



Understanding Pre-Service Teacher's perceptions and responses to behaviour in the classroom while on professional experience.

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Abstract

Student behaviour and how to manage this behaviour in the classroom, has been an issue in classrooms for as long as schools have been in existence (Millei & Petersen, 2015). It takes up time in the classroom and detracts students from learning (McDonald, 2019). How student behaviour is perceived in the classroom can depend on the perceiver's own set of attributes as well as their self-efficacy and beliefs (Rose & Nelson, 2018). This research aims to explore these perceptions of student behaviour in the classroom by adopting a qualitative case study methodology. It is guided by a conceptual framework of Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological model (1995) and Sen's Capability Approach (CA) (1997), with semi-structured interview questions. Two participants (Pre-Service Teachers) were interviewed at the beginning and end of their final placements at a school in Melbourne. Several themes were generated from the data analysis which utilised an inductive and deductive process of reflexive thematic analysis. These themes include the tendency to view behaviours as low-level concerns, the importance of creating positive student-teacher relationships, the need for aligned perspectives between PSTs and Teacher Mentors (TM), the influence individual factors of teachers have on perception, and an absence of theoretical knowledge relating to wellbeing in ITE courses. This study reveals the multiple influences that reside within each individual when perceiving behaviour in the classroom.

Certification

I certify that the ideas, experimental work, results, analyses, and conclusions reported in this thesis are entirely my own effort, except where otherwise acknowledged. I also certify that the work is original and has not been previously submitted for any other award, except where otherwise acknowledged.

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12/12/2023

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I wish to dedicate this to my mother who passed away during this research. She was a strong advocate for learning who continued striving to improve her own educational outcomes as a mother and woman.

Finally, the journey to completing this research will serve as an impetus to my own family. Through observing my striving towards further knowledge, they will see that persistence can lead to the achievement of educational goals. Their support and quiet understanding that I will get it done, always without question, has always been very reassuring!

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Chapter One: Introduction

Working in education in Victoria for over twenty years, I have always been fascinated by the perceptions of student behaviour and the different ways teachers respond to that behaviour while in the classroom. From the time I was working as a teacher in secondary schools to working as an academic at a university, I continued to maintain an interest in exploring this topic. Identifying what behaviour is, and how it is perceived in the classroom, is a topic often mentioned in the media in Victoria, and more widely across Australia in the current context of teacher shortages and teacher burnout (Clarke, 2023). One attribution of this issue proposes poor teacher preparedness when facing behaviours in schools. Post-COVID-19 malaise following extensive lockdowns in Victoria with long periods of remote learning have also been attributed to behavioural concerns identified in the classroom (*Remote Learning during COVID-19: Insights from Victorian Independent Schools*, 2024.). The lack of respect that is felt from the community and parent bodies regarding the teacher's role, as well as the increasing disruption in the classroom by students, continue to exacerbate the concerns teachers express (Contact, 2023). Furthermore, in the *National Teachers Workforce Action Plan (2022)*, difficulties with classroom management were listed as a concern by many current teachers as a reason for leaving the profession (*Teacher Workforce Shortages Issues Paper*, 2022).

Governments across Australia have sought to address these issues in the classroom by undertaking inquiries and releasing initiatives such as *Educating Classrooms* which provides tools to support teachers in managing classroom behaviour (Ministers' Media Centre, 2023). The current government called a parliamentary inquiry titled *The issue of increasing disruption in Australian school classrooms* (Ministers' Media Centre, 2023) asking for submissions from stakeholders involved in education to pitch their perspective on how to address the concerns being raised. The Quality Initial Teacher Education (QITE) review was also undertaken by

Mark Scott (former Education Department Secretary and Sydney University Vice-Chancellor) in 2023 into ITE courses and teacher preparedness. Its panel released '*Strong Beginnings: Report of the Teacher Education Expert Panel*' (Clarke, 2023). The report suggested a series of changes, including creating specific core content for all ITE courses. This core content included classroom management practices which covered the establishment of rules and routines as well as the modelling of desired behaviours (Clarke, 2023). Despite these suggestions, few of the reviews and inquiries focus on the myriad of factors that influence a pre-service teacher's perception of student behaviour and perceived capability when responding to challenging student behaviour. This study, then, aims to shift the lens from a focus on current teachers to looking at the behaviours pre-service teachers (PSTs) face and then perceive while on professional experience. These experiences of PSTs who are about to graduate and work in Victorian schools will be examined. Identifying what it is they value in the decisions they make in the classroom in response to behaviours presented during their final professional experience will be explored at one school in Melbourne.

1.1 Background to the study

There have been many studies over the year relating to behaviours observed in the classroom and whether teachers feel prepared when encountering these behaviours (Peters, 2012). In exploring research relevant to this topic, one significant study conducted by O'Neill and Stephenson (2013) piqued my interest. O'Neill and Stephenson (2013) surveyed teachers after their first year of teaching, seeking to identify whether they perceived themselves to be prepared after their first year in education when facing behaviours in the classroom. O'Neill and Stephenson's (2013) research provided the initial ideas for this study; however, expanding to explore what influences PST's perception to behaviour during their final professional experience became the research focus.

1.2 Research questions

This study addresses the research question: How do Pre-Service Teachers' (PSTs) perceive and respond to behaviour in the classroom while on professional experience?

Five sub-questions sit underneath this:

- (a) How do PSTs perceive behaviour in the classroom?
- (b) What factors influence these perceptions of behaviour?
- (c) What responses do PSTs make when facing behaviour in the classroom?
- (d) How do PSTs perceive their capability when responding to behaviour in the classroom?
- (e) Do PSTs feel their ITE courses prepared them well for responding to behaviour in the classroom during professional experience?

1.3 Methodology

A qualitative case study was selected in this research to focus on understanding each individual PST's subjective perceptions and responses. The case study in this research includes two PSTs who completed professional experience at a secondary school in Melbourne, Victoria. The two individual PSTs were interviewed at the beginning and end of their professional experience. Using semi-structured interviews to provide opportunities for PSTs to elaborate on their perceptions offered opportunities for rich data to be acquired (Lincoln & Guba, 1990; McChesney & Aldridge, 2019). Convenience sampling was used given the specific requirement for PSTs to be on their final professional experience during their ITE courses.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

This thesis has been organised into seven chapters. In the first chapter, the research project will be identified, and its significance discussed. The research questions, an overview

of the methodology, and a description of the structure of the thesis will be included in this chapter.

Chapter Two presents a literature review relevant to this research. This provides definitions of behaviour, explaining how attitudes can contribute to perceptions of behaviours as well as causes and motivations of behaviour. The chapter also includes relevant theories and response strategies relating to behaviour. Literature pertaining to varied wellbeing approaches will be identified, as well as literature concerning individual teacher factors such as self-efficacy and personal characteristics. Literature addressing the culture and climate of a school will be discussed as well as terminology relating to professional experience, also explored.

Chapter Three examines the conceptual framework on which this research was grounded; it utilised a bioecological theory and the capability approach in combination as a guiding framework for the study.

Chapter Four presents the methods for this research. The use of a case study and the gathering of qualitative data is justified, followed by a discussion identifying how participants (two in total) were selected for this study. The chapter also explains how reflexive thematic analysis was applied to the data obtained from the participants. Relevant ethical considerations are also explored in this chapter.

Chapter Five reports on the results obtained from the participants. It presents the perspectives of both individual participants through the direct use of quotes and commentary on themes.

Chapter Six addresses themes in connection to the research questions in the discussion. This includes implications arising from this research as well as limitations of the research.

The final chapter, Chapter Seven, articulates the research conclusions and sums up the paper.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Literature relating to this research topic is vast. It incorporates many areas including perception, attitudes, and varying factors within the life of each individual Pre-Service Teacher (PST) that may influence their responses to behaviour. This chapter begins by defining student behaviour that could be identified as concerning, including high-level or low-level disruption. It identifies a context to examine the behaviour from as well as an illustration of causes and motivations of behaviour. Relevant theories and strategies relating to behaviour, and the potential wellbeing approaches used in individual schools to support student engagement and belonging, will be presented. Individual characteristics of a PST such as their self-efficacy and personal characteristics will be discussed. This chapter will also explore the role of key stakeholders in professional experience such as the teacher mentor (TM) and tertiary supervisor (TS). What emerges from the review of the literature is that behaviour is complex, and how each teacher responds to behaviour when in the classroom, and their capacity to respond appropriately, will be influenced by a myriad of factors or experiences over the course of their lives.

2.1 Student behaviour

Student behaviours that one teacher may perceive as challenging or in turn, as low-level issues, might not be perceived in the same way by another teacher, for various reasons (Åhslund & Boström, 2018). These can include differences in the context, situation or the demonstration of behaviour that is observed (Walker & Graham, 2021). The individual teacher's further consideration of the behaviour, and how they perceive it, is critical to this discussion. We need to identify the role of the teacher in this perception of behaviour, to discover whether their previous experience and understanding of the individual student can lead to a different understanding of the behaviour.

2.1.1 Definitions

Behaviours that may cause concern in the classroom can be described in a range of ways, varying from low-level through to high-level disruption (Department of Education Victoria, 2024; Fox et al., 2022). Within the classification of high-level, word descriptors often include the terms challenging, disturbing, bad, problematic, or disruptive behaviour, or simply misbehaving (Aas et al., 2023; Castelli et al., 2015). It can also be identified as behaviour which “enables us to ask what is actually disturbed or challenged” (Lanas & Brunila, 2019, p. 683). According to the Department of Education Victoria, examples of behaviours of concern can include withdrawn, disruptive, violent, or unsafe behaviour or identified as inappropriate behaviours (Department of Education Victoria, 2024)(see Table 1).

Table 1

Department of Education (Victoria) classification of behaviours of concern accompanied by examples.

Behaviour	Examples
Withdrawn behaviours	Shyness, rocking, staring, anxiety, school phobia, truancy, social isolation, hand flapping.
Disruptive behaviours	Being out-of-seat, calling out in class, tantrums, swearing, screaming, refusing to follow instructions
Violent or unsafe behaviours	Head banging, kicking, biting, punching, fighting, running away, smashing equipment
Inappropriate social behaviours	Inappropriate conversations, stealing, being over-affectionate, inappropriate touching or masturbation

Note. From Department of Education Victoria, (2024).

Tom Bennett, the current behaviour advisor in the U.K, works with schools in England in the areas of behaviour management for the classroom. He had previously worked as a teacher

and an online advisor for *The Times Education Supplement* responding to queries from teachers across the U.K regarding issues of behaviour. Bennett (2010, p. 21) defines low-level behaviours to include students moving around the classroom, or “anything that undermines the flow of your lesson without actually blowing it out the water”. They articulate that low-level behaviours are worthy of discussion as put together and after being proffered repetitively by all students in the class, can escalate to more serious demonstrations of behaviours of concern. In addition to these suggestions by Bennett, teachers also often identify low-level behavioural concerns to be related to disengagement (Fox et al., 2022). It is these perceptions of behaviours that they identify as challenging or otherwise low-level that will be explored throughout this research.

2.1.2 Context matters

Teachers often consider behaviours of concern to include situations that they cannot control. Teachers might be identified as not being in control of their classes (Millei & Petersen 2015) and may report classes with boys are often reported as being behaviourally problematic (Wienan et al., 2019). In recent studies, teachers report “problem behaviour when working in a less favourable school climate, in disadvantaged school contexts and in classes with a higher percentage of boys and a higher number of relatively young pupils” (Wienan et al., 2019, p. 115). Linking of challenging behaviours with particular contexts (such as low socioeconomic areas and classes of boys) raises concerns about the accuracy of teachers’ perceptions when it comes to behaviour (Åhslund & Boström, 2018). Students surrounded by other students with problematic behaviours who are viewed as troublesome and of concern, creates bias in the classroom (Timmermans et. al., 2016). The repercussions for these students create a constant state of striving for the impossible by students who “must continuously work out how to

become credible subjects not only in the eyes of their teachers but also within multiple other reference groups: school, peers, and home” (Lanas & Brunila, 2019, p. 684).

Western perspectives and culture associate adolescence as a period of rebellion or problematic behaviour (Qu, 2023). The societal context and subsequent constructs that adults hold regarding the behaviour of young people are often negative or deficit focused requiring intervention by an adult (McGregor, 2017). These deficit constructs classify adolescents as disengaged and in need of ‘fixing’ (Corcoran, 2015). Societal perception of disability can also be deficit-laden, suggesting that those with a disability need to be fixed or can be fixed (Kirby, 2017). Behaviours of individuals with a disability are often interpreted by the teacher in a negative manner leading to lowered expectations of student ability (Clifton, 2020). Interpreting what they are expected to do, or stop doing, to be ‘good’ (such as sitting properly or listening) in contrast to “not being ‘silly’, putting hands up and waiting to be chosen to speak, and not speaking while the teacher is speaking” (MacLure, et al., 2012, p. 458) can be testing for the student if physically unable to do whatever is being asked. There is evidence suggesting that an overrepresentation of exclusionary school discipline exists for students with a disability (Graham et al., 2023).

2.1.3 Theoretical constructs of behaviour

Psychological perspectives have heavily influenced our understanding of behaviour in the classroom (McDonald, 2023). The behaviourist perspective proposes that behaviour occurs because of influences in the environment (Hour, 2012). The influences in the environment include punishment or reinforcement given in response to behaviour which can then shape future behavioural responses (Chen, 2023). The social learning theory expands on this theory to include observation and how individuals may observe one another and subsequently imitate their behaviour (Sherry & Berge, 2012). Students may imitate, complement, or reciprocate the

behaviour of other students and then respond in kind during social interactions; further endorsing appropriate or inappropriate behaviours, depending on the situation (Farmer, 2014).

The ecological perspective contrasts with these perspectives arguing that individuals develop in the context of their family, home, school, and other environments over time (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). From this perspective, student behaviour is explained through the lens of context specificity. Individuals act differently in the different contexts in which they find themselves due to the meanings they place on these environments that have developed from their experiences (McDonald, 2019).

Following on from these theories, interest in the influences on behaviour due to the presence of the teacher in the classroom began to take prominence. Here the focus lies on the control of the teacher in the classroom and the outcomes of their influence (Aina et al., 2015). In the 1950s, Rudolph Dreikurs proposed that students might misbehave because they lacked a sense of belonging from the teacher, acting in a certain way to attract attention. From this theoretical proposition, Gordon's Teacher Effectiveness Training (TET) (1974) approach was formulated, focusing on the quality of the teacher-student relationship. In this model, the focus is on the individual who the teacher is trying to teach (forming a relationship) rather than with the content of their teaching (McDonald, 2019). These are just some of the approaches that have been proposed and implemented in classrooms over the years.

2.2 Attitudes

Attitudes that individuals hold can elicit positive or negative perceptions of behaviour presented. Attitudes arise from thoughts about objects or people and involve cognitive components (beliefs), affective components (emotions or feelings), and behavioural components (actions or responses triggered by the ideas or emotions felt) (Kendrick & Olsen, 2012). Attitudes can be formed in many ways (Reid & Amanat, 2020). They can develop from

personal experiences or exposure to information or people over time. Attitudes can develop consciously or unconsciously from experiences or exposure. They can produce initial reactions or enduring views (Brown et al., 2020).

2.2.1 *Attributions*

Attribution of a student's behaviour by an individual teacher can influence interpretation (perception) of behaviour (Schultz & Simpson, 2013).). One teacher might attribute the conduct of the individual student based on their understanding of the behaviour's causation. Knowledge of the individual student's character and background can either positively or negatively affect the attribution of the causation of the behaviour. Such variables can also be influenced by the teacher's actions and attitudes (whether deliberate or inadvertent) which can trigger a particular response in a student (Van der Putten, 2017).

Attribution Theory explains how attitudes held previously by an individual can develop a perception which guides their responses (Weiner, 2010). This theory seeks to explain how a perceiver (such as a teacher) uses information around them to explain events (such as behaviour in the classroom). The attributions we make or attitudes we hold can lead us to act in a certain way (Schröder & Helmke, 2015). Heider (1958) identified two components of this theory: the dispositional element (behaviour arising internally – also known as fundamental attribution error) versus the situational element (behaviour with an external cause – coming from the situation or the environment in which we are placed). In the instance of a classroom, the teacher may look to internal causation for the behaviour, considering characteristics such as learning or development concerns, or the personality of the individual. The environment can refer to the cohort of students in the classroom, the curriculum, or the school where the individual student is enrolled. These internal and external causes of behaviour can inform the teacher and, in turn,

lead to a particular attribution of a behaviour, subsequently driving their response to it (Heider, 1958).

Weiner (1985) proposed an extension of attribution theory by identifying connections to the personal and social motivations of the teacher and the cause of the student's need. This theory proposes that, for a teacher to consider helping a student, they must first determine what caused their need, which will then determine whether they decide to help them (Brady & Woolfson, 2008). Teachers may look to whether the behaviour is caused by the individual internally (a characteristic of the individual) or externally (behaviour caused by factors in their environment) The teacher may identify that the student cannot control or help their behaviour due to individual characteristics, or that others in their environment may have contributed to the outcome (LaBelle & Martin, 2014). Experiences with individual students can affect future situations, forming an attitude about forthcoming behaviours. This can influence impending application of teaching strategies and approaches (Wang & Hall, 2018). The attitudes formed by teachers when they encounter challenging behaviour may also be followed by negative emotional responses towards individual students, leading to inappropriate responses by the teacher (Woodcock et al., 2019).

2.2.2 Perception

Understanding how teachers view behaviour, and why they perceive it in a particular way, is critical. Asking why behaviour occurs and expanding our knowledge about the responses teachers give when they are facing behaviours in the classroom provides insights when “implementing prevention-focused initiatives because their perspectives likely influence their choice of behaviour management strategy” (Dutton et al. 2010, p. 87). It is important to know whether teachers view the behaviour they perceive through the lens of developmental perspectives, whether they perceive the environment as having a more significant role in the

behavioural problems presented, or whether they see the behaviour as arising from students' individual characteristics (Graham & Taylor, 2022). Depending on which viewpoint, teachers may place greater emphasis on selecting interventions that they believe will have a greater impact on modifying the behaviour presented (Dutton et al., 2010).

If multiple factors, events, or people are involved in incidents at the same time (known as multidimensionality), individual perceptions can be influenced by other teachers or students who are present (Hospel et al., 2016). If many occurrences happen at once (known as simultaneity) or how quickly they occur (immediacy), this too can affect perception. If there is a history of encounters or previous experiences with certain students, further influences are identified (Emmer & Stough, 2001). Working to prevent these multiple factors from escalating can be achieved by organisation and planning for the classroom (McDonald, 2023). Being able to effectively manage a classroom through a combination of effective instruction, the scaffolding of the activity, and the promotion of engagement in school can ensure teachers can respond to the needs of their students and avoid events from occurring (Jennings, 2015). If teachers are informed of any individual needs prior to teaching a class, the curriculum can be organised and adapted to the needs of students rather than the teacher waiting for unwanted behaviours to emerge (Walker & Plomin, 2005). Teachers are ready to respond with warmth and emotion to their students because they are prepared and know their needs (Jennings, 2015). Showing empathy, unconditional positive regard, acceptance, and respect towards students in the classroom can lead to more positive student behaviour (Balart et al., 2023).

Initial Teacher Education (ITE) courses which include social and emotional competence in understanding behaviours can also influence perception, the choice of strategy and approach (Rose & Nelson, 2018). A significant correlation exists between teachers' level of study and their attitudes; for example, teachers with a bachelor's degree rate behaviour as more disturbing than a teacher with a master's degree (Johnson & Fullwood, 2006). Units

completed in classroom management and social and emotional competence can also positively contribute to teacher skills (Jennings, 2015). Staff skilled in such areas of social and emotional competence can readily recognise the emotions in their students and subsequently appraise behaviour in relation to the motivation behind it (Todd et al., 2022). Responses can be then adapted according to that appraisal to demonstrate a greater empathy, perhaps helping the student to regulate their emotions rather than implementing a punitive response. The social and emotional competence of the teacher may also contribute to a classroom environment or climate that “may reinforce a teacher’s enjoyment of teaching, efficacy, and commitment to the profession, thereby creating a positive feedback loop that may prevent teacher burnout” (Jennings, 2015, p. 733).

Staff agreeing on common approaches to classroom management can also help when identifying behaviours and subsequent perceptions of situations in the classroom. This can assist in understanding causation, impacts, and interventions for behaviours across the whole school (Clarke, 2023; Quinlan & Hone, 2020). Individual teachers can hold different opinions of behaviour, just as parents may have different opinions about perception of behaviour, but staff working together to agree on what constitutes low to high-level behaviour classifications is important; it can lead to the development of an appropriate and relevant classroom support model for use by all teachers in a school (Clarke, 2023; Little, 2005). Using a Whole School Approach (WSA) can assist in the successful implementation of programs such as Positive Behaviour Support/Learning (PBS/PBL) or School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) . These will be examined later in the chapter.

2.3. Causes and motivations of behaviour

Understanding the function of behaviour, that being, what causes an individual to behave in particular ways in response to stimulus in the classroom, is complex and varied (Fox et al., 2022). Causes can range from social immaturity to a need for belonging by students,

through to difficulties experienced at home life or trauma responses (Brunzell, 2021). This can lead to the presentation of inappropriate or challenging behaviour in the classroom. The school environment can also lead to behaviours of concern. Boring curriculum content through to a classroom layout that is not conducive to learning, can also lead to difficult behaviour (Fox et al., 2022). Setting unclear limits, shaming, or even curtailing the experience of student success can also promote challenging behaviours in the classroom (Curwin et al., 2018).

Individuals may engage in disruptive or challenging behaviour in the classroom because of their developmental or social immaturity – their age or lack of social experience (Ye et al., 2021). Younger children are often unable to sit still for extended periods; they cannot prevent their bodies from moving or touching things around them. This can present as disruptive behaviour to a teacher trying to demonstrate concepts or provide instructions for tasks (Gootman, 2008). When students wriggle or cannot sit still, it can cause other students to be distracted, and a ripple effect of chatting may occur. Being aware of developmentally appropriate guidelines for each age group can help teachers see that students of a particular age may act in a manner beyond their control (Fox et al., 2022). A student may respond to a stressful situation by initiating their body's flight or fight response and managing the triggers that provoke this response will depend on their ability to handle the situation or their experiences in previous interactions; "what one person finds threatening in the environment, another person may not" (Hally, 2018, p. 46). Many students may have well-developed response systems, while others who do not will subsequently perceive certain situations in the classroom as a threat (Fox et al., 2022). Like the fight or flight response, an individual student's behaviour may respond to a room that is noisy or too bright by running away (flight) or that the work is too difficult and not engaging (freeze) (Gootman, 2008).

Some students may not have been taught how to act or respond in class situations or in ways that are deemed socially appropriate (Curwin et al. 2018). Previous responses of teachers

may have inadvertently reinforced behaviours deemed inappropriate (Hally, 2018). The feeling of belonging to a group could promote behaviours to ensure the student conforms with the group, even though they are inappropriate, such as calling out or acting out, “just to gain the acceptance of others” (Gootman, 2008, p. 105). Some students exhibit a need for recognition. They may try to gain the attention of parents or teachers by behaving well or by misbehaving (McDonald, 2023). Attention may be given for being friendly as well as for showing anti-social behaviour; in the latter case, the teacher may provide attention to the student acting out and in turn “encourage a large amount of misbehaviour in the classroom that is only because of students’ attention-seeking” (Yuan & Che, 2012, p. 144).

Student behaviour can reflect the adverse experiences to which they have been exposed (Brunzell et. al., 2019; Brunzell et. al., 2020). Trauma occurs in many forms, physical, sexual, or verbal, and in multiple other circumstances experienced by an individual student (Southall, 2023). Students who have been traumatised may “have an underdeveloped frontal cortex— the area where the brain does its high-level decision making— and an overdeveloped fight-or-flight reflex” (Curwin et al., 2018, p. 16). This might make it difficult for the student to focus during class time (Aupperle et al., 2012). Students may demonstrate challenging behaviour because of their own need to demonstrate power or control over another (Kilger et al., 2023). Students may present dominant or aggressive behaviour because of misdirected anger or resentment, not knowing how “to handle their strong feelings or how to express their anger constructively” (Gootman, 2008, p. 106).

Students can also act out due to feelings of powerlessness engendered by the draconian rules of the school. The constant reminders of the rules to follow and how to act can be challenging, so conformity is rejected (Curwin et al., 2018). Some students may choose to demonstrate behaviours because they find them fun and enjoy the responses from their peers or their teachers (Goldberg et al., 2023). Students may act out because they have been

“told for six hours every day where to go, (what time to be there, how long to take for basic biological necessities, which learning is relevant, what to learn, and how their learning will be evaluated. They are told rules, consequences, how to dress, and when to talk” (Curwin et al., 2018, p. 24).

The pressure of a competitive environment focused on testing or tests can lead to conflict and challenging behavioural responses. Students may find that the “pressure of testing continues to preoccupy both teachers and students” (Curwin et al., 2018, p. 22). Such a pressurised environment can leave little time for enjoyment or exploration of the curriculum. In other schools where the curriculum is too scripted or monotonous, difficult behaviour in the classroom may follow (Sun & Shek, 2012). Students may struggle to find school relevant and become disengaged and resistant to the curriculum. Their body language and behaviour align; “head down, hood up, and earphones plugged in— and look unmotivated; or they act out, unconcerned with the consequences of poor grades, a trip to the office, or a phone call home” (Curwin et al., 2018, p. 24). If students are made to feel shame about their results, opposition can arise. Some may then begin to hate school and then cycle through experiences of little success, leading to further acting out (Brunzell et al., 2021; Christoforou, 2018).

2.4 Behaviour support

Two terms used interchangeably when discussing difficult behaviour in the classroom are classroom management and behaviour support. Classroom management often involves the actions taken by the teacher to create an environment that supports the needs of students, while behaviour support relates to the behaviour presented in that class by students that requires managing (De Nobile et al., 2021). Classroom management can be defined as:

“The ability to regulate various elements in classroom teaching so that the teaching can proceed smoothly. This includes the ability to interact with students, to stimulate

students' learning motivation, to create a relaxing classroom environment, to organize various forms of teaching activities, and to manage students' learning behaviour and discipline in classroom teaching and so on" (Ye et al., 2021, p. 115).

The use of the word management has dated in recent years, with terminology now including more supportive or guiding phrases rather than the restrictive term *managing* (Behaviour Student Advice - Department of Education Victoria, 2022). Behaviour support instead of behaviour management is now the accepted terminology.

2.4.1 The continuum of behaviour support models

Varying models of behaviour support have been taught to PSTs in a variety of units at university. It is up to the provider to determine how the course should run (*Initial Teacher Education today*, (n.d)). The approach of each lecturer, the university's philosophy, and the final content of each ITE unit "could have been influenced by locally available and promoted materials, popular classroom management textbooks, coordinators' ideological belief system, or the comfort level of the unit coordinator" (O'Neill & Stephenson, 2012, p. 1133). The programs presented in ITE courses identify a wide variety of techniques but may lack guidance for application in particular circumstances (Myers & Holland, 2000).

Models used to apply when responding to behaviour in the classroom may follow frameworks which are very specific to psychological approaches such as behaviourism, or to the needs of individual school context (Yarra Me, 2022). Each approach is quite specific in teacher terminology and in classroom language use. Most importantly, the implementation of each approach is critical to its success in the classroom. Consistency among all staff when implementing behaviour support models relies on professional learning (which can be costly and time-consuming) as well as staff investment in that approach (which may not necessarily align with their teaching philosophy or their usual classroom style) (Quinlan & Hone, 2020).

Given the complexity of individual student needs, it is imperative that appropriate learning and development is provided to teachers in these areas before they step into the classroom (Clare, 2023; Woodcock & Reupert, 2013). Some teachers prefer to begin in the classroom using a baseline of responses such as low-level feedback to behaviour. This can be seen when small incremental steps that gently guide appropriate responses to behaviour in the classroom are presented (Rogers, 2015).

Behaviour support strategies which include low-level responses involve signalling (non-verbal and verbal), reminding, warning, ignoring, praising, and sometimes doing nothing in response to challenging behaviours (Gootman, 2008; Rogers, 2015). The focus is not on punitive responses but rather on a series of classroom strategies for teachers that work to maintain the dignity of both parties when facing challenging behaviours (Gootman, 2008; Rogers, 2015) (see Table 2 which outlines low-level responses to behaviours).

Table 2

Low-level responses to behaviours in the classroom.

<i>Type</i>	<i>Application</i>
Signalling	A verbal, written, or symbolic representation that is associated with the need to stop behaviour, such as a hand raised to stop students from chatting
Warnings	A verbal statement indicating this is the last time or asking for the behaviour to stop
Doing nothing	Ignoring the behaviour in the classroom

Note. From Gootman (2008); Rogers (2015).

School wide behaviour support models differ in application. They can include more teacher directed approaches through to more teacher student collaborative interactions. One of the seminal behaviour support models for the classroom was the approach suggested by Kounin and Gump (1958). They created preventative strategies which included teacher and lesson characteristics fundamental to preventing behaviours in the classroom. The varying elements of classroom life were the focus of this approach when discussing navigating behaviours in school contexts. One of these strategies used identified the term ‘withitness’. It encapsulated the action of the teacher who simultaneously monitors students by interacting, keeping eye contact, and roaming the room (Notar & Sorbet, 2020).

Over the years, subsequent iterations of Kounin and Gump’s (1958) approach have developed which reflect different continuum of influence found from the key aspects of the classroom, that being, the dynamic between teacher and student (McDonald, 2019). This continuum begins with a focus of the class held by the teacher (classified as interventionist which includes autocratic and authoritarian approaches) to more student-teacher interactions (interactionist approach) (Overland, 2020). Interactionist approaches include Logical Consequences (Martella, 2012), Reality Therapy (Glasser, 1992), PBS (Sugai & Horner, 2002), SWPBIS/SWPBS (Bradshaw et al., 2010) and Discipline with Dignity (Curwin et al., 2018). The zero-tolerance approach is one example of an authoritarian approach and has been adopted by several educational jurisdictions (e.g. Queensland) (Graham et al., 2023).

2.4.1.1 Interactionist behaviour support models

The Logical Consequences approach suggests that behaviour that is inappropriate is often motivated by the unconscious needs of the student to gain attention or exercise power over another in the classroom (Martella, 2011). This perspective notes that students can learn what motivates them and can therefore eliminate their inappropriate behaviour through the support of the teacher who can help them to understand why they act as they do. Through

positive interactions, students can be exposed to appropriate responses by experiencing natural, arbitrary, or logical consequences (Martella, 2011).

Reality Therapy, as proposed by William Glasser (1992), suggests that disruptive behaviours occur through a lack of positive interaction between the student and the teacher. The teacher disturbs students' need for power by meeting the need for love, passion, freedom, and fun through the creation of positive relationships between the teacher and student (Glasser, 1992). This evolves through student agency and voice in the classroom, with students being able to make decisions, and through the promotion of mutual respect and self-discipline (Overland, 2020). A warm and supportive classroom enables students to feel good about themselves. Mutual respect exists between the student and the teacher (Martella, 2011).

The Discipline with Dignity Approach highlights the relationship between the student and the teacher in the classroom. This interactionist approach focuses on identifying what each student needs from the teacher while discussing what the teacher needs from the student (Curwin et al., 2018). It highlights the importance of differentiation, that is, teaching the individuals in the room in accordance with their academic level or abilities. Identifying when a student may be bored due to high or low expectations and listening to students in an active manner to help defuse tricky situations are part of this approach (Jinot, 2018).

Positive Behaviour Support (PBS)(also known as Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL)) is an interactionist approach which aims to create positive social relationships among students and staff to prevent or minimise challenging behaviours (Sugai & Horner, 2002). PBS models include the design of individual student behaviour support plans while implementing preventive practices that, as a primary goal, target the entire school population. This approach includes components that are applied across the whole school setting, known as whole school approaches (WSA). They include setting behavioural expectations, teaching interpersonal

skills, providing positive reinforcement for meeting outcomes, monitoring goals, and involving all stakeholders in this process, as well as teaching prosocial behaviours and reducing the use of punitive strategies (Luiselli et al., 2005). Components of a WSA include the whole school coordinating elements of the curriculum, teaching and learning with family partnerships to construct an effective approach schoolwide (Spencer et al., 2022). This includes “modelling social-emotional competencies and providing continuous and consistent opportunities to practice these skills during everyday classroom situations” (Goldberg et al., 2019, p. 756). To achieve consistency of modelling, all the staff are trained in the agreed approach as well as extending learning to the family and community partnerships that exist within the school (Hudson et al., 2020).

Schoolwide Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS or SWPBS) seek to reduce behavioural problems through implementing PBS/PBL in a series of schoolwide directed strategies. It promotes prosocial behavioural interactions amongst students by working to ensure consistent responses from staff. The subsequent refinement of the consistency of responses is critical. If there is consistency across the school, then success is achieved (Quinlan & Hone, 2020). This is done through “schoolwide plans that clearly articulate positive behavioural expectations, provide incentives to students who meet those behavioural expectations, and establish a consistent strategy for managing student behaviour problems” (Bradshaw, et al., 2010 p. 133). Initial steps include identifying the causation of the behaviour and then developing tiered responses that aim to present behavioural problems from escalating (Fox et al., 2022).

The Multi-Tiered Support System (MTSS) is like the SWPBIS/SWPBS approach as it works to promote positive behaviour through working with staff, students, and parents (Hannigan & Hannigan, 2018). This approach seeks to understand why the behaviour is occurring by gathering data about behaviour and learning in that school setting (Fox et al.,

2022). Once the data is in, they make changes to the instructional environment, while implementing interventions such as social and emotional learning (SEL) frameworks and positive behavioural supports (Hart et al., 2021). Through the application of MTSS in schools, effective instruction is used which targets supports aimed at decreasing behavioural issues in the classroom with the increased application for learning in the classroom (Fallon et al., 2023). MTSS emphasises tiered approaches as well as learning and behavioural supports to provide an approach suitable for individual school contexts.

2.4.1.2 Authoritarian behaviour support models

Authoritarian methods contrast with the other classroom approaches by demarcating teacher control as a focus (Walker, 2009). The teacher has the right to determine the rules and routines and set up a discipline plan for the classroom which includes clarity about the outcomes if students misbehave. Teachers are informed not to accept excuses for misbehaviour from the students (Martella, 2011). One method that is classified under the authoritarian stance is the zero-tolerance approach (Birbalsingh, 2016). Zero-tolerance approaches are teacher-centred supporting systems of rewards and sanctions which often lead to removal from the classroom and detentions (Bennett, 2020).

2.5 School culture and climate

2.5.1 School Culture

School culture can be defined colloquially as the ways things are done around schools and describes “how teachers feel about their students, how administrators relate to teachers, what teachers consider professional attire, how teachers decorate their classrooms” (Kaplan et al., 2013, p. 32). School culture often aligns with or reflects any selected whole school behavioural approach, in their rules and policies (standards of learning and behaviour),

traditions and routines (established from the shared values of the school (Character Education Partnership, 2010)).

Culture is defined as the beliefs and values held by a group. This can be at a national or a local level and can describe a group of people (Kaplan et al., 2013). School culture can reflect a group's set of beliefs or values that they wish to be mirrored within the school grounds. It can guide responses to situations and reduce ambiguity regarding messages about behaviour in the classroom (McDonald, 2023). This can be created by "relationships, expectations, and behaviours among teachers, administrators, students, and parents" (Kaplan et al., 2013, p. 32). Staff, students, and the wider school community are connected through shared experiences of the school and the interactions that occur within the school (Bullock, 2011).

Within school culture, social norms exist. If a group within the school determines that handing in homework is valued or that chatting in class is acceptable, this social norm becomes the accepted behaviour in that group or culture (Bennett, 2020). These norms can influence the culture of a school which can be established by the teachers who work at the school to the cohort of families attending (Hinde, 2004). Parents can contribute to the culture of the school by their support of behavioural expectations and by their support of the school's ethos and mission. Parental support has been identified as one important influence on student behaviour; if students perceive "that their parents expect them to perform well in school, they are more likely to avoid problem behaviour and excel academically" (Bowen et al., 2012, p. 176). This might not always be achievable for every student.

Schools may represent their culture and expectations through visual representations. These include "mission statements, student work, banners, displays of past achievements, symbols of diversity, awards, trophies and plaques, halls of honour, mascots, historical artefacts and collections" (Deal et al., 2016, p. 38). The icons and rituals used to communicate culture

can include rites of passage and other symbols of importance to the school. They portray what is of value to the school (Hoy, 1990). The physical environment, including the buildings, gardens, and architecture, demonstrates symbolism such as religious artefacts or prosperity relating to their financial success or investments (Deal et al., 2016). Mission statements may be displayed on their websites, logos, brochures, and newsletters and can be co-created by staff and students with input from the broader community of parents (Young, 2023). Teachers employed at schools over many years may have contributed to the formation of the school values and the subsequent translation of these into routines and overall behavioural expectations (Hongboontri & Keawkhong, 2014). *Whitefriars* in Donvale, for example, is a Catholic all-boys school in Melbourne whose ethos is to produce compassionate, gentle men (*Whitefriars*, 2023). This differs with *Eltham High School's* vision and values. Their motto is 'Deeds Count' which aligns with their values that include the pursuit of excellence, individuality, creativity, social and environmental responsibility, and integrity (*Eltham High School*, 2023). *Ivanhoe Grammar School* shares its purpose on its website, stating that each student should aim to achieve their own personal best, not anyone else's (*Ivanhoe Grammar School*, 2023).

Living representations of school culture can exist in the form of principals or others in leadership. They present messages in "their words, actions, and nonverbal announcements" (Deal et al., 2016, p. 49). They embody the school's culture; however, it is their words and actions that establish the school's day-to-day climate, that is, the language used, the test results or standards they set, to the time leadership spends on certain school activities in the school, such as school tours and attendance at professional learning with the staff, or visiting classrooms (Morris et al., 2019). The style of leadership that the principal or other leaders demonstrate can evoke positive or negative reactions from the staff and the wider school community as the leadership styles will vary from individual to individual (Veletić et. al.,

2023). At times these leaderships styles can cause isolation and discord between teachers and leaders, creating feelings of leaders “being in an exclusive group” (Nguyen & Hunter, 2018, p. 558). The styles can range from transformational leadership (inspiring and motivating others to share their goals) to democratic leadership (engaging in collaboration with staff on decisions), contrasting with authoritative leadership (leaders taking all the decisions) (Bass, 2009; Hussain, 2017). While it is beyond the scope of this study to explore these in any detail, they are worth noting as these styles of leadership influence many areas of the school from the motivations of staff to the distribution of resources, staff resignations, and the following of school rules by students (Morris et al., 2019).

2.5.2 School climate

School climate is often referred to as the personality of the school, the day-to-day interactions within a school such as the “social characteristics of a school in terms of relationships among students and staff/teachers” (Maxwell et al., 2017). The school climate is complex and is one of the leading predictors of behavioural outcomes in a school (Maxwell et al., 2017). A school climate that emphasises positive attributes of students creates a sense of belonging, a valuing of the school as well as engenders a confident self-concept in students (Cohen et al., 2009). Students can flourish academically within a safe and responsive school environment. Encouraging students when they have made poor behaviour decisions to continue trying to make improvements and increase their capacity for change can also assist in developing a positive school climate (McDonald, 2019).

The conditions of the physical buildings that surround the school, as well as the symbols on the walls, all influence the climate of a school. Students may feel proud of the school buildings if they are emoting feelings of pride and respect them by picking up rubbish around them or disrespecting them by painting graffiti on them (Deal et al., 2016). Building conditions

can affect the levels of comfort that an individual student may feel when they are in them, conditions such as the ventilation, air conditioning, “building age, climate control, indoor air quality, lighting, acoustical control, design classifications and overall impression” (Kutsyuruba et al., 2015, p. 110). A connection between feelings of comfort or discomfort, that a student feels because of the state of the buildings has been shown to contribute to student behaviour and student learning (Magzamen et al., 2017).

Relationships between stakeholders are integral to developing a positive school climate. This overarching focus identifies the value of a positive connection between students and teachers within a school (Sethi & Scales, 2020). Strengthening and building relationships between those connected to the school is at the heart of a safe school environment. A positive school climate which “promotes cooperative learning, group cohesion, respect, and mutual trust” (Cohen et al., 2009, p. 186) leads to the development of student wellbeing and good social relationships between teacher and student (Forsberg et al., 2021). By fostering relationships, schools are more likely to seem welcoming and secure, contributing to positive learning outcomes for students. When relationships break down and there are inconsistencies in rules and expectations, schools are identified as unsafe and incidences of bullying may arise (Kutsyuruba et al., 2015).

Achieving a positive school climate has been identified by the National School Climate Center (NSCC) in America as containing five ‘buckets’ or areas of focus. They are safety, teaching and learning, institutional environment, interpersonal relationships, and social media (National School Climate Center, 2011). Within the bucket of safety is a focus on the physical, social, and emotional benefits for students arising from a decrease in risky behaviours (Block, 2011). When all buckets work in combination among the major stakeholders of the school community, an alignment of values and ideals is created (Cohen et. al., 2009). Similar components of a positive school climate as identified by the National School Climate Center

(NSCC) in New York, also exist in Australian school frameworks. According to the NSW Department of Education, a positive school climate develops when the elements of safety, teaching and learning, interpersonal relationships, and the environment all work together. Through healthy teacher-student relationships, students can feel safe and secure knowing that they have one adult beyond the family unit who cares about them. Providing a positive school learning climate makes students more likely to be engaged and subsequently show less inclination to misbehave (Evaluation, 2023b).

In New South Wales (NSW), a survey distributed to students called '*Tell Them From Me*' asked students to identify the behaviours they encountered in their classrooms that may indicate the norms and values of the school (*Tell them from me*, n.d.). This survey allowed schools to pivot and respond as needed, to align with the perceptions of the students. The Australian Capital Territory (ACT) has produced The Australian School Climate and School Identification Measurement Tool (*The Australian School Climate and School Identification Measurement Tool | ANU Research School of Psychology*, n.d). This tool identifies opinions from the school community about the school environment, including perceptions of wellbeing, engagement, and aggression levels. Tools such as these provide schools with opportunities to assess results and respond. They may do this through a multifaceted approach of engagement with students, teachers, and parents (Chen et al., 2005).

Creating a positive school climate through engagement requires the inclusion of three components, emotional, behavioural, and cognitive (Lombardi et al., 2019). Emotional includes how positive a student may feel about school, while behavioural reflects effort in school activities ranging from adhering to school expectations to effort in academic endeavours. Cognitive refers to self-regulatory behaviours that students demonstrate when participating in learning-related activities (Tomaszewski et al., 2023). In relation to measuring

levels of engagement, it has been found that students “attain higher academic achievement in schools with a positive school climate” (Lombardi et al., 2019, p. 2). Feeling positive about attending school can have multiple effects. One significant outcome of a positive school climate is the contribution it makes to a student’s general wellbeing (Aldridge & McChesney, 2018).

A positive school climate can also correlate with the level of teacher wellbeing of the school staff. How a teacher feels (teacher wellbeing) may impact responses to behaviour, which can then influence the school climate in a positive or a negative way, and vice versa (De Cordova et al., 2019). For example, teachers who feel positive, can manage work related stressors such as violent or disruptive behaviours in the classroom easier. The reverse, if a negative school climate exists, teachers may struggle to deal with the demands of the job (Lester et al., 2020). Positive professional relationships between staff who support one another can also contribute to the development of positive wellbeing amongst staff, who in turn, are able to respond appropriately to behaviours in the school. Social connections as well as “mutually supportive collegial relationships between teachers and school management are useful in developing a working community where problems can be discussed and shared, and potential solutions considered collaboratively” (De Cordova et al., 2019, p. 3).

2.6 The importance of wellbeing in schools

Creating a school-wide wellbeing approach alongside behavioural expectations and guidance approaches provides a framework for responding to behaviour in the classroom. Wellbeing approaches typically focus on outcomes related to mental health, however many undesirable behaviours exhibited by students in classrooms can be attributed to their lack of belonging, lack of self-esteem, and lack of engagement in the classroom and in their school (Goldberg et al., 2022). Combining wellbeing approaches with consistent expectations of

behaviour can make navigating behaviour easier for teachers and support students proactively (Quinlan & Hone, 2020). During adolescence, a lessening in their sense of belonging has been observed by students during this time when they have a greater need for positive relationships with non-parental adults (Neel & Fuligni 2013). Being seen and heard, coupled with a strong “sense of personal connection to their academic institution supports internalization of academic values, encourages academic-supporting behaviours, and therefore, plays a role in academic success” (Neel & Fuligni, 2013, p. 680). If students are connected and feel success, they can self-regulate, and vice versa (Ulmanen et al., 2016). For students who “experience a high level of wellbeing and engagement, their learning curve and learning outcomes will be optimal” (Goldberg et al., 2022, p. 149).

A publication by The Department of Education Victoria (2023) identified the importance of wellbeing in schools and articulated strategies for implementation into the classroom for all Victorian teachers. Its High Impact Wellbeing Strategies (HIWS) are practical strategies for teachers that promote student wellbeing and better teacher-student relationships. They highlight connections between learning, engagement, and behaviour (HIWS, 2023). The HIWS document, created in consultation with Monash University, provides explicit frameworks for application in schools, proposing seven strategies. Specific to classroom management and behaviour supports, HIWS 3 strategy stipulates that teachers must establish and maintain clear classroom expectations that are consistent with the school approach (HIWS, 2023). Teachers are directed towards further departmental resources such as behaviour guidance and behaviour policy materials to assist with implementation.

Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) has also released research relating to wellbeing for learning and development which focuses on belonging and connection in schools (*Wellbeing for Learning*, 2024). This research asserts that “a positive relationship with the school community can shape a student’s emotional, behavioural, and cognitive

engagement with schooling and influence academic outcomes” (*Wellbeing for Learning*, 2024, p. 3). Some strategies include developing classroom rules and routines that focus on working as a team, promoting high expectations in academic learning, introducing peer mentoring, and fostering relationships with students by participating in activities such as shared lunches (*Wellbeing for Learning*, n.d). The development of routines within a wellbeing framework can mitigate challenging behaviours (McDonald, 2023).

Teacher interactions and connections with students are critical to student engagement in the classroom. The strength and quality of a teacher-student relationship can have a significant impact on a child’s social and behavioural adjustment in the classroom. Studies have shown that if this relationship is conflicted, problematic behaviours increase (Walker & Graham, 2021). Positive emotions are beneficial for learning, self-regulation, and better behaviour (Tambyraja et al., 2015; Wagle et al., 2018). Negative emotions “undermine motivation and potentially reduce students’ willingness to learn leading to low performance” (Camacho-Morles et al., 2021, p. 1080). Bowlby’s attachment theory (1982) suggests that, if a child is closely connected with a primary caregiver, the connection can affect a child’s social behaviour and subsequent readiness to learn. In addition, “positive teacher-child relationships provide children with the emotional security necessary to engage fully in learning activities and scaffold the development of key social, behavioural, and self-regulatory competencies needed in the school environment” (Baker, 2006, p. 212). Teachers report that interactions with students who display challenging and disruptive behaviours are higher in conflict and lower in closeness. They suggest that these same students are “difficult to teach and less likeable” (Van Bergen et al., 2020, p. 178). A positive relationship with a non-familial adult provides a student with opportunities to develop social, emotional, and behavioural competencies (Baker, 2006). These relationships can lead to “reduced levels of disruptive behaviours, suspension, and dropout” (Quin, 2017, p. 373). When there is an alignment of gender between the student and

the teacher (particularly for boys), and a positive relationship exists, school adjustment is enhanced (Murray et al., 2008).

Achievement emotions have been found to be important for student communication, for their ability to collaborate with others, and for critical thinking and problem-solving. Mastery of these skills leads to enjoyment in learning, bolstering their motivation to continue with the tasks at hand. If activities are enjoyable and rewards are gained, then students will continue to attend school. They will be motivated to learn and to direct their efforts towards additional tasks, increasing their opportunities to succeed academically (Camacho-Morles et al., 2021; HIWS, 2023). Students' academic motivation can also be negatively influenced by friendship groups. A low expectation of success and the lack of valuing of their schoolwork, coupled with poor school belonging, correlate together (Ulmanen et al., 2016). If a student cohort has low expectations of success in schoolwork and places little value upon it, disconnection may occur and disruptive behaviours may then arise in the classroom. By contrast, students will attend and academic results will improve if they find the school environment to be "more enjoyable, worthwhile, and interesting when they believe that others in the environment like and value them" (Goodenow, 1993, p. 68).

2.6.1 Wellbeing approaches

Many wellbeing approaches implemented in schools come from the framework identified under the umbrella term of positive psychology (Kern, 2015). Positive psychology focuses on individual development by providing opportunities to develop prosocial skills such as resilience, gratitude, belonging, and connection among students (Allen et al., 2022; Goldberg et al., 2022). Some of these wellbeing approaches are derived from Martin Seligman's PERMA framework (Kern, 2015; Waters, 2011) or may include components from the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) framework (*Our History – CASEL*, 2021). A school's positive

psychology framework has “been linked to academic achievement, fewer risky behaviours, and better physical health in adulthood” (Kern, 2015, p. 262).

Use of Martin Seligman’s PERMA framework in secondary schools is a model that can apply in areas such as homeroom and pastoral care (Allen et al., 2022; Goldberg et al., 2022). A PERMA (P: Positive Emotion, E: Engagement, R: Positive Relationships, M: Meaning, A: Accomplishments) framework can be broken down into individual units that cover each letter or area which schools might focus, perhaps one each term. Activities are centred on each of the overarching terms, building on the personal skills of each student (Allen et al., 2022; Goldberg et al., 2022).

SEL includes five competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (Jagers et. al., 2019). They focus on the needs of the students and work on helping them to navigate events in their lives which they might perceive as stressful. The focus is on prevention rather than reaction when problem-solving (Cahill & Dadvand, 2020). SEL focuses on the processes one may use to manage emotions or “feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions” (Jagers et al., 2019, p. 152). The SEL framework provides guiding principles for educators in opening conversations with students to identify the issues they are facing, develop goals and strategies to address them, and review actions collaboratively (Ertelt, 2022).

2.6.2 Wellbeing programs

There are many wellbeing programs that can be applied to schools based on the principles of positive psychology which focus on the positive conditions that contribute to improved state of wellbeing (Be You, n.d.). Schools can implement wellbeing programs guided by the five competencies of the SEL program (Macklem, 2020) to shape their activities, or they

may opt to use PERMA principles. They may even decide to implement a different approach across the whole school with variations of wellbeing components to focus on the needs of their cohort of students; they may, for example, focus on resilience, gratitude, or grit (Waters, 2011). Often concepts and strategies are embedded across the whole school in policies, curriculum, and day-to-day activities for maximum effectiveness (Goldberg et al., 2022). Examples of potential wellbeing programs that are available in Victoria include The Berry Street Education Model (BSEM, n.d), Bounce Back (Bounce Back n.d), and The Mindfulness in Schools Programme (Kuyken, 2013).

Be You is an educational online resource that provides educators with information to create positive and responsive learning communities (*Home*, 2024). It offers a directory of wellbeing programs that schools can apply in their schools, all of which have been assessed in collaboration with the Murdoch Children's Research Institute (MCRI) and Monash University. The programs within the directory include a variety of programs which schools can use, knowing they have undergone assessment regarding the aims of the program and the overall cost for implementation (*Home*, 2024).

The Berry Street Education Program is one program which can be used in Victorian schools which incorporates five key domains: Body, Engagement, Relationships, Stamina, and Character (Berry Street, 2024). Their courses explore trauma, influences on child development and the ability to learn, as well as how to strengthen student-teacher relationships (Berry Street, 2024; *Home*, 2024). The Bounce Back program gives children and young people practical skills and strategies that promote social and emotional wellbeing, while The Mindfulness in Schools Programme is an intervention in mindfulness which involves "learning to direct attention to immediate experience, moment by moment, with open-minded curiosity and acceptance" (Kuyken, 2013, p. 126). This program works to improve students' reactions to stressors by controlling their reactive responses in different situations (Dunning et al., 2022).

2.7 Individual factors of teachers

The question of whether one is born a good teacher with stable attributes, or whether a good teacher is created, is a topic that is often explored in relation to the value and importance of ITE courses (Bowles et al., 2014). The ‘born a teacher’ hypothesis, which suggests that PSTs arrive with a particular set of predispositions, has met with resistance from many educators. It detracts from the demonstrations of perseverance by eventually successful teachers, dismissing the value of the guidance that individuals receive from mentors or tutors over their teaching careers (Klaussen & Kim, 2021). The detractors believe that finding a set of attributes that an individual demonstrates over a period (identified as stable attributes) weakens the discussion around future improvements to teaching practice in ITE courses (Harrison, 2005).

Identifying a combination of attributes or individual characteristics which contribute to a successful teacher, is a task being undertaken by *The University of Melbourne*. The Teaching Capability Assessment Tool (TCAT) tests PSTs before commencing their ITE studies to establish whether a particular combination of skills leads to success as a teacher. It asks questions about their experience, motivation to teach, and their disposition (Teacher Capability Assessment Tool, n.d). The tool explores the individual factors that influence how and why teachers work in particular ways, interrogating attributes as well as social interactions. By assessing the individual prior to beginning their course at university, stable dispositions may be identified in teachers (Teacher Capability Assessment Tool, n.d).

Self-efficacy and personal characteristics are two components within an individual that contribute in varying ways regarding how they perceive and respond to behaviour in the classroom.

2.7.1 Self-Efficacy

A sense of self-efficacy within individuals has been defined as the beliefs that are “people's domain-specific perceptions of their ability to perform the actions necessary to achieve valued goals” (Gallagher, 2012, p. 314). It is identified as “a set of judgments about one’s ability to perform a certain action or to deal with a specific situation” (Lopes et al., 2017, p. 471).

Albert Bandura (1977) proposed the theory of self-efficacy, articulating that the presence of perceived efficacy within an individual can influence the choice of activities that one may undertake when there is an expectation of success. These expectations might determine the effort that one expends and how long an individual may “persist in the face of obstacles and aversive experiences. The stronger the perceived self-efficacy, the more active the efforts” (Bandura, 1977, p. 194). If one determines that they cannot cope or the action that they are wishing to take is beyond their ability, then “they will avoid transactions with stressful aspects of their environment” (Bandura, 1977, p. 203). If an individual perceives themselves to lack the skills required to complete a certain activity, then they may view themselves to have “low self-efficacy and view activities with a sense of futility” (Bandura, 1977, p. 204). If one perceives a good outcome, then there is a likelihood that individuals will persist with the event they are engaging in (Bandura, 1977). So, in essence, individuals will weigh up the event or task in their mind and may make decisions about the efforts to use in those situations depending on their successful outcome (Bandura, 1977).

In the classroom, self-efficacy of teachers refers to the ability to persist in a situation and to be confident in applying a strategy when facing a challenging classroom environment (Lozano et al., 2023). A presence of self-efficacy can influence how a teacher demonstrates care, emotion, or even motivation in the classroom (Teacher Capability Assessment Tool,

n.d). A specific measurement of self-efficacy for teachers, called the Teacher Self-Efficacy (TSE) scale was developed by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001). It sought to identify the presence of self-efficacy in teachers by measuring the relationship between teacher effectiveness, wellbeing, and job satisfaction. It examines the efficacy that a teacher has for “instructional strategies, efficacy for classroom management, and efficacy for student engagement” (Lozano et al., 2023, p.2). These indicators revealed a positive correlation between classroom management effectiveness and a high level of self-efficacy. The indicators suggest that an authoritarian teacher may have low self-efficacy (low self-belief and confidence in themselves and others), while teachers high in self-efficacy allow students to be more independent (Lopes et al., 2017).

2.7.2 *Personal characteristics*

Personal characteristics encapsulate the characteristics that are personal to everyone. They can be identified as character traits which have been defined as traits that are “reflected in thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. They exist in degrees and can be measured as individual differences” (Park et. al., 2004, p. 603). They are conceptually like personality traits which are broad and apply across many individuals (Bleidorn & Denissen, 2015) yet they are often associated with moral values or attributes that operate to produce specific outcomes in different settings, contexts, and situations (Nofle et al., 2011). It has also been proposed that character traits can often appear or be more relevant in some situations than others (Blenidorn & Denissen, 2015). Personal characteristics or character traits can include some of the following terms “brave, careful, cheerful, clever, confident, considerate, curious, dishonest, foolish gloomy, grumpy, honest, intelligent, irresponsible, patient, reliable, selfish, ungrateful, wicked” (Manyak, 2007, p. 575). There are many more that can be considered in this list.

One personal characteristic or character trait is the concept of patience or to be patient. Patience is defined as “having the power to wait” (Bülbül & Arslan, 2017, p. 1633) and include

both affective and behavioural characteristics ie. waiting (behavioural) and being calm (affective) (Bülbül & Arslan, 2017). People who are patient are often described as this is their disposition, or those who wait patiently it might be viewed as a state (Schniker, 2012) while others might present as being less emotional than others by “showing less reaction than expected in a challenging situation” (Bülbül & Izgar, 2017, p. 159).

Having patience when interacting with students, can influence responses to behaviours in the classroom (Bülbül & Arslan, 2017). When using the definition of patience within the classroom, it identifies teachers as “calmly dealing with challenging or unsatisfactory situations and delayed outcomes” (Zhang, 2022, p. 2). It refers to the ability of a teacher to tolerate unexpected behaviours as well as persevere. It has been identified as remaining “calm mentally and behaviourally as they wade through undesirable outcomes of their teaching until they achieve their desired outcomes” (Zhang, 2022, p. 3).

2.8 Professional Experience

Professional experience is teaching practice undertaken under supervision in school settings, known as professional or field experience, practical, or placement (Johnston, 2010). Professional experience is a critical component of ITE (Curtis et al. 2019), one that is most valued by PSTs (Wyatt & O’Neill, 2021). It is an opportunity for PSTs to integrate ideas presented in coursework and apply them to the classroom (Jones et al., 2016). The learning that takes place during placements provides opportunities to engage in teaching under the supervision of a teacher mentor (TM) in a classroom and supported by a tertiary supervisor (TS) (Wyatt & O’Neill, 2021). While on placement PSTs identify the required knowledge and skills of a successful teacher (Johnston, 2016). There are many positive outcomes from participating in professional experience which include “working with more experienced teachers and professional collaboration.... opportunities to work with and learn from other

teachers” and opportunities to increase their self-efficacy in the classroom by being supported when initiating “instructional strategies, classroom management and student engagement” (Symes et al., 2023, p.2).

Many PSTs experience a successful placement, contributing to a higher self-efficacy for the future as an educator (Symes et al., 2023). PSTs who have positive experiences will “likely begin their careers with higher levels of self-efficacy” (VanLone et al., 2022, p. 2), will “have a strong belief in their abilities...are more resilient when faced with challenges, are more willing to try new strategies to help students succeed, and consistently put forth effort” (VanLone et al., 2022, p. 2). Being able to perform the actions of a teacher, demonstrate appropriate interactions with students, and have this positively endorsed by a mentor is critical (Symes et al., 2023). Positive outcomes have been found to increase teacher retention and improve the perception of overall job satisfaction (VanLone et al., 2022). Individuals with low self-efficacy identify an intention to quit their studies and abandon teaching (Symes et al., 2023). Engaging in a positive face-to-face professional experience develops:

- “Self-efficacy for instructional strategies (i.e. perceived ability to use a range of strategies to increase and assess student understanding)
- self-efficacy for classroom management (i.e. the perceived ability to manage student behaviour, especially disruptive behaviour); and
- self-efficacy for student engagement (i.e. perceived ability to motivate and engage students)” (Symes et al., 2023, p. 1).

Although professional experience can contribute positively in many ways to the development of the PST, it can also be perceived as the most stressful and challenging component of the ITE course (Johnston, 2016). Staffroom climate and concerns about competency, fuel the stress levels of many PSTs during their placements (Matoti & Lekhu,

2016). Navigating the plethora of existing relationships between staff at their placement school can be difficult. PSTs may encounter a welcoming school climate or the opposite, a lack of welcome, and may feel ill at ease. PSTs identify the staff rooms as barometers of welcome, with positive or negative feelings paramount. They experience “unease, and there were instances where social interactions led students to feel isolated, unwelcome, destabilised and occasionally victimised” (Johnston, 2010, p. 312). The evaluative component of the professional experience can create anxiety for some PSTs. The reliance on a supervisor (the TM) to assess their performance, can be viewed as difficult for many PSTs. They worry “about managing and maintaining discipline in the classroom and dealing decisively with the students who misbehave” (Matoti & Lekhu, 2016, p. 304).

Professional experience also provides opportunities to observe and respond to behaviours over time and in different contexts (Bradbury & Acquaro, 2022). Having opportunities to practise implementation of various strategies, and to identify which approach works, involves multiple occasions of response in the classroom and discussion of experiences with teaching practitioners. Knowing which approach to use requires practice. Recently graduated teachers reported that they felt only somewhat prepared to manage a range of problematic student behaviours based on their coursework preparation at university (O’Neill, 2014). Prior to attending placement, PSTs may have covered behaviour topics in their ITE courses in great depth, or only broadly discussed approaches, while other students may have been assigned further preparatory reading (Woodcock & Reupert, 2013). Strategies used by PSTs while on placement were commonly identified as related to rewards and corrections. The reactive strategies were used most frequently, rather than preventative strategies (stopping behavioural issues from occurring) (Woodcock & Reupert, 2013). This use of reactive strategies was found to lead “to an exacerbation of the disruptive behaviour rather than a resolution of it” (McGarr, 2021, p. 274). PSTs also were found to use “lower-level strategies

such as proximity control and giving warnings as opposed to strategies such as contacting a student's parents, the principal or other professionals" (Woodcock & Reupert, 2013, p. 92). It can be difficult for PSTs to respond appropriately to challenging behaviour without relevant information about the students concerned (Mikuluc & Hamman, 2020). Understanding the needs of individual students in the classroom is critical to the implementation of effective responses and strategies. Teachers can feel "more anger toward children when they think children are responsible for their disruptive behaviours...and (sic) will endorse the appropriateness of more punitive strategies toward students" (Mikami et al, 2019, p. 930).

When professional experiences are not prioritised in schools, preparation for incoming placement students is minimal. Schools may be unprepared. With a "lack of formal preparation for site-based supervisors...teachers typically focus on the learning of pupils in their classrooms and not on the process of learning to teach" (Curtis et al., 2019, p. 78). Central to a high-quality professional experience is the presence of supervising teachers who demonstrate commitment and trust, together with a strong partnership with the university (Toe et al., 2020). Finding and providing matched professional experience for PSTs takes time. The administrative processes which match up the myriad of different subject combinations that PSTs require for their teaching experiences are complex. Periods when teaching staff are available to take a PST, and when it is convenient for them, are limited. The responsibility of supervising PSTs can be time-consuming, seen as an additional obligation that they may not have time or inclination to meet (Contributor, 2023). Teachers may decline to host PSTs due to a lack of remuneration and lack of time allowance, leaving the pool of options for placement supervision narrow (Report of the Quality Initial Teacher Education Review, 2022). Without support from schools to undertake professional experience opportunities with real and engaging experiences, PSTs have few experiences in a variety of situations. They cannot practise relevant strategies or implement conceptual ideas relating to individual students in the classroom, nor

experience dealing with a variety of situations (Report of the Quality Initial Teacher Education Review, 2022). Darling Hammond (2007), in an exploration of placement duration, indicated that longer professional experiences were more effective in preparing PSTs for future classroom experiences. Opportunities in multiple settings were also important so that PSTs could understand and navigate different school settings (Bradbury & Acquaro, 2022).

2.8.1 Teacher Mentors (TM)

A key stakeholder in the professional experience, is the role of the school-based mentor. This role is often referred to as mentor, Teacher Mentor (TM) or even school-based coach (Bradbury & Acquaro, 2022). The TM works at the school in the subject area the PST is allocated to teach during placement. A small amount of money per day is allocated to supervisors during the placement. In a report undertaken by the Australian Deans Council of Education and commissioned by the Federal Department of Education and Training in 2017 (pre-COVID-19), it was suggested that more information about placement costs was needed to ensure that professional experience placements were both available and of high quality, such placements being critical to the overall preparation of PSTs (Professional Experience in Initial Teacher Education, 2017).

TMs perform their mentoring role in various ways. They bring different experiences, people skills, and mentoring abilities to the task, while having varying amounts of training to undertake this role (VIT, 2022: Mentoring Capability Framework and Teacher Mentor Programs). The interactions that PSTs have with their TMs also vary, affecting the professional experience in positive or negative ways depending on the strength of the relationship between the parties (Johnston, 2016). The establishment of a positive relationship between the mentor and PST can influence progress made in the placement (Johnston, 2016). PSTs may behave in a certain way to ensure they complete the placement, regardless of any difference in behaviour management approach from their supervisors.

Reasons for TMs taking on the responsibility of supervising a PST can differ. These include ‘giving back’ to the profession by developing teachers for the next generation through mentoring early career teachers (Cavanagh & Prescott, 2014). Being introduced to new and innovative ideas to use in the classroom through observing a PST may enhance the mentors own classroom practice (Cavanagh & Prescott, 2014). Teacher Mentors report that the presence of another adult in the room often led to the invigoration of their teaching practice as they felt compelled to demonstrate high-quality practice, to model such practice for the PST to emulate (Bradbury & Acquaro, 2022). A significant benefit for schools taking on a PST is the opportunity for them to identify potential employees for the future. It is a chance to view potential employees and create connections with them while giving them the opportunity to view the school in a positive light (Cavanagh & Prescott, 2014).

PSTs are assessed on a variety of competencies and standards during the professional experience such as the teaching assessment tool (AITSL, 2023). Such assessments are reliant on the perception of success by another teacher or a supervisor such as a TM. If a relationship between a PST and a teacher mentor is poor, a PST may feel they cannot act as they would if this class were their own; they report “instances where teachers had attempted to exert control over the structure of class lessons, dictating what was to be taught and how – in the students’ views detracting from the ownership they needed to feel over their work” (Johnston, 2010, p. 315). The threat of not passing the placement unit could hang over their heads, leading PSTs to manage behaviour in the classroom in the manner preferred by the TM because they sense “a lack of trust in their abilities” (Johnston, 2010, p. 314). PSTs might feel compromised, obliged to try to figure out whether they should conform to the TM’s advice, ignore their own values, or stand firm in their convictions and risk the criticism of their mentor (Johnston, 2016). The PST’s need to show proficiency, may lead to confusion for the individual student in the classroom and the PST experiencing a loss of confidence (McGarr, 2021). Some PSTs have

reported feeling like a burden on their mentor, or feeling as though they were getting in the way. Others indicated a lack of information regarding individual student needs, or an absence of appropriate feedback (Johnston, 2010). This may, in turn, affect their responses to behaviour and feel compelled to respond in the manner that the TM suggests. Alternatively, PSTs might end up simply observing the management of the challenging behaviour by the mentor and have no ownership over the result (Mikuluc & Hamann, 2020).

2.8.2 Tertiary Supervisors (TS)

Tertiary Supervisors (TS) or academic university supervisor, are another key stakeholder in the professional experience. They are representatives of the university who also assess the PST and act as a liaison between the school, the teacher mentor, the university, and the PST (Bradbury & Acquaro, 2022). Often the TS has met neither the TM nor the PST prior to the professional experience placement. Whether the TS has undergone training in their role varies from university to university. TSs, who are university educators, can be perceived as having no real-world experience (Manton et al. 2021). Some supervisors may be teacher-focused employees with a foot in both camps (schools and universities)(Bradbury & Acquaro, 2022). If the TS falls into this category, known as the expert-practitioner category, they are “likely to have had extensive experience in schools...the expert-practitioner is aware of the practicalities of day-to-day teaching and can offer knowledgeable and practical solutions” (Manton et al. 2021, p. 337). In this scenario, the TSs offer a supportive voice from the university to the PST who may have found the placement school unwelcoming (Bradbury & Acquaro, 2022).

2.9 Chapter summary

This chapter presented a variety of literature on the topic of behaviour in classrooms. Individual theories articulate why behaviour occurs in the classroom range from explanations

relating to context or teacher control (Aina et al., 2015; McDonald, 2019). Behaviour might occur in the classroom for reasons such as boredom, attention, or a need to exert control over others (Gootman et al., 2008). Establishing a wellbeing approach in a school such as The Berry Street Model (Berry Street, n.d) has been shown to support student engagement and belonging. The presence of a positive school climate can contribute to a reduction in aggression in schools (Kutsyuruba et al., 2015). What was seen in the plethora of literature related to behaviour, was that behaviour can occur for several reasons in different contexts. Having self-efficacy or utilising varying personal characteristics can also influence perception of behaviour in the classroom. Key stakeholders in the professional experience such as the teacher mentor (TM) play a vital role in the experience of the PST and their emerging self-efficacy in the classroom (Johnson, 2010; McGarr, 2021). PSTs can also be influenced in their decisions by the presence of their TM during their professional experience when they encounter behaviour in the classroom (Mikuluc & Hamann, 2020).

Chapter Three

In this chapter, the interpretivist paradigm that underpins the research is explored and connected to the study's conceptual framework. The framework combined two theoretical approaches, the first from Amartya Sen (1997) and the second from Urie Bronfenbrenner (1995). This combined conceptual framework resulted in 'Uniting Perspectives: Integrating Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Model (PPCT) (1995) with Amartya Sen's Capability Approach (CA) (1997) (PPCT x CA)'.

3.1 Paradigm

An interpretive paradigm guided the design of this research. Interpretivist paradigms are often associated with qualitative research and inquiries where the focus is on reality as subjective and socially constructed (Dean, 2018). It was important in this research to identify what is understood as truth based on the perceptions and beliefs of the person being studied (Dean, 2018). In this research, that truth was the individual Pre-Service Teacher's (PSTs) perspectives on behaviour - how they constructed it, and what they considered it to be. From an ontological perspective, the interpretivist paradigm focuses on social construction. In this paradigm, the concept of truth acknowledges that perceptions of reality vary from individual to individual; they are subjective in nature. Individuals interpret their own understandings or knowledge they wish to share (McChesney & Aldridge, 2019). This research focused on individual PSTs and the subjective responses to each situation in which they found themselves while on placement in secondary schools, affirming that "interpretivists believe reality is... subjective... and socially constructed" (Dean, 2018, p. 3). This paradigm connected to the ontological constructivist perspective and interpretivist epistemological approach, bringing ideas together with individual perceptions. Using the interpretive paradigm (connecting to the

social construction of the individual) (Lincoln & Guba, 1990), the knowledge acquired throughout this research was connected to the participants via the context of the research, “meaning that the products of interpretivist research are not universally applicable theories or laws but, rather, rich and contextually situated understandings” (McChesney & Aldridge, 2019, p. 227).

3.2 Conceptual framework

The emphasis on the subjective world of the individual in the interpretive approach continued into the conceptual framework. The conceptual framework was used to articulate the relationship between experiences and decision-making in the classroom of the PST. It was these experiences of the PST that led to their perception of behaviour and their decisions, in the context of their knowledge and understanding (Van der Putten, 2017).

The term capability has often been associated with a measurement of achievement, as noted by its use in many of the standards and tools employed across multiple sectors. One such tool is the Victorian Early Childhood Teachers Capability Assessment Guide which articulates teacher success as achievable through a deeper understanding of “what is meant by exemplary teaching practice in the early years” (Early Childhood Teacher Professional Standards and Supports | Victorian Government, n.d; p. 7). Early childhood teachers must demonstrate achievement in several areas to show capability in teaching, including leadership, expert teaching skills, providing advice to parents and other staff members, and high-level pedagogical skills (Early Childhood Teacher Professional Standards and Supports | Victorian Government, n.d). This tool offers an exploration of the measures of capability by focusing on measuring skill achievement or building expertise.

The Victorian Public Sector Commission (VPS) has also developed a Capability Framework with seven interrelated capabilities. These capabilities range from the development

of relationships to the creation of change in an organisation (Australian HR Institute, 2023). Descriptions of each capability are provided, using phrases such as ‘standard of achievement’ and ‘a goal to complete’.

In reference to both examples, it was noted that the term capability was often used without a recognised definition to accompany it (VECTA Capability Assessment Guide, 2022). The term capability in both situations, implied an understanding of the term to infer proficiency or a measurement of a skill acquired according to an external measurement.

In exploring Amartya Sen’s (1997) Capability Approach (CA), the term capability included the consideration of individual perceptions as a vital component of their approach. Sen (1997) argues that, although we all have an abundance of resources, it is how we use these resources and what we do with them that demonstrates achievement. It is the value that is placed on these resources by the individual that determines the capability (success), not simply a utilitarian economic measurement (Hirai, 2021). This theory from Sen (1997) highlights why a teacher may select a strategy in response to behaviour given their value on relationships or other aspects that they value in the classroom.

In seeking to further understand the perceptions and influences that may affect PST’s decision-making, a bioecological theory was also examined. Urie Bronfenbrenner’s (1995) bioecological model identifies the multiple experiences and influences in an individual’s life. Recognising the diverse array of experiences that an individual may have throughout the course of their lives, and the importance of these on their development, guided the decision to select this theory. The bioecological theory acknowledges that no one’s set of experiences is the same as anyone else’s (Bronfenbrenner, 1995) and combines well with Sen’s (1997) approach to focus on our own set of experiences which can be used in a variety of ways, depending on the preference by one individual.

Commonalities of terms across both approaches and models were noted when interrogating these frameworks. *Person, social, and environment* featured heavily in both Bronfenbrenner's (1995) model and Sen's (1997) CA. When these were brought together, the ensuring framework afforded an acknowledgement that what an individual may value because of their own experiences can and will influence their decision-making in the classroom. What one individual values may differ significantly from another person, even when facing the same behaviours, for a myriad of reasons. Each of the two approaches is examined in more detail below.

3.2.1 Capability Approach

Amartya Sen (1979 – 2000) was an economist-philosopher who first pioneered the Capability Approach (CA). This approach arose from economic perspectives, using terms which included evaluation, resources, and utilitarianism. Sen (1979 – 2000) continued to evolve economic ideas to include ideas relating to wellbeing such as the identification of how people choose to be and choose what to do. Sen (1997) found that many earlier theoretical ideas did not explain how and why people use their allocation of resources. The notion of capabilities, as the success that is associated with a resource when it is used, was born.

Sen (1997) proposed two major components as part of the Capability Approach (CA): *capabilities* and *functionings*. Capabilities are matters linked to the doing and being of an individual, while functionings is a key part of doing and being. Put simply, how one decides to use a capacity or ability at their disposal is the capability, while the functioning is being *able* to do this. Functionings include the ability to have friendships, being part of a family, and being employed. Functionings are often classified as achievements, while the opportunities to show what is of value to their states of being and doing are known as capabilities (Robeyns, 2006). These functionings can be identified as “the doings and beings that people can achieve if they

so choose — their opportunity to do or be such things as being well-nourished, getting married, being educated, and travelling; functionings are capabilities that have been realized” (Robeyns & Fibieger Byskov, 2021, para 1). Not everyone will decide to do all these things. In turn, what a teacher may value as being important could affect the decisions they make in the classroom and the outcomes of those decisions. They may wish to implement a particular pedagogical or behaviour management strategy into the classroom, but it will only be viewed as successful if it achieves the outcome the teacher values. A teacher has the option to do this (functionings) in their classroom because they are a teacher, and it is their classroom. Whether they have *support* to do this from leadership, management, parents, and students can affect the implementation. How they use resources at their disposal in implementing this strategy can affect the view of this functioning as successful or not (Robeyns, 2006).

The ability to convert resources, according to Sen (1997), relied on three conversion factors. The first, *personal*, were those factors internal to the person, such as their physical condition, intelligence, and sex. The second, *social*, were those factors related to public policies and social norms, while the third, *environmental*, were those factors that arose from a person’s locale. In relation to a resource such as a computer, for instance, it will be utilised differently by different people. First, on the *personal* level, usage will depend on whether an individual can type or can read the font on the computer. It can also affect them from the *social* perspective if they are from a low SES area and have never used a computer before and do not know how to use it. From an *environmental* perspective, they may not have internet access so cannot make the most of this resource. To fully understand whether a resource has improved a person’s wellbeing, it is important to know more about them, to identify how they will use the resource, and to know the value they ascribe to it (Buhwamatsiko Tumuheki et al. 2016).

Sen (1997) argued that capability can involve making decisions and tracking how these decisions work to remove obstacles. One can measure an individual’s actions or responses that

arise from their decision-making, exploring how they affect others (Walker & Unterhalter, 2007). How individuals benefit from resources can be determined by their choices and their needs (Dalkilic & Vadeboncoeur, 2016). The three components (*personal, social, and environmental*) play a significant part in the decisions that individuals make. PSTs make decisions in the classroom daily; with the individual or personal components they value influencing these decisions. Each response made by the PST affects students in a variety of ways, ranging from what and how the curriculum is being taught to responding to behaviours displayed in the classroom.

Using the lens of the CA to discuss the perceptions of PSTs when facing behaviours in the classroom can provide insight into the reasons for their choice of response strategies. PSTs are informed by their perception of the strategy's effectiveness and by the value they ascribe to their response or that strategy at that time (Taylor et al. 2015). *Personal* factors can include the PST's experiences up to this point in their lives, their temperament, self-efficacy, and their gender. *Environmental* factors could include the type of school where the PST is located, the culture of the school and the availability of resources. *Social* factors include the PST's understanding of social norms or the power relations observed at the placement school, such as the mentor relationship that exists at the time of measurement (Robeyns, 2009).

3.2.2 Bioecological Theory

Urie Bronfenbrenner (1973 - 1979) was a seminal theorist in the bioecological approach. Bronfenbrenner (1973 – 1979) sought to examine the effects of interactions and relationships of a person over the course of their lives by identifying the influences of these interactions and how they varied from person to person. This was done by articulating three essential components to the theory. First, events and relationships depend on related environments. Second, development occurs through reciprocal relationships. Third, the

environment of the individual must be considered as it is perceived by the individual, not by any objective standard or other individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1974, 1977). Put simply, it is the outcome of interactions and relationships and the subsequent perception of these in a particular environment that influences an individual's growth over time. From these adaptations, the bioecological model was born. Bronfenbrenner (1973 - 1979) articulated the importance of progressive change in an individual over time as relationships and interactions evolve with increasing complexity.

Bronfenbrenner (1973 - 1979) claimed that real research into the dynamics of families and their interactions with one another should be the driving force of social policy, rather than the other way around. Policy decisions need to be made by individual families, not by the government. This thinking revolving around the importance of family continued in the model. Between 1980 and 1993, Bronfenbrenner modified the theory, paying more attention to the individual and the influences on their lives. The impact of time featured heavily in this reiteration of the theory, as did the settings where individuals were located and the characteristics of the individuals with whom they spent that time (Bronfenbrenner, 1974, 1977).

Bronfenbrenner's final iteration of the Bioecological included *Process-Person-Context-Time* (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). The focus of this phase was individual characteristics combined with context (known as proximal processes). The process component refers to engaging in opportunities or interactions in an ongoing capacity with other individuals. In this research, *Process* covers PSTs engaging in a variety of learning opportunities throughout their time at university while also engaging with school staff when on placement. The *Person* component refers to the PST's personal characteristics that they might bring to a social situation, characteristics such as patience. The *Context* component refers to interrelated systems such as various interactions with stakeholders while on placement, including the families of their students and other influences across their lives. The *Time* component is identified as what

is occurring during some specific activity (Bronfenbrenner, 1995) and this is specific to the professional experience placement where behaviours occur.

Within the *Context* component, Bronfenbrenner (1995) identified five ecosystems which work together within every individual: the *microsystem*, *mesosystem*, *exosystem*, *macrosystem*, and *chronosystem*. Each ecosystem is connected to and influences the others (Anderson et al., 2014). Within the context of this research, the PST sits at the centre of all these systems, identifying a host of influences that are significant in their decision-making processes in the classroom.

The *microsystem* is defined as the primary setting of the PST. This includes their home environment and its influences (Duchesne & McMaugh, 2019) and the PST's personal characteristics. Social skills include the verbal skills required for negotiation, mediation, team building, awareness of others, problem-solving, and decision-making, for instance (Ferrara & LaMeau, 2015). How they use these skills in the classroom can vary. Their personal characteristics can influence how they react to certain behaviours (Shiner et al. 2012). The different home situations experienced by the PST growing up, and the schools that they attended, including university (and the courses studied), can also influence their perceptions of situations arising in the classroom. It is these experiences that the PSTs have throughout their own lives (whether negative or positive) that may influence their perception of a situation. Relating to the individual on a personal level through an understanding of shared experiences can affect future interactions. The placement school of the PST, whether a religious establishment, a public school, or a private/independent school, can also affect their perception of a situation. PSTs may feel an alignment with the values of the school in which they teach and make decisions accordingly (Guo et al. 2015).

The second system within the context component of Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological model is the *mesosystem*. This is where an interaction occurs between two or more microsystems (Duchesne & McMaugh, 2019), and can include the PST's relationships with their family, or with schoolteachers, whether positive or negative. It includes the relationship that the PST has with the families and caregivers of the placement school (positive or negative). In addition, identifying the expectations placed on the school by the families connected to it can affect the PST and their perceptions of behaviours in the classroom (Guo et al. 2015). This may occur when the community becomes engaged with the school in either a supportive or unsupportive manner (Emerson et al., 2012).

The third is the *exosystem* which describes features of the setting in which the PST finds themselves, features that can have an impact on the PST (Duchesne & McMaugh, 2019). This could include the programs being implemented in classrooms or the leadership model of the school. The broader influences on the school can indirectly affect resources, time, and morale (Anderson et al. 2014; Johnston, 2010). Media reports, for example, rife with negativity towards the teaching profession, may affect the PST by causing absences in the staff community (less direct supervision) or by decreasing their motivation to engage in the placement (education.gov.au, 2022). The induction processes used by the school for the PSTs and the teacher mentors can influence a PST's ability to integrate into the placement school seamlessly and with confidence. The university's payment for the supervision can either entice schools to participate or deter them from participating in professional experience supervision. The Tertiary Supervisor (TS) recruitment process and the interactions of TSs with the school (whether positive or negative) can also influence the experiences of the PST indirectly when undertaking a placement at an individual school (Professional Experience in Initial Teacher Education (ITE): A Review of Current Practices in Australian ITE, 2017). The TS may also be a casual employee of the university or struggle to find time to visit the PST. In addition, the

cohort of students in a particular year level at the placement school may be problematic, or the pedagogical instruction used in the school (which lies beyond the direct influence of the PST) may affect their classes while they are on professional experience.

The *macrosystem* includes broader aspects such as societal and cultural practices (Rosa & Tudge, 2013, Navarro & Tudge, 2022). The implementation of NCCD and *The Disability Discrimination Act (2005)* can influence the perception of the PST. Having a deeper understanding of relevant legislation and how to apply it in an inclusive manner may influence a PST to respond in a particular way. Further, PSTs may be from a refugee background, may have experienced war or a pandemic (such as COVID-19), may be of different ethnicity and culture, are international students, or have been a child of divorce. These and other life experiences could affect their understanding of situations or their ability to react to them with appropriate skill and empathy (Sabato et al. 2021). Examining the zeitgeist of the relevant period that an individual is in or was in also needs consideration (Krause 2019). In this manner, zeitgeist can “refer to a pattern in meaningful practices that is specific to a particular historical time-period, links different realms of social life and social groups, and extends across geographical contexts” (Krause, 2019, p. 1). This can include practices within that period that can combine words to meanings with objects in particular ways that are only known by the individual during that time (Krause, 2019).

The *chronosystem* is the outermost system that influences every other component (Duchesne and McMaugh, 2019). In this instance, it refers to the time during which the PST experiences behaviour throughout the placement. Through the exploration of Bronfenbrenner’s (1995) theory of bioecological development, one can better understand the influences on PSTs throughout their lives and how these can affect their decision-making in the classroom (Sabato et al., 2021; Taylor et al., 2015).

3.2.3 Uniting Perspectives: Integrating Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Model (PPCT) (1995) with Amartya Sen's Capability Approach (CA) (1997) (PPCT x CA).

These two theories, when combined, provide insight into the factors that contribute to each PST's response to behaviour. The plethora of experiences that they have, and their perceptions of success can vary greatly from one PST to another. Bronfenbrenner's (1995) theory carefully illustrates the many aspects of each individual PST's life, while Sen's (1997) theory seeks to explain how these experiences can influence choices and subsequent perceived success of strategies applied in the classroom, by the individual pre-service teacher. It is the experiences of the PST from their childhood and their schooling experiences, as well as influences of varying policies and procedures implemented by the government and their placement school such as their teacher mentors, that can determine how they will use the resources or the strategies (see Table 3 and Figure 1).

Table 3

Key features of Bronfenbrenner's PPCT (1995) and Sen's CA (1997) (PPCT x CA) when combined align with key components to form the conceptual framework for this study

Bronfenbrenner (1995) PPCT	Sen (1997) CA
<i>Process</i> relates to the professional experience including opportunities or interactions that the PST has with other individuals during this time.	
<i>Person</i> refers to the PST's experiences and personal characteristics. Focuses on their understanding of the social situations in which they are placed.	<i>Personal</i> identifies the PST's own experiences that are important to them to assist in deciphering the situation in front of them.
<i>Context</i> identifies the five interrelated systems of interaction and influence relating to a PST.	<i>Social:</i> The PST's understanding of social norms and expectations at the time of the behaviour. This connects with the Macrosystem and the Mesosystem of Bronfenbrenner's PPCT Model. <i>Environmental:</i> The school/environment in which the PST is situated. This connects with the Microsystem and the Exosystem of Bronfenbrenner's PPCT Model.
<i>Time:</i> when the behaviour occurs in a particular moment or time frame (professional experience).	

Note. Bronfenbrenner (1995), Sen (1997).

Figure 1

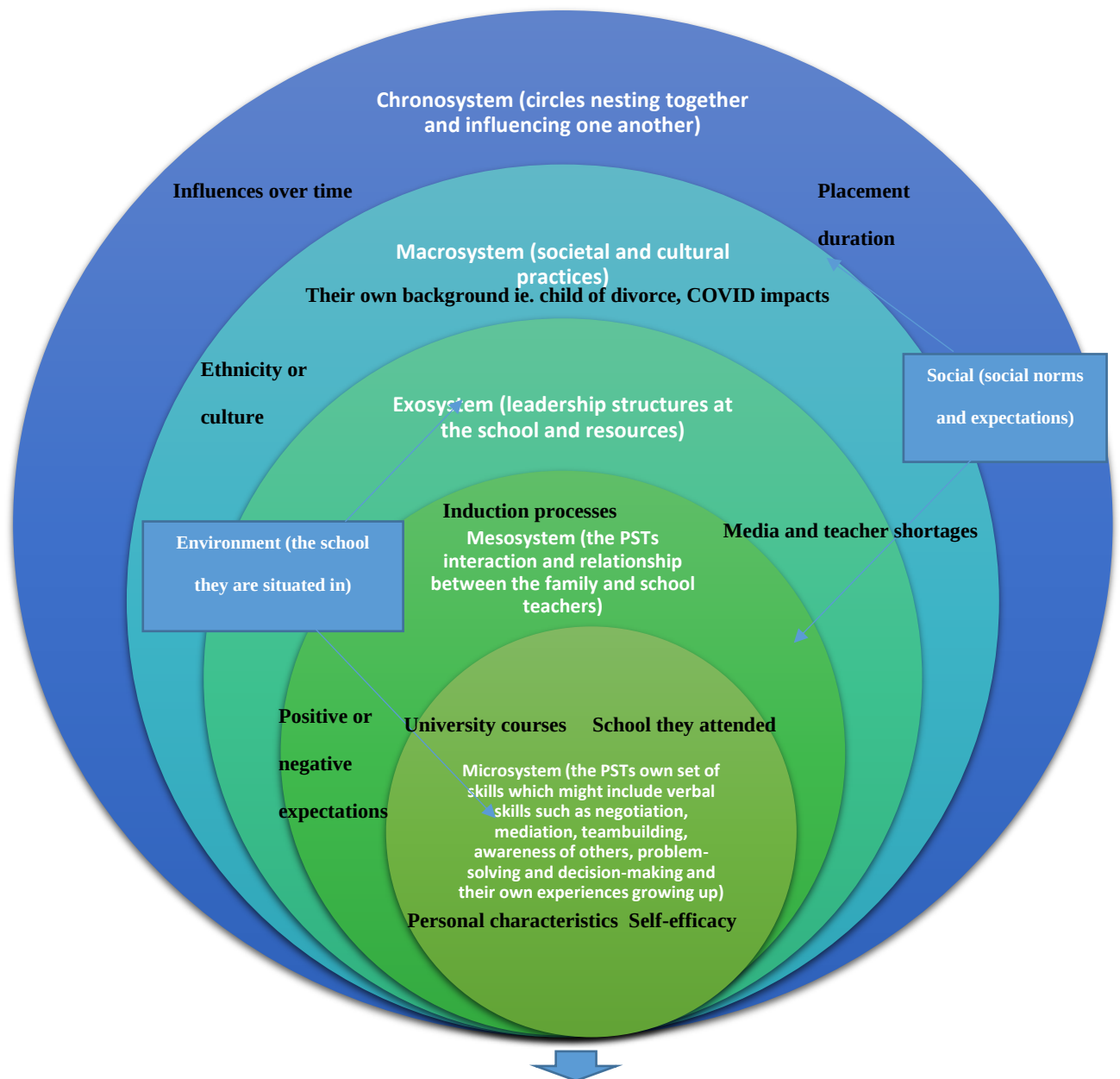
Process (Bronfenbrenner): The PST's opportunities to engage with students during professional experience.



Person (Bronfenbrenner) and *Personal* (Sen): The PST's individual characteristics such as self-efficacy or patience.



Context (Bronfenbrenner) and *Social/Environmental* (Sen): the 5 circles connecting and influencing the PST.



Time (Bronfenbrenner): The PST's engagement with behaviour at that point in time, the decision, and perceived success.

Bronfenbrenner's (1995) PPCT Model and Sen's (1997) CA Theory (PPCT x CA) combined to form the conceptual framework exploring the understanding of Pre-Service Teachers' (PSTs) perception and capability when facing behaviours while on professional experience.

3.4 Chapter summary

There are a number of features that align closely with one another in the two approaches from Bronfenbrenner (1995) and Sen (1997). Key to each theory is a focus on the components that influence the lives of individuals and the potential to change perceptions in a variety of ways from person to person. Together, this framework, known as 'Uniting Perspectives: Integrating Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Model (PPCT) (1995) with Amartya Sen's Capability Approach (CA) (1997) (PPCT x CA)', created the conceptual background for this research.

Chapter Four

This chapter outlines the methodological approach that was taken throughout this research. It begins with the individual components comprising the research design. It then presents the research questions. The process of analysing the data, utilising a reflexive thematic approach, is discussed and relevant ethical considerations for this research are identified.

4.1 Research design

4.1.1 Qualitative research methods

Qualitative research methods were employed in this research. Qualitative research methods include “research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification. It can refer to research about persons’ lives, lived experiences, behaviours, emotions, and feelings” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 11). Using qualitative research methods aligned with the paradigm and the conceptual framework selected for this study. Qualitative research methods are often “characterized by an interpretative paradigm, which emphasizes subjective experiences and the meanings they have for an individual” (Rebolj, 2013, p. 30). The selection of the methodological approach was driven by the focus on experience and on understanding individual participants, “subjectivity is not a problem to be managed or controlled, to be gotten rid of, but should be understood and treated as a resource for doing analysis” (Braun, 2022, p. 9). Qualitative data can be viewed as stronger than other forms of data in certain instances when it is nuanced to the needs of the research (Braun, 2022).

4.1.2 A qualitative case study approach

A qualitative case study approach was identified as most suitable for this research. It emphasised the individual perspective being investigated and sat comfortably within the interpretivist paradigm of this research. Case studies are used when a person, group, process,

or event is studied in detail (Stake, 2005). It affords an in-depth exploration of “multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, program or system” (Rebolj, 2013, p. 32). A snapshot case study was used and determined by a specific timeframe allocated to the research, that is, the start and the end point of the professional experience with the focus of the case study during the participant's final placement (Rebolj, 2013).

In classifying the case study according to theory, it focused on “determining what the investigated case may be” (Rebolj, 2013, p. 35). In this study, the case consisted of it was two participants who were interviewed from one school on professional experience. Stake (2005) identified that the use of a case study was “not a methodological choice, but rather a choice of what is to be studied – by whatever methods we choose to study the case” (Stake 2005, p. 443). In turn, this identifies that it was not the choice of method or the how that determined the choice of case study in this research, but rather the desire to *focus* on the individual participants that drove the decision.

Using a qualitative case study approach in this research enabled the exploration of real-life circumstances for the individual PST. It sought to understand how various life experiences could influence the decisions of PSTs (VanWynsberghe & Khan 2007). The qualitative case study was used to draw out and explore “the nuances lying beyond those processes as they unfold” (Aspers & Corte, 2021, p. 8).

4.1.3 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews focus on “how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (Agazu et al., 2022, p. 1500). This interview process was ideal for this research to explore the perceptions of participants as well as understand how they interpreted behaviours observed or

encountered in the classroom. It also enabled meanings to be ascribed to the behaviours mentioned in their responses. The semi-structured interviews were less formal than what an otherwise structured interview would be (Jennings, 2005). The advantage of such a process was that it was interactive between the participant and the researcher as additional questions were asked after a response given (Jennings, 2005).

Semi-structured interviews were used to enable “participants to give a vivid description of their feelings, experience and views about the importance of a topic” (Azungah, 2018, p. 387). In these semi-structured interviews, participants revealed more than could normally be “detected or reliably assumed from observing a situation” (Azungah, 2018, p. 387). It was their insights, not the researcher’s observations, that were the priority. When using a semi-structured questioning process, interviews are “conducted conversationally... dialogue can meander around the topics on the agenda—rather than adhering slavishly to verbatim questions as in a standardized survey—and may delve into totally unforeseen issues” (Wholey et al., 2010, p. 493). The benefits of such an approach allow for the individual thoughts of each participant to be explored, thoughts which may not have surfaced in focus groups or structured interviews (Wholey et al., 2010).

The questions during the interviews (asked at the beginning and end of the professional experience) aligned with Bronfenbrenner’s PPCT (1995) theory and key features of Sen’s (1997) CA (Bronfenbrenner, 1995; Sen, 1997). Questions were designed to evoke honest responses from both participants regarding their perceptions and attributions about behaviour as well as questions regarding their relationship with their teacher mentor. Some of the questions were closed style format questions and others were open ended questions to draw out more information from the participants (Connor Desai & Reimers, 2019). The creation of the questions was formulated to fall under the conceptual framework of process, person, context, and time as overarching areas to focus on. Within these overarching topics, additional questions

were included to gather information regarding who the participant was in terms of their experiences and influences over their lives in accordance with Bronfenbrenner's (1995) bioecological theory which postulates the overlapping circles of influences over the course of their lives. In addition, Sen's CA (1997) theory was included, and questions were posed that also fell under this theory pertaining to the specific areas of person, social and environment (see Appendix A for the full list of questions generated from this process).

Following the semi-structured interview process, the data analysis identified themes and common patterns from the narratives and conversations (Punch & Denicolo, 2001). Through the descriptive responses and information gained from both participants, details were acquired that could not have been represented by numbers obtained through quantitative research methods.

4.1.4 Participants

Two Pre-Service Teacher's (PSTs) participated in the research. The process of recruitment started with an invitation sent to participants. This was via an email from the coordinator in the selected school. The information sheet and email invitation originated with the research team to the PST coordinator. PSTs who were in their final year of professional experience were invited. The rationale for using final-year PSTs versus first-year PSTs was supported by previous studies by Woodcock & Reupert (2013) who found that PSTs who were in their final placement used preventative strategies rather than reactive strategies when facing behaviour in the classroom. Only two participants were available during the research selection period and this was identified as sufficient given the quality of dialogue in the interviews conducted met the needs of the research (Maltured et al., 2019).

4.1.5 Sampling

Convenience sampling was used. This type of sampling, known as non-probability sampling, occurs when not all potential participants have an equal opportunity to engage in the research. Convenience sampling was used with participants self-selecting to be in the research, provided they matched the eligibility criteria of the research (Emerson, 2015; Stratton, 2021). PSTs who were not on their final professional experience were ineligible (see Table 4).

Table 4

Eligibility criteria for participants to be included in the research.

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Final year PST	First-year PST
Attending university to study Initial Teacher Education (ITE)	Attending university to study for any degree (not ITE)
PST	Graduate teacher
At the selected school for professional experience	At any other school

Motivation bias can be one drawback of this type of sampling method. This may come from participants who identify their interest in the research topic and subsequently “express a disgruntled point of view, or desire to support one’s specific opinions” (Stratton, 2021, p. 2). No specific mention was made by the participants regarding such a viewpoint.

4.1.6 Profile of the School

This study was conducted at one private independent school in Melbourne, Victoria. Students who wish to enrol at this school can begin in an Early Learning Centre (ELC) and move through to Year 12. There are multiple campuses attached to the one school. The school began as an all-boys school and became co-educational in more recent years. The school has an enrolment of more than 2000 students with approximately 20% more boys than girls – perhaps a hangover from its origins as a boys’ school. The outgoing coordinator of the PSTs at the school departed in the middle of 2023, replaced by an interim coordinator for the remainder of 2023. Fees for this school range from \$15,000 at ELC level to \$32,000 at Year 12 per annum.

4.2 Research questions

This research was guided by one overarching question which was subsequently broken down into smaller, more specific, sub-questions. The main research question was ‘How do Pre-Service Teachers’ (PSTs) perceive and respond to behaviour in the classroom while on professional experience?’

The sub-questions sought to explore the overarching question by interrogating each relevant issue. These sub-questions, which identified more specific areas to explore, were as follows:

- (a) How do PSTs perceive behaviour in the classroom?
- (b) What factors influence these perceptions of behaviour?
- (c) What responses do PSTs make when facing behaviour in the classroom?
- (d) How do PSTs perceive their capability when responding to behaviour in the classroom?
- (e) Do PSTs feel their ITE courses prepared them well for responding to behaviour in the classroom during professional experience?

4.3 Data analysis

During the interviews, PSTs were video recorded. Data collected from the interviews were transcribed and analysed. The video recordings provided opportunities to stop and re-watch the interview to gather information therefore allowing the researcher to be fully present in the interview at the time of the recording. These recordings added “visual data which enabled the analysis of non-verbal communication and the possibility of analysing interaction which was meaningful” (Pole & Pole, 2004, p. 42). Non-verbal communication included tone, facial expressions, or body language. This type of communication assisted in understanding the responses offered by the PST. Latent content analysis was used to decipher whether the individual was happy or not by representing “a class of qualitative data analysis techniques used to identify the underlying meaning of behaviours or actions” (Denham & Onwuegbuzie, 2013, p. 673).

The data gathered through the interviews was initially transcribed word by word into a Word file. Subsequently, the transcript was uploaded onto NVivo software for analysis.

Analysis of qualitative data by coding and forming themes is known as Thematic Analysis (TA). The process of thematic analysis (TA) can be articulated as a “method for identifying, analysing, and interpreting patterns of meaning (‘themes’) within qualitative data” (Clarke & Braun, 2017, p. 297). TA is used in many instances and was applicable to the two PSTs involved in this research. It has been shown that using TA is appropriate for small datasets (Clarke & Braun, 2017).

Being reflexive as a researcher requires critical thought and reflection when exploring data. It allowed for opportunities to expand on the ideas through multiple processes, guiding the exploration of data. In this research, the use of inductive and deductive processes of analysis were used – where and when these are used have been described in more detail below. The inductive processes from this study included the development of themes from the data. The

deductive processes looked at the data through the conceptual framework to guide the analysis, in this instance, the combined framework entitled '*Uniting Perspectives: Integrating Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Model (PPCT) (1995) with Amartya Sen's Capability Approach (CA) (1997) (PPCT x CA)*' (Braun, 2022).

Reflexivity was key to the research process. Three types of reflexivity were included: personal, functional, and disciplinary. Personal reflexivity refers to the individual researcher's personal beliefs, while functional reflexivity can be shaped by the design of the research which can influence the interpretation of the results. Disciplinary reflexivity referred to the discipline in which the research was situated. These three parts of reflexivity were embedded throughout the final report. Personal and disciplinary reflexivity was reflected in the inclusion of a variety of literature, presented in Chapter Two. The research design of a case study approach and the use of semi-structured interviews highlighted the functional reflexivity and disciplinary reflexivity (Braun, 2022).

The six steps of Braun & Clarke's (2021) reflexive TA model guided the data analysis process and supported the generation of themes. They were structured in alignment with the conceptual framework and the research questions.

The six steps included familiarisation, generation of initial codes, the construction of themes, revising and defining the themes, and the final report.

4.3.1 Stage 1 Familiarisation

In this stage, I spent time exploring the overarching research question and the sub-questions. During each interview, I used my own shorthand notes to record initial observations of the interview's progress and to note some of the body language observed. Each interview was analysed with attention to the descriptions of the body language of the PST, the tone and expression of the PST, and the responses given to each question. I transcribed each recording and placed this information into a Word document, breaking down ideas noted during the

interviews. This process of immersion in the data to really identify and explore the ideas was critical for Stage 1 (Braun, 2022).

4.3.2 Stage 2 Generating initial codes

Following transcription, I began to explore the data in a more sustained and detailed manner by identifying areas that were relevant and meaningful (Braun, 2022). This was guided by the process of analysis known as reflexive TA. The type of reflexive TA selected was identified as both inductive and deductive analysis (Azungah, 2018). The inductive process explored potential themes emerging from the data (through coding) and the deductive process used established themes from the conceptual framework (Bronfenbrenner, 1995; Sen, 1997).

To begin the inductive process, I read each interview line by line, looking for words (codes) and prompts that were commonly mentioned in the recordings (Saraswati, 2020). I considered the overview of the words expressed and then sought to explore the intention behind the words expressed (Wæraas, 2022). This inductive process led to the creation of the themes by going “through data line by line thoroughly and assigning codes to paragraphs or segments of texts as concepts unfold” (Azungah, 2018, p. 391). Connections indicating potential themes were identified in this process as they emerged from the data.

In the deductive process, I brought together questions and responses in alignment with the conceptual framework, identifying how they fell under the conceptual framework, that is, Bronfenbrenner’s *Person, Process, Context, Time* (PPCT) Bioecological theory (1995) and Sen’s *Capability Approach* (CA) (1997) model combined. I began plotting the categories under the conceptual framework and identifying potential codes with the transcript (refer to Appendix A for questions and Appendix B for transcript).

4.3.3 Stage 3 Constructing themes

In this stage, I started “identifying shared patterned meaning across the dataset” (Braun, 2022, p. 35). By utilising the inductive process of analysis, codes were developed and

streamlined by identifying umbrella terms and terms that could indicate a theme. In the deductive approach of data analysis, I worked on identifying themes generated from the questions categorised into sections relating to the conceptual framework.

In the deductive approach, the first group of interview questions (see Appendix A) sought to discover how prepared PSTs felt, having completed their ITE courses when responding to behaviours during placement. These questions, which fell under *Time* (from the PPCT model of Bronfenbrenner 1995), explored details of the professional experience, such as how many lessons they delivered. They were asked whether they had completed any units in their ITE programs that related to behaviour management, wellbeing approaches, or theoretical ideas explaining the causation and motivation of behaviours.

The next group of interview questions relating to *Person* (falling under the PPCT model of Bronfenbrenner 1995) and *Personal* (Sen's 1997 CA) asked about perceptions of behaviour. I asked how PSTs perceived behaviour, how they defined it, how they had acquired their definition, and what factors influenced their adoption of this definition, such as their personal characteristics and attitudes. It also them to reflect on their perception of their capability in responding to those behaviours.

The third group of interview questions (presented at the beginning of professional experience placement) related to *Context* as identified under Bronfenbrenner's PPCT (1995) framework and Sen's CA (1997) *Social* and *Environmental* factors. The PSTs were asked to identify the factors that influenced their perceptions of behaviour. They were also asked about their relationships with supervising teachers, their interactions with current parents/carers in their school, the leadership models at their placement school, and finally their relationship with their TMs.

At the conclusion of the PSTs' professional experience, a fourth group of interview questions was asked. This group of questions fell under the *Process* element in the conceptual

framework as identified by Bronfenbrenner (1995). PSTs were asked to identify their responses when facing behaviours during placement.

From each of the categories of questions mentioned above, codes were identified. Using information such as semantic content (the presence of key words or phrases) and latent content (the underlying meaning of what was said) assisted in this process (Clarke & Braun, 2021). From the codes, themes were generated. The construction of themes from questions, alongside the conceptual framework can be seen in see Table 5. The themes will be presented and discussed in Chapter Five.

Table 5

Data showcasing links to the conceptual framework with sample questions and responses with codes for potential themes.

Conceptual framework	Sample questions	Sample responses	Code
Time	What units covered behaviour in the ITE Course?	“We did readings but did not cover it.”	Theoretical knowledge
Process	Interactions when they were at school	“Pretty positive relationships at school”	Relationships: Interactionist
Person	Their perception/ definition of behaviour	“A way that someone behaves”	Individual teacher factors
Context	Strategies used	“Remove the distraction”	Viewing as low-level

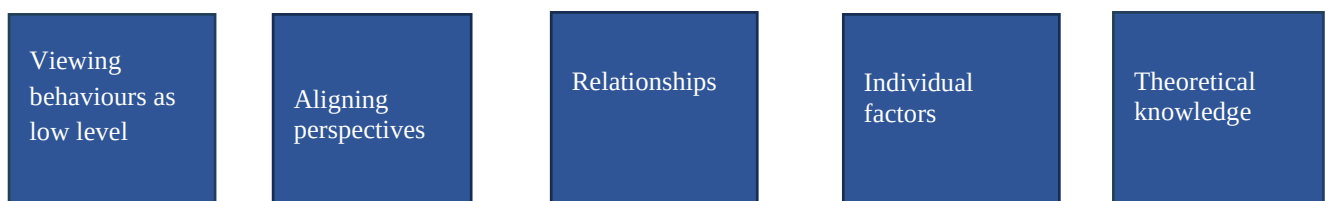
4.3.4 Stage 4 Revising themes

During this stage, I sought to “assess the initial fit” (Braun, 2022, p. 35) of the themes that emerged from the data identified in Stage 3. I checked on the provisional themes and asked myself whether they sufficiently answered the research questions to continue in their current form (Braun, 2022). Using this process of consolidation of the themes, I compared the themes, inductive and deductive, by exploring the transcripts once more.

4.3.5 Stage 5 Defining themes

Being satisfied with the initial themes that arose from the processes of inductive and deductive data analysis, I consolidated the data to examine in Chapter Five, the Results chapter. Using this process enabled each theme to be “clearly demarcated, and... built around a strong core concept or essence” (Braun, 2022, p. 35)(see Figure 2).

Figure 2



Initial themes generated from the data analysis during Stage 5

4.3.6 Stage 6 Writing the Report

Using the two layers of reflexive TA (inductive and deductive processes) I ensured that no theme was left out. Each theme will be presented in the following chapter in connection to the research questions.

4.4 Ethical considerations

The Australian Code for Responsible Conduct of Research (2018) identifies core principles to be adhered to while undertaking research. All were respected throughout my research to ensure that the results obtained were honest, rigorous, and transparent.

When undertaking research on humans, the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2018) identifies core principles to consider. When undertaking research we must be respectful, value research merit, and demonstrate integrity, justice, and beneficence. Respect directs that all interactions between the participant and researcher must reflect fairness and justice, as well as protecting individuals throughout the research process. This was done. The risks associated were assessed to ensure there was no harm to participants and that no burden was placed upon them because of their participation in the research (National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. (2007). National Health and Medical Research Council]. Updated 2018).

Participants freely consented to involvement in this research. They were informed not to fear or worry that lack of participation would affect their final year results or their completion of the professional experience placement. There was information in the consent form identifying “that these steps have been taken in order to counter any perceptions that research participation (or abstention) may affect grades” (Roberts & Allen, 2015, p. 99). The PSTs signed consent forms before interviews commenced at the start of the placement indicating

their free and willing participation in the research. The consent forms included information regarding the research.

4.4.1 Trustworthiness

Generally, it is not an expectation of qualitative research findings that they can be replicated; however, the reader should be reassured that the researcher has reported the findings in a trustworthy and accurate manner (Stahl & King, 2020). Guba & Lincoln (1994) propose five elements that contribute to trustworthiness in data collection which include credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and authenticity.

4.4.1.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to how congruent the findings are with what occurs in the real world (Shenton, 2004). To articulate confidence in the results, several steps were taken with the research. One of the steps suggested was to develop “an early familiarity with the culture of participating organisations before the first data collection dialogues take place” (Shenton, 2004, p. 65). As a previous employee of the school and having worked in education for over twenty years, I understand how secondary schools operate and am knowledgeable regarding the intricacies of this school. This ensured I was able to see beyond the façade of the school itself and focus on the responses of the PST being interviewed.

Using the process of triangulation also aided the credibility process (Shenton, 2004). In this instance, I used theoretical triangulation, as well as the process of coding followed by inductive and deductive processes to analyse the results. The subsequent analysis from this process could be identified as being “stronger (e.g. compelling, insightful, thoughtful, rich, complex, deep, nuanced)” (Braun, 2022, p. 9) because of the use of theoretical triangulation as well as other steps, to examine the data presented (Stahl & King, 2020). This was seen

through the results (themes generated) in Chapter Five and in Chapter Six (a discussion of the themes and results together with relevant theories and literature). Selecting reflexive TA for data analysis, also enabled clear and subjective responses from the researcher “as knowledge generation is inherently subjective and situated... subjectivity is not a problem to be managed or controlled, to be gotten rid of, but should be understood and treated as a resource for doing analysis” (Braun, 2022, p. 9).

An additional step to achieve credibility was to ensure honest responses from the participants as much as possible (Shenton, 2004). By providing a welcoming space for the participants to be interviewed that was comfortable for participants, they were able to respond with honesty. This space was booked by the librarian to avoid students interrupting the interview. The room in the library was surrounded by glass. Only myself and the participant were present in this room during the interviews. I also sought to facilitate discussion throughout the interviews without judgement to develop trust with the participants (Silverman, 2006).

4.4.1.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the findings being generalizable across similar settings, or in this instance, the results being transferable within a broader group (Stake, 1994). The boundaries of this research were explicitly identified to include two participants from the one school with a specific criterion required to participate in the study. In addition, the data collection process (semi-structured interviews) was clearly articulated which stipulated commencing at the start and end of placement.

4.4.1.3 Dependability

Dependability is determined when, “if the work were repeated, in the same context, with the same methods and with the same participants, similar results would be obtained” (Shenton, 2004, p. 71). This would be obtained by following the clear instructions provided

regarding the procedure of the research and adhering to the research design stipulated for this study. Observing the same methodological approach for gathering data as well as enacting a similar evaluation of the data could be achieved given the clear instructions provided (Shenton, 2004).

4.4.1.4 Confirmability

Confirmability occurs when steps have been taken to “help ensure as far as possible that the work’s findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the informants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher” (Shenton, 2004, p. 72). To generate each theme, codes were generated from the participants responses in both interviews. At no point was any commentary from the researcher included in the results. In addition, every step of research undertaken and why particular decisions were made were supported and justified in the methodology (Shenton, 2004).

4.4.1.5 Authenticity

Authenticity refers to “the ability and extent to which the researcher expresses the feelings and emotions of the participant’s experiences in a faithful manner” (Cope, 2014, p. 89). Using quotes as well as descriptions of the participants body language, the responses of each participant was recorded in an authentic manner.

4.5 Chapter summary

In this chapter the justification for the selection of a qualitative case study approach was examined (Braun, 2022; Rebolj, 2013). The advantages of using semi-structured interviews were presented (Jennings, 2005), as well as the rationale for the selection of the participants in this research Woodcock & Reupert (2013). The use of convenience sampling was justified (Emerson, 2015; Stratton, 2021) and the research questions as well as the school

profile were presented. The use of thematic (TA) was discussed (Clarke & Braun, 2017) and the six steps undertaken in this process was explored. The five components of trustworthiness (credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and authenticity) were identified in this research process.

Chapter Five: Results

This chapter will present results from the interviews with the two participants. The two participants, Pre-Service Teachers (PSTs), were interviewed onsite at the school both at the beginning and end of their professional experience. A summary of each participant will be given at the beginning of this chapter.

5.1 Summary of participants

5.1.1 Participant One summary

Participant One had six placements behind her and described herself as a disorganised person. She noted the impacts of COVID-19 while at university, saying that she was easily distracted and had found concentrating at university difficult. She also admitted that she disliked university. Participant One mentioned that she would like to have been offered more explicit classroom behaviour management content at university, stating that much of the information she knew about behaviour was implied or simply known from observations and was often context dependent. She articulated that she entertained the idea of studying psychology. Participant One identified the need for more feedback from her Teacher Mentor (TM). She spoke quietly and lacked expressiveness in her tone while sitting hunched with her arms over her body. Participant One indicated that maintaining a good relationship with her students was her priority.

5.1.2 Participant Two summary

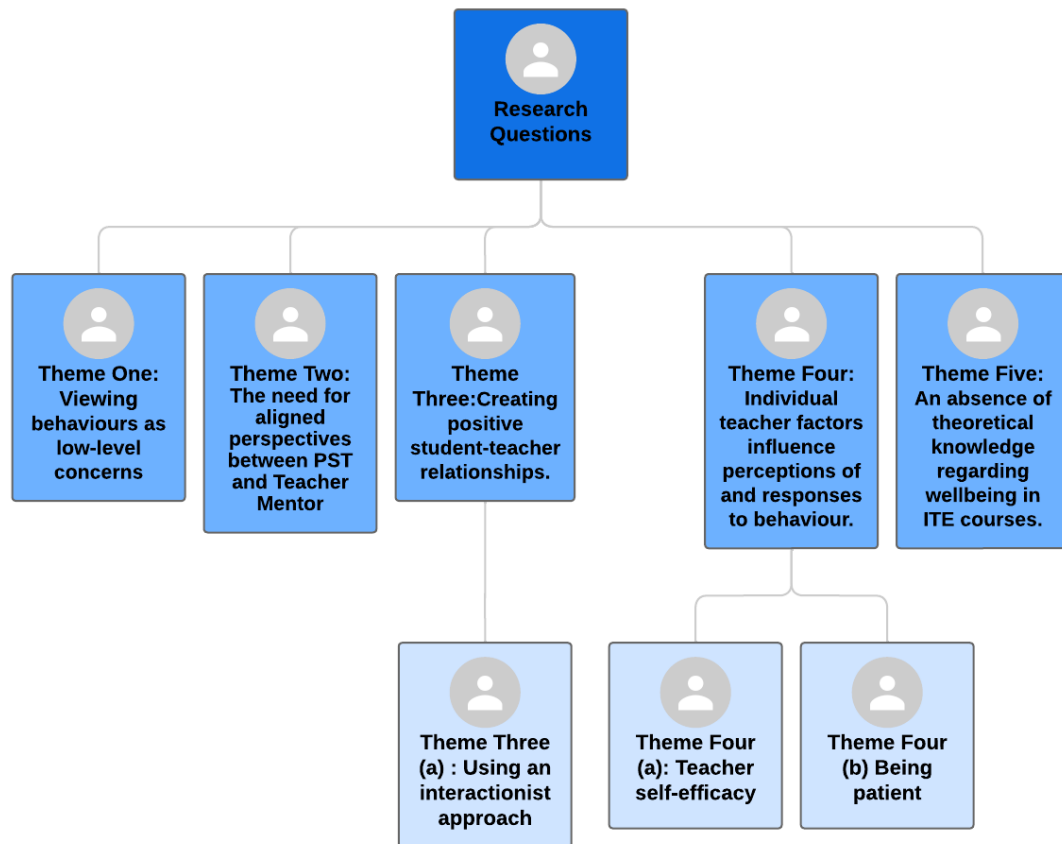
Participant Two quickly established eye contact in both interviews with an open body stance. She stated in her first interview that this, her third and final placement, differed from her previous professional experience in a public secondary school (co-educational) and a catholic secondary (all boys) school. She reported working as a Learning Support Officer

(LSO) in a co-educational public secondary school and being patient in demeanour. Participant Two mentioned that this placement was an opportunity for her to practise theoretical strategies and establish good relationships with her students in the classroom.

5.2 Themes and key findings

Through careful reading of each line of the four interview transcripts, several codes were identified using the inductive process of analysis. By using the process of coding, recognisable themes were generated from the data. For the deductive component of analysis, responses to questions were aligned with categories in the conceptual framework. From these responses, codes were identified which were developed into themes. This process was completed for both participants. The final themes generated from the process outlined in Chapter Four are represented in Figure 3.

Figure 3



Final themes generated from inductive and deductive processes of data analysis of results received from both participants when responding to questions.

The five major themes and three sub-themes are presented below with their relevant sub-research questions.

(a) How do PSTs perceive behaviour in the classroom?

Theme One: Viewing behaviours as primarily a low-level issue.

(b) What factors influence these perceptions of behaviour?

Theme Two: The need for aligned perspectives between PST and Teacher Mentor.

(c) What responses do PSTs make when facing behaviour in the classroom?

Theme Three: Creating positive student-teacher relationships.

Sub-theme Three (a): Using an interactionist approach.

(d) How do PSTs perceive their capability when responding to behaviour in the classroom?

Theme Four: Individual teacher factors influence perceptions of and responses to behaviour.

Sub-theme Four (a) The importance of teacher self-efficacy.

Sub-theme 4 (b) The importance of being patient.

(e) Do PSTs feel their ITE courses prepared them well for responding to behaviour in the classroom during professional experience?

Theme Five: An absence of theoretical knowledge regarding wellbeing in ITE courses.

In the presentation of results below, quotes have been taken from the transcripts in Appendix B.

5.2.1 Theme One: Viewing behaviour primarily as a low-level issue.

Across both participants, their responses indicated that they generally viewed behaviours as low-level issues, not high-level challenging concerns. When examining the results, both participants mentioned that they thought the behaviour was pretty good, even articulating that they had observed quieter classes when comparing their previous placements to this experience (refer to Appendix B: Transcript).

When asked how behaviour could be described from their perspective, Participant One mentioned that she thought the student behaviour was “Nothing that I can’t handle. Nothing too difficult. You can tell them off and why are you doing this. Sometimes they are trying to get attention. The more attention you give them the more difficult they will become.” She articulated that for the most part, most of the behaviours she encountered were classified as

being low-level concerns. Participant One did however mention that she had observed a more serious incident of a student spitting; “A kid spat yesterday in the gym. I said it was disgusting.” She responded by asking the student to clean it up and sit out of the activity. Participant One further offered another example of observation of a Year 8 boys’ class where she indicated that there was no management of the class behaviours; “Boys standing up, yelling out, this teacher had no control over these students.” She articulated that this was during the subject of sex education and believed that these behaviours occurred because of the gender of the class (boys), topic and the age of the students.

Participant Two described a similar series of low-level issues when mentioning behaviours she observed throughout her placement. She indicated that her classes were “Not super challenging but just in terms of noise and getting them to focus.” She expanded on the categorisation of behaviours observed as being low-level, by mentioning one incident in her boys’ class where two boys were yelling out at one another. She articulated that this was different to the other behaviours observed and was a little more serious. Participant Two said that she had to work specifically with this student to regulate him and bring the student back to a calmer state. Participant Two indicated that she thought it “wasn’t too catastrophic” and admits that she should have caught on to the issue before letting it escalate; “maybe encourage him to exit earlier. I kind of left him to be. It kind of continued far too long. Do more preventative. Catching on to it earlier. Moving people from seats.” She acknowledged that they weren’t in their assigned seating plan which could have contributed to the behaviours and it was in only her second lesson. Since this time, she indicated she has read notes on the students and sought ways to work with the students in ways that suited their needs, such as use of hard copy notes or digital formats. Participant Two also mentioned that the time of the day could have led to this different presentation of behaviours, noting that engagement appeared to vary throughout the course of the day with her students.

5.2.2 Theme Two: The need for aligned perspectives between PST and Teacher Mentor.

This theme described a similar journey that both participants had throughout their placement with their Teacher Mentors (TM). Both participants indicated a lack of feedback as well as incongruent approaches between their mentors and themselves when responding to behaviours in the classroom. No mention was made regarding contact with their Tertiary Supervisors (TS).

Participant One articulated explicitly a need for more feedback from her mentor; “I would like a little bit more feedback, constructive. Sometimes I will come out of a class and it’s yeah... kids running all over the place. I would like some strategies.” She also indicated she would have liked to have tried approaches that were different from the approaches adopted by her mentor: “I think it’s hard with placement. Because you haven’t had that class from the start. You need to come in and reinforce the rules, but they might not be your rules.” Participant One described the difference in approach between herself and her mentor, saying that the mentor focused on hands up and quiet in the classroom, however, she wished for more interactive approaches when discussing concepts in the class. She articulated that her TM had quite an “old school response” to student behaviour and mentioned that she didn’t agree with some of the methods and strategies that her mentor used in the classroom: “He is all about one person speaks at one time. But I think it depends on the class and your ability to get them back. You lose control for a bit but it’s harmless. Sometimes they need a bit of a break.”

Participant Two also mentioned an incongruent approach when responding to behaviour that differed from her mentor’s. She identified gender as a potential explanation for the difference between herself and her mentor’s approach, articulating that the students in the class appeared to respond favourably to “men, firmer, big booming voice, the teacher coming

in after me with a big booming voice.” This difference was voiced when Participant Two expressed difficulties she faced when teaching in the boys’ class.

5.2.3 Theme Three: Creating positive student-teacher relationships.

Participants One and Two both identified the need to establish effective student-teacher relationships in the classroom with their students as a matter of priority.

Participant One articulated a specific desire to not be punitive, indicating that she was not “authoritative and will not rip into him. There is no point. You will ruin the relationship.” She also noted that her “personal experience leads me to respond like this”, highlighting that her motivation to build strong relationships with her students came from her reflections on her own time as a student. Participant One mentioned personal learning difficulties when she attended secondary school and articulated that this experience might have provided her insights into students that struggle in the classroom. She also said that she was currently experiencing a fractious relationship with her mother and acknowledged she understood student concerns. Participant One also remarked that placements were difficult environments for forming connections with students and that despite wishing to create more connections with her students she felt unable to do so because of the restrictions of the professional experience; “Placement is not the best representation. Here are a bunch of kids and not teaching them a lot of content. Never see them again and hard to engage.”

Participant Two discussed her goal to create connections in the classroom with her students as important. She identified that she “could have built on the relationships more in the beginning, [but for] the pressure of curriculum.” She highlights a preference to establish a student-teacher relationship in the classroom however, the need to demonstrate competency in curriculum areas superseded this task.

5.2.3.1 Sub-theme Three (a): Using an interactionist approach.

Both participants used an interactionist approach when responding to behaviours in the classroom. The style and manner both participants demonstrated when facing behaviours shown by their students focused on collaboration. This was seen in the interactions between Participant Two and a student in the following excerpts from the transcript:

“I s’pose because he was so heightened, I wanted to keep calm and bring it down to that energy.”

“Lower my voice a bit and spoke to him directly.”

“Asked him if he wanted to go and get a drink of water.”

“He said no I’m alright.”

“Then he started to regulate a bit more. Realised I was empathetic to the situation.”

“I said we will discuss it after class and stay back at the end.”

The interactionist approach is a method whereby collaboration between students and teachers is a priority. For example Logical Consequences (Martella, 2012) and Reality Therapy (Glasser, 1992) demonstrate an ongoing dialogue between the student and the teacher in maintaining behaviours.

Although both participants utilised an interactionist approach to behaviours, scant specific terminology and knowledge was mentioned by the participants when discussing their responses to behaviour. Participant One indicated little knowledge of behaviour management approaches across the board. Participant One could reference social learning theory and articulated that “we have done different approaches to teaching. Haven’t done approaches to learning.” She further mentions that “we didn’t do anything on restorative conversations. I feel a lot of the stuff ...didn’t cover it.” Participant Two mentioned an awareness of several different

theories in relation to behaviour management, identifying a unit she studied in her Initial Teacher Education (ITE) course called “effective teaching and is run over the course of the degree in conjunction with placement.” She indicated multiple theories such as Bill Rogers (2015) as well as cognitive behaviour theory and humanist perspectives. Despite a lack of formal knowledge of interactionist approaches, both participants continued to focus on positive interactions with their students when responding to behaviours.

The strategies that Participant Two implemented when facing behaviour in the classroom highlighted a focus on positive interactions with her students. Like the behaviour support approach (interactionist) that Participant One applied of collaboration and engaging with the student, Participant Two used responses that involve “a lot of bringing it back and regulating.” Her need to reduce the energy in the classroom and alleviate the tension prioritised the interactionist approach, one of focusing on the dynamic of interconnecting exchanges between student and teacher when applying a response to the behaviours presented. She wished that she had initiated more preventative approaches before the situation escalated.

Although the knowledge acquired in their ITE courses differed, the techniques both participants used in their interactions with students when facing behaviour appeared very similar. The priority for both participants to maintain and establish a good connection with their students underpinned their behaviour support approaches. Regardless of the theories they knew from their ITE courses (which differed between participants in content knowledge), their approaches to behaviour aligned on the interactionist continuum. This was seen in the collaborative and relationship-focused approach that both participants sought to employ when working with students in the classroom.

5.2.4 Theme Four: Individual teacher factors influence perceptions of and responses to behaviour.

This overarching theme identified a similarity (both participants patient) whilst showcasing different levels of self-efficacy during the professional experience. Participant Two was quick to respond throughout the interview whilst Participant One stumbled over responses and mentioned self-doubt as well as a lack of confidence, during her interviews.

5.2.4.1 Sub-theme Four (a) The importance of teacher self-efficacy

Presence of perceived self-efficacy varied from each participant from their responses. One participant admitted to being disorganised (lacking motivation) and articulated that she sent a student from the room when she encountered difficult behaviour (perceived lack of self-efficacy in being able to resolve the situation). Participant Two on the other hand, appeared confident and able to resolve behaviours in the classroom by seeking to resolve situations (perceived self-efficacy) thanks to ITE behaviour support units undertaken at university.

Participant One described herself as “pretty disorganised”, saying “I can’t be bothered,” and “I don’t actually know if I want to be a teacher.” It could be surmised from her words and her stance (body language closed) that she was lacking confidence in general (Denham & Onwuegbuzie, 2013). This was supported by her comments: “I have this view of being judged. Not the most self-confident person. Feel like I’m a little bit awkward.” Further, she indicated that she couldn’t be bothered to observe classes and that it was a waste of her time. When describing an assessment task she was completing during this placement, Participant One demonstrated her disorganisation: “I haven’t actually looked at the assignment yet as I am pretty disorganised.” Participant One attributes some of her difficulties to COVID-19 during her time at university, mentioning that she studied a lot of her ITE course online and struggled during this time; “not a massive fan of how they ran uni. I have struggled a bit with the

transition out of uni. Has impacted what I think of uni.” Participant One remarked that she experienced feelings of loss and motivation during her time studying at university. When Participant One encountered a difficult behaviour, such as when a student was chewing gum, she articulated that she sent them to sit out. No identification was provided by the participant that they had a follow up discussion with the student at a later point.

In contrast, Participant Two’s quick response that she would “observe the first week of all classes” with her quick articulation of several behaviour support units completed in “anatomy of a crisis.” She mentioned working currently in a school as a Learning Support Office (LSO), crediting her confidence in the classroom and her knowledge to these experiences as well. Participant Two further articulated that she worked with a broad range of students in her capacity as LSO and had even been given opportunities for professional learning with Berry Street on trauma related approaches. Her articulation of an issue that she faced and her mention of being able to engage with both parties to achieve calm in the classroom, identified a perceived self-efficacy in being able to resolve the situation herself.

5.2.4.2 Sub-theme Four (b) The importance of being patient

Participant One claimed that she was amiable in nature, saying, “I’m pretty chilled, laid back” and “a bit of a people pleaser.” She described her approach in the classroom as being quite relaxed and that she was not too worried about letting them do their own thing, indicating that its harmless to lose control for a bit; “Sometimes they need a bit of a break.” She articulated that she often gives a sense of freedom to her students and doesn’t worry too much about being too strict. Her calm demeanour throughout potential difficulties when her students might lose control, highlighted patience.

Participant Two indicated she is “not a yeller”, seeing herself rather as someone who is “pretty patient. More of a softly spoken person” who said, “I don’t need to yell.” She mentioned

her focus was to create calm in the classroom. She did this by speaking quietly with the individual student who she identified as dysregulating. Participant Two hoped that her quiet voice would enable her student to feel calm and for him able to continue with his work. This ongoing interaction and her persistence showcased patience within Participant Two.

5.2.5 Theme Five: An absence of theoretical knowledge regarding wellbeing in ITE courses.

A theme that emerged from the findings was the lack of wellbeing content in ITE courses. Both participants reported little exposure to theories that reflected a wellbeing focus. When specifically asked questions about their knowledge of such theories, they reported no knowledge or even awareness of wellbeing approaches throughout their ITE courses (Appendix B).

Participant One mentioned in her responses a lack of content relating to wellbeing approaches: “I feel like I haven’t been exposed to what programs are available in wellbeing.” Her lack of engagement in her ITE course could have contributed to this response. She may not have been as engaged as other students, perhaps explaining her lack of awareness of relevant content. This was obvious when she indicated she was “not a massive fan of how they ran uni. I have struggled a bit with the transition out of uni. Has impacted what I think of uni.” Participant One mentioned coming to the interview from a wellbeing session held at the school for homeroom teachers but was not able to elaborate on the content provided as she didn’t know enough context or knowledge about what was being presented in the session.

Participant Two responded to the question which inquired about wellbeing approaches or theories in her ITE course by saying, “Probably not...maybe briefly. Looking more at the safety...special education, inclusive education but not more broadly.” The indication of special education content (which differs drastically from wellbeing literature) indicates that Participant Two had no knowledge of this content or relevant literature.

5.3 Chapter summary

In this chapter, a summary of each of the two participants in this research was presented. The research questions which aligned with the themes generated were illustrated. They included five major themes and three sub-themes. In the next chapter, the themes identified will be explored in connection to the research questions of this study with supporting literature.

Chapter Six: Discussion

This chapter revisits the research questions by presenting themes and connecting them to relevant literature. Implications of the research will be explored as well as a review of the limitations of the research.

6.1 Revisiting research questions

The main research question focused on ‘How do Pre-Service Teachers’ (PSTs) perceive and respond to behaviour in the classroom while on professional experience?’

The sub-questions were:

- (a) How do PSTs perceive behaviour in the classroom?
- (b) What factors influence these perceptions of behaviour?
- (c) What responses do PSTs make when facing behaviour in the classroom?
- (d) How do PSTs perceive their capability when responding to behaviour in the classroom?
- (e) Do PSTs feel their ITE courses prepared them well to respond to behaviour in the classroom during professional experience?

In exploring these themes, the sub research questions aligned with themes and the areas of conceptual framework (see Table 6).

The main research question will be explored following the sub-question examination with themes.

Table 6

Themes generated from the data which correspond to the research questions and the conceptual framework.

Question	Theme	Conceptual framework
(a) How do PSTs perceive behaviour in the classroom?	Viewing behaviours as low-level.	Context (Bronfenbrenner and Sen)
(b) What factors influence these perceptions of behaviour?	Need for aligned perspectives between PST and TM.	Context (Bronfenbrenner) Social and Environmental (Sen)
(c) What responses do PSTs make when facing behaviour in the classroom?	Relationships between student-teacher.	Process (Bronfenbrenner)
(d) How do PSTs perceive their capability when responding to behaviour?	Individual factors of teachers.	Person (Bronfenbrenner and Sen)
(e) Do PSTs feel their ITE courses prepared them well to respond to behaviour in the classroom during professional experience?	Theoretical Knowledge: Wellbeing.	Time (Bronfenbrenner)

6.1.1 Sub-question (a) *How do PSTs perceive behaviour in the classroom?*

When faced with behaviours, both participants viewed behaviours generally as low-level issues, not high-level concerns. They perceived the behaviours as not too concerning and articulated that they were able to handle the behaviours. Although this classification of behaviour being predominantly low-level could be perceived as pleasing, it has been found that ongoing behaviour that continues in a persistent manner, leads to difficulties for students as

well as teachers. In a recent report titled *Teaching Behaviour: How Classroom Conduct Can Unlock Better Learning* (McDonald, 2023), these low-level behaviours were noted by teachers as being difficult to manage given their frequency. These behaviours included talking out of turn and avoiding work. In this report, students who had been categorised as avoiding work regularly by McDonald (2023) were reported to have lower literacy and numeracy results when compared with their same aged peers; some working one-to-two-years below expectation (McDonald, 2023).

Although both participants in this research reported behaviours that they viewed as low-level issues across the board, they did identify one lesson where they experienced more serious difficulties when facing behaviours. This was in one Year 8 boys' class. The behaviours they observed may have been perceived as difficult because of a lack of understanding of the developmental needs of boys (Wienan et al., 2019). Understanding actions associated with development to be able to utilise varying behavioural techniques in the classroom could have been useful in this situation such as how to apply consistent rules and routines (McDonald, 2023).

6.1.2 Sub-question (b) What factors influence perceptions of behaviour?

Both participants identified a mismatch between the strategies of the allocated teacher mentor and their own. They mentioned differences in manner regarding how to interact with students (voice, old school) as well as the interactive ways (or not) to involve students in a discussion during the class. Participant One indicated that she would have responded differently to behaviour in other circumstances outside of the professional experience and at times, mentioned feeling like a burden (Grant-Smith et. al., 2018). Concern about failing the professional experience placement could have led them to respond in their non-preferred manner to the behaviour because they worried about responding differently to their teacher mentor (Johnston, 2010). Both participants mentioned limited time with their teacher mentor,

and this could have contributed to this misalignment of approaches between the TM and the PST (James et al., 2015). Perhaps if more time had been provided for the TM to connect and provide feedback with their PST things could have been different; “if mentors have ample time to meet with novice teachers, usually because they are given release time for mentoring activities, they are likely to spend more time with them, which increases opportunities for productive interactions” (Desimone et al., 2014).

6.1.3 Sub-question (c) What responses do PSTs make when facing behaviour in the classroom?

Across both participants, a common focus of maintaining a strong student-teacher relationship was identified. Both PSTs might have focused on this area during their placement with an aim of reducing potentially difficult behaviour in the classroom (Block, 2011; Rucinski et al., 2018). Knowing that the establishment of a strong positive relationship between themselves and their students, leads to confidence to engage in learning activities might have directed this focus (Baker, 2006). Perhaps both PSTs were seeking to develop a positive classroom climate as positive relationships have been associated with engagement and learning (Ingemarson, et al., 2020). A vast array of literature has identified that students who feel they belong indicate that they like school, will persist in school (Neel & Fuligni, 2013). It is also known that the value of a positive connection with a teacher is important in the classroom for problem-solving and critical thinking (Camacho-Morles et al., 2021; HIWS, 2023). The development of a positive student-teacher relationship may also assist students to self-regulate which could have led to better behaviour in the classroom (Tambyraja et al., 2015; Wagle et al., 2018).

Despite the differences in specific knowledge of theories relating to behaviour management approaches, both participants appeared to demonstrate an interactionist approach

when responding to behaviour. They may not be applying this because of their ITE courses, but for other reasons such as their own experiences whilst at school such as positive interactions with their teachers (*microsystem*). One interactionist approach, known as The Discipline with Dignity Approach of Curwin & Mendler (2018), could have been applied inadvertently by both participants in response to behaviours (Curwin and Mendler, 2018). It advises that identifying when a student may be bored (struggling with attention or seeking to gain attention) and listening to students can help defuse tricky situations. Features of this interactionist approach were evident in both participants responses, notably when they removed distractors and did not employ punitive techniques in the classroom.

6.1.4 Sub-question (d) How do PSTs perceive their capability when responding to behaviour in the classroom?

Perceiving capability relies on one's use of resources and the value one gives that resource (Sen, 1997). The belief in oneself, or the self-efficacy, varied across the two participants. The presence of self-efficacy has been identified in literature as important to the development of teacher resilience for the classroom (Yada et al., 2021). Developing self-efficacy can be influenced by four areas; mastery experiences (achieving or failing at specific tasks or situations), vicarious experience (observing others perform), social persuasion (receiving feedback from someone of influence) and psychological states of the individual (how one feels at the time ranging from stress through to feeling tired or fatigued) (Bandura, 1997; Yada et al., 2021). Participant One's responses suggested that she may not have been exposed to the opportunities that would have allowed her to improve her self-efficacy. She indicated completing her ITE studies during COVID-19 while Participant Two may have felt she had self-efficacy due to mastery experiences undertaken as an LSO.

Both participants highlighted being patient. Participant One alluded to being patient through her wish to please people, being relatable as well as seeking to maintain a relaxed classroom. Participant Two articulated her focus on the creation of calm and being patient when describing herself in the classroom. It is known that teachers who calmly interact with their students when facing behaviours as well as showing the ability to persevere, are known to have high levels of patience in the classroom (Zhang, 2022). Although variances existed in both participants self-efficacy, the ability to be patient and create calm in the classroom, assisted them when facing behaviours in the classroom.

6.1.5 Sub-question (e) Do PSTs feel their ITE courses prepared them well for responding to behaviour in the classroom during the professional experience?

Wellbeing is intrinsically connected to behaviour. Although both participants indicated a lack of theoretical knowledge obtained from their ITE course during the interviews, they both nominated maintaining student-teacher relationships as their priority, perhaps indicating an innate understanding of how important wellbeing is for learning. The strength and quality of a teacher-student relationships has been shown to have a significant impact on a child's social and behavioural adjustment in the classroom (Walker & Graham, 2021). There are an abundance of programs and strategies that schools use in Victoria that have a wellbeing focus. The lack of knowledge that both participants mentioned in this area is surprising given the current focus in schools on wellbeing, particularly post COVID-19.

6.2 Responding to the main research question: How do Pre-Service Teachers (PSTs) perceive and respond to behaviour in the classroom while on professional experience?

Bronfenbrenner's Person, Process, Context and Time (PPCT)(1995) Bioecological Model combined with Sen's Capability Approach (CA)(1997) guided the scope of focus, utilising the

perspective of the individual PST. Each individual revealed responses in connection to the complex interconnecting circles of influence, leading to their articulation of perceptions of behaviour and responses, as well as their own capabilities (Bronfenbrenner, 1995; Sen, 1997).

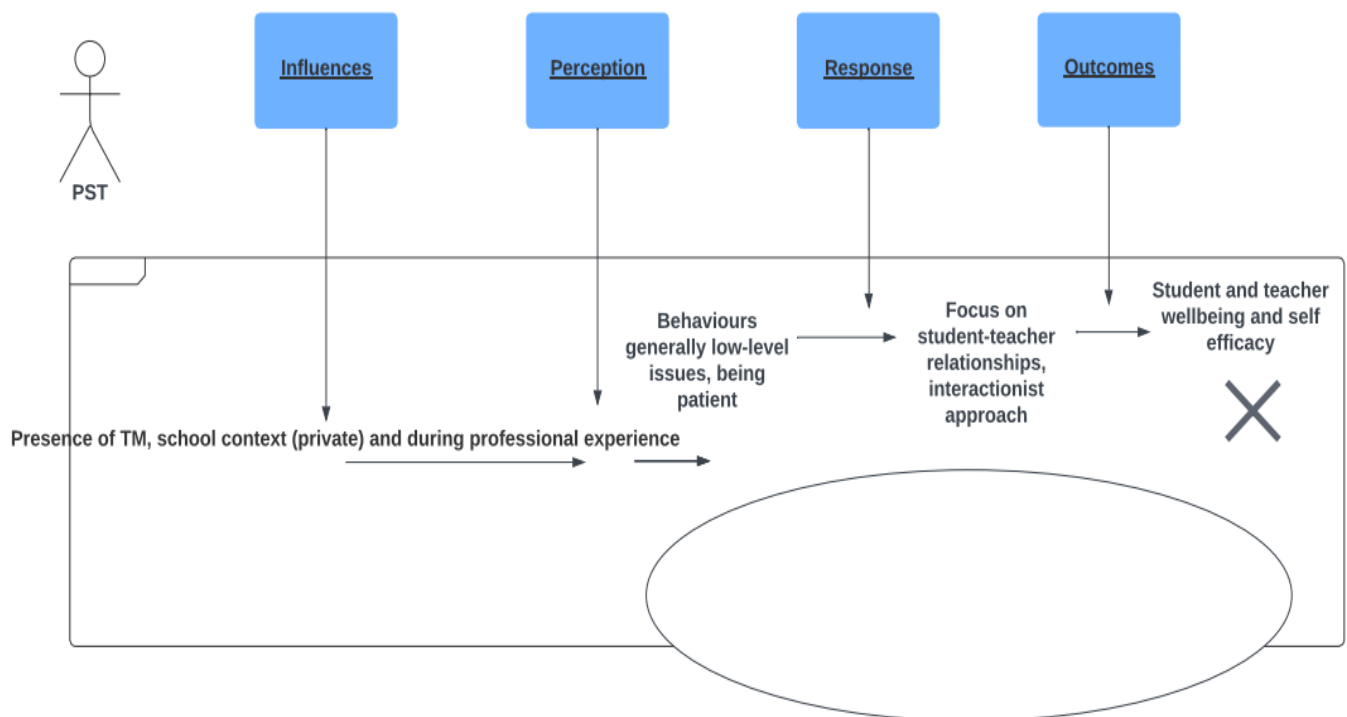
In responding to ‘How do Pre-Service Teachers (PSTs) perceive and respond to behaviour while on professional experience? Both participants (the PSTs) perceived behaviours as low-level concerns across the board, not as high-level issues or challenging for the most part. They sought to respond to behaviour by maintaining a focus on relationships when interacting with their students. Both participants demonstrated an interactionist approach when responding to behaviours. They identified that their responses to behaviour could have differed were it not for the TM presence. Their decisions to respond as they did could have been influenced by their personal characteristics (self-efficacy and being patient). A lack of knowledge in wellbeing literature or theories could have limited both PSTs when interacting with their students.

Using an illustrative framework, such as the proposed framework in Figure 4 below, the themes demonstrate a flow on effect from one theme to another and then showcase a cyclical series of influence between each other. Beginning with being on professional experience, the PSTs identified the influence of their teacher mentor. The presence of a TM could have led to the perception of behaviour to be low-level. This could have been because of their desire to demonstrate competency in front of their TM (Grant-Smith et. al., 2018). The sector of the school (private) could have also influenced their perception or even how the behaviour was presented. The focus on the development of a student-teacher relationship using an interactionist approach to behaviours presented in the classroom could have been attributed to their individual characteristics such as being patient coupled with their wish to focus on the connection of students (relationship being associated with student wellbeing) as well as their personal need for a sense of positive self-efficacy during the professional experience (Symes

et al., 2023). Feeling competent when responding to behaviours through the creation of a calm classroom environment (class climate) could be the driving force behind this decision-making response (De Cordova et. al., 2019). The circle below the arrows in Figure 4, situated under the three areas of perception, response, and outcome, highlight the cyclical influence between each theme. Relationships between students and teachers depend on one another and any future responses by a teacher, depend on the strength of a relationship formed by a teacher with a student (Brunzell et. al., 2019; Brunzell et. al., 2020). This can be often influenced by student and teacher wellbeing as well as the self-efficacy of the teacher (De Cordova et. al., 2019). The themes continue through the cycle, again and again; demonstrating cannot have one theme present without the other when PSTs perceive and then respond to behaviours during the professional experience.

Figure 4

Responding to the main research question represented by a framework.



6.3 Implications

Undertaking this research into the area of behaviour and how it was perceived by PSTs in the classroom while on professional experience, sought to offer additional insights into this field. For early career teachers, concerns with student behaviour can be significant, leading to feelings of powerlessness and perceptions of being unsupported by school leaders and parents. Other teachers have indicated that their teacher education degrees left them unprepared for such situations (Buchanan et al., 2013). Exploring this research from the perspective of PSTs to provide information regarding this complex issue of behaviour in classrooms, provided insights and some suggested implications encapsulating theory, suggestions for PSTs and for ITE providers.

6.3.1 Implications for theory

The bioecological framework coupled with the capability approach, provided a new lens to view behaviour. Identifying the plethora of experiences over one's lifetime coupled with influences and with this new perception of success, provides a framework to be used in future explorations. Examining the term capability in relation to functionings and capabilities provided insight into the way success is perceived. Having an awareness of the individual needs of PSTs and their perspectives into behaviour offered insights into why individuals select responses, based on their own experiences and values. This framework could be used in ITE courses whereby PSTs select elective units that address each of their needs that warrant developing or that they value or aspire to develop. Deakin University in the Teaching and Learning Innovation department recently identified a new framework for Deakin staff to improve their teaching practices. Entitled the '*Deakin Teaching Capability Framework*', this framework comprises individuals selecting the areas they need to work on which align with

their values and needs (Deakin Teaching Capability Framework, n.d). A consideration for the future when developing resources and skills of individuals to align in a similar way.

6.3.2 Implications for Pre-Service Teachers

6.3.2.1 Develop positive student teacher relationships during professional experience

One of the themes that was generated from this research was the focus of the PST to maintain a positive student-teacher relationship when responding to behaviour in the classroom. When one begins the process of educating, the assumption of a relationship is initiated between two parties, the student, and the teacher (Biesta, 2023). This relational process of “forming and nurturing relations; and that relational pedagogy always occurs in the moment of the encounter – the interface – between teacher, learner and knowledge” (Riddle & Hickey, 2022, p. 268). A positive student-teacher relationship contributes to the development of a constructive classroom climate as well as teacher wellbeing (Haldiman et. al., 2023). The interconnecting influences on many areas of the classroom that originate from the formation of relationships, is not to be underestimated. Principal Noel Dixon, from Granville Boys High in Western Sydney, concurred that relationships are of value, in his low SES and underperforming school. He articulated that it “is all about the relationships, one at a time.” (Carroll, 2023, p. 1) and improving student behaviour evolved through building strong foundations with each child. Developing connections with students and developing trust has been critical to turning around the public school in West Sydney (Carroll, 2023).

Developing student-teacher relationships take time and specific application of individual programs. This could be assisted through understanding social emotional learning (SEL) so “that relationship building is not left to chance and professional strategies for developing and dealing with dyadic teacher–student relationships are addressed as early as possible” (Haldiman et. al., 2023, p. 16). The Teacher Effectiveness Training (TET) model

espouses five critical elements which include openness, care, interdependence, separateness, and mutual needs (Talvio et. al., 2013). This model articulates that it is not simply on the onus of the teacher to develop the relationship, it must be a mutual relationship that is held by both teacher and student (Talvio et. al., 2013). Direct interactions and engagement need to exist between the two stakeholders who work together to ensure that the positive student-teacher relationship flourishes (DeNobile et.al., 2021). Give and take must occur, not just from the perspective of the teacher when considering developing student-teacher relationships in the classroom.

6.3.2.2 Developing self-efficacy of PSTs when in the classroom.

Developing confidence and subsequent self-efficacy for the classroom in PSTs is important for future interactions in the classroom to ensure classrooms are safe and supportive places for students (Clarke, 2023). For teachers to be successful, they need to be confident to apply the range of skills required as a teacher into the classroom. Teaching is a complex job that requires a raft of skills ranging from differentiation of curriculum in the classroom to behaviour management. Teachers are required to interact and engage with students while also adapting to the demands of the classroom (McCrory et al., 2023). Teacher wellbeing influences student mental health and in turn, influences retention as well. If teachers feel stressed, then they are less likely to remain in the profession and “early-career teachers are more likely to plan to leave the profession than mid- to late-career teachers” (Clinton & Smith, 2023, p. 318).

Ensuring PSTs are resilient and mentally healthy as well as confident, is crucial to an effective classroom teacher. ‘*Strong Beginnings: Report of the Teacher Education Expert Panel*’ identified the need to strengthen ITE courses which develop confident and classroom ready graduates (Clarke, 2023). Teaching is a complex process and identifying clear goals for PSTs which deepen their knowledge regarding how students in the classroom learn, through effective teaching practices, as well as how to set up classrooms with clear class rules can

develop confidence for PSTs and student learning overall (Clarke, 2023). In addition, by assessing the individual prior to beginning their course at university, stable dispositions may be identified in teachers (Teacher Capability Assessment Tool, n.d).

Using an awareness of their own dispositions and character traits, PSTs can build their self-awareness and expand their evaluative mindset by judging the impact of their decisions (Clinton & Smith, 2023). Providing support for these PSTs by developing their resilience is critical as it is “an important predictor of an individual’s ability to recover from adversity, respond to change, and face challenges.” (Clinton & Smith, 2023, p. 320).

6.3.3 Implications for ITE Providers

6.3.3.1 Deepening knowledge and skills relating to behaviour in relevant contexts

Both participants highlighted difficulties with behaviours when teaching or observing the boys’ class. Completing relevant units during ITE studies which encompass topics such as cognitive development (Piaget’s theory of development), social, emotional, and moral development (Erikson’s theory of development and Bandura’s Social Learning theory), as well as sociocultural approaches in learning (Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological model of development) (Duchesne & McMaugh, 2019). This unit could also incorporate skills of discerning why behaviour occurs by observing and noting patterns of behaviour. Using this functional process of viewing behaviour, includes noting events in the environment such as recent worldwide events that may have caused disruption in behaviours (ie. COVID-19 pandemic) as well as other considerations (Fox et. al., 2022). This would include thinking further about the classroom composition, location, curriculum modifications and accommodations and style of delivery (Fox et.al., 2022). This would enable PSTs to be able to implement strategies that are relevant in knowledge but also appropriate because of their

determination and identification of where the behaviour is coming from and why (Fox et.al., 2022).

6.3.3.2 Understanding wellbeing models and programs that exist in schools currently

Developing content relating to wellbeing theories, as well as an understanding of the current wellbeing programs that exist in schools, is necessary. There are many substantial and well-documented theoretical approaches to wellbeing in schools. Research tells us that many students who are engaged at school and feel connected to the school experience high levels of wellbeing that enhance their learning outcomes (Goldberg et al., 2022). Connections and relationships are vital for many students who have experienced trauma or adversity. The Berry Street Education Model (BSEM), an example of a wellbeing program being used across Victorian school, focuses on relationships as one of their domains within their five-domain pedagogical approach. The trauma-informed positive education model (TIPE) used in the BSEM approach is designed for students who have experienced adversity (Brunzell et al., 2019). A positive psychology foundation guides this approach, reminding “teachers that the timing and quality of positive interactions have meaningful consequences” (Brunzell et. al., 2020, p. 76). Developing positive relationships between student and teacher provides support for students who become dysregulated or may have impaired relational skills. By developing positive relationships with students, teachers can identify opportunities to increase the “self-regulatory abilities of their students to mitigate this escalation, (second) increases relational capacities within their students to make strong peer and teacher relationships for safe and supportive relational bonds and (third) increases psychological resources for student wellbeing” (Brunzell et. al., 2019, p. 601). PSTs need to have an awareness of how the individual components of positive psychology and wellbeing interconnect and enhance learning for students.

6.3.4 Implications for future research

6.3.4.1 Exploring patience and the influence on perception of behaviour

The personal characteristic of patience needs further examination in a future study to further identify the influences on perception of behaviours as well as the influence on development of student-teacher relationships. The concept of teacher patience “involves teachers calmly dealing with challenging or unsatisfactory situations and delayed outcomes” (Zhang, 2022, p. 2). PSTs may have been drawn to the profession of teaching with these associated traits for the job, including patience and kindness (McCrory et al., 2023). Identifying through research whether they considered themselves patient prior to commencing their ITE course (biologically determined) or this evolved through their studies (situationally constructed), when understanding the skills required to be a teacher, warrants exploration (Zhang, 2022). Often the concept of being patient, “is a part of teaching that is taken for granted” (Zhang, 2022, p. 2). Being patient may vary according to different contexts such as one class to another class, or from one student to another. It may be reduced when teachers face a lack of change in behaviour when implementing a program on behaviours for example. Simply knowing about an individual student’s circumstances or reasons for their behaviour in class, might not be enough to galvanise patience in teachers when experiencing difficult behaviours (Zhang, 2022). Teacher workload, emotional support can all provide support for teachers, however teacher wellbeing issues are rising and this may require a deeper consideration of the impact of all associated areas in the exploration of patience in teachers.

6.3.4.2 Exploring research and influences of Teacher Mentors (TMs) on PSTs

Both participants indicated a mismatch between their teacher mentor during placement. Given the short time frame over professional experience, it can be challenging to develop strong relationships and aligned approaches between mentor and PST (Toe et al., 2020). Undertaking research into this area regarding how TMs influence PSTs and how different

contexts for professional experience can create stronger partnerships between the mentor and the PST would provide greater understanding of the influences they give during this time. One model that provides extended time frames of professional experience coupled with additional support is the initiative called the Professional Experience Hub in NSW. It provides an ongoing partnership between schools and universities, and in some situations, provides a year-long placement experience. The hubs associate with schools that have a strong focus on supporting PSTs. Schools and universities work together in this initiative to ensure support is given to PSTs and mentors during placement in a strong cohesive way (Professional Experience Hub Schools, 2023). From this program, PSTs can be given additional support while for teacher mentors, additional professional learning can be provided with “increased access to support structures in the partnership.” (Bradbury & Acquaro, 2022, p 32). This is just one program that is being applied in Australia and extending research into this area to identify how this program works to support mentors and PSTs as well as how approaches between mentor and PST align, would be of interest.

6.3.4.3 Applying the conceptual framework used in this research across multiple sectors.

Having the opportunity to undertake further research on perceptions of behaviour across a variety of educational settings would be of interest. This would include schools in alternative settings, catholic, independent, and state sectors simultaneously. Having the opportunity to extend this research in multiple settings would provide further insights into PSTs perceptions of behaviour.

6.4 Limitations

Some specific limitations were identified in relation to the processes of the research. These limitations include the size of the sample (only two), the process of enlisting participants and participants responding freely with the researcher.

The use of a larger sample would have been advantageous for overall data analysis. More participants could have provided more data to inform the findings, such as other themes not yet explored (Brink, 1993). Expanding the research to gain a broader understanding of the many needs of PSTs from other universities with different experiences could have led to a deeper knowledge of the perceptions they hold as a cohort of students (Robinson, 2014). In this research the information acquired was accurately represented; however, it may not be a representation of the wider cohort of PSTs. Using one placement school as a focus rather than a university education faculty could have also limited responses received from participants. A focus on a university, rather than one individual school, may have elicited more in-depth responses in relation to the units covered in ITE programs. This could have allowed for follow-up opportunities with the university directly to uncover details regarding course composition in the ITE programs. More precise information could have led to a deeper understanding of the PSTs from that individual university (Robinson, 2014). Expanding the number of schools involved may have been useful as the school was a private independent co-educational school with high fees. PSTs may not witness the full range of behaviours in a single school, and no comparisons were available; this could have influenced the results (Bashir et al., 2014). The process of enlisting participants also proved difficult. The coordinator of the PSTs at the school where ethics approval had been granted moved to a new school in the middle of 2023. This was in the middle of the intended participant selection period. No one was appointed to replace the coordinator during 2023. As a result, communication between the school and myself added an unforeseen level of complexity. A temporary coordinator, appointed for the remainder of 2023, was able to identify potential participants. Despite these concerns regarding limited number of schools and participants, the researcher took all these considerations into account “such as time...the availability of participants...the quality and quantity of data required to

achieve the research objectives” (Dunwoodie et al., 2023, p. 865) and identified that indeed the objectives of the research were met by using the two participants in the one school.

The ability of the participants to answer freely may have been influenced by my age as a mature researcher, given their position as students in the 20 to 25 age range; they may have felt intimidated by me. Through the semi-structured interview process and striving to achieve authenticity by presenting as an educator who had previously worked in schools, these concerns may have diminished. Qualitative interviews “provide an opportunity for participants to share their feelings, prejudices, opinions, desires, and attitudes towards different phenomena they experience in the workplace or other organisational contexts” (Dunwoodie et al., 2022, p. 864). The interview process gave participants an opportunity to explain how they felt about the issue and they were able to put this into their own words (Pessoa et al., 2019).

6.5 Chapter summary

In this chapter, the findings of this study were examined. Each of the research questions was answered through the corresponding connection to a theme. The main research question was summed up in an illustrative framework highlighting the interconnecting influences that affects the PSTs when they view, perceive, and then respond to behaviour in the classroom. Several implications emerged from this study in relation to theory, ITE providers and the PSTs themselves. The potential for future research into the areas of patience, teacher mentor support and an expansion of participants for the future has been suggested. Minimal limitations were identified throughout the course of this research study.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

For many years, there have been numerous explanations (anecdotal and from research) offered for why teachers leave schools and the education sector in Australia. Teachers who consistently manage and respond to behaviours in the classroom, report feeling tired and apathetic about their daily contribution to their workplace (Bower & Carroll 2017; Song & Zhang 2020; Tuisk, 2007; Van der Vyver et al., 2020). Their sense of mission and responsibility to their students “contrasts with the diminishing possibilities of implementing these priorities in their real work” (Tuisk, 2007, p. 37). Their feelings of apathy, unpreparedness, and diminished value grow as the level of expectation they feel and the scope of the curriculum continues to expand (Bower & Carroll 2017; Song & Zhang 2020; Tuisk, 2007; Van der Vyver et al., 2020). It is difficult to pinpoint the motivations behind each departure from teaching and it cannot be said that it is the same reason for all of them. It has been found to depend on a variety of issues ranging from workload, family issues, and personal factors (Weldon, 2018). What is known is that many teachers report concerns about the lack of support for managing behaviour in the classroom (McDonald, 2023).

The concerns articulated by PSTs when I was teaching across varying academic units at a university initiated my interest in perception and behaviour. Seeking to explore explanations of why perception of behaviour occurs in PSTs and what responses they might give in such situations, drove the rationale for this current research. Using the lens of the conceptual framework to explore PSTs perception of behaviour has provided new insights into the field, without necessarily providing a solution to the overarching issue of how to respond to behaviour in the classroom for all teachers. PSTs and educators around the world face multiple interactions every day with students.

In this research, a qualitative case study approach was utilised (Braun, 2022; Rebolj, 2013). The opportunity to use semi-structured interviews provided opportunities to expand on the responses of each participant and it shone a lens on their unique experiences and insights as individuals (Jennings, 2005). Using a combined conceptual framework of Bronfenbrenner (1995) and Sen (1997) to interrogate questions regarding how perceptions can influence responses to behaviours observed in the classroom, this research sought to shine a lens on the variances that exist across PST in their perceptions when they face behaviours while on placement. The use of thematic analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2017) generated several themes which revealed a focus on maintaining positive relationships with students by using interactionist approaches in response to behaviours observed. Both participants sought to develop and maintain positive relationships with their students in the classroom. This was apparent in many of their responses provided in the semi-structured interviews. Working with the students by using an interactionist approach to behaviours presented was a priority, rather than responding in an authoritarian manner.

Implications from the results of this research included expanding the knowledge regarding behaviour of our students, well as an identification of wellbeing theories and specific programs that exist in schools now. Ensuring PSTs are confident in the classroom, is also identified as imperative from the results (Clarke, 2023). Exploring the interconnection of patience in PSTs as well as advancing our understanding of how to support teacher mentor in different professional experience formats is also suggested.

The overarching focus of what happens within the classroom clearly has its focus on a human element, the student. The perspectives of these PSTs present an optimistic viewpoint which focuses on relationships between students and the teacher as critical. This research has highlighted the varying ways individuals perceive behaviour and multiple reasons why behaviour occurs in the classroom by students. The notion that all teachers view behaviour in

the same way has been interrogated using the combined perspectives of Bronfenbrenner (1995) and Sen (1997) to guide the research journey. While there is no singular outcome from this research that typifies how all PSTs view behaviour or respond, this study has provided insights into the various interconnecting themes that influence perceptions of and responses to student behaviour in the classroom.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Questions

QUESTIONS FOR BEGINNING OF PLACEMENT

- How many placements have you had previously? Indicate number of previous placement opportunities.
- How were the previous placements different from this placement?
- How long is this placement?
- How many lessons/classes will you deliver (face to face with students)?
- How many lessons/classes will you observe (face to face with students)?
- Which year level will you be teaching?
- Did you complete any units in your ITE program that addressed behaviour management?

If yes....

Did these units cover theoretical origins of behaviours?

Did these units cover behaviour management strategies/approaches/support?

Did these units consider cause and motivation for behaviour?

Did these units provide practical approaches to dealing with a variety of behaviours in the classroom?

Did these units address wellbeing approaches in schools?

Did these units address social and emotional learning in schools?

Did these units address low level responses to behaviours in the classroom?

Did you feel prepared for behaviour management in the classroom after these units?

- Did you have a positive or negative relationship with your teachers when you attended school?

- How would you describe the relationship that you have with the families and caregivers at your current placement school?
- What are the expectations placed on the school by the families connected to the school?
- Do you believe that school-wide programs are supported across the school by staff?
- What are the varying leadership models that exist at your placement school?
- Indicate what type of leadership you experienced while at the school.
- Do you have direct supervision from a TM?
- What type of relationship do you have with your allocated TM?
- Do you think a combination of factors over the course of your life, your teaching studies, and the wider world have influenced how you respond to or perceive behaviours?
- How would you define behaviour?
- Where did your definition of behaviour come from?
- What factors have influenced your definition of behaviour?
- How would you describe your personal characteristics?
- What is your attitude to behaviour?

QUESTIONS FOR END OF PLACEMENT

- Did you experience behaviours while on placement?

If yes...

How many times did you experience behaviours while on placement? Indicate amount.

Did behaviours occur over the whole placement experience?

In what class/es did the behaviours occur?

What was the behaviour?

Why do you think this behaviour occurred?

What strategy/response did you implement when you faced behaviours?

Would this strategy fall under the umbrella of a particular approach known as ...?

Did you feel this response was effective?

Why did you feel this response was effective? or

Why did you feel this response was ineffective?

Why did you respond in this manner to the behaviour?

Would you implement this strategy again?

If you said yes...

- Why would you implement this strategy again?

If you said no...

- Why would you not implement this strategy again?
- Do you think any factors influenced your responses to behaviours observed in the classroom?
- Do you think your perceptions of behaviour changed between the beginning and end of placement? Why?

Appendix B: Transcript

Transcript – Participant One

START OF PLACEMENT

Body language: reserved, nervous, can't make eye contact, quiet voice

How many placements have you had previously? Indicate number of previous placement opportunities.

How were the previous placements different from this placement?

How long is this placement?

How many lessons/classes will you deliver (face to face with students)?

How many lessons/classes will you observe (face to face with students)?

Which year level will you be teaching?

- "This is the second block at this school. Final placement. I feel I have a bit more autonomy."
- "But I don't kind of have autonomy because I don't know if you have heard about the GTPA...it's an assignment I have to do based on a sequence of lessons and I have never had to do this on placement before...and make assessments based on this...while placement is about free rein...you have to structure it around the university assignment...yes and no...I haven't actually looked at the assignment yet as I am pretty disorganised."
- "Placements I have been on are different to this one as they have been at the end of the year because of COVID and lockdowns and I haven't really done much teaching."
- "Had more teaching this time."

- “Placement office struggled to find me a prac.”
- “I am teaching Year 7 girls, Year 8 boys and 11 VCE.”
- “Mentor is part-time and he doesn’t have classes on Friday so he doesn’t come in.”
- “I have observed other classes. Sometimes I don’t push it. I think it is a bit pointless. Waste of my time. Can’t be bothered. Do more bio as it’s my third method.”
- “Observing PE is much the same over and over again. Much the same.”

Did you complete any units in your ITE program that addressed behaviour management?

If yes....

Did these units cover theoretical origins of behaviours?

Did these units cover behaviour management strategies/approaches/support?

Did these units consider cause and motivation for behaviour?

Did these units provide practical approaches to dealing with a variety of behaviours in the classroom?

Did these units address wellbeing approaches in schools?

Did these units address social and emotional learning in schools?

Did these units address low level responses to behaviours in the classroom?

Did you feel prepared for behaviour management in the classroom after these units?

- “Not explicitly. I mean probably. I think it’s interwoven. But I don’t think so. I think it could be more. Hard to teach because it’s so dependent on context and other factors.”
- “We did readings but not cover it.”
- “We touched on social learning theory. I also did psychology.”

- “We have done different approaches to teaching. Haven’t done approaches to learning.”
- “No, I think its self-implied. Assume what’s going on. Look at the student and know the factors. Lower social class or family violence. Self-implied I think.”
- “I haven’t explored it too much. Occasionally. I guess I feel like ...I don’t actually know if I want to be a teacher. I have considered doing psych. So think that sort of stuff interests me. Personal interests.”
- “Some of the PE students are straight line learners. They need it explained to them. But I feel like I am more aware of stuff relating to students.”
- “Two years of a course was online. Hard to say whether given practical examples were given to help in the classroom as it was all online.”
- “More strategies given in PE and Health subjects, very structured.”
- “We did some units that covered wellbeing in PE and Health.”
- “We didn’t do anything on restorative conversations. I feel a lot of the stuff we did didn’t cover it. I hated uni.”
- “Not a massive fan of how they ran uni. I have struggled a bit with the transition out of uni. Has impacted what I think of uni.”

Did you have a positive or negative relationship with your teachers when you attended school?

- “I didn’t start doing this degree. I started doing Science at Melb Uni and I had a negative view of it. Seems to have tainted anything else after. I wanted to do physio but didn’t work hard enough in Year 12. Got sucked into Melb Uni...prestigious. I didn’t really know what I wanted to do.”
- “I was pretty lost. I feel that now in this course.”
- “I wasn’t very motivated.”

- “I enjoy coaching.”
- “I like sport so that seems fine.”
- “Pretty positive relationships at school.”
- “Hard while on placement coming in and forming relationships. Such a challenge. I have this view of being judged. Not the most self-confident person. Feel like I’m a little bit awkward.”
- “It’s easier with the younger year levels.”
- “Classes always run fine. No real communication. Placement is not the best representation. Here are a bunch of kids and not teaching them a lot of content. Never see them again and hard to engage.”
- “Older kids roll their eyes.”

How would you describe the relationship that you have with the families and caregivers at your current placement school.

What are the expectations placed on the school by the families connected to the school?

- “None. No connection with parents on placement.”
- “Graduate Standards indicate you have to meet this. Be a part of parent interactions. But it’s all online.”

Do you believe that school-wide programs are supported across the school by staff.

- “I feel like I haven’t been exposed to what programs are available in wellbeing – I have heard of school trips and such but nothing like wellbeing.”
- “I haven’t been to any homeroom. I think they have them, but I haven’t been to any.”

What are the various leadership models that exist at your placement school?

Indicate what type of leadership you experienced while at the school.

- “I think it’s a decently run school. I haven’t seen the principal but there are multiple campuses. I have seen him online. It’s pretty organised.”

Do you have direct supervision by a TM?

What type of relationship do you have with your allocated TM?

- “Mentor is very chilled and laidback. I would like a little bit more feedback, constructive. Sometimes I will come out of a class and its yeah. Kids running all over the place. I would like some strategies. He is kind of like...yeah. The sport office is really matesy.”
- “I kind of rock up, sit down, and do my own thing. Feel like a bit of a hassle.”

Do you think a combination of factors over the course of your life, your teaching studies, and the wider world have influenced how you respond to or perceive behaviours?

- “Learning challenges if people struggle to focus. I can relate to that.”
- “I feel like it’s a matter of being approachable. I coach soccer and there are a few girls who are struggling a bit. I can give my own experiences and approach them and I can kind of relate to them on a personal level.”
- “I think I have always been pretty observant. I enjoy watching people and it’s kind of like...sometimes it’s not that hard to read people.”

How would you define behaviour?

- “A way that someone behaves that is not comfortable or ...I guess it’s something ...I’m trying to think of a concise definition...a way that someone behaves that is hard to manage that disrupts the lesson.”

Where did your definition of behaviour come from?

- ‘From watching people, being that person, seeing people in society.’

What factors have influenced your definition of behaviour?

- “I don’t have a good relationship with my mum at the moment. I think that how I would respond to her would be different to the classroom.”

How would you describe your personal characteristics?

- “I’m pretty chilled, laid back. Disorganised.”

What is your attitude to behaviour?

- “I think I’m approachable and a bit of a people pleaser, so I would like to work on that in the classroom to get more strategies and ways to do things.”

END OF PLACEMENT

Did you experience behaviours while on placement?

If yes...

How many times did you experience behaviour while on placement? Indicate amount.

Did the behaviours occur over the whole placement experience?

- “Challenging to an extent. I think the kids are pretty good here. I have had Year 7 girls, Year 11, the Year 8 boys have been a little difficult. Sometimes it has been a little chaos.”
- “Again, it comes down to each person’s perspective of what challenging behaviour means.”

- “I guess if you take it from my perspective, yes, a little bit. I wouldn’t say over the top. Nothing that I can’t handle. Nothing too difficult. You can tell them off and why are you doing this. Sometimes they are trying to get attention. The more attention you give them the more difficult they will become.”
- “Some things you have to shut down. A kid spat yesterday in the gym. I said it was disgusting. You can go and clean that up. Sit out for a bit.”
- “The kid has got a bit of ADHD. He hasn’t been told. He is not medicated for it. He cannot control for it. He is all over the place. He can’t sit still. He is never going to put his hand up. His parents know but he doesn’t know. The school knows. But he doesn’t. Apparently.”
- “There are no modifications for this. Not that I am aware of. To be fair, I haven’t been told anything specifically about any other learning needs, so I’m not really sure.”
- “I got told 2 weeks into the placement about a girl who isn’t supposed to be asked anything in class.”
- “It was in prac PE the spitting.”
- “I observed a Year 8 Boys’ class and there was no management of this class. Boys standing up, yelling out, this teacher had no control over these students.”
- “It was Sex Ed. So awkward.”
- “Immaturity, age, topic. Development.”
- “With the spitting I said that’s not acceptable whether its ADHD or not.”
- “I am not authoritative and will not rip into him. There is no point. You will ruin the relationship. In that instance, spitting is not acceptable. I can modify how I will treat him in class, but in this instance, that is not on.”

In which class did the behaviour occur?

What was the behaviour?

Why do you think this behaviour occurred?

What strategy/response did you implement when faced with the behaviour?

Would this strategy fall under the umbrella of a particular approach known as ...?

- “Remove the distraction. Remove the laptop and get them to move.”
- “If it’s a prac class, they might need to sit out. Warning.”
- “Low level issues. Not every kid jumping on top of one another swearing. It’s just immature Year 8 boys.”
- “It’s stereotypical, but the boys are difficult. But the girls have challenges socially and emotionally.”
- “You don’t have too many girls punching one another.”
- “I think it’s hard with placement. Because you haven’t had that class from the start. You need to come in and reinforce the rules, but they might not be your rules.”
- “My mentor is all about, hands up. That’s ok. I agree you do need it. But if you are having a discussion, no point having the hands up. Old school responses.”
- “He is all about one person speaks at one time. But I think it depends on the class and your ability to get them back. You lose control for a bit but it’s harmless. Sometimes they need a bit of a break.”
- “Personal experience leads me to respond like this. Reflect back on how you learnt. Engage in those practices. You are not necessarily going to go for each theory. Trial and error.”

- “You can’t be too closed off to the students. They lose their sense of freedom.

I think this is good to give.”

Did you feel this response was effective?

Why did you feel this response was effective? or

Why did you feel this response was ineffective?

Why did you respond in this manner to the behaviour?

Would you implement this strategy again?

If you said yes...

Why would you implement this strategy again?

If you said no...

Why would you not implement this strategy again?

Do you think any factors influenced your responses to behaviours observed in the classroom?

- “I think I am more aware and have greater experiences. I can visualise what is being said and when I see those students in action such as ADHD. It’s not just a concrete thing. I have a deeper understanding now.”
- “I would be apprehensive about going to a school that has challenging behaviours as I don’t think I have seen a lot of challenging behaviours on placement.”

Transcript – Participant Two

START OF PLACEMENT

Body language: confident, makes eye contact, clear voice, articulate

How many placements have you had previously? Indicate number of previous placement opportunities.

- “Two previous placements.”

How were the previous placements different from this placement?

- “Been in a variety of settings, co-ed public school and boys catholic school.”

How long is this placement?

- “This is a five-week placement.”

How many lessons/classes will you deliver (face to face with students)?

- “Will deliver 80% of classes.”

How many lessons/classes will you observe (face to face with students)?

- “Will observe the first week all classes.”

Which year levels will you be teaching?

- “Year 8 and Year 10.”

Did you complete any units in your ITE program that addressed behaviour management?

If yes....

Did these units cover theoretical origins of behaviours?

- “Yes, they covered...lots of different theories, cognitive behaviour theory and humanist perspectives...sort of how do you...Carl Rogers...Bill Rogers...”
- - “It was called effective teaching and is run over the course of the degree in conjunction with placement.”

Did these units cover behaviour management strategies/approaches/support?

- “We talked a lot about the anatomy of a crisis...the escalation of a student and where we can intervene...prevention strategies to deal with it.”

Did these units consider cause and motivation for behaviour?

- “Yes, provided this...looking at personal issues that the student might have...such as trauma informed...learning difficulties...lack of engagement...”

Did these units provide practical approaches to dealing with a variety of behaviours in the classroom?

- “Yes, some.”

Did these units address wellbeing approaches in schools?

- “Probably not...maybe briefly. Looking more at the safety...special education, inclusive education, but not more broadly.”

Did these units address social and emotional learning in schools?

- “Not that I can recall.”

Did these units address low level responses to behaviours in the classroom?

- “Yes, we covered those.”

Did you feel prepared for behaviour management in the classroom after these units?

- “I s’pose that you don’t really know until you are in the classroom, until you face it. Theoretically all good and well but until you are in the classroom it’s a whole different thing.”

Did you have a positive or negative relationship with your teachers when you attended school?

- “Pretty positive. I s’pose every teacher is different. More positive than negative.”

Would you describe the relationship that you have with the families and caregivers at your current placement school.

What are the expectations placed on the school by the families connected to the school?

- “Not yet. I imagine it is pretty high by what I have observed so far in the classrooms, some of the quietest classrooms I have ever seen.”
- “Doesn’t seem like too big an issue.”

Do you believe that school-wide programs are supported across the school by staff.

- “Went to a meeting today, Year 10 – 12, to promote engagement strategies. The staff seemed on board and open to implementing these ideas. A lot of engagement when we broke into small groups.”

What are the various leadership models that exist at your placement school?

Indicate what type of leadership you experienced while at the school.

- “I think in the first school I was at, I don’t think there was a sense of teacher community. Couldn’t really tell who was doing what. In the next school, it was very specific chain of command. Felt a little like teacher versus management. But a great teacher community there. Could see where everything flowed. Here I have been taken through all the different leaders here. Have been told it will change again soon.”

Do you have direct supervision from a TM?

What type of relationship do you have with your allocated TM?

- “Mentor is at 0.8.”

- “Have engagement to a point. Is hard as mentor is not exactly both my teaching methods. I am happy to observe his lessons that are not my teaching method.”
- “We had a planning session yesterday.”

Do you think a combination of factors over the course of your life, your teaching studies, and the wider world have influenced how you respond to or perceive behaviours?

- “Comes from practical experience.”

How would you define behaviour?

- “Good question.”
- “Something that is pushing the boundaries of your control.”

Where did your definition of behaviour come from?

- “Comes from practical experience as an LSO.”

What factors have influenced your definition of behaviour?

- “Work as an LSO.”

How would you describe your personal characteristics?

- “I’m pretty patient. I’m not a yeller. More of a softly spoken person. So need strategies for that. Would prefer to prevent stuff before it happens.”
- “Think I need to be stronger in my responses.”
- “My first placement said I need to focus on projection. And I worked on this a lot more in my second placement. My mentor gave me lots of strategies to do this on my last placement.”
- “Recognising I don’t need to yell.”

- “Be vocal yet present.”

What is your attitude to behaviour?

- “Different strategies work at different schools.”

END OF PLACEMENT

Did you experience behaviours while on placement?

If yes...

- “Yes.”

How many times did you experience behaviour while on placement? Indicate amount.

Did the behaviours occur over the whole placement experience?

- “Um, in that class of Year 8 boys, every class. Not super challenging but just in terms of noise and getting them to focus and so...yeah, there was one incident where two students had a blow-up at one another and I had to neutralise the situation.”
- **In which class did the behaviour occur?**
- “Year 8 English.”

What was the behaviour?

- “Verbally yelling at one another and calling one another names.”
- “One student was quite upset.”
- “A lot of bringing it back and regulating him.”
- “Returning back to the lesson.”
- “Wasn’t too catastrophic.”

Why do you think this behaviour occurred?

- The student does have ASD and is prone to escalate.
- Maybe the relationship between the two students is recurring.
- Maybe I missed the first part of the conversation before it escalated.
- Should have caught onto it before it escalated.

What strategy/response did you implement when faced with behaviours?

- “I s’pose because he was so heightened, I wanted to keep calm and bring it down to that energy.”
- “Lower my voice a bit and spoke to him directly.”
- “Asked him if he wanted to go and get a drink of water.”
- “He said no I’m alright.”
- “Then he started to regulate a bit more. Realised I was empathetic to the situation.”
- “I said we will discuss it after class and stay back at the end.”

Would this strategy fall under the umbrella of a particular approach known as ...?

- “A blend really. A little bit intuitive. I didn’t want to add to the situation. Add to that energy.”
- “In my job as an integration aide I have similar students who have that sort of temperament and yeah, knowing to stay calm to talk them through.”
- “I think university studies we have discussed those crisis moments at university ...in our placement subject last semester, redirecting, go and get a drink. Give the student time to come back and be present.”

Did you feel this response was effective?

Why did you feel this response was effective? or

Why did you feel this response was ineffective?

Why did you respond in this manner to the behaviour?

Would you implement this strategy again?

- “Somewhat. Maybe encourage him to exit earlier. I kind of left him to be. It kind of continued far too long. Do more preventative. Catching on to it earlier. Moving people from seats.”
- “They weren’t in their seating plan which also contributed to it.”
- “Um, it was my second lesson, and I didn’t realise they were not in their seating plan.”
- “I have looked at their learning plans and have notes on how best to work with them.”
- “Now after several weeks, I’m picking up on what I have read and seeing how that happens in the classroom. Seeing how they work.”
- “Whether some students like hard copy or digital copies, etcetera.”
- “Different stimuli.”
- “Ways of approaching the activities.”
- “I suppose the first time I spoke with you I said they are all quite quiet. But depending on the time of day, they have presented quite differently.”
- “Engaged at a different level.”
- “That class in particular I kind of asked myself do they do this with everyone, or just me.”
- “I think it is common with this group.”
- “Got feedback on the projection of my voice and using that as a tool.”

- “I can be a bit quiet.”
- “I have some feedback from other staff that it is common.”
- “They respond more to people like men, firmer, big booming voice, the teacher coming in after me with a big booming voice.”

If you said yes...

Why would you implement this strategy again?

If you said no...

Why would you not implement this strategy again?

- “I could have built on the relationships more in the beginning, the pressure of curriculum.”

Do you think any factors influenced your responses to behaviours observed in the classroom?

- “Experience and familiarity, context situation.