the student, the range of opportunities available for the student, and acceptance into the peer group.

Skrtic (1991) uses a dual frame of reference to investigate school organizational structure: structural and cultural. Schools structured as professional bureaucracies are based on the division of labour through specialisation that requires the professional to adapt to meet the needs of the client. However if the needs of the client cannot be met, the client is then redirected to another specialist within the professional bureaucracy who is deemed responsible for meeting the client's needs. This structure reinforces the deficit model of education where special education teachers have been deemed to be responsible for students who do not fit within the structure and expectations of schools. This structure can devalue the role of teachers and deskill them into becoming "technical workers" (Giroux, 1988) robbed of the opportunity to explore alternate pedagogies and disempowered by a diminished belief in their capabilities. Critical pedagogy provides a problem posing education and provides learners with tools for empowerment (Kincheloe, 2008; Monchinski, 2008). However, empowerment is not an easy process (Ellsworth, 1989), and challenging for beginning teachers. Nevertheless, challenges to the status quo of education are essential if the inequities within education systems are to be challenged and movement towards a more inclusive and just education is to be realised (Monchinski, 2008).

Viewing an organisation from a cultural perspective recognises the reciprocal influence organisations and people have on each other. Within these organisations meaning is constructed and reconstructed through communication and interaction amongst its members and influenced by those with power and authority (Kanpol, 1994; McLaren, 2007). Meanings are challenged when the values of the greater group change. The move towards inclusive education is an example of this change in community values when increasing attention to civil rights and equal opportunities transferred to a reshaping of organisation and structure in schools. Special units were built in schools to cater for those students who, because of a disability, were previously educated in separate settings. As community ideals and expectations were further refined the special units became part of the school culture. The intention was students from the Special Education Program students could receive all or part of

their education in classroom alongside their same age peers and become part of the school community. For some students this has not become a reality.

Skrtic (1991) proposes an alternative organisation of education structure referred to as "adhocracy" (p. 170). The focus of adhocracy is on problem solving and collaboration. Similarly, problem solving and collaboration are identified as key characteristics of successful inclusive education (Hart et al., 2007; Paulsen, 2008) and generally effective teaching (Hattie, 2003; Clement, 2007; Trilling & Fadel, 2009). While professional bureaucracies codify problems within which prescriptive solutions can be applied, the adhocracy applies creativity to explore innovative solutions (Skrtic, 1991). However, policy is not enough to enact change in education (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Skrtic, 1991) that will enhance the learning opportunities of those students operating on the periphery of the classroom due to learning difficulties. It requires changes in organizational structure (Carrington, 1999; Skrtic, 1991) and challenges to teachers' assumptions, values, attitudes, and beliefs about learning (Lambe, 2011). Critical pedagogy offers a means to rethink institutional and personal factors that can limit the opportunities of some students. It provides a means to challenge the knowledge that is valued and the power that maintains it within the organisations, and how both combine to position individuals. Changes within education require teachers to engage in critical pedagogy and praxis as they move towards becoming critical pedagogues.

Critical pedagogues

Teachers who become critical pedagogues come to recognise and name the injustices that occur in schools (Kanpol, 1994; Kincheloe, 2008; McLaren, 2007). Once recognised and exposed, critical pedagogues actively attempt to address these injustices by manipulating the environment (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008). This could include changes to teaching practices such as assessment techniques that lack validity and reliability. For example, students experiencing learning difficulties may not have the literacy skills to complete an assessment task set as a scientific essay even though they have a firm understanding of the scientific concepts being assessed. Critical pedagogues would seek alternative assessment techniques which may involve changes to whole school policy. Teachers as critical pedagogues gain greater control over their practice as they attempt to address identified injustices (Kanpol, 1994).

Gaining greater control over practice is one source of empowerment. This is significant given that teachers have very little input into the development of policy and curriculum that dominate schooling (Kincheloe, 2008). Pre-designed curriculum packages and programs are in abundance. Teaching, at times, is reduced to the implementation of generically produced resources that give little consideration to individual learning contexts and participants. These programs provide very little scope for teachers to influence the learning experience and thereby deskill the work of teachers (Giroux, 1988; Kincheloe, 2008) positioning them as "obedient technicians" (Giroux, 1988). Critical reflection allows teachers the opportunity to consider what they are doing in the classroom, that is, to challenge their beliefs, identify external influences and to question and modify their teaching practices. This should lead to practices that breakdown the barriers to learning for students experiencing learning difficulties. However, if teachers' beliefs about difference relating to students experiencing learning difficulties continue to be seen as individual deficits (within the child), and particular limiting school practices remain unchallenged, then their practices are not going to be inclusive or open for change.

If teachers are to provide enhanced educational opportunities for those students experiencing learning difficulties operating on the periphery, their practice needs to be informed by freshly created knowledge and skills. These practices will be developed as a result of personal challenges and critical reflection on their preconceived assumptions, attitudes, and beliefs as well as contests to organisational structure (Larrivee, 2008). Giroux (1988) refers to these teachers as transformative intellectuals and this is expanded later in this chapter (see Learning democracy). Transformative individuals engage in a new discourse of possibility and hope–a *language of possibility* (Giroux, 1988).

Language of possibility

A language of possibility (Giroux, 1988) presents opportunities to envisage how schools could be, rather than accepting how they are. It allows us to conjure a representation of the possible, a Utopia or "vision of the future … of what life could be like" (Giroux as cited in Masschelein, 1998, p. 524). In this research, the language of possibility provides a vision of inclusive education where all students, including those experiencing learning difficulties, receive fair and just treatment in an environment that allows everyone opportunities to reach their full potential. As

described by Booth & Ainscow (2002) inclusion is "an ideal to which schools can aspire but which is never fully reached" (p. 3). However, by engaging in ongoing critical reflection and praxis preservice teachers can uncover the previously held assumptions that influence their practices. This allows them to engage in the language of possibility to explore new inclusive practices as they move into their career as a beginning teacher. This is the measure by which we can compare inclusive education as a reality where "a humanizing practice becomes the realization of an idea or program and critical action and judgements are measured against that idea and become actual techniques or applications" (Masschelein, 1998, p. 524). It is only once taken for granted assumptions reach our consciousness that change and improvements may occur. When the changes and improvements mean greater participation and fewer barriers in the education process for all students then the process of inclusion is in action (Booth & Ainscow, 2002).

School sites are often traditionally structured, driven, and managed by a dominant culture and power. The dominant culture is not neutral, but "characterised by a selective ordering and legitimising of privileged language forms, modes of reasoning social relations and lived experiences" (Giroux, 1988, p. xxx). Giroux (1988) calls for alternate theories of traditional schooling and claims teachers need to examine their own belief systems and practices to examine how they either benefit or victimise students. Teachers need to understand how issues such as class, gender, and race contribute to their ways of thinking and impact on their behaviour. This creates the *hidden curriculum* in their classrooms (Apple, 2004). The hidden curriculum refers to the implicit values and ideologies that are communicated to students as common sense (Kanpol, 1994). It includes such things as what constitutes success, unspoken classroom rules, and classroom material choices that serve to socialise and behaviourally condition students to accept hierarchical structures (Braa & Callero, 2006; Breunig, 2005).

The hidden curriculum teaches what is assumed to be important and defines the standard for the dominant culture (Wink, 2005) which has the potential to challenge the function of an inclusive environment (Breunig, 2005). It produces unintended outcomes of the school process such as exclusion of particular students through teacher actions and decision-making (McLaren, 2007). For example, preference for particular teaching strategies and teacher expectations can serve to alienate some

students. In addition, the hidden curriculum impacts on the professional practice and espoused educational ideals of teachers. For example, research suggests teachers act differently towards boys than girls in the classroom. Teachers are more likely to accept boys calling out than girls demonstrating the same behaviour which has been linked to the teachers' unexamined assumptions (McLaren, 2007). Woodcock (2008) supports this finding through a quantitative study of 667 preservice teachers in Australia, where participants were found to respond positively to students who expended greater effort than those who appeared not to expend effort. Effort was an expectation of the dominant culture but the underlying cause of the lack of effort may not have been examined in terms of the teacher's beliefs. That is, the teacher may have believed that lack of effort equated to lack of interest when in fact it was related to the student's perceived lack of ability and resultant lack of success. Teachers enter the classroom with assumptions about learners such as their capacity and capabilities to learn. These assumptions impact on the teacher's behaviour and contribute to the hidden curriculum. Inclusive education and the ideal to provide every student with equitable opportunities to successfully navigate educational outcomes cannot be realised unless the structures of dominance are challenged through critical pedagogy and critical reflection.

In traditional settings students are generally grouped according to their chronological age and what is expected of that group of students is culturally determined by the white middle class values that have created these structures (Breunig, 2005; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008). Many students in Australian classrooms today, such as migrants, refugees, and Indigenous students do not fit within the expectations of white middle class settings. Their underachievement is often seen as a deficit based on the traditional "technical instrumental" (Masschelein, 1998, p. 525) framework of the education system. To contest this perception critical pedagogy "wants to react against a system characterized by a totalization of instrumentality and functionality" (Masschelein, 1998, p. 525) and must analyse how this instrumental logic and law reproduces itself. Essential in this process is critical reflection where teachers have the opportunity to challenge their assumptions and beliefs towards teaching and learners. Changing teachers' attitudes towards educational underachievement relies on knowledge transformation rather than

knowledge transmission and is essential given how strongly one's values, attitudes, and beliefs influence practice.

As discussed in Chapter 2, beliefs have been found to be extremely influential on behaviour (Beswick, 2003, 2008; Wiebe Berry, 2006). Beswick (2008) argues teachers' beliefs about themselves, their performance and their perceptions of how they are perceived by significant others may be among the most crucial factors determining the extent to which teachers can change. Despite the ongoing investment of resources and time into professional development for teachers, and the increased focus on courses at university that prepare preservice teachers to successfully cater for students' diverse needs, research suggests programs lack a positive impact on teachers' current beliefs (Beswick, 2008; Woolfson & Brady, 2009). Ongoing reflection has been identified as essential in transforming values and beliefs (Brookfield, 2006; Cranton, 2006; Garmon, 2004; Toomey, 2007; Major & Brock, 2003).

Historically, the deficit model of disability has influenced the practices of teachers in dealing with students who have learning difficulties. Practices such as removing the student for instruction by another teacher or aide contribute to the deskilling of teachers and reinforce the role of teachers as technicians (Giroux, 1988) where their primary function is to manage and control students. Traditional schooling reinforces the deficit model of disability and can be challenged through critical social theory. "Since education is a function of historical forces and societal contexts ... it is not surprising that educators are products of their time" (Cooper & White, 2004, p. 20) and have accepted the dominant school culture reinforced through hegemony. The concept of hegemony, closely linked with ideology (McLaren, 2007) is expanded later in this section.

Ideologies "legitimize certain political and educational practices so that these come to be accepted as representing the normal order of things" (Brookfield, 2000, p. 129). For example, the medical deficit of disability and the ideology that surround the model such as *needs help*, *different*, and *incapable* have perpetuated educational practices. This deficit view of students legitimised the segregated settings and special pull out programs that existed and still exist in some schools. However, the inclusive education movement challenged these ideologies. It sought the identification and

removal of barriers to learning and the review of policy so the presence, participation, and achievement of all students were possible (Ainscow, 2007). However, given the slow, inconsistent progression of inclusive education (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010) it is apparent ideologies can be difficult to change.

In addition, ideology shapes the way we come to understand our world pervading our emotions, moral reasoning, and interpersonal relationships (Thompson, 2011). From this stand, ideologies cannot be ignored as an influential aspect of teaching. Without critical reflection, teachers come to accept pedagogies and practices as routine aspects of the school day without considering the match or mismatch of these practices for their students' learning styles, interests, or needs. Teachers' ideology controls the decisions made in the classroom and contribute to the hidden curriculum. Grouping practices, assessment techniques, and classroom management choices can be used as forms of control or techniques to empower students through educational enhancement. Without fully understanding the origins of their ideological perspective, teachers are more likely to be controlled by the hegemonic powers of the site and unwittingly contribute to their own oppression (McLaren, 2007). This highlights the need for critical pedagogy to expose the hidden curriculum and teachers to take a critical stance through ideology critique.

Ideology critique is the process of "reading the world more critically" (Leonardo, 2004, p. 16) through critical reflection. It allows the socially constructed reality which is accepted as normal (hegemonic practices) to be challenged. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to critically explore how the values, attitudes, and beliefs of preservice teachers impact on their teaching practices. In addition, the study intends to shed an understanding of how these personal factors, together with the work environment, hinders or assists the sustainability of inclusive practices through a critical pedagogy.

Brookfield (2005) suggests "ideology critique contains within it the promise of social transformation" (p. 13). He identifies seven lesson of critical theory that may allow teachers to liberate and emancipate their behaviour. This allows more socially just and equitable conditions to exist for all members of the school community including themselves and students experiencing learning difficulties. These lessons are; challenging ideology, contesting hegemony, unmasking power, overcoming

alienation, learning liberation, reclaiming reason and learning democracy. Each lesson is explained in the following section and develops an important discussion significant to the data analysis in Chapters 5, 6, and 7.

Challenging ideology

Ideology, "embedded in language, social habits, and cultural forms" (Brookfield, 2005, p. 41), provides the framework and concepts by which we come to make sense of our world, and come to know how we should act to belong within that space. However, the negative function of ideology indicates that the framework and concepts used is selective and contributes to the alienation of certain members of that society (Brookfield, 2005; McLaren, 2007; Thompson, 2011). Ideology critique challenges sources of oppressive and dominant ways of thinking that lull people into accepting situations and practices within education as normal and justifiable creating unjust social and political order. Teachers frequently make decisions and choices in the classroom that are ideological; they reflect and support the established order but limit opportunities for others.

Critical pedagogues are suspicious of the decisions that seem to be based on common sense or instinct and challenge the ideological nature of their pedagogy. Examples include behaviour control techniques in the guise of management strategies; grouping students for targeted teaching that may contribute to social division within the class community; and assessment practices that limit opportunity for students to communicate effectively their knowledge and understanding. Critical reflection on the ideological influences on their practice present opportunities for teachers to provide fairer, more just educational opportunities for all students including those experiencing learning difficulties. Importantly, ideology critique through guided critical reflection provides the opportunity for preservice teachers to question their own set of assumptions and perspectives regarding teaching. This may help them to position themselves as agentive in their practice. Furthermore, because teachers may work in contexts where their cultural and social norms differ from those of the community, ideologies may clash and create a negative learning environment if they are not identified and critiqued for the power they wield.

Ideological decisions based on the deficit model of learning, created through a long history of special education, need to be continually uncovered for the limitations

they impose on some students within the education system. The dominant culture of the school may influence teachers' behaviour and decision-making. Teachers who are long standing members of staff, or principals who are well established, have particular ways of working and may challenge new, innovative approaches because they differ from the practices accepted at the school. The influence of ideology may also come from the parents. When a new teacher employs an innovative practice or routine, or differs in their expectations from a previous teacher they may be challenged because the established order of the school is ideologically accepted. When the dominant culture is able to impose their ideas over the less powerful group, who come to see their social position as natural, it is known as hegemony (Brookfield, 2005; McLaren, 2007; Thompson, 2011).

Contesting hegemony

Contesting hegemony means challenging the beliefs, assumptions, and structures that normalise the acceptance of certain decisions made in the school or classroom that do not serve one's interests but rather the interests of those in power (McLaren, 2007). Bartolomé (2008) contends teachers "possess tremendous agency to challenge and transform harmful ideologies" (p.xxi). However, Ellsworth (1989) warns the approach one takes to challenging oppression is at risk of producing unintended privilege and may "perpetuate relations of dominance in their classrooms" (p. 297).

Hegemonic practices support dominant school culture through consensual social interactions and social structures (Kanpol, 1994; McLaren, 2007). In other words, what people say and do, the principles that support specific social practices such as legislation and policy, and social class of individuals control the dominant culture and develop the ideology of specific sites. These hegemonic practices work to deskill and disempower teachers, and silence subordinate groups of students. Furthermore, the hidden curriculum and hegemonic practices function to support the dominant school culture (McLaren, 2007). In addition, they contribute to the unwritten code of conduct and implied expectations of teachers (Gavish & Friedman, 2010). How beginning teachers position themselves is therefore influenced by the dominant culture of the school.

Beginning teachers, generally inexperienced but desperate to impress administration as they seek ongoing employment, are at risk of accepting unquestioned the hegemonic practices of the school. This threatens to undermine their confidence and their professional growth in the early years of their careers and position them as obedient technicians (Giroux, 1988). This is fairly significant given teachers' beliefs about teaching, including beliefs about their own sense of efficacy are more malleable in these early stages (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007) and have long-term consequences for their career (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Therefore, it is essential beginning teachers learn to question the ideologies that justify the intuitive decision-making which informs their teaching, rather than blindly accepting the dominant practices of the school (McLaren, 2007). This highlights the importance of promoting critical reflection as a valued skill during the preservice stage so beginning teachers can identify and negotiate barriers presented by institutional limitations.

Contesting hegemony is possible and essential if teachers are to provide equitable educational opportunities for all students, and create work environments where they too can flourish and reach their own potential. Unmasking the hegemony that maintains ideological decision-making is the first step to creating more democratic learning environments for students. How teachers are positioned in their role as beginning teachers influences their opportunities to become agentive.

Unmasking power

Critical pedagogy is context specific and cognisant of the importance of understanding the extremely complex contexts in which educational activity takes place (Monchinski, 2008). Understanding the nuances of the school culture is a form of knowledge and has implied power (Burr, 1995). The relationships teachers develop with students, administrators, other teachers, and parents even in the most well intentioned schools are not truly equal. The principal in many cases has the power to remove teachers from his staff, especially beginning teachers who are often in contract positions. In some schools parents may have power over the teacher because they pay school fees. Some parents are in a position to remove their children from particular schools if they are unhappy with the decision-making within the school that impact on their child. Simultaneously, other parents are often without a voice in school decision-making such as the class placement of their child or

intervention strategies. These parents may not be in a position to consider an alternate option for schooling their child due to economic, social, or other limitations. Teachers have power over students in a variety of ways such as grading requirements, time allocation, and curriculum goals that need to be fulfilled. Critical pedagogy is not about relinquishing the control and power that people legitimately hold. It contends power must be acknowledged as existing and negotiated with all participants in the learning context (Davies, 2008; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Kincheloe, 2008).

Preservice teachers hold little power in any relationships within the school. Students are usually aware the visiting teacher in their classroom is still in training. Parents seldom approach preservice teachers as they would the regular class teacher. Their position within the hierarchy of the school does not change dramatically once they graduate. Currently, for graduating and early career teachers in Australia, full time permanent jobs are scarce. Initial employment is usually in contracted positions with no guarantee of permanency. Participants in this study were employed on a term by term or semester basis. The renewal of their contracts was at the discretion of the principal. This presented an even greater imbalance of power which therefore has the potential to persuade beginning teachers to conform to contextual, ideological practices. If beginning teachers are to unmask the forces that shape how they see themselves as teachers they need to engage in critical reflection and be self-reflexive (Kincheloe, 2008).

Power exists in a variety of sources such as curriculum choices, access to resources, one's own abilities, and the connections that exist within the organisation (Kanpol, 1994). It is "continually in use, always being renewed, altered, and challenged by all those individuals who exercise it" (Brookfield, 2005, p. 129). Certain classroom practices reinforce to students they are constantly being monitored and judged by those in higher positions of power. Behaviour management charts, reward systems, portfolios, report cards all provide evidence that student behaviour is under constant surveillance (Kanpol, 1994). Programs designed to control behaviour, where students apparently choose the consequences of their actions, are in fact disguising the *power over* students that teachers exercise for control (Larrivee, 2000). Power over strategies may be adopted by teachers as a self-protective mechanism

when the demands of their role become too overwhelming and they seek strategies to overcome alienation (Brookfield, 2005).

When teachers use *power with* strategies they identify power but address imbalances through respect and problem posing. Teachers who work within the *power with* strategy have control without being in control (Davies, 2008). They use their position of authority to create situations where learning becomes reciprocal (Kanpol, 1994) and attempts to empower learners (Larrivee, 2000). By empowering individuals teachers can create change through individual or collective power, but without a critical stance they may inadvertently perpetuate dominant power relations.

Power may not necessarily be repressive (Monchinski, 2008). Liberatory power in the form of empowerment may help people take control of their own lives (Brookfield, 2005).When critical pedagogues are empowered they identify the steps needed to overcome personal and contextual obstacles (Thompson, 2011). Their decision-making includes informed choices related to the culture of the school. In this regard they question the relevance and appropriateness of the choices they make in their practice (Kanpol, 1994). However, empowerment has the potential to be exclusionary and can work against the goals of critical pedagogy (Ellsworth, 1989) as discussed later in this chapter (see Learning democracy).

Overcoming alienation

Freedom is being able to choose how you act free of dictated terms and is only possible in a non-alienated world (Brookfield, 2005). However, no one can ever truly be free because of the pervasive nature of our ideologies which are embedded in our language, actions, and judgements. Teachers are at risk of becoming alienated from their practice when their role becomes too demanding and the tasks too prescriptive. This results in them being robbed of the opportunity to be creative and to explore possible opportunities or alternatives in their pedagogy (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Monchinski, 2008).

Collaborative planning and teaching may serve to assist teachers to overcome alienation. Supporting each other emotionally, sharing the workload and responsibility, and maximising the use of particular skills may free teachers' time. This allows them to explore more creative aspects of their teaching. Collaboration is seen as particularly important in inclusive education for these very reasons (Brownell

et al., 2006; Paulsen, 2008). However, collaborative practices may also serve to promote the ideological influences and hegemonic practices that threaten alienation in the first place. If the actual practices of the school are at odds with the espoused culture then additional time for meeting, equitable sharing of the workload, social manipulation, and power relations amongst the staff involved may actually result in the "suppression in critical thinking ... as teacher strive to conform" (Brookfield, 2005, p. 173). This jeopardises the goals of inclusive education. Critical reflection is crucial to challenge the ideological influences that serve to alienate teachers in varying contexts and situations (Thompson & Pascal, 2012) and therefore extremely relevant to educators who strive to create inclusive environments.

Learning liberation

Similarly, induction programs for new staff, in particular graduate teachers, could be seen as programs that support teachers' transition into new settings. However, they could just as easily be viewed as programs designed to manipulate conformity within the school context. These programs are designed to communicate explicitly the practices and procedures of the school and one method where both the overt and hidden expectations of teachers are communicated. When teachers work is closely interwoven with others, "it becomes difficult to establish the necessary distance for autonomous thoughts" (Brookfield, 2005, p. 198). This is particularly relevant if teachers feel their performance is being judged. Beginning teachers employed on a short-term contractual basis, may feel vulnerable given their future employment opportunities depends on how they are perceived by others in the school who hold positions of power. This includes the principal, mentor teachers, and parents in the school community. Therefore, despite social processes being an important aspect of critical reflection, where multiple perspectives help to shape our views of ourselves and situations (Brookfield, 2000; Cranton, 2006; Thompson & Pascal, 2012) independent self-reflection is also required. Isolation and separation from those who offer multiple perspectives allows for self-examination "to trigger a rupture with present day experience ... that will jerk people into an awareness of how life could be different" (Brookfield, 2005, p. 200). Thus, change needs a collective approach coupled with an individual consciousness.

Reclaiming reason

Freedom is when one has the choice of how to act without limiting their creativity within the bounds of respect, where the rights one expects to receive are mutually extended to others (Brookfield, 2005). "Reason is claimed as crucial to freedom" (Brookfield, 2005, p. 229) but is threatened by the imperatives one adopts. Imperatives are promoted through political commentary and mass media and so form part of the ideology of education.

Imperatives are self-generating and shape how we think and act. Imperatives such as *I must, I need to, I have to*, *I am responsible for* pervade the lives of teachers as they absorb the external pressures and expectations driven by ideology. When teachers' work becomes driven by imperatives they are at risk of becoming overwhelmed within that environment. This may influence how they reason pedagogical choices and correlate the expectations they hold for certain members of the classroom and themselves. For example, particular students may come to be seen as requiring specialised knowledge and so teachers hand over control to support teachers seen as having more knowledge to help these students. This has the risk of devaluing the role of the teacher. Also threatened is the students' sense of citizenship in the classroom and worthiness which is diminished when they are not part of the routine class activities (McLeskey & Waldron, 2007).

Teachers need space to critically reflect to provide a basis for developing emancipatory practice that promotes equity and social justice (Thompson, 2011). Critical reflection is required so teachers can identify the demands being placed on them and consider how they influence their classroom practices. For example, teachers need to consider what and who are placing demands on their time, alternate methods for streamlining practices, and the knowledge and skills they may need to develop to complete the tasks being asked of them. In particular, critical reflection is required to challenge the realism of the self-driven imperatives that threaten teacher's creativity. If teachers are to continue to try to meet the needs of all students in their classrooms, and challenge the oppression and structures of inequality that exists within schools, then reclaiming reason is essential for longevity and sustainability in their careers.

Learning democracy

The provision of enhanced educational opportunities for those students experiencing learning difficulties and operating on the periphery requires teachers to remain open to multiple options, informed by freshly created knowledge and skills. These new ideas developed, in part, as a result of personal challenges and critical reflection of their preconceived assumptions, attitudes, and beliefs as well as organizational structure. Giroux (1988) refers to these teachers as transformative intellectuals and I have previously used the term critical pedagogue.

Teachers who act as critical pedagogues are committed to teaching as an emancipatory practice and the creation of schools as democratic public spheres (Giroux, 1988). Teaching as an emancipatory practice is concerned with promoting equity, valuing diversity, and providing individuals with skills and knowledge that contribute to human agency (Thompson, 2011). Human agency provides individuals with opportunities to experience social mobility which can result in an improved standard of living and quality of life. Students experiencing learning difficulties are over represented in lower socioeconomic groups with evidence of the cyclic nature in families (Commonwealth of Australia, 2008). Teachers as transformative intellectuals have a responsibility to investigate and instigate solutions to this recurring trend.

Teachers working as critical pedagogues are committed to the restitution of shared community values that advocate social reform and common public discourse linked to equity and social justice (Giroux, 1988). Values form part of our cultural capital, that is the way we act, the language we use and the knowledge that we deem important. Our cultural capital is a product of the environment in which we live and work (Thompson, 2011). As critical pedagogues inclusive teachers challenge their values, assumptions, and beliefs against those that support an inclusive society. This is important given our behaviour sends attributional messages to students (Clark, 1997; Woodcock & Vialle, 2010) and strongly influences their self-perceptions and thus their behaviour. Therefore, to be critical pedagogues we need to challenge the assumption and perspectives that contribute to community values and this of course relies on critical reflection.

Critical social theory raises social consciousness which helps to identify how values are formed and the assumptions that support them. This study investigated how beginning teachers working as critical pedagogues challenged the deficit model of learning and considered a more socially just construction of knowledge where learning in a different way, at a different pace, and through a different means was not problematic. Part of that commitment involved engaging in different ways of knowing, treating people equitably rather than the same because of the understanding that everyone is different, and valuing the diversity that difference brought to the classroom (Zimmerman, 2009). The discussion in Chapter 2 highlighted the influence of values on practice and their importance to fostering inclusive education. Effective teaching occurs where there is a strong emphasis on values (Lovat, 2005) and in particular when community values have a shared focus that advocates social reform and equity (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Hart et al., 2007).

Teachers who engage with critical pedagogy identify and seek ways to challenge control mechanisms (Kanpol, 1994). This extends to how teachers and students negotiate authority and power within the classroom. The critical pedagogue develops relationships with students that encourage shared decision-making, personal responsibility for behaviour, and independent thinking.

Research that uses a critical pedagogical lens provides an analysis that exposes the "opportunities for democratic struggles and reforms within the day-to-day workings of school … [and] the theoretical basis for teachers and others to view and experience the nature of teacher work in a critical and potentially transformative way" (Giroux, 1988, p. xxxii). Critical pedagogy is grounded on a social and educational vision of integrity and equity (Kanpol, 1994; Kincheloe, 2008). It parallels the goals of inclusive education by its concern for those who operate on the margins of society. Critical pedagogy is constructed on the belief that education is innately political with its own biases, agenda, and structures of domination. Therefore, it allows educators and others to examine and deconstruct relationships among schooling, the wider social networks which inform it, and the historically constructed needs and competencies that students bring to schools (McLaren, 1988).

This research draws from Brookfield's seven lesson of critical theory to examine how beginning teachers come to negotiate the structural, cultural, social,

political and personal constraints that exist within teaching. The goals of inclusive education are more likely to be enacted by teachers who critically reflect. These teachers seek ways to maximise the educational and social outcomes of all students by identifying and challenging social injustices. Critical reflection prompts ruptures in their practice that may lead to the identification, reduction, or removal of barriers to learning. It encourages new growth in teacher development and their responses to students experiencing learning difficulties.

The challenges and limitations of critical pedagogy

Critical pedagogy "examines schools both in their historical context and as part of the existing social and political fabric that characterises the class-driven dominant society" (McLaren, 2007, p. 185). Its limitations are often linked with the critical pedagogue, in this case the teacher. Major challenges in implementing critical pedagogy include skilling teachers so they have the confidence to pursue a problem posing education rather than the *banking model* (Freire, 1970) where knowledge is acquired and stored. This can be challenging given teachers are often a product of the banking model themselves (Cooper & White, 2004; Monchinski, 2008). In addition, critical reflection is a learned skill and is required if teachers are to reflect on their pedagogy and the impact it has on their relationships with students (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008).

Freire's critical pedagogy has been criticised for an over emphasis on rational thought and discourse. Rationality has dual meaning. It is a set of assumptions and practices that allows people to understand and shape their own and others' experience. Correspondingly, it refers to the interests that define and qualify how one frames and engages problems confronted in lived experience (Giroux, 1998). Another limitation concerns the role of critical pedagogy as an emancipatory tool. People who are deeply oppressed may find it challenging or impossible to begin the process. Beginning teachers may feel oppressed in their roles and therefore may not feel positioned to challenge the status quo or enact change. This highlights the importance of including experiences to develop skills in critical reflection early in preservice teacher training.

Despite these drawbacks, critical pedagogy remains an important element to the realisation of the goals of inclusive education and this study. Inclusive education

and the related humanising practices are threatened by the rationalist/ functionalist approach to education. A skilled critical pedagogue becomes cognisant of the personal and institutional factors that impact on their perceptions of teaching and learning. This positions them to challenge dehumanising practices. Through critical pedagogy they not only aim to develop skills in themselves they aim to create a learning environment where students feel safe and comfortable to take risks in their learning. This is the learning environment of an inclusive classroom.

The context of learning plays a considerable role in the education process. Schools are complex environments and often the difficulties that students experience are not a result of inadequacy within the child but from socially constructed factors (Kincheloe, 2008; Westwood 2006). The context of learning is so complex and influential it must therefore be investigated as a source of oppression in the education process. This applies as much to students in schools as it does to the preservice teachers learning how to function in their profession. Research suggests the work environment is influential on affective and practical behaviour which can contribute to oppression not only of students but staff alike (Kardos, Johnson, Peske, Kauffman & Liu, 2001; Walsdorf & Lynn, 2002). Hence, beginning teachers' ability to engage with critical pedagogy is not a linear process achieved by mastering a set of codified skills. It is a complex, ongoing process that is influenced by a number of sociocultural factors. In this regard, learning to engage with critical pedagogy can be seen as a rhizomatic process.

Rhizomatic learning

Research through a critical social theoretical lens aims to disrupt the existing status quo to bring about change. This research aimed to disrupt the thinking of preservice/beginning teachers to challenge their preconceived ideas about students experiencing learning difficulties. In addition, it sought to investigate how their developing views influenced their choices in teaching. This was deemed necessary to challenge the functionalist approach to education that perpetuates the deficit view of learning and threatens the professional growth of teachers. This research captured the growth of participants and mapped their transformation as they moved from preservice teacher to beginning teachers. Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) concept of the rhizome and rhizomatic explains the fluid conception of identity and the varying subject positions occupied by individuals as they challenge structural ideologies. In

this research, the concept of the rhizome helped conceptualise the multiplicities that are within an individual.

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) use the concept of the rhizome to explain the interconnectedness of elements and events. The term rhizome describes a tubular plant that is able to grow and extend itself through its underground root-system which erupts at any given point to produce new shoots. "The rhizome is a concept that 'maps' a process of networked, relational and transversal thought, and a way of being without 'tracing' the construction of that map as a fixed entity" (Coleman, 2005, p. 231). It describes a progression that is constructed through a series of events that can be connected, coincidental, or indiscriminate. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) identify a number of principles of a rhizome: connection and heterogeneity; multiplicity; asignifying rupture, cartography and decalcomania. Each principle is discussed linking its feature to the research.

Principles of connection and heterogeneity can signify how reflective practitioners connect theories of learner difference to the actual learning experiences in the classroom. That is, theoretical understanding of inclusive education and quality teaching are realised through preservice teachers reflecting upon their practice and engaging in praxis. There is no fixed point to mark the beginning or end of this endeavour. The teacher, like the rhizome, "is perpetually in construction or collapsing, a process that is perpetually prolonging itself, breaking off and starting up again" (Gregoriou, 2004, p. 244). The rhizomatic construction of teacher growth challenges the proposed linear or stage based process of teacher development (see Hattie, 2003). It supports the notion that becoming a teacher is a complex process that occurs over an extended period of time, and is in fact a lifelong pursuit (Henderson et al., *in press*).

The principle of multiplicity is concerned with growth rather than reproduction. As the rhizome spreads and grows new knowledge is created through "interconnections between knowledges acquired at university and new knowledges on site" (Carrington & Iyer, 2011, p. 4). Multiplicity represents the growth of the preservice teacher through interconnections made through critical reflection rather than reproduction of behaviour created through knowledge transmission, policy constraints and modelling, imitating, or replicating others. Critical reflection

provides preservice and beginning teachers opportunities to question their beliefs about certain students and how learning is influenced by aspects of the environment including their behaviour (Cranton, 2006; Larrivee, 2000; Toomey, 2007). This growth can lead to new subject positions for the beginning teacher as the theory-practice nexus is challenged and consolidated. As beginning teachers try on various subject positions they learn to navigate the obstacles that form part of the multiplicity. If beginning teachers continue to imitate the behaviour of the mentor teacher, or others, without taking a critical stance transformation is unable to occur (Cranton, 2006). As a consequence, their practice is likely to become limited as they struggle to work within the constraints of the organisation.

Critical reflection on practical experience and new actions based on those reflections (praxis) may allow the preservice teacher to make links with the theoretical knowledge gained at university utilizing it in new forms in a practical context–this is an asignifying rupture. "A rhizome may be broken, shattered at a given spot, but it will start up again on one of its old lines or on new lines" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 10). These ruptures are likely to occur through critical reflection. However, the ruptures may not lead to new growth immediately. The growth of a teacher is a complicated process. This is due to the complex nature of teaching and the multitude of influences both from within the teacher and the contextual nature of the work environment. New growth may occur at another time when the situation is more favourable. For example, working in a role with reduced responsibilities may allow beginning teachers to experiment with new practices that link theory and practice. Similarly, working with additional support structures may enhance their confidence and skill level so theory may be enacted in practice. New growth is mapped through this research.

The principle of cartography and decalcomania explains how preservice teachers experience growth as they move into the profession of teaching. The growth of preservice teacher to beginning teacher to experienced or expert teacher is not about tracing an expected pathway and mastering a checklist of predetermined skills (Allan, 2004). Among other qualities, expert teachers adopt a problem-solving stance to their work; anticipate, plan, and improvise as required by the situation; and are better decision-makers (Hattie, 2003). These skills are not gained in an hierarchical order, but rather through a messy process of reflection, action, and reflection

(praxis). Teachers who engage in critical reflection keep an open mind to other options (Thompson & Pascal, 2012). Through flexible thinking they develop a "language of possibility" (Giroux, 1988). As the rhizome has the capacity to spread, constantly re-forming and reshaping itself it does not become a replication of anything but a new form that is open to change (Carrington & Iyer, 2011). Similarly, inclusive teachers also adapt their teaching practices, drawing on new knowledge and skills, to create innovative learning experiences that suit the needs of their learners.

The complexities of teaching, along with the diverse population of contemporary classrooms, require teachers to be open to change. The variety of learning styles and abilities of students, and in particular those students who experience learning difficulties, requires teachers to re-form and reshape their practice. This can only occur successfully through critical reflection. It can be mapped through the use of a rhizome model, not a rigid, structured hierarchical model of teacher development. Deleuze compares the rhizome to a tree, but not as binaries.

A wide body of literature is developing in the field of teacher education drawing on the work of Deleuze and Guattari. Goodley (2007) explored socially just pedagogies in disability studies by drawing on the rhizome, and Allan's (2006b) study of exclusion adopted a theoretical lens of Deleuze and Guattari to understand the rhizomatic disruptions that could occur in special education to create difference. Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy offers an opportunity to think differently "to produce previously unthought questions, practices and knowledge" (Sellers & Gough, 2010). Cole (2011) draws on Deleuze in particular to introduce "educational life-forms." He suggests that "signs of life can never be extinguished from the learning context" (p.3). Educational life forms create the possibility for individuals and groups to challenge the structures of schools and institutions from within. Cole notes a Deleuzian approach to changes in education is pragmatic, builds on the existing, and allows insider knowledge to prevail and influence future directions. This challenges the top down hierarchical structures of schools and education systems.

Jones (2011) applies the theoretical work of Deleuze and Guattari to investigate the "oscillating identities" (p.1) that emerged for a preservice teacher

from a minority background. Deleuzian analysis of online role play activities "mapped" the various identities, made visible when given freedom from the White middle-class Discourse that pervades teacher training institutions. These varying identities allowed the preservice teacher to voice her opinions and generated a sense of agency. It illustrated the importance of space within teacher education to reflect on developing personal and professional identities.

Gale (2007) also used the work of Deleuze to re-think the theory and practice of teacher education. Gale's use of Deleuzian terms illustrates the ongoing process of becoming a teacher. Gale (2007) used Deleuze's concepts of the folding /unfoldings to illustrate the richness, complexity and multiple layers of becoming a teacher. As the process of becoming a teacher evolves, "new elements are added or folded in, new relationships and connections are made or folded out" (p.475).

Allan (2011) notes how the work of Deleuze and Guattari enables researchers new ways of thinking about difference, in particular people with learning disabilities and other aspects of disability. The current research adds to this body of work. Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome is used to provide new insights into how preservice teachers attempt to become inclusive practitioners as they move into the role of beginning teachers.

The rhizome is used in this research to understand the growth of preservice teachers and the events that contribute to their perceptions of, and responses to students experiencing learning difficulties. When teachers critically reflect on their practice they have the potential to move past imitation of significant others. As a result of rhizomatic growth teachers have the potential to create new practices that are more effective for students who are experiencing learning difficulties. However, when beginning teachers replicate the practices of their mentor teachers or significant others, without considering the needs of the learners, or the limitations of the practices, their capacity for rhizomatic growth is diminished. Their growth is likened to the leaves on a tree: structured, hierarchical, and limited. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) refer to this as creating tracings. Nevertheless, because teachers work within institutional constraints some tracings are inevitable and may be helpful to support beginning teachers in some instance. For professional growth to occur, beginning teachers need to put the tracings back on the map so they remain open to future

opportunities for change and learn to navigate the institutional obstacles they encounter.

Rhizomes do not have clearly identifiable beginnings and ends. As Honan (2007) states, "it is impossible to provide a linear description of the journey taken through and across a rhizome" (Honan, 2007, p. 533). This principle of the rhizome explains that becoming a teacher is an ongoing nonlinear process of learning. Teaching is a complex profession influenced by multiple factors. Preservice training, the school environment and the supervising teachers where preservice teachers gain their practical experience all influence the growth of a preservice teacher. In addition, prior experiences, family history, and personal characteristics contribute to preservice teachers' growth and professionalism. Factors that contribute to the transformation of beginning teachers as they transition into their role and their interconnected nature of these factors have been examined using features of the rhizome. This is reported in Chapters 5, 6, and 7.

In Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) and Deleuze's (1995) philosophy, new learning manifests itself in "new connections, new pathways, new synapses … (produced) not through any external determination but through a becoming that carries the problems themselves along with it" (p. 149). The Deleuzian approach decentres to investigate how knowledge, experience, and practice interrelate to create new meaning. The process of knowing has strong implications for education as a developing and generative practice. It questions how certain knowledge is legitimised and opposes the practice of knowledge transmission which merely reproduces that which is already known to exist (McLaren, 2007). The process of knowing may encourage preservice teachers to reflect on their current practice and generate new ways of working with students experiencing learning difficulties rather than reproducing practices borrowed from special education under the guise of inclusive practice.

Deleuzian thinking helps challenge the rationalist approach to education (Gregoriou, 2004). Schools, organised on a scientific management structure based on a functionalist/ rational approach tend to position human problems as pathological (Skrtic, 1991). "Deleuzian understanding of rhizomatic thinking helps disrupt that linear and layered thinking about subject positioning that is so dominant in modernist

approaches to identity" (Honan, 2007, p. 533). Rhizomatic thinking supports critical pedagogy, that is, the enactment of change through reflection and action, and an understanding of how knowledge is created and "responds ... to the need for a possible point of departure for resistance and for education as a humanizing practice" (Masschelein, 1998, p. 523). These possible points of departure occur as ruptures on the rhizome.

Rhizomatic wanderings "disrupt conventional knowledge about special needs" (Allan, 2004 p. 424) and allow preservice and beginning teachers to question their current understanding of them. As previously explained, there is currently a strong focus on the causes of learning difficulties as situated within the deficit model of disability. The social model of learning, however, supports an inclusive approach to education and argues that learning difficulties arise from problems situated outside of the child (Westwood, 2004). Rhizomatic wanderings can challenge conventional knowledge and map the connections within one's views regarding learning difficulties. For example, it can help contest the types of learning deemed appropriate for students experiencing learning difficulties and the assumed skills and pedagogies required to teach these individuals.

This research offers a new way of looking at teacher development. Rhizomatic growth, examined throughout the data, identifies and illustrates the interrelated factors influential on the various subject positions occupied by beginning teachers as they transition from university into the profession. If preservice teachers do not engage in critical reflection their personal and professional growth, which includes the ability to attend to students experiencing learning difficulties, may fail to develop or stagnate. Critical reflection is an essential component of this growth which may take the form of transformational learning. The shortcomings in traditional pedagogical approaches signal the need for a transformative learning theory. A theory of transformative learning advances that assumptions and beliefs that are left unchallenged can limit decision-making and therefore practice. Transformational learning may occur through rhizomatic growth when teachers engage in critical reflection and challenge their previously held beliefs and the ideological beliefs that exist within institutions.

Transformational Learning Theory

Teachers need to be highly skilled and flexible to manage the complexities of the modern classroom. For inclusive education to be successfully implemented teachers need to be aware of the values, attitudes, and beliefs that drive their practice. It may require a shift in their understanding of themselves and their beliefs. Transformative learning may be necessary (Mezirow, 2000). This study investigated the meaning schemes of preservice teachers with regards to how they perceive students who are experiencing learning difficulties and how this influences their practice. Changes that occurred in teachers' frames of reference as they moved from preservice teacher to beginning teacher were investigated within a rhizomatic model of transformation developed from Mezirow's theory of transformative learning (Mezirow, 2000). Mezirow describes transformative learning as

> learning that transforms problematic frames of reference—sets of fixed assumptions and expectations (habits of mind, meaning perspectives, mindsets)—to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective, and emotionally able to change. Such frames of reference are better than others because they are more likely to generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action (Mezirow, 2003, p. 58-59).

Explanation of transformational learning theory

Transformational Learning Theory investigates the process of learning and refers to the restructuring of meaning by challenging and reconstructing previously held beliefs and ideas. A disorienting event, an event that challenges previously held beliefs, triggers the process. Transformational learning is built on the premise that individuals make meaning from within themselves through interactions and communication with other people. Meaning schemes shape the way one views the world and are affected by individual ideologies created by beliefs, judgements, feelings, and attitudes. Both past and present experiences create personal meaning schemes which combine to produce frames of reference (Mezirow 2000). A frame of reference consists of cultural and psychological assumptions which have been adopted through past experiences and are often unchallenged (Cranton, 1992). This influences how individuals come to understand the world and is based on the factors that characterise one's uniqueness, such as, background, experience, culture, personality, self-concept, and one's belief system.

According to Mezirow (2000), learning occurs in one of three ways: elaborating existing frames of reference, learning new frames of reference, and transforming points of view or habits of mind. Frames of reference are entrenched within an individual's value system and therefore have an emotional investment. If a learner rationalises a new point of view, without first dealing with the deep feelings attached to the original meaning scheme, personal transformation cannot occur (Mezirow, 1995). A key element in this process is critical self-reflection. This is particularly relevant for teachers working towards the goals of inclusive education and highlights the importance of personal beliefs playing a more powerful role than policy in the enactment of practice (Beswick, 2008; Wiebe Berry, 2006).

Influenced by the work of others, (see Kuhn, 1962; Freire 1970; & Habermas, 1972) Mezirow first developed his theory in 1981 and refined his work with a final revision in 1991. Since then many other theorists have identified shortcomings in his theory and have contributed to the development of transformational learning from various perspectives.

Varying viewpoints and identified shortcomings

Mezirow's original work was criticised because it failed to address social change and neglected power issues. In addition, it disregarded the cultural context of learning and had an overemphasis on rational thought and cognitive processes (Cranton, 2006). Teaching and teachers are influenced by the social, political, and cultural environment of the educational institution and wider community. In addition, teaching is a value laden practice heavily influenced by emotions, feelings, and intuition (Flores & Day, 2006). These factors are so prominent and influential in teaching they cannot be ignored when one considers the transformation of preservice teachers as they move into the role of beginning teacher. Others have added to the theory of transformative learning to address these shortcomings.

A social emancipatory view of transformative learning (Taylor, 2008), a psychoanalytical perspective (Dirkx, 2000, 2006) and an extrarational perspective (Cranton, 2006; Dirkx, 2006) each add a new dimension to Mezirow's original theory. A social emancipatory view of transformative learning (Taylor, 2008) views people as subjects, who are constantly reflecting and acting on the transformation of their world where equity may prevail, and therefore is particularly relevant to the

advocates of inclusive education. It relies heavily on critical reflection to promote an awareness of agency to transform society and the individual's reality. Transformation from this perspective relies on cognitive activity that involves problem posing and dialogical discourse rather than the transference of information. By way of contrast is a psychoanalytical perspective. From this perspective, transformative learning is viewed across a lifespan where one comes to understand oneself through the resolution of inner conflicts through reason and logic (Dirkx, 2000; 2006). However, neither addresses the emotional aspect of transformation. An extrarational perspective of transformative learning addresses this shortcoming.

An extrarational perspective of transformative learning involves imaginative and emotional ways of knowing. It involves nurturing the soul by attending to intellectual, emotional, spiritual, social, and physical aspects of the learning environments and takes its influence from a Jungian perspective (Cranton, 2006; Dirkx, 2006). Quality teaching involves a holistic approach with attention given to intellectual, emotional, spiritual, social, and physical aspects of learning and learning environments (Alton-Lee, 2003; Toomey, 2007). Teaching can be highly emotive (Flores & Day, 2006) and therefore this cannot be overlooked in the transformative process.

Self-knowledge and individuation are two concepts relevant to transformative learning from an extrarational perspective (Cranton, 2006). Self-knowledge occurs by questioning the self. Individuation is when people have awareness that they are both the same but at the same time different from others (Cranton, 2006) and results in a deepened sense of self and an expansion of consciousness. "Transformation is the emergence of the Self" (Cranton, 2006, p. 51). The process of individuation requires the differentiation of one's self from those significant others who have influenced their lives in the past. This can be an unsettling process as it involves questioning assumptions and perspectives that were uncritically absorbed from influential role models such as parents and previous teachers (Cranton, 2006). This is significant during the preservice experiences where the mentor teachers can be influential in developing beginning teachers' beliefs towards teaching, and in particular inclusion of students experiencing learning difficulties. While there are varying views about how transformational learning occurs it is clear the process of

transformation has a strong influence over behaviour and therefore teaching practices.

Some teachers may follow a rational approach to transformative learning based on logic and reasoning. Others may follow a more emotional approach based on emotional, intuitive decision-making. Regardless, transformational learning is "a process by which previously uncritically assimilated assumptions, beliefs, values, and perspectives are questioned and thereby become more open, permeable, and better validated" (Cranton, 2006, p. 2).

Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) rhizome model works well to draw these various perspectives of transformational learning together. As the rhizome model illustrates, individual subject positioning is fluid and can change as a result of experience and reflection. Subject positioning being fluid, the position of teacher is challenged and modified through the process of reflection as the teacher comes to terms with their personal beliefs and how these may align with or challenge the deficit model of learning. Transformation that occurs when the deficit model is contested requires changes to personal beliefs. Ideologies are challenged and practices re-created so more inclusive and just perspectives of teaching and learning can develop within the new subject positioning of the teacher. A rhizomatic model of transformative learning was a suitable model to adopt in this study as factors from the environment as well as within the individual contributed to teachers' transformative learning.

Conclusion

Critical reflection was identified throughout Chapter 2 as an important process for teachers and is strongly linked to effective teaching and teacher improvement. In Chapter 3, critical reflection was identified as an important component of critical pedagogy and necessary for change and emancipation to occur in education. The importance of critical reflection continued to be investigated in terms of transformational learning, in this instance transformational learning of preservice teachers as they move into the role of beginning teacher.

As one who believes learning occurs in different ways for different people it would be unreasonable to assume transformative learning occurs in one way. For some transformation may occur through the development of relationships.

Conversely, for others it may be a process developed from within the individual. Nevertheless, it is a complex, recursive process with multiple influencing factors.

Learner empowerment is a goal and condition for transformative learning. Empowerment requires the learner to engage in critical reflection, participate in discourse, and act on revised perspectives (Cranton, 2006) leading to praxis. It has the potential to help teachers gain greater control over their practice through the development of confidence and efficacy (Thompson, 2011).

Critical reflection allows the individual to question personal assumptions and perspectives and is seen as essential in transformative learning (Brookfield, 1991; Mezirow, 2000). While critical reflection can occur through introspection, it also requires interaction with significant others. For Mezirow, involvement of others allows for discourse involving the assessment of beliefs, feelings, and values (Cranton, 2006). According to Brookfield (1995; 2000) others are needed in transformative learning to reflect back our point of view from varying angles and to sustain the commitment to the process of critical reflection. Preservice teachers are likely to encounter varying levels and types of support that may foster critical reflection and praxis. This is influential in determining the various subject positions they occupy throughout their transformative journey to beginning teacher.

This chapter proposes that through rhizomatic transformational learning beginning teachers can develop the capacity to challenge personal and institutional barriers that can limit their practices. Critical social theory and critical pedagogy present a language of possibility that introduces new ways of working and broadens beginning teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning. Therefore, this has the potential to impact on classroom decision-making and practice. However, the language of possibility can only be realised through ideology critique. Central to this process is critical reflection.

This research used a multicase study approach to examine the rhizomatic transformation of preservice to beginning teachers. The methodology used in this study forms the basis of the discussion in the following chapter.

Chapter 4: Research Design

Chapter 4 addresses the methodological considerations related to this research. First, the research question is re-introduced and the research is located within a social constructionist epistemology. Second, a discussion validates the choice of methodology, introduces the participants, and outlines the research procedure. Next, the discussion turns to methods where the processes implemented for data collection, analysis, and management are examined. Finally, the issue of trustworthiness and ethics related to the research are examined.

The Research Question

There are a multitude of societal and personal factors that influence teachers and teaching. Consequently, a critical social lens was considered the most effective way to address the research question

What sociocultural factors contribute to the transformation of beginning teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning, and how do these factors influence the provision of effective teaching for students experiencing learning difficulties?

Social Constructionism

The study was grounded in a social constructionist epistemology. "As an epistemology, social constructionism asserts that knowledge is historically, culturally specific; that language constitutes rather than reflects reality, and is both a precondition for thought and a form of social action; that the focus of inquiry should be on interaction, processes and social practices" (Young & Collin, 2004, p. 377). Furthermore, social constructionism not only emphasises that knowledge is socially constructed it attempts to identify and locate the historical and cultural roots of that construction (Young & Collin, 2004). Constructionism is

> the view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interactions between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context (Crotty, 1998, p. 42).

Meaning, therefore, is not discovered but constructed through interpretation of lived experiences (Young & Collin, 2004). It is socially constructed where the focus is on "the collective generation (and transmission) of meaning" (Crotty, 1998, p. 58).

Accordingly, the culture within which an individual lives or works is influential in shaping how the world is viewed and interpreted. From this perspective, it could be assumed the culture of the work environment as well as personal circumstances contribute to way teachers view and interpret situations that arise in the classroom. However, critical theory is suspicious of the constructed meaning and the influence of culture.

Burr (1995) presents a broad set of characteristics that shape the interpretation of social constructionism. These characteristics shape the epistemological position of this research.

1. This research takes a critical stance towards taken for granted knowledge and ways of interpreting the world.

2. Interpretations of events are time specific and therefore researcher reflexivity allows the historical and cultural influences on interpretations to be challenged. Researcher reflexivity is discussed later in this chapter (see Researcher as Data Collection Instrument).

3. The construction of knowledge is evolving and created through ongoing social interactions, which themselves are a product of previous interactions.

4. Negotiated understandings are influenced by the political, social, and economic factors which determine the value privileged to certain kinds of knowledge, and usually facilitate the interests of the more powerful groups.

However, research within a social constructionist epistemology "retain[s] some concept of the active, agentic person" (Burr, 1995, p. 99) and consequently complements a paradigm of critical inquiry.

This research sits well within a critical theory paradigm based on the critical nature of the research focus and the epistemological belief that knowledge is a social construct that accompanies power (Burr, 1995). Knowledge as a representation of an event or concept suggests a particular way of acting or thinking and as a result has an implied power. For example, if a teacher comes to understand delayed progress in reading is related to a student's limited opportunity and exposure to ineffective teaching then she may be more likely to evoke responsive strategies than if she came

to understand the issue as a result of a deficit within the child. Therefore, knowledge implies power. So, who holds the power when it comes to decide what legitimises and counts as knowledge? This research investigated how beginning teachers position themselves as agentive through ideology critique which was outlined in Chapter 3.

Methodology

Multicase study

Multicase study was the major tool employed for this project. Multicase studies, like case study research, are "studies of particularization more than generalization" (Stake, 2006, p. 8). The use of multicase study aims to provide a fuller picture of a situation (Stake, 1994). As Merriam (1998) suggests, case study research is interested in providing insight and interpretation rather than testing a hypothesis. This aligns with the goals of this study and was deemed as a suitable design for this project. Merriam (1998) identifies four domains within which case study may be situated: ethnographic, historical, psychological, and sociological. This case study research drew on the sociological domain. It was concerned with "the constructs of society and socialization in studying educational phenomena" (Merriam, 1998, p. 37) related to the beginning teacher journey and their understanding of teaching students experiencing learning difficulties.

Case study was chosen because of the suitability to the purpose of this research. The aim of this research was to understand in-depth the sociocultural factors that influence how preservice teachers perceive teaching and learning, particularly with regards to students experiencing learning difficulties, and how this influences their practice as they move from preservice status to beginning teacher. Case study allows the researcher to gain insight "through the eyes of the participants" (Cohen et al., 2000, p.183). Qualitative researchers put a high priority on direct interpretation of events (Stake, 1995). "Standard qualitative design calls for the persons most responsible for interpretations to be in the field, making observations, exercising subjective judgement, analysing and synthesizing, all the while realizing their own consciousness" (Stake, 1995, p. 41). Researcher consciousness is discussed later in this chapter.

In this study, thick descriptions were used to present the direct perceptions of the participants. This allows the reader to engage in the experience, reflect, and learn. Stake and Turnbull (1982, as cited in Stake, 2006) refer to this learning as naturalistic generalizations. Thick descriptions were used to present "detail, context, emotion, and the webs of social relationships that join persons to one another ... [and] established the significance of an experience, [so] ...voices, feelings, actions, and meanings of interacting individual [could be] heard" (Denzin, 1989, p. 83). Stake (1995) proposes the qualitative researcher organise the study to maximise the opportunity for naturalistic generalisations, therefore, relying on the participant and reader experience. Thick descriptions and multiple realities add rigour to the data as participants accounts are detailed and can be confirmed and substantiated (Denzin, 1989).

The group, category, or phenomenon to be studied in multicase research is referred to as the *quintain* and are connected by some element of commonality (Stake, 2006). Each case was an individual preservice teacher. Seven cases were investigated and made up the quintain. The commonality of this particular quintain was that they were preservice teachers in their final year of preservice training in primary education who would go on to become classroom teachers in the primary setting. Stake (1995) also espouses the importance of both balance and variety. He highlights the value of diversity in a multicase study and notes "an important reason for doing the multicase study is to examine how the program or phenomenon performs in different environments" (Stake, 2006, p. 23). While each of the participants completed the same university course they came to the course with multiple life histories and diverse experiences. In addition, each participant gained their preservice experience and employment in different settings. Rather than being detrimental to the multicase approach it provides the opportunity to learn of the complexities of the pathways to teaching and the context in which it occurred.

Case study design allowed for in-depth insight into the participants' perception of teaching and learning, and the factors that influenced how they responded to students experiencing learning difficulties. An extended data collection period also aided a deep understanding of the participants. The timeframe of this study spanned two significant periods of the participants' development: their final year of an undergraduate university course and their initial year as a qualified teacher.

Participants

Participants in this study were drawn from preservice teachers enrolled in a Bachelor of Education course in a university located in a capital city in Australia. The Bachelor of Education is a four year course consisting of eight 12 week semesters of study. The participants were specialising in primary education preparing to teach students who are approximately 5-12 years of age. Part of the course involves practical experience. Preservice teachers undertake five blocks of practical experiences within the four year course. Table 4.1 illustrates the scheduling, purpose, and duration of the practical experiences.

Table 4.1

Preservice Experience during University Training

Year	Duration	Purpose
		The preservice teacher has the opportunity to:
1	5 days	• observe both the teacher and young children in learning and teaching situations. (Prep-Year 3 setting)
2	20 days	• explore and apply effective pedagogies with a focus on middle years learning. (Year 4-7 setting)
3	20 days	• explore and apply effective pedagogies with a focus on behaviour management strategies and student engagement
4	20 days (+5 introductory days)	• explore and apply effective pedagogies with increased responsibility for planning and managing the classroom while supported by the mentor teacher
	30 days-internship	• increase their responsibility for planning, teaching, and assessing student learning.
		• plan, implement, and evaluate collaboratively with their mentor
		• develop and demonstrate the professional, ethical, and values-based standards and competencies required of beginning teachers.

The participants involved in this research project were drawn from the fourth year of the Bachelor of Education program. Appendix B contains a description of each participant and the school settings where they undertook their professional

experiences and/or gained full time employment. Participants completed a personal profile at the beginning of Stage B of the project (the beginning teaching year) and direct quotes were extracted where appropriate to illustrate particular characteristics and experiences the participants brought to the study.

Recruitment

All students enrolled in a core course within the Bachelor of Education program (n=approx. 180) focusing on the principles of inclusive education were invited to participate in the research project. Recruitment of participants was two-fold. First, an email containing an attachment about the project was sent to all students in the core unit by the University's school secretary. Second, the email was followed up by the researcher promoting the opportunity at the common lecture in week one of the semester. The response was disappointing with15 inquiries and 14 students deciding to join the project. Six participants left the program in the first year as a result of personal factors such as the decision to discontinue teacher training, pregnancy, and family related issues. Of the eight remaining participants seven gained employment as a classroom teacher in a primary school in 2012 and continued through the duration of the project. Appendix C contains the information that was distributed to participants and the consent form.

The quintain

Six female participants and one male participant made up the case study quintain. The strong female presence is representative of the dominance of female students in the Bachelor of Education Primary program and female teachers within the profession.

Research procedure

The research project had two parts. Part A involved data collection during the final year of university at three significant junctures: the beginning of the final year, the four week practicum experience midyear, and the six week internship; the final activity of the four year Bachelor of Education course. The initial reflective diary collected at the beginning of the final year of study was designed to capture information from the participants to contextualise the study. A total of fourteen participants completed this diary entry. This data was used to provide some baseline information on what the participants perceived were the causes of learning

difficulties, the previous experience and attitudes the participants held towards students experiencing learning difficulties, and also contextualised the study against prior research previously investigated in the literature review such as the work of Westwood (1995).

The second data collection point in Part A of the study occurred during and directly following the practicum experience in June, 2011. Three participants left the study at this point; one actually left the Bachelor of Education program and two others stopped communicating despite several attempts to follow up via email. The remaining eleven participants completed four diary entries, one each week of the practicum, and one semi structured interview following the completion of the practicum. One participant completed only three diary entries assuming diary entry one from the practicum was actually the diary entry she completed at the start of the year. Due to multiple data collection points this has did not have a major impact on data collection.

The final data collection point in Part A of the study occurred during and directly following the six week internship. The internship was the final course requirement of the Bachelor of Education course. Participants completed four reflective diary entries and one semi structured interview. Seven participants completed this phase. Participants withdrew from the study due to a combination of the heavy demands of the internship and personal issues resulting in their inability to complete the diary entries. Others withdrew when it became clear they would not seek full time employment as a teacher in 2012 and therefore could not continue in the study.

The remaining seven participants gained full time employment in 2012 as classroom teachers within primary classrooms and continued onto the second stage of the study. Their data from Part A were retained and together with the data in Part B were examined in greater depth through multicase study and formed the quintain of the study (Stake, 2006). Through natural attrition of participants the individual case studies to form the quintain presented themselves. According to Stake (2006) if fewer than four cases are selected the benefits of multicase study are limited. Conversely, more than ten cases can prove to be unmanageable with excessive data difficult to understand (Stake, 2006).

Part B of the study commenced in 2012. Data were collected through reflective diary entries, semi structured interviews, and classroom observations. Each participant completed six reflective diary entries and four semi structured interviews. Most teachers were observed teaching in their classrooms on four occasions except for one, where permission to conduct observations was not given by the principal. A second participant was observed on three occasions only as permission to conduct observations from the system within which he worked was not available until second term. Table 4.2 shows the timeline of the project.

Table 4.2

Timeline of Project

	What	Who	When
Part A **2011**	**Initial Data Collection** Initial Reflective Diary	14 volunteer participants from 4th Year Bach Ed Primary course	Week One Semester One March 2011
	Practicum Data Collection Four Reflective Diaries One semi structured interview	12 of the remaining volunteer participants from 4th Year Bach Ed Primary course	June/July, 2011
	Internship Data Collection Four reflective diaries One semi structured interview	Seven of the remaining volunteer participants from 4th Year Bach Ed Primary course	November/December, 2011
Part B **2012**	**Beginning Teacher Data Collection** Six reflective diaries Four classroom observations* Four semi structured interviews	The remaining seven volunteer participants outlined above (*no classroom observations for one participant ^no classroom observation this month for one participant)	Reflective Diaries- February, March, May, June, August, and September Classroom Observations*- March^, May, August, and October Semi structured interviews- March, May, August, October

Methods

Data collection instruments

A variety of data collection instruments were utilised. Reflective diaries and semi-structured interviews were the tools used in Part A. Classroom observations

were used in addition to reflective diaries and semi-structured interviews in Part B. Copies of these instruments are available in Appendix D. Participant profiles, memos, the researcher's diary, and facesheets (summaries of data) also contributed to data. Multiple sources of evidence collection tools were selected to increase the trustworthiness of the study. This discussion is expanded later in this chapter. This approach is not designed to arrive at a *complete truth* but to investigate, reflect on, and question the reality and reveal how certain elements of the assumed reality may be hindering or advancing the participants' teaching practices.

The following section explains the research tools used in the case study. Initially, the role of the researcher is introduced as a data collection instrument, acknowledging the multiple selves I bring to the study. Following this, each data collection tool is described and justified. A timeline for data collection is presented which links each data source to the research questions being investigated. Then, the discussion moves to data analysis and management, and concludes with the ethical considerations for this study.

Researcher as data collection instrument

Given the social constructionist epistemology of this research it is unreasonable to think I, as researcher, was a passive collector of information in this process. Rather, it is understood that I was an active data collection instrument who co constructed meanings with the participants within the events in the research process (King & Horrocks, 2010). Therefore, personal reflexivity was required to ensure the trustworthiness of the study (Simons, 2009). Reflexive thinking allowed me to consider how my role and the multiple selves (Davies & Harré 1990) I bring to the research process had the potential to influence data collection, interpretation, and how conclusions were drawn (King & Horrocks, 2010; Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2009). Thus, the multiple selves of the researcher were identified and their impact considered. In particular, the constructionist self, the nurturing self, the political self, and the professional self were deemed most significant.

The epistemological belief upon which this research is founded reflects my understanding of how people exist in the world and how meaning is socially constructed through interactions. However, it is not static and is influenced by events over time and as such has the potential to be challenged. Therefore, this supported

my ideal that inclusive education, where education is equitable for all, is a distinct possibility. This is the constructionist self I bring to the research.

I consider myself to be a nurturer, which I feel is what originally attracted me into teaching. As a mother of two adult children, I have a daughter the same age as many of my participants, which I recognise impacted on how I interacted with these people. I have shared their professional and personal triumphs and challenges, often empathising as a mother. I have had to be mindful of the protective and rescuing role I have wanted to play in our relationship finding a balance between offering support as critical friend but conscious of the limitations of my role in this process.

My political self allowed me to recognise the historic events in my career that have coloured my view of educational institutions. Having taught in the classroom for twenty years, experienced what I perceived as poor leadership, inequitable access to opportunity, and injustices in resource allocation, I had to be aware this did not taint how I co constructed the meaning presented by participants.

Finally, my professional self was a factor to consider. I have mentored numerous beginning teacher in my role as senior teacher and supervised practicum students whilst working as a sessional lecturer and tutor at university. I have certain expectations as to what preservice and beginning teachers should bring to their roles in the classroom. I became very aware during my initial data collection and analysis that I was making judgements on certain events during classroom observations based on these criteria. Being reflexive allowed me to address these issues openly adding to the transparency of the data collection and analysis.

The discussion now turns to the other data collection tools employed in this study. These include participant reflective diaries, semi structured interviews, classroom observations, facesheets (summaries), researcher diary and memos.

Participant reflective diaries

The role of reflection and the importance of values, attitudes, and beliefs in transformative learning were emphasised in the discussion in Chapter 3 outlining the theoretical framework of this study. Participant reflective diaries provided a tool for reflection that provided sources of data providing insight into the participants' values, attitudes, and beliefs and how they interpret events in the classroom

(Merriam, 1998). Their usefulness lies not in what they say occurred in a particular situation but in revealing the participants' perspective of a situation which ultimately is the purpose of the data collection tool.

Participants provided nine reflective diary entries in the course of the first year. Initially, participants responded to a single diary entry to communicate their thoughts about the causes of learning difficulties and their experiences dealing with children who they considered were experiencing learning difficulties. To increase the user friendly nature of the data collection tool and guide the participants towards the relevant issues of the research, the template of the first entry contained suggested guidelines for writing an entry and researcher expectations (Alaszewski, 2006). This information was also reinforced through face to face explanations prior to the template being emailed. During the four week practicum experience participants completed one diary entry per week with another four completed during the internship. While I was very interested in providing participants with space to voice issues and concerns within the broader context of teaching and decision-making in the classroom my primary concern was about how they perceived and responded to students experiencing learning difficulties. Thus, I provided an overarching question to consider as they answered the diary questions. The question used to focus their response was "What decisions have you implemented that directly relate to the enhanced education of students experiencing learning difficulties?" In addition, interviews were used in conjunction with diaries and allowed more details of particular aspects of the information to be provided (Alaszewski, 2006).

Developing the questions

A diary template, which was optional to use, was provided and contained the same open-ended questions each time during the first year. Participants were always given the opportunity to communicate additional information, which they thought was important but did not fit within the given questions, as a way of ensuring they had space to verbalise their concerns that may not otherwise have been heard. The final question was always "Is there anything else you want to tell me?"

Although open-ended and qualitative in nature the choice of questions used in the diary template were influenced by Likert-style surveys, used in earlier research by Westwood (1995) and Woolfson and Brady (2009). These questions examined

teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards student's experiencing learning difficulties and the origins of these difficulties. Questions were also developed through conversations with my supervisors and colleagues in the field of inclusive education. Questions were trialled on previous cohorts of 4th year preservice teachers as part of the pedagogy I use to encourage teacher reflection.

Diary templates were emailed to participants and the completed diaries were returned to me in the same manner. Email addresses were provided by participants. Diary responses were identified by the pseudonyms chosen by participants. Hard copies were printed, filed in folders for corresponding participants and data sets, and stored in a locked filing cabinet. Electronic copies were uploaded into the NVivo program (QSR International, n. d.) and sorted into files that replicated the hard copy organisation.

Developing the template for Part A

Although the template format was optional, all participants accepted this structure and usually attempted to address all questions. The same questions were used on each occasion to assist in establishing a deep understanding of the views of the participants. Many participants expressed their initial hesitation in joining the study because of the use of reflections and their experiences with this at university. The guidelines provided regarding word count, language style, and the question format and prompts were welcomed by the participants who felt it was easier to complete the task with explicit expectations. While the questions were mostly open-ended, prompts were used to support participants' thinking (Larrivee, 2008). The prompts would have influenced the types of things the student wrote about and considered within their reflections. While this helped to focus the types of data I was able to collect it was not considered to be limiting due to the open nature of the questions.

At times, it was necessary to follow up with participants who had overlooked completing the diary entry. Reminders were sent through email and text messaging.

Developing the template for Part B

During their first year as a beginning teacher participants completed six diary entries between February and September. The template for the reflective diaries in

Part B was similar in format to Part A, however, there was a slight variation in the questions each time. Responses to the diary questions were used as data in themselves and also to develop the questions for subsequent interviews. In addition, the questions were developed from previous observations, data analysis, or in response to certain aspects of the theory illustrating the emergent nature of the research design (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Again, diary formats were delivered through email communication and reminders sent through email and text messaging.

Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were held after the practicum period, internship, and each term during the beginning teacher year, and complemented the collaborative nature of the study. Semi structured interviews provided flexibility to ensure the researcher was able to gain data which could be enriched through probing. The flexibility also allowed the participants to express their views and raise issues they deemed important (Cohen et al., 2000). Interviewing allowed the researcher to gather descriptions and interpretations from participants in their own words (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008) enabling multiple views to be portrayed (Stake, 1995). Interviews were held face to face in settings chosen by the participants. In the first year they were held either in an office at the University or a coffee shop. In the second year they were held in the participants' classrooms or in the case of the participant whose principal did not give permission for me to enter the school to collect data, in an offsite venue.

An interview data recording protocol was used to keep the interview sessions focused but flexible. The questions were used to clarify information or elicit further details obtained from the diary entries and provided opportunities for data follow up during analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For example, probing questions included "Tell me about a student in your class experiencing learning difficulties" or "How do you make the curriculum more accessible for that child?" However, the semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed flexibility for the participants to fully express their opinions. Probes were recorded on the protocol as a useful reminder of ways to elicit or clarify information given by the participants. The protocol was not used to record information during the interview as the process was recorded using an Echo Smartpen and later transcribed verbatim in preparation for data analysis. This

allowed the interview to progress in a relaxed, conversational manner and helped to put the participants and researcher at ease.

Taping and transcribing the interviews, although time consuming, was beneficial for a number of reasons. It allowed accurate recall of what was actually said in the interview, provided opportunities for review of material to confirm full understanding. It also provided further opportunities to check for non verbal cues, such as laughter or long pauses, that may have been missed in the initial interview (Cohen et al., 2000). However with these advantages come drawbacks. While the process of recording gave undisputed accounts of what was said, it may have created a threat for some participants and prevented them from exposing some information. This was more evident in the initial interviews when the participants and researcher were still establishing rapport and some participants seemed hesitant in their responses. This could have been their discomfort of the recording devise or the uptake time required for processing what it was they actually wanted to say. However, in subsequent interviews participants came to expect this procedure and spoke as openly when the tape recorder was on as they did during casual conversations. In spite of the initial drawback, taping the interview was considered useful as a counter measure to researcher inexperience, and the drawback was minimised by the researcher-participant rapport and trust that developed.

I attempted to minimise my input into the interview process so the participants' line of thinking was not interrupted. However, even utterances and short replies carry meaning and contributed to the meaning being constructed between researcher and participant (Associate Professor A. Woods, personal communication, December 14, 2011). In any case, the participants were well aware of my position with regard to inclusive education due to our prior relationship at university where I was employed as a sessional tutor and lecturer. Any attempt to overtly mask this would have interfered with the integrity of our relationship. What was important was the emphasis I placed on hearing their view. It was their experiences and views I was interested in during the research process, and only they could paint the picture of the beginning teacher's transition that I was interested in investigating.

Attempts were made to avoid leading questions that did not allow the participants to express their ideas freely. Similarly, attempts to limit dichotomous

questions that require yes or no type responses were also made as these question types limit the flow of the conversation and inhibit the collection of in-depth information (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2009). Interacting with the transcripts and reflecting on these two aspects of interview questioning enabled me to become more skilled in this area during subsequent interviews and more responsive to other aspects of the interview such as silences.

The silences that occurred during the interviews have meaning and were data in themselves (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2009). Silences at times signalled participants needed additional time to formulate their thoughts, perhaps challenged by the question, or needed time to reflect on their responses. Other times, the silence was a space for composure after emotions, such as frustration, bubbled to the surface. Critical reflection, especially when values, attitudes, and beliefs are being examined, can be an emotionally moving and difficult experience (Cranton, 2006). Silences were also recognised as a sign of fatigue in some instances and signalled an appropriate time to conclude the interview.

Ample time was allocated after each interview to prepare a verbatim transcript so the participants had an opportunity to respond to the interpretations of the researcher adding to the trustworthiness of the information gleaned (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and to the development of researcher–participant rapport and trust (Simons, 2009).

Both the diaries and the interviews provided an opportunity for me to lead the participants through the process of critical reflection. Although participants had been exposed to frameworks to guide their reflections during their university studies (see Bain et al., 2002) I chose not to use such a structured framework in this research. My previous discussions with students when working as a practicum supervisor, and tutor in the course work prior to the practicum, indicated they were frustrated by the expectations to write reflections during the practicum experience. I interpreted this to mean they did not fully understand the process or the benefits to them and their teaching practice. Russell (2005) claims "reflective practice can and should be taught–explicitly, directly, thoughtfully and patiently" (p. 203). I chose to guide participants' reflections through open-ended questioning. At the interview I used prompts to foster deeper thinking about issues that they raised either in the diary or

the interview (Larrivee, 2008). In the beginning teaching year I provided them with my definition of critical reflection as an option to consider when they were completing their diaries or their own reflections.

Classroom observations

Observation provides the opportunity for the researcher to observe first hand issues relating to each case (Merriam, 1998). Because it is difficult to interpret what is observed, observations were also followed up with interviews to gain insight from the participants (Cohen et al., 2000; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Therefore, observations provided data that were used to triangulate and substantiate emerging themes (Cohen et al., 2000; Merriam, 1998). Also necessary to validate observations is an understanding of the events preceding the observation. For example, Theresa disclosed during a discussion at the follow up interview about a difficult parent-teacher conference she has experienced directly before the classroom observation which she explained impacted on the lesson I observed (Research Memo March 2, 2012). This parent-teacher conference not only emotionally drained her; it also ran overtime and encroached on her time for lesson preparation. This resulted in her changing the lesson plan as she entered the room minutes before the observation took place.

I took on the role of overt observer. My participants were clear on my purpose for being there and were familiar with the data collection template. Only one participant introduced me to their class in the first round of visits. I interpreted this was due to their nervousness at my presence and their attempts to create as normal a session as possible. Most participants introduced me to their class at the second and subsequent visits as a person who was watching them teach. Two participants chose not to highlight my presence to the students perhaps because teacher observation was a common occurrence at their schools although usually conducted by the administration team. On the occasions I was not introduced students rarely questioned my presence. I was usually positioned in the classroom prior to the students entering the room. I was positioned usually at the rear or side of the room where I could reposition myself in the same spot to follow the movements of the participant with minimal disruption to the class.

It would be naive to assume the researcher as observer in the classroom did not change the dynamics of the event. My presence in the classroom more than likely created some form of stress or tension for the participants. This in turn was likely to influence the behaviour of the participants and also of the students in the class which needed to be taken into account when observations were being made (Merriam, 1998). The tension caused by my presence was discussed openly with the participants and along with the rapport I had developed with the participants over the preceding twelve months helped to alleviate some of their stress. Some participants indicated their comfort with the process by sharing conversations they had with other staff who questioned why they would want to subject themselves to observations (Sandra, personal communication, May 16, 2012; Logan personal communication, February 29, 2012).

Classroom observations provided a multisensory approach to understanding what was happening in the classroom (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Observations allowed access to information the participant may not have offered during the interview either because they did not see it as relevant or they were not comfortable raising the issue. Subtle factors including mannerism, non verbal communications, and voice which could represent the hidden curriculum (Apple, 2004; Kanpol, 1994) were able to be observed first hand. These subtle factors communicate information that is unintended by or even unconscious in the participant and provided valuable material to challenge the participant through critical reflection.

A template specifically designed for this study was used to record observations (see Appendix D).

Developing the template

A template was designed to facilitate the generation of thick descriptions which allowed for more accurate explanations and interpretations of events (Cohen et al., 2000). The template style was drawn from The CLASS observation tool (Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008) and organised teacher–student interactions into the four domains; personal attributes, recognised value and worth of students, problematises teaching, and identifies/responds to school barriers to learning. The development of the classroom observation tool followed early data analysis and hence, the domains

were drawn from the subthemes and codes that had previously been established for data analysis.

The template provided descriptions of behaviours that linked actions to sub themes. While this list was not considered conclusive it did provide a guide that was useful for an inexperienced observer. Where an event was considered important, but did not fit within a predefined domain, it was noted in a blank area for later consideration. This was important to ensure the researcher remained open-minded about the data. Space was also provided on the template to record detailed contextual information, direct speech of the participant, diagrams of the physical setting and descriptions in low inference language (Cohen et al., 2000). Questions and notes to be addressed at the follow up interview were also recorded on the template. Following the observation and the follow up interview a facesheet (summary) was constructed which expanded the notes, noted emerging analytic insights drawn from the data, and listed considerations for future data collection.

Other tools

Memos and researcher journal

Researcher memos and journals were used as a means to monitor my own thinking and decision-making during the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Justifying how the themes, sub themes and codes emerged from the literature and data is one example of how memos were used. My use of memos also extended to include think maps, diagrams, and tables in an attempt to link theory and data.

A researcher journal allowed me to note various concerns about the research process. Reflexive thinking was recorded and allowed me to explore the influence I was having on the process. Issues such as allowing equitable space to participant voice and not privileging the less articulate is one example noted and later examined during the analysis process. Recording in a researcher journal was particularly useful following workshops, discussions, and personal experiences designed to extend my researcher skills.

Data Analysis

Table 4.3 outlines the timeline of data collection and the links between data analysis and the subsidiary research questions.

Table 4.3

Procedural Timetable of Data Collection and Analysis

Research Question

What sociocultural factors contribute to the transformation of beginning teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning, and how do these factors influence the provision of effective teaching for students experiencing learning difficulties?

Sub questions

SQ1- What factors do beginning teachers attribute to development of learning difficulties?

SQ2. What do beginning teachers see as essential elements of learning and the learning environment for students experiencing learning difficulties?

SQ3. How does the school culture influence beginning teachers' decision-making including their role in teaching students experiencing learning difficulties?

SQ4. What personal attributes influence beginning teachers' decision-making including their role in teaching students experiencing learning difficulties?

What	Who	Research SQ Addressed	When	Analysis
Initial Data Collection Initial Reflective Diary	14 volunteer participants from 4th year Bach Education Primary Course	SQ1	March, 2011	Coded for emerging themes and sub themes Comparison to earlier work of Westwood
Practicum Data Collection 4 Reflective diaries 1 Semi- structured interview	12 of the remaining volunteer participants from 4th year Bach Education Primary Course	SQ1-4	June /July, 2011	Coded for emerging themes and sub themes Links made to initial reflective diary responses and triangulated with other data sources
Internship Data Collection 4 Reflective diaries 1 Semi- structured interview	7 of the remaining volunteer participants from 4th year Bach Education Primary Course	SQ1-4	November/ December, 2011	Coded for established and emerging themes and sub themes Links made to previous data set and triangulated with other data sources
Beginning Teacher Data Collection 6 Reflective diaries 4 Classroom Observations* 4 Semi- structured interview	The remaining 7 volunteer participants from 4th year Bach Education Primary Course *self observations for one participant ^ no classroom observation for one participant this month	SQ1-4	February-October, 2012	Coded for emerging and established themes and sub themes Links made to previous data sets and triangulated with other data sources

The data analysis presented in this thesis draws from data provided by the final seven participants only. Thematic analysis was used in this study as a method for "identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). The data analysis process was guided by techniques described by Lincoln and Guba (1985), and Braun and Clarke (2006). The iterative nature of the data analysis process is illustrated in Figure 4.1. A detailed description of this process follows.
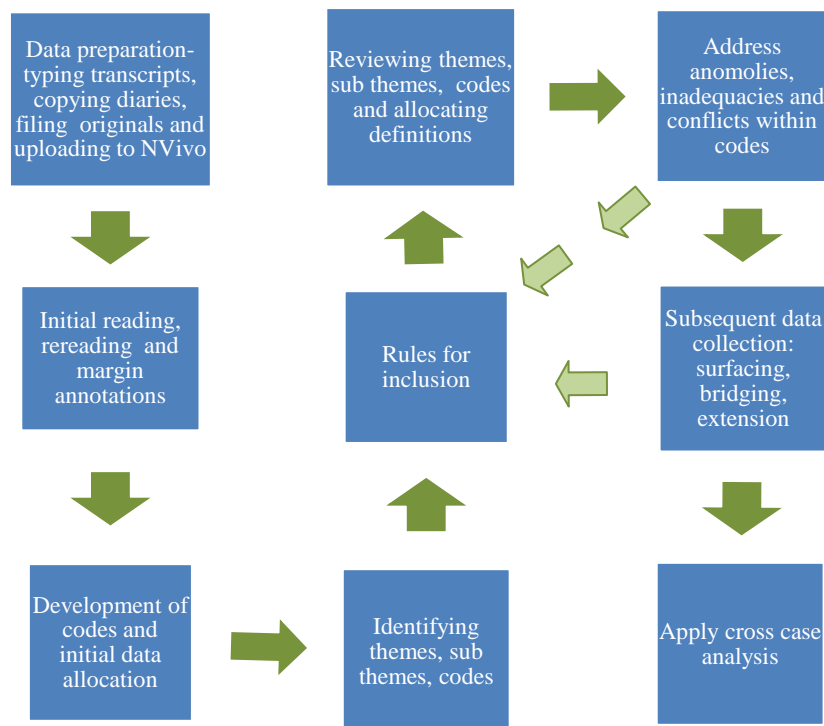
Figure 4.1. Process of data analysis.

Initially, I found selecting codes, creating themes and sub themes challenging because I was constantly worried about imposing my ideas onto the data. To overcome this I met with my supervisors and colleagues to discuss hunches, utilised inter-researcher reliability checks, and engaged in ongoing researcher reflexivity.

I familiarised myself with the data by typing my own transcripts. However, due to time constraints at some stages of data collection interviews were transcribed by an outside source. Nonetheless, I edited each transcription listening to the original audio several times to ensure the transcriptions were honest accounts of each

interview. Having the transcripts prepared by an outside source in no way reduced my knowledge of the content of the data. It simply streamlined the process.

I commenced data analysis while I was collecting Data Set One (Practicum). This involved recording in the margins key words I felt may be potential codes. After reading through the diary responses I formulated a set of open-ended questions that were used to guide the semi structured interviews. This pattern recurred throughout the entire data collection process.

Once I had read through several interview transcripts and participant diaries I started to feel some similarities in what students were saying and linked some codes to create sub themes and allocated loose descriptions. I continued this process adding new data from Data Set Two (Internship) and started to look for a way to link the sub themes.

The inclusive education literature was more influential in at this stage of organising the data. This may be because I was more comfortable with the content, given I was lecturing and tutoring in this area at university, and was still coming to terms with the slippery content of critical social theory and Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) concept of the rhizome. Using the research question I created two themes: personal factors and cultural factors. Drawing on key concepts from inclusive education I organised the codes into a concept map under these two themes. As I became more comfortable with the process of analysis and formed a deeper understanding of how the theoretical framework informed this analysis it became evident certain features were missing from the concept map. I used the literature review and the theoretical framework to identify the gaps. This eventually gave me an alternate way to code the data and two major themes were named personal attributes and humanising practices.

Using the work of Saldaña (2009) and the advice of my supervisors I created a table to organise a set of what I called themes, sub themes, and codes and wrote descriptions for each item in the set. I used these headings to organise my data and format my concept map which illustrated the links amongst the data. I then went back to my research question and allocated a theme, sub theme, or code to a corresponding question to check for voids. Some additional codes were created. This presented a tidy package of critical theory and inclusive education but ignored

Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) rhizome which was supposed to be illustrating the transformation.

It was not clear initially how Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) rhizome was going to be included but as rhizomatic theory contends, learning is not a linear process (Allan, 2011). I went back and forth from the data, to the theoretical framework, to the literature review. I engaged in countless conversation with my supervisors and colleagues and through problematising the data in a variety of ways I had my own ruptures in thinking and I began to conceptualise analysis as a three dimensional model. I was unable to create my three dimensional thinking on the computer so I constructed a diorama, similar to one I have asked my grade threes to construct during a unit on under the sea. As primitive as this process may seem it served its purpose to consolidate my understanding of how I could express the data and the messy relationships that existed amongst it. As Allan (2011) suggests "the metaphor of the rhizome can be deployed effectively in relation to the process of analyzing research data, enabling what has previously been closed to surface and effect" (p. 158). A photograph of this three dimensional model appears in Appendix E and a two dimensional model is offered here. Figure 4.2 illustrates the final model used to organise and analyse the data and indicates the links to the subsidiary research questions. A final set of descriptions of each theme, sub theme and code is provided in Appendix F.
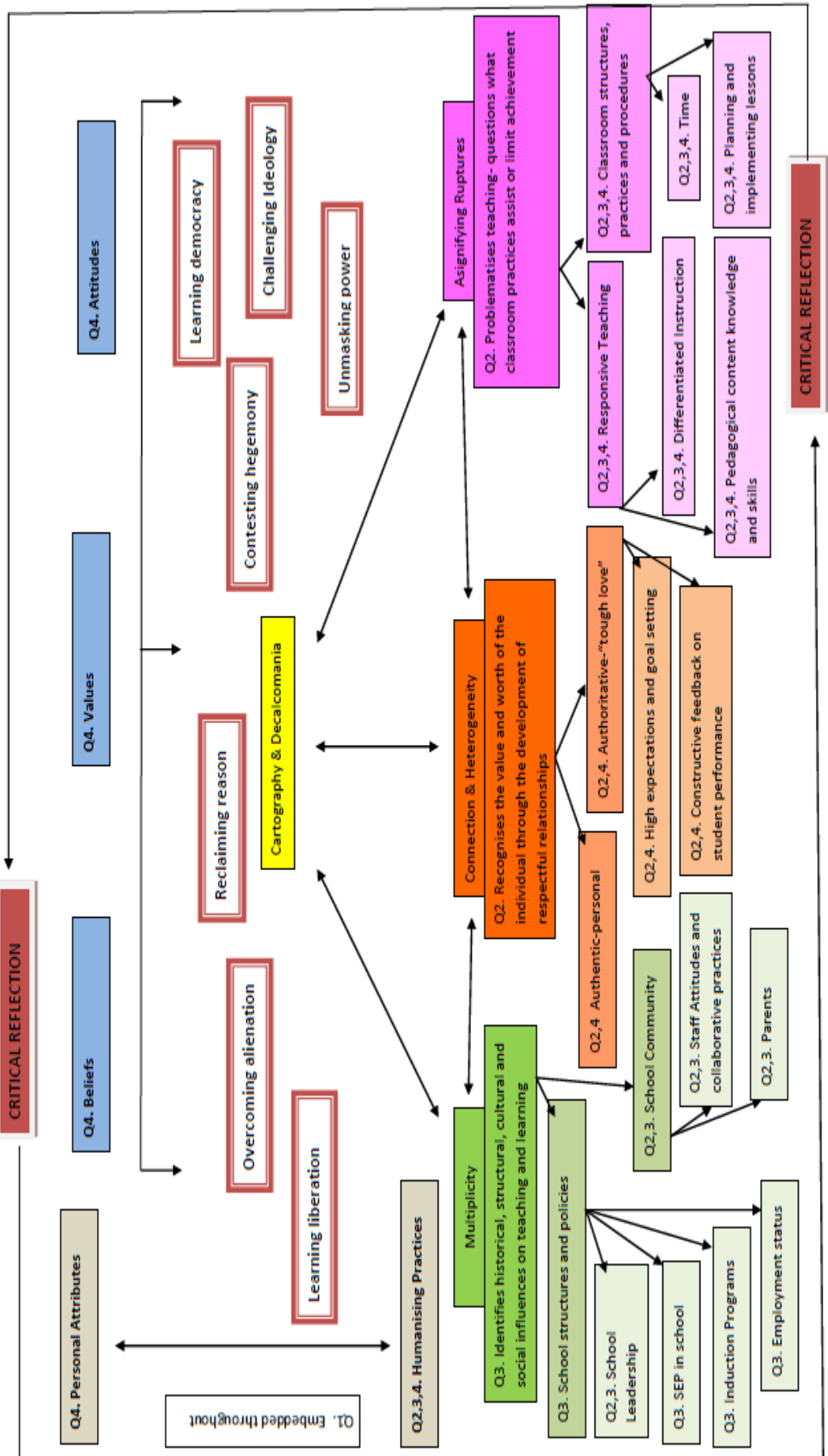
Figure 4.2. Theoretical framework for data analysis.

Critical reflection (identified in maroon/brown) encompasses the whole model because transformation cannot occur without it. Data have been sorted into two areas; personal attributes and humanising practices. Values, attitudes, and beliefs play an important role in shaping teachers' behaviour (Beswick, 2008; Silverman, 2007). Because limited or advanced knowledge and skills have also been identified as crucial elements for the difference between espoused and enacted beliefs (Carrington, 1999) this code originally formed the part of the personal attributes theme represented in blue. However, because of the overlap with elements of responsive teaching, knowledge and skills as a code was moved into theme 4– asignifying ruptures.

Three themes make up the humanising practices section and are drawn from Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) concept of the rhizome. A detailed description and application of each component is examined in detail in Chapter 3, however, a brief review follows to make explicit the links with the data analysis. Multiplicity (in green) is concerned with the new knowledge created when teachers connect theory from university to the situations they experience at their school site. The site becomes part of the multiplicity and through critical reflection beginning teachers identify and challenge the historical, structural, cultural, and social barriers to learning. According to Stake (2006) "the case's activities are expected to be influenced by contexts, so contexts need to be studied and described, whether or not evidence of influence is found" (p. 27).

Connection and Heterogeneity (in orange) signifies how reflective practitioners connect the theory of learner differences (medical v social) to the actual learning experiences in the classroom. In this instance, the worth and value of individual students is recognised through the development of respectful relationships.

Asignifying ruptures (in pink) occur when teachers problematise teaching and question what classroom practices are limiting achievement. As a result, they consider new and alternate approaches to teaching and learning by utilizing theoretical knowledge in new practical forms.

Central to the model is the final rhizome characteristic cartography and decalcomania (in yellow). These characteristics illustrate the *mapping* or *tracing* of teacher development as the beginning teachers engage in transformation by means of

ideology critique as identified through Brookfield's (2005) seven lessons of critical theory interspersed throughout the model. Beginning teachers who only engage in tracing, that is imitation of their mentor teacher's behaviour miss valuable opportunities for growth and limit the subject positions they occupy. The development of their identity is restricted by the institutional ideologies (Burr, 2003). Institutional, discourse, and affinity identities are all prone to influences of the work environment. Beginning teachers who create maps maintain greater control of the positions they assume by challenging or deliberately accepting various identities that are offered. While presented on the concept map in a linear fashion, the elements represent the interconnectedness of the sociocultural factors influencing rhizomatic teacher transformation.

The development of the model was a messy process in itself. The model was reviewed many times and endured numerous changes with some codes merging or separating, others being added or removed and other facets rearranged. Appendix G contains examples that illustrate the growth of the model.

In summary, the rhizome because of its messy and erratic nature, illustrates the process of transformation. The data cannot be compartmentalised when considered as part of the rhizome and that was one of the challenges when first organising and later analysing and reporting on the data. The interconnectivity of the data illustrates the tensions and complexity, and the ongoing nature, of learning to be a teacher (Henderson et al., *in press*). So each humanising practice taken from critical theory literature aligned with important features of inclusive education and was linked with three of Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) rhizome characteristics. Critical reflection and personal attributes were overarching influences and the sub theme of cartography and decalcomania describe how each characteristic "grew". Finally the seven lessons drawn from critical theory linked the cyclic process of praxis: critical reflection and action, that is required for transformation to occur.

Throughout the research process the researcher "endeavour[ed] to gather together the lived experiences that relate[d] to and define[d] the phenomenon under inspection" (Denzin, 1989, p.60). Each stage of data collection and analysis promoted questions and challenges that required revision and reflection, and simultaneously informed the next stage of data collection. Reading and rereading

created familiarity with the data and allowed the researcher to capture "reflections, tentative themes, hunches, ideas and things to pursue" (Merriam, 1998, p. 191). This was useful for informing the next stage of data collection.

Data analysis involves organising, understanding the context of, and interpreting the data (Cohen et al., 2000) through a process of coding, that is, creating categories or themes to describe discrete data and identifying frequency and patterns within the categories or themes. Once the initial data from each case was coded and categorised the process occurred across the quintain to create a cross case analysis (Stake, 2006). Multicase study requires with-in case analysis and cross case analysis (Merriam, 1998; Stake 2006). However, each case was analysed and understood for its particularity before cross case analysis occurs (Stake, 2006).

Managing the data

A large database was developed throughout this project and a computer program was utilised to manage the process. Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) has been employed by qualitative researchers for over a quarter of a century and is now well established as accepted practice in qualitative research (Kelle, 2004). NVivo9 (QSR International, n.d.), a CAQDAS package, was used in this research project as it allowed secure storage and management of all data types. The NVivo9 software was useful for physically organising data snippets into particular themes and codes and for modifying and editing theme, sub theme, and code description. It was also useful for drawing out examples when investigating hunches and relationships found within the data such as participants frequent reference to time. However, analysis of the data was done manually through the creation of notes, concept maps, lists and drawings as I constantly reread and reexamined the data (see Appendix H) for examples.

The discussion now turns towards the considerations employed to ensure the trustworthiness and thoroughness of the research process.

Trustworthiness

The use of case studies has been rejected by some researchers who consider the method lacks rigour (Flyvberg, 2004). However, due consideration to several technical aspects of case study was employed to alleviate these concerns which

contribute to the production of quality research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Stake 2006). While more traditional research approaches refer to credibility and reliability measures to judge the rigour of research, many qualitative researchers refer to the terms credibility and dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) as a means of exploring the criteria to establish trustworthiness of qualitative research. The quality of this case study design was enhanced through due deliberation to issues of trustworthiness (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Issues of trustworthiness are concerned with truth value and credibility, dependability, and transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Each of these components of trustworthiness is examined in relation to their meaning, their application to this study, and how each one was addressed.

Truth value and credibility

"Truth value" refers to an adequate representation of the multiple constructions extracted from the participants. The researcher must demonstrate truth value if the research is to be deemed credible (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). There were several ways the credibility of this study was enhanced. These include acknowledging and addressing researcher bias, prolonged engagement, member checking, multiple methods of data collection, triangulation of data within and across cases, and peer debriefing (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008).

As a data collection instrument in this study I have had to be mindful of how my preconceived ideas, previous experience and personal biases may have influenced the decision-making process during the design of this study and the construction of participants' stories. Researcher memos and journals were used as a means to monitor my own thinking and decision-making (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Discussion with my supervisors and other colleagues often provided important avenues for considering alternate perspectives. However, as researcher I acknowledge I am not totally impartial, and am a product of the ideological agenda I was attempting to disrupt (Cohen et al., 2000).

This research design considered prolonged engagement to increase the possibility of credible findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Prolonged engagement refers to the time spent with participants to develop a relationship and to gain a clear understanding of the participants' views. As data was collected over a period of almost two years the relationship between the researcher and participants developed

and changed. Initially, I was their university tutor and lecturer, and then I became the researcher and eventually a *critical friend* and sounding board. In the second year students used me as a critical friend. I intentionally highlighted to each participant that we were now both teachers in an effort to minimise the power imbalance (Cohen et al., 2000). During classroom observations my presence more than likely impacted on the participants' behaviour, despite my efforts to down play my presence. It is human nature to experience an emotional response to being observed and I acknowledge my presence may have impacted on their behaviour and typical responses to classroom events. However, we did discuss this aspect openly and by the time I came to complete the observations I had established a solid rapport with all participants. While some imbalance probably did still exist, participants emailed comments following my classroom visits and the interviews which indicated they found the process useful and enjoyed the events. An example is provided by Edweena who commented, "It was good to have another debrief. Thank you" (Edweena, Personal communication, 24 May 2012). Further, Logan's comment, "Thank you for all of your feedback from the previous visit and I look forward to seeing you soon (Logan, personal communication 2 May, 2012). These comments are example of communications that informed my perceptions of the participants' comfort level during researcher–participant interactions.

Prolonged engagement also allowed for collection of multiple sets of data, using a variety of tools. A total of six data sets were collected from each participant between February 2011 and November 2012 which not only provided multiple representations of data in diary, interview and observation formats, it also allowed opportunities for the researcher constructed interpretations of the data to be validated for accuracy by the participants.

Prolonged engagement allowed time spent ensuring misinterpretations drawn from data were clarified and all points of view were considered (Stake, 1995). According to Stake, "Good case study is patient, reflective, willing to see another view of the case" (1995, p.12). The findings were made credible by having the participants approve the construction of the "multiple realities being studied" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 127) through a process of member checking (Stake, 1995). Member checking took a variety of forms. I shared with each participant the verbatim transcripts from their interviews to establish openness and transparency and

validate accuracy. Also, at the conclusion of class visits I shared my classroom observations openly with participants and asked them to comment on, or elaborate on some of the observations I had made.

Case study researchers rely heavily on drawing inferences from participants' information, especially if the researcher does not observe the event first hand. Credibility is concerned with the researcher considering all other options and possibilities for the explanation, using multiple sources of information to support their conclusions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Inferences drawn from reflective diaries and observations were clarified during the interviews. Also the researcher looked for multiple examples to support each inference. Attention was given to Stake's (2006) suggestion that each important finding should be supported by at least three pieces of evidence. Through this process of triangulation the probability that findings and interpretations were credible was enhanced (Lincoln & Guba, 1995; Stake, 1995). Employing various methods of triangulation ensured constructed meaning of the researcher matched the intended meaning of the participant and therefore added credibility to the inferences drawn by the researcher. Triangulation across case studies also increased credibility of the case study as a whole (Stake, 2006).

Dependability

Dependability of case study research is acknowledged to be threatened by *instrumental unreliability* (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In case study research, the researcher interacts directly with the participants and is therefore the primary instrument for data collection. In addition, the primary responsibility for analysis and interpretation of the data is the role of the researcher (Stake, 1995). Correspondingly, Merriam (1998) notes qualitative case study research is human, thus "all observations, analyses are filtered through ones' world view, one's values, one's perspectives" (p. 39). However, the multiple methods of data collection outlined and the detailed explanations of triangulation and member checking helped to eliminate human error, thus, increasing dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998; Simons, 2009; Stake, 1995). The dependability of this study was enhanced through the provision of the audit trail that detailed explanations of the procedures which were employed during data collection and analysis and careful documentation of how the findings were concluded (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Inter-researcher reliability checks were utilised to reduce the threat of potential researcher bias (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008) adding to the consistency of analysis. Inter-researcher reliability checks occurred at multiple intervals throughout the process of analysis and interpretation. To check the suitability of themes, sub themes, and codes my supervisors and other colleagues, knowledgeable in the field of study, cross-coded various pieces of data. This provided opportunities for dialogue to examine the assumptions drawn from the data and alternate ways in which the data could be viewed.

Transferability

Transferability is enhanced when the researcher provides enough detailed information about the project so that a reader can make their own judgements about whether the study can be transferred into another setting (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Only a reader can judge the transferability of the study because they know the context of the situation upon which they are attempting to link the study. However, it is the researcher's responsibility to provide a detailed case study project that provides a clear outline of the data collection methods and procedures, as well as how the data was managed, analysed, and reported so transferability can be enhanced. It is with this in mind I outlined the specific details of this case study.

Confirmability

In scientific research strives for objectivity. However, no research is really ever objective. Within a constructionist inquiry, objectivity can be referred to as confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and can be seen to be threatened by researcher bias. However, this was overcome by two previously mentioned procedures: the audit trail and triangulation.

Ethical Considerations

Any research undertaken by students at Queensland University of Technology that includes the participation of humans requires clearance from the University's Human Research Ethics Committee. Their decision to approve the research is guided by the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. This research received ethical clearance and followed the ethical clearance guidelines of the university. Permission to conduct the research was also approved by Griffith University, the site where participants were recruited. Permission to approach the

principals, to seek access to schools to conduct classroom observations, was also requested in the three education systems within which participants gained employment. All three systems approved this request. However, only six of the seven principals approved access to participant while they were teaching. Therefore, classroom observations were not included in the seventh participants' data. Appendices I and J contain documents relating to ethics approval.

Ethical clearance is a stringent process and is required to protect the researcher, the participants, and the reputation of the organisation being represented. In addition, to completing the HREC requirements the researcher also needs to be mindful of potential problems that may arise while conducting the research.

It was expected that over time the researcher and participants were likely to develop a working rapport and personal trust. Participants did reveal personal information during interviews that was not included into the transcripts. A note was made that alluded to the conversation without details or identifiers. The trust of the participant was preserved. No ethical dilemmas arose. The wellbeing of the participant was considered ahead of the research goals. For example, some participants needed flexibility with the due date of research diaries as their work demands increased. I always explicitly stressed to participants their involvement in this research was valued but was never to come before their commitment to their own wellbeing, their family time, or work demands.

Maintaining interest and investment of participants as they became busier throughout the semester and moved into the role of beginning teacher was less of a challenge than I anticipated it would be. All participants who commenced Part B remained in the project, even Kate whose principal did not support my request to observe in her classroom.

The research design was based on the assumption the participants would gain full time employment as primary school teachers in 2012. As this was not guaranteed, the original design identified the use of eight participants in Section B to increase the chances of maintaining an adequate number of participants into the second section of the research process.

My role in this project was to collect and analyse data from the participants, and as previously discussed, I needed to be mindful of the potential as researcher to bias discussions. Teaching is a very demanding profession. Participants in this project experienced pressures associated with the demands of students, parents of those students, school administration, and general responsibilities of planning, teaching and evaluating. As researcher, and not teacher mentor, I needed to remain impartial during these discussions. I have a personal grievance about inadequate leadership and lack of support for inclusion in schools which I consciously attempted to control to avoid deflecting my feelings onto the participants.

Gaining access to classrooms was slightly problematic. Participants gained employment in three different systems: two State systems and one Catholic. Some participants did not gain employment until the 2012 school year commenced and this delayed gaining permission from one organisation to approach the principal of one participant's school. As previously mentioned, one principal refused permission to access her school for data collection. Despite these drawbacks data was able to be collected and triangulated and so did not threaten the trustworthiness of this project.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided a comprehensive description of the research design. The epistemological and methodological considerations were outlined, the participants were introduced, the data collection instruments, and procedures for data management and analysis were described. The trustworthiness and ethical considerations of the study were validated. The following chapter introduces the first of three data chapters. The data in the following chapter was collected during the first preservice phase and the discussion relates to participants as student teachers.

Chapter 5: Participants as Student Teacher

The following three chapters report on the data collected at the three major junctures of this project: practicum, internship, and beginning teaching year. Chapter 5 reports on the data gathered during the practicum period. The data set includes a diary entry collected prior to this experience. The data set referred to as Data Set One is described in Table 5.1 and was collected midway through the final year of the Bachelor of Education course. The practicum entails five single day visits over five consecutive weeks and then a 20 day block, over four consecutive weeks. The seven participants in the multicase study, and the framework used for data analysis were introduced in Chapter 4. A full description of each theme, sub theme, and code is presented in Appendix F.

Appendix B introduced each participant and the school contexts within which Sandra, Kate, Pepper, Theresa, Edweena, Logan, and Jack worked. Initially, the seven individual cases were created and analysed. This ensured the individuality of each participant could be highlighted. Cross case analysis was implemented following the individual case analysis. This allowed similarities and differences across each case to be considered.

The data are reported in a narrative style with footnote referencing indicating sources of the data. Footnote references appear at the bottom of the page to which they refer. Throughout Chapters 5, 6, and 7 thick descriptions are provided and analysis is interwoven throughout the data descriptions. This allows my voice to be heard while also allowing the participants to tell their story as much as possible. At times, data descriptions focus on individual cases to highlight notable events, circumstances or transformations. A summary of the key findings concludes each of the four themes used to organise the data discussion.

The elements of Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of the rhizome have provided a lens to understand what is happening in the data, as described in Chapter 4. In the next three chapters the elements of the rhizome are also used to describe the transformation of participants' perceptions of teaching and learning, and their responses to student difference across the data. This reinforces the interrelated nature of multiple factors in the transformation process.

Table 5.1

Data Sources Data Set One

Data Source	Time of Collection
Initial diary entry (1)	Feb, 2011
Practicum Diaries (4)	May- June, 2011
Semi Structured Interview (1)	June-July, 2011

The main research question underpinning this research is

What sociocultural factors contribute to the transformation of beginning teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning, and how do these factors influence the provision of effective teaching for students experiencing learning difficulties?

This question forms the basis of the discussion in the final chapter of the thesis. The four subsidiary questions, however, are addressed throughout the discussions in Chapters 5, 6, and 7. The four subsidiary questions are

1. What factors do preservice teachers attribute to the development of learning difficulties?
2. What do beginning teachers see as essential elements of learning and the learning environment for students experiencing learning difficulties?
3. How does the school culture influence beginning teachers' decision-making, including their role, in teaching students experiencing learning difficulties?
4. What personal attributes influence beginning teachers' decision-making, including their role, in teaching students experiencing learning difficulties?

Participants as Student Teachers

Participants came into the final year practicum with a range of prior experiences. Most participants reported very limited experience working with students experiencing learning difficulties. Some of the participants described this practicum as their most challenging due to the diverse needs of the students in the class. This was a situation they had not experienced, or been aware of, in the past. A combination of factors is likely to have contributed to the preservice teachers' increased awareness of diversity. Several factors are identified from the context of this research and offered here as explanation.

During the final year practicum the student teacher is expected to take greater responsibility in areas of planning and teaching. This could be one factor that has influenced their awareness of student diversity. Other contributing factors could be their participation in this research project with the specific focus on students experiencing learning difficulties, the course work focussing on inclusive education in the semester previous to the practicum, or maybe they were just in classrooms where the students presented with greater challenges for the teacher.

Participants often had difficulty articulating what they actually thought learning difficulties were. This was not surprising given the multiple meanings allocated to the term in the literature (Elkins, 2007; Westwood, 2008) and the lack of clear definition in Australia. This may have contributed to what they perceived to be the causes of learning difficulties and the impacts they had on learning. What was interesting was the broad range of explanations offered for the causes of learning difficulties, blending from both the deficit and social model. Participants appeared to have a wider view of the causes of learning difficulties than the deficit model view reported in Westwood's (1995) and Penso's (2002) studies. However, family context was still overwhelmingly identified as a contributor to students developing learning difficulties, and like the deficit being situated within the child, may be viewed as another factor teachers are unable to overcome (Paugh & Dudley-Marling, 2011; Tomlinson, 1988). In any case, it should be noted that while participants claimed the causes of learning difficulties were both within and outside of the child, the data revealed there was still an element of the participants looking for something to be fixed within the child (Thomas & Loxley, 2007). At times, participants were looking for an expert, such as a support teacher to correct the problem (Woolfson & Brady, 2009).

Table 5.2 shows participants' response to subsidiary question one: What factors do preservice teachers attribute to the development of learning difficulties? Data were gleaned from the initial diary entry and the semi structured interview following the practicum experience as described in Table 5.1. As reported, some participants identified a deficit within the student as a possible cause of learning difficulties. This included such things as neurological, sensory, and physical impairments. However, family and home life such as socioeconomic background, and academic support at home were overwhelmingly identified as possible causes of

learning difficulties. Many participants linked learning difficulties with earlier school experience. This included inadequate teaching related to time pressure on the teacher, and teachers implementing a curriculum that did not match the needs of the student. Some participants identified learning difficulties resulted from limitations experienced by students where English was a second language, insufficient time was provided to consolidate learning, and shortcomings within the education system such as delays in identification and intervention.

Table 5.2

Factors Preservice Teachers Attribute to the Development of Learning Difficulties

	Medical	Family Context	School experience/ quality of teaching/ the system	Other factors
Edweena	• HI- refusal to wear hearing aids, ADHD, ADD, OCD, II prenatal experience	• Low value given to education/ learning in the home	• Responses to student behaviour, attitudes of teacher	• ESL, student behaviour
Theresa		• Disadvantaged or abusive home life. • Poor diet • Missed schooling	• Being treated differently and rebelling against support/ learning	
Jack		• Lack of care and nutrition • Family disruptions		• Outside of school issues impacting on concentration • Most people have something • Poor organisational skills • Emotional intelligence
Pepper		• Lack of support in the home and poor guidance/ parenting		
Logan	• II, ASD, HI	• Access to school limited by parents commitment	• Barriers created by curriculum	• Unidentified barriers to learning
Sandra		• Slow to recognise and respond to students needs	• Insufficient support due to lack of time • Mismatched assessment tasks • Lack of support and cohesion within the class • Slow identify and respond to students needs	
Kate	• Dyslexia, ADD	• Broken homes, no support to monitor homework		• Poor reading impacts on everything else

Three participants, who identified learning difficulties stemming from within the child relating to medical aetiology, also identified at least two of the other categories as significant in the development of learning difficulties. The major focus was on the negative impact of family on learning. All participants recognised the family context as a major factor attributed to the development of learning difficulties. This is fairly significant given teachers' beliefs about the origin of learning difficulties influences their attitudes about addressing the issues (Twomey, 2006; Woolfson & Brady, 2009). Also notable participants reported very little interaction or communication with parents on the practicum. The assumption that families can have a negative impact on students' learning may, therefore, have been influenced by the values and prejudices of other teachers that form the dominant ideology of the school (Paugh & Dudley-Marling, 2011; Tomlinson, 1988). This may also be a factor that influences the participants' sense of efficacy in dealing effectively with students experiencing learning difficulties in future settings.

Beliefs and values influence intuitive actions and behaviour (Brookfield, 2000). They are paramount in influencing teachers' attitudes and reactions towards students experiencing learning difficulties. The beliefs about the causes of learning difficulties, that is, the assumptions participants make about these students illustrated in Table 5.2 influence the judgements, expectations, and actions they take in the classroom (Twomey, 2006; Woolfson & Brady, 2009). Beliefs, values, and attitudes of the participants towards teaching and learning, and in particular students experiencing learning difficulties, are discussed in the next section. These findings relate to theme 1–personal attributes.

Findings from the Data Related to Theme 1–personal attributes

Beliefs

Today, classrooms comprise of increasingly heterogeneous groups of children and present numerous challenges for both novice and experienced teachers (Larrivee, 2000). Faced with teaching students of varying abilities and from diverse backgrounds, along with the challenge of meeting the technological demands of the 21st century, traditional pedagogies do not suffice (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). New and innovative pedagogies are required. However, for teachers to transform their teaching practices a shift in the teachers' beliefs or meaning scheme is required

(Mezirow, 2000). The prevalence of a deficit discourse that situates the source of learning difficulties within students and their backgrounds dominate how students are viewed (Howard, 2003; Paugh & Dudley-Marling, 2011) and the "naturalisation of these assumptions renders them invisible and resistant to critique" (Paugh & Dudley-Marling, 2011, p.820). Personal beliefs play a powerful role in how teachers respond (Beswick, 2008; Wiebe Berry, 2006) and their behaviour towards inclusion and inclusive practices (Lambe, 2011; Loreman, et al., 2011) in the classroom. If beliefs are left unchallenged, pedagogical choices may be limited (McLaren, 2007) for students who are experiencing learning difficulties (Howard, 2003; Westwood, 2006). Therefore, challenging one's beliefs and reflecting on how they influence practice is an essential component of effective teaching.

Positioning students

Beliefs influence the assumptions and perceptions we make about ourselves and others. The way teachers frame various situations, the lens through which they perceive what is going on in the classroom, is determined in part by their belief system (Larrivee, 2000; Wiebe Berry, 2006). Participants reported frequent off task and disruptive behaviour occurred during their lessons. Most participants appeared to attribute negative behavioural responses from students as self-protection mechanisms resulting from feelings of inferiority as they became threatened by academic expectations rather than innate deviance and deliberate wilfulness to disrupt. By framing behaviour in this way many participants attempted to identify and respond to the actual learning difficulty illustrating a strong general teaching efficacy (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993).

Participants described students employing delaying tactics in the classroom. They identified this as task avoidance when the task was too hard or students believed they would not be able to complete the tasks successfully. Some participants "started to supply the resources"[1] while others used their physical presence, either standing over or returning after short periods of time, to ensure students engaged with and remained on task. This served to address the issue at surface level, that is, compliance and task completion. However, they did not address the issues of differentiating task difficulty despite recognising this as the source of the disruptive

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[1] Source: Theresa/ Prac Interview July 1, 2011

behaviour. Adjustments to the task may have increased motivation or led to students experiencing success.

Diminished emotional attachment and commitment to education (Munns, 2007) or lack of motivation for students is often a by-product of continued lack of school success (Westwood, 2008). Kate described "using a gadget such as a voice recorder ... to motivate [students] to read."[2] This is one of few references in this data to student motivation. Rather, participants placed a strong emphasis on student compliance. Even Kate acknowledged the use of the recorder had a dual purpose as "it also controlled [the] group."[3] A major concern of most participants was "a need to control behaviour within the class"[4] so they were viewed as competent by the mentor teacher. This sometimes compromised their beliefs about teaching.

Jack placed a high emphasis on understanding why students behaved in a particular way. He stated "simply as an adult, and as a teacher, [he] felt ... responsibility to the student to make the experience at school as easy as possible so that she was able to learn like every other student in the class."[5] He reported how important he felt it was for teachers to be "careful not to jump to simple conclusions such as "laziness"[6] and that "many factors 'covered' ... true ability."[7] These comments reflected the importance Jack placed on getting to know his students and the high expectations he held for his conduct as a teacher. Jack's beliefs about interpersonal relationships and learning are expanded in theme 2–connection and heterogeneity. The expectations other participants held for themselves as teachers continues in the following section.

Expectations of self as teacher

The practicum period, with 5 single days and a four week teaching block presented very little time for the preservice teachers to master new pedagogy. Time was limited to influence or recognise major changes in students' progress. Some participants expressed very high expectations of themselves as teachers and this

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[2] Source: Kate/Prac Diary 3 June, 2001
[3] Source: Kate/Prac Interview August 10, 2011
[4] Source: Logan/Initial Diary Entry March, 2011
[5] Source: Jack/Initial Diary Entry March, 2011
[6] Source: Jack/Prac Diary Four June, 2011
[7] Source: Jack/Initial Diary Entry March, 2011

combined with the limitation of the practicum contributed to feelings of frustration and challenged their sense of efficacy. Sandra set herself very high expectations and was especially critical of herself as she explained how she "just did not feel like [she] coped... it was horrible ... [and] overall [she] struggled."[8] She described the classroom as a "battlefield"[9] where she felt the "frustration of not being able to drag everyone across the line."[10]

Pepper described the responsibility of having her own class in the near future as "really scary"[11] because if she was to "do something wrong, that's [her] fault."[12] She questioned her ability to correct a situation she may create. This could indicate she saw the job of teaching the class as totally her responsibility, with little regard for the school influences or parent support. Interestingly, she identified a lack of parent support as a major cause of learning difficulties. Pepper appeared to be confronted by her perceived future level of accountability which was exacerbated because she did "not want to wreck this child's life."[13] This may indicate Pepper's self-efficacy was quite low. Both Sandra and Pepper needed to critically reflect on the elements of their classroom or teaching to reclaim reason (Brookfield, 2005) and challenge the reality of the demands contributing to their frustration and sense of inadequacy.

Sense of efficacy

Participants' perceptions of their own efficacy fluctuated and appeared to be influenced by the context within which they worked as suggested by Sutherland et al. (2010). Kate explained how she felt the other teachers in her cohort "just treated [her] like ... one of the teachers and [so she] felt comfortable contributing."[14] Feeling that the other teachers saw her as capable may have contributed to her positive sense of efficacy (Tuchman & Isaacs, 2011).

However, in general the views participants expressed about their capabilities as a teacher were quite fragile. Carroll et al. (2003) note, a common concern expressed by preservice teachers is being inadequately prepared to deal with particular students.

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[8] Source: Sandra/Prac Interview July 28, 2011
[9] Source: Sandra/Prac Interview July 28, 2011
[10] Source: Sandra/Prac Interview July 28, 2011
[11] Source: Pepper/Prac Interview August 5, 2011
[12] Source: Pepper/Prac Interview August 5, 2011
[13] Source: Pepper/Prac Interview August 5, 2011
[14] Source: Kate/Prac Interview August 10, 2011

Sandra explained how she was "beginning to realise [she was] totally and utterly out of [her] depth when dealing with students ... [from the special education program] within a mainstream classroom."[15] In contrast to Kate, Sandra claimed to be "very, very concerned about [her] future classroom."[16]

Many participants expressed concern about not being able to meet the needs of some learners adequately when faced with the responsibility of the whole class "because there were some lower students who needed one-on-one teacher attention."[17] Participants claimed any individual attention they could give to students "was not enough."[18] Theresa indicated she felt the school system was not able to adequately help one particular student and suggested she would not improve "unless she [went] to out of school tutoring."[19] Theresa frequently questioned what would happen in the child's future.[20] This draws from the deficit model where it is considered outsiders with greater expertise are needed to intervene and *fix* the child and threatens the development of the participants' sense of efficacy.

However, Jack could see positives about his ability and explained "one good thing about [his] ... teaching strategies, [although they] have got a long way to go before [they were] anywhere near perfect ... when given the space [he had] a lot of patience."[21] Rather than doubting his ability, he expected that his capacity to work effectively with students experiencing learning difficulties would grow. Although, he did concede, "if there was one factor that would come into play as to why [he was] not succeeding with those kids it would be time."[22] Jack's ability and willingness to critically reflect, and his positive disposition towards inclusion, were important factors in his level of teacher efficacy (Sutherland et al., 2010). Like the rhizome itself, the ways teachers perceived themselves, the subject positions they took on as teachers, and their sense of efficacy had the potential to spread and grow or break off and re-form, constantly changing and reemerging (Gregoriou, 2004). However, while external factors are influential on the development of teachers' self-efficacy

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[15] Source: Sandra/Prac Diary Three June, 2011
[16] Source: Sandra/Prac Diary Three June, 2011
[17] Source: Edweena/Prac Interview July 13, 2011
[18] Source: Edweena/Prac Interview July 13, 2011
[19] Source: Theresa/Prac Interview July 1, 2011
[20] Source: Theresa/Prac Interview July 1, 2011
[21] Source: Jack/Prac Interview July 20, 2011
[22] Source: Jack/Prac Interview July 20, 2011

(Tuchmann & Isaacs, 2011; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001), preservice teachers' growth and ability to change relies on the challenges to, and development of, their personal belief systems (Mezirow, 2000). The ruptures on the rhizome occur as a result of critical reflection.

Beliefs about inclusive education and models of inclusive education

Some practicum settings provided poor models of inclusive education which challenged some participants' beliefs about its value, and stifled their use of inclusive practices (Hart et al., 2007). The culture of the school is developed through a range of social interactions which legitimise or challenge ideological and hegemonic practices (Burr, 1995; Kanpol, 1994; McLaren, 2007). Participants reported very little interaction with administration or parents. The mentor teacher and the ideological assumptions she carried into her practice were the most significant feature from the school culture on preservice teachers during the practicum. Specifically the type of relationship that developed between the mentor and the practicum student is noteworthy as a factor that could have influenced the participants' decision-making in the classroom (Walkington, 2005).

Most participants mimicked the behaviour of their mentor teacher, and did not engage in critical reflection. This limited their skills, confidence, and beliefs that they could make a difference to students experiencing learning difficulties (Walkington, 2005). The multiplicities that could arise from linking theory and practice and possible opportunities to challenge their personal beliefs and engage with critical pedagogy are missed when preservice teachers mimic their mentor teachers without reflecting on their practice. Although they have positioned themselves to fit in with the existing school culture it is a missed opportunity to consider and develop their professional identity which will influence their perceptions of teaching and the subject positions they will occupy in the process (Sutherland et al., 2010).

One issue threatening the success of inclusive education is the misalignment between theory and practice witnessed by participants in classrooms. The four territories of failure associated with inclusive education; confusion, frustration, guilt and exhaustion identified within the inclusive education movement in the United Kingdom (Allan, 2008) were evident in the participants' experiences during the practicum. Confusion was the most significant.

Confusion

Teacher identity, especially for females, has been aligned closely with the role of nurturer (Monchinski, 2008). As Pepper and Theresa positioned themselves in this role they expressed an overwhelming sense of responsibility and helplessness. Theresa had many students in her class working well below grade level expectations. She explained how she kept "feeling sorry for them ... [and questioned] what [was] going to happen with [them]?[23] Pepper was visibly upset as she described how she felt students were being let down by the system where "no one seem[ed] to care."[24] They questioned the inadequacies of the system and what [they were] supposed to do"[25] to help students to deal with the problems, thus, exposing their potential to become overwhelmed by a system where unequal access to power, ideological assumptions, and hegemonic practices exist.

The high levels of sympathy expressed were also significant. They may lower teachers' expectations of students who are experiencing learning difficulties (Woolfson & Brady, 2009). Teachers need to reflect on how, in the role of nurturer, they can position themselves as empathetic rather than sympathetic towards students. They need to question how their beliefs, and the messages they portray to students, contribute to limited achievement for some students (Clark, 1997; Woodcock & Vialle, 2010).

Values

Values are the judgements we place on people, situations, and events. They are the ideals that shape our behaviour (Larrivee, 2000). Teaching is a value laden activity. Teachers' values privilege the judgements they make in teaching in relations to particular individuals and groups. Examples include time allocation, curriculum choices, knowledge and activities selected as appropriate and important, classroom control, and the influence of student voice and resource allocation (Loreman et al., 2005). The value teachers place on the worth of particular individuals and groups is closely linked to the relationships and the learning community they establish in the classroom. The interwoven nature of values, relationships, and teachers' expectations

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[23] Source: Theresa/Prac Interview July 1, 2011
[24] Source: Pepper/Prac Interview August 5, 2011
[25] Source: Pepper/Prac Interview August 5, 2011

of students is explored later in this chapter in theme 2–connection and heterogeneity. The following discussion focuses on how participants' personal values directly influenced their decision-making in the classroom.

Many participants recognised the value they placed on particular learners, and how the learning goals were often overshadowed by the "need to control behaviour within the class."[26] For example, Logan explained how "you want to be on top of the students with behaviour problems and ... that takes up all of your time when teaching."[27] She found that "in hindsight [she] should have been helping those kids at the front who seemed like they were on task but weren't"[28] rather than focussing on the students who created the most disruption. She noted "whilst behaviour management [was] important, [she] should [have] aim[ed] a little higher than to have all the kids being quiet and polite ... and should be more worried about the child ... missing out on the learning."[29]

Deleuze suggests we can "select and assess our values, not by giving them some ultimate meaning or foundation but by looking at what they do" (Colebrook, 2002, xxxii). Logan explained how she valued being seen as competent and how this worked to limit her practice. She reported how, upon reflection, she did create learning opportunities that were more aligned to her espoused values. She explained how later in the practicum she used "peer tutoring ... to... contribute to the open and supportive learning environment [she] was hoping to create."[30] Teachers who engage in critical reflection consider within the moral domain (Howard, 2003) how their values inform their actual decision-making. This rupture in her thinking allowed her to create a more inclusive classroom.

Many participants explained how they built on students' interests to develop behaviour management plans. While it did show the value they placed on the student and his/her individuality, these plans were ultimately designed to ensure compliance with the added bonus of task completion. Participants frequently positioned their need to demonstrate power and control ahead of consideration of students' learning

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[26] Source: Logan/Initial Diary Entry March, 2011
[27] Source: Logan/Prac Interview July 12, 2011
[28] Source: Logan/Prac Interview July 12, 2011
[29] Source: Logan/Initial Diary Entry March, 2011
[30] Source: Logan/Prac Diary Three June, 2011

goals. No participant mentions the intellectual quality of their lessons but most discussed strategies to control student behaviour with little consideration of the uneven power dynamic this supported in the classroom. This approach suggested these participants had adopted the ideology of the school which is not surprising given their position as a preservice teacher. It does highlight, however, the need to develop critically reflective practitioners who can envisage ways to challenge the ideological assumption that good teaching equates to control (Gore & Parkes, 2008).

Attitudes

Our attitudes influence how we act and are interwoven tightly with what we believe, value, or assume. Teachers' attitudes determine how they respond to students (Beswick, 2008). This is significant given the strong influence teachers' attitudes have on how students perceive themselves as competent learners (Clark, 1997; Woodcock, 2008; Woodcock & Vialle, 2010). This in turn influences the students' motivation to engage in tasks. Since attitudes are a learned behaviour, which result from life experiences, they can be controlled and adapted (Loreman et al., 2005).

Lived experiences

Participants in this study each came to teaching with different life experiences, and various levels of exposure working with students experiencing learning difficulties and disabilities. These experiences can expose ideological assumptions that can expand or limit one's perceptions of these students. The perceptions they develop are not discovered or developed in isolation, but constructed through interpretation of these lived experiences (Young & Collin, 2004).

Kate explained "not everyone can think the same way... [and] having a brother who has Asperger's who is very, very smart, taught [her that]."[31] She also attended a "primary school [where] it was normal to have [a child with a disability] in the classroom"[32] which she explained provided her with a positive attitude towards teaching students experiencing learning difficulties.

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[31] Source: Kate/Prac Interview August 10, 2011
[32] Source: Kate/Prac Interview August 10, 2011

Sandra described her experience as a parent had exposed her to families who were frustrated by the lack of support available in schools for students who were experiencing learning difficulties. In her opinion "as teachers ...our hands are bound by the system ... you have to deal with it this way ... and there is no way around it."[33] Sandra explained that the limited outlook on how students can be supported is "institutionalised, that we are ... bound by these little rules ... not looking at the whole child"[34] and it was an issue "across all schools."[35]

Positive classroom support

The opportunities to develop or contribute to strong classroom support are limited in the practicum experience due to its short duration (five single days and a four week block). Added to this, is the preservice teachers' desire to please their mentor teacher and so their propensity to adopt the classroom climate they inherit. Although the opportunities can be limited it is not impossible to establish some level of classroom support and most participants reported doing so by establishing relationships with students early in the practicum. Sandra provided an example.

Sandra reported how she requested two students from the special education program be allowed to remain in class and take part in her maths program as she believed they were capable of reaching the lesson outcomes, especially when provided with scaffolding. Her positive attitude toward their learning was rewarded as illustrated in the following comment.

> I have noted that the girls learn best through hands on activities and therefore I thought I would try and give the girls the opportunity to use the materials through being my assistant and then attempt to do it independently. It must have worked as when I kept them back [from the special education unit] the following day, they not only confirmed their understanding from the previous day, but applied it to the new concept being taught within the second lesson. I was over the moon with their progression and I voiced it to them publicly and privately. They were so excited with being able to keep up with the rest of the class. When I tested the class on this concept at the end

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[33] Source: Sandra/Prac Interview July 28, 2011
[34] Source: Sandra/Prac Interview July 28, 2011
[35] Source: Sandra/Prac Interview July 28, 2011

of the 5 weeks, these two girls scored extremely well pertaining to this concept…YAY![36]

Sandra was willing to take risks in this lesson. She had to challenge the deficit assumptions about some learners that had become the accepted ideology of the classroom and reinforced by how the Special Education Program operated in the school. The removal of these students was standard practice and the deficit discourse surrounding their potential was accepted and unchallenged by the staff (Paugh & Dudley-Marling, 2011). However, Sandra challenged the deficit discourse by including the students, sharing responsibility, and scaffolding the task which created positive classroom supports and enhanced learning. It could be considered Sandra demonstrated gumption and gusto, that is, she was a risk taker who embedded fun into the lesson.

Gumption and gusto

Learning experiences that factor in fun create more effective learning environments (Devlan, 2008). Teachers with higher self-efficacy are more likely to apply gumption and gusto to their teaching as they seek innovative ways to increase current levels of achievement and motivation (Brady & Woolfson, 2008; Hart et al., 2007). However, as efficacy fluctuated so too did the attitudes of teachers, and their willingness to try new approaches was limited. Jack explained that if he was "doing a lesson and it start[ed] to fall apart the best thing [he could] do [was] wrap it up but it would be great to get to a point when a lesson is falling apart and [he could] go 'okay why is this falling apart?' and change it."[37] Very few participants described lessons that involved any risk taking or innovative strategies. This could be a reflection on their need to present "safe" lessons and appear competent or it could be a reflection on their limited knowledge and skills which are investigated in theme 4–asignifying ruptures.

The participants' values, attitudes, and beliefs were significant factors that influenced the beginning teachers' response to student difference. Participants' lack of confidence in their ability to action change for some students, and their strong desire to be seen as competent in the practicum situation contributed to their sense of

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[36] Source: Sandra/Prac Diary Four June, 2011
[37] Source: Jack/Prac Interview July 20, 2011

fear and hesitation to investigate alternate practices. Limited opportunities to develop new pedagogical knowledge and skills ultimately threatened their sense of efficacy.

Findings from the Data Related to Theme 2–connection and heterogeneity

Connection and heterogeneity refers to how reflective practitioners connect the theory of learner difference to the actual learning experiences in the classroom. Learner differences occur as a result of multiple factors and may contribute to the students experiencing learning difficulties.

Teachers who have strong theoretical and pedagogical knowledge and skills are able to combine theory and practice to provide quality education for students experiencing learning difficulties (Ellis, 2005). The theoretical understanding of inclusive teaching practices is realised by engaging in praxis. This involves "theorising about practice and practicing theory" (Monchinski, 2008, p. 1) and provides the teacher opportunities to create positive learning experiences for all students including students experiencing learning difficulties. This deliberate decision-making, including classroom interactions and pedagogical choices, is closely related to teachers' values, attitudes, and beliefs and creates a learning environment where all students feel they are valued and have full membership in the class (McLeskey & Waldron, 2007).

The data presented in the previous section revealed preservice teachers generally espoused a desire to create inclusive settings to address the needs of all students. However, participants indicated they had limited knowledge and skills which they attributed to their struggle to accommodate learner differences in their lessons, especially faced with additional demands such as behaviour management.

Respectful Relationships

Developing positive, respectful relationships with students is paramount in quality teaching for all students and is an essential component of a supportive classroom (Alton-Lee, 2003; Hughes, 2011). The ways students perceive themselves is influenced by the attributional messages communicated to the student through the teacher's expectations, teacher–student interactions and dialogue, and constructive timely feedback (Clark, 1997; Popp, Grant, & Stronge, 2011; Woodcock, 2008).

Views of learner competence, a social model construct, are evident when the teacher recognises the value and worth of all students by setting high expectations and using ongoing assessment to provide useful feedback to help students set goals to improve performance (Alton-Lee, 2003). When learning difficulties are viewed through a social model lens teachers identify and respond to barriers to learning, thus providing opportunities for students to improve. Of utmost importance in this process is the development and maintenance of respectful relationships. Respectful relationships are authoritative, built on *tough love*. They are authentic (Cranton, 2006), developed through trust, openness, and respect (Ertesvåg, 2011; Hattie, 2003).

Preservice teachers participating in this study, enrolled in the Bachelor of Education course are exposed to the importance of building positive relationships with students during their coursework. It is a minimum requirement in Australia that graduates of approved preservice teacher education programs are able to "demonstrate knowledge of practical strategies for creating rapport with students and managing student behaviour ... and know how to select and apply timely and appropriate types of feedback to improve students' learning" (AITSL, 2011, p.5). Nevertheless, exposure to theory at university does not always translate into practice in the classroom. Even if the participants held the ideals, sometimes the technical demands of teaching and the constraints imposed by the practicum situation overwhelmed the best intentions of the preservice teacher.

Some participants, however, were able to mindfully develop respectful relationships with their students, recognising their significance as essential elements of the teaching and learning process. Through critical reflection, rather than reflection with a limited focus on technical decisions, participants were able to monitor and adjust their personal behaviour, the quality and purpose of interactions with students, and the context of teaching, all elements required for respectful relationships to develop.

Authentic relationships

Authentic relationships develop in an environment built on trust, openness, and respect (Ertesvåg, 2011; Hattie, 2003). Teachers can create these conditions by making time to acquaint themselves with students' personal histories. This allows them to build an understanding of students' strengths, weaknesses, goals, and

significant factors that may influence their learning. While generating these relationships teachers come to understand how certain conditions may contribute to the manifestation of certain student's inappropriate behaviours. Through critical reflection, teachers seek to uncover and respond to these conditions.

Developing relationships with students

Sandra was adamant about the importance and value of positive teacher–student relationships in successful teaching. Sandra reported making a constant effort to develop a rapport with all students in her class and especially those students she noted as experiencing learning difficulties. She explained "forming those different relationships with children"[38] helped her to "meet their social, emotional, and cognitive skills."[39] Sandra's personal history, including diverse employment opportunities, has provided her with valuable experience from which to develop her awareness of relationships and the important roles they play in enhancing communication, productivity, and social cohesion. This may have contributed to her ability to articulate how she influenced the development of respectful relationships with her students.

Sandra identified that structural constraints and hegemonic practices of the school, such as the role taken on by the Special Education Program, imposed on her ability and opportunity to develop relationships with students. This appeared to provide ruptures in the way she viewed and dealt with some students. These ruptures challenged her existing values and beliefs. For ease of presentation of this discussion the detrimental impact of the Special Education Program on positive relationship building that Sandra perceived is discussed further in theme 3–multiplicity. However, it needs to be stressed that while the discussion is presented here under independent headings, they are in fact very much interrelated, as illustrated through Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) explanation of the rhizome.

Jack also identified building relationships with his students as important in the teaching and learning process. He built relationships with his students by consciously making sure he greeted students as they entered the classroom each day. He used these interactions to assess the mood levels of the students. Jack explained that

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[38] Source: Sandra/Prac Interview July 28, 2011
[39] Source: Sandra/Prac Interview July 28, 2011

"some children have the social skills to get over minor things quite easily and then other kids don't."[40] Thus, he recognised events outside of the classroom and their impact on the emotional wellbeing of students also influenced the students' ability to attend to learning. It also highlighted the importance participants placed on creating a safe and supportive classroom tone which was seen as an essential element of the learning environment.

Jack also commented on the unnecessary abuse of power and control that can jeopardise relationships and hinder classroom involvement and success (Larrivee, 2000). His framing of certain situations meant he tried to focus on understanding how the behaviour of both the students and the teacher impacted on creating positive learning environments. According to Jack, "if you just keep it nice then [they] genuinely keep it nice too, but if you are going to get cranky ... especially for just a minor thing [they are] going to get cranky back."[41] However, Jack did acknowledge in his position as student teacher he "was quite paranoid [with] things like noise levels ... and possibly ... crack[ed] down on things like that more than ... if it was just [his] class."[42] His "need" to please the teacher and be seen as competent did influence his behaviour and had the potential to jeopardise relationships.

Most participants reported observations they made of other teachers and their interactions with students which they felt compromised relationships and escalated difficult behaviour. While acknowledging teachers are under tremendous pressure, some participants felt students should be "given another chance."[43] Theresa and Logan noted the imbalance and coercive use of power over (Larrivee, 2000) students used by some teachers, such as, the use of threats and time out models. Edweena noted how she "would often hear teachers talking about students in negative ways and it would usually make [her] repel that view and try to see the student in a different light."[44]

Pepper and Kate did not elaborate on how they developed relationships with students. Although Kate explained she identified learners who needed additional

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[40] Source: Jack/Prac Interview July 20, 2011
[41] Source: Jack/Prac Interview July 20, 2011
[42] Source: Jack/Prac Interview July 20, 2011
[43] Source: Edweena/Prac Interview July, 2011
[44] Source: Edweena/Participant Profile 2011

support but her teaching methods were limited because she "could not trust them to go off in little groups on their own."[45] Therefore, this limited her teaching to mostly whole class presentations. Her espoused belief that "not everyone can think the same way"[46] was threatened by her need to control the class and she lacked the trust that "sustains teachers' beliefs that young people will choose to engage if the conditions are right." (Hart et al., 2007, p. 507). Given the short duration of the practicum this was not surprising.

Authoritative relationship

Authoritative relationships are built on control and warmth (Ertesvåg, 2011). Based on the literature on authoritative parenting, developing this type of relationship with students allows the teacher to set standards, establish limits, and explain reasons for the restrictions placed in the classroom. Authoritative relationships encourage students to think independently and assume personal responsibility for their actions (Snowman et al., 2009). Teachers who create a safe, supportive environment and provide this *tough love* can covey more effectively their high expectations to the students (Ertesvåg, 2011) and communicate opportunities for improvement through constructive feedback (Alton-Lee, 2003). As student teachers, most participants found this challenging.

High expectations of all students

Teachers who command high expectations for behaviour and academic growth in their students demonstrate their belief in the value and worth of the individual and their capacity to improve (Alton-Lee, 2003). They engage in goal setting with the students and communicate constructive feedback. However, high expectations are not enough to ensure success for the student. The teacher needs to ensure well suited teaching strategies and resources support the student so maximum progress can be achieved (Alton-Lee, 2003).

For students experiencing learning difficulties, direct instruction and strategy instruction (self-regulation, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies), aimed particularly at the identified areas of need, are essential teaching components to

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[45] Source: Kate/Prac Interview August 10, 2011
[46] Source: Kate/Prac Interview August 10, 2011

ensure success (Ellis, 2005). With the exception of a *hands on* demonstration described by Sandra most participants used teacher-directed lessons. They favoured one-on-one or whole class delivery as the method of choice when they noticed students were experiencing difficulty. There was little evidence that participants utilised strategies that drew from their theoretical understanding of learner differences or evidence differentiated instruction was being utilised in whole class lessons. This is not surprising given participants' extremely limited reporting of differentiation happening in the lessons they observed by the mentor teacher.

However, Edweena commented on reflection being a useful tool for consolidating her knowledge from university and identified theoretical knowledge as being influential in her decision-making. Reflection, in this context, appeared to be focused on the technical aspects of teaching. Edweena did describe a maths lesson where she differentiated instruction but she generally taught only a small group of six to eight students, made up of one grade level from her multi-age class.

Teachers who engage in critical reflection are more likely to select strategies, resources, and supports that more closely match the identified needs of the student than teachers who make these selections on an unplanned basis. Critical reflection allows teachers to understand how the distribution of power and resources (Brookfield, 2000), such as teacher aide time, are allocated and how this impacts on their own classrooms. In addition, critical reflection allows questioning of assumptions and practices that are uncritically accepted (Larrivee, 2000) as being appropriate for the students experiencing learning difficulties.

Sandra acknowledged "we are playing into [the students] and to what they believe in themselves if we don't set high expectations."[47] She expressed concern however, about "putting those expectations on [her] students [and] setting them up for the same failure"[48] that she described she felt at times. Nevertheless, she did contend that by having "that relationship with the kids [she] knew that one person's achievement was not the same as somebody else's."[49] She explained by building

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[47] Source: Sandra/Prac Interview July 28, 2011
[48] Source: Sandra/Prac Interview July 28, 2011
[49] Source: Sandra/Prac Interview July 28, 2011

relationships she could "truly understand what the child needed."[50] As an example, she worked with one student and "made it very clear ... from the very beginning ... [she] was going to ride her because ... [Sandra] knew she could do it."[51] Sandra claimed by "giving positive reinforcement and conveying an attitude of perseverance rather than one of hopelessness helped this situation."[52]

Sandra's role as a parent provided her with experience to draw on that may have influenced her decision-making with regard to setting expectations for students: both academic and social. However, on the whole, participants' recall of expectations focused on behaviour. This was not surprising given the strong focus given to behaviour management by novice teachers (Melnick & Meister; 2008; Westwood, 2008) and the ideological assumption that a "good teacher" manages an orderly classroom with tight control (Gore & Parkes, 2008).

Throughout the theme of connection and heterogeneity examples illustrated how participants were limited in their ability to connect theory and practice. The importance of developing positive relationships was valued by the participants as an essential element of learning and the learning environment. At times this was compromised as some participants did not have the skills to build or maintain relationships when also managing the demands of whole class teaching. Of significance in this section is the limited amount of feedback and goal setting the participants were able to provide for students as part of communicating expectations and the difficulty providing feedback when managing the demands of whole class teaching.

Findings from the Data Related to Theme 3–multiplicity

Multiplicity is concerned with growth rather than reproduction and is concerned with actions specifically chosen to match the needs of students, especially those students deemed to be experiencing learning difficulties. The practicum experience provides an opportunity for participants to create new knowledge by connecting theory from university to the situations they experience at their school site. Critical reflection on this knowledge can result in new teaching practices being

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[50] Source: Sandra/Prac Interview July 28, 2011
[51] Source: Sandra/Prac Interview July 28, 2011
[52] Source: Sandra/Prac Diary One, 2011

enacted. Therefore, teaching practices are selected to best suit the learner and are not limited by the ideological constraints of the site.

The subject positioning of the participant as student teacher did limit but did not necessarily prevent multiplicity. More restricting were the historical, structural, cultural, and social obstacles within the school's organisation (Skrtic, 1991) that hindered the advancement of quality teaching for students experiencing learning difficulties. Not all participants were able to engage with critical pedagogy and name the obstacles encountered. For those who did reach a level of consciousness, some worked creatively to negotiate them in an attempt to create more humanising practices. Others chose to work within the limitations thereby working within and supporting the ideological practices of the site.

School and systemic structures and policies

All teachers working in schools, whether it is within the public (predominantly Government funded) or independent (affiliated with religious or other nongovernment sector) domain, work within structures. Some procedures and processes provide structures that are useful for efficiency; however, when they are used without critique they may become redundant or restrictive. As preservice teachers observe and try on the practices of their mentor teacher, reproduction of practice is inevitable. To overcome the limitations that imitation can have on the development of teacher identity and professional growth, teachers need to engage in critical reflection (Thompson & Pascal, 2012). Therefore, the propensity to engage in critical reflection could be considered as another personal attribute that influences the decision-making process of beginning teachers with regards to students experiencing learning difficulties. Critical reflection allows the tracings, or imitations of other teachers' practices to be put back on the map (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) so new ways of thinking a can be considered (Hagood, 2009). This allows the limiting structures and policies to be challenged so alternative, flexible approaches can be implemented as a response to student difference. Engaging in tracings only, allows the hegemonic practices to threaten a fair and just education for all students. Placing tracings back on the map allows critical pedagogues to consider what else is possible within the structural boundaries of the institution (Kincheloe, 2008; Monchinski, 2008; Thompson & Pascal, 2012).

Special education program in school

Theresa and Sandra both taught in schools with Special Education Programs (SEP). This meant some students attended their classrooms for part of the day (supported by a special education teacher or teacher aide) and others were in the classroom fulltime (also supported by a special education teacher or teacher's aide). Both participants reported frustrating experiences related to classroom interactions with special education staff. However, for Sandra the presence of the SEP and the way it functioned in her classroom challenged her values and attitudes. This caused her to question the legitimacy of some aspects of the program and highlighted her conflicting beliefs about inclusive education.

Sandra reported how two students came "into our class in the beginning of the day and the end of the day"[53] and Sandra felt "their presence [was] merely tokenism as [she] do not see the purpose of them being in the class."[54] As the class teacher she was "not allowed to engage [them] in the content of the general classroom" because they came "in with [their] own stuff, with [their] own aide."[55] She explained how she felt her role as class teacher was diminished by the SEP staff when they indicated the students had their "own stuff to do ... [and] there [was] no need ... to provide ... any curriculum"[56] for them.

Sandra identified the ideological assumption about inclusion that was being supported by selected school practices that it is "almost as if he's in the class and that's good enough."[57] She explained, within her understanding of inclusive education "there are certain social elements to integrating them but [wondered] why ... the bar [is] so low for them." Sandra questioned "why we expect so little of them."[58] This challenged the high expectations she described as part of her understanding of middle years philosophy.

The high expectations Sandra held for students, the value she placed on relationships in the learning process, and her inability to reconcile the theory of

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[53] Source: Sandra/Prac Interview July 28, 2011
[54] Source: Sandra/Prac Diary Three, June,2011
[55] Source: Sandra/Prac Interview July 28, 2011
[56] Source: Sandra/Prac Interview July 28, 2011
[57] Source: Sandra/Prac Interview July 28, 2011
[58] Source: Sandra/Prac Interview July 28, 2011

inclusive education with her own beliefs and the practices witnessed in this limiting structure, continued to cause concern for Sandra. It illustrated the interconnected nature of the rhizome of teaching. On the one hand, she claimed to value students' full membership in the class, however, previously she admitted to seeing benefits to herself and the class when certain students were not in the classroom. Sandra explained how she was "passionate on the middle years"[59] and aligned herself with middle schooling values, many of which intersect with inclusive education, in particular "forming those different relationships with children"[60] to create supportive learning environments. However, she could not reconcile the practicalities of inclusive education to transfer the theory from university into the class setting in this negative work environment.

Theresa identified tension between the classroom teacher and the teacher from the SEP which resulted in awkward interactions between them, and ineffective teaching. Collaborative relationships between the regular teacher and special educator are essential for the goals of inclusive education to be realised. However, as illustrated here they can be threatened by unresolved philosophical differences, and instructional and territorial issues (Salend et al., 2002). Theresa described the tension when "most of the kids would go next door [to the special education unit] but [her supervising] teacher wanted the teachers to come out and support them in the classroom."[61] She reported "there were some disagreements with that aspect."[62] To illustrate the tension Theresa gave the following example from the class morning routine.

> There was one boy with ASD who ... had some behavioural issues and ... lacked social skills. On the carpet he would be constantly calling out. ... His unit teacher would ... stand out the side of the classroom while we marked the roll and if he called out she would stand there and argue with him across the classroom and she'd say "DON"T DO THAT BLAH, BLAH, BLAH" and he's like "Naa naa naa". And so it would be just back and forth while the

[59] Source: Sandra/Prac Interview July 28, 2011
[60] Source: Sandra/Prac Interview July 28, 2011
[61] Source: Theresa/Prac Interview July, 2011
[62] Source: Theresa/Prac Interview July, 2011

class is sitting there trying to get the roll marked. And my teacher is just like "Oh god, oh god!"[63]

Apart from the obvious unsettling influence of the student's and the special educator's behaviour had on the class, Theresa made no comments about how the SEP staff, or their role in the classroom, hindered or advanced the educational outcomes of the students. However, she did unmask the power imbalance amongst the staff (Brookfield, 2005) that resulted in her mentor teacher's lack of action. According to Theresa, although the teacher "didn't like [the behaviour of the special education staff], she didn't take it anywhere [because] she didn't like conflict"[64] and she chose not to challenge the status quo. Theresa also reported how the teaching arrangement disrupted the learning process in the classroom "because they'd take the student away and do some work, and then he'd come back and he'd miss out on the instructions."[65] The special educator would ask "what is he supposed to be doing?"[66] Theresa's frustration resulting from this practice was illustrated in her *think aloud* response during the interview "*well why didn't you stay with him and listen to the instructions.*"[67] While Theresa did not actually verbalise the italicised passage to the special education teacher it illustrated the frustration and inconvenience she felt with the student being removed. Despite being uncomfortable with the practice Theresa did not challenge the situation perhaps apprehensive about challenging the ideological practice which may have positioned her unfavourably with the mentor teacher (Walkington, 2005). Perhaps she recognised her own lack of power to change the situation given her position as student teacher and the lack of power exercised by her supervising teacher (Brookfield, 2005).

Theresa explained how the SEP was also used as a place for timeout where some students voluntarily used it as a safe haven, but for other students it was used as a punishment. The class teacher exercised her position of power over the students. As a consequence, this is unlikely to lead to the development of authentic relationships that can help to overcome students' sense of isolation in the learning process (Larrivee, 2000). As an example, Theresa explained how "one of the boys ... didn't

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[63] Source: Theresa/Prac Interview July, 2011
[64] Source: Theresa/Prac Interview July, 2011
[65] Source: Theresa/Prac Interview July, 2011
[66] Source: Theresa/Prac Interview July, 2011
[67] Source: Theresa/Prac Interview July, 2011

like going to the unit"[68] so to control his behaviour "we said you need to go to the unit [and] he would crack it [because] he didn't want to go there."[69] The use of the term *we* indicated Theresa also adopted this practice and given the underdeveloped relationships (due to limited time on practicum) with the students, in comparison to the class teacher, it may have negatively influenced her future interactions with students which became confrontational.

For both Sandra and Theresa, the school environments did not provide quality models of inclusive teaching. The traditional special education model of withdrawing students was in place, and decision-making related to the students experiencing learning difficulties was not shared which created a "them and us"[70] cultural within the school's organisation. Preservice teachers need exposure to quality inclusive education models. This provides opportunities to experiment with innovative practices and may lead to successful experiences when attempting to meet the needs of students experiencing learning difficulties (Carroll et al., 2003).

Staff attitudes

As part of the course work requirements prior to the block practicum the preservice teachers were asked to undertake a variety of tasks that would provide evidence of their understanding of various aspects of inclusive education. An example of the tasks includes collaborating with other staff to enrich their knowledge of the diverse needs of the students in their class. The preservice teachers used this information to create a unit of work, where attempts were made to differentiate instruction to suit the class they were teaching on the practicum. The purpose of this task was to challenge the preservice teachers and provide space to consider new teaching approaches that would help align theory and practice. However, neither Sandra nor Theresa worked in environments where inclusive practices were being demonstrated and negative attitudes towards inclusive education were openly expressed. Sandra reported other staff told her to "just do what you need to do for uni because there is no such thing as inclusivity."[71] Sandra remarked that inclusive education "does not happen. It can't translate ... you can't transfer those skills in all

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[68] Source: Theresa/Prac Interview July, 2011
[69] Source: Theresa/Prac Interview July, 2011
[70] Source: Sandra/Prac Interview July 28, 2011
[71] Source: Sandra/Prac Interview July 28, 2011

instances to the classroom because of the culture of the school [and] the opinions of the teachers."[72] Sandra identified the deficit discourse surrounding students experiencing learning difficulties "just listening to the conversations the [staff had] in the staffroom."[73] She explained students were being labelled by teachers who held low expectations regarding the students' future success. Sandra described a disjointed work environment where "it's the special education unit and us and there's no cohesiveness there ... working to improve."[74]

The discussion in theme 2–connection and heterogeneity explained how Sandra challenged the negative discourse and ideological assumptions that were influencing school-based practices. Left unchallenged, negative discourse perpetuates the deficit model of difference in education (Howard, 2003). This was illustrated in staffroom interactions reported by Theresa. She reported instances where negative staff attitudes towards some students were openly expressed and positioned her class in a deficit view. Some teachers made comments like "*Oh, you've got that class. Good luck* and those kinds of comments and saying *you've got a really bad class. If you can teach that class you can teach any class.*"[75] Theresa reported these comments initially made her feel intimidated and scared. However, once she established a rapport with the students she actually "didn't find them that bad, like it was a learning curve."[76] The learning curve may be a reference to new knowledge in behaviour management. Multiplicities may have been limited to behaviour management strategies as there was limited evidence from her data at this stage of any new teaching strategies being introduced.

However, other participants reported positive staff support and explained how they were included in fruitful collaborative experiences. Edweena noted the fact that she was "working in a new school they [were] doing everything from scratch ... and thinking everything through."[77] As a result she found "all the processes and ... support [were] a lot more aligned ... so even though there were children with

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[72] Source: Sandra/Prac Interview July 28, 2011
[73] Source: Sandra/Prac Interview July 28, 2011
[74] Source: Sandra/Prac Interview July 28, 2011
[75] Source: Theresa/Prac Interview July, 2011
[76] Source: Theresa/Prac Interview July, 2011
[77] Source: Edweena/Prac Interview July, 2011

problems there seemed to be a better action plan for them."[78] As a result, the support available was quite flexible in terms of being available at times when it was needed.

Edweena reported while she felt her supervising teacher provided her with support she felt there was "a lot more of an expectation [for Edweena] to suggest things."[79] Edweena was supported and encouraged to reflect on her practices in relation to the day's events thereby providing her with an opportunity to draw on her existing knowledge and apply it into her new setting. The mentoring relationship provided an opportunity for Edweena to reflect on her practices in a supportive and safe space. This allowed her to connect theory and practice and consider a range of teaching approaches (Walkington, 2005).

Kate also reported positive staff attitudes and how "the year level teachers work[ed] really well together."[80] Besides a positive school culture she identified several school structures that she felt enabled her to provide better learning experiences for students experiencing learning difficulties. Classroom schedules were built around teacher aide timetables and "that was good because [the teacher aide] would just act as the scribe [because] a lot of [the students] just had trouble getting from [their head] to the page"[81] She explained how she found this really helpful as it enabled her to "teach normally"[82] while those students who needed assistance were getting help. *Teach normally* appears to be a whole class approach, with the exception of reading rotations where she took a guided reading groups and the rest of the class worked independently in pairs or individually. Kate explained how extra resources, such as two additional computers, were allocated to the classroom because of the identified needs of the students. In addition, a reciprocal arrangement with the class teacher in the adjoining room gave the students access to a total of ten computers at various times throughout the day. This cooperative arrangement maximised the use of resources, both physical and human, and created conditions favourable for addressing the diverse needs of students who were experiencing learning difficulties (Devlan, 2008).

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[78] Source: Edweena/Prac Interview July, 2011
[79] Source: Edweena/Prac Interview July 13, 2011
[80] Source: Kate/Prac Interview August 10, 2011
[81] Source: Kate/Prac Interview August 10, 2011
[82] Source: Kate/Prac Interview August 10, 2011

Targeted Teaching Time (TTT) was another school-based decision that Kate reported to be useful. TTT was used "for maths ... 4 days a week ... they would split [the students] up for levels [depending on ability]."[83] She linked the success of this practice to the positive collaborative relationships and systems the teachers developed which resulted in regular meetings to plan ... and evaluate current programs. While this practice reduced the width of the spectrum of student differences, it obviously did not produce maths groups where students were at exact ability levels. Kate does not describe any strategies she witnessed or used to work with students at their level except for the use of scribing for a child with low literacy levels. This institutional practice of streaming students for maths may have indicated to Kate that differentiated instruction did not apply as groups were seen as homogenous.

The year two teachers at Logan's school used an informal behaviour program where they sent students who were disrupting lessons to a 'buddy teacher' for time out. She explained how there were "constantly kids being sent into [her] classroom and they would be sitting there staring at a wall for a good hour and so missing out on class time."[84] Logan found this challenged her values system because she "[did not] like sending a kid out of the classroom"[85] and potentially missing out on learning.

Logan described how she adopted her own way of dealing with students who presented challenges for her. One particular student, who Logan identified as having learning difficulties, required additional support to begin and remain on task. After several unsatisfactory interactions with this student where she describes herself as "sounding like a broken record"[86] she decided a new approach was necessary. Rather than adopting a confrontational approach "that would escalate the problem and ... aggravate him even more,"[87] or adopting the existing classroom plan which "actually [was] a negative ... behaviour management strategy"[88] she described a softer

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[83] Source: Kate/Prac Interview August 10, 2011
[84] Source: Logan/Prac Interview July 12, 2011
[85] Source: Logan/Prac Interview July 12, 2011
[86] Source: Logan/Prac Diary Two June, 2011
[87] Source: Logan/Prac Interview July 12, 2011
[88] Source: Logan/Prac Interview July 12, 2011

approach. This involved using "praise and encouragement,"[89] and "highlighting [students'] work."[90] Critical reflection on her own practice allowed Logan to identify the negative impact her own behaviour was having on the teacher–student interactions (Howard, 2003; McLaren, 2007). By unmasking power (Brookfield, 2005) she was able to implement a power with (Larrivee, 2000; Davies, 2008) strategy that fostered respect and problem posing. After she identified her role in the negative interactions, Logan was prompted to consider other possibilities to engage this student in more just ways. Her approach was more inclusive and aligned more closely with her belief system than the dominant practice of using a buddy teacher to manage challenging behaviour. By contesting hegemonic practices established by the year two teachers, that did not match her beliefs, Logan was able to respond in a more authentic manner (Brookfield, 2005).

The ideology embedded within the school culture has the potential to influence the decision-making of teachers. Staff attitudes, supportive collaborative practices, and the quality of relationships amongst teachers influenced the way the preservice teachers positioned themselves to respond to students experiencing learning difficulties. If preservice teachers are to meet the needs of students experiencing learning difficulties, in socially just and inclusive ways, it is clear they need to take a critical stance as they identify resistance and constricting features within the school environment and their own practice. In Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome, asignifying ruptures provide this point of departure from *what is* to consider *what could be* (Masschelein, 1998) and is the focus of the next section.

Findings from the Data Related to Theme 4–asignifying ruptures

Asignifying ruptures provide a means of identifying and resisting structural boundaries and sources of power in education. Ruptures allow teachers to problematise teaching and challenge the stratifying features that have the potential to limit student achievement, such as resource distribution and classifying students experiencing learning difficulties. Critical reflection on classroom practices and routines has the potential to expose previously unchallenged values and beliefs. It provides opportunities to explore alternative practices and new possibilities.

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[89] Source: Logan/Prac Diary Four June, 2011
[90] Source: Logan/Prac Interview July 12, 2011

Asignifying ruptures occur when theoretical knowledge is applied in new and practical forms. This is a messy process because of the multitude of contributing factors, such as the subject positioning the teacher occupies, which is influenced by their sense of efficacy, and familiarity and confidence within the work setting.

Classroom structures and procedures

The artificial nature of the practicum setting is one factor that has the potential to limit ruptures occurring in preservice teachers' practice. The mentor teacher is responsible for the final report regarding the preservice teacher's progress during the practicum period. This information transfers to the assessment component of the practicum period reported by university and ultimately influences prospective employment opportunities the following year. Jack was very conscious of the power the mentor teacher held with regards to his future and this limited his willingness to experiment with new pedagogy.

Jack described the practicum as a limiting and contradictory experience. He noted the decisions he made were influenced by his mentor teacher, because "the one person [he had] to please [was] that teacher"[91] who was writing his report. He believed if the mentor teacher thought he was "doing things the way she [did] them, then she [was] obviously going to be happy with that."[92] Consequently, Jack explained that he did "a lot of things ... that [he] probably ... disagreed with ... [and] would never do"[93] in his own classroom. As a result of his practice not being authentic (Cranton, 2006), it led to feelings of frustration.

However, Jack was reflecting on his future practice and the working environment while he was "mimicking"[94] his teacher. He came to recognise several injustices that occur in schools. Jack envisioned a future with "his own classroom and time"[95] where he would implement things he had learnt at university and the professional experiences.[96] Jack identified several features of the classroom that he would change, such as the class layout. He demonstrated a "language of possibility"

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[91] Source: Jack/Prac Interview July 20, 2011
[92] Source: Jack/Prac Interview July 20, 2011
[93] Source: Jack/Prac Interview July 20, 2011
[94] Source: Jack/Prac Interview July 20, 2011
[95] Source: Jack/Prac Interview July 20, 2011
[96] Source: Jack/Prac Interview July 20, 2011

(Giroux, 1988) as he envisaged what could be for a student who used a wheelchair and did not have full access to all areas of the room in the current set up. He "drew it out ... and ... actually showed it to [the] teacher one day and she was like ahhhmm,"[97] and so his frustration continued when his ideas were not considered or valued by the supervising teacher. Jack explained that while he was "on prac ... at the end of the day it is not [his] classroom"[98] and he felt this seriously limited what he could achieve.

According to Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) rhizomatic model this practice produced a tracing although he does attempt to place the tracing on the map. For teachers to become critical pedagogues mapping is required. A map "is open and connectable to all its dimensions ... susceptible to constant modification" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 13). Ruptures are evident in Jack's thinking but he is unable or unwilling to enact new practice. This may occur at another time. The fact that he is reflecting on why he does things in particular ways, while simultaneously thinking about how he could do them, may help Jack to overcome organisational obstacles. Like the rhizome, his preferred teaching choices may cease at a given time due to personal or structural limitations but have the potential to re-form at another time when conditions are different (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987).

Edweena's class was made up of students from three consecutive grade levels. Based on an organisational management decision Edweena often taught small groups comprised of one particular grade level during her practicum. She explained how she taught the five grade 4 students, who were at varying abilities in maths. Edweena described how she worked closely with "the two boys [who] were at the basic level of understanding"[99] using hands on material so students could physically manipulate the process while she modelled the recording. At the same time the others worked independently. Edweena explained how she learnt at university "about the importance of using materials ... in the early phase of their understanding."[100] She made links between theory and practice and is considered various methods of teaching the one concept. Many of Edweena's teaching experiences in this practicum

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[97] Source: Jack/Prac Interview July 20, 2011
[98] Source: Jack/Prac Interview July 20, 2011
[99] Source: Edweena/Prac Diary Three, June,2011
[100] Source: Edweena/Prac Diary Three, June,2011

involved small group, grade specific lessons that greatly reduced the demands experienced in whole class teaching. It provided her with opportunities to differentiate instruction in a less demanding environment enabling her to enhance her skills in this area.

Kate described her response to a situation from reading rotations where she "saw that a lot of [the students] were getting off track, not reading ... [and] getting bored [because] they finished the book really quickly and so that is when [she] introduced the voice recorder."[101] This process had a dual benefit. "By using the voice recorder the students were able to focus on their voice and expression"[102] and "it also encouraged them to read because ... it was kind of like a gimmick ... [and] it also controlled [the] group."[103] This reduced Kate's role in maintaining students' on-task behaviour. Kate's consideration of the value of novelty as a motivational device allowed her to focus on student learning rather than behaviour management. Kate created a rupture from the structures and routines commonly exercised in the classroom. This allowed her "to see where ideas open up and new trajectories may be realised" (Hagood, 2009, p. 43). In a rhizomatic sense she was mapping new practices rather than purely imitating those of the classroom teacher. Kate's confidence in teaching reading and her subject positioning as a teacher allowed her to create a new strategy within the structure of the preestablished reading rotations.

Kate reported a very confident approach to addressing students' difficulties in reading and explained how she would "just go through the different reading strategies and usually knew what work[ed] for each student."[104] She attributed her confidence and skills to the knowledge she gained about teaching reading through elective subjects at university and additional training she sought outside of her university course.[105]

Peer tutoring was another strategy introduced by some participants that linked theory from university to practice in the classroom, although sometimes this may have been at a subconscious level. Logan's desire to create a warm class

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[101] Source: Kate/Prac Interview August 10, 2011
[102] Source: Kate/Prac Diary Three, June,2011
[103] Source: Kate/Prac Interview August 10, 2011
[104] Source: Kate/Initial Diary Entry March, 2011
[105] Source: Kate/Prac Interview August 10, 2011

environment, led to peer tutoring as a class practice even though it "came about as a bit of an accident."[106] Edweena expressed surprise at how "some students [she] did not expect to work well, actually really encouraged each other."[107] She described how "two low students, have this real competitiveness between them ... pushed each other and they worked better than anyone in the class."[108] Although she admitted peer tutoring "just kind of found its way"[109] rather than being a predetermined decision it does demonstrate she was willing to listen to the students' voice, recognise their ability to help themselves, and allow them some control in the learning process.

These asignifying ruptures described above provide examples where the participants as student teachers were able to respond to the needs of their students. However, it was not an hierarchical process reliant on a developing set of skills, rather it was a process where ruptures occurred at various places along the rhizome (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) and were influenced by a variety of factors, in particular their ability to engage in critical reflection. Teachers who problematise teaching constantly reflect on and challenge their classroom setting and practices. This allows them to identify and remove possible barriers to learning so individual potential can be uncovered and unleashed (Masschelein, 1998). Through critical reflection, some participants identified limiting factors in the classroom and developed responsive teaching strategies that matched students' learning needs and maximised students' learning opportunities. This forms the basis of the following discussion.

Responsive teaching

Responsive teaching utilises flexible classroom practices and enacts decisions that consider the needs of all students. This aims to maximise engagement and opportunities for learning through the quality and quantity of teaching time. Responsive teaching practices utilise pedagogy drawn from research. This is sensitive to students' individual needs identified through ongoing assessment and respectful relationships between the teacher and the student. Responsive teaching occurs in classrooms where students feel they have full membership and their

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[106] Source: Logan/Prac Interview July 12, 2011
[107] Source: Edweena/Prac Interview July 13, 2011
[108] Source: Edweena/Prac Interview July 13, 2011
[109] Source: Edweena/Prac Interview July 13, 2011

presence and contributions are valued. The closely linked nature of responsive teaching within the theme of asignifying ruptures and respectful relationships identified in theme 2–connection and heterogeneity highlight the interwoven nature of teacher growth and development.

All of the participants reported in their diary entries providing one-on-one support for the students they identified as experiencing learning difficulties. This type of support was the focus of practicum experiences during the first and second year of the Bachelor of Education course. Preservice teachers worked with small groups of students to provide intervention and support work without the responsibility of managing the whole class simultaneously. The third year practicum has a behaviour management focus that endeavoured to highlight strategies to assist the development and flow of the lesson. As students became more focused on managing whole class responsibilities during this practicum, the likelihood of being able to provide one-on-one attention to students who needed support became less manageable. Participants reported the time spent with one student challenged their sense of justice and the feelings of neglect for the other students and caused them to question their practices. Teachers who learn democracy (Brookfield, 2005) to meet the demands of their role understand the difference between equality and equity in education and realise there are multiple ways to respond to students who are experiencing learning difficulties.

Many participants acknowledged the unsustainable nature of some practices they employed to respond to student difference. They expressed concern about the logistics of helping "just one child because you need to teach the rest of the class [and it would] disadvantage everyone else."[110] Participants felt they were not always "able to give [the students] what they needed."[111] Ultimately they put the responsibility of instigating new practices on themselves as the class teacher "because you can't leave anyone behind."[112] While some participants reported altering tasks to suit students' ability or provided additional hands on material to help students to succeed, they did not elaborate on how they determined what adjustments were needed.

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[110] Source: Pepper/Prac Interview August 5, 2011
[111] Source: Theresa/Prac Interview July, 2011
[112] Source: Pepper/Prac Interview August 5, 2011

Responsive teaching requires teachers to implement ongoing assessment to identify students' needs (Meo, 2008). Participants provided little evidence of using formative assessment to inform teaching. Closer examination of summative assessment data, at the end of the unit, revealed to Logan she did not have a close understanding of her students' academic progress. As a result Logan noted a particular student who "went under the radar"[113] because of her focus on students who demonstrated high behaviour needs.

It would appear participants did not utilise responsive teaching strategies during lessons. They showed little consideration of students' needs at the planning stage. Limited use of assessment and differentiated instruction could be a result of under-developed skills and the ability to manage the tasks when faced with whole class responsibilities. Perhaps their ability to reflect on their lessons was limited to the technical aspects of teaching with little regard for the role their behaviour had on the learning context and student outcomes. Inexperience also played a significant part in their ability to identify potential barriers to learning. Limited pedagogical knowledge and skills, fluid sense of efficacy, and the need to appear to be in control through the eyes of others were some of the personal attributes that influenced participants' responses to students experiencing learning difficulties throughout the practicum.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the findings and discussion related to the practicum period of data collection and addressed the four subsidiary questions of this study. The lack of confidence participants described in themselves and the education system has the potential to project to parents and students a very detrimental message that the learning problems the students face are beyond teachers' capabilities. This has the potential to perpetuate the problem for students by impacting on their expectations and perception for future success in classroom performance (Clark, 1997; Woodcock & Vialle, 2010).

The banking model (Freire, 1970) of education where knowledge is acquired and stored resonated in the pedagogical choices of preservice teachers. Here the

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[113] Source: Logan/Prac Diary One, June, 2011

teachers placed themselves in a position of control and power because they had the knowledge (Monchinski, 2008) to impart through whole class lessons. The creativity, knowledge, and worth of others in the learning process were minimised. The participants' responses to students' difficulties became reactive rather than proactive. By positioning themselves as the holder of knowledge, the preservice teachers positioned students as objects in the learning process. This compromised the humanising practices they attempted to establish through positive student–teacher relationships, which they recognised as highly important in the learning process for all students.

The culture of the school is developed through a range of social interactions. This culture legitimises or challenges ideological and hegemonic practices (Burr, 1995; Kanpol, 1994; McLaren, 2007). The mentor teacher and the ideological assumptions she carried into her practice were the most significant feature from the school culture on preservice teachers during the practicum. However, negative discourse around students experiencing learning difficulties, expressed by other staff, also reinforced the deficit view of learning.

Preservice teachers who gain practical experience in inclusive environments are more likely to frame and respond to students experiencing learning difficulties in a positive manner (Hart et al., 2007). The lack of power resulting from the subject positioning as student teacher limited participants opportunities to challenge the ideological and hegemonic practices encountered during the practicum. However, possibilities remain open for future change for those participants who engage in problem posing through critical reflection.

The following chapter presents the data from the final phase of preservice data collection which took place during the internship. It follows a similar format to Chapter 5 where the findings and discussion are organised under the same four themes; personal attributes, connection and heterogeneity, multiplicity and asignifying ruptures. The four subsidiary questions underpinning this study as well as the transforming perceptions of teaching and learning relevant to the internship are addressed throughout the discussion.

Chapter 6: Participants as Intern

This chapter reports on Data Set Two, described in table 6.1 and was collected during the internship period. The internship is a 30 day, sustained classroom teaching experience undertaken by fourth year Bachelor of Education students in the final semester of the degree program. As an intern, the preservice teacher takes increasing responsibility for planning, teaching, and assessing student learning. In collaboration with the mentor teacher the intern plans, implements, and evaluates the classroom program for six weeks of a school term. During this period of time the interns are expected to develop and demonstrate the professional, ethical, and values-based standards and competencies required of beginning teachers identified by a governing body, external to the university.

Data Set Two builds on the data presented in Chapter 5, adding to the experiences of the seven participants. The internship concludes their teacher training. In all of the cases being reported the intern period occurred in the same settings as the practicum experience. These settings are described in Appendix B. Because Jack completed his practicum and internship interstate, data collection times for his internship occurred six weeks earlier than the times displayed in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1

Data Sources Data Set Two

Data Source	Time of Collection
Internship Diaries (4)	Oct-Nov, 2011
Semi Structured Interview (1)	Nov, 2011
Personal Statement	Dec, 2011

The same four subsidiary questions used in Chapter 5 are again addressed throughout this chapter. The interns' transforming perceptions of teaching and learning as they respond to student difference are discussed. During the practicum the participants' perceptions about how learning occurs generally situated the teacher at the centre. They sought to established control, compliance, and assumed total responsibility for students' progress. Their perceptions about the teacher's contribution involved the provision of whole class lessons and one-on-one attention to attend to student difference. They identified the value in developing relationships with students but

controlled lesson content. During the internship there was some evidence of transformations in these perceptions in some participants, but generally the change was minimal. It appears to be limited by a lack of critical reflection to consider how their behaviour and beliefs, and institutional ideologies limit responses to student difference. In addition, limited pedagogical knowledge and skills minimised what they envisaged was possible.

Participants as Intern

The elements listed in red in Table 6.2 present a growing list of factors participants attributed to the causes of learning difficulties. This may indicate their awareness of and new knowledge about students experiencing learning difficulties was increasing. It may also simply be the fact that as data were collected participants had more opportunities to recall their ideas. The purpose of Table 6.2 is not to provide the participants' exhaustive list of reasons why students may experience learning difficulties, but to illustrate the range of factors interns associated with students experiencing learning difficulties.

Significantly, in this data set participants increasingly identified deficits within the child but separate to the six ascertained areas of impairment. Students who meet criteria for one of the six disability categories of autism spectrum disorder (ASD), hearing impairment (HI), intellectual impairment (II), physical impairment (PI), speech-language impairment (SLI) and vision impairment (VI) may be supported by additional targeted funding to access additional educational support. Participants identified disabilities linked with behavioural consequences such as ASD, but also other behavioural factors situating the learning difficulty within the students. For example, attention deficit disorder (ADD), lack of concentration, and poor attitude were indicated by many participants. This may be a result of the deficit discourse they were exposed to in some school settings. A lack of foundational knowledge and skills as well as poor literacy skills, were noted to impact on learning in all areas. While this does locate the problem stemming from within the child it does indicate participants recognised teachers and other school factors had been ineffective in previous years. This understanding may challenge participants' beliefs about how effectively they can teach students experiencing learning difficulties in the future. Also apparent is the increased attention to deficit discourse which may influence participants' beliefs about learning and teaching (Howard, 2003). Beliefs about the

causes of learning difficulties and their efficacy in responding to students who are experiencing difficulties are significant on teachers' practice and decision-making in the classroom (Beswick, 2008; Schussler, 2009; Woodcock & Vialle, 2010). However, at this stage it appears their underdeveloped skills to manage whole class responsibility and their limited pedagogical content knowledge are more significant personal factors impacting on their practice.

In Chapter 5, participants described a strong focus on providing one-on-one support for students who were experiencing learning difficulties. This continued in Chapter 6, but became less manageable given their increasing teaching load. While most participants had a positive attitude towards the diverse range of learners in their class many participants questioned their capacity to make a difference for those students who they considered were working *well* below the year level expectations. In this data set increasing levels of frustration were evident. Attempting to maintain control over all aspects of the learning process and placing themselves at the centre has been a common feature in much of their practice. As student teachers, participants' tended to concentrate on their own behaviour and the scripts they had prepared for the lesson. This reduced their attention to how the students were responding to the lesson and the flexibility of the responses participants were able to generate. In this chapter, some participants decentred themselves from the process and focused more on students' learning. Attending to student difference, however, remained minimal. A strong focus on behaviour and control monopolised their attention over academic goals.

Table 6.2

Additional Causes of Learning Difficulties Identified by Participants as Interns

	Medical	Family Context	School experience/ quality of teaching/ the system	Other factors
Edweena	• HI- refusal to wear hearing aids, ADHD, ADD, OCD, II prenatal experience	• Low value given to education- learning in the home	• Responses to student behaviour, attitudes of teacher • Lack of foundation knowledge and skills	• ESL, student behaviour • Lack of participation and effort • Lazy
Theresa	ASD	• Disadvantaged or abusive home life. • Poor diet • Missed schooling	• Being treated differently and rebelling against support/ learning	• Behaviour • Lazy
Jack		• Lack of care and nutrition • Family disruptions	• Going unnoticed by teacher • Lesson quality results in lack of engagement	• Outside of school issues impacting on concentration • Most people have something • Poor organisational skills • Emotional intelligence • Not asking for help • Students zone out- many reasons for this
Pepper		• Lack of support at home, poor guidance/ parenting	• Lack of foundation knowledge and skills	• Does not seek help- lazy, shy, scared, low confidence
Logan	• II, ASD, HI, ADHD, Anxiety	• Access to school limited by parents commitment	• Barriers created by curriculum	• Unidentified barriers to learning • Student's attitude
Sandra	ASD, Speech impediment	• Slow to recognise and respond to students needs	• Insufficient support due to lack of time • Mismatched assessment tasks • Lack of support and cohesion within the class • Slow identify and respond to students needs	• Lack of social skills • Poor literacy skills impact on everything
Kate	• Dyslexia, ADD, ASD, ADHD	• Broken homes with no communication or support to monitor homework		• Poor reading impacts on everything else • Needs ongoing attention that is not available

Findings from the Data Related to Theme 1–personal attributes

Values and beliefs

According to Beswick (2008), Schussler (2009), and Wiebe Berry (2006) teachers' beliefs, reflected in the decisions they make in the classroom, are more strongly influenced by the values and beliefs they hold than the theoretical knowledge acquired during teacher training. Building on this, Carrington (1999) found teachers' espoused beliefs sometimes did not translate to enacted beliefs because of limited knowledge and skills, or limited opportunities to witness successful inclusion in practice. Nevertheless, Larrivee (2000) claims preservice teachers who engage in critical reflection are more likely to "infuse personal beliefs and values into a professional identity" (p. 293). This influences the assumptions they make about learners, the perceptions they form about the learners' behaviour, and their responses to it. In other words, their professional identity influences their perceptions of teaching and learning. This highlights the importance of preservice teachers engaging in critical refection during preservice training and its role in the process of transformational learning (Carrington & Selva, 2010) and the development of teacher identity (Henderson et al., *in press*).

However, while critical reflection allows teachers to question student behaviour in relation to the context of the learning environment it may not result in improved teaching practices and learning outcomes. Change is not an easy or guaranteed process (Brookfield, 2000; Hoffman-Kipp et al., 2003). Nevertheless, teachers with high self-efficacy and high expectations of themselves as teachers are more likely to frame students' learning difficulties as an element over which they have some influence. These teachers will seek to find pedagogical practices that enhance student learning (Hart et al., 2007; Hattie, 2003; Woolfson & Brady, 2009). They position themselves with some form of agency.

Positioning students

As preservice teachers most of the participants saw themselves as being able to make a difference to the students' progress through their pedagogical choices and practices. This is despite the over emphasis on one-on-one teaching as the preferred method of intervention. Generally, their belief in themselves and their ability to make a difference to the learning outcomes of students experiencing learning difficulties

continued during the internship. Their position of agency, however, became less stable and coincided with a shift in their general teaching efficacy (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993).

Despite indicating they believed they could make a difference to students' learning, the ways they framed students' behaviour increasingly located the source of the learning problem within the child. As interns, participants expressed increasing levels of frustration with students who became disengaged because they thought they could not "do the work or they shouldn't have to."[114] Two participants used the term *lazy* to describe these students, although, they were also aware some students were "too embarrassed to ask"[115] for help. A perceived lack of success in their teaching increased the levels of frustration experienced by the interns. This may have contributed to participants directing negative attributes towards students experiencing learning difficulties. In addition, not satisfying the expectations they held of themselves, as well as concerns they did not meet the expectations of the mentor teacher who was evaluating them, may also have contributed to how they viewed students.

Expectations of self as teacher

The interns held high expectations of themselves but sometimes felt let down by their actual teaching and the response of the students. Jack believed because he had "been at university for the last four years ... [he] should know how to do ... some things ... a bit better."[116] Logan explained she "felt a sense of failure when [a student] moved his name over to the 'bored' emotion on the chart [because] as a teacher [she] hoped that [her] lessons [were] engaging."[117] While difficult to accept, exposing this weakness made Logan "consider the needs of all learners; not just the low level students"[118] and brought to her consciousness her "belief that pedagogy can be a barrier to learning."[119] Recognising the limits pedagogy can create is the first step towards purposeful transformation (Monchinski, 2008). However, Freire's (1970) notion of praxis is required to examine the transformative potential of teaching so

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[114] Source: Logan/Intern Interview December 21, 2011
[115] Source: Edweena/Intern Interview December 12, 2011
[116] Source: Jack/Intern Interview September 22, 2011
[117] Source: Logan/Intern Diary Four Oct, 2011
[118] Source: Logan/Intern Diary Four Oct, 2011
[119] Source: Logan/Intern Diary Four Oct, 2011

participants may be able to work towards their high expectations and create learning environments that are inclusive of all learners.

Sandra struggled with the high expectations she held of herself. She explained she had "to come to terms with not [being] the Michelle Pfeiffer's of the world ... going into a school and [not being able] to change it all ... only make a difference in a ... small capacity."[120] Sandra's expectations of what constituted being successful in teaching may have been influenced by the ideological notion, often portrayed through mass media, of what a teacher should be able to achieve (Monchinski, 2008; Shoffner, 2011). While she probably did not really expect to change the world she did reassess her views. Sandra explained,

> it is good to be committed and to dream and to want for your kids but it does not necessarily mean that if they have not achieved it that you have failed ... it just means you need to go about it in a different way.[121]

A key goal of critical pedagogues is to examine how the limiting factors in education can be challenged and then enact the change required. Through critical reflection, "coupled with a necessary ethical posture ... teachers, as agents of change, can take revolutionary steps to improve their students' educational chances" (Bartolomé, 2008). Accepting small accomplishments for their worth and value is needed to reduce Sandra's sense of frustration. This is discussed later in this chapter.

Sense of efficacy

Teachers' sense of efficacy is fluid. It is created by an ongoing struggle to reconcile ones view of themselves, their contributions in their role as teacher, how others perceive them, and the context in which they work (Sutherland et al., 2010). This was reported in Chapter 5 and continues within the data in this chapter. It is suggested preservice teachers who work in collaborative environments feel more supported and are likely to develop a stronger sense of efficacy than those preservice teachers who receive limited feedback (Flores & Day, 2006; Sutherland et al., 2010).

Edweena described how she felt "a lot more confident ... thanks to the mentor teacher... giving [her] as much experience as [she] wanted."[122] In addition, she was

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[120] Source: Sandra/Intern Interview December 20, 2011
[121] Source: Sandra/Intern Interview December 20, 2011

exposed to a "lot of professional development around planning,"[123] and received support from the school's Literacy and Numeracy Support Teacher. She gave Edweena suggestions to address specific concerns and "a checklist of adjustments to teaching, learning, and assessment."[124] Also helpful was the team teaching approach she used with her mentor teacher.

Edweena generally worked with smaller groups of students during the internship taking one year level from the composite class. When faced with fewer demands of classroom management, Edweena had the opportunity to experience positive outcomes with differentiated instruction and this increased her skills, confidence, and sense of efficacy (Woolfolk Hoy & Burke Spero, 2005).

Edweena became more reflective about her practice and the technical demands of teaching. She described feeling supported in her work environment. The focus on professional development and mentoring at the school has almost shocked Edweena into realising the theory from university was "actually applicable"[125] She reported utilising teacher aides to assist students to reduce the extraneous task demands (like cutting and pasting) so the student could focus on the learning goals.[126] While she targeted particular students and planned intervention strategies in her lesson preparation she was more open to the fact that others might also need support. This was due, in part, to her increased skill level but also as a response to her realisation that during the practicum she was totally unaware of one student who was performing well below grade level expectations. Edweena explained "because there were other kids who had more severe things ... he sort of just floated along."[127] As a result, she kept a more open mind about where she may need to help during her teaching rather than "sort of tunnel vision these are the kids ... to help."[128]

Kate was also well supported and accepted by staff in her intern setting. She saw herself as one of the teachers, and other staff members referred to her as part of the staff. In addition, she had opportunities to implement strategy instruction lessons

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[122] Source: Edweena/Intern Interview December 12, 2011
[123] Source: Edweena/Intern Interview December 12, 2011
[124] Source: Edweena/Intern Interview December 12, 2011
[125] Source: Edweena/Intern Interview December 12, 2011
[126] Source: Edweena/Intern Interview December 12, 2011
[127] Source: Edweena/Intern Interview December 12, 2011
[128] Source: Edweena/Intern Interview December 12, 2011

on an individual basis with students experiencing learning difficulties who attended maths in a "streamed" class.

Kate identified herself as "really confident"[129] to take responsibility for her own class and she reported using a variety of strategies to engage and motivate students, such as, partner work, small groups and technology-based lessons using the electronic smart board. She explained how she introduced lessons with fun language such as "once you put your hand up ... I will give you your next secret mission ... and the secret missions would keep going on until [she] thought they had had enough."[130] Her confidence and strong sense of efficacy could be a reflection of the level of support she received and the opportunities to experience success (Tuchman & Isaacs, 2011; Woolfolk Hoy & Burke Spero, 2005).

Kate reported getting feedback from her mentor teacher as well as the deputy principal, which helped her to extend the strategies she used for motivation into activities that also improved academic quality and developed higher order thinking skills. Ongoing support from the mentor and other staff, contributed to Kate and Edweena's confidence which allowed them to experiment with new pedagogies (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). New ways of thinking, that is, mapping rather than tracing or imitating the mentor teachers' practices occurred which strengthened the nexus between theory and practice.

When students' behaviour and engagement did not meet the participants' expectations their sense of efficacy was threatened. Logan explained that as a teacher she thought "she would be good at making things engaging for the kids, and identifying student strengths and weaknesses, and targeting those as well."[131] She noted it was her "responsibility to take care and nurture the children and do as much as [she could] to make them feel welcome and ... know they all belong."[132] Logan took on the position of nurturer which included taking full responsibility in the teaching and learning process. When students did not want to do the work she felt it

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[129] Source: Kate/Intern Interview November 29, 2011
[130] Source: Kate/Intern Interview November 29, 2011
[131] Source: Logan/Intern Interview December 21, 2011
[132] Source: Logan/Intern Interview December 21, 2011

"was [her] fault and she would take it personally ... and [as a] reflection of [her] not being able to engage them properly."[133]

However, she identified one area where she had improved as being able to "get around to all students and apply feedback ... and make judgements."[134] This may indicate she was able to decentre herself in the teaching process to focus on how learning was occurring. It may also have indicated she was becoming more efficient in gaining compliance from students who completed the set tasks causing minimal distractions. When questioned about her teaching strategies she explained how "a lot of lessons taught were from the text book ... not really differentiating but trying to give individual feedback ... to try to make sure they had that understanding."[135] The focus on supporting students individually continued for most participants throughout the internship. It became more difficult and less effective as their responsibilities as class teacher broadened and became more demanding during the internship.

Logan commented how "in a different context, particularly with behaviour management ... you could really doubt yourself and not feel that you had control."[136] As described in Chapter 5 control was seen by participants as an essential element of the learning environment and was reflected in their teacher-centred approach to whole class lessons and their focus on providing individual support to students experiencing learning difficulties. Pepper and Theresa both experienced doubt in themselves about their ability and loss of control.

Pepper described how she "was just fed up with some of the kids' attitude and was ... really upset [because she was] working so hard and just not getting anywhere."[137] However, she explained how she "got around it ... with activities that looked like they weren't learning ... it was all fun ... and ... more flexible."[138] A description of some of these activities, however, indicated the cognitive level of the task may have been compromised in an effort to engage the students.[139] Pepper explained she was happier with how the students worked, but the students' learning

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[133] Source: Logan/Intern Interview December 21, 2011
[134] Source: Logan/Intern Interview December 21, 2011
[135] Source: Logan/Intern Interview December 21, 2011
[136] Source: Logan/Intern Interview December 21, 2011
[137] Source: Pepper/Intern Interview November 24, 2011
[138] Source: Pepper/Intern Interview November 24, 2011
[139] Source: Pepper/Intern Interview November 24, 2011

outcomes were lower than she expected "but at least the kids enjoyed it."[140] Pepper appears to be judging her lesson success against student enjoyment over student achievement and outcomes. Although not particularly successful at this stage, this does provide an example of asignifying rupture and Peppers' willingness to experiment with new ideas as she considered the students' needs.

Theresa continued to describe challenging situations with behaviour management and engaging students similar to those she experienced in the practicum. She explained how during the practicum she was "just trying to get through the lesson ... but [during the internship she] was putting behaviour first."[141] This change resulted from the mentor teachers' feedback. Theresa explained how she felt "annoyed"[142] but did not realise how she became fixated on the students until her partner suggested she "come home and tell [him] the good things that happen[ed] in the day rather than the bad things."[143]

Perhaps one thing in Theresa's favour was the support from the mentor teacher who "always gave [her] a lot of feedback"[144] following her lessons. Theresa reported that this helped her to work through the challenges she faced. However, she did clarify most of the feedback was during the practicum "because on [the] internship she was 'yep that's great, doing great.' And if [she] needed ... any other advice"[145] she felt the support was there. The mentor teacher appeared to have taken on a supervisory role. While her positive affirmations may have boosted Theresa's confidence, feedback that involves a two way dialogue may be more empowering for preservice teachers as it allows them to find their own solutions through a process of critical reflection (Walkington, 2005).

The participants used their ability to maintain students' engagement on tasks to judge how successfully they met their own expectations. When participants did not experience success in this area they often expressed frustration which had the potential to impact negatively their relationship with students and how they interpreted students' behaviour. This influenced their willingness to experiment with

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[140] Source: Pepper/Intern Interview November 24, 2011
[141] Source: Theresa/Intern Interview November 30, 2011
[142] Source: Theresa/Intern Interview November 30, 2011
[143] Source: Theresa/Intern Interview November 30, 2011
[144] Source: Theresa/Intern Interview November 30, 2011
[145] Source: Theresa/Intern Interview November 30, 2011

different teaching approaches. Thus, feeling a sense of success with students experiencing learning difficulties was a personal attribute that influenced the decision-making in the classroom. The consequences of this belief are discussed in the next section.

Beliefs about inclusive education and models of inclusive education

Woolfolk Hoy & Burke Spero (2005) suggest the beliefs teachers form about their teaching are formed during their preservice training and once formed are difficult to change. While Monchinski (2008) contends some beliefs and expectations about teaching result from personal schooling experiences. Accordingly, it is essential preservice teachers are exposed to quality models of inclusive education where social justice and humanising practices (Masschelein, 1998; Monchinski, 2008) influence the ideologies that legitimise certain practices in schools (Brookfield, 2000).

As reported in the previous chapter, many participants were not exposed to quality models of inclusive education during their practicum experience. Most participants reported they did not witness teachers working collaboratively. They noted students experiencing learning difficulties were usually removed from their classes for intervention, and limited examples of differentiated instruction were presented in lessons. In one situation the mentor teacher was frequently absent from the room, engaged in another school project, and therefore modelling of inclusive practices and support for that intern were almost nonexistent The four territories of failure associated with inclusive education; confusion, frustration, guilt and exhaustion identified within the inclusive education movement in the United Kingdom (Allan, 2008) were also evident in the participants' experiences. The two found to be most significant in this data set, frustration and guilt, are discussed in this section.

Frustration

Frustration was often expressed by participants as a result of failing to meet the expectations they held for themselves and the perceived expectations they created through the imperatives that influenced their behaviour (Brookfield, 2005). Frustration was also linked to feeling undervalued by both staff and students which also impacted on their sense of efficacy (Gavish & Friedman, 2010). The interns in

this study were still developing a professional identity and this along with limited skills could also have contributed to conflict between their assumptions and beliefs, and their actual practice (Carrington, 1999).

For Jack, the frustration was a result of feeling undervalued by the mentor teacher in his role as intern. He explained how she "wasn't there a lot of the time and there were a couple of times [he] got a bit frustrated ... not getting ... too much guidance."[146] One advantage Jack noted of being left alone was the students "got used to the fact that [he] was the teacher."[147] However, Jack detailed how he frequently felt like the mentor teacher assumed Jack could take responsibility for the class and "as long as the kids weren't running riot then everything was okay."[148]

His frustration also stemmed from his recognition of the power abuse that occurred in the intern situation. Part of the mentor teacher's role was to assist Jack to co-plan and provide him with constructive feedback. Jack explained this did not occur on the internship which was frustrating because he "want[ed] to have a decent overview of what was going [on and he] just didn't have that."[149] Very conscious of the power the mentor teacher held to influence Jack's future opportunities for employment at this school meant he was reluctant to challenge the situation and wore the frustration instead. Jack was aware of the power imbalance during the practicum, and very cautious not to contest it. As an intern he recognised his position as teacher in front of the students, but positioned himself as a subordinate without power against the mentor teacher.

Sandra's frustration resulted from her very high, almost unreasonable, expectations of herself and the never ending challenge to reach them as discussed earlier in this section. Her assumptions about what she should be able to do as a teacher shaped her reactions. She reflected on herself as a teacher and what she believed she needed to do to satisfy her own expectations of herself. Sandra explained,

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[146] Source: Jack/Intern Interview September 22, 2011
[147] Source: Jack/Intern Interview September 22, 2011
[148] Source: Jack/Intern Interview September 22, 2011
[149] Source: Jack/Intern Interview September 22, 2011

> I have to lower my standards. ... And I struggle with that but I have to at some point realise that my lofty ideals are not necessarily what is applicable to what these kids need. And so I just need to be ... more realistic.[150]

What she does not challenge is where the *lofty ideals* originated and whether they were actually realistic. Critical reflection would allow her to challenge whether she really needed to lower her standards or adjust her own expectations. Brookfield (2005) would suggest Sandra needs to critically reflect to overcome the ideological influences that are alienating her from her authentic practice and reclaim reason by reevaluating the imperatives that are shaping the way she conceives teaching.

Theresa described how she was frustrated by student behaviour. This may stem from relationships based on a power dynamic. She explained how "in the beginning [she] felt sorry for this child as he [came] from a broken family, [but she came to realise] he was also really good at talking his way in and out of situations."[151] His behaviour towards her became disrespectful. She explained how she "would try to give him extra help and be extra attentive to his needs, but then ... found [it] was taking ... time away from other students who also desperately needed the help and [she became] more inclined to help the others, as they weren't being rude or disrupting the class."[152] Her frustration influenced her pedagogical choices and responses and may even influence the future expectations of the student (Brookfield, 2007; Woodcock, 2008; Woodcock & Vaille, 2010). The power dynamic in this relationship is investigated further later in this chapter in theme 2–connection and heterogeneity.

Frustration had previously been described by Theresa and Sandra towards school-based decisions such as the role of the Special Education Program in their classrooms and this did continue in Data Set Two for Sandra. However, in this data set participants expressed frustration more towards the students, their behaviour, and their lack of engagement and motivation rather than to their roles as teachers or the structural constraints of schools. The interns created very teacher-centred

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[150] Source: Sandra/Intern Interview December 20, 2011
[151] Source: Theresa/Internship Diary One October, 2011
[152] Source: Theresa/Internship Diary One October, 2011

environments. The interns' position of power was challenged as the students contested the strategies implemented for control and compliance.

Guilt

Conflicting beliefs about inclusion, combined with high expectations of themselves and a shifting sense of efficacy, resulted in participants feeling a sense of guilt when teaching students experiencing learning difficulties. Sandra expressed very conflicting beliefs. On the one hand she claimed not to agree with inclusion.[153] She felt some students were not achieving and they took her time away from the other students. On the other hand, she described how she went out of her way to make the students feel part of the class and when students from her class "were taken away... it was a frustration."[154] Sandra explained how she had "the luxury"[155] of students who were experiencing difficulty being "removed for a greater portion of [her] lessons."[156] Although she recognised she was not comfortable with this arrangement she found it made "a HUGE difference to the amount of quality teaching time [she could] achieve with the remainder of the class."[157] Consequently, she did "not feel guilty for holding the class back ... because of the few struggling."[158] She noted the "emotional see saw ride that ... is surely only going to get worse in the future."[159] She recognised "she must cater for all students ... [even though it] sometimes seem[ed] much easier just teaching to the middle – but that also [brought] a whole lot of guilt."[160]

The additional demands some students placed on the interns and the amount of time they potentially took from the other students caused the interns to question their ability to meet everyone's needs. They also questioned the placement of some students in their class. Participants explained "there [were] students who [took] up your whole time and ... the other students ... would start to get off task."[161] They described the classroom as "unfair sometimes ... working with one student and so

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[153] Source: Sandra/Intern Interview December 20, 2011
[154] Source: Sandra/Intern Interview December 20, 2011
[155] Source: Sandra/Internship Diary Three Oct, 2011
[156] Source: Sandra/Internship Diary Three Oct, 2011
[157] Source: Sandra/Internship Diary Three Oct, 2011
[158] Source: Sandra/Internship Diary Three Oct, 2011
[159] Source: Sandra/Internship Diary Three Oct, 2011
[160] Source: Sandra/Internship Diary Three Oct, 2011
[161] Source: Kate/Intern Interview November 29, 2011

many others that ... needed one-on-one help as well."[162] Compounding this problem was the participants' confusion over equity and whether making adjustments for some students was "really fair to the rest of the class."[163] Perhaps participants were working towards a critical pedagogy when they express views about learning democracy (Brookfield, 2005). However, equity and equality are two different concepts. Working towards equality is too demanding and not the goal of inclusive education. Equity within education, however, suggests teachers respond to students specific to their needs and circumstances (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008).

Generally, participants continued to identify one-on-one support as an essential element of teaching students experiencing learning difficulties. This compounded the additional strain on their time when they were trying to manage the increasing responsibilities of whole class teaching and decision-making. This may have challenged their previously held beliefs about inclusive education and their own sense of efficacy.

Values are subjective and therefore arouse an emotional response (Larrivee, 2000). Emotions are a significant part of the construction of teacher identity (Zembylas, 2003), teaching and learning to teach (Flores & Day, 2006) and are aroused when our values are challenged. Guilt is a conditioned response we experience when we feel we have compromised our values and belief system. When belief systems become ideological; when they are accepted unchallenged and "serve to reproduce existing systems, structures, and behaviours" (Brookfield, 2005, p. 67); they threaten to alienate teachers from authentic practices. This creates space for hegemonic assumptions and unchallenged power to fuel oppressive, limiting practices allowing them to flourish within teaching. As preservice teachers embark on the internship experience it is not surprising emotional responses continued to pepper the recollections of their decision-making and teaching context. What became more noticeable in Data Set Two compared with Data Set One were the negative emotions; frustration and disappointment, that emanated from student–teacher interactions as discussed in the earlier section.

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[162] Source: Kate/Intern Interview November 29, 2011
[163] Source: Theresa/Intern Diary Three October, 2011

Attitudes

Attitudes are multidimensional; they contain affective, behavioural, and cognitive components (Haddock & Maio, 2007; Loreman et al., 2011). The affective component has been discussed in the previous section. The cognitive component of attitudes guides teachers to make sense of what is happening in their classrooms while behavioural attitudes influence how they respond to those situations.

Positive classroom support

A positive classroom environment is created when all members of the group feel valued and supported. This can be achieved by creating a community where the roles of teaching and learning are shared amongst all members and individual strengths are acknowledged and utilised (Loreman et al., 2011). Sandra's strong sense of social justice and the value she placed on others and their role in creating shared learning environments was evident as she discussed shared power as part of a positive classroom environment. Sandra envisaged a classroom with "a lot more mentoring"[164] based on her personal experiences. She described it as "a win/win situation [and] ... an untapped source of help and resource.[165]

This was the sentiment also shared by Jack, Logan, and Edweena. Jack identified students working together as a major benefit of the grouping model used throughout his school. He explained how "getting them to work together or work in a group [meant] the people [who] might have been struggling a bit were not relying"[166] on him as the class teacher to provide assistance. He described how he encouraged the students to "help someone else out, or if working in a group ... explain how to do it to [the others] as well."[167]

While Sandra and Jack held these beliefs as early as the practicum, it appeared they were not enacted, but visioned for the future when they had their own class. Perhaps this was a result of their limited skills, lack of confidence, or their desire to maintain control of the learning environment and appear competent. However, for Logan and Edweena the use of peer mentoring "actually came about as a bit of an

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[164] Source: Sandra/Internship Diary Three October, 2011
[165] Source: Sandra/Internship Diary Three October, 2011
[166] Source: Jack/Intern Interview September 22, 2011
[167] Source: Jack/Intern Interview September 22, 2011

accident"[168] and it was in hindsight that they could see its benefits. Logan "realised it was creating quite a good work environment for the kids."[169] Edweena explained peer tutoring "just happened"[170] because she was trying to work with the student having the most difficulty and the early finishers were looking for something to do. Logan and Edweena were prepared to relinquish some control given the increasing demands of whole class teaching and this indicated a transformation in their perception of teaching. They acknowledged they were not the only teachers in the room and demonstrated a new subject position of co-teacher as opposed to controller.

Kate explained how she used "lots of group work"[171] and a variety of strategies to make learning "as enjoyable as possible for"[172] the students. However, she actually described using mixed ability groups working on the same task simultaneously where she remained in control of the process. Despite being unable to relinquish control of the class she described as being "off task because [she] was down on the carpet"[173] helping small groups of students, she did describe enthusiasm and risk taking in some of her teaching approaches.

Gumption and gusto

Teachers who display gumption and gusto create new learning experiences that engage students through activities that match the learning levels of the students and also create a sense of fun through their enthusiasm. These are characteristics shown to raise student engagement (Schussler, 2009). However, inexperience, constraints of the internship, and conflicting values, attitudes, and beliefs when confronted with the realities of the classroom situation may limit the practices of the preservice teacher. Particularly limited could be their response to students experiencing learning difficulties who may also challenge the preservice teacher's practice through the presentation of difficult behaviour.

Some participants endeavoured to find interesting and novel ways to engage students. Edweena, Pepper, and Kate addressed this by introducing technology into

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[168] Source: Logan/Prac Interview July 12, 2011
[169] Source: Logan/Prac Interview July 12, 2011
[170] Source: Edweena/Intern Interview December 12, 2011
[171] Source: Kate/Intern Interview, November 29, 2011
[172] Source: Kate/Intern Interview, November 29, 2011
[173] Source: Kate/Intern Interview, November 29, 2011

some lessons and providing opportunities for formative assessment where multiple opportunities and modalities were used to demonstrate skills and understanding. In contrast to the practicum data, each of these participants was explicit about the strategies they used to engage and motivate students. Interestingly, these three participants reported the most direct support and mentoring from either their class teacher or other support staff.

The earlier discussions showing struggles with behaviour management, dilemmas associated with the teachers' attention being monopolised by students experiencing learning difficulties, and the difficulties described in motivating and engaging students highlighted the need to capture students' attention by making learning fun and relevant in supportive classroom environments. However, it was only when the interns took the time to critically reflect on their practice that they were in a position to unmask the power and contest the hegemony that had the potential to devalue gumption and gusto in the learning process which resulted in them becoming alienated from their practice (Brookfield, 2005).

Reflection limited to the technical and procedural aspects of teaching is not critical. Critical reflection requires analysis of how teacher's belief system, behaviour, and various power sources interplay and influence their practice. When teaching becomes too demanding and prescriptive, pedagogies become more limited and less creative. Ideological influences permeate the decision-making process and lull teachers into accepting unchallenged routines and practices.

Although some participants attempted to use strategies to increase motivation and engagement, the academic quality or expected outcomes of the lesson was rarely articulated by the participants. Most participants focused their reflection on the technical and procedural aspects of teaching and they described lessons that were teacher directed or textbook focused with limited differentiation to match students' needs or interests. Further discussion about teaching practices is in theme 4–asignifying ruptures.

The preservice teachers' beliefs about their efficacy and learner competence appeared to be significant personal factors that influenced decision-making in relation to teaching students who were experiencing learning difficulties during the intern stage. In most cases, participants' sense of efficacy was challenged by their

perceptions of inadequacy at addressing the learning needs of all children which led to feelings of frustration and guilt. Their focus on providing individualised attention to some students could be a result of their limited pedagogical knowledge and skills which is also addressed in theme 4–asignifying ruptures.

Findings from the Data Related to Theme 2–connection and heterogeneity

Teachers who have strong theoretical and pedagogical knowledge and skills are able to combine approaches and produce better outcomes for students experiencing learning difficulties (Ellis, 2005). This highlights the importance of connecting theory to practice in the classroom. Teachers who use their knowledge and understanding of student diversity to understand the behaviour of students and who challenge the deficit construct of some learners are more likely to select appropriate pedagogy and achieve greater success with those students (Hughes, 2011; Paugh & Dudley-Marling, 2011; Popp et al., 2011). The manner in which teachers respond to student difference reflects the value and worth teachers assign to individuals. This is evident through the development of respectful relationships and the high, yet achievable, expectations they advance for each student (Alton-Lee, 2003). The internship provided opportunities to connect the theory drawn from university, the knowledge and skills of the intern, and the relationships with other professionals, students, and parents to produce new ways of thinking about learning and teaching. Similar to the rhizome, relationships grow and change into something "that can be connected to anything other, and must be" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p.7) given the emphasis and the importance relationships hold in inclusive education literature.

Respectful relationships

Two important features are required for respectful relationships to flourish in the classroom between the teacher and students. They need to be authentic (Cranton, 2006) and authoritative (Ertesvåg, 2011; Snowman et al., 2009).

Authentic relationships

When building authentic relationships teachers work to build trust, openness, and respect by making time to listen to and respond empathetically to students' stories and concerns. In addition, they recognise and understand how certain conditions may manifest in student's inappropriate behaviours. Through critical reflection, authentic teachers seek to uncover and respond to these conditions.

Jack demonstrated the importance he placed on authentic relationships in the classroom when he stated "to be a good teacher you really need to know your kids."[174] Jack explained how despite the often hustle and bustle chaos of the morning he continued his practice of greeting students each day as they entered the classroom in an endeavour to build rapport. By genuinely believing in this practice Jack presented his authentic self to the students. This increased the likelihood of genuine, worthwhile relationships developing between the teacher and student (Cranton, 2006) which impacts positively on student learning (Alton-Lee, 2003).

Authentic relationships rely on mutual trust and respect. Jack explained although he was in the position of power as the class teacher, he tried to ensure he did not use it as a control mechanism, rather as a tool to create a positive learning environment. Jack extended reflection beyond the technical aspect of teaching to encompass the political dimension required to make reflection critical (Brookfield, 2005). He identified the grouping method, based on the work of Kagan (1989), as one of the unique features of his school setting and a strategy where power could be shared.

This grouping model aligned with Jack's own philosophy. It allowed for cooperative learning which acknowledged other members of the class were also teachers. The power shifts and learning becomes a shared responsibility. Getting students to work together or work in groups meant "the people that might have been struggling a bit were not relying on [him] ... they were sitting next to someone who would actually be able to help them out."[175] Jack was able to connect the theoretical understanding of inclusive education in this aspect of his practice. It illustrated his perceptions about learning occurring as a social interaction where he positioned himself as a facilitator.

Jack's respect for others, demonstrated through the value he placed on authentic relationships, influenced how he framed students and their behaviour. As an example, a potential conflict arose between Jack and a student from another class, who refused to participate during a Friday sports session. Rather than allowing a confrontation to develop, Jack reported how he allowed the child to move away and

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[174] Source: Jack/Intern Interview September 22, 2011
[175] Source: Jack/Intern Interview September 22, 2011

have some personal space. Once the group was busy he approached the student, introduced himself and asked permission to sit with the child. Jack "spoke with this student for a few minutes, and allowed him to voice his concerns about not being able to play and his frustration with other students."[176] Eventually that student joined the game without coercion or fuss. Jack's respect for the students extended past his class and into the rest of the school as he modelled his expectations for respectful interactions and behaviour to the students. Jack resisted the position of authoritarian that he could have occupied given the pressure interns felt to appear competent and the ideological construct this represents in teaching.

In Data Set Two some participants expanded their discussion about the value of relationships beyond those with students to include other staff and parents. Jack reported improved relationships with a boy in the class, John* who during the practicum experience had displayed challenging behaviour. He linked the improved behaviour during the internship to an informal interaction he had with John's father.[177] Jack explained how after that interaction John "would make an effort to say hello ... [and on the] last day he came and said thanks and actually put his hand out and shook [Jack's] hand."[178] Jack was able to manage students' behaviour through relationship building in preference to enforcing his position of power (Davies, 2008). While this may have been an ideal for Jack during the practicum he actioned it during the internship. His practice reflected his personal beliefs and was supported by the ethos of the school.

In Data Set One, most participants mentioned their need to control the class to appear competent in front of their mentor teacher. Order and control are ideological assumptions related to good teaching (Gore & Parkes, 2008). As a result of this unchallenged ideology, the relationship with students that some participants described resulted in improved behaviour and engagement, but tended to have an uneven power balance where the teacher controlled the rewards and consequences related to student behaviour. For many participants, control seemed to be an essential element of teaching in general.

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[176] Source: Jack/Intern Diary Three October, 2011
[177] Source: Jack/Intern Interview September 22, 2011
[178] Source: Jack/Intern Interview September 22, 2011

For example, the use of class charts where students' names were moved along a scale of acceptable to unacceptable behaviour was reported as the most commonly used behaviour management tool. Each level of behaviour had attached consequences such as tokens towards free time for behaviour viewed as acceptable and a visit to the deputy principal for behaviour deemed by the teacher as unacceptable. Most participants adopted this approach from their mentor teachers. They did not question their role in creating a power imbalance in the classroom and how their control may actually be limiting students' internal motivation and engagement. This approach sees management of student behaviour as a precondition of good teaching rather than an effect of good pedagogy that correlates with student achievement (Gore & Parkes, 2008). Given that lack of engagement and challenging behaviour are often the results of frustration exhibited by students who experience ongoing learning difficulties (Munns, 2007; Westwood, 2008) the issue of classroom control as an ideological construct is hegemonic (Brookfield, 2005). It needs to be challenged for the limiting effect is has on students experiencing learning difficulties and the additional challenges it can create for teachers.

Kate highlighted this limiting effect when she recalled the power of the diamond, a power over strategy (Larrivee, 2000) used in her classroom for behaviour management. The diamond was divided into five zones each representing levels of behaviour. The teacher determined where the students' name was placed within the diamond moving up when behaviour was recognised as positive and down when behaviour was deemed inappropriate. Each level had consequences ranging from extrinsic rewards to intervention from the administration team.

However, she did not recognise the power of the students to manipulate the effectiveness of this classroom practice. Several specialist teachers complained about the behaviour of Kate's class and she felt the children misbehaved for them because "the diamond [did not go] with them"[179] to specialist lessons. Kate noted when the class system of control was not in place, the children took advantage of it. She also described one student who would push the boundaries until just before he reached a level on the diamond where the consequence was to report to the deputy and "he

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[179] Source: Kate/Intern Interview, November 29, 2011

would just flip"[180] his behaviour and comply with the classroom expectations. Each day the student started in the neutral position and was noncompliant until he reached the point where the consequence was a deterrent. If there was evidence of assigning rupture Kate may have considered alternative ways to circumvent the power game that had developed between the student and the teachers.

Sandra continued to express her concerns about the Special Education Program as it functioned in her school and the negative impact this practice had on her being able to develop meaningful relationships with students. She explained she "lost that connection"[181] because the special educator (Bob) took on the greater role of teaching them. She expressed concern about students being removed from the classroom for separate instruction. It reduced her awareness of what the students were learning; therefore impacting on how she could help them when they were in the classroom. This also led to diminished relationships with the students and, as a result, negatively influenced her ability to engage them in the learning process. Sandra reiterated her views from Data Set One about the crucial role of relationships in learning and her doubts about inclusive education functioning successfully for students who worked below year level expectations.

Unfortunately, for Sandra her position as intern did not allow her to change the hegemonic practices of the special education staff. Her frustration grew out of her awareness that the Special Education Program did not serve her best interests due to the damaging impact on relationships. More importantly, it did not serve the best interests of those students it was meant to be helping. Any attempts made by Sandra to make the students' learning more inclusive were thwarted. She reported asking Bob "on several occasions if [the students] could be included ... but he always took the group."[182] Attempts by Sandra to differentiate instruction to meaningfully include the students experiencing learning difficulties into her class program, also met with difficulties and frustrations as she "struggled to get Bob's"[183] support.

However, evidence of assigning ruptures occurred as she challenged the ideological practices, including the withdrawal of students from most literacy and

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[180] Source: Kate/Intern Interview, November 29, 2011
[181] Source: Sandra/Intern Interview December 20, 2011
[182] Source: Sandra/Intern Interview December 20, 2011
[183] Source: Sandra/Intern Interview December 20, 2011

mathematics lessons. She questioned their exclusion from particular class routines recognising that neither practice assisted in creating "confident and creative individuals" (*Melbourne Declaration*, p. 9). By comparison they reinforced the negative perceptions the students had of themselves as "the dunce group"[184] and the negative beliefs she reported Bob expressed that "they will never amount to anything."[185]

Bob was transferring special education practices of withdrawal and specific pedagogy into what is supposed to be an inclusive setting. Bob took control of students who technically were Sandra's responsibility. As a permanent teacher on staff and the life partner of Sandra's mentor teacher Bob held considerable power in his position by comparison to Sandra. However, in a bid to unmask the power Bob had in this situation Sandra attempted to bring about changes in classroom practices. She realised the current system was undermining and weakening the relationships she valued and diminished her capacity to engage the students. Presented in this context, it is not surprising she expressed a growing sense of frustration and confusion about how inclusion was supposed to work in schools (Allan, 2008).

Theresa noted the difference in her relationship with her students during the internship compared to the practicum. On the advice of her mentor teacher she realised she needed to be more consistent and follow through on her behaviour management. Theresa recognised she "was a bit afraid to be the bad guy on [her] prac and [was] trying to get them on side."[186] On the internship Theresa realised she had attempted to position herself as "their friend and ... the nice teacher but it didn't work."[187]

Theresa's mentor teacher appeared to be suggesting she needed to develop authoritative relationships where mutual respect is fostered through warmth and control (Ertesvåg, 2011). Teachers who are successful classroom managers are able to proactively address student engagement as part of their teaching practices rather than as a separate entity that acts as a response to control student misbehaviour (Gore & Parkes, 2008). Student engagement can be increased when teachers provide

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[184] Source: Sandra/Intern Interview December 20, 2011
[185] Source: Sandra/Intern Interview December 20, 2011
[186] Source: Theresa/Intern Interview November 30, 2011
[187] Source: Theresa/Intern Interview November 30, 2011

opportunities for success, offer multiple and flexible approaches to learning, and express high expectations of the student (Schussler, 2009). Interestingly, these features are dominant in literature about effective teaching (Hattie, 2008) and quality relationships (Cranton, 2006). High expectations and trust are part of this positive practice (Hart et al., 2007) and form the basis of authoritative relationships.

Authoritative relationships

The mutual respect developed through authoritative relationships allows the teacher to simultaneously promote academic and social norms and expectations (Alton-Lee, 2003; Ertesvåg, 2011; Gore & Parkes, 2008) as they encourage students to assume personal responsibility for their actions (Snowman et al., 2009). This requires a shift in thinking by some teachers who see themselves as solely responsible for events in the classroom.

As described in Chapter 5 and earlier in this chapter, attempting to take responsibility and control of all aspects of the classroom was a feature evident in most participants' practice. Authoritative relationships cannot develop successfully in an environment where ideological beliefs assume behaviour management is separate from quality teaching (Davies, 2008). Also restrictive are classrooms where fixed-ability thinking, drawn from the deficit model of learning, pervades the beliefs of teachers (Hart et al., 2007). When behaviour and teaching are seen as two separate entities the teacher assumes a powerful role of controller who needs to find ways to coerce students into completing classroom tasks. However, when behaviour management is seen as a part of effective teaching practices, student behaviour and engagement is addressed through consideration of suitably engaging and stimulating teaching practices that create a more just political order (Gore & Parkes, 2008). Teachers' beliefs and the impact they have on teacher behaviour was discussed in theme 1–personal attributes and highlighted the interrelated nature of teaching and teacher development. In the next section, I present data to investigate how authoritative relationships developed between the intern and the students and assisted or hindered the communication of expectations.

High expectations of all students communicated through goal setting and feedback

Effective teachers hold high expectations for all students and make explicit the learning goals they expect students to meet (Alton-Lee, 2005; Hattie, 2003; Masters, 2009). They can effectively communicate and encourage students to reach these expectations because they have developed authoritative relationships with the students. Working together they establish goals for learning in a nonthreatening environment. Teachers who set high expectations for their students draw on their understanding of student capabilities. This is created through a combination of theoretical knowledge about diversity and inclusion with personal values and beliefs. By creating authoritative relationships within a supportive environment teachers are able to create conditions where students are more willing to strive for goals set beyond their current level of achievement.

However, there was little evidence that goal setting was actually happening and interns were predominantly running authoritarian classes with power over (Larrivee, 2000) approaches to classroom management. This may be the result of limited skills and knowledge and further evidence of their need to appear competent inflating their desire for control. Kate did report using *learning ladders* to identify individual goals for students, although some of the learner goals she described appeared to be closer to activity choices,[188] and as a school-based procedure it is discussed in theme 3–multiplicity.

Sandra described a situation with a student from the Special Education Program where she was able to increase her expectations of him, both academically and socially. She explained she was able to achieve positive results because of the effort she put into building a relationship with the student. Showing an interest by requesting to mark his work Sandra claimed this "single action brought about a change in Colin's* behaviour towards [her]."[189] As a consequence, she was able to tell him "when his work looks rushed ... and that there [were] expectations even for him and [she would] not lower them."[190] She described how she went from "fearing his arrival and cherishing his departure in Term 2 and 3 ... to now looking forward to

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[188] Source: Kate/Intern Interview, November 29, 2011
[189] Source: Sandra/Internship Diary One October, 2011
[190] Source: Sandra/Internship Diary One October, 2011

his cheery face and relish[ing] in the knowledge that he look[ed] forward to seeing [her] too.[191] The significance of this event on Sandra's transformation as a teacher was evident when she claimed it is as "one small step for me and one huge leap for my confidence."[192]

Sandra challenged the hegemony surrounding the attempts to include this boy into the classroom. Realistically, this student did not have citizenship in this class and was merely a token visitor. As the situation was described by Sandra, no one was benefiting from the arrangement. Through critical reflection Sandra was able to overcome alienation (Brookfield, 2005) and by challenging the status quo created a new context which resulted in improved behaviour from the student, higher quality of completed tasks, and improved quality of classroom interactions. An increase in Sandra's confidence allowed her to explore alternative opportunities in her practice.

With the exception of Kate, none of the participants really described the use of informal assessment to inform their teaching or the use of feedback as a motivation tool to increase student engagement. The links between the theoretical understanding of inclusive education, and student motivation and engagement did not seem to be evident through teaching practices such as differentiated instruction or use of constructive feedback in the classroom setting. These are important component of the feedback loop necessary to establish high expectations (Ertesvåg, 2011; Masters, 2009). However, their importance in teaching and learning may not be fully appreciated by the participants perhaps signalling connections between theory and practice had not occurred. It could be the current skill level of the participants prevented them from implementing informal assessment and feedback practices.

However, Kate was able to adopt a practice already in place in her classroom, and therefore replicated her mentor teacher's practice. She described how the students gave each other "warm and cool feedback"[193] during whole class and group work which the teacher had introduced at the start of the year and she continued the practice.

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[191] Source: Sandra/Internship Diary One October, 2011
[192] Source: Sandra/Internship Diary One October, 2011
[193] Source: Kate/Intern Interview, November 29, 2011

Kate reported feeling well supported during her practicum and internship by her supervising teacher, the deputy principal and the other teachers in the cohort. She was included in their collaborative practices. This more than likely contributed to her confidence in assessment and feedback practices (Flores & Day, 2006). However, she does not mention the impact of providing feedback, the shift in student learning, or if her expectations were met. Based on Kate's warm and friendly personality, conversations that are peppered with laughter and the animated way she talks about working with children, it could be assumed she builds warm relationships with students. However, the use of the behaviour diamond described in the earlier section on authentic relationships may threaten the effectiveness of feedback and high expectations to improve learning outcomes for student with leaning difficulties. While replicating the mentor teacher's practice helped her to implement an important aspect of the learning process, it created a tracing. She does not critically reflect on her role within this aspect of teaching, and continues to position herself in a dominant position, holding the power in the teaching and learning process.

Most participants continued to value building authentic relationships with students and recognised it was an essential component of teaching and learning. However, their need to control most aspects of the classroom continued. As the demands of the intern role developed, there were situations where the development of authoritative relationships were jeopardised. This had the potential to limit students' achievement and threaten teachers' efficacy. The relationships teachers built with students experiencing learning difficulties influenced how they responded to various situations, and the standards and expectations they communicated to students. This had the potential to influence how students perceived themselves through the eyes of the teacher (Clark, 1977; Woodcock & Vialle, 2010). However, some interns did not assign ruptures to the influence their behaviour had on relationships and the impact on the learning process. This may suggest the participants' use of critical self-reflection at this stage was limited.

Findings from the Data Related to Theme 3–multiplicity

The purpose of the internship experience is to provide further opportunities for participants to develop their teaching practices. Interns are supposed to take on increased levels of responsibility closer to that of the classroom teacher with reduced levels of support. The internship provides opportunities for new teaching practices to

be sourced, implemented, and refined. Multiplicity occurs when new strategies linking theory and practice are generated and enacted by the preservice teacher to suit the particular needs of the students within the context of a particular setting. The site is part of the multiplicity. Multiplicities occur as an interconnection of all elements at the site: personal characteristics and structural elements. "An assemblage is precisely this increase in the dimensions of a multiplicity that necessarily changes in nature as it expands its connections" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 9).

While the preservice teachers were given more freedom for decision-making during the internship participants found, as with the practicum experience, their decisions were still limited by their desire to impress their mentor teacher in a quest to seek a favourable evaluation. Participants continued to identify historical, structural, cultural, and social obstacles within the school's organisation (Monchinski, 2008; Skrtic, 1991) that prevented linkages between theory and practice and hindered the advancement of quality teaching for students experiencing learning difficulties. Their position as intern limited or prohibited their opportunity to challenge or change particular practices. However, as Brookfield (2005) contends naming the enemy is required before liberatory steps can be made in the process of freeing education for the students and teachers working in oppressive, constraining situations. He claims this in itself is a step towards awareness necessary to challenge hegemonic, ideological practices in the future. Nevertheless, in some cases the structures within the school, such as co-teaching, enhanced opportunities for theoretical knowledge to be connected to practice. In other instances, participants did attempt to challenge conditions they deemed to be limiting student potential and reported feelings of frustration and inadequacy as a result.

School and systemic structures and policies

Some participants commented on how their practices were restricted because "a lot of lessons ... taught were from the text book where ... it was open to page 5."[194] The choice to use commercially prepared text books is usually an administrative one. While teachers may have some input into the choice of publication used by the school, the decision to use textbooks as part of the school's program is usually a school-based decision with teachers feeling obliged to utilise it as parents have paid

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[194] Source: Logan/Intern Interview December 21, 2011

for the text. On the surface this seems like a time saving strategy for teachers and a cost saving measure for the school with reduced strain on their resources. In addition, publishing houses often run *free* professional development for teachers to support the use of the textbook or published program. However, for teachers with a broad spectrum of abilities in their class, the use of published material actually creates challenges and is a form of hegemony. The use of published material does not serve in the best interest of the students or the teacher but rather those in power: school administration and corporations (publishing houses). This operational aspect of the school culture impacted on how several participants approached their lessons. However, as interns they did not have the status to challenge the school decision to use a textbook. Perhaps they did not have the skills to adjust and differentiate the lessons to incorporate the text, and as a result, it dictated the structure of their lessons. It appears they were often imitating the model of the mentor teacher, and without assigning rupture new and more creative practices were limited. The teacher directed lessons also continued to support perceptions of the teacher needing to be in control of all aspects of the learning process. It positioned the interns as knowledge transmitters in the teaching process.

Special education program in school

Both Theresa and Sandra taught students who were supported by staff from a school-based special education program and the difficulties they experienced were discussed in the previous chapter. However, Theresa's main concern about the underlying tension and conflict between the classroom teacher and special education teacher seemed less apparent during the internship. She reported having "the benefit of having a full time special education teacher and teacher aide"[195] who "would often work with the students with ASD ... [and the] students experiencing learning difficulties. So there was always a teacher and a teacher aide to ... work with them."[196]

Theresa reported the teachers from the SEP would differentiate the content of the lessons she or the class teacher were teaching. Although, she did not mention any opportunities where special education and class teachers shared the responsibility to

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[195] Source: Theresa/Intern Diary Three October, 2011
[196] Source: Theresa/Intern Interview, November 30, 2011

plan or assess work together. Nor did she question that fact that this practice was neglected. It appears Theresa worked in a context where teachers were "enact[ing] a version of inclusion which is merely about the tolerance and the management of presence and difference" (Allan, 2008, p.15). This experience forced Theresa "towards the management of, rather than engagement with, difference" (Allan, 2008, p. 20) and the consequences are highlighted in the discussion in theme 4–asignifying ruptures. Some students demonstrated a lack of respect for Theresa and this left her struggling with classroom management and difficulties engaging some students into academic work.

Sandra explained how the frustrations she experienced in the practicum were exacerbated during the internship by the increased responsibility the special education teacher took in teaching the students experiencing learning difficulties and the diminished capacity she had as classroom teacher. Again, this was discussed at length in theme 2 but is mentioned here to illustrate how the school culture influenced participants' decision-making with regards to students experiencing learning difficulties, and how in some situations it removed their decision-making opportunities altogether. The ideological basis of these programs drawn from the deficit model of special education continues to operate in schools. They have far reaching consequences that limit the opportunities for teachers to explore new and innovative ways of teaching because the hegemonic practices are not challenged.

Targeted teaching time – or streaming by another name

Targeted teaching time (TTT) was a strategy used in Kate's school to cluster students based on ability levels in maths. During this time Kate worked in a cooperative teaching situation with the teacher who was responsible for the students identified as having the lowest ability. Based on the alternate teaching model (see Kloo & Zigmond, 2008) Kate worked one-on-one with students using various problem solving strategies chosen from the Learning Ladder. This was a school-based program that identified a sequence of learning goals in mathematics and English.

This process provided the opportunity for Kate to fine tune her understanding of the sequence of teaching problem solving skills. It enabled her to teach specific cognitive and metacognitive strategies to students experiencing learning difficulties

in a one-on-one situation. It also provided the opportunity for her to become familiar with and utilise the Learning Ladders. Using this tool she was able to set academic goals and measure academic growth in a situation with reduced responsibility as the other teacher took the rest of the class.

Kate spoke positively about TTT and saw this as a positive school-based initiative. However, it may have provided her with a false understanding that the groups that were formed were homogenous. She explained the strength in the program was the students in each group were " all on the same ... kind of wavelength that you can teach them all together, about the same pace"[197] rather than enabling her to see each student as having particular needs. While Kate's role in the TTT classroom allowed her to fine tune particular pedagogical knowledge it did not provide the opportunity to expand that knowledge into skills when teaching with full class responsibilities. When faced with whole class responsibilities she "found [teaching a small group] didn't work as well because the other students would start to get off task"[198] while she was helping other students. The school culture, in this instance, reinforced the one-on-one approach as the preferred method of responding to students experiencing learning difficulties for Kate and reinforced her perceptions of a teacher-centred approach where the teacher maintained control throughout the learning process.

Staff attitudes

There was little difference in this set of data compared to Data Set One in terms of the attitudes of other members of staff towards students experiencing learning difficulties. This was not surprising given change in attitudes and beliefs towards inclusion take time and commitment from the whole community (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Lewis & Batts, 2005). What was noteworthy in this data set was how the deficit model of learning difficulties was perpetuated through negative teacher discourse and threatened participants' confidence and outlook for their future practice. Sandra had a confirmed contract teaching position for the following year, at a school considered to be in a low socioeconomic area. She explained her role as a teacher was going to be challenging "because [she had] heard lots of stories about it

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[197] Source: Kate/Intern Interview, November 29, 2011
[198] Source: Kate/Intern Interview, November 29, 2011

being challenging not only with behaviour but their ... cognitive needs."[199] She accepted this view.

Up to this point I have described the school factors that contributed to those aspects of learning and teaching that the interns valued. These included classroom control, student compliance and participation, and task completion. Participants accepted these practices because they supported their perceptions of teaching and learning. However, many of these values stem from ideological views of teaching and if left unchallenged will limit their future practice. With the exception of how Jack, Sandra, and at times Logan positioned themselves to enact their espoused beliefs about the value of relationships there is little evidence of critical reflection by participants on their practice. Therefore, transformation on their perceptions of many aspects of teaching and learning was minimal from the practicum and throughout the internship.

It is only through critical reflection that participants will be able to assign ruptures so transformation can occur (Brookfield, 2005; Larrivee, 2000). Imitating the mentor teacher creates tracings of practices. However, multiplicity occurs through the production of new knowledge when theory and practice merge. This leads to transformation as participants remain open to new options and map their own practices. Some participants did report positive interactions with staff and this is discussed in the final section of the multiplicity theme. From these positive staff interactions some new growth in teaching practices was evident.

Collaborative practice amongst staff

In addition to their mentor teachers, Edweena, Pepper, and Kate reported they were able to collaborate with support staff, such as the Learning Support Teacher or Literacy Coach to investigate and trial new teaching strategies and assessment techniques. This helped them respond to student difference. Thoonen et al. (2011) suggest working in supportive environments can reduce teachers' feelings of uncertainty and encourage them to experiment with their practice. Pepper explained how she was able to "incorporate more group work"[200] during the internship than her class teacher had used throughout the year and was more relaxed about students

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[199] Source: Sandra/Intern Interview December 20, 2011
[200] Source: Pepper/Intern Interview November 24, 2011

talking amongst themselves as they worked. She also mentioned how she became more flexible in her approach as her confidence grew and would "switch it up ... or try a different way the next time."[201] Pepper appeared to be more cognisant of the value of social interactions in the learning process as she positioned herself as facilitator rather than controller. The support she received from staff may have supported her efficacy and her willingness to try new approaches as she was able to overcome early setbacks and disappointments related to how students responded to her teaching.

The internship is supposed to be a model of collaborative teaching where the mentor teacher and intern develop a collegial partnership of shared responsibility for the class utilising various cooperative teaching strategies. Collaboration amongst teaching staff is seen as an important aspect of inclusive education and teacher development because it provides opportunities for skills, knowledge, and expertise to be utilized to create optimum learning opportunities for all students (Booth & Ainscow, 2002; Brownell et al., 2006). However, when there is an uneven balance of power amongst the stakeholders such as the internship scenario, collaborative teaching practices can provide a breeding ground for ideological and hegemonic assumptions as they become embedded in the routines and practices to which the interns are exposed (Brookfield, 2006; Walkington, 2005). Therefore, collaborative practices need to be accompanied by critical reflection as a tool for detecting ideological manipulation and hegemonic exploitation to "expose arborescent pseudomultiplicities for what they are" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 8). This provides authentic opportunities for the creation of new knowledge and skills rather than the imitation and reproduction of existing practices that may or may not be effective.

This data illustrated the mentor teacher as a significant factor from the school culture that influenced the intern's decision-making during the internship. However, some mentor teachers acted in a supervisory capacity while others provided true mentoring. School-based advisors who focused on the functional roles of teaching provided supervision. Their role involved "welcoming and enculturating ... modelling and explaining; providing feedback" (Walkington, 2005, p. 56) and

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[201] Source: Pepper/Intern Interview November 24, 2011

addressed teaching as a competency-based practice. School-based advisors who provided mentoring offered a problem posing stance towards teaching and encouraged greater collegiality and professionalism. They provided opportunities for interns to learn "about teaching and themselves as teachers, as well as learning to teach" (Walkington, 2005, p. 57). This influenced their perceptions about teaching. The mentors' style influenced the interns' self-efficacy and willingness to take risks in the intern setting. Additional influences included the support available for interns to develop and refine new pedagogical knowledge and skills and particular organisational features of the school designed for specific implemented of programs. Each of these influences contributed to how the participants responded to student difference and the ruptures assigned to their perceptions of how learning occurs.

Findings from the Data Related to Theme 4–asignifying ruptures

Ideally, during the internship the teaching load and responsibility of the preservice teacher is gradually increased until eventually the intern takes full control of planning, implementing, and evaluating the class program. During this period of time the intern is expected to develop and demonstrate the professional, ethical, and values-based standards and competencies required of beginning teachers. For teachers working towards becoming a critical pedagogue this also includes problematising teaching. This includes identifying the "institutional, personal and financial, and other barriers ... that create 'limit situations,'" (Monchinski, 2008, p.119) and seeking various means to reach the learning goals to suit a wider range of learners.

Subject positioning of self during the internship influenced how effectively participants were able to problematise teaching while attempting to respond to the complex learning needs of students. Some participants accepted their role as intern was one without power over the establishment. They came to accept classroom practices and policies, including those that were assumed and unwritten. This is not to say they did not try anything new. They did seek support from their mentor teacher and other support staff to develop new skills and knowledge. However, the evidence of ruptures, where they questioned why and how certain practices were limiting was not very strong or consistent in the data. For Kate and Logan this did not present any major challenges because the teachers and students were generally accepting of the arrangements and at a surface level their classes appeared to run

smoothly and students were seen to be learning. Generally, the teacher taught and the students listened. The use of text books and the prescriptive teaching associated with this form of teaching and streaming students by ability justified to participants the use of whole class teaching. Freire (1970) refers to this as the banking model of education which threatens to deskill teachers and dehumanise teaching practice (Giroux, 1988; Kincheloe, 2008; Monchinski, 2008). In addition, behaviour management systems that were used to control student behaviour were accepted as effective practices and were discussed at length in themes 2 and 3.

Accepting these practices unchallenged is problematic in itself, and could result in interns who become "obedient technicians" (Giroux, 1988) who accept practices that create barriers for learners when they move into their role as teachers. Engaging in critical reflection provides opportunities to question the limitations of these practices. This may position the intern with more control and power, thereby, substantiating their position as teacher and strengthening their sense of efficacy in future situations.

Kate's comment regarding one student's deteriorating behaviour illustrated the need for critical reflection. She explained "one particular boy['s] ... behaviour regressed during the year ... [and he] would argue when you moved him down the diamond."[202] Kate explained how this would annoy the supervising teacher and her even more "because he wouldn't take responsibility for his behaviour."[203] There is no discussion offered to suggest how the class environment supported the development of students' personal responsibility or why the students' behaviour deteriorated, only a "hope his behaviour improves ... next year."[204] Kate did not consider her role or the teacher's role in influencing student behaviour apart from the controlling mechanism of the behaviour management tool described in theme 2–connection and heterogeneity that she referred to as the diamond.

For Theresa, accepting the routines and classroom practices established by the classroom teacher and imitating her practices was problematic because they were built on power relations. However, the students did not see Theresa as someone in

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[202] Source: Kate/Intern Interview, November 29, 2011
[203] Source: Kate/Intern Interview, November 29, 2011
[204] Source: Kate/Intern Interview, November 29, 2011

the same position of authority as the supervising teacher. Theresa explained how one student "had a really rude tone with [her but] he didn't talk like that to [the] teacher."[205] As a result, a power challenge between Theresa and some of students developed as Theresa attempted to mimic the role of the teacher while addressing the students' challenging behaviours. This resulted in negative classroom interactions and difficult student relationships as discussed in theme 2–connection and heterogeneity. As a consequence, Theresa's confidence was diminished.

Jack was very aware of various constraints and limiting practices in the classroom but was not prepared to challenge them in his position as intern. Similar to the discussion from the practicum period data, Jack chose to "create tracings" as an intern by accepting the status quo in an attempt to cement his future position as teacher. However, Jack did identify many practices he would not engage in if it was his own class. For example he indicated the way he would "do reading groups"[206] differently. He offered alternatives that involved mixed ability groups so "kids at different learning abilities [could be] helping each other out."[207] This is consistent with his espoused inclusive philosophy. He was also frustrated by the physical layout of the classroom which limited his ability to access each student and prevented students' full participation in some lessons. Although he found these features of the classroom frustrating he would not challenge them during the internship choosing to align himself with the practices of the supervising teacher. This limited his professional growth because he could not transform his practice to match his perceptions of learning and teaching.

However, some participants chose to pursue ruptures to seek new practices. At times this required challenging the status quo related to classroom structures and procedures. If new ways of thinking about maximising learning for students experiencing learning difficulties are to be realised then there is a need to position interns so they can learn to "liberate themselves from the discourse, logic, and practice of domination" (Brookfield, 2005, p. 195) that alienate students in the classroom. This transformation depends on their ability to engage in critical reflection (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008) and their tenacity to pursue

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[205] Source: Theresa/Intern Interview, November 30, 2011
[206] Source: Jack/Intern Interview September 22, 2011
[207] Source: Jack/Intern Interview September 22, 2011

alternatives and create ruptures in their practice. These are experimentations trialling theoretical knowledge in new practical forms, sometimes appearing to be ineffectual but perhaps reappearing in another form at another time (Gregoriou, 2004). Without critical reflection and tenacity the rhizome of teacher development stagnates. Rhizomatic thinking (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) offers teachers a way to sustain effort and persistence to overcome alienation (Brookfield, 2005) from their role.

Classroom structures and procedures that threaten to limit practices may be overcome by intentionally selected practices designed to meet the identified needs of the students. Rhizomatic thinking allows the intern to problematise teaching and challenge the obstacles through ruptures in their practice as they intentionally apply the principles of differentiated instruction into their planning, teaching, and assessment.

Classroom structures and procedures

Sandra was very vocal about the limiting practices she associated with the special education program in her school. She identified negative consequences for the students and herself. The strategies Sandra employed to challenge this situation, although mostly unsuccessful, have been discussed at length. However, one final example of a classroom practice that Sandra identified as limiting student achievement, and another one she could not counter in her role as intern, was the withdrawal and isolation of students whose behaviour threatened the authority of the teacher. In one instance, Sandra explained she went to offer support to a student who had been isolated for refusing to do his work. She was told by the classroom teacher to "leave him [and] don't even give him your time."[208] Sandra reported she did not "feel comfortable doing that"[209] but felt she had to follow the direction of the supervising teacher. Sandra explained she felt the student's offending behaviour could have been read as a signal of unmet needs, in this case "he refused to his maths ... [that was] really not a challenge for him."[210]

In this classroom scenario both the student and Sandra were positioned as subordinate, without power or voice (Davies, 2008). In addition, anything the student

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[208] Source: Sandra/Intern Interview December 20, 2011
[209] Source: Sandra/Intern Interview December 20, 2011
[210] Source: Sandra/Intern Interview December 20, 2011

had to say regarding his behaviour and the link to the teacher's performance and preparation may also be seen as a threat to her authority and so resulted in a power game between the teacher and student. The student had the power to act up and disturb the lesson, and she had the power to remove him. Sandra was willing to try a new approach as a way of breaking this cycle but was prevented from doing so by the teacher who also held a position of authority over Sandra. Based on her beliefs about equity, social justice, and the value she placed on relationships her perception of teaching and learning were more student-centred than most participants. However, enacting change from the *ruptures* was limited for Sandra in this setting. The restrictions on her practice threatened to transform her perceptions of what was possible in a more limiting direction, thus, jeopardising her growth towards becoming a critical pedagogue.

Responsive teaching

There was very little evidence of responsive teaching described by participants during the internship. Teachers who engage in responsive teaching apply the principles of differentiated instruction into their planning, teaching, and assessment in a supportive classroom environment. As discussed in theme 2–connection and heterogeneity the feedback loop was very limited during the internship. Although participants were starting to use feedback more to inform their planning, they were not completing the loop by providing feedback to students in a bid to raise their performance, nor were they differentiating instruction to meet diverse student needs. There was some evidence of the use of informal assessment during lessons to guide the pace and direction of lessons as the interns became less tied to their *scripts* and more flexible in their approach. Logan explained how she "didn't do any actual lesson plans or planning and it just kind of became natural ... [as she was] more aware of what the kids were doing."[211] Pepper described how she "became more confident in [her] teaching and [her] ability to be able to just think of something off the top of [her] head which was so much better than crazy planning all the time."[212] However, this may not necessarily have resulted in more responsive teaching to the students' particular learning needs.

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[211] Source: Logan/Intern Interview December 21, 2011
[212] Source: Pepper/Intern Interview November 24, 2011

Responsive teaching appeared to be limited as the interns were still honing their skills and knowledge while simultaneously trying to manage the increasing demand to whole class responsibility. Kate, Pepper, and Edweena were well supported by their mentor teacher and other support staff while on the internship. According to Levin et al. (2009) support from the mentor may assist the transfer of new skills and strategies into other situations because of opportunities to refine their skills. However, in line with Penso's (2003) findings the participants had difficulty attending to students needs while their attention was monopolised by whole class responsibilities. In addition, little thought was given to formative assessment to guide practice and the academic quality of lessons was also rarely mentioned. A greater level of critical reflection was required to create responsive teaching opportunities rather than engaging in reflection that focused mainly on the technical aspects teaching. Limited skills to reflect critically on their teaching may be linked to personal factors that influenced the decisions they made with regards to students experiencing learning difficulties.

Pedagogical knowledge and skills

While many participants reported they were confident about taking on the role of class teacher at the conclusion of their internship, Sandra expressed her concern about her lack of skills and knowledge in relation to teaching students experiencing learning difficulties and "being able to differentiate for all their needs."[213] Also problematic for her was the "feeling of letting the kids down."[214] Her expectation of herself was to "be coming out of University and ... be ready to do it."[215] However, the reality for Sandra was that she "taught to the middle and [felt she would] come a cropper because of it."[216]

As beginning teachers, participants will be required to adopt the same responsibilities and roles as more experienced teachers on staff (Shoffner, 2011). This includes providing the best learning opportunities and becoming advocates for students experiencing learning difficulties. If participants are feeling underprepared in their new role as teachers they will be less likely to question unjust practices, seek

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[213] Source: Sandra/Intern Interview December 20, 2011
[214] Source: Sandra/Intern Interview December 20, 2011
[215] Source: Sandra/Intern Interview December 20, 2011
[216] Source: Sandra/Intern Interview December 20, 2011

alternate pedagogies, or identify and connect theory to best practice. While critical reflection will help beginning teachers identify ideological assumptions that can create politically and socially challenging situations, they will also need to develop protective strategies to ensure they remain resilient to the ideological pressures they will face.

Logan reported "a sense of failure"[217] when students appeared disengaged. She explained how this was an issue for her because of her belief that "pedagogy can be a barrier to learning"[218] and she had failed to make lessons engaging for all students. Ruptures like these provide the disorienting dilemmas that have the potential to challenge the frames of reference (Mezirow, 2000) that can transform future practice.

Chapter Summary

The participants' perceptions of learning and teaching showed minimal transformation from the practicum to the internship. Reflection was often limited to the technical aspects of teaching and new practices sometimes resulted from this. However, the conflict they experienced between their attitudes, values, and beliefs about teaching and the realities they experienced often saw contradictions in their espoused beliefs and practice (Carrington, 1999). For those participants aware of the contradictions emotional responses were aroused. This indicated some transformation may be occurring. Emotional reactions are a natural response in transformational learning and without dealing with the deep feelings attached to the original values and beliefs; personal transformation cannot occur (Mezirow, 1995). A key element in this process is critical self-reflection where teachers come to understand their role in the teaching and learning process. Understanding one's beliefs about teaching is crucial to how teachers respond to student difference given those personal beliefs play a powerful role in teachers' practice (Beswick, 2008; Wiebe Berry, 2006).

Transformation of perception of teaching and learning cannot occur until the participants engage in critical reflection and praxis (Hoffman-Kipp et al., 2003; Kincheloe, 2008). Theory and practice must come together to provide new

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[217] Source: Logan/Intern Diary Four October, 2011
[218] Source: Logan/Intern Diary Four October, 2011

opportunities to develop in their practice that will reflect changing perceptions. Participants recognised classroom climate as an essential elements of the learning environment in which effective teaching could occur for students experiencing learning difficulties. Elements of the classroom climate included quality relationships and consistency and routine. In most instances this equated to teacher control. These teachers adopted a teacher-centred approach to learning. Compliance, participation, and task completion were valued and the teacher took on the position of knowledge transmitter. This frame of reference was not problematic for some participants. Therefore, it was not open to transformation because it fulfilled their perceptions of learning and teaching. For these participants' frustration towards the students who were experiencing learning difficulties was more related to the students' behaviour threatening the interns' position of control.

The participants' sense of efficacy became less stable as they were given greater responsibility in the classroom. When their efficacy decreased it increased their need for control and their pedagogical choices became more limited. Perhaps this was due to the underdeveloped skills in this area and may have contributed to increasing frustration for the students (Brady & Woolfson, 2008). The participants' personal need to appear competent meant they came to rely on control of and compliance from the students. This often came at the expense of their espoused beliefs about what constituted effective teaching for students experiencing learning difficulties.

However, some participants had opportunities to experience success working with students experiencing learning difficulties. This success often came in the form of small group teaching with diminished classroom responsibility. This provided opportunities to develop pedagogical knowledge and skills. These participants generally developed a stronger sense of efficacy towards helping students who were experiencing learning difficulties and teaching in general (Tuchman & Isaacs, 2011).

Many of the decisions participants made with regards to students experiencing learning difficulties were influenced by broader elements of the school culture, such as the ideological impact of the special education unit's practices, the hegemonic use of behaviour management systems, and lessons based on text book content. However, the mentor teacher and the ideological assumptions she carried into her

practice continued to be the most significant feature from the school culture on preservice teachers during the internship. Many participants mimicked the behaviours of their mentor teacher either as a self-protection mechanism or self-promotion strategy. There was some evidence of critical reflection being used to counter the identified imbalance of power in some classrooms. These participants challenged the position they had previously held as controller and re-positioned themselves as facilitators.

A variety of subject positions were held by the interns. Some of these included positions of power while others placed them as subordinate and without a voice. Their subject positioning did influence their decision-making. It influenced how they perceived their role as teacher, and how they understood learning occurred, and essentially how much influence they had in both.

The following chapter presents the data from the final phase of data collection which took place during the beginning teaching year. It follows a similar format to Chapters 5 and 6 where the findings and discussion are organised under the same four themes. As participants commence their role as a beginning teacher the efficacy and confidence they developed during the preservice period was challenged. The rhizomatic growth towards student-centred learning initially ceases. Previously held beliefs about control re-commenced on the rhizome. The connections between relationships and classroom climate shatter but reform for those participants who critically reflected on, and navigate the political, cultural, and structural barriers they encounter. Some participants came to position themselves as agentive while others were unable to counter the ideological and hegemonic expectations that limit their practice

Chapter 7: Participants as Beginning Teacher

The two preceding chapters presented the data generated by participants during their preservice professional experiences of the practicum and internship. This chapter reports on Data Set Three, described in Table 7.1, and was collected during the participants' first year of teaching. All participants were employed in contract positions secured on a term by term or semester basis. While some participants were employed in the same schools in which they completed their preservice experience, others commenced employment in new locations. The new settings for beginning teaching roles are described in Appendix B.

The data sources are provided in the table below. Broadly, the data sets constituted of classroom observations, beginning teacher diaries, and semi structured interviews. Similar to the two previous chapters, data are described and analysed concurrently throughout the chapter. The transformations evident in the beginning teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning are discussed in relation to the four subsidiary research questions.

Table 7.1

Data Sources Data Set Three

Data Source	Time of Collection	
Beginning Teacher Diaries+ (6)	February, March, May, June, August, September, 2012	***No classroom observations for Kate as permission for the researcher to collect data in her classroom was denied by the principal.**
Semi Structured Interview (4)	March, May, August, October, 2012	**^Classroom observation was not done for Jack in term one as permission to approach his principal was not received until term 2.**
Classroom Observations* ^(4)	March, May, August, October, 2012	**+ Diary not received from Pepper (March)**

Participants as Beginning Teachers

As illustrated in Table 7.2, participants identified a growing list of factors attributed to the causes of learning difficulties. Although not exhaustive, it illustrates the range of reasons participants, as beginning teachers, associated with students experiencing learning difficulties. Significantly, this data set presented in green to differentiate it from the table in Chapter 6, continues to highlight participants' focus on the impact of family background including socioeconomic status and support students receive at home.

Disadvantage due to family background, and particularly socioeconomic status, has been identified in this data set as a major influence on students experiencing learning difficulties. Generally, this reflects the context of the school setting where participants were employed during their beginning year of teaching. Social disadvantage is linked with students who experience learning difficulties (Boston et al., 2011; Masters, 2009). Interestingly, in most cases, interaction with parents was minimal during the preservice data. Given the links between family background and students experiencing learning difficulties this is an area that is quite significant in this data and is expanded in theme 3–multiplicity where less blame is directed at the parents and greater understanding of home influences on students behaviour is considered.

Table 7.2

Additional Causes of Learning Difficulties Identified by Participants as Beginning Teachers

	Medical	Family Context	School experience/ quality of teaching/ the system	Other factors
Edweena	• HI- refusal to wear hearing aids, ADHD, ADD, OCD, II prenatal experience, ODD- home or genetic?	• Low value given to education/ learning in the home • No support with homework • Lack of routine at home	• Responses to student behaviour, attitudes of teacher • Lack of foundation knowledge and skills • Slipped through the system	• ESL, student behaviour • Lack of participation and effort • lazy • Lack of motivation
Theresa	ASD	• Disadvantaged or abusive home life. • Poor diet • Missed schooling • Additional responsibility in the home	• Being treated differently and rebelling against support/ learning	• Behaviour • Lazy
Jack		• Lack of care and nutrition • Family disruptions • High levels of stress from family situations	• Going unnoticed by teacher • Lesson quality results in lack of engagement	• Outside of school issues impacting on concentration • Most people have something • Poor organisational skills • Emotional intelligence • Not asking for help • Students zone out- many reasons for this • Limited prior knowledge • Dealing with high levels of stress • Missed schooling • Poor/defeated attitude

	Medical	Family Context	School experience/ quality of teaching/ the system	Other factors
Pepper	• Asperger's Syndrome	• Lack of support in the home and poor guidance/ parenting • No books at home • Poor diet and home routines, • Socioeconomic factors • Basic needs not being met	• Lack of foundation knowledge and skills	• Does not seek help- lazy, shy, scared, low confidence • Behaviour • Limited prior experiences related to under developed language
Logan	• II, ASD, HI, ADHD, Anxiety	• Access to school limited by parent's commitment • Difficult home life, no support at home	• Barriers created by curriculum	• Unidentified barriers to learning • Student's attitude
Sandra	ASD, Speech impediment	• Slow to recognise and respond to students needs • Limited skills or knowledge about how to help • Family circumstances • Lack of support	• Insufficient support due to lack of time • Mismatched assessment tasks • Lack of support and cohesion within the class • Slow identify and respond to students needs	• Lack of social skills • Poor literacy skills impact on everything • Behaviour
Kate	• Dyslexia, ADD, ASD, ADHD	• Broken homes with no communication or support to monitor homework		• Poor reading impacts on everything else • Needs ongoing attention that is not available • Lazy

Findings from the Data Related to Theme 1–personal attributes

Values, attitudes, and beliefs have a strong influence on teachers' practice (Silverman, 2007). Transformational learning occurs when teachers critically reflect on incongruence between their beliefs about themselves, their beliefs about their learners and their practice and then act to address the variance if it is found to be problematic (Mezirow, 2000). Transformational learning is built on the premise that individuals make meaning from within themselves through interactions and communication with other people. Students, parents, and staff, in combination with self-reflection, therefore, are likely to influence the transformation of beginning teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning. The personal attributes shape the way teachers perceive learning and teaching and combine to produce frames of reference (Mezirow 2000). A frame of reference consists of cultural and psychological assumptions which have been adopted through past experiences and if left unchallenged may limit practice (Cranton, 1992). Transformation occurs when the frame of reference made up of values, attitudes, and beliefs is found to be faulty in particular situations.

Values and beliefs

Despite contradictory evidence about the factors that shape teachers' beliefs about teaching children experiencing learning difficulties (Brady & Woolfson, 2008), there is significant research to support the idea that beliefs influence teaching practice (Beswick, 2008; Jordan & Stanovich, 2001; Silverman, 2007; Wiebe Berry, 2006; Woolfson & Brady, 2009). The following section adds to the discussion presented in the preceding chapters to support the significance of values and beliefs in determining the teachers' practice and decision-making in the classroom.

Positioning students

Most participants identified masking behaviours in students who were experiencing learning difficulties and understood them as delaying tactics or self-protective behaviours. However, *lazy* was a term used by Pepper, Kate, Edweena, and Theresa to describe students who either did not engage in learning or whose productivity they considered was less than satisfactory. This positioned the learning difficulty within the student and illustrated a shift in their general teaching efficacy

(Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993). However, all four of these participants described differentiating instruction or providing scaffolding with the goal of engaging students. Perhaps the belief they had done what they could to accommodate the students influenced their interpretation of negative behaviours being situated within the child (Brady & Woolfson, 2008).

Some participants reported gaining additional background information about certain students. This enabled them to respond more effectively to the avoidance tactics displayed by some students. The lack of information about the students' background and prior school experiences was one factor described as frustrating and limiting during the preservice period. Understanding students' background experiences and family contexts was valued as an essential element of the learning environment participants sought to create for all students, but particularly for those students experiencing learning difficulties. These participants were working towards becoming transformative individuals as they sought to understand and value the diversity that students brought to the classroom (Zimmerman, 2009) and used this knowledge to create more democratic learning environments (Giroux, 1988).

Expectations of self as teacher

Most participants continued to express high expectations of themselves which were driven by their personal beliefs and values. Also influential on their expectations of themselves were school factors such as the principal, which is discussed in theme 3–multiplicity. Their personal expectations were also shaped by systemic influences such as the newly introduced Curriculum into the Classroom Program (C2C), which is examined in theme 4–asignifying ruptures. Additional pressure to perform may also have been experienced by participants because of the insecure nature of their employment. This caused enormous stress, and at times, distracted most participants from their role as teacher, and is discussed in theme 3– multiplicity. For now, the impact of their personal beliefs on their expectations of themselves is examined in the following discussion.

The high expectations participants held for themselves became problematic when they perceived they were not meeting these expectations. In particular, Sandra clearly articulated how she felt let down with her behaviour when she did not meet

her own expectations and did not feel in control of "a positive environment."[219] When participants expressed negative views about how they were meeting their own expectations the negativity in their comments was generally exacerbated by fatigue resulting from the onerous demands being felt by the beginning teachers.

Sandra described how "the late nights [were] a result of [her] own high expectations."[220] However, she came to realise that they were unrealistic because of the impact fatigue was having on her performance at work. She explained that work was also becoming very invasive in her personal life. While she claimed that she had "to accept that at this point in [her] career not everything ha[d] to be perfect,"[221] she found it difficult to apply this philosophy to her teaching. To overcome the alienation she was feeling in her role she reduced the number of days she taught per week from five to three. Sandra explained how her "expectations ... had to be reassessed as [she] felt like [she] was failing the kids all the time."[222] She explained the only way [she] could give 100% to both [her] lives was to take a step back [and now felt] a lot happier."[223]

This reduced the physical demands of the role and gave her more time with her family. However, she did not challenge the ideological demands of teaching. Perhaps given time and personal space to critically reflect, she will be able to become liberated from the perceived demands and separate them from the actual demands of the role (Brookfield, 2005). Nevertheless, when she returned to full time capacity in term four it was not the demands of teaching in the classroom that she found overwhelming. A more demanding problem was the planning and additional requirements of her role and when she "realised how much work [she had] to do ... that part [had] not improved at all."[224] Flores and Day (2006) suggest preservice teachers need greater opportunities during their training to reflect on their personal values and the realities of teaching. This may help beginning teachers to identify the self-imposed, ideological expectation from the actual requirements of the situation (Brookfield, 2005). As the year progressed Sandra did learn to challenge the often

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[219] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3 March 5, 2012
[220] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 2, March, 2012
[221] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 2, March, 2012
[222] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 3, May, 2012
[223] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 3, May, 2012
[224] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6 November 7, 2012

unrealistic goals she sets for herself. She described how she was now able to be more critical to prioritise her "battles and work on ONE [her emphasis] thing at a time"[225] ... because if [she could not] do it all then [she was] going to do one thing well."[226]

Sandra's expectations of herself extended to being an advocate for students, as she came occupy the position of critical pedagogue (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008). She claimed she did not "beat [her] drum loudly enough"[227] for one of her students to be included in particular support program for selected students who were experiencing learning difficulties. She claimed to have "learnt [her] lesson,"[228] however, and in future would be more assertive "when it [came] to the kids in [her] class."[229] This may indicate she was feeling more confident in how she positioned herself as an agent of change in the school. It may also illustrate the lack of efficacy she felt in being able to make a difference to the learning needs of some students which was reinforced through the intern experience. Three of Sandra's current students attended the program that worked on a withdrawal basis for focused intervention. Interestingly, the very program Sandra was advocating to get the student into she later described as,

> anything but helpful. ... The students are out the class for an hour four days of the week and this is when I do most of my literacy. This means that they miss out on a lot of content. The inconsistency of the lessons has been disruptive to their learning too. Of all the kids to have inconsistency, these kids that struggle should not be the ones to encounter this as they do not bounce back as easily. Scattered learning in an inconsistent learning environment just makes them unreceptive to learn. ... I wish they were not removed from the class.[230]

Sandra's change of heart regarding the value of intervention programs that involved the removal of students coincided with her increased levels of confidence in her ability. She explained that "believing [she could] do this [was her] ... greatest

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[225] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 2, March, 2012
[226] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6 November 7, 2012
[227] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5, August 29, 2012
[228] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5, August 29, 2012
[229] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5, August 29, 2012
[230] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 6, September, 2012

accomplishment."[231] Through critical reflection Sandra was able to identify the inadequacies of the intervention program which she had previously valued. This rupture in her *frame of reference* (Mezirow, 1995) was significant in her changing views towards inclusive education and her own efficacy. It illustrated that without critical reflection hegemonic practices threaten to deskill teachers and position them as obedient technicians (Giroux, 1988; Kincheloe, 2008).

Ideology influenced the expectations participants held for themselves and what they thought was expected of them (Thompson, 2011). Despite recognising that spending an excessive amount of time on planning and preparing resources for lessons had a negative impact on their own emotional well-being, and their effectiveness in the classroom, many participants continued to engage in this unrealistic practice. Some participants began to learn liberation and reclaim reason (Brookfield, 2005) in their roles, however, as they challenged the imperatives that were driving their decision-making. Logan provided an example.

Despite her commitment to teaching, and being "willing to get [to school] quite early" and ... put in the hours"[232] Logan decided she had "to draw the line somewhere."[233] She was able to overcome being alienated in her practice and reclaimed reason by challenging the way she thought and acted (Brookfield, 2005). She explained how "some nights [she would] lie awake and think, I should be doing this ... and I could be doing more but [realised she had] to stop thinking about it at some point because it would never be enough."[234] Logan concluded "no matter how much you do there was always more to be done."[235] However, by assigning rupture she freed her thinking and prioritised her workload. She learnt not to "take any work home ... and come back the next day early and start fresh."[236]

Negotiating the expectations participants held for themselves, the perceived expectations others had of them, the challenges they faced in the classroom and the role of teacher in general was difficult for most participants. That is, at this beginning stage, although they had a critical reflective view about being an inclusive teacher,

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[231] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6 November 7, 2012
[232] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5 August 28, 2012
[233] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5 August 28, 2012
[234] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5 August 28, 2012
[235] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5 August 28, 2012
[236] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5 August 28, 2012

structural constraints prevented them for asignifying rupture that could develop them as critical pedagogues.

Sense of efficacy

Woolfolk Hoy & Burke Spero (2005) suggest teachers' sense of efficacy is strongly impacted by the experiences of the initial year of teaching. Theresa's comment illustrated the fragility and fluidity of participants' efficacy during this period.

> I sometimes feel that I am on a bit of a rollercoaster with these kids in relation to my ability to teach them. Some days I feel really confident and feel like I'm making a difference and getting somewhere with their learning and personal development. Then other days I feel the complete opposite and question my ability and career choice.[237]

Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) suggest efficacy is not consistent across the various tasks teachers perform. They identified three dimensions of efficacy: efficacy for instructional strategies, efficacy for classroom management, and efficacy for student engagement, as representative of the work of teachers. The influence of efficacy on beginning teachers' decision-making in the three specific dimensions is addressed in theme 4–asignifying ruptures where classroom practices are examined and data supporting the fluid often fragile sense of efficacy for beginning teachers is presented. Efficacy for classroom management is also considered in theme 2–connection and heterogeneity where relationships between students and the teacher are discussed. The following discussion gives a general overview of participants' fluid sense of efficacy which impacted on how they positioned themselves in their role as beginning teacher.

Teachers with a high sense of efficacy feel they have a positive influence over student engagement and learning (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Initially, many participants were not able to gauge their effectiveness in relation to student achievement. They were so centred in their practice they did not have a clear understanding of what students could do or how learning was happening. However, as an exception Edweena was very aware of students' levels of achievement.

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[237] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 5, August, 2012

Edweena worked in an environment where decision-making was explicitly driven by school data. She worked closely with members of administration and other teachers on student data and explained how she was disappointed about the impact she was having on students' progress.[238] However, she did concede she "couldn't expect to be performing very well at this stage in [her] career."[239] As the year progressed she constantly questioned her ability to manage student behaviour and engage students in learning. Her efficacy in classroom management and student engagement diminished. She explained how she noticed "motivation for some of the kids ha[d] dropped ... because [she was] not being firm enough"[240] but rationalised the difference in students' outcomes was not all her responsibility. She added that students needed "self-direction to ignore distractions and ... motivation to want to be there."[241] Edweena provided an example of transformation as she decentred herself from her perceptions of how learning occurs and realised it was a shared responsibility. Although feeling exhausted with her efforts to differentiate the curriculum, which were unsuccessful and unwelcomed by students, Edweena remained optimistic "that all students [could] learn and should have the opportunity to learn and be successful."[242]

The realisation of her perception of the limited impact she could have on students' learning was illustrated in her comment "I can bring a horse to water but I can't make it drink."[243] However, her confidence was bolstered when results indicated the "lowest reader [had] made significant gains"[244] in the final term. The development of teachers' efficacy is rhizomatic, constantly forming, collapsing and re-forming (Gregoriou, 2004). It is important the small achievements that beginning teachers make when working with students experiencing learning difficulties are acknowledged and celebrated as part of the school culture. This can help to maintain their fragile sense of efficacy and their willingness to experiment with pedagogy to create inclusive learning opportunities early in their careers. Edweena claimed

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[238] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5 August 21, 2012
[239] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 3, May, 2012
[240] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5 August 21, 2012
[241] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5 August 21, 2012
[242] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 5, August, 2012
[243] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 5, August, 2012
[244] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 6, September, 2012

"teaching [was] an emotional rollercoaster"[245] where "some days [were] good and [others] bad."[246] This comment echoed the experience of many participants.

Despite "feeling pretty good last year"[247] following the internship Edweena's sense of efficacy was challenged during her first year of teaching. Edweena originally felt she had developed skills and knowledge particularly with regards to differentiating instruction but came to view her knowledge as quite limited. She also found it difficult to implement. Woolfolk Hoy and Burke Spero (2005) found the sense of efficacy preservice teachers developed during teacher training declined during the first year of teaching and most participants in this study had a similar experience.

In the first half of the year most participants were questioning their effectiveness in the classroom which was further evidence of asignifying rupture. For example, Sandra "felt she was failing the kids"[248] and "feeling overwhelmed at dealing with the curriculum."[249] She explained how throughout the year it "felt like [she was] pretending to be a teacher."[250] Eventually she came to realise she "was not pretending anymore and she [was] doing the job."[251] As Sandra gained more experience she explained she became "a lot more confident in what the kids [knew] … in assessing … [and started to] make a difference to a fair few [students] in the class."[252] This belief was strengthened by the comments from the principal, other teachers, and parents who confirmed "she was doing all right"[253] (Tuchman & Isaacs, 2011). Her identity as teacher developed, in part, through her positive interactions with others and her perceived successes in her role as teacher (Gee, 2000). Her increasing confidence and stronger sense of efficacy contributed to how she positioned herself in various roles such as advocate, nurturer, and empathetic listener. She came to share responsibility with her students in many aspects of their learning.

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[245] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 5, August, 2012
[246] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher 3Interview 5 August 21, 2012
[247] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5 August 21, 2012
[248] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 3, May, 2012
[249] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 1, February, 2012
[250] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6 November 7, 2012
[251] Source: Sandra Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6 November 7, 2012
[252] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5, August 29, 2012
[253] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3 March 5, 2012

Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk (2001) note teachers with a strong sense of efficacy are more likely to engage in goal setting and set high levels of aspiration for themselves and their students. In addition, they are likely to demonstrate high levels of commitment, display enthusiasm, and experiment with new teaching strategies. The high aspirations Sandra previously had set for herself and her students had been problematic throughout her preservice experience and in the first six months of her beginning teacher year. This was often a result of her sense of efficacy not matching the expectations she held for herself. However, as the year progressed Sandra developed the confidence, knowledge, and skills necessary to instigate practices that aligned more closely with her beliefs (Carrington, 1999). Commitment, enthusiasm, and the introduction of new teaching practices were described by Sandra in her data and observed by the researcher in Sandra's classroom. Logan also demonstrated these traits.

Logan explained she was "definitely growing in confidence"[254] and as her requisite knowledge of classroom processes increased she was able to shift her attention from her own behaviour to what the students were doing (Melnick & Meister, 2008). While this was characteristic of some participants' teaching during the internship their confidence and focus on what the students were doing ceased in the early part of the beginning year. However, it did re-commence in their practice in later months. This illustrated the rhizomatic nature of teachers' growth.

Pepper admitted to learning, making mistakes, feeling lost, but that she was happy with the overall progress of her students. She questioned "what [she was] doing wrong"[255] and expressed doubts that she was "clearly stating the expectations"[256] to students. While this illustrated her preparedness to examine her role in the learning context it also exposed her perceived lack of power and efficacy in the education process (Monchinski, 2008). However, in the final stages of the year Pepper noted how she felt much more confident in her role and spent less time noting everything she had to do in the lesson and shifted her focus onto what the children

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[254] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5, August 28, 2012
[255] Source: Pepper/Beginning Teacher 2 Interview 4, May 14, 2012
[256] Source: Pepper/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 3, May, 2012

were doing.[257] This positioned her to take on the role of critical pedagogue which is discussed in theme 4–asignifying rupture.

While earlier in the year Jack described himself as "performing quite well"[258] he concluded "he hadn't done a really good job [of] teaching much."[259] He was often overcome with the demands of the curriculum. Although Jack acknowledged his lack of "experience limit[ed] his overall performance,"[260] he noted "even some of the most experienced teachers [he] work[ed] with did not cover anywhere near the amount outlined in the curriculum."[261] This may indicate that Jack considered some of the factors that prevented him from being fully effective were beyond his control. Masschelein (1998) would suggest he was accepting *realism*: accepting a situation as impossible to change. It was reinforced by his perceptions of the ideology of the school culture reflected in staff attitudes.

Throughout the year increasing levels of confidence were evident in all participants, except Jack, and generally related to how they perceived themselves to be coping with the demands of teaching. Perceptions of their effectiveness were coloured by how participants felt others rated them (Tuchman & Isaacs, 2011). Positive feedback from parents and other teachers influenced their perceptions of themselves but positive feedback from administration was not always a factor present when participants' sense of efficacy appeared to be improving. For example, Logan received no feedback from her principal about "what her expectations [were] so [she] had] no idea if [she was] meeting them."[262] However, a strong sense of efficacy was an important personal attribute of participants' willing to engage as critical pedagogues and seek more effective ways to engage students and address their learning needs.

Jack lost confidence throughout the year. He described limited support being available and he did not actively seek opportunities of support. Eventually he accepted he had little power in his role to make a difference. Jack positioned himself as an obedient technician (Giroux, 1988) in many aspects of his teaching which

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[257] Source: Pepper/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6, October 29, 2012
[258] Source: Jack/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 3, May, 2012
[259] Source: Jack/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6, October 30 , 2012
[260] Source: Jack/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 3, May, 2012
[261] Source: Jack/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 4, June, 2012
[262] Source: Logan Beginning Teacher 3Interview 5 August 28, 2012

disempowered him from becoming agentive. This was evident when he was asked to consider the class results from the NAPLAN testing and he explained how he was "still worrying about minor things"[263] and as a result did not feel equipped "to make a professional judgement on that."[264] Jack taught a class of 30 grade 3 students. There was a broad range of abilities, and many students were working below year level expectations. Very little formal collegial support, feedback, or ongoing training resulted in Jack becoming overwhelmed by his role. This seriously threatened his sense of efficacy and his ability to develop as a critical pedagogue.

As a preservice teacher Jack was able to critically reflect to envisage humanising practices that would create inclusive learning environments. However, now alienated (Brookfield, 2005) he was unable to uncover the ideological assumptions that were challenging his beliefs. This led to Jack's acceptance of being powerless to enact change in these unjust situations (McLaren, 2007). Although his perception about learning did not change his beliefs about how they could be achieved in an inclusive setting did. He continued to show signs of asignifying ruptures but could not enact the changes in his practice.

Knobaluch and Woolfolk Hoy (2008) suggest the context where beginning teachers gain their experience is a significant factor influencing efficacy. They found beginning teachers' sense of efficacy increased when they experienced mastery of difficult tasks in challenging contexts. Theresa taught some students who displayed very challenging behaviour and worked well below grade level expectations. Although she did not always feel effective her sense of achievement and efficacy grew when her progress was acknowledged by the principal. As Theresa explained, at the start of the year she was just "trying to get through the day and enforce behavioural expectations ... questioning why [she was] in teaching ... feeling very overwhelmed and ...not really enjoying it."[265] Six months later she reported a conversation which illustrated how demanding her teaching experience had been but the feedback she received was powerful as an influence on her sense of efficacy. She commented,

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[263] Source: Jack/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6, October 30 , 2012
[264] Source: Jack/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6, October 30 , 2012
[265] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 1, February, 2012

I guess it was unexpected that I was doing quite well. At the beginning I didn't think I would last. I was actually told that by the principal who said, "I didn't think you were going to last and you have really turned it around and you've made something happen, the change."[266]

As a result she reported "feeling pretty good at the moment ... more effective than at the beginning of the year"[267] and "a bit more confident in dealing with [parents]"[268] who "still scared [her]."[269] She acknowledged she was "slowly getting better at trying to ... cater for all the different needs ... but [found] it a constant struggle."[270] Despite commenting she "could be more effective"[271] she remained optimistic she would "gain that more in time [and] with experience."[272]

The levels of efficacy demonstrated by the participants varied within the quintain and within each individual. This had a major impact on how they positioned themselves in the role of beginning teacher (Davies & Harré, 1990; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Participants' sense of efficacy impacted on their decision-making with regards to students experiencing learning difficulties and their capacity to become agentive is illustrated in theme 4–asignifying ruptures.

Beliefs about inclusive education and models of inclusive education

Teachers who have a positive belief that students can develop to the best of their abilities, despite personally or socially manifested obstacles, are more likely to persist in finding suitable teaching strategies and include them purposefully in class activities (Jordan & Stanovich, 2001; Silverman, 2007; Woolfson & Brady, 2009). The effect of teacher's positive beliefs also extends to social relationships within the classroom influencing how peers view and accept one another (Silverman, 2007). Therefore teachers' beliefs impact on the development of positive classroom relationships and the creation of inclusive settings.

The four territories of failure associated with inclusive education; confusion, frustration, guilt, and exhaustion (Allan, 2008) were evident in this data set.

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[266] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5, August 27, 2012
[267] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5, August 27, 2012
[268] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6, November 5, 2012
[269] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6, November 5, 2012
[270] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6, November 5, 2012
[271] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5, August 27, 2012
[272] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5, August 27, 2012

Participants' described "feeling overwhelmed at dealing with the curriculum."[273] They explained how they did not feel they had the skills, time, or energy "to make anything fit for any child."[274] The confusion surrounding the implementation of the new Australian Curriculum and the implication for classroom practice is discussed at length in theme 4–asignifying ruptures.

Participants found "it very difficult to cater to the vast range of abilities"[275] within their class and were concerned they were "not doing enough to help ... the ones behind ... or ... the ones at the top end."[276] In an attempt to develop classrooms based on justice and equity, participants questioned how they could work with some students enough "just to get them to understand the very basics"[277] without feeling as though they were neglecting the rest of the class. Equity is a common goal of critical pedagogy and inclusive education. Although confusion surrounded how equity could be achieved some participants were able to challenge structural constraints in an effort to do so.

For example, Logan explained how initially she "struggled to use her teacher aide time effectively."[278] Teacher aides initially withdrew "students from the class to work one-on-one."[279] Logan described it made her "cringe when she thought about it"[280] perhaps indicating it did not sit well with her beliefs about inclusion. Through critical reflection, Logan did manage to overcome structural constraints and get "into a particular routine where [the teacher aides came] in at particular times that match[ed] the timetable"[281] and supported individual, pairs, or small groups of students.

The confusion and guilt surrounding how they were supposed to be helping students who were experiencing learning difficulties were soon joined by exhaustion and frustration. Participants described "feeling tired and overwhelmed,"[282] not only

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[273] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 1, February, 2012
[274] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 1, February, 2012
[275] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 2, March, 2012
[276] Source: Pepper/Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3 March 7, 2012
[277] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 2, March, 2012
[278] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 1, February, 2012
[279] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 1, February, 2012
[280] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 1, February, 2012
[281] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3, February 29, 2012
[282] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 3, May, 2012

dealing with lesson planning and implementation, but also having to deal with "keeping track of all the paper work and referrals and the reporting, and behaviour."[283]

Frustration stemmed from two sources. Participants noted the lack of response some students' displayed to their efforts to differentiate instruction. Edweena and Theresa described the frustration they felt when they "were putting the effort in"[284] but students were "refusing to use the help because they [did not] want to be different"[285] and did not "like being singled out."[286]Perhaps in their efforts to include these students they have actually managed to ostracise them supporting Ellsworth's (1989) claim that efforts to empower students can actually repress. These participants may not have considered the unintended implications of their practice, and perhaps did not consider including the students' voice in the decision-making. This reflected the control participants perceived as part of teaching and how they centred themselves in the learning process.

Many participants were frustrated by the low expectations other people held for the students in their class. Sandra challenged the goals of one student's Individual Education Plan describing it as "so low it [was] pathetic."[287] Theresa noted staff and parents accepted one boy's academic ability was "really low and [felt because] they ha[d] this low expectations ... that is what he [was] giving"[288] them. She found when she "worked one-on-one with him he [was] capable of it [but was] ... choosing not to."[289] These examples show how some participants were willing to challenge "realism" (Masschelein, 1998) that reinforced the low expectations of particular students.

Some participants' views about inclusion transformed throughout the year. While Jack contended "at the start of the year [he] may have been a little more

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[283] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher 2Interview 4 May22, 2012
[284] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher 2Interview 4 May22, 2012
[285] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 5, August, 2012
[286] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5, August 27, 2012
[287] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher 2 Interview 4, May16, 2012
[288] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher 2 Interview 4, May 4, 2012
[289] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher 2 Interview 4, May 4, 2012

optistic"[290] about inclusive education, Sandra developed a more positive view. She explained,

> When I was in uni, it all sounded impossible to incorporate all learning abilities in the class. I now realise that the classroom is a richer place for it. Yes it is challenging…EVERDAY. Yes there are days that I still feel it is impossible as I watch my II student just happily draw as I have not been able to engage him. I have come to realise that inclusive education is not doing *everything* for everyone all of the time, but rather doing something for everyone as much as I can.[291]

Sandra's transformation required changes in her beliefs and critical self-reflection (Mezirow, 1995). As Sandra's confidence increased and she learnt to let go trying to control all aspects of the classroom she was able to utilise peer tutoring to support other students' learning.[292] "In the beginning [Sandra] thought [she] was being lazy"[293] using students as tutors and to mark other people's work but changed her attitude when she saw "the benefits"[294] and even joked about the students "having more power ... in teaching"[295] than she did. This is another example of Sandra critically reflecting to identify and challenge the frames of reference entrenched within her values system (Mezirow, 1995). Sandra was able to share the power and control in the classroom with the students. They became partners in the learning process as she challenged the banking model of education's ideologically endorsed role of teachers as predominately responsible for what and how students learn (Brookfield, 2005).

Attitudes

Attitudes are influential in teaching (Avramidis et al., 2000; Beswick 2008; Lambe, 2011). The affective component, or emotion driven aspect of attitudes and their influence on teaching was discussed in the previous section. Schussler (2009) claims how students' perceive teachers' attitudes towards them and their learning as a crucial factor in influencing their level of engagement. She claims student

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[290] Source: Jack/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 6, September, 2012
[291] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 6, September, 2012
[292] Source: Sandra Classroom Observation 4, November, 2012
[293] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6 November 7, 2012
[294] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6 November 7, 2012
[295] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6 November 7, 2012

engagement is enhanced when teachers align learning tasks with students' interests, that is, the way they respond to situations (behavioural attitude). Therefore, teachers' attitudes influence their teaching practices and student engagement; however, they may not always align with teachers' pedagogical skill level which may limit their performance in the classroom (Carrington, 1999).

Gumption and gusto

Teachers demonstrate gumption and gusto when they a) demonstrate enthusiasm for learning through their language and actions; b) design and present learning activities that match students' abilities and interests; c) trial new pedagogies and d) embed opportunities for fun within the learning process. However, a lack of confidence exacerbated by inexperience and strong structural constraints, perceived or existing, within the school context had the potential to jeopardise opportunities for participants to demonstrate such risk taking and experimentation. Most participants were limited in their pedagogical choices by how they perceived the crowded curriculum and the fact that "there [was] no room for [students'] interests"[296] to be pursued. As Sandra became more confident she explained how she "listen[ed] to what [the students] want[ed] ... and it ... form[ed] a big part of what [she did] in the classroom on a daily basis."[297] Most participants, however, still struggled to see past the constraints of the curriculum.

Both Pepper and Kate taught the prep year, although, neither of them had any early years training as part of their Bachelor of Education studies. Both explained how their practice was limited by structural constraints. They explained how they initially chose more formalised learning experiences as opposed to play-based experiences because of the Australian Curriculum and the expectations of the school. Over time they came to recognise the pressure was too much on some children who "just [broke] down."[298] Nevertheless, despite recognising a lack of readiness in some students Kate described the classroom practices she employed to encourage one student to complete a task that appeared to be ideologically driven by school expectations. She explained,

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[296] Source: Kate/Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3 March 9, 2012
[297] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6 November 7, 2012
[298] Source: Kate/Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3 March 9, 2012

there is one boy and writing even one word you have to be over the top of him and okay write this letter, stay there for a while as he writes that letter. Okay now write this letter and it is not even a learning difficulty really it is [a lack of] readiness to be at prep yet.[299]

Pepper agreed some students were not ready for formal learning and more than half way through the year she explained she did not "think they actually [understood] what school [was] about."[300] She claimed her "expectations for them [was] to have fun,"[301] although simultaneously there was an expectation from the principal that she would have the students performing at a particular reading level by the end of the year. This caused some conflict between her espoused beliefs and enacted practice.

Kate compared the prep year she observed for a week in her first year of teacher training to her current situation. She noted the huge difference in the explicit academic expectations of her students compared to "four years ago [when] prep ... [was] all play-based."[302] Kate may have been assuming the students in the play-based model of prep did not have the basic counting and concepts about print knowledge that she described. She explained how the formal approach "was something that [she] would never have usually started with preps in the first term but [was] quite happy [she] did [because it gave her] time to monitor and improve their reading and writing skills."[303] Kate seems to be focused on the importance of knowledge transmission and judged success by what students could perform based on the banking model of education (Freire, 1970).

As the year progressed, however, Pepper and Kate's attitudes appeared to change towards how formally they structured activities. Driven by their beliefs about learning and recognising the negative social implication of the overly formal approach they attempted to compensate the formal expectations with their expressed desire to make prep fun. Nevertheless, both participants continued to allude to fun and learning as separate entities. They were unable to resist the hegemonic influences on their pedagogical choices and their practices remained closely aligned with the

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[299] Source: Kate/Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3 March 9, 2012
[300] Source: Pepper/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5 August 20, 2012
[301] Source: Pepper/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5 August 20, 2012
[302] Source: Kate/Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3 March 9, 2012
[303] Source: Kate/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 2, March, 2012

banking model of education (Freire, 1970). Due to influences from within the school culture, such as expectations of student outcomes and school-based testing and accountability (explored in theme 3–multiplicity), the activities were determined by the curriculum rather than students' interests. Students frequently worked on the same task, and maths and literacy skills were the major areas where students' achievement and success were judged.

While there were attempts to work within a critical pedagogy the structural constraints within the school context proved problematic for Kate and limited transformation in her practice. She explained how she could make time for "activities [that] were more preppy like"[304] but it always related to "some kind of curriculum-based thing."[305] Kate described how "social growth was ... something that [had] been pushed aside in prep with the new curriculum."[306] She explained how she thought "it was important until [she] realised that no one in the school was actually doing it and then"[307] she found she did not have time to do it either. As the year progressed, however, she noted various social issues in her classroom. This caused her to assign rupture and question the ideologies and expectations of the school. She explained she was "worried [there was] too much structured learning ... and they basically have no time to interact with each other."[308] Nevertheless, her challenges to the ideological expectations were limited and their influence was evident in her practice. The constraints imposed by the school structures are examined in theme 3–multiplicity. Interestingly, Kate's school adopted many intervention programs that were run before school and during play break for prep students identified as needing additional support. This functionalist approach (Skrtic, 1991) supported the deficit discourse of learning and reinforced pedagogies that supported the banking model of education that was limiting Kate's responses to student difference.

Adhering strictly to a formal curriculum created limitations for learners (Monchinski, 2008). This threatened to create situations where students were deemed to be experiencing learning difficulties due to a lack of readiness. The demands some participants felt to implement the curriculum outweighed the opportunity for students

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[304] Source: Kate/Beginning Teacher 3Interview 5 August 17, 2012
[305] Source: Kate/Beginning Teacher 3Interview 5 August 17, 2012
[306] Source: Kate/Beginning Teacher 3Interview 5 August 17, 2012
[307] Source: Kate/Beginning Teacher 3Interview 5 August 17, 2012
[308] Source: Kate/Beginning Teacher 3Interview 5 August 17, 2012

to work at their own pace and level. However, attempts were made by some participants to create learning activities that drew from more humanising practice (Masschelein, 1988) and recognised the needs of the learners.

Reflecting on her practice, Pepper came to realise her pedagogical choices were creating barriers for some students. Pepper explained how in hindsight she would use "more games and activities so they were a lot more immersed in it"[309] and this was becoming more evident in her lessons.[310] Nevertheless, she still struggled with her ideological beliefs about learning and teacher control. She could not fully let go of the assumption that learning occurred through formal instruction and as a result the fun activities were "always more towards the end of the week when [they had] done all the focus[ed] learning in the beginning."[311]

Being able to recognise the level of control they commanded in their pedagogical choices, the power they wielded, and the limits it often imposed on students was not readily identified by the participants. Most participants acknowledged that they "felt a bit lost ... just trying to get through each week"[312] and this perhaps had limited the appropriateness of their choices earlier in the year and their effectiveness as critical pedagogues (Kanpol, 1994; Thompson, 2011).

Positive classroom support

Some participants identified "the need to build resilience in many of the students."[313] Mediating social issues for the students was very intrusive on their teaching time.[314] The beliefs these participants held about social justice and their attempts to create democratic learning spaces was demonstrated in the implementation of social games, through the use of constant encouragement, and positive language. The students came to adopt and use these positive affirmations throughout the year.[315] This was particularly beneficial in developing inclusive relationships amongst students.

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[309] Source: Pepper/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5 August 20, 2012
[310] Source: Pepper/Beginning Teacher Classroom Observation 4 October, 2012
[311] Source: Pepper/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5 August 20, 2012
[312] Source: Pepper/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5 August 20, 2012
[313] Source: Jack/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 1, February, 2012
[314] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher 2Interview 4 May22, 2012
[315] Source: Sandra/Class Observations 1-4, 2012

A cohesive learning environment was valued by each of these participants which they attempted to create by encouraging students to become more independent and responsible for themselves and their actions, and also to consider their behaviour within the group setting. As some participants moved towards creating a problem posing education it did challenge them to relinquish some control within the learning environment Control was previously very highly valued but reconsidered as beginning teachers attempted to create democratic spaces that promoted shared values and human agency (Brookfield, 2005; Giroux, 1988). Some participants found this more challenging than others. The varying need to maintain control, as an essential element of the learning environment, is discussed throughout this chapter.

Jack attempted to find ways to enhance support, in an inclusive manner, for students who were experiencing learning difficulties. He created a very welcoming and warm classroom climate.[316] Jack used a deliberate classroom seating plan, which "follow[ed] the school's philosophical stance on community learning, strategically placing students together to promote positive relationships and positive work partnerships."[317] This served to limit difficulties such as intimidation and encouraged peer support, while "also tak[ing] into account preexisting behavioural concerns and personal relationships of some of the students."[318] He recognised the value of positive relationships and peer tutoring, especially in a class where many students struggled to work at year level expectations which created demands on his time. Jack used the grouping model (see Kagan, 1989) "to get partners together where at least one partner [was] able to guide the other one ... [so he could] walk around and help as needed."[319]

Alton-Lee (2003) recognises the value of quality relationships in the classroom and the value they contribute to learning. She acknowledges, however, this alone is not enough to enhance student outcomes, and needs to be supported by quality teaching. Jack did target individual students to support while students worked in partnerships or small groups;[320] although, he had a tendency to over rely on peer tutoring without closely monitoring student progress as discussed in theme 2–

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[316] Source: Jack/Beginning Teacher Class Observation 2 (May), 3 (August), and 4 (October), 2012
[317] Source: Jack/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 1, February, 2012
[318] Source: Jack/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 1, February, 2012
[319] Source: Jack/Beginning Teacher 2 Interview 4, May 9, 2012
[320] Source: Jack/Beginning Teacher Classroom Observation 3 (August), and 4(October), 2012

connection and heterogeneity. Jack remained constant in the way he perceived the social aspect of learning and recognised his strengths in attending to this. The frame of reference he constructed around this belief was a significant component of how he constructed his identity as a teacher and therefore was not open to transformation. His beliefs about teaching and his role in the process were problematic and showed significant transformation. The transformation is addressed throughout this chapter.

Edweena also set up her classroom so "some students ... [sat] next to people who [could] either help them or keep them on track"[321]and described her classroom as a "work in progress."[322] This indicated the reflective nature of her decision-making. It illustrated a problem posing stance towards education through a shared responsibility for learning. By engaging in critical reflection Edweena considered the students' needs and remained open to new scenarios as students developed and changed (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008).

In contrast, Theresa explained how she was "constantly rearranging the seating"[323] in configurations where she could keep a close "eye on [students] and they [felt] compelled to stay on track."[324] This is another example of teachers trying to control all aspects of the classroom where they positioned themselves as the sole decision maker in the room, providing students with very little autonomy or responsibility. It contributed to a definite lack of cohesion and respect amongst the students.[325] Theresa found her early attempts at peer tutoring ineffective due to an unhealthy competition amongst the students.[326]

Peer tutoring needs a social climate based on mutual trust and respect and students need to demonstrate particular interpersonal and group work skills (Loreman et al., 2011). Initially, these elements were not present in Theresa's classroom. Added to this, the students being seated in lower and higher ability groups may have contributed to the stratifying positioning of the students, the challenges with behaviour management, and lack of student motivation reported by Theresa. In response, Theresa took full responsibility for knowledge transmission and positioned

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[321] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 3, May, 2012
[322] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3 March 6, 2012
[323] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 3, May, 2012
[324] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 3, May, 2012
[325] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher Classroom Observation 1, February, 2012
[326] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher 2 Interview 4, May 4, 2012

herself to "focus a lot of [her] time working with struggling students."[327] This is a very demanding practice that can be physically and emotionally draining. This may have contributed to the high levels of fatigue reported by Theresa.

As the year progressed, however, Theresa learnt to critically reflect on her practice and she explained how she created an environment with students that was "consistent and [where] they're loved."[328] The tone of her classroom was more relaxed[329] and she noted the students were more responsive to her instructions. She also acknowledged she "let a little bit slide a little bit more"[330] because she found trying to "keep them on a tight leash [did not] really help."[331] Theresa started to develop improved relationships with her students based on trust and respect. She relinquished some of the control and power back to the students (Ertesvåg, 2011). This led to the successful use of peer tutoring and student leadership roles and is expanded in theme 2–connection and heterogeneity. Theresa acknowledged the students' potential may have been limited by social and cultural obstacles (Hoffman-Kipp et al., 2003) but as she developed as a critical pedagogue she manipulated the classroom environment to seek ways to overcome them (Kanpol, 1994). Theresa concluded the positive classroom environment was "a good thing for"[332] the student and this attitude continued to influence the transformation in her practice throughout the year.

Several personal attributes stemming from participants' values, attitudes, and beliefs influenced the beginning teachers' decision-making with regards to students experiencing learning difficulties and were identified in the preceding discussion. These included the beginning teachers' beliefs about particular learners, their expectations of themselves, and the positions they occupied as they formed their professional identity. Their sense of efficacy also influenced their responses to student difference. The systemic context, the school culture, and participants' knowledge and skills also impacted on the beginning teachers' decision-making with

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[327] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 2, March, 2012
[328] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6, November 5, 2012
[329] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher Classroom Observation 4, November, 2012
[330] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6, November 5, 2012
[331] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6, November 5, 2012
[332] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6, November 5, 2012

regards to students experiencing learning difficulties. These elements form the basis of the discussion in the rest of this chapter.

Findings from the Data Related to Theme 2–connection and heterogeneity

As preservice teachers, participants valued the importance of building relationships and the contribution they made in an inclusive classroom. This was described extensively in the two preceding chapters. Building relationships was one area where the links between theory at university and practice at school had been evident. As beginning teachers, building authentic relationships remained a priority for some participants. For others, however, the value of building relationships with students was overshadowed by a number of competing factors, such as, establishing control and managing the curriculum.

Building relationships is an important component of effective behaviour management (Davies, 2008; Hattie, 2003; Nichols, 2006). For Sandra and Edweena, undertaking a professional development course provided links to strategies they had previously been taught at university. Sandra explained the main difference was actually having a class now where she could apply the new knowledge.[333] She found the professional development was timely. It provided her time to reflect on, and become liberated from, the negative cycle that had developed between herself and one particular student in her class. Sandra described the negative interactions she experienced with a student named Shane* and the personal angst it caused her given the high value she placed on relationships. It is interesting to note that Sandra commented in the first beginning teacher interview that "behaviour management [had] never been an issue ... [and she had] always been seen as confident enough to deal with the classroom."[334] Being able to build rapport with students was a significant aspect of the identity she created for herself as teacher, yet, the difficult relationship she developed with this student became a considerable focus of her discussion throughout the first half of the year. This illustrated the fluid nature of her identity in specific situations (Davies & Harré, 1990; Miedema & Wardekker, 1999).

Given time at the professional development course to "rupture with everyday experience" (Brookfield, 2005, p. 200) Sandra was able to liberate her thinking to

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[333] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3 March 5, 2012
[334] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3 March 5, 2012

identify other ways of behaving. She explained how she "forc[ed] [herself] to find something nice to say about Shane."[335] This resulted in her practice and values becoming more aligned. She became more conscious of her role in the negative, hostile situation and how "up until now [she had] demanded him to make the changes but [she] made no changes [herself]."[336] Sandra unmasked the power she held in this relationship. By engaging in critical reflection, and being self-reflexive, she was able to respond in a manner that supported her deeply entrenched beliefs about valuing others (Kincheloe, 2008). She transformed her practice so it was more authentic (Cranton 2006).

Despite understanding the value of respectful relationships as demonstrated throughout their practicum and internship, most participants lost this focus in the earlier weeks in their role as beginning teaching. This in a large part was due to the extreme pressure they perceived to cover the content rich, newly introduced Australian Curriculum. Participants accepted the perceived ideological expectations related to its implementation and overlooked their own values, beliefs, and prior understanding about how their classrooms should operate. Theresa's comment reflected other participants' experiences. She explained,

> there wasn't any of this introduce yourself first week, sort of get to know
> each other and do classroom activities. It was kind of like okay, numeracy in
> the morning literacy and science ... the impression was we had to get into
> this C2C thing because you are going to fall behind.[337]

Teachers who worked within the State system were supplied with a set of unit plans to assist with the implementation of the new curriculum. These unit plans were referred to as Curriculum into the Classroom (C2C). In many cases, C2C was seen as the prescriptive guide to be adopted by all teachers working in the State system. The hegemonic ideology was initially unchallenged. The staff supporting and mentoring the beginning teachers, and the administration teams, also adopted the misguided impression that the Australian Curriculum was to be implemented using C2C; closely following the prescribed schedule. These hegemonic practices supported the dominant school culture (McLaren, 2007) and contributed to the unwritten code of

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[335] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3 March 5, 2012
[336] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3 March 5, 2012
[337] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3, March 2, 2012

conduct, and implied expectations of teachers (Gavish & Friedman, 2010). Accepting the C2C unchallenged draws parallels to Giroux's (1988) concept of "obedient technicians." The wasted school hours pushing through unsuitable and irrelevant content, and the potential damage on classroom relationships, highlighted the importance of teachers becoming critical pedagogues. This is needed to overcome the rationalist approaches that threaten the humanising practices of effective teachers (Masschelein, 1998).

As the year progressed many participants did start to use C2C more selectively. This discussion is expanded in theme 4–asignifying ruptures. At the same time they became more reflective about the valuable role of relationships in teaching and how in many cases this important factor initially had been overlooked as an essential element in their classrooms. For example, Edweena explained how she "did not get enough of getting to know the kids at the start of the year ... because it was the first day [and] we [had] to have done this for English (*laugh*)."[338] This perceived expectation overshadowed any theory or good teaching practices she may have learnt previously. In hindsight, the participants using C2C "wish[ed they] could have that time back again"[339] knowing valuable time and opportunities for making connections had been lost.

Like the rhizome that can be broken at a given spot, the links between theory and practice can start up again on one of its old lines (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). As a way of overcoming alienation (Brookfield, 2005), exacerbated by their unrealistic expectations of the C2C and the hegemonic ideologies of the work place, participants changed their practices. They refocused on building relationships in a bid to become more authentic in their practice (Cranton, 2006).

Authentic relationships

Relationship with students

Despite the demands of a content focused curriculum Edweena came to make time in her classroom to introduce pro-social games, drawn from various professional development sessions. This was evidence of asignifying rupture. By

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[338] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher 1Interview 3 March 6, 2012
[339] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3 March 6, 2012

making time to build authentic relationships, not just between teacher and student but also amongst students Edweena attempted to build a shared responsibility for improved behaviour and learning. Although earlier in the year she noted "we are improving as a whole"[340] behaviour management remained an ongoing challenge for Edweena. In spite of this, she did persist with the pro-social games which were designed to reward students with even greater challenges. Edweena attempted to transfer the intrinsic motivation into classroom goals for learning where students were expected to "work together using strategies, and ... challenge themselves ... to help their learning."[341] This practice had limited success in the short-term, however, and Edweena reported experiencing difficulties with classroom management and student motivation throughout the year.[342] She explained it "reduce[d] how much [she could] teach"[343] because behaviour management required so much of her attention and focus. This has been found to be a common concern of beginning teachers (Melnick & Meister, 2008).

Nevertheless, Edweena continued to demonstrate a very respectful approach to students.[344] She credited this to the links she made through professional development. Edweena became more conscious of "not yelling out and ... just going and having a one-on-one"[345] with particular students. She described this as "more effective."[346] Because she had "a better personal relationship"[347] with the students they were working together to figure out "how to make it better."[348] Edweena also unmasked the power (Brookfield, 2005) struggle she may have been contributing to by raising her voice and giving students "a chance to yell back."[349] By remaining calm she not only preserved the relationship with the student she also reduced her contribution to the manifestation of inappropriate student behaviour. However, despite Edweena remaining respectful this was not always reciprocated by the students, and she found she had to "try to distance [herself] a little bit from school

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[340] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3 March 6, 2012
[341] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher 2 Interview 4 May22 and Class Observation 4,October, 2012
[342] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6 October, 26, 2012
[343] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5 August 21, 2012
[344] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher Classroom Observation 1,2, 3, and 4 2012
[345] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher 2 Interview 4 May22, 2012
[346] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher 2 Interview 4 May22, 2012
[347] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher 2 Interview 4 May22, 2012
[348] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher 2 Interview 4 May22, 2012
[349] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher 2 Interview 4 May22, 2012

particularly in terms of the behaviour … because that … impact[ed] on [her] a fair bit."[350] She explained she was "frustrated [by] … the way they talk[ed] to [her] and other people."[351]

Edweena chose to position herself as nurturer, monitoring and guiding students' unfolding development (Burr, 2003). Perhaps being young, inexperienced and female, influenced how Edweena was positioned by some students who clearly did not see her in the relatively powerful position in the teacher–student relationship. Her approach may have appeared ineffective at face value and did not help her to resist the subject position she was being offered (Burr, 2003) by the disruptive students. It did, however, allow Edweena to preserve the respectful relationships she valued. It also reduced her role in creating oppressive educational experiences that these students may have previously endured.

Logan also noted her contribution to some negative student behaviour and how this threatened to jeopardise the development of authentic relationships. Negative discourse supported by other staff and parents surrounded Logan's class and their previous teachers.[352] As a result, she described feeling tremendous pressure to have everything running smoothly and an urgency to lift the academic standards. Like Sandra, Logan was also challenged by a particular student and found herself "focussing on [him] more than the others"[353] but despite "investing a lot of energy nothing seemed to work."[354] She noted how she often had to "reflect on the type of teacher that [she] wanted to be and the type of teacher [she was] actually being."[355] She reported how she often found herself "getting stressed with how low the students' literacy and numeracy skills [were] and often forgot to have fun and take time to be flexible."[356] Critically reflecting on her own behaviour allowed Logan to liberate herself from her practices and raise the quality of the social aspect of the classroom. Critical reflection also helped Logan to name and overcome limitations within accepted school-based practices. These practices threatened the creation of a

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[350] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6 October, 26, 2012
[351] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6 October, 26, 2012
[352] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3, February 29, 2012
[353] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 2, March, 2012
[354] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 2, March, 2012
[355] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 2, March, 2012
[356] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 2, March, 2012

positive social climate and the development of authentic relationships in the classroom.

Logan explained how she found developing rapport with students more difficult this year than during her practicum last year. She attributed this to the school's decision to limit student access to classrooms before school. She was not "allowed to have an open door policy in the morning,"[357] which she preferred. Also, the extra responsibility of being the class teacher reduced the amount of time she could spend out in the playground. She had lessons to prepare in her classroom which was quite isolated from the rest of the school. Logan reportedly overcame these obstacles by allocating class time for "getting to know you games,"[358] having "a bit of a wander while [she] ate lunch,"[359] and kept open lines of communication with parents. As a result, she developed "a good rapport with most of the kids."[360] She felt she could "give them more credit than previous teachers"[361] thereby challenging the deficit discourse that surrounded her class. Logan explained through a conscious effort she attempted to become more flexible in her practice. Ruptures in her thinking allowed her to adopt a more relaxed approach. She noted she had the "ability to control the classroom climate with [her] attitude and teaching practices"[362] which, in turn, impacted on students' behaviour and the formation of positive relationships.

The value of relationships that Jack expressed during his practicum and internship remained unchallenged during the beginning teaching year. His employment in a State system that was yet to commence the implementation of the Australian Curriculum meant, like Logan who taught in Catholic education, he did not have to deal with the confused expectations or messages about C2C. However, he did face other challenges. Jack did not receive notice of his placement for 2012 until the end of the first week of the new school year. This presented its own challenges with limited time to prepare the curriculum, set up the classroom, and gain background knowledge of the students in his class (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009).

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[357] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3, February 29, 2012
[358] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3, February 29, 2012
[359] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3, February 29, 2012
[360] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher 2 Interview 4, May 8, 2012
[361] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher 2 Interview 4, May 8, 2012
[362] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 2, March, 2012

However, despite these challenges he still maintained his focus on building authentic relationships. He described the minutes after he was officially allocated his class midway through day five of the school year. Jack explained,

> Straight after I was given the class on the Friday after recess ... I remember walking in and the kids were behind me and I was like just wait a minute, I moved all the desks to the side. Right, sit on the carpet. So when it came to actually setting up the class that was the first thing having carpet space. .... We'll sit down, any notes, talk about what we are going to do today just briefly.[363]

Throughout the internship the classroom set up frustrated Jack. While he could not enact change during the internship, critically reflecting on the vision he held for a more inclusive classroom enabled Jack to create a more democratic learning space in his own classroom (Kanpol, 1994). He managed to stay true to his own values. He created physical space and time that would provide opportunities to develop open, honest relationships with students. Jack maintained that sharing his own experiences and linking them with the students was a valuable way to build the classroom climate that underpinned his teaching approach.[364] However, as discussed earlier in theme 1–personal attributes, positive classroom relationships are not enough to advance learning, and must be accompanied by informed teaching which is explored in theme 4–asignifying ruptures.

Authoritative relationships

Behaviour management has been found to be a key concern of beginning teachers and, at times, runs the risk of monopolising their focus away from academic matters (Meister & Melnick, 2003; Melnick & Meister, 2008; Westwood, 2008). This was evident in this study. The early beginning teacher data revealed when participants offered information about their expectations for students it immediately focused on behaviour management and social goals. Academic goals were rarely expressed. In fact, some participants had not actually differentiated between the two. Perhaps it was because behaviour management was such a challenge for beginning

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[363] Source: Jack/Beginning Teacher 1Interview 3, April 18, 2012
[364] Source: Jack/Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3, April 18, 2012

teachers as they established themselves in the school. It may also have been linked to limited understanding of the academic expectations of the grade they were teaching.

While trust and respect developed between most beginning teachers and their students, it was often threatened by the beginning teachers' need to maintain control over all aspects of the classroom. The authoritative relationships that did develop allowed the teachers to raise the expectations of the students, both socially and academically, in a safe, nonthreatening environment (Ertesvåg, 2011; Hughes, 2011).

High expectations for all students and goal setting

Participants reported the expectations they held for students' level of acceptable behaviour were communicated to students through classroom management procedures and behaviour charts. Positive behaviour was compensated through extrinsic reward systems. However, participants recognised communication of their expectations was not always consistent through their reactions and responses to student behaviour. This was impacted significantly by personal fatigue which most participants reported they experienced in the earlier months of the beginning teaching year. Initially, participants had a strong focus on goals and expectations related to behaviour. When they did communicate academic expectations to the students it was generally because of a school-based requirement to do so.

Edweena and Theresa followed school-based practices and went through the motions of displaying their "learning intention and success criteria."[365] They created tracings in their practice due to school expectations. Neither participant really used the practice initially to revisit the learning goals or to raise academic standards. When they reflected on the value of the practice, however, it gave them a new way of thinking. This rupture transformed their views when they realised stating learning intentions helped them to have a "really clear focus"[366] in the lesson.

As participants established themselves into the role of beginning teacher their expectations for students, both socially and academically, became more explicit.[367] Strong support from the administration meant Theresa was able to raise her expectations of the students.

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[365] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher 2 Interview 4 May22, 2012
[366] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher 2 Interview 4 May22, 2012
[367] Source: Classroom Observations March, May, August and October

Theresa's principal "really cracked down"[368] as a means of challenging the deficit view that encompassed his school. Theresa explained he was "really good at instilling we're not the crappy school: We are the good school."[369] The school administration regularly visited classrooms.[370] Books were frequently collected and checked for neatness and task completion up until the third term. These school structures assisted Theresa in following through on her expectations. While initially the focus on neatness appeared to override the focus on academic quality of thinking,[371] it allowed Theresa time to reflect on her preconceived beliefs about the school. The ruptures in her thinking allowed her to develop better relationships with the students. Through the support of the administration she was able to reset her expectations.

Theresa noted her "prejudice about the school before [she] started that it would be very 'rough' and emotionally draining ... [and] at first, this is how it seemed."[372] As the year progressed, however, and she became the more confident, her "perceptions of these kids and 'some' of their family lives changed as [she realised] there [were] some really remarkable kids with good, supportive families."[373] Ideology critique, through critical reflection allowed Theresa to form a more critical view of the school (Leonardo, 2004). She was able to challenge her initial socially constructed view and came to realise her previously held beliefs about the students and their families were not always accurate and may have been limiting her expectations and practices. The sympathy she demonstrated in the preservice data became empathy as her perceptions of the students changed and her confidence increased throughout the beginning teacher year. This may also have contributed to the higher expectations she held for these students (Woolfson & Brady, 2009). This transformation in her attitude may also have influenced how students saw themselves as learners (Woodcock & Vialle, 2010).

Logan expressed high expectations in terms of behaviour at the start of the year and described how she communicated these frequently to her students. However, she

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[368] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher 2 Interview 4, May 4, 2012
[369] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher 2 Interview 4, May 4, 2012
[370] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher 2 Interview 4, May 4, 2012
[371] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher Class Observation 2 May, 2012
[372] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 5, August, 2012
[373] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 5, August, 2012

realised she had not actually considered how she communicated her academic goals and expectations prior to our interview in term one and felt she would need to "rethink that ... [and] be little bit clearer."[374] Perhaps this caused a shift in her focus on academic goals that she reported allowed her to "provide the class with a variety of different entry points ... differentiate tasks and expectations ... and provide extra scaffolding and ... extra time to complete tasks"[375] in future assignments.

Logan's expectation of her students' ability may have been lowered initially as a result of the negative discourse that surrounded her class. However, Logan contested the socially constructed reality. She came to realise "that they [were] far more capable than [she] initially gave them credit."[376] Logan found she had to "raise her expectations throughout the year."[377] She came to understand her learners and explained how the expectations she had were "different for different students."[378] While this illustrated her growing awareness of student difference the approaches she used to respond still appeared to be teacher-centred and controlled and reflected the banking model of education (Freire, 1970). Her response may be a result of the limited support available to develop her pedagogical knowledge and skills during the beginning year. This is discussed in theme 4–asignifing ruptures.

Sandra and Edweena reported using one-on-one conferencing[379] "during the reading time [where they] ... pull[ed] kids out for two minutes at a time and by having that individual conference with them ... [they could create] individualised programs."[380] Once the student had read to the teacher she would "give them a new goal ... to focus on and be aware of"[381] thereby raising expectations by linking feedback to student performance (Ertesvåg, 2011; Hart et al., 2007; Masters, 2009). Sandra also found showing examples of particular graded work and discussing "not only what it looks like, but why [it was] a 'c' grade ... definitely improved"[382] the quality of the students' work. Sandra and Edweena's perceptions of goal setting and

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[374] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3, February 29, 2012
[375] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 5, August, 2012
[376] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5 August 28, 2012
[377] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher 3Interview 5 August 28, 2012
[378] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher 3Interview 5 August 28, 2012
[379] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher Class Observation 3August, 2012
[380] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher 2 Interview 4 May22, 2012
[381] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5, August 29, 2012
[382] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6 November 7, 2012

timely feedback were highlighted as essential elements of effective teaching and learning. This was less evident in the other participants' data.

Kate made very little reference to the nature of relationships she built with students and because I was unable to observe her teaching it was difficult to make assumptions from her data in this area. However, the expectations she expressed for the students in her class were very much academic and behaviourally focused where she controlled the class through the position of power held by the class teacher and reinforced within the school culture (Burr, 2003). Drawing on her preservice experience in the older grades, she explained how her attention was concentrated on two things. For Kate it was "important that ... students develop good reading skills"[383] and she "had very high behaviour expectations"[384] and so focused a "lot of [her] time modelling and correcting behaviours in the classroom."[385] Her explanation of how she reached these goals placed her in a position of control. Students were coerced through a power over strategy (Larrivee, 2000) involving punitive measures, competition, and extrinsic rewards. As described in Chapter 6, Kate displays a welcoming and open personality. She speaks enthusiastically about working with children so it could be assumed she builds warm relationships with students. The use of the power over strategy, however, has the potential to threaten relationships and a cohesive class environment (Hart et al., 2007; Nichols, 2006). As a result, the effectiveness of feedback and the use of high expectations to improve learning outcomes for student who are experiencing learning difficulties may be jeopardised.

Feedback on student performance

In the early part of the year participants reported they did not "have the time"[386] to provide feedback to students. This is despite some participants reportedly being able to do this on the practicum and internship. Later in the year, however, Logan noted she "had improved ... giving more feedback ... taking more time to sit down with [students] while they [were] doing their work rather than letting them go and checking it at the end."[387]

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[383] Source: Kate/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 2, March, 2012
[384] Source: Kate/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 2, March, 2012
[385] Source: Kate/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 2, March, 2012
[386] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher 2 Interview 4, May 8, 2012
[387] Source: Logan Beginning Teacher 3Interview 5 August 28, 2012

Theresa explained how she checked the books and provided feedback but this was mainly in the area of neatness due to high demands from administration. Later, she began using observations throughout the lesson to give feedback or question students about their performance.[388] She started attending to student thinking and making them more accountable for their own learning (Levin et al., 2009). Ongoing professional support, which increased her confidence and skill level, contributed to this shift in her practice.

Pepper and Kate reported using a lot of school-based assessment and testing practices but initially provided little explanation by way of using the data to improve students' performance.[389] A further discussion relating to Pepper and Kate's use of assessment is expanded in theme 4–asignifying ruptures.

Sandra "learnt in first semester that [she] didn't do enough incremental stages where [the students] could ... find their confidence."[390] As a consequence, she adjusted the assessment and feedback processes. This provided further evidence of asignifying ruptures. Her perceptions of how assessment could inform teaching expanded to its benefits as a motivational and teaching tool. She used their test papers as a tool for reflection where students reviewed their work to identify "where they went wrong and how they could have improved it."[391] However, participants did not always feel they had the flexibility or autonomy to modify assessment techniques. They explained how their decision-making, with assessment and other areas of teaching and learning was limited by various factors associated with school and systemic structures and policies. It is to these factors the discussion now turns.

Findings from the Data Related to Theme 3–multiplicity

School and systemic structures and policies

The following discussion describes the school factors that contributed to the transformation of the beginning teachers' perception of learning and teaching. While some of the actual changes and the influences on their practice and response to

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[388] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher Class Observation 4 November, 2012
[389] Source: Source: Kate/Beginning Teacher 2 Interview 4, May 11, 2012; Kate/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6, October 26, 2012; Pepper/Beginning Teacher 2 Interview 4, May 14, 2012; Pepper/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6, October 29, 2012
[390] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5, August 29, 2012
[391] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6 November 7, 2012

student difference are discussed, the multiplicities that developed are presented in detail in theme 4– asignifying ruptures.

Employment status

Regardless of the particular system within which participants gained employment they were all employed on a contractual basis renewed on a term by term or semester basis. Similar to the preservice experiences where participants were conscious of needing to please the mentor teacher, in order to gain a positive evaluation to help gain employment, the beginning teacher year held the same pressure. Participants were very conscious of the instability of their employment. This influenced decisions they made in the classroom and their willingness to accept school structures and procedures. Comments made during the year by all participants were encapsulated by Logan when she said "for me to keep my job, I need to kind of prove myself."[392] The impact of the employment issue was especially highlighted in term four when employment opportunities for the following year appeared to be even more limited due to economic and political constraints imposed on the various education systems.

Being able to secure a full time contract in their first year after university was considered to be an accomplishment in itself by most participants. However, participants explained that despite "knowing you have done a great job ... [it did not] matter or mean anything."[393] Not knowing if they had "a job next year ... [was] the most unsettling feeling."[394] Each participant commented on how the additional stress had impacted on their energy levels and created another distraction while they were trying to teach. The most disturbing consequence of the uncertainty was how participants were positioned as powerless over their future careers and how devalued they felt. When individuals are subjected to overly oppressive conditions it is unlikely that person will be in a position to empower others. Hence, this impacts on the students they teach who need their support (Burr, 2003). The uncertainty of employment may have created situations that were not conducive to learning for students experiencing learning difficulties. For example, Kate reported she was

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[392] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3, February 29, 2012
[393] Source: Kate/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6, October 26, 2012
[394] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6 November 7, 2012

"starting to lose patience with some of [her] reluctant writers."[395] This may be related to how she perceived her performance as a teacher would be judged by the principal given the strong emphasis on student outcomes in literacy and numeracy and teachers' accountability.

School leadership

The ethos of the school community is strongly influenced by the leadership of the school principal (Ainscow & Miles, 2010; Cranton, 2006; Robinson et al., 2009; Thoonen et al., 2011). Not surprisingly, the role of the principal was far more significant in the beginning teacher data than in the practicum and internship data when participants were mainly focused on the events in the classroom and answerable more specifically to the mentor teacher.

Most participants described feeling supported by their principal who they found to be approachable. Logan and Kate were the exceptions. Kate did not "really talk to the principal or deputy that much."[396] She explained how she "knew that it was going to always be a hard slog the first year ... but [it was] the added pressure of admin that [had] really gotten to [her] this year."[397] It was accepted practice at her school for the principal to send a lengthy email newsletter to staff on Sunday nights. Kate explained the obligation she felt to read it that night because of previous comments the principal had made that had singled out staff.[398] Kate explained the emails clearly outlined the principal's expectations of teachers."[399] She recognised the explicit and implicit attempts the principal used to coerce teachers into accepting her hegemonic ideology (Brookfield, 2005) and maintained "you really just have to walk on thin ice with them."[400] She was not in a position to challenge these practices, but aligned herself with the other teachers in the year level cohort. They became a significant support structure as Kate attempted to manage the professional and personal impact of the oppressive school culture.

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[395] Source: Kate/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 6, September, 2012
[396] Source: Kate /Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3 March 9, 2012
[397] Source: Kate/Beginning Teacher 3Interview 5 August 17, 2012
[398] Source: Kate/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6, October 26, 2012
[399] Source: Kate/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6, October 26, 2012
[400] Source: Kate/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6, October 26, 2012

While Logan did discuss "all matters of concern with the principal purely to cover [herself]"[401] she reported very little contact with her principal. She explained the principal "was not very approachable"[402] and Logan had been "expecting a lot more support as a first year"[403] teacher.

Other participants generally felt supported but unclear of the principal's expectations of them. The hidden curriculum (McLaren, 2007) contributed to the unwritten code of conduct, and implied expectations of these teachers (Gavish & Friedman, 2010) When expectations were not clearly defined it made assessing their own efficacy difficult given they had blurred guidelines against which to judge themselves. This had implications for their willingness to take risks and investigate new and innovative practices as a critical pedagogue.

In contrast, both Theresa and Edweena's principals clearly communicated their "high expectations of ... [both] teachers and students"[404] at their respective schools. The principal is crucial in providing opportunities and support for teachers through the development of professional learning communities (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Robinson et al., 2009). Most participants worked closely and were supported by teachers in their year level cohort. Theresa and Edweena, however, worked in schools where the principal helped to foster trusting, supportive, collaborative programs amongst teachers throughout the school. Theresa explained how the administration did "a lot of filming of ... the more experienced teachers"[405] and the rest of the staff met to view and critique it. This type of program needs to be run in a safe, supportive setting where strong collegial support exists (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Thoonen et al., 2011). Theresa commented on how the principal and deputy "know every kid by name. They pretty much know every parent and ... they work[ed] really hard"[406] to build a community within the school. She described how "the staff [were] really tight knit and that ha[d] been really good ... because ... [she had] made quite a few ... good friends."[407] The similar interests and shared culture of the staff

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[401] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 3, May, 2012
[402] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 2, March, 2012
[403] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5, August 28, 2012
[404] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 3, May, 2012
[405] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6, November 5, 2012
[406] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6, November 5, 2012
[407] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6, November 5, 2012

may have enhanced her A-Identity (Gee, 2000) and the subject position Theresa accepted that allowed her to take a more critical stance in her practice. Given the challenges Theresa was facing, personally and professionally, this was extremely significant in her ability to remain in the role of beginning teacher.

Many principals invested in the graduate teachers by providing opportunities for ongoing professional development. Edweena and Theresa attended numerous professional development sessions, usually outside of school hours, and explicitly described how they transferred new knowledge to change their practice. Other professional development opportunities were school-based and provided by other school leaders.

Role of other school leaders

Several participants worked in schools where student achievement levels on national testing was in the lower bands and so were allocated literacy and numeracy coaches as part of a Federal Government agreement within the Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership. The coaches worked as part of the school leadership team, building classroom teachers' capacity in delivering quality literacy and numeracy teaching. This was one of the most significant influences on the transformation of beginning teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning that impacted on how they responded to student difference.

Pepper and Theresa worked in schools with numeracy and literacy coaches. Sandra and Kate had access to a coach for a limited period of time early in the year. Pepper expressed the sentiment of all four participants when she explained how she was "really pleased with how much ... the literacy coach [helped]."[408] She explained how the coach would "come into [her] room and demonstrate a number of techniques and strategies."[409] How this additional support impacted on their practice is discussed in theme 4–asignifying ruptures.

Induction programs- Support for graduates

Well designed, ongoing induction programs and mentorship programs can help reduce the stress experienced by beginning teachers (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009;

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[408] Source: Pepper/Beginning Teacher 2 Interview 4, May 14, 2012
[409] Source: Pepper/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 3, May, 2012

Ingersoll, 2012). However, induction programs for participants were varied. While Theresa felt supported later on, she described her induction as "[t]here's the deep end' *Kick*… [and] would have felt a lot better if the school told [her] that yes you do have to do all these programs and routines, but [they would] tell [her] how to do that in a couple of weeks."[410] She explained how she "was pretty much having a meltdown thinking ... everything [had to be] up and running from the word go and [was] desperately trying to get advice and help."[411]

Perhaps because Jack completed his preservice training at the same school, "along with working there on a casual basis during Term 4 of 2011, [he] received very little orientation"[412] Jack explained, due to the commitments of his stage leader, he was "basically figuring everything out through informal discussions with teachers."[413] Although, he came to realise "every staff member at the school [was] supportive,"[414] key factors of effective induction programs, such as, mentoring, feedback on his performance, and collaborative planning (Ingersoll, 2012) were not offered. Jack did not seek these supports. Perhaps this was because his unofficial mentor was his internship mentor from whom he wanted to distance himself.[415] Similarly, given the highly competitive employment market, he may not have wanted to appear like he was not coping.

Logan also had very little in the way of formal orientation at her school. In contrast to Jack, she established herself within the school culture, seeking help from her cohort teaching partner and librarian. She too found "the actual teaching staff [was] very, very supportive"[416] but realised she "had to do a lot of [her] own sourcing ... [because] "nothing really [was] given ... on a silver platter."[417] Nevertheless, Logan was prepared to navigate the social and political systems of the school culture which gave her some level of control and empowerment (Hebert & Worthy, 2001) in comparison to Jack.

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[410] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 2, March, 2012
[411] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 2, March, 2012
[412] Source: Jack/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 2, March, 2012
[413] Source: Jack/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 2, March, 2012
[414] Source: Jack/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 3, May, 2012
[415] Source: Jack/Beginning Teacher 1Interview 3, April 18, 2012
[416] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3, February 29, 2012
[417] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3, February 29, 2012

Sandra, Pepper, and Kate's orientation was quite comprehensive. Kate and Pepper also had "graduate meetings with [the] principal"[418] during the first semester. These approaches to induction were more unidirectional whereas Edweena's was more interactional.

Edweena's induction was more a team approach to help new teachers "to learn the culture."[419] Like Jack, following her practicum and internship, Edweena was familiar with the school and particularly its shared culture, common language, and aligned programs. Her induction extended to an ongoing mentoring relationship which is examined later in this section.

Special education programs

Sandra was the only participant who taught in a school with a Special Education Program. The teachers from this unit supported students within the classroom and assisted Sandra with differentiating instruction and assessment for L* who was ascertained with an intellectual impairment.[420] These teachers presented Sandra with a very different model to the one she had experienced on the internship where responsibility for students who were part of the special education program was essentially removed from the classroom teacher. This was a significant factor in the shift in her beliefs about inclusive education.

School Community

As participants moved into the role of beginning teacher, they described increased contact with the wider school community. Most participants found they had daily interactions with parents and other teachers and as a result *school community* was added as a category for data analysis. Participants realised they were as accountable to parents as they were to the principal, and regardless of their outlook, developing relationships with them was an important goal. Fantilli and McDougall (2009) found beginning teachers were often not prepared during teacher training programs to manage the complexities associated with parent interactions. Data in Chapters 5 and 6 suggest participants' interactions with parents were fairly

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[418] Source: Kate/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 2, March, 2012
[419] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher 1Interview 3 March 6, 2012
[420] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3 March 5, 2012; Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6 November 7, 2012

limited during their preservice experience. At this time, participants consciously focused on developing authentic relationships with the students. However, as a beginning teacher they realised authentic relationship had to also extend to staff and parents.

Staff attitudes and collaborative staff practices

Despite a few personal differences most participants reported staff to be friendly and supportive, and identified their cohort teachers to be their "biggest support system."[421] This aligns with the work of Fantilli and McDougall, (2009) who found collaboration with experienced colleagues supported the development of beginning teachers. Logan, Pepper, Kate, and Sandra all worked closely with their cohort teachers to plan class activities and assessments.

Like Jack, Edweena had a composite class and as a result did not work too closely with any cohort teachers when planning, which she claimed "definitely made it more difficult"[422] (Edweena, personal communication, November 18, 2012). Although she did attend planning afternoons for each grade on alternate weeks she often found the conversations did not apply to her class. However, Edweena's mentor teacher, who taught a different grade supported her throughout the year. She observed Edweena's teaching and classroom routines[423] and provided feedback and support with planning. Edweena commented she "got help when [she] asked for it but because [she] was so in the deep end, [she] often didn't even know what to ask"[424] (Edweena personal communication, November 18, 2012). Strong mentoring programs have been found to enhance the quality of teaching produced by beginning teachers and to help reduce the isolation they experience in the beginning year (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009). Unfortunately, Jack did not receive this level of support and this may have limited his professional growth.

Most of the participants who planned with other teachers on their cohort indicated their ideas were generally welcomed and accepted. "Supportive teachers ... shared ideas [and gave them] the opportunity to share ... ideas too ... and made

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[421] Source: Kate/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 1, February, 2012
[422] Source: Edweena, Personal Communication- email follow up 18 November, 2012
[423] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6 October, 26, 2012
[424] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6 October, 26, 2012

[them] feel appreciated."[425] Feedback from colleagues during these sessions contributed to higher levels of efficacy in the beginning teachers (Tuchman & Isaacs, 2011). Their subject positioning was enhanced through an increased understanding of the expectations and responsibilities communicated through the social interactions with other teachers (Davies & Harré, 1990; Gee, 2000).

In comparison, Sandra did not always feel her ideas were valued. Sandra explained teachers were "often reluctant to change and try something new."[426] Her feeling of restriction and the need to conform to the majority led to her sense of isolation. A close working relationship with her part-time teaching partner, and the year level teacher next door, however, developed into a "nice little network"[427] and provided her with enough support to unmask certain power sources (Brookfield, 2005) within the school culture.

Within the wider school community, Sandra recognised certain teachers who did not agree with her decision to "work with some of [her students] or play games with them"[428] at lunchtime which challenged their ideological practices (Brookfield, 2005). Sandra also attributed their frosty attitude to several other factors including the fact that she was given the position at the school previously held by a relative of one of the teachers who [was] also seen as "the matriarch of the school."[429] Sandra explained how earlier in the year there were occasions when Sandra was team teaching with this particular teacher and "she would take over the class every time ... [until] eventually [Sandra] said '*I'm sorry, I can't team teach with you*' and that pee[d] her off big time."[430] Sandra was able to unmask the power held by several members of staff and challenged their ideological approaches to teaching (Brookfield, 2005). Although often positioned as a subordinate she was able to challenge the dominant culture and hegemonic beliefs (McLaren, 2007). However, this came at a cost to her emotional wellbeing. It also made her particularly wary of her decision-making and being able to trust some members of staff.[431] Rather than

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[425] Source: Kate/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 3, May, 2012
[426] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 4, June, 2012
[427] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5, August 29, 2012
[428] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5, August 29, 2012
[429] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5, August 29, 2012
[430] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5, August 29, 2012
[431] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5, August 29, 2012

having an emancipatory influence, it challenged her confidence and highlighted the oppressive conditions that restricted opportunities within the school (Ellsworth, 1989).

Pepper also reported mixed support from staff. While many teachers were supportive Pepper described feeling ostracised by her teaching partner and some other teachers (due to political issues regarding her employment similar to those experienced by Sandra). As a result, she was reluctant to trust some staff. She explained how she "knew last year that it was [a] very segregated"[432] staff, but did not seem to negotiate the political and social system of the school (Hebert & Worthy, 2001). Although she went to the staffroom more in the final term she generally chose to remain in her room and eat with the other prep teachers or aides.[433] As a consequence, she may have missed opportunities for informal professional sharing that may have helped to enhance her developing identity.

One opportunity for support that was not mentioned by participants was networking with other graduate teachers. Despite all participants working with other graduate teachers on staff at their school no one described building strong relationships in this area. Although participants described other more experienced staff as helpful and related to them as mentors who provided support, a network with other graduate teachers at their school was not mentioned. Given that the first year of teaching is challenging (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009; Flores & Day, 2006) it could be expected that networking with other graduates who are presumably experiencing the same challenges would have been useful (Gardiner & Robinson, 2009; Larrivee, 2008). It appears the opportunity was missed and may be due to the highly competitive nature of future employment that was discussed earlier in this section. Perhaps the beginning teachers were reluctant to network with other graduates and risk appearing weak in any area. Similarly, they may have been reluctant to support someone they saw as competition for future employment opportunities.

Parents

Parents, like the principal, became more significant in the beginning teacher data than in previous data sets. Just as participants faced a diverse group of students,

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[432] Source: Pepper/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5 August 20, 2012
[433] Source: Pepper/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6, October 29, 2012

the parents also presented with varying expectations of their child, the teacher, and the school. At times the attitudes, beliefs, and values of the parents were aligned with the participants' own perspectives, but at other times they were markedly different. This presented challenges for the participants and on occasion, impacted negatively on their classroom practice. This highlighted the importance of critical reflection and critical pedagogy where beginning teachers can challenge their values, attitudes, and beliefs against those of the school community to examine the influence their own beliefs system has on their relationships with others and their decision-making in the classroom (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Larrivee, 2000; McLaren, 1988).

For some participants, witnessing the different lifestyles and "how people live[d] ... was a big eye opener."[434] The lack of parent support reinforced the beliefs Pepper expressed in the preservice data that home circumstances were a major contributor to students' lack of progress at school. In general, most participants linked students' lack of progress or disengagement, especially in literacy, with limited support or difficult circumstances at home. Students who made progress were generally seen to be supported by parents at home where there were routines and homework was completed. Therefore, parent support was seen as an essential element of the learning process.

Some participants, however, described how they were initially wary of the parents and others found "discussions with some parents would lead to [them being] distracted from the goal of preparing and delivering good lessons."[435] Perhaps their lack of experience interacting with parents, limited confidence in their ability, and underdeveloped knowledge about the backgrounds of the students early in the year impacted on how they reacted to some parents (Melnick & Meister, 2008). Participants identified how home routines made teaching and learning more challenging.

Participants reported many students arrived at school tired or had poor attendance. They reported children as young as 4 and 5 years old not going "to sleep until 9.30pm."[436] The demands of family responsibilities were also reported to

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[434] Source: Pepper/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5 August 20, 2012
[435] Source: Jack/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 2, March, 2012
[436] Source: Kate/Beginning Teacher 2 Interview 4, May 11, 2012

impact negatively on students' learning. One student, who had responsibilities to mind younger siblings, "quite often ... [would] be asleep on the desk."[437] Participants noted some students had high levels of absenteeism. They were also "concerned about ... kids ... coming ... half an hour late every day [because] they miss[ed] out on ... basic lesson[s]."[438]

The frustration expressed by participants was illustrated in an example from Jack. Despite setting up an individual program for a particular student who was working well below year level expectations, she often missed the opportunity to use it because of her frequent absences or tardiness.[439] His frustration was evident in his comment that he had "given up on her really."[440] Further discussion confirmed he had given up because he felt he could not make a difference due to the lack of parent support rather than giving up because of her limited potential.[441] This perceived lack of success may have contributed to Jack's diminished sense of efficacy and growing frustration (Tuchman & Isaacs, 2011) which was clearly impacting on his practice. In earlier data Jack noted how "simply as an adult, and as a teacher, [he] felt ... responsibility to the student to make her experience at school as easy as possible so that she was able to learn like every other student in the class."[442] While he attempted to honour this belief by establishing an alternative program for the student the agentive position he occupied as a preservice teacher was shifting.

The expectations parents had of the teacher and of their own role in the education of their children also conflicted with the participants' expectations on some occasions. Some parents expected participants to take a firmer approach to behaviour management. While Edweena agreed with the parents that she needed to be more firm with students, she found attending to so many other variables in the lesson distracted her from being able to achieve it. Pepper described how one parent suggested she "threaten her [daughter] with calling the stepdad."[443] Pepper was

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[437] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3, March 2, 2012
[438] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher 2 Interview 4, May16, 2012
[439] Source: Jack/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6, October 30 , 2012
[440] Source: Jack/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6, October 30 , 2012
[441] Source: Jack/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6, October 30 , 2012
[442] Source: Jack/Prac Interview July 20, 2011
[443] Source: Pepper/Beginning Teacher 2 Interview 4, May 14, 2012

uncomfortable with this as she found the man to be "a little bit confronting"[444] when he arrived at the school to speak to her "in the middle of ... teaching."[445]

Some participants indicated they felt many parents assumed educating their child was the school's responsibility. Participants perceived this as the parents' lack of interest in their child's education. Pepper noted the parents seemed to "avoid [her] ... didn't show up ... never called back... and [did not] know [her] name."[446] When she did get in contact with them she explained they "were a bit annoyed with"[447] her. She explained she got "to a point where [she wanted to] just give up."[448] She chose instead to take steps to bridge the gap between home and school.

Some participants explained how they helped maintain home school relationships by sending home a newsletter. While Edweena reported the practice ineffective, others found it was well received by parents. By building relationships with parents they were able to challenge their previously held beliefs about families

Pepper noted her transformation as she challenged her preexisting beliefs[449] (Mezirow, 1995) and came to realise she was "the professional."[450] This allowed her to become more assertive when communicating her expectations to parents. Pepper supplied resources for parents to use at home "and [taught] them how to go through and say the words."[451] She explained how she "sometimes got disheartened because the parents just [did not] care" but maintained she still kept trying because "she cared"[452] despite being able to "see how people burn out."[453] Like Theresa, the sympathy Pepper expressed in her preservice data turned to empathy. She positioned herself more confidently in her role, and realised she could make some kind of difference by manipulating the environment (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008). Her change in attitude may also have altered the attributional messages she conveyed to

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[444] Source: Pepper Beginning Teacher 2 Interview 4, May 14, 2012
[445] Source: Pepper Beginning Teacher 2 Interview 4, May 14, 2012
[446] Source: Pepper/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5 August 20, 2012
[447] Source: Pepper/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5 August 20, 2012
[448] Source: Pepper/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5 August 20, 2012
[449] Source: Pepper/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6, October 29, 2012
[450] Source: Pepper/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6, October 29, 2012
[451] Source: Pepper/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5 August 20, 2012
[452] Source: Pepper/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6, October 29, 2012
[453] Source: Pepper/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6, October 29, 2012

students (Clark, 1997; Woodcock & Vialle, 2010) and positively influenced the expectations she communicated to them.

Sandra also "arranged to 'teach' parents of students [who] came in and admitted that they [did not] know how to help their children."[454] She described how she was able to connect with parents because "she was a mature student"[455] and by sharing her own recent learning at university "they [felt] more comfortable to say they [did not] know"[456] how to help their children. Sandra recognised the potential of some of her students was limited by social and cultural obstacles (Hoffman-Kipp et al., 2003). As a critical pedagogue she sought ways to overcome these barriers (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008).

Elements of the school culture were powerful in influencing the decision-making of beginning teachers. They impacted on the way beginning teachers positioned themselves or were positioned by others (Davies & Harré, 1990). The power relations negotiated between the beginning teacher and the principal enabled or disabled them in their quest for professional support. Further, the way beginning teachers were positioned as colleagues or subordinates to other staff members impacted on how effectively they could engage in collaborative planning and how confidently they responded to parents.

The school culture has the potential to provide ongoing opportunities for professional growth (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Booth & Ainscow, 2002; Cranton, 2006; Thoonen et al., 2011). When teachers seek support, enhance their level of skills, and broaden their understanding of how students learn, they develop the potential to create new pedagogies and become critical pedagogues. In this role they can contest unchallenged, limiting pedagogies that can exist within dominant ideological practices (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Kanpol, 1994). This provides them with an opportunity to create new approaches and avoid replications of existing practices. In Deleuze and Guattarian (1987) terms they create maps rather than tracings. Critical reflection is required to identify the limitation imposed by school cultures. Once these limitations are recognised, enhanced pedagogical

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[454] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 5, August, 2012
[455] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5, August 29, 2012
[456] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5, August 29, 2012

knowledge and skills may be required to respond to the ruptures that occur. This is explored in the following section.

Findings from the Data Related to Theme 4–asignifying ruptures

The complexities of the modern classroom constantly challenge teachers' decision-making. Ruptures occur in teachers' practices when they critically reflect to identify particular components that enhance or restrict student learning and teacher efficiency. When teachers problematise teaching they consider the classroom structures and procedures and how they may or may not contribute to the development of optimal learning environments. Problematising teaching practices through critical reflection allows new and more effective pedagogies to be contemplated that may advance students' learning (Hofmann-Kipp et al., 2003).

Classroom structures, practices and procedures

Planning and implementing the lessons

By far the most significant influence on most participants' classroom practices early in the year was the implementation of the new Australian Curriculum in mathematics, English, and science through a curriculum package designed by the State's major education system referred to as Curriculum to the Classroom (C2C). With the exception of Jack, who taught in another state that has delayed introducing the new curriculum, all participants were expected to implement the new Australian Curriculum. Of those participants, all had access to the C2C materials except Logan who taught in the Catholic system in this state.

Sandra echoed the sentiments of the other participants when she commented that "C2C without a doubt [had] been the biggest drain and challenge ... as a graduate teacher."[457] Participants noted "the expectations of C2C ... initially encouraged bad teaching practices because [it was] assumed [they] had to bulldoze through the work rather that working from where the students were at."[458] "The impression was we had to get into this C2C thing ... [or we were] going to fall behind."[459] Participants noted more senior staff members accepted this view too. Therefore, the hegemonic power

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[457] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 3, May, 2012
[458] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 2, March, 2012
[459] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3, March 2, 2012

of C2C within the organisational structure was able to influence teachers' decision-making at classroom level.

Participants described how they "felt very overwhelmed and under prepared ... mostly due to C2C [and recognised] experienced teachers were having similar anxieties."[460] The messages participants reported about C2C were also receiving significant media coverage at that time. This added to the ideology that legitimised the prescriptive tool (Brookfield, 2000).

Despite recognising "it was impossible to implement,"[461] C2C was accepted as a dogmatic teaching tool. Participants were initially reluctant to challenge the hegemonic messages while others did not "feel confident enough in [their] pedagogy to stray too far from the recommended units."[462] What was particularly concerning about this was how the participants came to view the experienced teachers' acceptance of the expectation to implement C2C as a prescription for teaching the Australian curriculum. This certainly highlighted the importance of teachers learning to take a critical stance and challenging situations they see as unjust, rather than accepting the ideological messages transmitted through various sources within education systems (Leonardo, 2004). The significance of this and the threat it posed for quality classroom relationships was discussed in theme 2–connection and heterogeneity earlier in this chapter.

However, some participants were able to overcome alienation (Brookfield, 2005) in their practice when they were supported by other staff in their cohort who became more critical and confident to make decisions about their approach to using C2C. As Kate explained,

> in first term, it was still the impression, no, you should be sticking to it. Even though I was kind of going against it, and I know everyone else in prep was going against it and we were moulding it to our class, it was then in second term that they [school administration] said 'no, you should be definitely doing more of what you know works instead of what C2C says.' So I guess I

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[460] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 2, March, 2012
[461] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 2, March, 2012
[462] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 4, June, 2012

have always been doing it but now ... at least I know I should be doing that anyway.[463]

Once participants felt they had the support of the school they reported being more confident to adapt the C2C resources to suit their students. Like most participants, Edweena described how her "position is very different [midyear] to the beginning of the year [when she] was trying to follow lessons exactly as they were set out, despite the children not understanding and all of us getting frustrated."[464] She problematised the lessons by considering the content, task difficulty, what was required for assessment and then "change[d] the unit to suit."[465] The transformation in her approach was more responsive to students' needs and was more in line with the ethos promoted at Edweena's school where "practices [were] supposed to be research-based and [teachers were] supposed to be"[466] questioning their pedagogical choices. Edweena managed to move from tracing to creating maps (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) within the structures of the C2C. Through critical reflection many other participants also came to enact new ideas, remained open minded and liberated to explore more suitable and creative pedagogies (Brookfield, 2005).

The focus on using the C2C resource diminished significantly as the year progressed. This coincided with the clearer message from schools that it was to be used as "a resource"[467] only. While most participants agreed C2C was useful "to draw a few lessons [from] to ... give a bit of focus,"[468] they challenged the fact that "it outline[d] what need[ed] to be taught, when it need[ed] to be taught and what books (and alternate books) to use."[469] The prescriptive nature of the resource was seen to be detrimental as participants came to realise it "hinder[ed] how flexible"[470] they could be when selecting "teaching methods ... to match student capabilities."[471] As participants became more confident in their decision-making they stopped "trying

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463 Source: Kate/Beginning Teacher 2 Interview 4, May 11, 2012
464 Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 4, June, 2012
465 Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 4, June, 2012
466 Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher 2Interview 4 May22, 2012
467 Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6, November 5, 2012
468 Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5, August 29, 2012
469 Source: Pepper/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 4, June, 2012
470 Source: Pepper/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 4, June, 2012
471 Source: Pepper/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 4, June, 2012

to follow it to a tee."[472] This illustrated some growth towards critical pedagogy as they challenged the hegemonic benefits of the C2C.

Despite having to implement the Australian Curriculum, Logan did not have "much support in curriculum planning ... or curriculum allocated meetings."[473] She did not have access to materials such as C2C within her schooling system. She met informally with her cohort teaching partner to "quickly organise ... and make sure [they were] sort of doing the same thing."[474]

Logan described how she had become more responsive to the students' needs in comparison to "the start of the year [when she] was still trying to keep [her] head above water and really trying to"[475] establish her routines and expectations. By the middle of term two she claimed she was trying "to think about how the kids learn."[476] She described herself as "evolving with the kids"[477] ... trying to make it interesting for them"[478] by trying to "give them different choices in their own learning."[479] She explained she found it difficult to meaningfully include the students' interests into her planning, however, because the curriculum was "really specific and puts it in a box."[480] Perhaps Logan's pedagogical knowledge was still quite limited, given she had very little support with regards to implementing curriculum. Despite her attempts to create meaningful learning tasks for students there was a strong emphasis on the banking model of education (Freire, 1970) evident during classroom observations[481] and eluded to throughout the interviews. This may also have limited her ability to include the interests of students.

Jack described the implementation of the mathematics program at his school to be "the bane of [his] life."[482] Jack explained it has created a political issue for him because his "internship teacher is the one ... who created all of the assessments ... and

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[472] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5, August 27, 2012
[473] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3, February 29, 2012
[474] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3, February 29, 2012
[475] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher 2 Interview 4, May 8, 2012
[476] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher 2 Interview 4, May 8, 2012
[477] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5, August 28, 2012
[478] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5, August 28, 2012
[479] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5, August 28, 2012
[480] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6, October 23, 2012
[481] Source: Logan Classroom Observations 1, 2, 3, & 4.
[482] Source: Jack/Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3, April 18, 2012

they [were] riddle[d] with mistakes"[483] and onerous to implement. Quite possibly some of Jack's frustration stemmed from the fact the assessments were being prepared by his mentor teacher during his internship when she should have been supervising his lessons, co teaching lessons with him, and providing feedback and guidance.[484] This is a point also noted by Jack in the data collected during the internship and reported in Chapter 6.

However, while Jack reported maths was frustrating he also reported it was "very clear cut on ... what [you had] to do each week"[485] as opposed to literacy where the expectations were not clear to him. Throughout the year, Jack reported he did not receive a lot of guidance. There was little collaboration and planning with the other teachers in the cohort which also made it difficult to fully understand what was to be taught in literacy. Despite recognising certain injustices Jack appeared unable to navigate the ideological and structural barriers he encountered within the school.

Jack continued to report how he would like to do and should do certain things; however, he could not seem to action his thoughts to enact a critical pedagogy. Perhaps this indicated his pedagogical knowledge and skills were not strong enough to enact his beliefs (Carrington, 1999). While ruptures in Jack's practice may have been beneficial during the practicum to help Jack envisage the classroom he wanted to create, a lack of support, underdeveloped skills, and ongoing feedback appears to have limited the trajectory of his growth. The passion for teaching noted in data drawn from the practicum was less evident following the internship and the beginning teacher data. Unless Jack starts to reflect more critically on his practices and the power relations within the school to exert more conscious control over his decision-making in the classroom he risks further alienation from his practice (Kincheloe, 2000). This potentially could contribute to long-term implications for his effectiveness, job satisfaction, and career choice (Hebert & Worthy, 2001).

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[483] Source: Jack/Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3, April 18, 2012
[484] Source: Jack/Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3, April 18, 2012
[485] Source: Jack/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5, August 23, 2012

Time

The demand on participants' time was found to be problematic. Many reported feeling "overwhelmed at dealing with the curriculum"[486] and were surprised by "the ... workload."[487] Participants did not realise there was "so much extra stuff apart from teaching ... like referrals, like newsletter, parent interviews ... meetings with kids for NAPLAN, trying to boost some of the kids help, getting posters made, organising reading groups, notes."[488] This is similar to the findings of Meister and Melnick (2003) who found beginning teachers were often not well prepared for the additional demands required of them and on their time. This also highlighted the importance of beginning teachers developing their identity and a greater understanding of the role from the onset of their teacher training (Henderson et al., *in press*; Noble & Henderson, 2012).

The demand placed on their time during the actual teaching process was also high. Some participants expressed frustration at not having "enough time to support all of the students in the best possible way."[489] Trying to maintain control of all aspects of the classroom, including providing one-on-one support for students experiencing learning difficulties became overwhelming. As Thompson and Pascal (2012) suggest, when working under pressure it is even more essential to be clear about what goals are important, why they should receive priority, and how the goals can most effectively and efficiently be achieved. This highlighted the value of critical reflection to identify the factors that were creating the situations restricting the use of and consuming their time.

Early in the year some participants expressed dissatisfaction with "the pretty dumb activities"[490] and "the quality of some ... lessons"[491] but did not feel they had "the time ... to be more creative."[492] Not only did planning take time, but "with literally no resources, [some participants] spent a significant amount of time creating

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[486] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 1, February, 2012
[487] Source: Edweena Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3 March 6, 2012
[488] Source: Edweena Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3 March 6, 2012
[489] Source: Logan/Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3, February 29, 2012
[490] Source: Jack/Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3, April 18, 2012
[491] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 3, May, 2012
[492] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 3, May, 2012

classroom displays and posters."[493] The expectations teachers held for themselves and the demands this placed on their time was discussed in theme 1 – personal factors, with particular reference to their values and beliefs. In the following section the changes participants made within the classroom to counter the demands on their time are discussed.

Some participants reported overcoming alienation (Brookfield, 2005) by adopting a more flexible and critical approach to their allocation of class time and timetabling of activities so they could utilise the teacher aide "to focus teaching ... rather than having them doing photocopying."[494] However, Kate did not have this option as her school had a very strict policy on timetabling and she was "not allowed"[495] to extend literacy time from the morning session into the middle block to compensate for time lost due to specialist lessons. This school-based decision did restrict the types of activities Kate chose when teaching numeracy and also influenced her behaviour management strategies. Both of these classroom decisions placed her in a position of control and encouraged teacher-centred practices as Kate attempted to navigate the hegemonic decisions made by the administration.

Theresa reported early in the year when she was trying to fit in everything she thought was expected of her "and the kids weren't getting anything out of it and [she] wasn't getting the time to see what they had learnt."[496] On the advice of the literacy coach, Theresa made a decision to "focus on reading and reading strategies ... [because the students could not] do what C2C want[ed] them to."[497] She took control over her practice through deliberate decision-making and challenged the ideology and hegemony surrounding C2C and the Australian Curriculum. As participants became more critical of how they were using their time they were able to learn liberation and reclaim reason (Brookfield, 2005) by prioritising what they perceived was expected of them. Instead of "trying to get every single resource fixed up and ready to go"[498] they became more reflective and prioritised the use of their time.

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[493] Source: Jack/Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3, April 18, 2012
[494] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 5, August, 2012
[495] Source: Kate/Beginning Teacher 3Interview 5 August 17, 2012
[496] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher 2 Interview 4, May 4, 2012
[497] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher 2 Interview 4, May 4, 2012
[498] Source: Theresa/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6, November 5, 2012

As participants began to develop their skills and classroom routines they were able to create time for responsive teaching practices. Peer tutoring, previously described in theme 1–personal attributes was used by many participants to reduce the need for one-on-one support from the teacher. Although initially unsuccessful, Theresa and Sandra re-attempted peer tutoring and then extended it to a group leadership role. This allowed certain students to conduct the pre-tests for various spelling groups,[499] correct other students' work, and tutor in maths activities.[500] This freed the teacher to work with students and created more equitable opportunities for students.[501] Although this practice was not successful at the start of the year, Sandra and Theresa remained open to contingency; their practices, like the rhizome were continually open to review and renegotiation (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Brookfield (2005) refers to this as learning democracy. This illustrated the transformation of their perceptions of shared responsibility in the learning process.

Responsive teaching

Responsive teaching practices are designed to maximise the learning outcomes for students through consideration of the students' abilities, interests, and circumstances. Inclusivity is promoted when adjustments and pedagogy support students' learning in an unobtrusive manner. However, this can be particularly challenging for many beginning teachers who may find it difficult to identify student capabilities while simultaneously managing the day-to-day demands of teaching (Kurz & Paul, 2005).

Differentiated instruction

While most participants expressed a strong desire during their internship and practicum placements to provide one-on-one support for students experiencing learning difficulties it became evident this was not a sustainable practice given the ongoing demands of day-to-day teaching. As a result, participants as beginning teachers changed their perception about their role in responding to student difference and reported experimenting with a variety of teaching strategies to differentiate the curriculum with varying degrees of success.

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[499] Source: Theresa/Beginning teacher Classroom Observation 4, November, 2012
[500] Source: Sandra/Beginning teacher Classroom Observation 4, November, 2012
[501] Source: Sandra/Beginning teacher Classroom Observation 4, November, 2012

Some participants launched into differentiating instruction before they had established routines, relationships, and expectations and this hindered the success of their early attempts. In addition, they did not have a clear understanding of the curriculum or what students were expected to know, and they were overwhelmed with the general demands and responsibilities of teaching.[502] As participants became more confident with pedagogical choices, familiar with the content, understood year level expectations, and the needs of the learners they became more skilled at adjusting their practices to suit the situations.[503] While literacy was reported by participants as being more difficult to teach, this was the area they referred to more frequently when discussing how they differentiated instruction. This may have contributed to the perceived complexity of teaching in this area. Also developing literacy skills in their students was highly valued by all participants and therefore a significant focus in their practice (Beswick, 2008).

When describing their pedagogy in maths, participants usually described whole class activities with minor changes to the level of difficulty in some content areas. Generally they described a banking model of education (Freire, 1970) focussing on knowledge transmission. The types of differentiation strategies employed were generally aimed to cater for learning styles rather than learning difficulties. They reported and were observed using a multisensory approach using the interactive whiteboard and sometimes hands on material to introduce, illustrate, and reinforce maths concepts. While the content and tasks were generally the same, varying levels of support were provided to individual students by the teacher, peer, or teacher aide. The exception was Edweena who reported using students' data to group students in some maths activities for extension and additional support.[504]

Most participants utilised the electronic whiteboard to present lessons in multimodal formats and found "songs and video clips a great way to engage visual and auditory learners."[505] Most participants described using visual and auditory means to communicate instructions and expectations. Many participants reported

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[502] Source: Classroom Observations 1and 2 Edweena, Theresa, Pepper, Logan and Jack
[503] Source: Classroom Observations 3 and 4: Edweena, Theresa, Sandra, Pepper, and Logan
[504] Source: Edweena BT 2 Interview 4 May 22, 2012, BT 3Interview 5 August 21, 2012; Edweena Classroom Observation 3 August, 2012
[505] Source: Kate/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 1, February, 2012 and Classroom Observations 1 (Pepper, Sandra),2 (Edweena, Logan),3 (Jack, Theresa)

using "a visual plan ... each day"[506] which they found particularly useful for students who needed routine. The use of questioning was another technique reported by participants to engage students and to scaffold their thinking, and a technique observed by the researcher that occurred more in the latter part of the year when participants were more confident in their skill level.[507] Each of these strategies illustrated that attempts were made to recognise and respond to students' differences. However, the knowledge and skill level of the participants, and the level of support available, seemed to influence how closely they were able to enact their espoused beliefs (Carrington, 1999).

Working in an environment where theory was expected to inform practice Edweena was able to articulate clearly the attempts she made to differentiate instruction. Although, as Edweena explained this was not an easy or straightforward process. Like the rhizome, her growth as a critical pedagogue stalled, changed direction, erupted, and changed form (Gregoriou, 2004) as she attempted to overcome the barriers she identified. Initially, she found it time consuming and students were reluctant to "even attempt the work."[508] She realised her early attempts were unrealistic because she was still trying to establish behaviour expectations and relationships with the students. Due to previous school experiences some students were not emotionally invested in their school work (Munns, 2007). However, Edweena explained that as the year progressed she changed her focus and was able to provide the "whole class, not just those students that are lower ... more hands on activities."[509] Despite constantly struggling with students who "refus[ed] to use the help"[510] Edweena continued to reflect on new possibilities.

Eventually she introduced a "resource shelf [with] different resources for maths and English both to support and extend ... [and would] suggest in a lesson ... a good time"[511] to visit the resource shelf. As this strategy had only just been introduced prior to the final interview its success was unknown. It does illustrate Edweena's ongoing critical reflection and commitment to respond to students' needs as they

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[506] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 1, February, 2012
[507] Source: Classroom Observation 3Sandra, Logan, Edweena, August, 2012
[508] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher Reflective Diary 3, May, 2012
[509] Source: Edweena Beginning Teacher 2 Interview 4 May22, 2012
[510] Source: Edweena Beginning Teacher 2 Interview 4 May22, 2012
[511] Source: Edweena/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6 October, 26, 2012

became evident. She found creative approaches to overcome obstacles. She also provided students with greater control over their learning and shifted the power and decision-making back onto the students. While acknowledging her efforts were not always successful it illustrated her growth as a critical pedagogue and the transformation of her perceptions about teacher control.

Some participants explained how they used their observations when marking students' work to identify areas where they needed to focus their teaching. Sandra explained how she used her observations to identify students who needed additional support once she started to "gain confidence"[512] and could provide additional help to those students in small groups. In line with the value she placed on social justice and equity issues Sandra was conscious of not stigmatising students who needed support and ensured the groups were flexible so students did not "feel like they [were] being excluded."[513] The success of Sandra's transformation into a critical pedagogue relied on several interrelated factors. Multiplicity occurred through new knowledge being formed that allowed her espoused beliefs to align more closely with her practice. Her ability to create a cohesive learning environment and increasing confidence in her knowledge and skills was significant in allowing her to develop trust in her students. It allowed her to relinquish some control thereby freeing her to attend to students' needs.

In contrast, Jack explained "marking the maths stuff ... tend[ed] to be ... marking it to have a record ... not really marking it to"[514] identify students' needs and strengths. He went on to clarify "it should be" but he could not liberate himself from the perceived structural constraints to negotiate the barriers, time being the most obvious. Jack described himself as "only just scraping through in maths and literacy"[515] which illustrated his perceptions of his own professional growth and ability. Jack accepted the structural limitation imposed by the school-based mathematics program and became so alienated in his practice he positioned himself as powerless to make change (Brookfield, 2005; Masschelein, 1998). Given Jack's previous ability to recognise the political nature of teaching and his vision of what

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[512] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher 2 Interview 4, May16, 2012
[513] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher 2 Interview 4, May16, 2012
[514] Source: Jack/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5, August 23, 2012
[515] Source: Jack/Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5, August 23, 2012

could be in terms of inclusive education his rhizomatic growth became stunted. With time, professional development to enhance his pedagogical knowledge and skill level, and ongoing support to enact his new skills his rhizomatic growth may recommence from its shattered state. This change will also require Jack to reengage in critical reflection and through self-examination he may learn liberation (Brookfield, 2005). This may help him to identify how his classroom could be different if he could learn to navigate certain systemic barriers.

Pedagogical knowledge and skills

Many participants claimed the theory learnt at university and the realities of teaching were quite different. Sandra explained how "university teaches you the content but not where it applies ... or the sequence that kids are supposed to learn things."[516] However, she contended that it was not until she was actually teaching that she began to grasp these elements.[517] Ruptures in their thinking about teaching and learning often did not occur until they were forced to take responsibility for their own class. Most participants noted the lack of opportunity during their preservice training to observe various techniques modelled by experienced teachers. This is not to say it did not occur, but it may indicate limited opportunity to reflect on what they observed. This highlighted the importance of observation and critical reflection, and the significance of quality mentor teachers during the practicum and intern period (Walkington, 2005).

Masters (2009) identifies four key elements of pedagogical knowledge. These include a) knowledge of how to sequence particular subject matter according to the typical progression of skill or knowledge development, b) how to engage students, c) the common misconceptions students develop, and d) a range of effective strategies. A measure that enabled these four elements to develop was the ongoing training and support some participants received. Participants who were able to explicitly describe how they were teaching reading were generally receiving on the job support from trained literacy coaches. The following example of Pepper's professional growth illustrated the importance and benefits of ongoing mentoring to cement the links between theory and practice (Walkington, 2005).

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[516] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6 November 7, 2012
[517] Source: Sandra/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6 November 7, 2012

In the first interview in March, Pepper described how her teacher aide took guided reading because she didn't have time.[518] However, in October Pepper was completing running records during her guided reading lessons which she used on the spot to create a mini lesson for that group.[519] She explained how the data was used to inform her practice for the following sessions.[520] At the same time the remainder of her class were engaged in meaningful literacy activities, some supported by the teacher aide and others worked independently.[521] Through the support of the literacy coach and given time to observe other teachers in action, Pepper was able to develop the skills she required to address the expectation of administration and to overcome the difficulties some students' faced that she attributed to their challenging home lives. Pepper developed the technical skills that allowed her to enact certain practices that she could see helped students to progress. Pepper held strong views about home life disadvantaging some students and previously questioned her ability to make a difference in some students' lives. Her new skills helped her to challenge this belief and she came to realise despite the home situation of some children she could make a difference. Her perceptions of teaching and learning were transformed as she reassessed her beliefs about the potential of students from challenging backgrounds. Coupled with improved knowledge and skills this positioned her as a critical pedagogue. Pepper modified her practices to create democratic learning spaces and challenged the deficit discourse that previously supported her assumptions about her learners.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the findings and discussion related to the data collected during the beginning year of teaching. The beginning year of teaching was a challenging time for participants and a number of interrelated factors contributed to and threatened the development of their professional identity which was illustrated through Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) concept of the rhizome.

The transformation of beginning teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning was closely related to their sense of efficacy. Those participants who developed a

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[518] Source: Pepper/Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3 March 7, 2012
[519] Source: Pepper/Classroom Observation 4 October, 2012
[520] Source: Pepper/Beginning Teacher 4 Interview 6, October 29, 2012
[521] Source: Pepper/Classroom Observation 4 October, 2012

stronger sense of efficacy and also developed pedagogical knowledge and skills through ongoing support showed transformation towards a more student-centred approach to learning. In these classes teachers were able to relinquish the need to control all aspects of the learning environment and students were given a greater role in the learning process and in their own learning. A shared responsibility for learning was recognised as an essential element of the learning environment. Understanding students' backgrounds, used to strengthen teacher– student relationships, continued to be seen as essential elements of learning and the learning environment particularly with regards to the students who were experiencing learning difficulties.

The following chapter concludes this thesis. The chapter draws together the key points arising from the study and addresses the overarching question, which is, *What sociocultural factors contribute to the transformation of beginning teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning, and how do these factors influence the provision of effective teaching for students experiencing learning difficulties?*

Chapter 8: Discussion and Conclusions

Introduction

This study has taken a multi-theoretical approach to examine preservice teacher training and beginning teachers' transition into teaching on inclusive education. Instead of adopting the standard procedure of exposing ideologies invested in the discourse of inclusion, this study moved beyond to propose a model of rhizomatic teacher transformation.

To illustrate the new theory resulting from this study a rhizomatic model was developed to depict teacher transformation. Based on this model implications and recommendations for universities, schools and mentor teachers, and those teachers entering the profession were advanced. In this chapter I provide recommendations for further research along with limitations of this study. The chapter concludes with a summary of the study and some final thoughts.

Major Findings of Research Question

This study endeavoured to identify beginning teachers' developing perceptions of learning and teaching. It also discussed the sociocultural factors that impacted on the transformation of these perceptions and how they influenced beginning teachers' response to student difference.

Perceptions of Learning and Teaching

The study found that teachers have a fluid set of beliefs about teaching that have been construed through the discursive practices based on personal and professional experiences (Davies & Harré, 1990). This included perceptions about themselves as teachers, the role of teachers, and the contribution they made in the learning process. The perceptions were not consistent across all participants nor were they a fixed entity within individuals. The use of Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) rhizome to illustrate participants' perceptions of learning and teaching exemplified the messiness and nonlinear development of teachers' growth and understanding of what constitutes effective teaching.

Participants did not work within teacher-centred practices and then move to student-centred approaches (see Appendix K). Rather, for those who moved towards

student-centred practices significant components of their teaching reflected this move in some aspects of their work. A conscious decision was also made to avoid a starting and end point given that teachers' growth is ongoing and multifaceted. The decisions teachers made as they responded to student difference was often influenced by the context of the learning situation. The transformation of their perceptions was particularly influenced by the "subject positions [that were] offered, claimed or accepted" (Burr, 2003, p.114) and this was influenced by how well they were supported to negotiate the political and cultural influences of the work site. This is similar to the findings of Flores and Day (2006) who found teachers' professional identities were shaped and reshaped over time by the affiliation of contextual, cultural, and personal factors, which in turn influenced their teaching practices.

This study found that a teacher-centred approach reflecting the banking model of education (Freire, 1970) predominantly influenced the pedagogical choices of teachers throughout the preservice and beginning teaching year. Features of a teacher-centred approach included tight control on all aspects of the classroom where the teacher assumed major responsibility for student learning. There was a focus on student compliance and participation, and curriculum driven lessons. These findings support the work of Flores and Day (2006) who found teachers engaged in these practices as part of a survival strategy. Fatigue levels were high for teachers due to the demands on their time. In the teacher-directed classroom, lessons had a whole class focus and responses to student difference included mostly one-on-one support provided by the teacher. Positive student–teacher relationships were valued in this setting but were threatened by the position of power occupied by the teacher. These findings support the work of Fantilli and McDougall (2009) whose mixed method study also found fatigue and anxiety were closely linked with attempts to respond to students who required additional attention to meet educational goals.

As the data illustrated, while some participants continued to draw heavily from this approach, in the latter part of the beginning teacher year, some participants increasingly moved towards a more student-centred model of education in many aspects of their work. Their focus shifted from themselves to their students. Elements of effective teaching such as engagement and motivation, goal setting, feedback, trust, and shared responsibility were featured more predominantly in their classroom

decision-making and changed the dynamics of the classroom relationships. Lessons had an element of fun and sometimes drew on students' interests.

In these classrooms the focus extended from developing positive teacher–student relationships to creating cohesive classroom environments which included the beginning teachers directing attention to fostering positive relationships amongst students and the creation of more inclusive learning environments. Behavioural expectations were negotiated and students were given a voice. For some participants there was an important attitudinal shift. Carrington and Robinson (2006), in their study, found that positive attitudes towards inclusion contributed to the creation of learning communities where teachers, parents, and students worked together. This "adds a layer of respect and understanding of difference" (p. 332) that cannot be achieved through professional development. This attitudinal response was significant for the realisation of inclusivity and equitable educational opportunities for students who experience learning difficulties (Booth & Ainscow, 2002; Loreman et al., 2011).

In student-centred classrooms the teachers took on the role of facilitator. Their success in this role was influenced by the pedagogical knowledge and skills they developed through ongoing support and professional development they received during the beginning year. This is further support for the work of Fantilli and McDougall (2009) whose research concerned the challenges and supports available to beginning teachers and found the ongoing formal and informal support of a mentor and more experienced teachers was a major influence on teacher development. Participants, who received ongoing support, were able to implement responses to student difference more aligned with recognised needs through the use of student data, and these participants also demonstrated increased attention to critically reflective practice. Attempts were made by them to link lessons to students' interests, more attempts were made to differentiate instruction, and efforts were made to individualise goal setting.

A significant result of this study is that despite the structure of professional standards upon which teachers are judged, learning to be a teacher does not shift along a predetermined set of accomplishments (Allan, 2004). Therefore, the shift in the beginning teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning was not unidirectional, or consistent across all aspects of practice, rather it was rhizomatic (Deleuze &

Guattari, 1987); growing and changing, sometimes returning to original forms and then growing and changing in a new direction or remaining dormant ready to grow at another time (Gregoriou, 2004). Pepper's growth across the three phases of the data provides an example.

Pepper showed considerable transformation in her perceptions of learning and teaching. As a student teacher she positioned herself as a sympathetic nurturer who claimed little power over students' learning. She was frustrated by what she perceived as a lack of action by the system to address major social, emotional, and academic difficulties in students. There was little evidence of differentiated instruction in her practice and she saw the home as a major obstacle to learning for most students experiencing difficulties. She was emotionally drained by the experience and described becoming a teacher and having to attend to students with learning difficulties as a "really, really scary thought."[522]

Pepper described becoming more relaxed during the internship. She made time to counter the stresses of the role through activities that provided an emotional outlet. Given space, Pepper was able to self-reflect and liberate herself from the self-imposed ideological expectations. Once she was able to reclaim reason (Brookfield, 2005) Pepper was able to tap into her creative nature. She introduced technology, choice, and group work into the classroom. She was showing signs of rhizomatic growth as she was mapping rather than tracing her mentor teachers' practice. Although her growth initially stagnated during the beginning year ruptures occurred at various stages and her growth re-commenced (Gregoriou, 2004). Her rhizomatic growth exemplified moments of frustration and exhilaration as she experienced that failure of not making a difference to becoming more liberated from her planning, becoming more flexible in her approach and less reliant on her lesson plans which she had previously scripted.

By contrast, Jack provides an example of rhizomatic growth that became stunted. As the participant who originally displayed the most positive attitude towards inclusion, a strong belief in his ability to make a difference and the participant who was most vocal in the preservice stage about challenging the political

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[522] Source: Pepper/Prac Interview August 5, 2011

limitations in teaching, his beliefs were seriously challenged. His rhizomatic growth ruptured during the internship as he reflected on what was possible but remained dormant as he chose not to attempt to action these changes. During the beginning year Jack was able to action his perceptions of a welcoming learning environment and continued his strong focus on the social aspect of learning. However, his perception of teaching and the influence he could contribute to learning regressed. This, in part, was the result of the lack of support at the school site to develop the necessary skills to manage the complexities of his class and the total alienation he experienced in his role. Pepper and Jack are typical cases of how a teachers' growth is determined by factors outside of self; sociocultural factors determine rhizomatic growth. It is these factors to which the discussion now turns.

Sociocultural influences and the implications for beginning teachers

The study established that a range of sociocultural factors influenced participants' perceptions of teaching and learning. These influences can be grouped into two groups: (a) personal factors; (b) systemic and school factors. Personal factors include the beginning teachers' beliefs system that comprise their values, attitudes, and beliefs and also their pedagogical knowledge and skills, which includes the art of critical reflection. Systemic and school factors include employment opportunities and uncertainty, school leadership, ongoing professional development and pedagogical support, and staff attitudes.

The role of critical reflection

Critical reflection is an important skill and essential component of effective teaching (Toomey, 2007; Larrivee, 2000; Sutherland et al., 2010). It needs to be developed and valued by teachers during their preservice training so it becomes embedded into their daily work to remain a significant component of their practice throughout their teaching career (Larrivee, 2008).

Initially, most participants in this study limited their reflection to the technical aspects of teaching. This is not surprising as critical reflection is a learned skill that is challenging for preservice and beginning teachers (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Larrivee, 2000; Sutherland et al., 2010). Prior to commencing this research most participants explained they completed reflections because they had to as part of the practicum and intern experience not because of the value they placed on the

process. However, several participants commented that being part of this project helped them to see the value in the process. For most participants this realisation came during the beginning teaching year rather than during the preservice experience. This study supports Russell (2005) and Larrivee's (2008) understanding that reflective practice can be taught and is important in the development of teachers' professional knowledge. Having more opportunities to reflect in the diaries and then orally during the interviews, and being led through this process by the researcher acting as a critical friend, enhanced their understanding and skill in critical reflection.

Critical reflection increases teachers' understanding of how their behaviour and work environment, among other factors, have a reciprocal influence on their decision-making in the classroom and the learning outcomes of students. The development of their identity as a beginning teacher was strengthened through critical reflection for those participants who learnt to engage in the practice (Sutherland et al., 2010). As Brookfield (2005) suggests critical refection leads to a greater sense of control. For the beginning teachers this meant they had greater control over their practice and it increased their confidence to try new approaches and challenge the status quo of the school. As illustrated throughout the data chapters, Sandra in particular, engaged consistently in critical reflection. This helped her to develop a strong sense of who she was as a teacher and what her role was in terms of providing the best possible outcomes for her students. This meant at times she had to challenge the ideological influences of the school. Kate and Jack were reluctant to challenge the power dynamics within their work contexts and their practices remained predominantly teacher-centred which sometimes compromised their beliefs about teaching and the values they espoused about the students as individuals.

Flores and Day (2006) and Shoffner (2011) contend emotions play a big part of teaching. Learning to teach and respond effectively to the diverse needs of students is demanding on beginning teachers emotionally and physically. Critical reflection must become an integral part of this process to challenge the hegemonic and ideological factors within the school that threaten to create obedient technicians (Giroux, 1988). Through critical reflection the beginning teachers came to feel empowered to seek and instigate more specifically appropriate practices for students

who were experiencing learning difficulties (Monchinski, 2008). This was closely linked with their sense of efficacy which is discussed in the next section.

The findings of this research support the work of Flores and Day (2006) and Shoffner (2011) regarding the influence of emotions in teaching. Emotions played a huge role in how beginning teachers positioned themselves and how they viewed students who were experiencing learning difficulties. As the data analysis chapters disclose, all participants found the transition from preservice to beginning teaching was turbulent and teaching to be emotionally and physically draining. In line with the findings of Fantilli and McDougall (2009) many participants in this research felt university did not prepare them for the challenges and complexities they faced in their new role, especially in responding to student difference. The additional demands from factors outside of actual teaching of the class were overwhelming and also unexpected for some participants. Participants' responses exemplify how critical reflection can contribute towards the transformation of a professional identity as preservice teachers deconstruct and analyse issues relating to education that may require them to challenge the status quo. It helps them to link theory and practice to explore multiple possibilities for a given situation (Henderson et al., *in press*) and the multiple selves they bring to teaching (Davies & Harré 1990).

Allan's (2008) assessment of confusion, frustration, guilt and exhaustion casting doubts about the effectiveness of inclusive education were also evident in participants when their efficacy was low and the demands they felt in their role were high. However, when participants were able to take time and reflect on their practice, and the contributing influences, most were able to experience a certain level of confidence, passion, satisfaction, and enthusiasm when planning for and implementing lessons for students experiencing learning difficulties. Sandra, Theresa, and Pepper described strong emotional responses to teaching as they transformed their beliefs about their capacity to teach students experiencing learning difficulties. Sandra, in particular, demonstrated a major transformation in her beliefs about inclusive education and described how critical reflection was a major contributing factor as she constructed and reconstructed how she positioned herself as a teacher. Although the period was challenging there was growth for her. This was also the case for the others but to a lesser extent. Critically reflecting back helped them to gain strength to move forward with an agenda of social justice.

Thus, the study established that critical reflection can help teachers identify the ideological beliefs attached to teaching and the discrepancies that can exist between their own values, attitudes, and beliefs that can contribute to the complexity and challenges of the job (Brookfield, 2005; McLaren, 2007). Without critical reflection teachers become limited to the structural and institutional constraints of education. Critical reflection allows teachers to consider and negotiate alternate solutions to the challenges encountered, enhancing their efficacy and level of job satisfaction. For example, in this study, teachers' beliefs about themselves and the students they taught played a role in their decision-making in the classroom. Their values, which underpinned their attitudes manifested in their behavioural and emotional responses to various situations (Loreman et al., 2005) and influenced their intuitive actions and behaviours (Brookfield, 2000).

Some participants were able to critically reflect on the role their conduct played in certain classroom situations, in particular with regards to student behaviour and classroom management. Ongoing confrontation with particular students forced them to challenge their own behaviour and how it aligned with their values. Both Logan and Sandra espoused how they valued warm, open relationships with students. The confrontations challenged their values and caused them emotional discomfort. Through critical reflection they were able to identify changes that needed to be made on their behalf and hence, they transformed their behaviour to align their practice more closely with their beliefs.

As Larrivee (2000) contends, "approaching teaching as a reflective practitioner involves infusing personal beliefs and values into a professional identity, resulting in developing a deliberate code of conduct" (p. 293). While building respectful relationship with students was seen as an essential element of learning and teaching many participants did not consider the threat their behaviour posed to the process. Although more coercive than confrontational, the strategies utilised for classroom control reinforced a power dynamic between teacher and student. This had the potential to diminish classroom motivation and engagement in some students (Schussler, 2009). Also threatened were the espoused values of those participants who claimed to place importance on students becoming independent and responsible for their own learning. Again, this aspect of reflection is linked closely with efficacy and the participants' belief systems.

The impact of personal factors

Beginning teachers' beliefs systems and their pedagogical knowledge and skills played an important role in how they perceived learning and teaching and how they responded to students experiencing learning difficulties. Throughout this study most participants described a strong belief in the ability of all students to learn albeit at different rates. However, similar to the findings of Carrington (1999) espoused beliefs did not always translate to enacted beliefs with teacher-centred practices limiting the flexibility of many learning experiences. Often, teachers' beliefs were not able to be enacted due to their limited pedagogical knowledge and skills. Participants who moved towards student-centred learning, and introduced a range of teaching strategies and approaches to meet lesson goals drawn from student data, generally developed a strong sense of efficacy in the domain of teaching strategies. Each of these participants was well supported through ongoing professional development and in class support. The ongoing support allowed them to develop knowledge and expertise to create more effective learning opportunities for students. (Booth & Ainscow, 2002; Brownell et al., 2006; Devlan, 2008).

All participants identified positive relationships as an essential part of teaching and learning. However, they also acknowledged that developing and maintaining authentic relationships could be challenging at times. Three key factors seemed to increase this challenge. First, beginning teachers' desire to maintain control in all aspects of the teaching and learning process threatened to destabilise relationships by compromising respectful interactions (Gore & Parkes, 2008; Nichols, 2006). Second, beginning teachers' lack of skills, to incorporate goal setting and feedback as elements of the learning process and to attend to lesson goals and behaviour simultaneously, also threatened relationships between beginning teachers and their students (Cranton, 2006; Loreman et al., 2011). Finally, the disparity between teachers' beliefs about education and those of the school community contributed to the frustration experienced by beginning teachers (Kurz & Paul, 2005).

A key finding of this research was the impact of teachers' sense of efficacy on their perceptions of learning and teaching and therefore on their pedagogical choices. Similar to the work of Hoy and Woolfolk, (1993) and Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2007) this research found teachers' sense of efficacy was not stable and varied across three domains: instructional strategies, classroom management, and

student engagement. Jack held particularly strong values about building relationships in the classroom. Reflection within the ethical domain allowed him to maintain authentic relationships with his students (Cranton, 2006) and enhanced his efficacy in relation to classroom management. There was no transformation evident here as Jack remained authentic in this practice. However, other areas of his efficacy were much lower. While quietly optimistic during preservice and early in the beginning year that his skills would improve, his efficacy related to instructional strategies diminished dramatically as the year progressed. He came to accept structural barriers he identified in the learning process such as assessment practices and positioned himself as powerless to enact change.

Similar to the findings of Woolfolk Hoy and Burke Spero (2005) most participants reported a higher level of efficacy at the end of the internship than they experienced at the start of the beginning year. In fact, many participants noted how much more confident they felt following the internship experience. The steep learning curve and demands of the role that they experienced as a beginning teacher highlighted their inexperience and underdeveloped skills. When their skill level did not match their personal expectations, which was driven by their beliefs system, it appeared to diminish their sense of efficacy.

The strong sense of efficacy many participants described at the end of their teacher training could be attributed to the knowledge and skills they developed through the support of their mentor teacher and their perceptions formed during interactions throughout the professional experience (Tuchman & Isaac, 2011). As described in Chapters 5 and 6, the preservice experience helped some participants develop a strong sense of efficacy prior to commencing the role of beginning teacher. These participants received positive feedback on their performance, experienced success in their teaching practices, and observed what they perceived to be successful practices performed by others. In contrast, Sandra identified a lack of opportunity, and Jack a lack of guidance, to develop the skills they would require to teach effectively students experiencing learning difficulties. Their efficacy was not enhanced by the internship experience.

In Chapter 2, the review of the literature identified efficacy as an important factor in how teachers position themselves and students in the learning and teaching

process. Generally, the teachers in this study whose perceptions of learning and teaching transformed towards a student-centred approach had a higher sense of efficacy. These participants were well supported and developed strong pedagogical knowledge and skills. However, Kate and Logan despite demonstrating a strong sense of efficacy, showed less growth towards a student-centred approach. Both of these participants received minimal support to develop their pedagogical knowledge and skills from a mentor or school-based professional development and often relied on other teachers in the cohort who provided limited guidance in an informal manner.

Woolfolk Hoy and Burke Spero (2005) claim it is the experiences from the early years of teaching that are the most influential on the development of teachers' efficacy. They suggest the experiences gained as early as the practicum and internship setting could be powerful on the development of teachers' sense of efficacy. This supports the findings of this research and the context variables are examined more closely in the discussion about school and systemic influences. Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2007) argue the early experiences are significant because the newly formed beliefs are most malleable at this time. This appears to be the case for the participants in this study who, at times, displayed quite fragile efficacy beliefs that were easily challenged and did not develop in incremental stages or consistently across all aspects of teaching.

Efficacy was found to be fluid and fragile. Similar to the findings of Fantilli and McDougall (2009) the demands experienced by the beginning teachers challenged their efficacy throughout the beginning teaching year and transformed how they perceived teaching and learning. In this study, the participants' efficacy was threatened and they described becoming less patient with students, less enthusiastic or willing to take risks, and less flexible and more limited in their pedagogical choices. As a result the response to student difference and the opportunities for success for students experiencing learning difficulties became limited.

The impact of systemic and school factors

Systemic and school factors significantly influenced beginning teachers' confidence, competence, and opportunities to experiment with and modify

pedagogies to support students experiencing learning difficulties. The findings of this research suggest employment opportunities and job security influenced beginning teachers' decision-making in the classroom. At times, this was in conflict with their espoused values, attitudes, and beliefs. Participants were anxious to prove themselves capable for prospective employment opportunities and were frequently unwilling to challenge the status quo. Attending to their own need to appear competent and working within the ideology of the school threatened beginning teachers' creativity and the development of a student-centred classroom as they positioned themselves more closely with the role of intern, trying to please a supervisor and establishing a class context based on control and compliance. Fixating on employment kept the beginning teachers' focus on themselves and hindered movement to student-centred teaching.

There was evidence to suggest employment uncertainty lowered beginning teachers' confidence and sense of worth. Competition within the employment market also hindered networking opportunities amongst graduate teachers. Although many beginning teachers formed networks with established teachers there was little networking or collegial sharing with other graduate teachers which would have provided emotional support and resource sharing. The exception was Sandra who worked in a job share role with another beginning teacher with whom she had previously developed a close friendship at university. The support they offered each other was a significant factor in Sandra's growing efficacy. Also important was the space created by the principal who encouraged her to move to a part-time role rather than resign earlier in the year when she found her values and expectations were being compromised by the overwhelming demands of the combination of her roles as mother, wife, and teacher.

Research within the school improvement and inclusive education literature argues that the principal plays a significant role in the improvement of student outcomes and establishing communities for shared learning (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Ainscow & Sandhill, 2010; Masters, 2009; Robinson et al., 2009). This research also supports this claim. It illustrates that when principals established clear expectations, provided opportunities for ongoing professional development, and created space for the beginning teachers to reflect on their practice, individually, and with others, it significantly improved beginning teachers' efficacy. This impacted on how they

positioned themselves as a teacher, therefore contributed to how they responded to students who were experiencing learning difficulties.

The principal is a key decision maker in resource allocation for support and collaboration, such as time off class for planning and staff meeting time allocated to planning or professional development (Robinson et al., 2009). In some instances, the feedback from the principal on participants' practice was influential on their efficacy development. This was not always the case as illustrated in Logan and Kate's data. However, it was the principal's influence on the school culture through additional support and the development of a community where collaboration was valued that played the strongest role in the development of teachers' efficacy. The influence of the principal contributed to the transformation of participants' perceptions about how learning occurs and what could be achieved through a shared school culture (Carrington & Robinson, 2006). It created opportunities for beginning teachers to develop the pedagogical knowledge and skills they needed to respond effectively to students experiencing learning difficulties and emphasised a shared responsibility for learning.

School leadership was an important factor in the school environment for creating a professional work ethic, and creating opportunities for collegial sharing through mentoring and collaborative planning. This transferred to enhanced knowledge, skills, and efficacy of the beginning teacher. Participants who experienced ongoing support and professional development were able to explicitly describe the changes they were making to their pedagogy and used student data to inform teaching. Some of those participants were able to work with students on personal goal setting, an important aspect of improving students' outcomes (Meo, 2008).

Working with a mentor played a valuable role helping beginning teachers to reflect on their practice and take responsibility for decision-making (Ingersoll, 2012; O'Neill & Stephenson, 2012; Walkington, 2005). Edweena's mentor teacher from her preservice experience continued in that capacity throughout the beginning teaching year and provided invaluable support as noted in the data in Chapters 6 and 7. The mentoring relationship allowed Edweena to question her practices. The mentor provided feedback on Edweena's classroom performance and provided

opportunities to jointly problem solve the challenges she was facing in the classroom. Given the difficulty Edweena was experiencing with behaviour management of some students who were experiencing learning difficulties, the mentoring support was a significant factor in her commitment to continue exploring innovative practices even though her efficacy in classroom management was challenged.

The findings of this research suggest that opportunities for collaboration with other teachers, along with professional development, contributed to the transformation of beginning teachers' perception of teaching and learning. This allowed their focus from teacher-centred practices to transform towards more student-centred practices. Learning to teach is an ongoing process because each class, year level, school setting provides so many variables. Ongoing professional development and support is required throughout the early years of teaching to scaffold the development of pedagogical knowledge and skills. While the knowledge learnt at university forms a theoretical base, the professional experience does not allow enough opportunity for the knowledge to be linked with practice and transferred into skills. There is also not enough time for their perceptions of teaching and learning to be challenged and perhaps reconstructed. Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, (2007) claim the early years of teaching is when efficacy beliefs are most susceptible to change and a time when beginning teachers are experiencing many disorienting dilemmas which can trigger transformational learning (Mezirow, 2000). Similarly, it is a time when they can become de-motivated.

The majority of participants found most staff members helpful and friendly, however, this did not transpire into supportive, strong collegial support. Staff attitudes are significant in the level of informal support offered to beginning teachers in the form of feedback, mentoring, and collaborative planning. While a friendly staff can make the work environment welcoming for a beginning teacher, a professional staff can create an environment that fosters beginning teachers' growth and impacts on the quality of the responses to student difference (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993).

Contribution to Scholarship

Since the Salamanca Statement (1994) called for schools to accommodate all children, regardless of differences that exist physically, intellectually, socially, emotionally, or linguistically, the inclusive education debate has been lively. In

Australia and at an international level, inclusive education is supported through various legislative and policy decisions. As a result the philosophical orientation of today's education system means every classroom includes students with diverse needs resulting in teachers facing increasing complexity in their roles (Kurz & Paul, 2005). This research highlighted the potential of scaffolded critical reflection to assist preservice teachers to negotiate these challenges as they transition into the role of beginning teacher.

Figure 8.1 presents a model of the sociocultural influences on beginning teachers' decision-making in response to students experiencing learning difficulties. The model links the literature on inclusive education and the findings of this research. A key feature of the model is the interrelated nature of each element which highlights the rhizomatic process of transformation and growth in teacher development. The model highlights the role of critical reflection in the process of change (Brookfield, 2005; Cranton, 2006; Larrivee, 2000; Mezirow, 2000). The central circle represents the teachers' decision-making in the classroom which is driven by praxis following critical reflection. Significant elements drawn from the rhizomatic perceptions of learning and teaching (see Appendix K) make up the next band of the model and represent major factors on classroom decision-making. These include a) level of control the teacher establishes, b) the model of teaching informed by teacher-centred or student-centred practice, c) views of parental influence on student achievement, d) the pedagogical knowledge and skills of the teacher, and e) the nature of relationships within the classroom. Each of these impacted on the participants' transforming perceptions of learning and teaching and therefore, these factors impacted on the decisions beginning teachers made in the classroom. The outer blue circle illustrates the sociocultural influences on the rhizomatic growth and organises them into two headings: personal factors and systemic and school factors. The outer circle in maroon and the similar coloured arrows illustrate the important role critical reflection plays in the decision-making process as teachers undergo rhizomatic transformation and growth in teacher development.
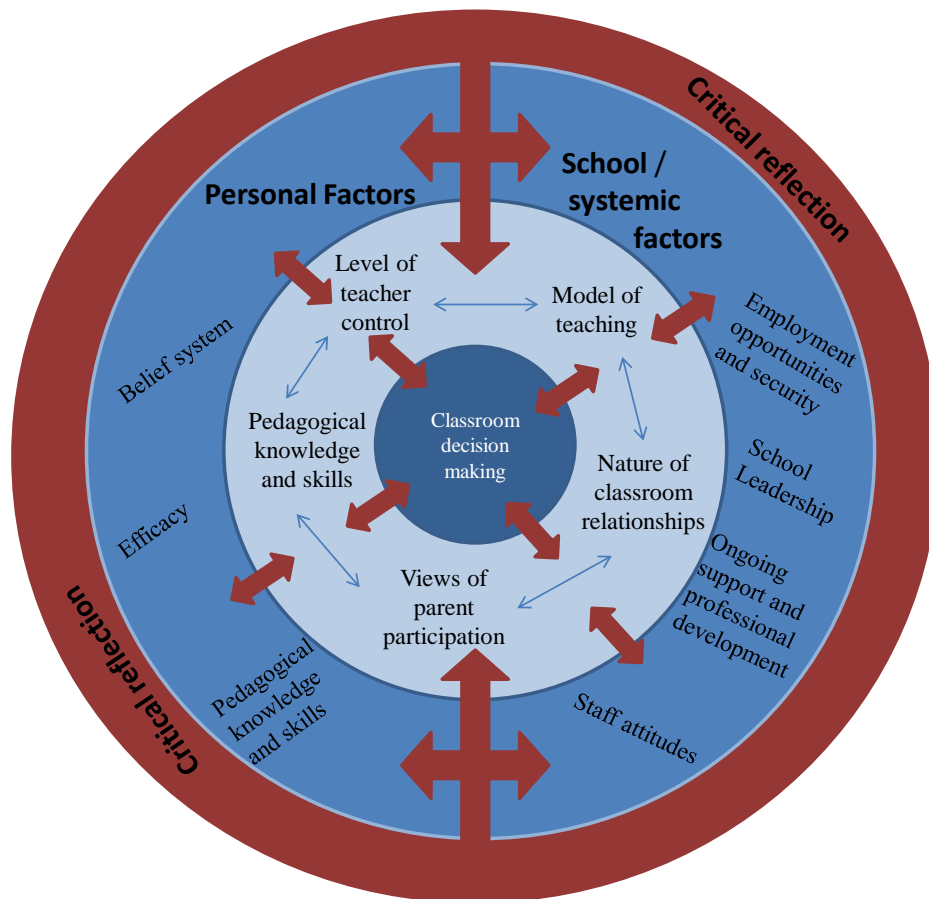
Figure 8.1. Sociocultural influences on classroom decision-making.

Based on this model, the current research has illustrated that the transition into teaching is a fluid experience that is neither linear or stage based, rather it is rhizomatic and advanced or shaped by a range of influences. More than ever, teachers are being faced with challenges and complexities as they attempt to meet the often competing demands of bureaucratic expectations and their own attitudes and beliefs and general sense of efficacy. These factors have been shown to impact on teachers' behaviour towards students experiencing learning difficulties (Beswick, 2003; Brady & Woolfson, 2008; Loreman et al., 2011; Silverman, 2007). However, there is currently a lack of positive impact of preservice teacher training and in-service professional development on teachers' beliefs (Brady & Woolfson, 2008, Georgiou, 2008) and beginning teachers often report feeling inadequately prepared to deal with the complexities they face in their new role (Flores & Day, 2006).

This research highlighted the need for explicit instruction and scaffolded support for preservice teachers and beginning teachers to engage with critical reflection. It also illustrated the benefits of ongoing professional support and training

as beginning teachers enter the workforce. While there are competing demands on financial and human resources at university, systemic, and school levels, the study found that an investment in teachers' capacity building through ongoing support early in their careers, has the potential to enhance the beginning teaching experience. In the current research, positive experiences early in their career contributed to participants developing more positive beliefs about their potential to enhance educational outcomes for all students. This is significant given Brady and Woolfson's (2008) and Jordan and Stanovich's (2001) link between teachers' high efficacy and their attribution of learning difficulties being situated outside of the child, and therefore, possible to influence through effective teaching. In addition, teachers with a strong sense of efficacy take a more flexible approach to teaching and experiment with new methods to suit the needs of their learners (Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). This implies that an investment in beginning teachers' capacity building through ongoing support results in more effective teaching for students experiencing learning difficulties.

Recommendations from the Research

The following recommendations are offered in response to the findings, analysis, and conclusions of this study. Recommendations for universities, schools and mentor teachers, and preservice/beginning teachers are presented followed by recommendations for further research.

Teacher educators play an important role in developing positive attitudes in preservice teachers towards inclusion (Kurz & Paul, 2005). While Booth and Ainscow (2002) acknowledge inclusion is a utopian view of education, it is an ideal nonetheless that educators should strive towards. The *Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action* (UNESCO, 1994) and the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA, 2008) exemplify the international and national conventions and declarations that support this movement. The groups of students that teachers work with each year vary and so too must their practice. When the changes and improvements result in greater participation and fewer barriers for all students, then the process of inclusion is in action and this is the measure by which we can compare inclusive education as a reality (Masschelein, 1998).

Recommendations for universities

Teachers need to learn to take a more critical stance to identify and address structural, cultural, and social influences that constrain their practice (Giroux, 1988) and become critically reflective practitioners (Brookfield, 2005; Kincheloe, 2008). During university training and the professional experience a stronger emphasis must be placed on the value of critical reflection and developing this skill (Flores & Day, 2006; Larrivee, 2008; Walkington, 2005). This needs a multipronged approach including a strong practical emphasis on teaching critical reflection skills at university, scaffolded support from universities and schools during professional experience, and continued support during the transition period into the workforce and the early years of teaching. Critical reflection must be seen as an ongoing process of self-transformation rather than an academic outcome to be achieved.

Links between the professional experience, personal history, and the theory at university needs to be explored through critical reflection (Flores & Day, 2006; Walkington, 2005). Course work and professional experience need to be closely aligned. Opportunities need to be made available during course work to explicitly draw on the new knowledge and understanding preservice teachers gain from the professional experience. This includes revisiting the decisions they or the mentor teacher made so they can fully understand how the teachers' and the students' behaviour contribute to the learning process. If the professional experience ends without a debrief, the experience becomes discrete rather than being embedded as part of the professional training, and as a result, contributes to the divide between theory and practice. Immediate reflection on their experiences can help beginning teachers to re-vision lessons or re-position students previously deemed to be unsuccessful.

Scaffolded critical reflection would help beginning teachers question their practice and continue the process of rhizomatic growth. Brookfield (2005) suggests teachers would be learning democracy where they are learning to live with contingency and remain open to what is possible and for whom it remains possible. In addition, universities need to ensure preservice teachers gain their practical experience in settings where successful inclusive education is modelled (Kurz & Paul, 2005). Teachers who are working successfully in inclusive settings are more likely to have positive attitudes towards collaboration and be more willing and

skilled to support new teachers. Also witnessing other staff working successfully with students who are experiencing learning difficulties can enhance teachers' efficacy in this area (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010; Tuchman & Isaacs, 2011).

Service learning opportunities embedded within the teacher training programs can provide real life experiences upon which preservice teachers can, through a scaffolded process of critical reflection, come to understand the links between theory learnt at university and life events (Carrington & Iyer, 2011). The process of guided reflection can enable preservice teachers to recognise the discrepancies between their belief systems and their practices and how they can contribute to a fairer more inclusive environment (Carrington & Selva, 2010). By engaging with others with varying life experiences, often very different from those experienced by the preservice teachers' everyday lives, preservice teachers may be able to form greater links between theory, personal beliefs, and their practice as they become more attuned to recognise societal inequities. This has the potential to influence newly formed beliefs about teaching and about students who experience learning difficulties.

Universities need to continue to seek opportunities where preservice teachers can engage in scaffolded critical reflection for nonevaluative purposes throughout their preservice training. Programs such as Education Commons, described by Henderson et al. (*in press*), need to be investigated for the potential they offer for the subject positioning of teachers as professionals. These types of programs also offer opportunities for universities and schools to foster relationships that enable additional support to be provided during the transitional phase into teaching.

Walkington (2005) argues that universities and schools need to develop closer relationships. First, this would ensure the universities were aware of the enacted and not the espoused philosophical slant of the school. Second, universities could work closely with mentor teachers to provide training and support to ensure a mentor rather than supervisory role was being provided for the preservice teachers.

In addition, universities need to consider the training they provide for the staff engaged to support preservice teachers during the professional experience. University employed staff also need to undergo training so they too are equipped to provide support through a mentoring role rather than an evaluative capacity.

Feedback provided to preservice teachers by university staff should be in the form of problem posing dialogue (Larrivee, 2008; Walkington, 2005) guiding preservice teachers through critical reflection on their practice and acknowledging the small gains they make with students who are experiencing learning difficulties, recognising it is sometimes a very slow and demanding process.

Recommendation for systems, schools and mentoring teachers

As recommended by scholars (Walkington, 2005), mentor teachers should undergo training so the goals of the professional experience and the role and expectations of the mentor teacher are clearly understood. Like critical reflection, mentoring is a learned skill and training could be part of the mentor teachers' professional development register against the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (AITSL, 2011). Mentor teachers who provide a problem posing style of support scaffold preservice teachers' reflection on their practice. This allows ruptures to arise in their thinking and may lead to multiplicities in their practice as they make links with theory. A problem posing approach to mentoring helps to develop beginning teachers' identity. It provides opportunities to learn about teaching, themselves as teachers, and how to teach (Walkington, 2005). This mode of support provides opportunities to develop a deeper understanding of what it means to be a teacher.

Teachers' sense of efficacy is enhanced when they have opportunities to collaborate with other staff and receive ongoing mentoring support (Tuchman & Isaacs, 2011; Walkington, 2005). This is linked to the knowledge and skills they develop on the job and how they position themselves as teachers. A stronger sense of efficacy along with enhanced knowledge and skills contributes to their growth as they move towards more student-centred practices which consider the interests and needs of the students, particularly relevant for students who are experiencing learning difficulties.

If schools agree to accept preservice teachers during their practicum/intern experience and employ beginning teachers as staff members, it is important they consider the supports they are able to provide given the influence of early positive experiences on teachers' efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007; Woolfolk Hoy & Burke Spero, 2005). Ongoing support needs to be built into the

everyday workings of the school and include such things as collaborative planning, positive mentoring relationships, shared reviewing of recorded lessons with a mentor, and observations of other teachers in action. Ongoing support and opportunities for the development of skills enhances beginning teachers' sense of efficacy and enables them to respond more effectively to students who are experiencing learning difficulties.

Small achievements also need to be acknowledged. Working with students who are experiencing learning difficulties has its challenges. Teachers undertake an important task as they assume the responsibility and complexity attached to teaching students experiencing learning difficulties and beginning teachers require ongoing support to learn to reflect, and work efficiently (Popp et al., 2011; Woolfson & Brady, 2009).

Recommendations for preservice and beginning teachers

Preservice teachers teaching students experiencing learning difficulties require a deep commitment to reflection on their values, attitudes, and beliefs. They need programs during their teacher training that can assist them to reflect on the multiple roles they occupy in teaching (Davies & Harré, 1990; Henderson et al., *in press*; Miedema & Wardekker, 1999). This needs to be considered at the genesis of preservice training rather than during the transition into beginning teaching (Henderson & Noble, 2012). Preservice teachers need to seek opportunities where professional growth can be enhanced. This may include volunteering during their teacher education training. Service learning programs within teacher education programs also enable preservice teachers to apply theory into practice and learn experientially (Carrington & Iyer, 2011).

Beginning teachers also need to accept responsibility for developing their own identities during preservice training and come to understand the ongoing nature of this process throughout their careers. Deliberately working to understand themselves as individuals will enhance their professional identity resulting in more ethical, inclusive practice. As Allan (1999) contends "inclusion ... is an ethical project of responsibility to ourselves and others, which is driven by an insatiable desire for more" (p.124).

Recommendations for Future Research

This study followed seven participants as they transitioned from preservice to beginning teacher. The data collected were rich and illustrated the rhizomatic nature of the participants' growth and responses to students experiencing learning difficulties. It would be interesting to follow these participants further into their teaching careers. A longitudinal study would provide greater insight into the role personal and systemic/school factors play in how teachers come to position themselves and their students, and how this influences their decision-making in the classroom.

While this research was predominantly concerned with the journey of the beginning teachers it would be interesting to include the influence their journey has on the students who are experiencing learning difficulties. Further research could map the progress and learning outcomes of students who are experiencing learning difficulties when they are taught by a beginning teacher whose capacity to respond to the challenges created by a range of diverse learners is enhanced.

Why are some teachers able to engage in critical reflection more than others? What activities, resources, and processes enhance the development of critically reflective practitioners? This would be an interesting extension to this study given the importance of critical reflection on teachers' professional growth and the development of a professional identity.

Research Limitations

This study was limited to only seven participants, and as such is not generalisable. However, the depth of the study and analysis which involved almost two years of contact with participants allowed me to confidently describe the experiences of each participant and draw conclusions from the data.

As a critical friend to the participants during the data collection period my comments and feedback following the interviews and classroom observations did influence their decision-making in the classroom. Similarly, the format of the questions used in the diaries and interviews may have limited some of the responses from participants. Some participants were more articulate than others and their stories may have received greater attention although I did try to counter this by

approaching the data in numerous ways and constantly checking the balance of participant representation.

A limitation of this study is that beginning teachers did not become critically reflective practitioners through participating in the study or through academic learning alone; they learnt that becoming critically reflective takes time and constant self-surveillance, hence the data though collected over two years was not sufficient to map their ongoing transformation or lack thereof. Further longitudinal studies are required to safely assert that through critical reflection teachers can shift their perspectives.

The female to male ratio of participants in this study was 6:1. The dominant female presence in this study reflects the predominantly female teaching population in Australian primary schools. However, the influence of teachers' gender and the response to students who are experiencing learning difficulties was not considered within the constraints of this study. Similarly, the gender of the student experiencing learning difficulties was not considered as a possible influence on teachers' perceptions, practices, or decision-making in the classroom. The influence of gender as a sociocultural factor influencing the transformation of preservice/beginning teachers perceptions of teaching and beliefs about learners could be examined in future studies.

Summary

This research project followed the journey of seven beginning teachers and their response to student difference as they transitioned from the role of preservice to beginning teacher. Literature regarding the key influences identified in this research was presented in Chapter 2. Through consideration of this literature a gap in the research was identified. There was little evidence to explain or examine the factors that contribute to preservice teachers' perceptions about learning and teaching and the influence this had on their practice especially in regards to teaching students experiencing learning difficulties. No research could be found that specifically examined beginning teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning with regards to students experiencing learning difficulties and the transformation that may or may not occur as they transition from preservice status. Thus, this research contributes to

scholarship in teacher education, beginning teaching, and in developing inclusive responses to student difference.

The preservice–beginning teacher transition is a significant period of time when newly formed beliefs about teaching are thought to be the most malleable (Pajares, 1992). Beliefs influence behaviour, and therefore the teachers' decision-making, which has the potential to affect classroom climate and student outcomes (Silverman, 2007). So, it is important in this transition period that new teachers develop and refine their pedagogical knowledge and skills as they experience success. Early success in teaching students experiencing learning difficulties adds to the teachers' overall sense of efficacy (Woolfolk Hoy & Burke Spero, 2005). In turn, this may strengthen their values, attitudes, and beliefs towards inclusive education and allow beginning teachers to respond more confidently to aspects of diversity.

The examination of sociocultural factors that contribute to the transformation of beginning teachers' perceptions about teaching and learning concerned itself with elements such as power and social relations, ideologies, and personal values and beliefs. These were viewed through a lens filtered by aspects of critical social theory; in particular critical pedagogy and ideology critique; and transformational learning theory. The fluid conception of identity and the varying subject positions occupied by individuals as they challenged structural ideologies was illustrated through Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) concept of the rhizome.

Multicase study methodology was used in this research. Seven cases made up the case study quintain. Reflective diaries, semi structured interviews, and classroom observations were the major research tools employed and provided rich data which was analysed guided by techniques described by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Braun and Clarke (2006).

Several key personal and school/systemic factors were shown to influence the transformation of beginning teachers' perceptions of learning and teaching as they attempted to respond to student difference and provide effective learning opportunities. Personal factors included their beliefs systems and how well they aligned with their practices, their sense of efficacy and pedagogical knowledge and skills. School/systemic factors included employments security and stability,

leadership at the school site, ongoing support and access to professional development, and staff attitudes.

At various stages throughout the research, participants described significant emotional responses ranging from frustration to exhilaration. Negative emotions such as frustration, guilt, or confusion, that are often seen as examples of failure (see Allan, 2008) were re-interpreted as ruptures that occurred in participants' values, attitudes, and beliefs and contributed to the rhizomatic transformation. These were not perceived as failures due to the valuable inner reflection that these moments provided participants that helped them to re-visit their values and re-form their perspectives. Transformation occurred as participants meaning schemes (Mezirow, 2000) were challenged. The sociocultural factors influencing participants' rhizomatic growth, however, played a notable role in their capacity to critically reflect on their practice and how they responded to students experiencing learning difficulties.

Final Words from the Researcher

Completing this thesis has been a journey of constant learning. Like the participants entering teaching, it has been a rhizomatic process, with multiple influences contributing to professional and personal growth. It has been emotionally challenging, and at times all encompassing, but has filled me with new possibilities for my own teaching. When considered this way, my PhD journey has now taken on a new form, through new ruptures, constantly changing and moving in new directions.

When I first started reading the work of Brookfield (1995; 2000; 2005) and Kincheloe (1991; 2000), I knew then I had found words to explain the frustrations I had experienced as a classroom teacher and I remember thinking *if only I had read this before*. Their work, which interestingly was written at a time when I was experiencing constraints in my practice and disappointment due to systemic and school structures, certainly opened my eyes to the need for teachers to become critical pedagogues. I came to understand how teachers as critical pedagogues have the potential to name and navigate obstacles encountered to seek more humanising practices, not only for their students, but also more humanising conditions for themselves. As a researcher and university tutor, Brookfield and Kincheloe's work gave me a pathway to investigate how teachers may come to be critical pedagogues

and in doing so I learnt to be one myself. Learning to "live with nonsense provided spaces for engagement" (Mercieca & Mercieca, 2010 p. 88) through rhizomatic research.

In this context, nonsense constitutes the conflicting often self-doubting thoughts and challenges experienced by teachers. These may be trivialised by themselves and others, but when confronted may widen their perspectives. I came to realise, as a classroom teacher, I had allowed myself to be silenced by the oppressive conditions that were inflamed by poor leadership and inadequate systemic support.

Preservice teachers and beginning teachers are often silenced due to inexperience and their position within organisations and acknowledging self-doubts opens up possibilities for their voice to be heard. I feel this research provided space for me as the researcher, and the participants as beginning teachers, to work through these challenges. It provided opportunities for minor voices to be heard and small stories to be made visible. For me, this has created a space to examine innovative and exciting pedagogies in my role as lecturer and tutor and has provided hope that I can engage future teachers to take a more critical stance throughout their careers. There is much to learn from small stories.

Early in the beginning teaching year Logan compared becoming a teacher to completing a never ending jigsaw puzzle. She claimed professional development and experience would always provide her with puzzle pieces to broaden the picture (Logan, personal communication, February, 29, 2012). In the final months of my research I felt like I was putting together a never ending jigsaw puzzle. I was constantly finding another piece to add to the puzzle. Some pieces needed to be moved. They looked like they fitted in the beginning but it became clear they belonged somewhere else. It also became clear there would always be new pieces to add. When the thesis journey threatened to become all-encompassing I had to listen to Brookfield (2005) and his lessons from critical theory. To overcome alienation I had to challenge my own imperatives to reclaim reason. Critical reflection, in isolation and with others, was needed so I too could learn liberation and complete this process while attempting to balance the work–life perspective that I recognised as so important for my participants.

Completing this thesis has changed the way I view the world. It has provided me with the confidence, optimism, knowledge, and skills required to support prospective teachers in their journey into the profession so they too can contribute to the quest for more humanising practices (Masschelein, 1998) and the realisation of inclusive education for all.

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Appendices

Appendix A
Disability Categories Used for Funding Purposes by Australian Government Schools

Table A1

Disability Categories Used for Funding Purposes by Australian Government Schools

Australian State/Territory	Disability Criteria/Category
Queensland	Intellectual Impairment
	Physical Impairment
	Visual Impairment
	Hearing Impairment
	Speech Language Impairment
	Autistic Spectrum Disorder
New South Wales	Receptive or Expressive Language Disorder
	Physical Disability
	Intellectual Disability
	Hearing Impairment
	Vision Impairment
	Deaf/Blind
	Mental Health Problems
	Autism
Victoria	Physical Disability
	Visual Impairment
	Severe Behaviour Disorder
	Hearing Impairment
	Intellectual Disability
	Autism Spectrum Disorder
	Severe Language Disorder with critical educational needs
Tasmania	Autism Spectrum Disorder
	Intellectual Disability
	Physical Disability or Health Impairment
	Multiple Disability
	Psychiatric Disability
	Vision Impairment
	Deaf or Hearing Impaired
Western Australia	Autistic Spectrum Disorder
	Intellectual Disorder
	Sensory Impairment
	Physical Impairment
	Speech Language Impairment
	Severe Social and Emotional Disorder
South Australia	Autistic Disorder or Asperger's Disorder
	Global Developmental Delay
	Intellectual Disability
	Physical Disability
	Sensory Disability (hearing and vision)
	Speech and/or Language Disability.
Australian Capital Territory	Language Disorder
	Physical Disability
	Hearing Impairment or Deafness
	Vision Impairment or Blindness
	Pervasive Developmental Disorder
	Mental Health Disorder
	Chronic Medical Condition
Northern Territory	Intellectual Impairment
	Physical Impairment
	Vision Impairment
	Hearing Impairment
	Language/Communication Disorder
	Emotional/Behavioural Disorders
	Autistic Spectrum Disorders
	Learning Disorder
	Health Disorder

Appendix B
Introducing the Participants and School Settings

Pseudonyms are used to protect the privacy of the participants, students and other staff named in this thesis. Information describing the participants came from profiles they completed at the start of Part B of this research. Data and information regarding the schools were retrieved from each schools website.

Sandra

Sandra is in her early forties and as mature-age student specialised in the middle years of education as part of her Bachelor of Education (Primary) training. While born in Britain, most of her childhood and adolescence was spent living in South Africa and as a result she also speaks Afrikaans, although English has always been her predominant language. Before settling in Australia in 1999, Sandra spent time living in London.

Sandra brings a wide range of personal experience to the classroom. These have been gained through parenting, international travel, working with children who have experienced physical and emotional abuse, as well as roles in real estate, information technology, and manufacturing.

She recalls her own schooling experience as one that brought much joy. The multiple roles and interests she demonstrated as a child are continued in her involvement with multiple organisations as an adult such as Girl Guide Leader and volunteer roles at her children's school and while attending university. She recalls her teachers were passionate and committed to giving of their best and felt they genuinely cared about her unconventional family life and the effects it had on her as a child. Most areas of schooling posed no threats to Sandra with the exception of MATHS (her emphasis). Sandra has less favourable memories from primary school in relation to her maths expertise, or lack thereof.

> I had an amazing High School teacher that tried to get me on track but the damage had been done in primary school by a tyrant of a teacher who would hit me on the back of the hand if I got things wrong. Oh, the difference teaching in the 70's and today [is] extensive (Sandra Personal Profile, 2012).

Sandra comments on the positive relationship she built with most teachers and felt she had teachers who genuinely cared about her wellbeing which influenced the

pathway of her life and claims it "is the only reason why I never went off the rails." (Sandra Personal Profile, 2012). Relationships continue to be seen as an important feature of successful teaching for Sandra. This is explored in the data chapters. Her desire for social equity and justice poses one of the many internal conflicts she experiences throughout the research. Sandra explains "as for dealing with students experiencing learning difficulties, I am unsure how to deal with these students and desperately want them to have a similar experience as I did when I attended school" (Sandra Personal Profile, 2012).

Sandra's practicum/internship setting

Sandra's preservice experience was completed in a large State school enrolling approximately 600 students from Prep to Year 7. The school has been open for approximately 30 year and has steady enrolment figures. Families who attended the school came from a range of socioeconomic backgrounds ranging from low to middle income earners. The school has a Special Education Program where the staff's role was to support students who were verified as having an intellectual, hearing, physical, visual, or speech impairment, or Autistic Syndrome Disorder that impacted on their capacity to receive their education in a regular setting. The SEP also supports teachers who are required to make significant educational adjustments to enable students to access the curriculum.

Sandra's beginning teacher setting

As a beginning teacher Sandra was employed in a State school with enrolment of just over 500 students from Prep to Year 7. Students come from semi rural and urban areas and the majority of families from the low-middle income range. The school has a Special Education Program catering for 25 students with an intellectual impairment, speech language impairment, or Autistic Spectrum Disorder who receive their education in regular classes. One of these students was in Sandra's class.

Kate

Kate is in her early twenties. She has a bright, bubbly personality and laughs frequently when recalling her stories from school. The only participant to move directly from high school to the Bachelor of Education course at university, Kate comes from a family she describes as close knit. Her father, a teacher for forty years, has recently retired and three of her aunts are also teachers. Kate explained she was

she was "lucky enough to have a supportive family who I will be able to go to and ask advice if I ever need help with one of my students" (Kate Participant Profile, 2012).

Perhaps her exposure to teachers increased her awareness of the diverse skills teachers are required to develop. She has availed herself of multiple opportunities while at university to develop her skills through volunteer reading program and her work experience as an after school care supervisor.

Her family life and own schooling experience have provided interactions with students experiencing learning difficulties and disabilities. Kate attended a primary school that had a large disability unit. For the majority of the day students from the unit, supported by a special education teacher, interacted with other students in the class. Kate's parents chose for her to attend this school, not the closest to her home, as her older brother, previously diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome already attended. Although achieving average grades she repeated year three because her mother felt she was quite immature socially. She enjoys sports and performing and enjoyed this aspect of school.

Kate's practicum/internship setting

Kate completed her preservice experience in a State school in an outer suburban location that caters for Prep to Year 7 students. The school's population is over 1000 and classes are organised in traditional year level groups. Families are drawn from a fairly middle class income bracket. Three percent of the student population identify as Indigenous or Torres Strait Islander and a similar number are from English as Second language backgrounds. The school reportedly operates targeted learning programs based on individual learning goals.

Kate's beginning teacher setting

Kate commenced her beginning teacher role at a different location. The student population is approximately 500 students who come from a variety of family backgrounds ranging from single parent families to two income middle class families. A small number of students come from other cultures or identify as coming from indigenous or Torres Strait Islander background. The school is well established

and reportedly runs a variety of intervention programs for selected prep students outside of school hours.

Pepper

Pepper is in her mid twenties. Her mother stayed at home while Pepper was growing up, while her father worked in an unskilled labour role. Pepper started a university placement straight from school in the field of architecture, withdrew after six months and worked in hospitality and retail before re-entering university the following year to commence her Bachelor of Education course.

Pepper remembers primary school more fondly than high school where difficult interactions with female peers tarnished her experience. In Year 5, Pepper had her first male teacher which she remembers as a standout year. "I can remember him always making our learning experiences fun and I can remember each term being strongly theme-based and we worked toward a fun day at the end of each term that involved parents" (Pepper Participant Profile, 2012).

Perhaps influenced by her own experiences, Pepper becomes emotionally invested in her students. She explains how she

> was educated through the state system and [is] passionate about helping others putting their children through state schooling. I feel for students with a learning difficulty because schooling becomes that much harder for them. I love seeing the students at the top excel but I love seeing the students that struggle achieve because it shows how much effort they've put in to be able to do that and it is rewarding to know you've possibly made a difference by helping them (Pepper Participant Profile, 2012).

Her emotional investment in student welfare is highlighted in the data and the discussion that follows in Chapters 5, 6, and 7.

Pepper's practicum/ internship/ beginning teacher setting

Pepper remained at the same school for both preservice experiences and the beginning teaching year. The school is a Prep to Year 7 campus. The school population of approximately 600 students is from culturally diverse backgrounds. School data shows a high level of transience and a high incidence of short-term suspensions. A breakfast program runs two days per week.

Theresa

Theresa, in her early twenties is the second of four children. For the first three weeks of her own school life she was physically dragged from her mother because "she liked life at home" (Theresa Participant Profile, 2012). Although academically successful and often the recipient of praise Theresa did not enjoy school until the later primary years. This positive disposition towards school was short lived and the high school years provided little excitement. Before enrolling in the Bachelor of Education course she completed a year in Creative Industries taking art, film, television, and journalism courses. During that year she felt displaced with no direction so moved into retail, which was an experience she did not enjoy. She reports the four year Bachelor of Education course opened the door to likeminded friends, a supportive environment, and was a time she enjoyed.

Theresa has a quirky, dry sense of humour and a genuine concern for others. She explained how she "got into teaching to 'make a difference' in the world." (Theresa Participant Profile, 2012) and described herself as "very environmentally conscious and [as someone who] tries to persuade others to be the same [and will] try to instil these values in [her] students by leading by example" (Theresa Participant Profile, 2012).

Theresa's practicum/internship setting

During the preservice experience Theresa worked in a well-established State school with an enrolment of approximately 450 students from Prep to Year 7. The community consists of a mix of socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. There are a small percentage of Indigenous students and a small number of students with English as Second Language. A Special Education Program supports approximately 40 students. Although some students travel to attend the school from outside the catchment area, drawn by the extracurricular activities offered at the school, the school population is declining due to the ageing population of the surrounding area. School data shows a relatively high number of short-term suspensions occurred in 2011.

Theresa's beginning teaching setting

Theresa commenced her beginning teacher role in a coeducational, state school catering for students in Prep to Year 7, with a student population of approximately

600. Information on the school website reports very high expectations around student behaviour with various incentive programs operating to acknowledge and reward students.

The school has a population of approximately 600 students with 22% identifying as Indigenous. There is also a large number of students from the Pacific Islands and a large group of students growing up in poverty. The school runs a breakfast club and additional activities outside of school hours to enhance higher order thinking strategies. Community partnerships with the nearby university provide feedback on student data in reading which is utilized to enhance learning opportunities for students. Coaches in literacy and numeracy provide ongoing support and training for teachers

Edweena

Edweena, also in her early twenties is reserved in nature, unassuming, and quietly spoken. She is the third of four children. She was educated at her local primary and secondary school and feels she was presented with numerous opportunities by great teachers. She claims this has influenced her own behaviour as a teacher today (Edweena, Participant Profile, 2012).

Before attending university, Edweena completed a twelve month Rotary Youth Exchange in Ecuador. During this time she lived with two host families, went to school, travelled around the country and learnt to speak Spanish. She explained from this experience she understands how learning a new language can be "difficult, tiring and isolating" (Edweena, Participant Profile, 2012) and how it has helped her to support new language learners, both socially and academically.

Edweena described herself as being someone who "likes to challenge the norm/ popular" (Edweena, Participant Profile, 2012). She explained how she heard teachers speaking negatively about students while on her practicum experiences and it motivated her to "repel that view and try to see the students in a different light" (Edweena, Participant Profile, 2012).

Edweena's practicum/ internship/ beginning teacher setting

During the preservice year, Edweena worked in a State school in its foundation year. With a growing population, it currently serves approximately 350 students from

diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. The school enrols students from Prep to Year 7. Some composite/multiage grouping occurs as a result of enrolment figures rather than a school-based philosophy. The school is situated in a satellite city in the far western corridor of a major capital city. It has state of the art resources, well equipped in information communication technologies.

Logan

Logan is in her mid twenties. She has a vibrant personality and a lively sense of humour. She is the youngest of three children. She values her Catholic upbringing and the educational opportunities her parents provided for her, acknowledging she had opportunities her own parents did not have as children due to their economic situation.

Logan explained how her father did not enjoy school and was told "he would never amount to anything because he could not read or spell. [He] "now owns and operates a successful jewellery business" (Logan Participant Profile, 2012). Her cousin has "a vision impairment ... and a rare bone condition but despite being told she would not live past puberty has overcome so much adversity and at twenty four years of age has exceeded doctors expectations" (Logan Participant Profile, 2012). She contends the influences of her father and cousin, as well as past teachers have contributed to her "understanding and attitude about being a teacher ... [and] is exceedingly aware that the smallest comments and actions ... in the classroom can have a lifelong consequences for students" (Logan Participant Profile, 2012).

Following high school Logan started studying Human Services majoring in disability and rehabilitation studies. After two years she realised she did not have a clear vision for her future and had a year working in retail. During this time she decided she would like to become a teacher.

Logan's practicum/internship setting

Logan's preservice experience was in a well-established coeducational Catholic school with approximately 600 students from Prep to Year 7. According to the school website, approximately 6% of the school's population had verified learning needs that attracted additional funding and 3% had language other than

English as their main language. Families were drawn from semi rural and suburban settings, and most would be considered middle class socioeconomic status.

Logan's beginning teaching setting

Logan's beginning teacher role was at another coeducational Prep to Year 7 Catholic School with approximately 400 students. Students are from predominantly middle-class multifaceted family structures and cultures.

Jack

Jack is in his mid twenties, and the middle child, having an older and younger brother. His mother is a teacher and his father is an engineer. Jack has a son, and shares his custody with the mother. Jack worked in various roles in the four years between finishing Year 12 and commencing his Bachelor of Education.

Jack explained his most "vivid memories (from primary school) are of the teachers which [he] enjoyed least" (Jack Participant Profile, 2012). However, he recalled one maths teacher in high school who was an "older gentleman, but despite his age was able to connect with just about every students he came into contact with. Jack explained the teacher displayed a high level of enthusiasm and a wealth of general knowledge" (Jack, Participant Profile, 2012). Jack noted this teacher's "ability to develop respectful friendships with students" (Jack Participant Profile, 2012) which is significant given the attention Jack gives to this same quality which is discussed in data Chapters 5, 6, and 7.

He reported having a "special unit," as it was known then, at his primary and high school. Although his contact with these students was quite limited he explained the experience helped him to understand and be aware of the "extremes of disabilities" (Jack Participant Profile, 2012). He also noted his opportunity to go to school with Indigenous students created a greater awareness of diversity and enabled him to be a more accepting and empathetic person.

Jack claimed "being a father has definitely impacted on how [he] treats students and the respect [he] displays for them" (Participant Profile, 2012). He describes himself as being quite relaxed and not easily agitated or frustrated.

Jack's practicum/internship/beginning teacher setting

Although Jack attended the same university as the other participants, he completed his preservice and beginning teacher roles at a public school in a different Australian state. His data collection times in the preservice phase occurred five weeks earlier than the other participants and the first classroom observation in the beginning teacher year was not able to be completed due to delays in ethical clearance which resulted from the late offer of employment.

The school is well established being over 100 years old. It has approximately 450 students with stable enrolment. The school promotes learning through a community approach and has adopted a philosophy where students work together to solve problems and support each other's learning.

Appendix C
Participant Information and Consent Form

Loraine McKay   n6128815 | Attachment F Ethics Application | Participant Information and Consent

QUT Queensland University of Technology Brisbane Australia	**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FOR QUT RESEARCH PROJECT**

Transforming perceptions and responses to student difference- the journey from fourth year preservice to beginning teacher

RESEARCH TEAM CONTACTS

Loraine McKay- Researcher	Professor Suzanne Carrington –Principal Supervisor
Centre for Learning Innovation	School or Learning and Professional Studies
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DESCRIPTION

This project is being undertaken as part of a PhD project for Loraine McKay. The project is not funded.

This research is designed to investigate the sociocultural factors that contribute to the transformation of beginning teachers' perceptions that influence the provision of quality teaching for students with learning difficulties. Of particular interest is the preservice teachers 'perception of student with learning difficulties, the influences that create these perceptions, and how these perceptions influence their classroom practice. Data collection methods to be employed include participants keeping reflective diaries, participating in semi-structured interviews, and allowing the researcher to engage in observations of participant's classroom and teaching.

The research team requests your assistance because the only way to truly appreciate how preservice teachers understand and respond to students with learning difficulties and how their understanding grows and/or changes as they move into the role of beginning teacher is through input from preservice teachers themselves. Your voice is needed.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this project is voluntary. If you do agree to participate, you can withdraw from participation during the project without comment or penalty. Your decision to participate will in no way impact upon your current or future relationship with QUT or with Griffith University (for example your grades).

Your participation will involve audio recorded semi structured interviews (to be held at a mutually agreed venue and time), keeping and sharing with the researcher a reflective diary (submitted online) and allowing the researcher to conduct classroom observations at the school where you commence your first year of teaching.

Expectations of Part A
- Initial meeting- provide briefing about how diaries should be used (group format)
- Reflective Diaries
  - Initial diary entry using a semi structured format (see below) to be completed in first weeks of semester one, 2011
  - At least weekly during practicum period (total of 4 entries)
  - At least weekly during internship period (total of 6 entries)
- Semi-structured interview after practicum period and internship (individual basis) to act as a debriefing tool and an opportunity for subsequent data collection (extend, bridge, surface)

Writing the initial diary entry
The aim of this phase is to ask a number (n=20) of preservice teachers to
- Describe their teaching experiences (to date) regarding children they consider were experiencing learning difficulties.
- Identify three or four decisions which were made in relation to these students.
- Discuss what factors they feel influenced their decision making.
- Discuss if they would change their actions if the situation arose again and what factors they feel influence this change in thinking.

The following guidelines will be provided for subsequent diary entries.
- Describe a situation/ incident drawn from any school day that week involving a student who you consider is experiencing learning difficulties.
- Identify two or three decisions that you made in relation to this student.
- Reflect on why you acted in a particular way.

The participant is asked to write approximately 250 words per incident/week. This is not a limit. Spelling, grammar and writing style are not considered important in this process and dot point format is acceptable.

Part B
The reflective diaries will include one entry per month during the first year of teaching. The requirements are the same as subsequent diary entries outlined above.

Classroom observations will occur during your during your first year of teaching (one session per term).
Semi structured interview will be conducted at the end of semester one and two during the initial year of teaching. Each interview will take up to one hour each. Questions will be similar to the ones listed below

- Tell me about a time you have taught a student who had learning difficulties?
- What factors do you attribute to your decision making with regards to working with students with learning difficulties?
- How does the school culture influence you decision making with regard to students with learning difficulties?

EXPECTED BENEFITS
It is expected that this project will directly benefit you. Critical reflection is an integral part of teacher development. Participating in this project will give you access to a critical friend at this important juncture of your career which will foster your critical reflection skills.

To compensate you for your contribution, should you choose to participate, the research team will provide you with out-of-pocket expenses relating to parking and transport costs incurred while attending interviews.

RISKS
Social research has the capacity to uncover deeply held beliefs or personal dilemmas which may present challenges for the participants. Teaching is a very demanding profession and participants are likely to have strong emotional reactions to some events. Discomfort is likely to occur because participants will be asked to critically reflect on their practices in the classroom which at times can be challenging. In addition participants will be observed during teaching which some may find intimidating. Teachers can be quite time poor and the additional time required to complete reflective diaries and attend interviews may add to their stress or be inconvenient.
However, a management plan is in place to minimise these risks.

CONFIDENTIALITY
All comments and responses will be treated confidentially.
While interviews will be audio recorded, you will be given a copy of the transcription and will have the opportunity to verify comments and responses. In addition, you will be given the opportunity to verify your comments and responses prior to final inclusion. The audio recording will not be used for any other purpose besides its intended use to provide data for this project and will be destroyed after the stipulated time period at the conclusion of the project. The audio recording will only be accessed by the named researcher, the researcher's supervisors and yourself. Data collected from the audio will be recorded in a manner that protects the participant's confidentiality. Use of the audio recording is preferable as a tool to collect rich data but may not be necessary in all cases.
All data collected is confidential. It is possible that the overall findings will be presented at conferences or published in journals. Participants will not be identifiable should this occur.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

I would like to ask you to sign a written consent form (enclosed) to confirm your agreement to participate in Part A of the study to be conducted in 2011. I will be seeking to follow you as you move into the role of beginning teacher in 2012, but understand that this is dependent on the approval of school systems and schools, and will seek further consent for the 2012 component
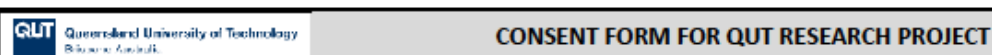
QUESTIONS / FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT
Please contact the researcher named above to have any questions answered or if you require further information about the project.

CONCERNS / COMPLAINTS REGARDING THE CONDUCT OF THE PROJECT
QUT is committed to research integrity and the ethical conduct of research projects. However, if you do have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project you may contact the QUT Research Ethics Unit on [07] 3138 5123 or email ethicscontact@qut.edu.au. The QUT Research Ethics Unit is not connected with the research project and can facilitate a resolution to your concern in an impartial manner.

Thank you for helping with this research project. Please keep this sheet for your information.

QUT Queensland University of Technology Brisbane Australia	**CONSENT FORM FOR QUT RESEARCH PROJECT**

Transforming perceptions and responses to student difference- the journey from fourth year preservice to beginning teacher

RESEARCH TEAM CONTACTS

Loraine McKay- Researcher School or Faculty- Centre for Learning Innovation Mob- 041 258 1320 Email l2.mckay@student.qut.edu.au	**Professor Suzanne Carrington –Principal Supervisor** School or Learning and Professional Studies Phone 3138 3725 Email sx.carrington@qut.edu.au

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

By signing below, you are indicating that you:

- have read and understood the information document regarding this project
- have had any questions answered to your satisfaction
- understand that if you have any additional questions you can contact the research team
- understand that you are free to withdraw at any time, without comment or penalty
- understand that you can contact the Research Ethics Unit on [07] 3138 5123 or email ethicscontact@qut.edu.au if you have concerns about the ethical conduct of the project
- understand that the project will include audio recording
- understand the transcribed data, which will remain anonymous, may be used in the future at conference presentation and/or journals
- agree to participate in Part A of the project in 2011 and understand you may be approached to continue in Part B of the project in 2012.

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____ / _____ / _____

MEDIA RELEASE PROMOTIONS

From time to time, we may like to promote our research to the general public through, for example, newspaper articles. Would you be willing to be contacted by QUT Media and Communications for possible inclusion in such stories? By ticking this box, it only means you are choosing to be contacted – you can still decide at the time not to be involved in any promotions.

☐ Yes, you may contact me about inclusion in promotions

☐ No, I do not wish to be contacted about inclusion in promotions

Please return this sheet to the investigator.

Appendix D
Sample Data Collection Tools

Semi Structured Interviews

Practicum Interview-Logan

1. What do you consider the term learning difficulties means?

2. For the kid who is disengaged, why is he disengaged? What would cause that?

3. What is it that makes you think it (helping students) is an ideal that you can work towards but not necessarily reach?

4. One of the things you talked about before and in your notes was about relationships and knowing your students. Do you think that you got to know him quickly by that exam experience?

5. There are three things that I, three themes I suppose that I have pulled out of your diaries. One is the importance of positive relationships with kids, the second one is positive reinforcement with the children and using positive reinforcement as a motivator and the third one is control, teacher control. Can you talk me through any of those?

6. What rewards system did you use for Joel?

7. Tell me about- you used some peer tutoring. You said you used it to create and it was successful because you got the open and supportive learning environment that you were after. Tell me how that worked.

8. The teacher told you with the other boy to pick your battles. One of the comments was that the teacher told you to choose your battles. How did you choose those?

9. So were there school factors that influence the decision-making that you made in the classroom?

10. Is there anything else you can think about that you wanted to talk about from prac, any other kids, any other situations, any decisions?

11. On your internship are there things you have trialled and now thought about that you have planned to use of not use?

12. Anything else?

Internship Interview General Guide

1. How are you catering for diverse learners in your planning and teaching?
2. How is the class set up helping/ hinder? How would you do it differently?
3. Emotions- how are you managing them?
4. Other staff- interactions
5. School systems that help/ hinder?
6. Inclusive practices used by the school
7. How has your teaching changed?
8. How have your skills to help diverse learners developed?
9. Any concerns for next year?
10. Anything else?

Beginning Teacher 1 Interview 3 General Guide

1. How many students in your class do you consider to have learning difficulties? What caused them?
2. What practices have you set up to cater for these students?
3. You used the term battlefield to describe the classroom at the end of the internship? Would you still use this term? Why?
4. Greatest challenge?
5. What have you drawn from internship and practicum experiences?
6. How did you establish your classroom relationships?
7. What support has the school provided?
8. Use of T/A time?
9. Views on inclusion now?
10. Addressing student motivation?
11. How far have kids progressed since start of year? How do you know? Why?
12. Anything else?

Beginning Teacher 3 Interview 5 General Guide

1. How effective do you feel as a teacher?

    a. Personal factors

    b. School factors

    c. Other

2. How are you meeting the expectations of the principal, parents, students, self?

3. How do you address the motivation and engagement of students?

4. How do you believe students learn?

5. Who is not making grade level expectations? Why not?

6. What is your response to meet these needs?

7. How do you decide what to teach? Level of content?

8. New/persistent challenges?

9. Views of self/students/school? Changes over time?

10. Hindsight?

    a. What would you do differently?

    b. What have you done differently?

    c. What will you do differently next year?

11. How do you use assessment to inform teaching?

12. What are the factors in the teaching/learning process that you can/cannot control?

13. Anything unexpected?

14. Anything else?

Reflective Diaries

Practicum and Internship Reflective Diaries

Pseudonym (as before) - _____

Practicum Diary Entry Number-   1   2   3   4

As you complete your diary entry consider this question
What decisions have you implemented that directly relate to the enhanced education of student experiencing learning difficulties?

Describe a situation/incident drawn from any school day this week/month involving a student who you consider is experiencing learning difficulties.

Identify two or three decisions that you made in relation to teaching this student.

What influenced how you acted in this situation?

Is there another way you would handle this situation in the future?

Beginning Teacher February Reflective Diary

Pseudonym (as before) - _____

Beginning Teacher Diary Entry Number-   1

As you complete your diary entry consider this question
What decisions have you implemented that directly relate to the enhanced education of student experiencing learning difficulties?

Describe your class (e.g. grade, size, school setting, supports in place for you and the students and particular students you think may be interesting to the study. Do not identify the school by name or location. If referring to a particular student do not use the full name perhaps using only a first initial or pseudonym).

Describe the set up procedures and routines have you established in you classroom to enhance the learning experiences of students with learning difficulties? Explain your reasoning for these decisions.

Outline any challenges you have already experienced working with this class or particular students and briefly explain the way you managed them. Explain your reasoning for these decisions. Would you do anything else next time?
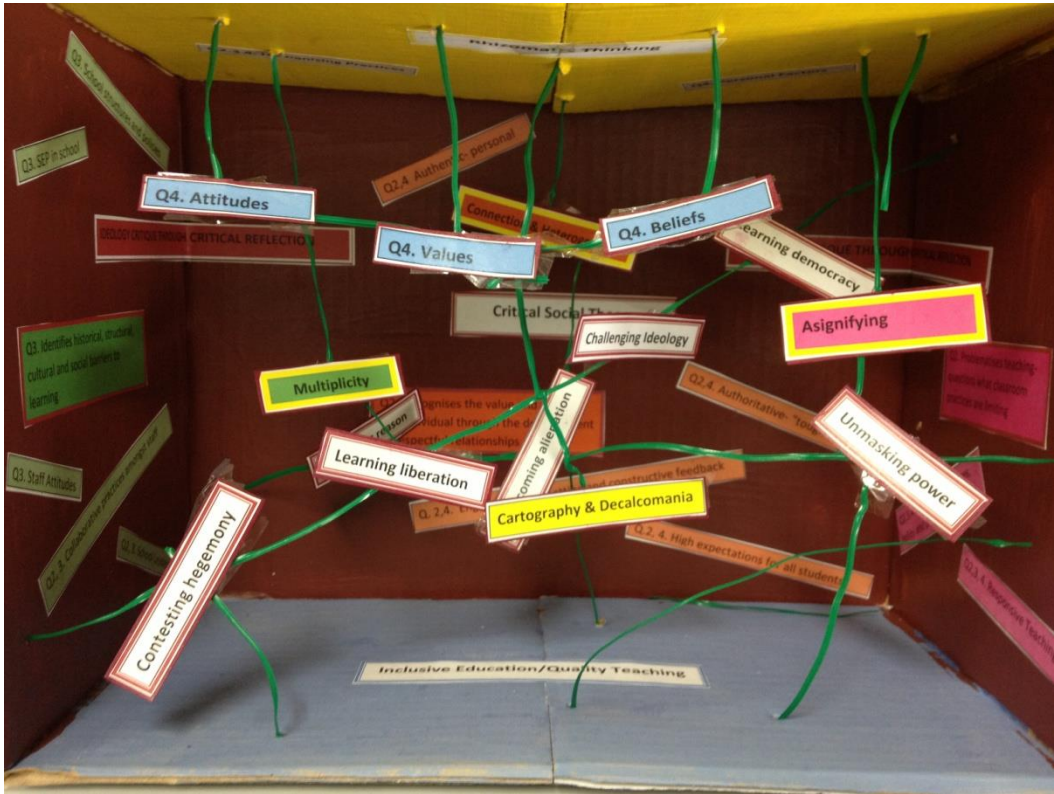

Is there anything else you think I'd like to know or you would like to share?

Classroom Observations

Classroom Observations

Participant	Lesson	Date

Description/ management of setting-
Is it an inclusive culture?
Does the classroom reflect student members?
Is there shared ownership?

Observation Number

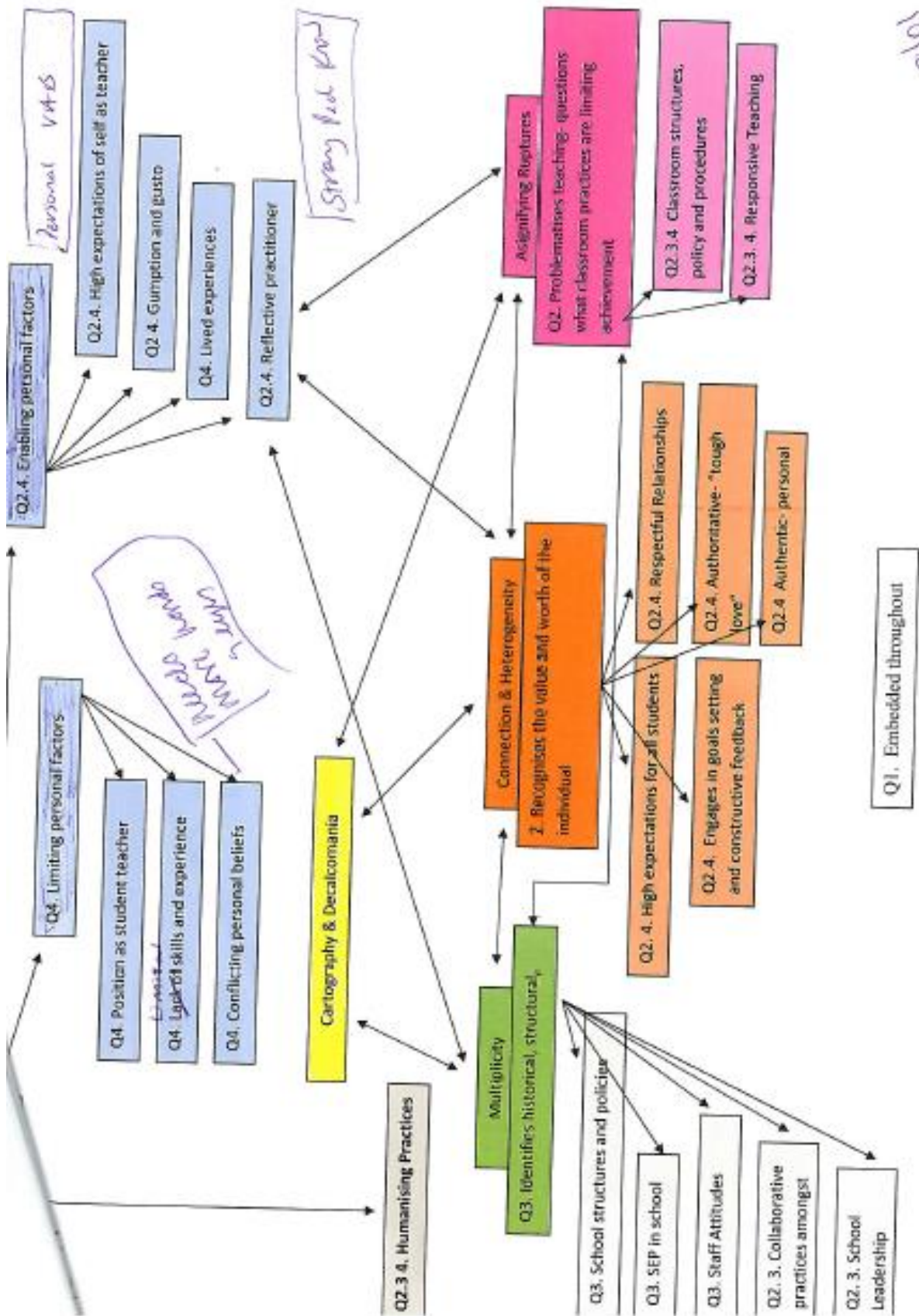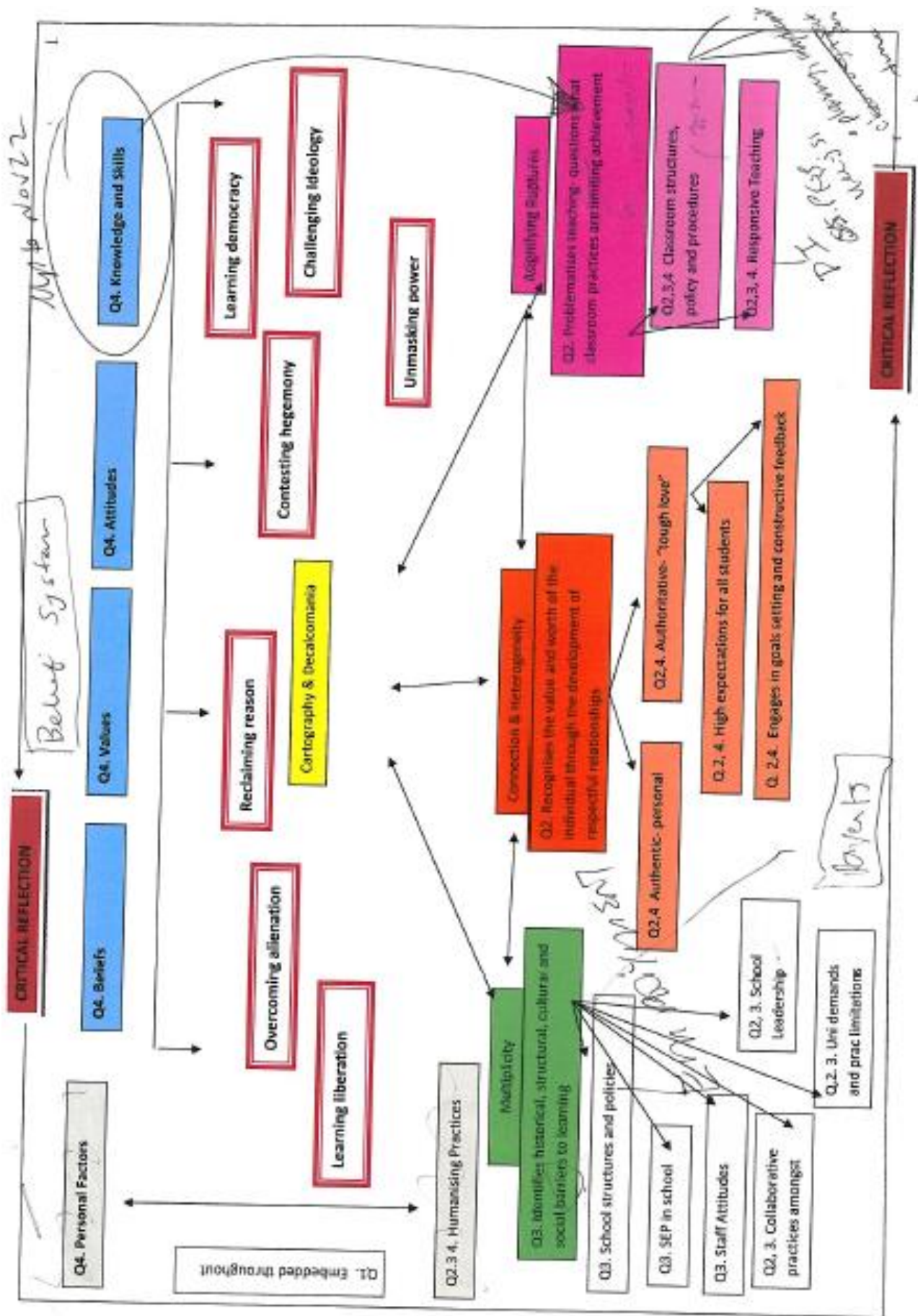| Sub Theme	Behaviour/ Action	What to look for	What happens
Personal attributes	Strong pedagogical knowledge	• Lesson sequence, clear goals, building concept • Framing- how to engage students • Includes strategy instruction and HOTS • Positive affect/ disposition • Language choices of T	
Recognised value and worth of students	Expectations and feedback	• Communicates achievable but challenging goals • Feedback loops • Encouragement and affirmation • Prompts thought processes to elicit further response • Responds to student's physical, emotional and academic needs	
	Relationships	• Provides models of behaviour and expectations- set standards, establish limits, explain reasons for restrictions; • Mutual respect- eye contact, calm voice, warm, respectful language • Encourages independent thinking and personal responsibility for actions • Makes time to listen to and respond to students' stories and concerns. • Shares anecdotes to show empathy and understanding • Provides choice/options • Provides opportunities for S-S engagement and interaction (peer tutoring and groups work)	
Problematises teaching- questions what classroom practices are limiting achievement	Responsive teaching	• Uses multiple approaches/ modalities to engage students or move lesson along • Differentiates instruction at planning stage and on the run • Includes input from students or follows students' interests • Routines/ transitions and preparation maximise learning time • Classroom set up maximises opportunities for S participation	
Identifies/respo nds to school barriers to learning	Identifies constraints	• Use of support staff • Use of school based text books • Flexibility in programming • Use of physical space and resources	

What happens for vulnerable kids?

Appendix E
Three Dimensional Model of Theoretical Framework

Table A2

Node Descriptions of Personal Factors and Humanising Practices

Theme	Sub theme	Code
Personal Attributes includes the values, attitudes and beliefs that constitute one's beliefs system and therefore impact on decision-making	**Beliefs** are the assumptions/ perceptions we make about ourselves, other people, and situations. **Values** are the judgements we place on people, situations and events. They form ideals that shape behaviour.	**Positioning students** refers to the way teachers frame student behaviour. This includes how they perceive and attribute the causes of what is going on in various situations that arise in the classroom. **Expectations of self as teacher** is what participants expected of themselves at various stages of their training and career **Sense of efficacy** is a judgement of personal capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning, even among those students who may be difficult to manage or unmotivated. **Beliefs about inclusive education and models of inclusion** include how participants question disadvantage and challenge social injustice, and maximise the educational and social outcomes of all students through the identification, reduction, or removal of barriers to learning. The models of inclusion refer to how schools enact inclusive policy.
	Attitudes are related to how we act based on what we believe, value, and assume. They are learned behaviours that can be controlled and adapted.	**Lived experiences** are the personal experiences drawn from the past such as one's own learning difficulties or family member who experienced learning difficulties. It also includes other experiences in nurturing roles besides teaching, such as, parenting, after school care worker, Girl Guide leader **Positive classroom support** includes elements of the classroom that enhance learning opportunities for all students **Gumption and gusto** refers to the willingness of teachers to take risks and try new strategies through a flexible approach. It includes recognising that fun is an important aspect of learning and so drives practice.

Theme	Sub theme	Code
Connection and Heterogeneity involves the recognition of individual's worth and value through respectful relationships. Teachers recognise each student brings a unique perspective to the classroom which contributes to a diverse and rich environment.	**Authentic relationships** are developed when teachers work to build trust, openness, and respect by making time to listen to and respond to students' stories and concerns. Teachers recognise and understand how certain conditions may manifest in students inappropriate behaviours. In addition, the teacher shares anecdotes to show empathy and understanding with the student.	
	Authoritative relationships provide models of behaviour and expectations. They help to set standards, establish limits, explain reasons for restrictions, and encourage independent thinking and personal responsibility for actions.	**High expectations and goal setting** Teachers hold high expectations for all students regardless of age, gender, race, and socioeconomic background. They set achievable but challenging goals for students. **Constructive feedback on students' performance** The teacher provides timely feedback with the purpose of student improvement.
Multiplicity identifies historical, structural, cultural and social barriers to learning. This includes the organisation of the school relating to issues such as, grouping of students, funding allocations, staff allocations, and curriculum policy and guidelines. It includes how the tone of the school is influenced by staff attitudes and leadership.	**School structures and policies** include the procedures or decision-making at school level that enhances the quality and quantity of teaching time and promotes a philosophy that aims to meet student's individual needs.	**Employment status** refers to the employment stability and security offered to the participant.
		School leadership refers to the principal's role in providing resources, both financial and physical, that support the goals of inclusive education. As a consequence of strong school leadership collaborative decision-making is encouraged. **Special education program in the school** provide trained special education staff to help the classroom teacher to support children verified with a disability or identified as needing additional resources. **Induction programs** are organised processes that socialise teachers into their role.

Theme	Sub theme	Code
	School community includes the influence of other teachers, parents, and the wider school community on teachers' decision-making.	They attempt to make explicit the expectations for teachers. **Staff attitudes and collaborative processes** are determined by other members of the administration team including deputy principals and head of curriculum (HOC). **Parents** include the custodians who are deemed responsible for the wellbeing of the students.
Asignifying ruptures occur when teachers problematise teaching and come to question what classroom practices assist or limit students' level of achievement.	**Classroom structures, practices, and procedures** include the procedures or decision-making at a classroom level that limit or promote the quality and quantity of teaching time while the teacher attempts to meet students' individual needs.	**Planning and implementing the lessons** includes the consideration of curriculum and other resources and the chosen practices to meet students' needs.
		Time demands that limit or threaten teachers' attempts to include all students. This includes factors that make demands on their time in and out of the classroom.
	Responsive teaching includes teaching practices that consider the needs of students and utilise pedagogy drawn from research-based practices and respond to students' needs identified through ongoing observation and assessment.	**Differentiated instruction and universal design for learning principles include consideration of** adjustments to the content being taught, the process or pedagogy being used, the tools used for evaluating learning, and the physical characteristics of the learning environment to enhance the learning opportunities of all students. **Pedagogical knowledge and skills enhance effective teaching.** Teachers know the general progression of students' understandings in a subject area. This includes being skilled in how to engage students and sequence subject matter, as well as the kinds of misconceptions that students commonly develop.

Appendix G
Growth of Data Analysis Model

December, 2010

Personal V4-5

Q2.4. High expectations of self as teacher

Q2.4 Gumption and gusto

Q4. Lived experiences

Q2.4. Reflective practitioner

Q2.4. Enabling personal factors

Strong prof prac

Asignifying Ruptures

Q2. Problematises teaching- questions what classroom practices are limiting achievement

Q2.3.4 Classroom structures, policy and procedures

Q2.3.4. Responsive Teaching

Q2.4. Respectful Relationships

Q2.4. Authoritative- "tough love"

Q2.4 Authentic- personal

Q2.4. High expectations for all students

Q2.4. Engages in goals setting and constructive feedback

Connection & Heterogeneity

2. Recognises the value and worth of the individual

Q1. Embedded throughout

what is...

Need based approach

Q4. Limiting personal factors

Q4. Position as student teacher

Q4. Layer of skills and experience

Q4. Conflicting personal beliefs

Cartography & Decalcomania

Q2.3 4. Humanising Practices

Multiplicity

Q3. Identifies historical, structural,

Q3. School structures and policies

Q3. SEP in school

Q3. Staff Attitudes

Q2. 3. Collaborative practices amongst

Q2. 3. School Leadership

10/12

Single Case Pepper Data Set 3B

Single Case Jack Data Set 3B

Cross Case Analysis Self-Efficacy

Self Efficacy

Who	When	What	Why - she attributes it to.	Evidence.
Echienne	BT 3/5 prior to BT 3/5 [illegible] BT 3/5 BT 3/5 BT 3/3	Low efficacy more +ve pr Low efficacy less sense of eff than prior	KqS, her ability to control beh. more organised on top of things, [illegible] her inexperience, [illegible] less support for ideas & BM	limited prog on school data more free time kids not engaged. confidence dropping
	could be linked to lack of relationships & respect. See RD5 comment Despite BT levels at [illegible] level, kids expecting help - adding to frustration & loss of confidence		←	Students lack internal control, motivation & are not engaged.
Jack aspects he feels he does well - ~~[illegible]~~ class climate	BT 4/2 RD1 (Feb) BT 5/3 June Diary (?)	+ve impact +ve impact Fluctuates "I wish I could do more, I probably should." +ve	We need to build resilience. On the surface everything is okay Not achieving all he sets out to do despite limited experience	getting better at reading (some of them) Only scraping through in Lit & Maths
Kate	BT 3/5 BT 3/5	-ve in Reading fluctuates +ve in maths	limited by school timetabling & lack of [illegible]. Kids performance not consistent, limited time she can help	R/R records home factors home factors
Logan	5/3 4/2 3/1 - just trying to keep my head up	confidence → efficacy +ve Doubt yourself as beg teacher → +ve	routines enable BT. have kids under control, can have fun high expectations get results. support from other teachers	→ student growth. love of learning
Peppa	BT 3/1 BT 3/5 BT 4/2 BT 5/3 5/3 RD5	-ve +ve -ve - varies [illegible] +ve ?/hoping its effective ↑ "I felt a bit lost"	not able to manage the length of the gaps not clearly stating expectations lack of skill & lack of support from parents. worried about her skill level she can make a difference What am I doing wrong? Kids are improving doing something right confident with strategy chosen Knows the expectations to work towards, clear expectations Making a difference / trying to	Kids on low level reading limited few slow but progressing influential over them
Sandra ↑ confidence	BT 5/3 3/1 - Fading them RD3 RD1	↑ - shaky - time Growing gap to the problem Shared LGT [illegible] "I don't know what I'm doing wrong!" Overwhelmed.	Making a difference. Age/life experience means she needs less support from other T in some areas but fragile Lack of skills is difficult to make a diff. More kids to be more involved - to show them they can do it together. - Time creates problem	Problem solved by buy adolescence Def Dis Limited
Thelson	Feb BT 2/4 confident 5/3 RD5	shaky but ↑ increasing confidence "quite [illegible] to show [illegible]"	Managing large groups & levels Get through the day - [illegible] Literacy teaching has improved Not going through the work - fairly [illegible]	Ag Home [illegible] good. very effective & will do so with time & experience +ve feedback admin

Appendix I
Ethics Clearance Notification from QUT

Dear Mrs Loraine McKay

Project Title:
Transforming perceptions and responses to student
difference: the journey
from fourth year preservice to beginning teacher

Approval Number: 1100000160
Clearance Until: 8/02/2014
Ethics Category: Human

As you are aware, your low risk application has been
reviewed by your
Faculty Research Ethics Advisor and confirmed as meeting
the requirements
of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human
Research.

Before data collection commences please ensure you attend
to any changes
requested by your Faculty Research Ethics Advisor.

Whilst the data collection of your project has received
ethical clearance,
the decision to commence and authority to commence may be
dependent on
factors beyond the remit of the ethics committee (eg
ethics clearance /
permission from another institute / organisation) and you
should not
commence the proposed work until you have satisfied these
requirements.

If you require a formal approval certificate, please
respond via reply
email and one will be issued.

Decisions related to low risk ethical review are subject
to ratification at
the next available Committee meeting. You will only be
contacted again in
relation to this matter if the Committee raises any
additional questions or
concerns.

This project has been awarded ethical clearance until
8/02/2014 and a
progress report must be submitted for an active ethical

clearance at least
once every twelve months. Researchers who fail to submit
an appropriate
progress report when asked to do so may have their
ethical clearance
revoked and/or the ethical clearances of other projects
suspended. When
your project has been completed please advise us by email
at your earliest
convenience.

For variations, please complete and submit an online
variation form:

http://www.research.qut.edu.au/ethics/forms/hum/var/varia
tion.jsp

Please do not hesitate to contact the unit if you have
any queries.

Regards

Janette Lamb on behalf of the Faculty Research Ethics
Advisor
Research Ethics Unit | Office of Research
Level 4 | 88 Musk Avenue | Kelvin Grove
p: +61 7 3138 5123
e: ethicscontact@qut.edu.au
w: http://www.research.qut.edu.au/ethics/

Appendix J
Consent Form for School Access (Principal)

QUT Queensland University of Technology Brisbane Australia	**CONSENT FORM FOR QUT RESEARCHER TO ACCESS PARTICIPANT CLASSROOM PROJECT- PRINCIPAL**

> Transforming perceptions and responses to student difference- the journey from fourth year preservice to beginning teacher

RESEARCH TEAM CONTACTS

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STATEMENT OF CONSENT

By signing below, you are indicating that you:

- have read and understood the information document regarding this project
- have had any questions answered to your satisfaction
- understand that if you have any additional questions you can contact the research team
- understand that you are free deny access, without comment or penalty
- understand that you can contact the Research Ethics Unit on [07] 3138 5123 or email ethicscontact@qut.edu.au if you have concerns about the ethical conduct of the project
- understand the transcribed data, which will remain anonymous, may be used in the future at conference presentation and/or journals
- agree to allow Mrs McKay access to the classroom to observe the research participant's teaching.

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____ / _____ / _____

MEDIA RELEASE PROMOTIONS

From time to time, we may like to promote our research to the general public through, for example, newspaper articles. Would you be willing to be contacted by QUT Media and Communications for possible inclusion in such stories? By ticking this box, it only means you are choosing to be contacted – you can still decide at the time not to be involved in any promotions.

☐ Yes, you may contact me about inclusion in promotions

☐ No, I do not wish to be contacted about inclusion in promotions

Please return this sheet to the investigator.

Figure A1. Rhizomatic growth of beginning teachers' perceptions of learning and teaching.