Relationships: A study of pre-service teachers' interpretations of the relationships formed with supervising teachers in professional experience

Submitted by

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Declaration of Authorship and Sources

This thesis contains no material that has been extracted in whole or in part from a thesis that I have submitted towards the award of any other degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the thesis.

All research procedures reported in the thesis received the approval of the relevant Ethics/Safety Committees of the Australian Catholic University.

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Abstract

Thesis Title*:* *Relationships: A study of pre-service teachers' interpretations of the relationships formed with supervising teachers in professional experience.*

This research study was framed through reflection on the ongoing debates within the Australian educational community regarding the quality of teacher practice and initial teacher education. School-based professional experience within teacher education programs is regarded as an essential element of pre-service teacher education courses. Much of the focus of professional experience is related to the pre-service teacher's performance of the teaching skills assessed against a predetermined set of evaluation criteria. However, at times an understated element of the professional experience is the influence of the range of relationships that the pre-service teacher experiences with the members of the school community. Key among these is the relationship that the pre-service teacher establishes with their supervising teacher, who is responsible for providing professional and affective support.

The aim of this study was to explore that relationship during the professional experience from the perspective of the pre-service teacher. As limited research has been developed with this focus, this investigation aimed to give voice to pre-service teachers. A study was developed into their perceptions and interpretations of their interactions in the relationship with their supervising teachers and how these influenced their professional learning.

To gain insight into these experiences, a qualitative case study was undertaken of two cohorts of undergraduate pre-service teachers participating in a 4-year Bachelor of Education Degree related to the Primary (elementary) years of schooling. The study used a Symbolic Interactionism theoretical framework as a lens through which to identify the perceptions developed and the interpretations made within the pre-service and supervising teacher relationship.

The data was analysed using the constant comparative method and axial coding to identify the key elements of the relationship. The results were read closely against the literature in a number of areas, including how relational aspects of the school based professional experience can influence the participants' professional learning.

The study established that the relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher is a fundamental and influential component of the professional experience. An important finding was the multi-layered structure of influence in this relationship. It comprised two overarching aspects: the Interpersonal Aspect and the Professional Mentorship Aspect. Within these aspects, four areas of significance emerged through a series of themes and sub-themes that revealed a more nuanced understanding of the relationship. These were: the influence of the interpersonal component relating to personal and emotional support; the influence of professional mentorship on the development of teaching competencies and expertise; the effect of the relationship on the development of teacher self-efficacy; and the impact of the relationship on emerging teacher identity and career confirmation.

The study clearly identified that the overarching interpersonal aspect was crucial in supporting a positive professional experience. When this aspect was not well developed in the initial stages, it negatively influenced the development of the professional mentorship aspect and subsequently affected the pre-service/supervising teacher relationship. The exploratory nature of the study also found that the degree to which the key influencing elements in both aspects interacted and were positively interrelated was important. This significantly supported and facilitated the pre-service teacher's professional learning and also contributed to their overall levels of teacher efficacy and the formation of their teacher identity.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The importance of quality teaching and teacher preparation is a key component of the ongoing discourse in the Australian educational context. In December 2008, a key report entitled the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* was supported by all Australian Educational Ministers. It identified the need for the provision of high quality education for all Australian children and put forward a vision for the future of education which has formed the basis for much educational progress and development in Australia. The report promoted equity and excellence and the goal that "all young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens" (Ministerial Council on Education, 2008, p. 10). A key element identified within the Declaration was the important role of pre-service teacher education as a contributor to this quality education:

> All Australian governments, universities, school sectors and individual schools have a responsibility to work together to support high-quality teaching and school leadership, including by enhancing pre-service teacher education. (Ministerial Council on Education, 2008, p. 11)

The Australian Federal Government provides support for this key outcome through funding to the States for the operation of their school systems. It has focused on the quality of teaching and leadership, through the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL). Much discussion has occurred related to achieving quality outcomes and the role of teacher education has remained a particular focus of the discussion. In 2014, the Federal Minister for Education appointed the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG). The aim of this group was to research pre-service teacher education programs and to evaluate the quality of courses and processes to better prepare pre-service teachers and to equip them with the practical skills for the classroom (TEMAG, 2014).

The TEMAG (2014) report entitled *Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers Report* contained 38 recommendations related to improving the quality and consistency of teacher education programs. A key focus of this report was the linking of education theory with practice through "pedagogical approaches, subject content and professional experience" (TEMAG, 2014, p. v.). One recommendation of the report specifically focused on the importance of an "integrated and structured" professional experience. It highlighted the vital role that professional experience plays in educating and developing pre-service teachers' professional skills:

> Beginning teachers in Australia consistently rate professional experience as the most useful part of their initial teacher education, and submissions to the Advisory Group identified professional experience as crucial to the development of pre-service teachers' professional skills and abilities. Professional experience provides a critical link for integrating theory and practice. (TEMAG, 2014, p. 26)

This key component of teacher education programs is therefore an important area of ongoing research and forms the basis for this research study.

1.1 Context of the Study

Professional experience in schools is viewed as an opportunity for pre-service teachers to apply the content knowledge, skills and expertise they have learnt in their course work and enables practical and authentic experiences in classrooms at various levels (Allen & Wright, 2014; Harwell & Moore, 2010; Wilks, Snow, Lasczik, & Bowling, 2019). It is an integral component of pre-service teacher education courses and has been the focus of a broad range of research (Allen & Wright, 2014; Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Harwell & Moore, 2010; Hastings, 2008; Kennedy, 2006; Roland & Beckford, 2010; Zeichner, 2002).

An important element of the teaching professional experience is the pre-service teacher's professional learning that takes place within the classroom and the broader school community. In this environment, the importance of a collaborative approach has been identified as essential to encourage professional dialogue,

shared expertise, reflective practice and the building of trusting relationships (Cranston, 2011). This process includes the pre-service teacher in the development of a range of relationships encompassing members of the school community including students, teachers, school leadership, other pre-service teachers and parents. In the daily teaching experience, at times referred to as the practicum, the most significant relationship formed, is that between the pre-service teacher and their mentor teacher (Gurl, 2018; Harwell & Moore, 2010; Hastings, 2008; Roland & Beckford, 2010). This mentor is primarily responsible for supervising the professional learning and providing affective support to the pre-service teacher who is usually engaged in an unfamiliar school and community environment. In terms of this study the mentor teacher will be referred to as the supervising teacher.

A number of research studies have identified the significance of the relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher in the professional experience (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Buckworth, 2017; Ditchburn, 2015; Dobbins, 1996; Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Haigh & Ward, 2004; Harwell & Moore, 2010; Hogan & Bernay, 2007; Patrick, 2013; Sanderson, 2003). In the early work of Dobbins (1996), professional experience was identified as a "complex process" (p. 16) for the participants due to the personal and professional aspects which need to be managed. Key among the recommendations of Dobbin's study was the selection of supportive supervising teacher educators capable of facilitating the pre-service teacher's learning "through the development of a trusting relationship" (Dobbins, 1996, p. 26).

The importance of the interpersonal relationship between the pre-service and supervising teachers was supported in later work by Beck and Kosnik (2002). They identified that pre-service teachers were looking for emotional and professional support from their supervising teacher. Subsequent studies including that of Ferrier-Kerr (2009) highlighted the importance of establishing "personal connectedness" (p. 792) in order to establish a professional relationship which would support pre-service teachers in their professional learning. In a supportive environment, the pre-service teacher is more likely to ask questions, clarify expectations, be willing to accept constructive advice and appreciate the guidance

of their mentor (Harwell & Moore, 2010). This was seen to be of particular importance as pre-service teachers often feel they have a limited knowledge and understanding of pedagogy, content and teaching strategies. Depending on their experience, it is possible they may feel ill-prepared for the classroom, and experience anxiety and a lack of self-efficacy related to their teaching abilities. This can inhibit the quality of their professional learning during their in-school experience (Harwell & Moore, 2010).

Therefore, the establishment of a collaborative and supportive pre-service and supervising teacher relationship should be "considered a crucial aspect of professional experience and critical to professional learning throughout" (Ferrier-Kerr, 2009, p. 791). The perceptions that pre-service teachers form and the meaning made of both the affective and competency based experiences within the relationship are crucially important in the development of professional learning and emerging teacher identity. These perceptions are influenced by their interactions with the supervising teacher. Perceptions are formed through the roles that are undertaken and "the roles played within a practicum are dynamic" (Haigh & Ward, 2004, p. 136). These perceptions can also be influenced by a range of issues such as the context of the school and the classroom, the varied understanding of the purpose of the professional experience, the personality of the participants and differing beliefs and experiences.

A range of studies have sought to give 'voice' to pre-service teachers' perceptions and interpretations developed during their professional experience (Allen & Wright, 2014; Buckworth, 2017; Moody, 2009; Patrick, 2013; Wilks et al., 2019). However as suggested by (Moody, 2009) these voices are often "less heard in the literature and a focus on their views should help towards a greater understanding of professional experience as they experience the day to day realities within the school" (p. 127). Buckworth (2017) supports this view stating that in professional experience "the inclusion of pre-service teacher voice in policy development is vital if dignity and equity is to be re-established" (p. 379).

In order to investigate and better understand the pre-service teacher's perceptions and the meaning they make from their experiences it is important to listen to their voices and explore their views separately from those of their supervising teachers.

This is particularly important, as power imbalances can exist between the supervising teacher as the expert and the pre-service teacher as the novice. In those circumstances, the pre-service teacher's voice related to their perceptions of their experience can, at times be "compromised in order to get through the process" of professional experience itself (Patrick, 2013, p. 210).

1.2 Aim of the Study

The aim of this study was to add to the body of research related to pre-service teacher professional experience by investigating the relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher. In particular, it focused on foregrounding the voices of pre-service teachers to explore: (i) their experience of the relationship with their supervising teacher; (ii) their interpretations and meaning made from these relationship experiences and (iii) how these experiences influenced their professional learning and development as teachers.

As suggested by Allen and Wright (2014), there is "insufficient empirical research associated with the experiences and perceptions of pre-service teachers' as they transition through the pre-service program and into the workplace" (Allen & Wright, 2014, p. 138). Furthermore, Wilks et al. (2019) contend "that the idea of seeking student voice about the knowledge and skills they deem to be important is new to teacher education" (p. 76). It is clear therefore, that this is an important area of investigation.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study therefore, was to develop the above aim by conducting a qualitative study into the relationship pre-service teachers formed with their supervising teachers in the professional experience component of their teacher education program. In order to listen to the voices of the pre-service teachers and to gain knowledge and insight into the meaning made from their perceptions and their experiences, a case study design of two cohorts of pre-service teachers was undertaken. It focused on pre-service teachers participating in a 4-year teacher education program (Bachelor of Education) centred on the Primary (Elementary)

years of schooling.

A Symbolic Interactionism theoretical framework was used to provide insight into the construction of meaning through the interactions with others (Allen & Wright, 2014; Gray, 2004; Sarantakos, 2005). The data collection covered the first and second classroom teaching professional experience sessions for the undergraduate students. The data was gathered through focus group discussions and individual semi-structured in-depth interviews following the professional experience.

1.4 Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis has been organised into seven chapters:

Chapter 1, the current chapter, introduces the study and establishes the context and importance of this research. It defines the aims and provides a clear overview of the purpose of the study.

Chapter 2 presents a review of literature related to pre-service teacher professional experience and the interrelated roles and relationships formed. It examines research related to the effects of that experience on professional learning and teacher development. The research questions are detailed at the end of the chapter.

Chapter 3 details the methodology employed in the study. It outlines the exploratory research design, the procedures and data collection methods involving professional experience focus groups and individual semi-structured interviews. It provides details related to the participants in the study and the analysis methods used.

Chapters 4 and 5 outline the results of the analysis of the data gathered in this study. The results of both the professional experience focus group discussions and the in-depth individual interviews are fully detailed using illustrative quotes. This includes the emergent themes related to the pre-service teachers' perceptions of their relationship with their supervising teacher, the meaning made

from these perceptions and how this relationship influenced their professional learning.

In Chapter 6, an overview of the findings is presented and developed with a detailed discussion of the key results focusing on the voices of the pre-service teachers. This chapter provides insight into the key elements and dynamics in the pre-service and supervising teacher relationship, the perceptions formed and how they influenced the professional learning of the pre-service teacher.

Chapter 7, the final chapter, outlines a summary conclusion along with a discussion of the implications of the findings from the study for professional experience in initial teacher education. The limitations of the research are outlined along with recommendations for further research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Professional experience provides valuable learning opportunities for pre-service teachers as they prepare to enter the teaching profession and is considered to be a vital component of the teacher education program (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Kilgour, Northcote, & Herman, 2015; Le Cornu, 2016). In teacher education, professional experience is where "theory meets practice and idealism meets reality" (Pungur, 2007, p. 267). This chapter reviews the literature related to professional experience in the context of the relationship experienced by the pre-service and supervising teacher.

Professional experience is a complex cognitive and affective learning environment which requires the pre-service teacher to demonstrate proficient pedagogical skills, fulfil duties associated with teaching, establish relationships, act professionally, be reflective and respond positively to evaluation (Haigh & Ward, 2004; Kilgour et al., 2015). The cognitive component requires the pre-service teacher to demonstrate adequate skills in the aspects of teaching including an understanding of basic teaching pedagogies, lesson planning, strategies in explicit teaching and facilitating group work. Effective oral and written communication are required along with competence in the differentiation of tasks, assessment, evaluation, classroom organisation and student management (Gretchen & Midford, 2015; Izadinia, 2017).

The affective aspect of professional experience for pre-service teachers involves managing the diverse range of emotions associated with teaching. These include establishing positive relationships with others in the school community, and recognising and managing their own emotions and the emotions of others around them. Interpreting their role as a pre-service teacher and the interrelated roles of others in the community is a key element along with coping with the stress related

to the workload and meeting their own and others' expectations (Gretchen & Midford, 2015).

The review of the literature on professional experience identified four key aspects as significant to the pre-service and supervising teacher relationship which is the focus of this study:

1. Historical context, paradigms and learning environment of professional experience.

Professional experience is considered to be fundamental to pre-service teacher education. In this section of the literature review the historical context of professional experience over time and professional experience paradigms are discussed with a focus on the relational aspects of the pre-service and supervising teacher interaction which can occur in the professional experience learning environment.

2. Affective aspect and perceived roles of the pre-service and supervising teacher in professional experience.

Due to its interactional nature between people, teaching is regarded as an emotional experience for teachers and the students they teach. Emotions are at the core of relationships including the relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher. This section outlines the emotions experienced by teachers including pre-service teachers and how pre-service and supervising teachers perceive their roles within the professional experience, the need for shared understanding of the roles between the pre-service and supervising teacher and the management of pre-service teacher emotions.

3. Supervision of pre-service teachers during professional experience.

Teacher supervision is a necessary component of teacher professional learning. This is especially the case for pre-service teachers during professional experience. Within the various professional experience paradigms, supervising teachers use a variety of teacher supervision approaches to evaluate pre-service teachers' performance during professional experience. At times this can result in

the relationship being purely directive or a mentoring relationship with the pre-service and supervising teacher acting in partnership to enhance the pre-service teacher's professional learning.

4. Development of teacher professional practice through professional experience.

The enhancement of teacher professional practice is central to teacher professionality. Professional experience is the opportunity for pre-service teachers to improve their professional practice under the guidance of their supervising teacher. By developing their professional practice through their professional learning supported by their supervising teacher, pre-service teachers can increase their confidence in their teaching ability. Through professional experience, pre-service teachers can gain a greater sense of their teacher identity by reflecting on the type of teacher to which they aspire through their interaction and dialogue with their supervising teacher.

The above aspects of professional experience literature will be reviewed to gain insight into what pre-service teachers experience and interpret in their relationships with the supervising teacher and how this relationship influences their professional learning.

2.2 Historical Context, Paradigms and Learning Environment of Professional Experience

2.2.1 Professional Experience Historical Context

Professional experience is described by many names such as the practicum, teaching practice, teaching induction, field experience, teaching rounds and internship (Elligate, 2007; Reynolds, Howley, Southgate, & Brown, 2016). Despite the diversity of names, they all describe the same activity, which is the placement of pre-service teachers in school settings to gain teaching experience. It is considered that professional experience is an important introduction for the pre-service teacher into the professional world of teaching. It allows the pre-service teacher to observe good teaching practice and to put into practice the theory they have learnt in course work (Beck & Kosnik, 2002). Furthermore, it provides an

opportunity for the pre-service teacher to experience the dynamics which work in schools in terms of organisation, relationships and communication.

During the 1960s professional experience was designed solely as an environment for a pre-service teacher to master the art of teaching (Ong'ondo & Jwan, 2009). It was considered a product based approach, where the aim was focused on replicating the desired outcomes with little regard for the actual learning experiences the pre-service teacher may encounter as they taught. During this time "learning to teach involved separately mastering the specific content one was to teach and separately mastering methodologies for conveying that content to learners" (Ong'ondo & Jwan, 2009, p. 516).

During the 1970s questions were raised whether this basic approach was the best way for preparing teachers considering the diverse nature of teaching and the various contexts in which teaching took place, due to pre-service teachers' differing learning styles, cultural, socioeconomic and political aspects (Ong'ondo & Jwan, 2009). There was a growing belief that pre-service teachers needed to be empowered to make decisions and take responsibility for their learning. From the 1990s up to the present, the focus of much research into teacher education has centred on how learning in professional experience is influenced by the expectations of the university, the relationships which are formed and the type of supervision employed (Ong'ondo & Jwan, 2009). Many of the studies and literature to be discussed in this review on teacher education highlight that the journey from the product based form of teacher education in the 1960s to today, has been anything but a smooth transition and is still evolving (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Martinez, 1998; Mitchell, Clarke, & Nuttall, 2007; Moody, 2009; Pungur, 2007; Roland & Beckford, 2010; Zeichner, 1983, 1992, 2002).

2.2.2 Professional Experience Paradigms

Research into the evolving nature of teacher education has highlighted its complexity and diversity. Kenneth Zeichner is a highly respected researcher in teacher education. Zeichner's (1983) seminal research into professional experience identified four basic types of professional experience paradigms, which involve aspects of the school context, expectations, relationships, and personal and professional growth. Zeichner's paradigms in the terms of teacher education,

can be thought of as the combination of beliefs and assumptions underpinning the nature and purposes of teachers and their education, that influences the forms of practice in teacher education (Popkewitz, Tabachnick, & Zeichner, 1979). The four paradigms are the *Behaviouristic, Traditional Craft, Personalistic and Inquiry Orientated* models of teacher education. The four paradigms form the foundation for much of the recent research in relation to the learning environment of professional experience including the relationships established by the participants.

The *Behaviouristic* paradigm is concerned with the development of the specific and observable skills required in teaching and representative of teacher education in the 1960s (Zeichner 1983). Within coursework the skills are taught to the pre-service teachers. They are then required to demonstrate adequate performance of these skills during their professional experience and are evaluated according to a predetermined set of criteria. The criteria are known to the pre-service teacher prior to the commencement of their professional experience. Underlying this approach is the belief that teaching is an applied science of known strategies with the pre-service teacher being the "executor of the laws and principles of effective teaching" (Zeichner, 1983, p. 4). Furthermore, the supervisory approach between the supervising and pre-service teacher is purely directive; the supervising teacher is the decision maker including what to teach, how to teach, and when to teach. Feedback is largely technical, focusing on how well the mechanics of teaching were demonstrated by the pre-service teacher. No dialogue is promoted between the two participants. Within this approach the pre-service teacher is viewed as a passive recipient of knowledge with the orientation clearly focused on the technical aspects of teaching (Zeichner, 1983).

In the *Traditional Craft* paradigm, teaching is looked at as a craft to be learned through exposure and practice. In this paradigm Zeichner (1983) describes teachers as craftspersons. As a consequence, the view is of the supervising teacher as the master and the pre-service teacher as the apprentice (Walkington, 2005b). The supervision relationship between the supervising and pre-service teacher is largely consultative. The supervising teacher, using their years of experience, confers with the pre-service teacher in preparation for teaching but still makes the decisions and discusses the feedback from their perspective.

Walkington (2005b) supports this position in her qualitative study of 105 supervising teachers using open ended questions, as to their professional and personal motivators for taking a pre-service teacher. The study found that the supervising teachers expressed a desire to pass on their knowledge to the next generation of teachers (Walkington, 2005b). This finding indicates that supervising teachers view teaching as a skill which is best passed on to future generations of teachers by those who have mastered the art through years of experience. Within this paradigm the pre-service teacher develops their teaching ability largely by observation, direction and trial and error, in combination with their skills and knowledge learnt within their course work. It is assumed that professional experience provides opportunities that cannot be afforded in a university situation, where no direct teaching by pre-service teachers takes place.

This approach builds upon the *Behaviouristic* paradigm by going beyond the technical aspects of teaching; it implies a mastery of competence as a teacher. Although the approach brings an element of input from the pre-service teacher and diversity of teaching, it still is focused on the supervising teacher making the decisions and assessing the pre-service teacher's performance (Zeichner, 1983).

In the *Personalistic* paradigm, professional experience is considered a place where there is an opportunity for personal growth by the pre-service teacher beyond that of the prescribed expectations. It rests upon the "foundations of a phenomenological epistemology and perceptual and developmental psychologies" (Zeichner, 1983, p. 4). In this approach, the perceived needs of the pre-service teacher are placed at the forefront of learning. The aim is to develop higher order cognitive skills in pre-service teachers and a greater sense of their teacher identity (Zeichner, 1983). Teacher identity is largely shaped by the interactions the teacher has in their relationships with others in the environment and teacher identity is continually evolving depending on the context, interactions and feedback (McNay & Graham, 2007). In terms of professional experience the relationship and interactions with the supervising teacher may influence the pre-service teacher's identity (McNay & Graham, 2007). Furthermore, Cattley (2007) in a study of four pre-service teachers used reflective writing as a method for pre-service teachers to record, analyse and synthesise their thoughts and feelings about their experiences and teaching during in-school placement. Cattley found

that when aspects representative of the *Personalistic* paradigm were evident, then the pre-service teachers developed a greater sense of their teacher identity, by focusing on perceptions and beliefs over the mastery of the technical aspects of teaching (Cattley, 2007).

Consequently, unlike the *Behaviouristic* paradigm, the skills that the pre-service teacher is required to master are rarely outlined in advance. The focus is on learning which is derived from the quality of the experience. It is considered a vital step to developing their teacher self-efficacy and teacher identity by becoming a teacher rather than just acting like a teacher. The supervision relationship is one of collegiality, where there is some level of dialogue between the pre-service and supervising teacher prior to and after teaching, to meet the pre-service teacher's personal goals. However, there is no emphasis on reflective pedagogy for either participant and it is still the supervising teacher who will make the evaluation and assessment regarding the quality of the pre-service teacher's teaching practice. The fundamental conflict in this approach is how to ensure this learning takes place, whilst ensuring at the same time the university's expectations in terms of knowledge and skills are being met. This growth to becoming a teacher will be most productive when the pre-service teacher is "stimulated by a safe and supportive learning environment" (Zeichner, 1983, p. 5). This is evident in the *Personalistic* Paradigm.

The aim of the *Inquiry Orientated* paradigm is to develop in the pre-service teacher the skills of inquiry and reflection of their teaching practice (Zeichner, 2002). The skills developed in this approach exceed those of the other approaches but still rely on the pre-service teacher being able to demonstrate the technical skills involved in teaching. The focus is on the pre-service teacher taking greater control in their learning through analysing, reflecting and evaluating what they are doing and how well they are demonstrating the skills, in terms of the students they teach and their own expectations. Pre-service teachers need to be taught the reflective skills of observation, analysis and inquiry as they do not necessarily come naturally (Main & Hammond, 2008). They need to critique their level of knowledge about concepts to be taught, along with their preparation and their teaching methods and strategies within the context of the setting they are

teaching. Hence, the nature of the relationship is collaborative with the pre-service teacher working on the same level and in dialogue with the supervising teacher.

The focus of the partnership is on reflection of teaching practice and pedagogy. In an *Inquiry Orientated* paradigm, the role of the supervising teacher is central to this development by providing opportunities for this reflective practice to take place. Discussing the pre-service teacher's goals in terms of skills and pedagogy, working collaboratively and reflecting with the pre-service teacher are key components. These are supported by providing constructive feedback in dialogue with the pre-service teacher and acting as a sounding board for ongoing pedagogical discussion. Above all, the pre-service teacher is encouraged to make decisions and judgements about their practice and take risks to further develop their teaching skills (Zeichner, 2002).

Within the learning environment of the four paradigms discussed, the mastery of teaching skills is a common component. However, the opportunity for pre-service teacher's learning will vary depending upon the learning environment in which they are immersed (Zeichner, 1983). The *Behaviouristic* and *Traditional Craft* paradigms both regard pre-service teachers as passive recipients in their teacher education program. The *Personalistic* and *Inquiry Orientated* paradigms rely on a reflective approach and allow the pre-service teacher to have greater input into the construction of their learning. Within these two reflective approaches the perceived needs of the pre-service teacher are given greater importance. Although the *Inquiry Orientated* paradigm is Zeichner's (1983) preferred model, there is no guarantee that this is the model which will be adopted in the professional experience setting.

During their teacher education, pre-service teachers could be exposed to a range of different professional experience paradigms. These may include diverse learning environments, supervision approaches and relationships with the potential for a "lack of congruence that has the potential to limit the success of the practicum for the pre-service teacher" (Haigh & Ward, 2004, p. 144). This lack of congruency and the pressure of meeting expectations can result in pre-service teachers experiencing anxiety and other negative emotions because of the complexity of learning to teach and the uncertainty of achieving goals (Sutton &

Wheatley, 2003). Pre-service teacher emotions and feelings towards their professional experience play a significant role in how they interpret their level of success and learning (Dobbins, 1996). "There is a substantial body of research related to the role of beliefs in learning to teach but there is almost no research on the role of emotions in learning to teach" (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003, p. 346).

Zeichner's (1983) four professional experience paradigms provide a lens through which to view the pre-service teacher and supervising teacher relationship by analysing the nature of the relationship formed and relating the analysed data to the type of paradigm it matches.

2.2.3 Professional Experience Learning Environment

The professional experience learning environment for the pre-service teacher is characterised by the combination of several key components including the physical setting, organisational structures, university expectations, school culture, and relationships with the supervising teachers, university supervisor, students and other members of the school community. It is the environment where pre-service teachers demonstrate and refine their communication skills, student management, content knowledge, and planning and organisation skills learnt in their course work (Wilks et al., 2019). The relationships, the expectations and physical characteristics all contribute to the pre-service teacher's learning (Lorsbach & Jinks, 1999). The impact of the learning environment on the pre-service and supervising teachers can be beneficial or a barrier to learning (Adelman & Taylor, 2005).

Research into the influence of learning environments was pioneered by Herbert Walberg (1976) in the 1970s. His seminal work on learning environments highlights that learning is influenced by the interpretation of the participant's perceptions within the environment and forms the basis of subsequent research into the interpretation of perceptions (Evans, Harvey, Buckley, & Yan, 2009; Kelly, 2010; Kennedy, 2006; Pech, 2010). Perceptual learning refers to the learning that takes place in the environment through interaction with the setting and the relationships of the participants. It is characterised by the interpretation of the verbal and written feedback received by students from others in the environment (Frenzel, Pekrun, & Goetz, 2007). Walberg developed his model of perceptual

learning by investigating students' perceptions of classroom environments in physics classrooms using the Learning Environment Inventory (Walberg, 1976). His research found that it was "valid to the use of students perceptual data to assess learning environments and that there is a relationship between perceptions of learning environments and student outcomes" (Kennedy, 2006, p. 28). The perceptual learning in the professional experience environment is a personal construct within which each person is affected by their interactions with others and the setting (Adelman & Taylor, 2005; Pech, 2010). Walberg proposed that the learning is determined by the way the student interprets and mediates these interactions with others within the learning environment to make meaning (Walberg, 1976). Consequently, within professional experience the interpretation of the pre-service teachers' perceptions of the interactions and relationships can have a significant influence on their professional learning.

Further support for Walberg's model of perceptual learning is supported by prior research conducted by Rudolf Moos (1974) who identified three dimensions in the way people conceptualise their environments. The first of these dimensions was relationships, which involved the nature and intensity of the personal relationships in the environment and the extent to which the people in a relationship help each other. The second dimension involved personal development, which focuses on the personal growth and self enhancement which will occur (Evans et al., 2009). The third dimension he referred to as system maintenance and change, which involves the extent "to which the environment is orderly, clear in expectations, maintains control and is responsive to change" (Frazer & Frazer as cited in Lorsbach & Jinks, 1999, p. 157). According to Moos the learning environment is influenced by these dimensions. Elements of this relationship aspect include the emotions related to teaching, the interrelated roles of the participants, variable understanding of the participants' roles, the relationships which are formed, the emotional concerns of the participants and their coping strategies. Within each of Zeichner's (1983) professional experience paradigms the relationship dynamics vary. In a purely directive form of the relationship, the dynamics are likely to be hierarchical with one-way communication from supervising teacher to pre-service teacher. However, in a collaborative paradigm the relationship will take on a co-operative dimension with two-way communication and mutual decision making.

In terms of the relationships in the learning environment of professional experience “each individual brings a set of beliefs about the classroom roles for themselves and others. These beliefs govern not only acts in specific situations but also constrain the meanings of the actions for others” (Lorsbach & Jinks, 1999, p. 158). How the pre-service teacher and supervising teacher interpret their role can have an influence on the learning of other participants in professional experience. Therefore the learning environment has a significant influence on the learning that takes place (Adelman & Taylor, 2005). The pre-service and supervising teacher relationship is contextualised within the setting of the learning environment and develops through the interpretation of the interactions and meaning making that occurs.

The learning environment for the pre-service teacher is also influenced by the model of supervision. Just as the model for professional experience can vary from directive to collaborative, so too can the model of supervision. The model adopted can be purely clinical, where the focus is on meeting technical requirements, through to a collaborative reflective model between supervising and pre-service teacher working in partnership. The supervisory dilemma is the extent to which the relationship between pre-service and supervising teacher is influenced when the supervising teacher is viewed as the assessor yet at the same time the mentor. It is possible that the relationship may experience a detrimental effect should the assessor role of the supervising teacher take precedence over the mentoring role.

The model of professional experience and the approach to supervision, when exposed to the catalytic effects of the relationships, can influence the characteristics of the interactions between the participants in the learning environment. These interactions include modelling of good practice, communication, professional and emotional support, shared understanding, type of feedback and reflective practice. When viewed through a Symbolic Interactionism theoretical framework, the way the pre-service teacher makes meaning through interpreting and mediating their perceptions of these interactions with their supervising teacher within the environment will contribute to their professional learning. For example the pre-service teacher’s interpretation of their professional learning affects the teacher’s “sense of purpose, self-efficacy,

motivation, commitment, job satisfaction and effectiveness" (Chong, Low, & Goh, 2011).

2.3 Affective Aspect and Perceived Roles of the Pre-service and Supervising Teacher in Professional Experience

2.3.1 Emotions and Teaching

When pre-service teachers speak about their professional experience, they do so in "highly emotional terms" using adjectives such as excited, anxious, overwhelmed, confused, reassured, nervous, worried, apprehensive and satisfied (Dobbins, 1996, p. 17). Erb (2002) describes beginning teachers' emotions as a whirlpool where "objects may stay afloat in gentle currents or get sucked underneath the water's surface by the overwhelming intensity of the force" (Erb as cited in Sutton & Wheatley, 2003, p. 347). A study of 58 Primary pre-service teachers by Kilgour et al. (2015) found that the pre-service teachers responded to difficulties during their professional experience using emotional language when discussing student management, planning, communication and student learning issues during lessons. Emotions were often a catalyst to reflect on the difficulties in the lessons in order to improve teaching practice for the future (Kilgour et al., 2015). To establish a context to explore the emotional dimension of professional experience for the pre-service teachers, it is first necessary to discuss the broader influence of the emotions involved in teaching.

Emotional understanding can be defined as "the subjective interpretation of another's emotional experience from one's own standpoint" (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 838). This is particularly relevant where work-related emotions impact on the quality of life and an individual's effectiveness and productivity at work. Emotions are dynamic parts of an individual and whether they are positive or negative, all organisations, are permeated by them (Hastings, 2008). Teachers, as the workers within schools, are open to experiencing a range of emotions. In terms of teaching "emotions are at the heart of teaching and that good teaching is charged with positive emotions" (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 835). Teaching can be viewed as a passionate vocation where teachers bring their emotions to their teaching and in their relationships with students (Fried as cited in Hargreaves, 1998). The

emotions that teachers experience are often formed in social relationships in their school context; these relationships influence how particular emotions are expressed and communicated (Zembylas, 2003). Consequently, a teacher's emotions can motivate and influence their actions. As a further consequence, a teacher's emotional state can affect the feelings and actions of others with whom they share relationships (Hargreaves, 1998). This is reflective of the proposal by Moos (1974) that people conceptualise their environment by the nature of the personal relationships in the environment they share with each other. It is important therefore that teachers possess an awareness and understanding of the potential impact that their emotions can have on their relationships with others within the school community.

Caring child centred occupations such as teaching require not only emotional work but also emotional labour (Hastings, 2008). Emotional work involves an understanding, sensitivity and empathy towards the feelings of others (Isenbarger & Zembylas, 2006). Listening to students' problems, giving advice and displaying concern and support are examples of emotional work. Emotional labour requires "one to induce or suppress feelings in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others" (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 840). Throughout the day a teacher will experience a range of emotions. The emotional labour involved requires conscious thought and action to monitor their emotions thus helping to promote a positive environment for their students and community. For teachers emotional labour can involve a large amount of effort due to the myriad of emotions which operate in the relationships they share (Hastings, 2008). Maintaining one's emotions to meet social norms or expectations can "often become stressful and alienating" for teachers (Isenbarger & Zembylas, 2006). Although emotional labour is largely viewed as being negative, it is possible that teachers may find a positive aspect by focusing on the improvements they observe in the students they teach as a direct result of their emotional labour. Thus the emotional labour involved in teaching and caring can have both positive and negative consequences for teachers (Isenbarger & Zembylas, 2006).

As outlined above, emotions are inseparable from teaching. Palmer (1998) describes the emotions at the heart of teaching as an art of love. By this Palmer contends that teaching is more than the technical process of instruction, but rather

good teaching relies on the teacher recognising the emotional connection between themselves, content and the students (Palmer, 1998). The quality of this connectedness of emotions in the relationship either enhances or inhibits the learning experience (Palmer, 1998). With teaching being based in their emotions, teachers experience the daily exercise of exposing their emotions at the "intersection of personal and public life" (Palmer, 1998, p. 6). The personal emotions they experience are often on view and can influence their relationships with others in the community. The constant demands of exercising emotional labour to maintain an emotional equilibrium in the relationships they experience can be draining. To cope with these emotional demands, teachers may disconnect from the students, the subjects they teach, their peers and even themselves. Palmer stresses the importance of rediscovering the teacher within, by reflecting and analysing the reasons an individual became a teacher. However, finding time for this rediscovery is problematic given the demands of an overcrowded curriculum, behaviour issues of students, accountability for academic achievement, managing the number of relationships they experience and keeping up with the rapidly evolving developments in technology. When teachers cannot achieve their teaching purposes due to such obstructions, then they may experience anxiety, frustration, anger and guilt (Hargreaves, 1998). In general early career teachers including pre-service teachers, are less skilled at dealing with emotions and relationships associated with teaching than experienced teachers (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003).

2.3.2 Perceived Roles within Professional Experience

Professional experience involves pre-service teachers in the emotions related to teaching. It takes place in a complex learning environment consisting of a variety of interrelated roles, involving interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships for the pre-service teacher (Haigh & Ward, 2004; Hastings, 2008). For example, the roles of the pre-service and supervising teacher can be fluid and ever changing (Haigh & Ward, 2004). At times small shifts in dynamics between the roles can have a significant influence on the relationship. The roles may vary due to the unique nature of the culture of the school, the experience of the participants, their interpretation of their role and the preconceived perceptions of each participant (Haigh & Ward, 2004). Throughout this myriad of relationships and roles, the pre-

service teacher may have to “tolerate doubt, ambiguity and complexity, be flexible, possess strong interpersonal skills, be an active learner, be reflective and be prepared to form pedagogical goals” (Haigh & Ward, 2004, p. 136).

Supervising teachers are expected to be accomplished experienced teachers. Roland and Beckford (2010) conducted a study of 134 supervising teachers using a mixture of an online survey and open-ended questions to explore what they perceived as their role in professional experience. They found that 85% of the supervising teachers viewed their role as that of an experienced expert in teaching (Roland & Beckford, 2010). Supervising teachers usually have been teaching many years and feel confident they can share their knowledge and skills of teaching practice and technique with their pre-service teacher. Roland and Beckford (2010) also found that 95% of the supervising teachers indicated a mentor or coach aspect to their role. The supervising teacher’s view of what constitutes a good pre-service teacher can be influenced by how they perceive their own role in professional experience (Ferrier-Kerr, 2009). If they perceive their role as largely being administrative and fulfilling the university’s requirements, the opportunities for the pre-service teacher to develop beyond basic university expectations will be limited (Roland & Beckford, 2010). However, if the supervising teacher has a more reflective approach to the overall development of the pre-service teacher, this will potentially lead to greater opportunities for development (Ferrier-Kerr, 2009).

A good supervising teacher in such a reflective case will recognise the importance of establishing a positive relationship with the pre-service teacher built upon honesty and trust (Millwater & Ehrich, 2008). Research into what constitutes a good supervising teacher has been conducted by gathering the views of supervising teachers, pre-service teachers and university supervisors (McDonald, Baker, & Stewart, 2004). The study by McDonald et al. (2004) found the three groups believed good supervising teachers demonstrated clear communication, shared expectations established through dialogue, encouraged the pre-service teacher to seek advice, provided feedback to the pre-service teacher and were willing for the pre-service teacher to take risks and develop their own teaching and management style. Izadinia (2017) in a study of pre-service and supervising teachers, supported the findings outlined by stating that both parties believed “a

good supervising teacher either cultivated a close friendly relationship or provided guidance and support" (p. 516). The study contends that the role that the supervising teacher plays within the relationship, is to provide the pre-service teacher with interpersonal and professional support during their professional experience.

The role of the supervising teacher is to be an excellent classroom practitioner, who provides modelling of good practice and support for the pre-service teacher. The supervising teacher can be viewed as a "critical interventionalist" who models good practice through teaching skills, team teaching, reciprocal learning and providing feedback to the pre-service teacher (Beck & Kosnik, 2002). Ideally, they are required to work collaboratively with the pre-service teacher yet at the same time be the main assessor and evaluator of the pre-service teacher's progress. For the professional experience to be effective for the pre-service teacher, it is important that the pre-service and supervising teacher have a shared understanding of their perceived role and the role of the other participant (Allen & Wright, 2014; Beck & Kosnik, 2002).

2.3.3 Perceived Relationships in Professional Experience

Pre-service teachers are often seen as the inexperienced partners in the relationship with the supervising teacher and are looking for support at both the cognitive and affective levels (Dobbins, 1996; Hogan & Bernay, 2007; Reynolds et al., 2016). In a qualitative study of 12 pre-service teachers, Beck and Kosnik (2002) found that pre-service teachers, when about to participate in a professional experience, were anxious about the unknown and the level of university expectations. They value emotional support and want to feel comfortable and supported in the relationship with the supervising teacher and desire shared expectations and clear communication (Beck & Kosnik, 2002). A study by Ditchburn (2015) of 30 pre-service teachers found that many of the pre-service teachers spoke of their "collaborative relationships with their mentor teacher enabled them to feel like a teacher" (p. 103). Gurls (2018) in his study of 169 undergraduate pre-service teachers, found that supervising teachers who were student centred in their classroom also demonstrated collaborative approaches towards their pre-service teacher. A similar qualitative study by Ferrier-Kerr

(2009) of four pre-service teachers found that if a positive relationship is established, pre-service teachers are less likely to feel threatened when asked to perform more difficult tasks related to their teaching.

Studies of pre-service teachers have found that they prefer to be given meaningful tasks by their supervising teachers. Harwell and Moore (2010) in their quantitative study of pre-service teachers in an early childhood and middle school course found that the pre-service teachers preferred not to be limited to menial tasks, but rather engage in the art of teaching and work closely with their supervising teacher in planning lessons, discussing classroom issues and pedagogy. Reynolds et al. (2016) in a quantitative study of 1167 undergraduate pre-service teachers into the length of the professional experience placement, found that the quality of the professional experience was related to the level of support they received rather than the length of the professional experience. Furthermore, Reynolds et al. found that the "level of support from the mentoring teacher was the mediating factor in any difference in the pre-service teachers' perceptions in their ability to apply core teaching elements due to the additional hours" (p. 466).

To date there has been limited research from the viewpoint of giving voice to the pre-service teacher about how their role interacts with the supervising teacher during professional experience (Patrick, 2013). Frequently, the voices of pre-service teachers are not heard on professional experience as they "are on the boundary of student and teacher identity, and frequently navigate the boarders between the two, particularly in relation to the differing conceptions of mentoring and communication and teaching beliefs" (p. 209). Often as pre-service teachers "lack real power in the classroom," this acts as a "form of silencing pre-service teacher voice," in order to satisfy the requirements of their professional experience (Patrick, 2013, p. 210). In a study of the perceptions of seven pre-service teachers about their relationship with their supervising teachers, Patrick found that pre-service teachers highlighted the power imbalance which exists in the relationship and the desire to be recognised as a teacher and a valued collaborator with the supervising teacher.

Various recent studies have confirmed the lack of voice in pre-service teacher education and professional experience. Allen and Wright (2014) support the view

of the “neglected student teacher voice” in teacher education (p.138). In particular they highlight the need to explore how pre-service teachers “perceive the practicum as enabling the integration of theory and practice and the issues they identify as impeding and supporting such integration” (Allen & Wright, 2014, p. 138). Allen and Wright’s study of 67 initial teacher education students, identified the supervising teacher as a factor which contributed to them being successful in applying theory to practice by being knowledgeable and well prepared. However, when the supervising teacher was unprepared or unsure of their role, this resulted in frustration and inhibited the pre-service teachers’ professional learning (Allen & Wright, 2014).

Further support for the lack of pre-service teacher’s voice being underrepresented in the literature on professional experience is supplied by Moody (2009). Moody’s study of 13 pre-service teachers on professional experience, sought to give voice to pre-service teachers’ perceptions of what contributed to a positive professional experience with a focus on the role of the supervising teacher and university supervisor. The study found pre-service teachers expect their supervising teacher to model good teaching practice from which they can learn and be approachable when seeking clarification. The pre-service teacher values an environment with the flexibility to explore their potential as a teacher, to make decisions and be able to take risks in their teaching to learn (Moody, 2009).

Lack of pre-service teacher voice in professional experience is particularly evident in the literature surrounding pre-service teachers who have failed their professional experience. Buckworth’s (2017) study focused on giving voice to six pre-service teachers who failed their professional experience. Buckworth found that failing students felt “their voices would remain unheeded and that their version of events in and beyond the classroom would be discounted” (p.377). The study found that the participants highlighted their poor relationship with their supervising teacher as the major cause. Furthermore, the participants identified a lack of time on behalf of the supervising teacher to meet their needs, poor communication and an inequitable power imbalance. “In the absence of an essential and reciprocal relationship, demoralised and disenfranchised participants were ready to give up on the completion of their professional experience” (Buckworth, 2017, p. 378).

Buckworth believes there should be a greater pre-service teacher voice when developing policy related to teacher education including professional experience.

Studies have found that pre-service teachers value professional experience within their initial teacher education. Wilks et al. (2019) support the view that pre-service teachers should be afforded a greater voice in initial teacher education by stating that “teacher education students voices are rarely used to ascertain whether their teaching education program achieves its goals” (p. 76). Wilks et al. four-year longitudinal study, was focused on giving voice to “pre-service teachers perceptions and awareness of their developing teacher knowledge and skills” during their initial teacher education course (p. 76). The research included professional experience as a component in the broader study of the initial teacher education course. The study found that pre-service teachers “demonstrated a strong desire to be in classrooms more frequently, to have longer professional experience placements and for professional experience placements to commence earlier in their course” (p. 88). Wilks et al. contend that in order to improve initial teacher education courses, which by purpose would include a professional experience component, that “engaging in deep and critical evidenced based reflection in teaching and learning design is crucial, by involving pre-service students in the process as they have much to tell” (p. 91).

2.3.4 Shared Understanding within the Professional Experience Relationship

As discussed, the understanding of the roles, relationships and understandings within the professional experience learning environment can vary for each of the participants. Martinez (1998) conducted a study into the pre-service teacher and supervising teacher relationship and role understanding. The study identified three areas of roles and relationships related to shared understanding; the research used open ended questions and discussions in a group work situation. The three findings are referred to as ‘dilemmas’ as they were considered differences in understandings between pre-service and supervising teachers related to aspects of professional experience (Martinez, 1998).

The first of these dilemmas involved a wide range of views as to what supervising teachers and pre-service teachers described as ‘good teaching.’ It has already been noted that an important part of professional experience for the pre-service

teacher, is that they be exposed to good modelling of teaching practice by their supervising teacher. Martinez (1998) found that what the supervising teacher valued as good teaching, largely reflected their own teaching style and varied greatly in nature. When assessing pre-service teachers, the supervising teacher will observe and evaluate the pre-service teacher's teaching from their perspective of good teaching. Depending upon the professional experience model employed, the supervising teachers perspective of 'good teaching,' was shown to influence the approach the pre-service teacher took in relation to their development during professional experience (Martinez, 1998).

The second dilemma identified in Martinez's (1998) study, was whether the pre-service teacher should teach according to their own beliefs of 'good teaching' or to comply with a model which matches that of the supervising teacher's perception. The studies previously discussed by Cattley (2007), Ferrier-Kerr (2009) and Moody (2009) indicated the benefits of providing professional experiences which allow the pre-service teachers to develop their own teaching style. The model of professional experience can influence the degree of initiative and the level of risk taking the pre-service teacher will display. If they are involved in a *Behaviouristic* or *Traditional Craft* paradigm of professional experience, pre-service teachers may view professional experience as a pass or fail situation and be reluctant to take risks. Many studies point to the value of providing professional experiences rich in opportunities to develop the pre-service teachers' teaching skills (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Hastings, 2006; Main & Hammond, 2008; Millwater & Ehrich, 2008; Pungur, 2007; Roland & Beckford, 2010; Walkington, 2005b; Watson, Hay, Hellyer, Stuckey, & Woolnough, 2008; Zeichner, 2002). These researchers promote professional experience learning environments based upon the components of the *Inquiry Orientated* paradigm with a focus on reflection rather than the acquisition of technical skills. However, for such a model to be implemented it requires supervising teachers with the ability to be reflective and supportive mentors. Even though a supervising teacher may be a good teacher, this does not necessarily mean they will have the skills to be a good supervising teacher (Main & Hammond, 2008; Roland & Beckford, 2010).

The third dilemma identified in the Martinez (1998) study involved the time constraints experienced by a supervising teacher when working with a pre-service

teacher. The supervising teachers were mindful of the time taken to plan and provide feedback to the pre-service teacher which reduced the time they had for preparing their own lessons and teaching the class. Gurl (2018) in his study of 169 undergraduate pre-service teachers, found that 57% spent less than one hour per week giving feedback to their pre-service teachers. Gurl contends that a lack of supervising teacher time, an "incompatibility between the pre-service and supervising teacher and a lack of pre-service teacher receptiveness to the feedback," could contribute to the lack of collaboration and negatively impacted on the pre-service teacher's professional learning (Gurl, 2018, p. 20). The pre-service teacher was also conscious of this limited time when looking for guidance and feedback. However, pre-service teachers considered it important that supervising teachers make time to provide constructive feedback. This view is supported in the literature by Zeichner (2002) who recognises that supervising teachers often have to accommodate the demands of having a pre-service teacher into their workload. During professional experience, time is required for supervising and pre-service teachers to meet to allow them an opportunity to provide constructive feedback to pre-service teachers and to engage in pedagogical discussion (Le Cornu, 2016; Sanders, 2005). Time constraints were also identified by pre-service teachers. They highlighted the demands that professional experience placed upon them in terms of workload to meet the assessment expectations (Martinez, 1998). Such demands can adversely affect their working and social life, leaving few avenues to relieve stress and anxiety (Dobbins, 1996). Hence, the dilemma of time constraints needs to be considered in the design of professional experience. Universities need to set realistic workloads for both the pre-service and supervising teacher and be conscious of the demands already placed upon teachers for their time (Walkington, 2005b).

2.3.5 Affective Aspect of Professional Experience

Emotional stressors have been identified in research related to teachers but much less research has been conducted into the emotional stress experienced by pre-service teachers (Gardner, 2010). Generally, levels of stress and anxiety have been reported as higher among university students than the general population and can be attributed to factors such as the desire for academic success, social issues and financial problems (Gardner, 2010). In pre-service teacher education,

Hart (1987) developed the Student Teacher Anxiety Scale, to discover the factors which caused pre-service teacher anxiety during professional experience. Results of the study found that pre-service teacher anxiety was due to four factors: evaluation anxiety, pupil and professional concerns, class control and teaching practice requirements (Hart, 1987). Ngidi and Sibaya's (2006) quantitative study of 72 pre-service teachers found that 31% indicated high levels of anxiety related to professional experience with another 44% indicating moderate levels of anxiety. Dobbin's (1996) Australian qualitative study using reflective journals, discussions and interviews of Third Year Bachelor of Education students over a two-year period, found the reasons for this stress and anxiety can depend upon the nature of the individual, the expectations of the university professional experience program, the relationship between the pre-service teacher and supervising teacher and the physical setting in which professional experience takes place (Dobbins, 1996). This was supported by Gretchen and Midford (2015) in their mixed methods study of 147 first year pre-service teachers, which found that stress and anxiety levels were high due to workload related to the completion of assessment tasks for course work and during professional experience placements. Kyriacou and Stephens' (1999) qualitative study of thirteen pre-service teachers highlighted evaluation anxiety as a significant issue of concern.

In relation to the anxiety experienced by pre-service teachers, evaluation anxiety is a key characteristic which can cause stress for pre-service teachers as it directly links to their self-esteem (Dobbins, 1996). A pre-service teacher's self-esteem is not static but fluctuates depending on their nature, energy level, their own and others' expectations and the level of support they received in the relationships they form (Dobbins, 1996). The Australian study by Dobbins (1996) found many pre-service teachers feel inadequately prepared for the affective aspect of professional experience with their feelings and emotions playing a major part in how they perceive their level of learning and success. They view their professional experience as a 'testing time' rather than a 'learning time'. As a consequence, pre-service teachers can interpret their low times not as a normal part of learning, but rather a time for "self-doubt and self-deprecation," where their level of self-esteem affects their ability to cope, interact effectively with others, and their level of learning (Dobbins, 1996, p. 16). A similar study using a mixed

quantitative and qualitative methodology of 18 pre-service teachers conducted by Campbell and Uusimaki (2006), supported Dobbin's earlier study by finding excessive levels of stress and anxiety during professional experience can seriously impair the pre-service teacher's learning, potentially leading them to withdraw. The characteristics of people drawn towards teaching as a career will often "predispose them to unrealistic expectations and idealism leading to stress and anxiety" (Campbell & Uusimaki, 2006). A fundamental dynamic of the affective aspect of professional experience is the requirement for the evaluation of pre-service teacher performance. This can be affected by the type and quality of relationship the pre-service teacher develops with their supervising teacher who is their mentor (Hogan & Bernay, 2007).

The importance of a positive pre-service and supervising teacher relationship was highlighted in a study by Harwell and Moore (2010) who conducted a quantitative study of three undergraduate teaching courses to determine the concerns of pre-service teachers and their interactions with supervising teachers. The study found that the pre-service and supervising teacher relationship was a key factor influencing professional learning with 81% indicating that they established a positive rapport with their supervising teacher (Harwell & Moore, 2010). When a positive rapport with their supervising teacher is developed, pre-service teachers are more likely to ask questions to clarify expectations and appreciate the guidance of the supervising teacher. In this positive environment, the pre-service teacher is more willing to accept the constructive evaluative feedback from the supervising teacher. However, Harwell and Moore also discovered 56% of pre-service teachers indicated that they experienced feelings of self-doubt during their professional experience despite their positive rapport with their supervising teacher. This was compounded by 25% of pre-service teachers perception that their supervising teachers did not provide constructive feedback and 50% felt great pressure to succeed (Harwell & Moore, 2010). The study also revealed that when the relationship is less productive, the aspects of good communication, support and pre-service teacher development may be reduced, resulting in greater levels of stress and anxiety for the pre-service teacher, leading to diminished teaching performance (Harwell & Moore, 2010).

Within the relationship the manner in which the supervising teacher expresses evaluative feedback to the pre-service teacher can exert an influence on the pre-service teacher's sense of self (Ong'ondo & Jwan, 2009). Non-constructive negative feedback from the supervising teacher may damage the pre-service teacher's perception of their teaching ability, resulting in a reduction in the strength of their self-efficacy. The ability to provide constructive feedback is a skill which not all teachers possess, even if they are good classroom practitioners (Zeichner, 2002). When feedback is constantly expressed in a negative manner, pre-service teachers' self-esteem can be reduced and they can start to self-doubt their ability with their "feelings having a direct result on their teaching" (Dobbins, 1996, p. 20). Conversely, self-esteem is increased when the evaluation feedback is expressed in an affirming manner with constructive ideas for improvement (Dobbins, 1996). The pre-service teacher will feel positive about their teacher self-efficacy, willing to implement the advice and take risks which enhances further development (Zeichner, 2002).

A qualitative interview study by Moody (2009) of 16 pre-service teachers prior to the commencement, during and after their professional experience, found that another important factor impacting upon the stress and anxiety level of the pre-service teacher is the supervision visit from the university supervisor (Moody, 2009). The study discovered that, whilst on the whole the pre-service teachers welcomed the feedback from the university supervisor, the majority of pre-service teachers found this feedback less useful than the feedback provided by their supervising teachers (Moody, 2009). At times there can be ambiguity, causing confusion, in feedback from the university supervisor and the supervising teacher (Haigh & Ward, 2004). Many pre-service teachers experience anxiety issues related to their professional experience from the need to satisfy university expectations adequately, mixed advice from the supervising teacher and university supervisor and the manner in which feedback is expressed. Pre-service teacher anxiety also results from the imbalance of power in the relationship they share as the learning apprentice and the supervising teacher and university supervisor being the experienced experts (Millwater & Ehrich, 2008; Patrick, 2013). If negative relationships are formed based on poor communication along with differing expectations, beliefs and advice, this can lead the pre-service teacher to

feelings of failure and hopelessness (Campbell & Uusimaki, 2006). In contrast when the relationship between the pre-service and the supervising teacher is positive, the pre-service teachers feel assured by emotional and professional support they receive (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Moody, 2009).

2.3.6 Strategies for Relieving Pre-service Teacher Anxiety

Pre-service teacher stress and anxiety have been identified as components of the affective aspect of professional experience. Studies by Campbell and Uusimaki (2006), Hogan and Bernay (2007), Sanderson (2003) and Sheridan and Young (2017) have focused on what schools and universities can do to assist pre-service teachers to feel emotionally supported during professional experience. Pre-service teachers, when they enter the school, want to belong and be part of the community. It is important for schools to make pre-service teachers feel welcome and part of the school as soon as possible (Gardner, 2010).

To discover the techniques supervising teachers employ to relieve pre-service teacher anxiety, Sanderson (2003) surveyed 57 supervising teachers with open ended questionnaires. The study found that effective anxiety relieving strategies, including meeting the supervising teacher prior to the commencement of professional experience, helped set the platform for a positive relationship. Both pre-service and supervising teacher can get to know the individual that lies behind the teacher before moving on to discuss the goals and expectations of the professional experience. The study also found that it was advantageous to discuss expectations in dialogue with the pre-service teacher, to ascertain their goals and minimise any ambiguity of what is expected of the pre-service and supervising teacher during the professional experience (Sanderson, 2003). It is also important for the pre-service teacher to feel they are 'real teachers.' Tasks should be meaningful and related to their teaching practice. The supervising teacher should explain what they do in the classroom is pedagogically sound (Sanderson, 2003).

A similar qualitative study by Hogan and Bernay (2007) supported Sanderson's (2003) findings. This study found that clear channels of communication need to be established, with open honest dialogue and an opportunity for the pre-service teachers to ask questions. Feedback to the pre-service teacher should be prompt

and positive, affirming what had been performed well, along with constructive advice for how they can improve (Hogan & Bernay, 2007).

Universities can help relieve pre-service teacher anxiety through the implementation of intervention programs. Campbell and Uusimaki (2006) conducted a study of an anxiety relieving intervention program for 18 pre-service teachers prior to their first professional experience, involving discussion and personal strategies (Campbell & Uusimaki, 2006). Post workshop surveys found that the pre-service teachers found expressing their anxieties in a non-intimidating environment productive to relieving anxiety along with the provision of practical stress reducing strategies. Campbell and Uusimaki support the need for universities to better prepare anxious pre-service teachers for the affective aspects of professional experience as part of the teacher education program.

Dialogue between the pre-service and supervising teacher has been highlighted in this literature review as being a fundamental element within a positive relationship. Sheridan and Young (2017) in their study of 14 mentor and pre-service teachers, highlighted the importance of conversations to promote shared understanding and provide guidance for the pre-service teacher. The study found that "shared conversations were most important for engagement, developing trust and reciprocal commitment" (Sheridan & Young, 2017, p. 667). Importantly, like the Sanderson (2003) study, Sheridan and Young highlighted the benefit of engaging in mentoring conversations early in the professional experience placement to orientate the pre-service teacher to the school and build the relationship with their supervising teacher.

Evaluation and feedback during the professional experience have been highlighted as two necessary components of the pre-service teacher supervision aspect of professional experience. However, the nature of the relationship which exists between the pre-service and supervising teacher, the way the pre-service teacher is evaluated and the feedback expressed, can have an influence on the degree of learning and anxiety experienced by the pre-service teacher. Just as the model of professional experience can influence the pre-service teacher's learning, the model of supervision will also influence the pre-service teacher's interpretation of their professional experience learning. By exploring the purpose,

history and a variety of teacher supervision models which exist, it is possible to apply them to professional experience and determine their effectiveness in evaluating the teaching and emotional influence on the pre-service teacher.

2.4 Supervision of Pre-service Teachers During Professional Experience

2.4.1 Models of Teacher Supervision

In the preparation and training of professionals there is a need for accountability of performance. Supervision fulfils a basic requirement of adult learning by providing feedback on an individual's performance to enhance new learning (Ponticell & Zepeda, 2004). Since the 1950s, researchers into the field of teacher supervision have defined this practice in similar terms. Goldhammer (1969), in formulating his *clinical supervision* model, contends supervision as a process for developing teachers' self-awareness and independence to improve classroom practice (cited in Clifford, Macy, Albi, Bricker, & Rahn, 2005). Coogan (1973) defined supervision in terms of developing the "professional responsibility of teachers, who are self-directing, capable of analysing their own performance and open to the assistance of others" (cited in Ponticell & Zepeda, 2004, p. 43). Costa and Garmston (1994) viewed supervision as a process to mediate teachers' intellectual functions and assist in decision making leading to modifying their teaching skills (cited in Ponticell & Zepeda, 2004). When looking at teacher supervision, the intended outcomes can include self-direction and reflection, developing self-awareness and independence, mediating teachers' intellectual functions, developing teachers' ability to analyse their own performance, enhancing decision making and opportunities to modify teaching practices (Ponticell & Zepeda, 2004).

The *clinical supervision* model proposed by Goldhammer (1969) involves five steps. These steps include a pre-observation planning conference of the lesson to be observed, the observation of the lesson by the supervisor, the analysis of the observational data, the supervision conference and the post conference analysis for the supervisor and teacher (Clifford et al., 2005). The main aim of the *clinical* model is for the supervisor to provide meaningful constructive feedback for the teacher to help identify effective practices and strategies to enhance improvement and to refine teaching practices.

Other models of teacher supervision have been developed since Goldhammer's (1969) model. The *artistic* model of the 1970s and 1980s adopted a similar approach to the *clinical* model except there is a focus on the supervisor being a connoisseur of classroom life. In the *artistic* model supervisor observes the teacher in terms of the context of the classroom and provides feedback to assist the teacher to refine their teaching to be more effective in the context (Clifford et al., 2005).

The *development* model advocated by Caruso and Fawsett (1999) promotes that after a period of clinical supervision, the supervisor gradually encourages the teacher to become more independent, make decisions and be effective problem solvers (Clifford et al., 2005). Acheson and Gall (1997) promoted the *technical/didactic* model. This model is again based on the *clinical* model with the focus on collaboratively identifying the technical skills to be demonstrated in the pre-observation conference, then using qualitative and quantitative methods to analyse the teaching to judge how well these skills have been achieved (Clifford et al., 2005).

The *reflective* model proposed by Zeichner and Liston (1987), is a process where the teacher is highly involved in engaging in their own evaluation. This model of supervision is a central element in Ziechner's (1983) *Inquiry Orientated* paradigm of the professional experience, in which the supervisor's role is to assist the teacher to reflect on their practice by posing questions and engaging in pedagogical dialogue. Reflective teachers are encouraged to be global thinkers, to go beyond what they teach in one lesson and apply their reflective thoughts to their overall teaching and the school community (Clifford et al., 2005).

The *contextual* model developed during the 1990s emphasises the context in which the teacher is being observed and assesses the teacher's level of performance. The supervisor then modifies the level of feedback to match the teacher's level of ability. This requires the supervisor to determine what level of advice and support would best benefit the teacher. At times this may be directive for underperforming teachers, to develop the basic technical skills they require to become effective teachers. At the other end of the spectrum for highly performing

teachers, the supervisor encourages them using the *reflective* model to challenge and further enhance their skills (Ralph, 2002).

2.4.2 Supervision in the Professional Experience

Supervision of the pre-service teacher is a key component of professional experience. Teacher education in professional experience is a multifaceted activity that includes a range of different contexts and supervision models in which skills and abilities are to be demonstrated, mastered and extended upon. Unlike other assessment conducted at university, there are no tutors or lecturers constantly present to assess the progress or development of the pre-service teacher (Walkington, 2004).

As discussed, a supervising teacher's belief about what constitutes good practice will greatly influence the professional experience learning environment. Martinez (1998) suggests that the type of supervision will reflect the professional experience model. When professional experience is directive then the supervision model adopted will focus on largely assessing the technical aspects of teaching with the feedback being one-way from supervising to pre-service teacher. However, when the professional experience is collaborative, then the supervision model takes on a mentoring approach with the supervising teacher providing emotional and professional support to the pre-service teacher with performance evaluation achieved through two-way dialogue with the pre-service teacher.

Three different models of mentoring supervision proposed by Maynard and Furlong (1993) in the professional experience are reflective of type of supervision from directive to collaborative feedback and learning for the pre-service teacher (Walkington, 2005b). The first is the *apprenticeship* model, where the pre-service teacher as an apprentice learns from the supervising teacher as the master as evidenced in the *clinical, artistic and developmental* models of supervision. The second is the *competence* model, where the pre-service teacher is assessed within a predetermined set of standards reflected in the *technical/didactic* model of supervision. The third is the *reflective* model where the pre-service teacher works in collaboration with the supervising teacher in dialogue, discussing assessment feedback jointly when planning future growth and development of the pre-service

teacher's teaching skills (Walkington, 2005b). Thus feedback is "an essential component of reflective practice and is critical to the ongoing refinement of an individual teacher's pedagogy" (Daniel, Auhl, & Hastings, 2013, p. 170).

Communication in professional experience is most beneficial when it is two-way between the participants. Argyris and Schon's (1974) theory of 'single and double loop learning' describe the "behaviours when individuals reflect on the actuality of practice" (cited in Walkington, 2004, p. 32). 'Single loop learning' refers to one-way communication, whereas 'double loop learning' describes two-way communication. Table 2.1 shows how Argyris and Schon's theory of learning can be related to a comparison of Zeichner's (1983) professional experience paradigms, Maynard and Furlong's (1993) mentoring models of supervision and the models of teacher supervision.

Table 2.1 Professional Experience Learning Theories, Paradigms and Supervision Models.

<table>
<tr><th>Argyris & Schon Learning Theories</th><th>Zeichner's Professional Experience Paradigms</th><th>Maynard & Furlong Mentoring Models of Supervision</th><th>Models of Teacher Supervision</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Directive
Single loop learning</td><td>Behaviouristic</td><td rowspan="2">Apprenticeship</td><td>Clinical
Artistic</td></tr>
<tr><td>Traditional Craft</td><td>Developmental</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Double loop learning
Collaborative</td><td>Personalistic</td><td>Competency</td><td>Technical/Didactic
Contextual</td></tr>
<tr><td>Inquiry Orientated</td><td>Reflective</td><td>Reflective</td></tr>
</table>

In Table 2.1 'single loop learning' can be related to Maynard and Furlong's *apprenticeship* model of supervision and Zeichner's *Behaviouristic* and *Traditional Craft* paradigms. In each of these directive models the predominant measurement of learning, is when the pre-service teacher is assessed as the 'novice' learning

from an ‘expert.’ The feedback is one-way from supervising to the pre-service teacher. Zeichner’s *Personalistic* paradigm is reflective of Maynard and Furlong’s *competency* model, where the pre-service teacher’s personal growth is acknowledged but still reliant on meeting a set standard. In contrast, Argyris and Schon (1974) describe ‘double loop learning’ as based upon joint input and enquiry from both the supervising and pre-service teacher “with assessment that addresses teaching knowledge, skills, attitudes and professional growth” (Walkington, 2004, p. 32). This type of collaborative learning and assessment is reflected in Zeichner’s *Inquiry Orientated* paradigm and Maynard and Furlong’s *reflective* model. To promote supervision based on ‘double loop learning’ principles, it is necessary to ensure that there is clear communication between the participants. Communication is central to the learning process, where expectations are stated, goals established, roles clarified and progress assessed through reflection (Walkington, 2004).

Differences in supervisory models can be illustrated in the study conducted by Haigh and Ward (2004). The focus of the qualitative study was on finding to what extent there was a congruence between the preferred supervisory model of a pre-service teacher compared to their three supervising teachers and the university supervisor by interviewing each of the stakeholders. Haigh and Ward describe supervisory models as *neglectful, directive, consultative, collegial* and *collaborative*. The results showed that each supervising teacher and the university supervisor had a different interpretation of their preferred model of supervision despite sharing the one pre-service teacher. The pre-service teacher indicated a preference for a *collaborative* model with each of their supervising teachers, which would be characterised by continuous reflective dialogue about practice. One supervising teacher indicated that they felt their preferred model was *consultative*, extending at times to *collaborative*, where they could reflect on learning with the pre-service teacher. However, another supervising teacher felt they were best served by using the *directive* extending to *the consultative* model. Even though they involved the pre-service teacher in discussion, the supervising teacher largely made the decisions based upon their years of experience. The third supervising teacher identified with the *collegial* model by discussing, planning and providing feedback to the pre-service teacher. In further contrast, the

university supervisor preferred to work collaboratively with the pre-service teacher. Also, the university supervisor expected the pre-service teacher to take an active and thoughtful approach to their learning. This was similar to the pre-service teacher's preferred model of supervision in the professional experience. An analysis of the supervisory styles indicates a lack of congruence, which could limit the success for the pre-service teacher in their professional experience with varied interpretations of the supervisory role of the participants in the one setting (Haigh & Ward, 2004).

2.4.3 Mentoring and Collaborative Supervisory Practice

Trust and communication are "at the heart of the relationship between mentor and pre-service teacher" (Stanulis & Russell, 2000, p. 71). Professional experience learning environments based upon collaborative processes and opportunities for reflection and dialogue amongst the participants, are the focus of studies by Pungur (2007), Roland and Beckford (2010) and Watson et al. (2008).

The significance of the role of the supervising teacher as mentor was identified by Pungur's (2007) qualitative study of 25 pre-service and supervising teachers using interviews. The study found that the supervising teacher as mentor is essential to establishing an effective collaborative supervisory model (Pungur, 2007). In terms of the *Inquiry Orientated* paradigm of the professional experience and the *reflective* model of supervision, the mentor goes beyond assessing technical skills, as evidenced in the *Behaviouristic* and *Traditional Craft* professional experience models and the *technical/didactic* model of supervision. Mentors provide the pre-service teacher with the opportunities to develop reflective thought about their teaching, develop communication and interpersonal skills, engage in pedagogical discussion, allow pre-service teachers to make decisions about their teaching, provide emotional and professional support in an environment which promotes risk taking, and provide affirmation of what is good and constructive feedback in dialogue with the pre-service teacher (Pungur, 2007). Often dialogue by supervising teachers and pre-service teachers during their post teaching feedback sessions, is driven by the supervising teacher with pre-service teachers generally confirming the feedback (Harris, Keogh, & Jervis-Tracey, 2013). However, when the supervising teacher deliberately structures the feedback using a collaborative

approach, this encourages pre-service teacher critical reflection and pedagogical discussion (Harris et al., 2013).

Support for the role of the supervising teacher as mentor is found in a study by Roland and Beckford (2010) of 134 supervising teachers. The study found that 95% of supervising teachers thought mentoring or coaching in professional experience was a key element. Comments included the "need of providing good teaching practice, maintaining positive relationships with pre-service teachers and facilitating pre-service teachers growth in all areas" (Roland & Beckford, 2010, p. 4). An effective mentor is conscious of the degree they are directing and not directing (Millwater & Ehrich, 2008). Mentoring is a reciprocal process whereby the mentor shares the learning with the pre-service teacher and there is a balance of power in the relationship (Millwater & Ehrich, 2008; Patrick, 2013). For example, Izadinia (2017) in the study of pre-service and supervising teacher views on mentoring, found that when the pre-service and supervising mentoring views corresponded, that "stronger personal relationships and higher levels of satisfaction of the mentoring program was found by the pre-service teachers" (Izadinia, 2017, p. 517).

Mentoring relationships can take a variety of forms including one to one with the pre-service teacher, or a mentoring community with many teachers involved (Lang, Neal, Karouni, & Chandler, 2015; Martinez, 1998; Roland & Beckford, 2010). Le Cornu (2016) promotes the concept of 'learning communities' where professional experience is conducted in an environment which is "proactive, communal, collaborative and given over to the construction of meaning rather than receiving them" (p. 86). Participants in such professional experience environments have a commitment to contribute towards the learning for the professional development of all.

There are a variety of different models of learning communities. For example, Zeichner (1992) advocated the *professional development school* model, in which pre-service teachers are not assigned to one supervising teacher but rather are the responsibility of the entire school staff. In this model, teachers are trained in their mentoring role with all the participants considering themselves learners (Zeichner, 1992). Darling-Hammond (2006) supports this view by advocating the

use of supervised clinical work, tightly integrated with course work. One approach similar to Zeichner's (1992) *professional development schools* model and Darling-Hammond's (2006) *clinical* model is promoted by the University of Canberra, in the use of *teaching clinics* (Watson et al., 2008). In this model, pre-service teachers are placed into primary schools under the mentoring supervision of supervising teachers and university staff. Each week the pre-service teachers work in schools for two and half hours, teaching groups of five to seven children. Support is provided for the pre-service teachers in the form of structured reflection of their teaching practice. The *teaching clinics* allow the university staff to liaise with supervising teachers, enhancing relationships and providing an opportunity for pre-service teachers to develop their teaching skills with the support of university staff and supervising teachers in partnership (Allen & Wright, 2014; Watson et al., 2008). Findings from this study indicated that the pre-service teachers found an increased level of professional confidence due to the positive aspects of the community mentoring (Watson et al., 2008). A study by Lang et.al (2015) placed two pre-service teachers with one supervising teacher supported by academic staff for a two day a week period. The results of this study showed that the triadic interaction promoted performance feedback and professional dialogue between all members which helped build capacity and relationships. Furthermore, Le Cornu (2016) highlights that for learning communities to work effectively, there needs to be time allocated for mentoring to take place. Universities need to be proactive in developing supervising teachers who are good mentors and building strong relationships with schools.

2.4.4 Mentor Versus Assessor Dilemma

The supervising teacher is viewed as the appropriate person to assess the performance of the pre-service teacher (Martinez, 1998). Studies by Cattley (2007), Ditchburn (2015), Martinez (1998), Millwater and Ehrich (2008), Roland and Beckford (2010) and Walkington (2004) identified the conflict of interest that may exist for a mentor who is also the main assessor of the pre-service teacher's performance. The conflict comes from balancing their role as mentor and that of assessor. As a mentor, they offer support emotionally and professionally. As a consequence, if they have built a positive relationship, they can become reluctant to report on unsatisfactory performance (Walkington, 2004). Millwater and Ehrich

contend that micropolitics can play a role in assessment. Micropolitics can be looked upon as the way people in an organisation use strategies to achieve their goals. For example, it is possible for a supervising teacher to become threatened by the teaching skills of a pre-service teacher and provide an unfair or biased assessment of their performance (Millwater & Ehrich, 2008).

The dilemma of the assessor and mentor role is difficult to resolve as the supervising teacher is expected to evaluate the student teacher's teaching performance according to set criteria. Martinez and Coombs (2001), suggest that the answer to this conflict of interest is to involve the school's professional experience coordinator as an assessor. In a study conducted of ten professional experience coordinators using semi-structured interviews, Martinez and Coombs found that they were willing to undertake supervision of pre-service teachers as an aspect of their role. These supervision methods varied from random visits to planned supervised lessons followed by feedback to the pre-service teacher. This provided them with the opportunity to be moderators when it came to supervising teachers reporting on a pre-service teacher's performance (Martinez & Coombs, 2001).

2.5 Development of Teacher Professional Practice Through Professional Experience

2.5.1 Professionality and Teacher Professional Learning

Two aspects of teachers' professional lives are professionalism and professionality. Professionalism can be viewed as "the collective achievement of a corps of professionals striving together towards the same ends" (Frelin, 2015, p. 590). When applied to a teacher, professionalism refers to professionals sharing common aims working together to establish and improve their profession (Whitty, 2000). Hoyle (1975) describes professionality as the "knowledge, skills and procedures which teachers use in their work" (cited in Davies, 2013, p. 54). Hoyle (1975) proposed professionality as two models: restricted and extended. The restricted model of professionality involves teachers being content focused in their practice related to the day to day teaching. However, the extended model of professionality involves a view of improving teaching practice based on

professional learning through the use of reflection, pedagogical dialogue and professional learning (Evans, 2008).

Evans (2008) describes Hoyle's (1975) two models of professionality as a continuum between restricted practice, which is concerned with imparting knowledge and skills to students, and the extended model which involves the teacher consciously improving their professional practice to enhance their teaching knowledge and skills. Furthermore, Frelin (2015) proposes a relational aspect of teacher professionality that goes beyond the knowledge and skills elements by teachers establishing, developing and maintaining relationships with students and colleagues which contributes to student well-being and learning. "Teacher professionality includes negotiating positive student teacher relationships that help students learn" (Frelin, 2015, p. 594). In terms of professional experience, pre-service teachers enter their placement with a limited understanding of professionality. If placed with a supervising teacher who values relational professionality and is at the extended end of the professionality continuum, the pre-service teacher will be engaged in professional learning which involves not only the observation of good teaching practice by the supervising teacher but also a reflection on their own teaching and participation in pedagogical dialogue to develop their knowledge and skills and improve their professional practice. Thus, professional learning within professional experience is central to the development of pre-service teacher's professionality.

The need for teachers to constantly improve their teaching practice as part of their professionality is a common theme in educational literature. According to the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), "Professional learning is the formal and informal learning experiences undertaken by teachers and school leaders that improve their individual professional practice" (AITSL, 2012, p. 2). Within the literature, professional learning has been identified as most effective when it occurs within a whole school environment supported by the school leadership through collaborative processes, where reflection and feedback on teaching practice is provided to improve student outcomes (AITSL, 2012; Bruce, Esmonde, Ross, Dookie, & Beatty, 2010; Cranston, 2011).

Professional learning which takes place in schools differs from the traditional view of teacher professional development (Bruce et al., 2010). Professional development of teachers is often focused on attending workshops and seminars which are frequently held outside of the school context. However, professional learning takes place within the school and classroom setting "where the context of the classroom becomes the primary and legitimate site of teacher professional learning on an ongoing basis" (Bruce et al., 2010, p. 1599). This is particularly relevant for pre-service teachers as part of their overall teacher education program.

Inherent within the current approach to professional learning is the importance of collaboration in producing an environment which promotes teacher professional learning. A collaborative approach to professional learning encourages professional dialogue and "allows teachers to share their expertise and accumulated wisdom and provide opportunities for collective learning" (Cranston, 2011, p. 68). When applied to the professional experience component of teacher education which takes place within a school and classroom context, collaboration with the supervising teacher and feedback on professional practice are fundamental elements of the pre-service teacher's professional learning. In this collaborative professional learning environment, research by Bruce et al. (2010) and Cranston (2011) has identified that building of a trusting relationship between the partners is an important aspect as "trust is interpersonal as it exists between two people" (Cranston, 2011, p. 69). Thus, professional learning for the pre-service teacher involves not just the gaining of professional knowledge to improve professional practice, but a willingness to open oneself up to being critiqued by colleagues and a preparedness to share one's own knowledge and experiences with others in a trusting supportive relationship. Professional learning therefore "lies at the intersection of professional context and personal experience, requiring professional and personal relevance to be effective in improving or changing practice" (Mockler, 2011, p. 522). Subsequently, professional learning is more broad based than professional development and applies not only to the professional learning of the individual teacher but also groups of teachers and the teaching community (Evans, 2008).

Professional learning is a key influence in improving and enhancing teacher professionality. Research has shown that there is a link between professional learning and the emerging view that pre-service teachers have of themselves. Their belief in their efficacy as a teacher has been shown to directly affect their approach to teaching. Bruce et al. (2010) contend that teachers who develop greater levels of teacher self-efficacy through professional learning have "higher expectations of their students, believe that students can achieve and are more willing to spend time with lower performing students to improve their outcomes" (p.1600). Furthermore, "novice teachers are in need of contextual support in order to develop self-efficacy" (Frelin, 2014, p. 264). A collaborative professional learning environment promotes teacher self-efficacy which positively influences the teaching strategies used resulting in increased student learning outcomes (Bruce et al., 2010). Additionally in this collaborative learning environment, Mockler (2012) asserts professional learning influences how an individual identifies with being a teacher and how they feel as a teacher (McNay & Graham, 2007). Mockler contends that professional learning contributes to the formation of teacher identity as the teaching knowledge and skills learnt, enhance teaching practice in alignment with the teacher's core beliefs of who they are as a teacher. Therefore, to enhance professionality, professional learning during the professional experience component of teacher education is most effective when it takes place in a collaborative environment. The relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher during professional experience is a key factor in the quality of the professional learning and the development of teacher self-efficacy.

2.5.2 Teacher Self-Efficacy

As has been discussed in this literature review, the feedback that a pre-service teacher receives from their supervising teacher, along with the teaching tasks they observe and enact, are key components in how they interpret their performance. Depending upon the content and the way the evaluatory feedback of their teaching is delivered, it can be viewed as anything from constructive affirming advice which builds confidence in their teaching self-efficacy, to negative critical appraisal leading to self-doubt about their teaching ability. Self-efficacy is intrapersonal and can be defined as an "individual's belief in his or her ability to

undertake the actions required to successfully accomplish a task in a specific context" (Main & Hammond, 2008, p. 29). Self-efficacy is not concerned with the skills an individual possesses, but rather their ability to make judgements whether they can organise and carry out the necessary actions (Bernadowski, Perry, & Del Greco, 2013; Lorsbach & Jinks, 1999). Albert Bandura, who is a highly respected researcher in the field of self-efficacy, contends that pre-service teachers with a strong sense of self-efficacy are more likely to take risks, have greater perseverance, and display greater resilience (Bandura, 1997).

Bandura (1997) identified four sources which contribute to an individual's self-efficacy which can be applied to the development of the pre-service teacher's level of teacher self-efficacy during professional experience. The first of these sources Bandura describes as *enactive mastery experiences* (Bandura, 1997). These experiences are essential to strong self-efficacy development in that success in mastering a task or skill helps build a robust personal efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Resilience in self-efficacy is built by overcoming difficult obstacles in tasks through perseverance. *Enactive mastery experiences* are "considered most influential as they provide proof of one's capabilities through the performance of the actual skills" (O'Neill & Stephenson, 2012, p. 536). This development is "best achieved by organising mastery experiences in ways that are especially conducive to the acquisition of generative skills" (Bandura, 1997). Within the professional experience environment, this requires pre-service teachers to be provided with the support, strategies and skills by the supervising teacher to carry out their tasks effectively, and reassurance from collaborative planning and feedback that they are using the strategies and skills correctly. As suggested by O'Neill and Stephenson (2012), "being able to manage the demands of the learning environment with success could bolster their sense of self-efficacy" (p. 536).

The second source of self-efficacy development is *vicarious experiences* (Bandura, 1997). Along with the deliberate feedback on the mastery of a specific task from a significant other, another way an individual can gauge their performance on a task is to informally compare themselves to the performances of others (Bandura, 1997). Within life generally, people often compare themselves to others in a similar situation. In a work situation "surpassing associates or

competitors raises efficacy beliefs, whereas being outperformed lowers them" (Wineberg et al. as cited in Bandura, 1997, p. 87). Within a professional experience environment, this type of performance appraisal can come from the pre-service teacher observing the supervising teacher or another pre-service teacher, as they teach and compare their practice to that of the supervising or pre-service teacher. Self-efficacy can be increased or lowered by observing a competent person's success and failures and applying the level of success to oneself (O'Neill & Stephenson, 2012). Teacher self-efficacy is likely to be affected by how the pre-service teacher gauges their performance against the quality of teaching practice demonstrated by the supervising teacher.

Another important source of developing self-efficacy is *verbal persuasion* (Bandura, 1997). "It is easier to sustain a sense of efficacy, especially when one is struggling with difficulties, if a significant other expresses faith in one's capabilities than if they convey doubts" (Bandura, 1997, p. 101). *Verbal persuasion* is closely linked with *enacted mastery experiences* in professional experience where evaluatory feedback is required of the task such as in practice teaching. Putman (2012) highlights the significance that *verbal persuasion* contributes as confirmation of the level of performance of the *enactive mastery experience.* People who are reassured that they have the capabilities to successfully master a task are more likely to persevere and succeed (O'Neill & Stephenson, 2012). However, the reassurance needs to be realistic in that false reassurance will only raise belief without the participant necessarily possessing the ability leading to potential failure and losing credibility of the persuader (Bandura, 1997). The evaluatory feedback which pre-service teachers receive from their supervising teachers during professional experience, is an important contributor to the development of their teacher self-efficacy. When the feedback is positive and constructive, it can increase the pre-service teacher's confidence in their teaching competencies. However, if the feedback is negative, non-constructive or non-existent, this can increase doubts in the pre-service teacher's mind, negatively impacting on their teacher self-efficacy. Bandura (1997) points out that de-valuative feedback which is based on harsh criticism with little helpful guidance will undermine an individual's belief in themselves, "whereas

constructive criticism sustains aspirations or even bolsters a sense of personal efficacy" (p. 104).

The fourth of Bandura's (1997) sources of self-efficacy are *physiological and affective states*. Bandura highlights that an individual's emotional state can have an adverse effect on their efficacy. Often negative self-thought about one's performance can lead to increased stress that results in a poor level of performance (Bandura, 1997). In terms of physiological states, fatigue and tiredness are often interpreted as indicators of being unable to achieve the desired outcomes which may or may not be true. Gurvitch and Metzler (2009) support Bandura's link between stress levels and self-efficacy development by contending that "an anxiety state prior to a specific performance likely leads to lower self-efficacy perceptions" (p. 438). Bernadowski et al. (2013) contends that *physiological and affective states* are a response to an individual's levels of stress and anxiety related to the performance of a certain task. For example, efficacy will be improved by "enhancing physical status, reducing stress levels and negative proclivities and correcting interpretation of bodily states" (Bandura, 1997, p. 106). Thus in pre-service teacher education "it is important for teacher educators to realise the importance of emotional arousal and *vicarious experiences* on initial teacher beliefs in teacher education" (Pendergast, Garvis, & Keogh, 2011, p. 55). As discussed, these strategies have significance within the professional experience setting related to the need for pre-service teachers to develop positive coping strategies to deal with the emotional issues related to their professional experience, including the need for the establishment of a positive and supportive emotional environment and relationships with the supervising teacher.

A stronger sense of self-efficacy will result in a higher level of achievement. Individuals who doubt their ability will tend to lack perseverance and give up early. Klassen and Chiu (2011) contend that a teacher's level of self-efficacy will have an influence on their job satisfaction and occupational commitment. In other words, teachers with low self-efficacy struggle to cope with classroom stress. Furthermore, the level of teacher self-efficacy can also be influenced by their personality traits and beliefs (Jamil, Downer, & Pianta, 2012). The study conducted by Jamil et al. (2012) found that there is a relationship between an

individual's ability to deal with stress and "positive traits such as activity, sociability and the tendency towards pleasure and joy" (p. 122).

Therefore, self-efficacy is influenced by the successful mastery of tasks, the *vicarious experiences* of teaching, the nature of the verbal feedback and the emotional aspects of the relationships and individual experiences. The comments made about a pre-service teacher's performance compared to the intended outcomes will influence the pre-service teacher's "personal appraisal of ability and growth" (Lorsbach & Jinks, 1999, p. 161). Thus the development of the pre-service teacher's self-efficacy is closely linked to their perceptions and experiences in the learning environment (Lorsbach & Jinks, 1999).

In professional experience, supervision is a key component of the learning environment. Kennedy (2006) highlights the link between supervision in the professional experience and the development of self-efficacy (Kennedy, 2006). This finding is supported by Ashton (2004) who contends that "teachers who had high levels of self-efficacy mentored pre-service teachers who also had high levels of self-efficacy" (as cited in Kennedy, 2006, p. 19). The view of self-efficacy being influenced by interactions in the learning environment is supported by a study of pre-service teachers' efficacy in relation to student management, by Main and Hammond (2008). The results showed that the majority of the pre-service teachers reported high levels of self-efficacy in student management. Analysis of the results indicated that the pre-service teacher's self-efficacy was based upon the *vicarious experiences* provided by observing the models of effective student management being demonstrated in the classroom by their supervising teacher, despite there being a mix of reactive and proactive approaches to student management (Main & Hammond, 2008). A subsequent study by O'Neill and Stephenson (2012) using the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale, found that pre-service teachers appeared to use Bandura's (1997) four sources of self-efficacy development. Specifically, *mastery experiences, vicarious experiences* and *verbal persuasion* added to their sense of self-efficacy. Furthermore, the study also found lower anxiety levels in the *physiological and affective states* resulted in higher levels of self-efficacy (O'Neill & Stephenson, 2012).

Development of teacher self-efficacy is an ongoing process started in pre-service teacher education (McCormack, Gore, & Thomas, 2006). The evolving nature of this self-efficacy was highlighted in a study conducted by McCormack et al. (2006) of the professional learning of beginning teachers in their first year of service. By the end of the year most of the beginning teachers in the study, were struggling to develop their teacher self-efficacy. The study highlighted the importance of feedback during the early experiences of teaching to develop confidence and motivation. This is equally important for pre-service teachers and highlighted the need for professional and emotional support. To be educationally effective, what really matters, "is quality teachers and teaching, supported by strategic professional development" (Rowe as cited in McCormack et al., 2006, p. 111).

Teacher self-efficacy can be developed by providing professional experience placements which provide: modelling to help pre-service teachers reflect their own values, assistance to explore their own self-concept, coping strategies, a supportive environment and dialogue leading to goal setting (Austin as cited in Kennedy, 2006).

2.5.3 Teacher Identity

During professional experience, pre-service teachers learn that a teaching role involves the skills and tasks which are carried out in teaching. By engaging in these teaching skills and tasks in a supportive and affirming environment, they develop their teacher self-efficacy and a greater sense of the type of teacher identity to which they aspire. Teacher identity is "based on the core beliefs one has about teaching and being a teacher; beliefs that are continuously formed and reformed through experience" (Walkington, 2005a, p. 54). The development of positive and resilient teacher identities relies primarily on schools providing environments in which a sense of belonging is nurtured by collaborative relationships. This sense of belonging is based upon open dialogue, respect, professional and emotional support and integrity (Johnson et al., 2010). These elements outlined by Johnson et al. (2010), when present in professional experience, will enhance the development of the pre-service teacher's sense of their emerging teacher identity. The formation of a teacher identity is an ongoing process largely shaped by a range of personal, social, professional and structural

experiences (Johnson et al., 2010). Each of these experiences is interconnected. Teacher identity is "formed and reformed constantly over the course of a career and mediated by a complex interplay of personal, professional and political dimensions of teachers' lives" (Mockler, 2011, p. 518) A teacher identity "manifests itself in teachers' job satisfaction, occupational commitment, self-efficacy and change in level of motivation" (Canrinus, Helms-Lorenz, Beijaard, Buitink, & Hofman, 2012, p. 116). Chong et al. (2011) support this contextual component and contend that a teacher identity consists of professional, contextual and relationship dimensions. Teacher identity is largely formed through interaction in the relationships a teacher experiences with others in the school environment (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Canrinus et al., 2012). Therefore, the importance of the relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher is fundamental to the development of the emerging teacher identity of the pre-service teacher.

A longitudinal study conducted by Day and Kington (2008) of 295 teachers over a three-year period found that teacher identity was composed of three dimensions: *professional, situational* and *personal.* These same three dimensions can be found in professional experience. In the Day and Kington (2008) model the *professional* dimension involves government and society expectations of what constitutes good teaching practice, syllabus documents, policies and procedures, professional development, workload, roles and responsibilities. The *situational* dimension involves the context of the schools and the classroom and includes such factors as the cultural background, socio economic status, student management, student learning needs, the leadership of the school, support and feedback from others, parents and school related activities. The *situational* dimension reflects many of the professional experience elements outlined in this literature review. The *personal* dimension involves the teacher's life outside of school including family responsibilities and non-school related activities and how these impact or not on the teacher's professional life (Day & Kington, 2008). When the three dimensions are in balance, Day and Kington found they bring stability to the teacher's sense of identity. This is also the case with the pre-service teacher's development of their sense of their emerging teacher identity. However, if one or more of the dimensions dominates or is lacking this imbalance puts pressure on the other dimensions challenging the stability of the teacher's

identity. The way these three dimensions interact can affect "job satisfaction, well-being, self-efficacy, vulnerability, agency and resilience of their perception of effectiveness" (Day & Kington, 2008, p. 11). Pre-service teachers would experience the same impact on their teacher identity if there was an imbalance of the three dimensions. Day and Kington also found that an imbalance between the three dimensions could be mitigated by the teacher's sense of why they chose teaching as a career. Palmer (1998) refers to this motivation or calling to teaching as a career as *moral purpose*.

Good teaching is more than just the application of technical skills but comes from within and is based in the "identity and integrity of the teacher" (Palmer, 1998, p. 4). Palmer (1998) contends good teachers are in touch with themselves, their students' needs and understand their curriculum content. Palmer states that teacher identity is not about just teaching. Effectiveness is achieved at a deeper level whereby teachers promote wholeness in themselves and the students they teach:

> As I teach, I project the condition of my soul onto my students, my subject, and our way of being together.... When I do not know myself, I cannot know who my students are. (Palmer as cited in Smith, 2005, p. 9)

The influence of context, experience and structural components on the development of self-concept and its subsequent role in formation of teacher identity was examined by Beauchamp and Thomas (2009). They found that teacher identity necessitates an examination of one's 'self-concept' in relation to others and in identification of why they wanted to be a teacher and the sort of teacher they wanted to become. Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) support Palmer's (1998) belief that teacher identity is linked to the understanding of the notion of the 'self or self-concept' as it is situated in a social setting such as a classroom or school, which requires an examination of one's self in relation to others in the setting. Thus, in terms of professional experience, pre-service teachers should not just be focused on reflecting about their teaching but also the relationships they establish with others in the learning environment to promote this sense of wholeness which Palmer describes. Hence, the interaction a pre-service

teacher has with others in the school context will shape and reshape their professional identity. Lauriala and Kukkonen (2005) extend upon Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) importance of 'self-concept' and propose three stages relevant to the development of teacher identity: the actual self (the identity the teacher holds about themselves), the ought self (the identity that is found in the hopes and aspirations of the teacher and significant others) and the ideal self (the identity to which the teacher aspires and is achieved through teacher preparation and professional development) (Lauriala & Kukkonen as cited in Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Therefore, the relationship the pre-service teacher establishes with the supervising teacher would be a key factor in promoting dialogue which will help the pre-service teacher identify their ideal teacher identity to which they aspire.

Teacher identity is therefore shaped by an understanding of one's 'self' within the context of the school or classroom (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Palmer, 1998). To understand one's teacher 'self,' it requires a pre-service teacher to reflect in why they want to become a teacher. Scheff (1994) proposes that when a teacher falls short of achieving their purpose for teaching, they experience shame and guilt and their integrity is placed into question (cited in Hargreaves, 1998). The same feelings of shame and guilt are experienced by pre-service teachers when they encounter a professional experience where they fail to reach their ideal desired expectation of themselves as a teacher.

To achieve wholeness, Palmer (1998) identifies three important aspects of teaching including intellectual, emotional and spiritual pathways. When applied to professional experience, the intellectual aspect is the way pre-service teachers think about teaching and learning. The emotional aspect refers to the way pre-service teachers feel as they teach and learn, based upon the relationships established, especially the relationship with their supervising teacher. In the spiritual aspect, Palmer is referring to the inner heart of the teacher, their love of teaching and their calling to the profession:

> Good teachers join self, subject and students into the fabric of life because they teach from an integral and undivided self; they manifest in their own lives and the students, a 'capacity for connectedness.'

> They are able to weave a complex web of connections between themselves, their subjects and their students, so that students can learn to weave a world for themselves. (Palmer, 1998, p. 2)

This inner heart of a teacher also applies to pre-service teachers. To develop teacher identities which are authentic to moral purpose, it is important that teachers be reflective in their thoughts (Palmer, 1998). An effective technique is for teachers, including pre-service teachers, to keep personal journals where they participate in dialogue with colleagues and friends, engage in contemplation and prayer, and explore their feelings and experiences (Smith, 2005).

When applied to professional experience, Palmer's (1998) beliefs about teacher identity have significance for the pre-service teacher. When a pre-service teacher enters their first professional experience, they come with preconceived ideas about their concept of being a teacher and a belief on the degree to which they match that construct (Martinez, 1998). Walkington (2005a) conducted a qualitative study of 205 first year undergraduate pre-service teachers at the commencement of their course. The study focused on the reasons why they had chosen teaching as a career. The pre-service teachers were required to write a reflective journal for their first semester including the five-day introductory period they spent in schools. The study found that most beginning pre-service teachers commented on the positive relations they had with teachers at school, sporting and community groups. This supports Palmer's (1998) philosophy that many teachers are called to teaching through encountering a good mentor teacher during their life. A second finding was that the beginning pre-service teachers felt they were a 'natural teacher,' with attributes which could be easily transferred to teaching (Walkington, 2005a). In the Walkington study the pre-service teachers undertook five days of observations in schools, during which they kept a record of their thoughts as they progressed. Analysis of these reflections found that they noted how much work teachers do in terms of preparation and management. The pre-service teachers were also surprised by the amount of work teachers do in planning, preparing, discussing and assessing together (Walkington, 2005a). Analysis of the responses reveals that even at this early stage of their training, pre-service teachers are forming their own beliefs about their ideal teacher identity.

Studies have also focused on finding out the sort of teacher pre-service teachers aspire to become (Beltman, Glass, Dinham, Chalk, & Nguyen, 2015). The Beltman et al. (2015) study involved 125 pre-service teachers in the first year of their teacher education course graphically depicting the teacher they hoped to become. Analysis of the drawings indicated that a large number of pre-service teachers portrayed an emerging teacher identity by depicting themselves with students in the performance of teaching but lacking many other aspects of the teaching profession such as working with colleagues, teacher's aides, parents or school leadership members. At this early stage of their career, the pre-service teachers portrayed themselves as confident with the positive emotions associated with teaching (Beltman et al., 2015). They depicted themselves and their students with smiling faces with caption words such as "supportive, fun, friendly and happy" apparently unaware of the stresses which are associated with the real life of teaching which they are yet to experience (Beltman et al., 2015, p. 238).

Teacher identity can effectively be developed in pre-service teachers by immersing them in the life and culture of a school (Turbill & Kervin, 2007). In a similar study to Walkington (2005a), Turbill and Kervin (2007) studied first year pre-service teachers who were placed in Primary schools for one day a week over a ten-week period as observers and teaching assistants. Along with focus group meetings, an open ended survey was given to the pre-service teachers at the conclusion of the ten weeks in which the pre-service teachers were asked to rank 'what had worked for them,' from a list of criteria related to the professional experience (Turbill & Kervin, 2007). The pre-service teachers ranked linking theory to practice, learning about the teaching profession and learning about schools highly. Turbill and Kervin suggest that these three aspects contribute to the development of a teacher identity.

Often the realities of teaching are different to what pre-service teachers expected on entering their initial teacher education course. Chong et al. (2011) conducted a similar study to Turbill and Kervin (2007) using open ended questions with 105 graduating pre-service teachers at the conclusion of their final professional experience. The aim of the study was to discover the pre-service teachers' perceptions of the teaching profession. Results of the study showed that 34% viewed teaching as a noble and caring profession, 39% recognised the realities of

teaching and the wider role and responsibilities of a teacher, and 15% indicated mismatched expectations as to what they thought teaching involved, highlighting their frustrations and disillusionment (Chong et al., 2011). Analysis of the findings show that despite one third of the respondents indicating positive altruistic reasons for the role of teaching, 54% of the pre-service teachers indicated that the realities of teaching differed from what they had expected. This included the 15% who were disillusioned with the teaching profession after their professional experience.

As part of the study the pre-service teachers were asked to rate on a Likert scale how they felt about teaching as a result of their professional experience. Factors included the role of teaching and learning, self as a model, sense of calling, sense of professional identity and growth as a teacher. The two factors with the lowest ranking were sense of professional identity and sense of calling. This result supports the earlier finding of the study, that the same pre-service teachers realised the realities of teaching to the point of disillusionment and did not confidently see themselves fulfilling the role of a teacher. Their teacher identity was still in an emerging stage, lacking a full understanding of all that is involved in their teacher identity.

Over time with increased socialisation, school professional development and emotional support, emerging teacher identity may be enhanced (Chong et al., 2011). This finding supported the results of Johnson et al. (2010) in their qualitative study of 59 early career teachers. They found that the development of teacher identity and resilience in early career teachers was enhanced, when they were in environments in which relationships developed a sense of belonging and acknowledged the emotional needs of the beginning teachers. Furthermore a positive school culture which took into account the demands expected of a beginning teacher was influential towards teacher identity development, along with system policies and practices that made a commitment to “social justice, teacher agency and voice, community engagement and respect for local knowledge and practice” (Johnson et al., 2010, p. 7). Furthermore, Yuan and Lee (2014) highlight the influential role that the mentoring supervising teacher plays in contributing to the formation of the pre-service teacher’s professional identity.

2.5.4 Emotions and Teacher Identity

As discussed, emotions play a significant role in teaching. Research by Yuan and Lee (2014) found that pre-service teachers' professional identities were "intertwined with their cognitive learning, socialisation as well as their emotional changes" (p. 485). Teacher identity formation is a dynamic process of experiences and emotions which develop over time as aspects in the environment change "constantly providing new configurations" (Zembylas, 2003, p. 221). Furthermore, "emotions connect people's thoughts, judgements and beliefs, and it can be said that emotions are the 'glue' of identity" (Haviland and Kahlbaugh as cited in Zembylas, 2003, p. 222). People form their identity partly due to the emotions they experience in the environment where they are situated. Kelchtermans (2009) contends that a teacher's understanding of their professional identity is an ongoing process built upon their self-image, self-esteem, job motivation and future perspective. Teacher identity is linked to recognition by others and that when this recognition is negative or denied a teacher will "internalise a demeaning image of themselves" (Zembylas, 2003, p. 223). Identity formation therefore is subject to dialogue with others in the environment.

As a consequence, the development of teacher identity is closely linked with the affective aspects of the school context and is largely shaped by the interaction and feedback from others (Cattley, 2007; McNay & Graham, 2007). This aspect of pre-service teacher identity development supports Palmer's (1998) belief in reflection and professional dialogue. As has been discussed, relationships and the perception of 'good practice,' are two key elements that shape the professional experience learning environment. These two elements make each professional experience placement unique for pre-service teachers. Acknowledging the differences that make up teacher identity provides the opportunity for teacher development (Walkington, 2005a). When a relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher is based on trust, then the pre-service teacher is more willing to take risks with their teaching to enhance their teaching skills (Barton, Hartwig, & Cain, 2015). Pre-service teachers who form a positive teacher identity are less concerned about survival and are more likely to display greater confidence by taking risks to further their teacher development (Barton et al., 2015).

There is a fine line that exists between the pre-service teacher's desire for survival and taking full advantage of the opportunities that exist for risk taking leading to further development (Cattley, 2007). Zembylas (2003) calls this predisposition in the pre-service teacher, "care of the teacher self" (p. 229). Cattley (2007) points out that risk taking increases the opportunity for critiquing which can be positive or negative. When the teaching practice of the pre-service teacher differs from the pedagogical beliefs of the supervising teacher, the feedback could potentially undermine the pre-service teacher's emerging teacher identity (Cattley, 2007). The importance of the mentoring role is highlighted by Cattley towards minimising this destructive influence with a focus on the establishment of positive relationships and the use of reflective dialogue between the partners. However, the relationship between pre-service teachers' emotions and reflective practice is as yet to be "fully explored in teacher education literature" (Kilgour et al., 2015, p. 378). McNay and Graham (2010) contend that not enough attention is paid to formation of teacher identity in teacher education and that teacher educators should envision ways of developing the "identity, self and personhood of the teacher" (p. 234).

2.5.5 Anticipatory Teacher Identity Reflective Practice

The importance of reflective practice in professional experience as a significant element of pre-service teacher development was a key element of Zeichner's (1983) *Inquiry Orientated* paradigm. Participating in reflective activities is "accepted as necessary for good teaching, good mentoring, personal and professional growth" (McNay & Graham, 2007, p. 232). Pre-service teachers should be encouraged to compare and contrast what they know from their previous experiences to what they are experiencing during their professional experience in terms of feelings and opinions (Walkington, 2005a). In terms of teacher identity, reflection is an important aspect of defining "who one is, what one aims to do and what one does as a teacher" (McNay & Graham, 2007, p. 232). In a qualitative study of what constitutes excellent characteristics, attitudes and practices of supervising teachers, McDonald et al. (2004) found that supervising teachers considered it important that pre-service teachers have the opportunity to develop reflective practice in their professional experiences. "Reflection practiced within a supportive environment encourages pre-service teachers to take risks and

be able to articulate their actions" (McDonald et al., 2004, p. 88). Supervising teachers can assist pre-service teachers to reflect by providing opportunities for reflection. Modelling reflective practice can be achieved by providing focus questions for reflection, planning time for discussions, making the implicit explicit and challenging their own thoughts openly (Walkington, 2005a).

In terms of the formation of teacher identity, which is an ongoing process, the challenge is to ensure teacher education programs provide the opportunity of anticipatory reflection. Rather than the total focus being on how the pre-service teacher feels they fit the role of a teacher at the moment, they should also question what sort of teacher they want to become (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004). Furthermore, pre-service teachers should be encouraged to reflect in a way that provides a positive and affirming construct of the teacher identity they aspire to achieve (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2010). By so doing, pre-service teachers would be permitted to "envision a future teaching self which would inform their development" (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2010, p. 634). In relation to pre-service teachers' perceptions of their ideal identity, Beauchamp and Thomas (2010) found that although the pre-service teachers recognised the need for hard work, learning from other teachers and knowing their learners, they did not significantly mention reflection as contributing to their ideal teacher identity. Therefore there is a need to ensure teacher education programs "provide a sense of space within which one can become the author of one's own interpretations of one's identity as a teacher" (Jenlink as cited in Beauchamp & Thomas, 2010, p. 639).

Cattley (2007) proposes reflective writing as being a valuable strategy for pre-service teachers in developing their teacher identity. Reflective writing provides an avenue for pre-service teachers to express the emotions they experience during professional experience. As discussed, the emotions pre-service teacher experience, especially in their relationships, can have a significant influence on their interpretation of their professional experience. Furthermore, reflective writing can help pre-service teachers in their understanding of 'self' (Cattley, 2007). The notion of 'self' is similar to Palmer's (1998) belief of the 'teacher within.' Hamachek (1999) sums this up as "consciously we teach what we know; unconsciously we teach who we are" (as cited in Cattley, 2007, p. 341). As

suggested by Beauchamp and Thomas (2010) engaging in reflective writing would help pre-service teachers “develop a more robust teacher identity” (Cattley, 2007, p. 341). To achieve this goal, Cattley recommends that pre-service teachers be explicitly taught how to engage in reflective writing using a scaffold of suitable prompt questions (Table 2.2) which promotes analytical and evaluative thought leading to assisting in teacher identity formation.

Table 2.2 Pre-service Teacher Anticipatory Reflection Questions

Reflections and Observations
What impact have these observations had on you? Have you been surprised by the outcome of your observations? How were things different to what you expected? What sort of self-talk have you found yourself having during or as a result of your observations? What emotions have you experienced during your observations? Have these changed over time?
General Reflection
What makes you feel like a teacher during this professional experience? Does anything threaten your sense of self as a teacher?
Summary Reflection
What are your views, philosophy or vision about what is involved in being a teacher? What has influenced you to come to this viewpoint?

(Cattley, 2007, p. 345)

Izadinia (2013) in her review of 29 empirical research studies, identified that reflection was a “critical process in the construction of professional identity” (p. 697). These studies suggest that encouraging the pre-service teacher to reflect on their “values, beliefs, feelings and teaching practices and experiences helps shape their professional identity” (Izadinia, 2013, p. 699). The interpretation of their teacher identity and the way an individual fulfils the role of a teacher affects the teacher’s “sense of purpose, self-efficacy, motivation, commitment, job satisfaction and effectiveness” (Chong et al., 2011).

2.6 Focus Question

The literature reviewed identified and discussed four key aspects of professional experience related to the pre-service and supervising teacher relationship: (i) the historical context, paradigms and learning environment of professional experience; (ii) the affective aspect and perceived roles of the pre-service and supervising teacher in professional experience; (iii) supervision of pre-service teachers during professional experience; and (iv) the development of pre-service teacher professional practice. The chapter concluded with an in-depth review of teacher identity and how it was formed over time through the professional and personal experiences of teachers. Included within these experiences was the pre-service teachers emerging concept of their teacher identity shaped through their experiences in their initial teacher education course work and professional experience.

Historically, professional experience has produced different paradigms ranging from the supervising teacher being directive in their supervision of their pre-service teacher to a mentoring model in a collaborative environment which enhances professional learning. When pre-service teachers enter the school environment they are confronted with an unfamiliar social situation. For some, professional experience “can be daunting and fraught with anxiety” (Hogan & Bernay, 2007, p. 219). They may feel they only have a limited knowledge and understanding of pedagogy, content and teaching strategies and therefore it is possible for them to feel ill prepared for the classroom (Harwell & Moore, 2010). Within the relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher, both participants have perceived roles of themselves and each other. Where the perceived roles match expectations through shared understanding, professional experience can produce valuable professional learning for the pre-service teacher. The supervision approach adopted by the supervising teacher as both assessor of performance and mentor within professional experience, can contribute to the quality of the professional experience and level of professional learning.

The literature reviewed in the four identified aspects above, indicates that the relationship pre-service teachers create with their supervising teacher is highly significant in their professional experience (Gurl, 2018; Harwell & Moore, 2010;

Hogan & Bernay, 2007; Sanderson, 2003; Sheridan & Young, 2017). This relationship can be a source of significant personal and professional support resulting in enhanced professional learning.

However, the literature also indicates that there is substantial evidence that this relationship can also be a source of stress for pre-service teachers and for some can become a negative experience (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Buckworth, 2017; Dobbins, 1996; Ferrier-Kerr, 2009). This can at times, develop into disillusionment with the teaching profession and not consistently generate the expected professional learning outcomes (Haigh & Ward, 2004; Harwell & Moore, 2010; Hogan & Bernay, 2007; Kennedy, 2006; Sanderson, 2003). When the relationship is poorly developed, this can result in greater levels of stress and anxiety for the pre-service teacher where professional learning can be impaired (Buckworth, 2017; Cattley, 2007; Sanderson, 2003).

The literature recognises the importance of the pre-service and supervising teacher relationship during professional experience. However, there is only limited research giving pre-service teacher voice of their experiences with their supervising teacher (Allen & Wright, 2014; Buckworth, 2017; Moody, 2009; Patrick, 2013; Wilks et al., 2019). Thus, there is a need to conduct research designed to give pre-service teacher voice to explore: (i) their experience of the relationship with their supervising teacher; (ii) their interpretations and meaning made from these relationship experiences; and (iii) how these experiences influenced their professional learning and development as teachers. The three key research questions examined in this study are as follows:

1. What are pre-service teachers' experiences of their relationship with their supervising teacher during professional experience?

2. What are the interpretations and meaning made by preservice teachers in these relationship experiences?

3. How do these experiences influence pre-service teachers' professional learning and development as teachers?

Chapter 3

Research Design

In this chapter the research context (participants and setting) are described followed by a detailed outline of the research framework, research design, procedures and data collection involving focus group sessions and in-depth individual interviews. Next, detailed information about the participants is developed and finally, the analysis of the data will be outlined. Chapters 4 and 5 report on the findings of the study and Chapter 6 summariieses amd discusses the implications of these findings.

3.1 Context of the Focus of the Study

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship developed between pre-service teachers with their supervising teachers during the school-based professional experience component of their teacher education program. In particular, the study was focused on listening to the voices of the pre-service teachers to investigate: (i) their experience of the relationship with their supervising teacher; (ii) their interpretations and meaning made from these relationship experiences; and (iii) how these experiences influenced their professional learning and development as teachers.

Focus of the Study

The teaching professional experience involves many interpersonal interactions and the formation of relationships with a variety of people. However, it was of particular interest in this study to listen to the voices of pre-service teachers in order to explore what the pre-service teacher experienced in their relationship with their supervising teacher. In particular, the study investigated the interpretations of these experiences by the pre-service teachers and how the meaning they made through these interpretations influenced their professional learning and development. As discussed in the Literature Review (see Section 2.3), the

relationship between the pre-service and mentor/supervising teacher has been found to be of significant influence in the overall professional development of the pre-service teacher (Harwell & Moore, 2010; Hastings, 2008; Roland & Beckford, 2010).

Participants and Course Work

The participants in this study were undertaking an undergraduate teacher education program in a metropolitan New South Wales university. The university offers a range of programs including a four-year undergraduate degree leading to a Bachelor of Education (Primary). This is the teaching qualification required to teach the Primary (Elementary) grades of the NSW school system (Grades Kindergarten to Year 6).

Supervision and Mentoring

The Bachelor of Education (Primary) Degree undertakes a four-year coursework program which includes a school-based professional experience component. The course focuses on the development of classroom teaching expertise, knowledge and competencies and offers the opportunity to develop practical teaching experience in the professional experience program. In this Bachelor of Education (Primary) Degree pre-service teachers complete two fully supervised professional experience components in their program of study. In both years of the supervised professional experience, the program consists of eight visits of one day per week, leading up to a continuous block-teaching period of four weeks on the same class. During the professional experience component, pre-service teachers are placed in a Primary grade class with a classroom teacher who acts as a mentor and supervisor of the pre-service teacher's progress. Across the day per week visits and during the block teaching experience, the pre-service teachers are expected to show progression in the development of their teaching knowledge, skills and expertise and to develop an effective working relationship with their supervising teacher. This relationship has therefore been identified as an important and relevant focus for investigation in this research study.

3.2 Overview of the Research Framework

Constructivism epistemology focuses on the belief that reality is constructed through the individual's interaction with the world (Crotty, 1998). As this study explored the relationship interactions between the pre-service and supervising teacher, then was well situated within Constructivism. Constructivism epistemology proposes that meaningful reality is not waiting to be discovered but rather "the meaning making activity of the individual mind" (Crotty, 1998, p. 58). This is essentially the type of environment pre-service teachers operate within during their professional experience.

Within the Constructivism epistemology Interpretivism is a theoretical perspective which is concerned with meaning making and therefore was a sound theoretical base in which to situate this study. Interpretivism is centred on the opinions and perceptions of people as they are experienced in everyday life and how they assign meaning to these experiences. Interpretivism then as a theoretical perspective, is closely linked to Constructivism epistemology by exploring "culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social-life world" by focussing on aspects which are "unique, individual and qualitative" (Crotty, 1998, pp. 67-68). Interpretivism explores how an individual perceives reality in the social situation and explores personal views and opinions to discover the factors which create meaning.

Within the theory of Interpretivism, Symbolic Interactionism, a sociological perspective that holds that people interpret the meaning of objects and actions through socially interacting with others and respond to the meaning they assign to their world (Sarantakos, 2005). This approach based upon the premise that human interaction in the world is mediated through the process of meaning making and interpretation offered a clear perspective framework to research the pre-service teacher experiences. They were in a position to interpret the meaning of objects and actions through socially interacting with others and responding to the meaning they assigned to their world (Sarantakos, 2005). These meanings which were constructed are open to revision and modification through interpretation on the basis of changes in the experience over time (Gray, 2004).

This was particularly relevant to investigate over the period of time pre-service teachers were engaged in their professional experience.

Socially interacting can broadly be interpreted as communication. Communication can be viewed as symbolic because humans communicate using verbal and written languages and symbols. It is through communication and "dialogue that we can become aware of the perceptions, feelings and attitudes of others and interpret their meanings and intent" (Crotty, 1998, p. 75). The construction of meaning requires reflection and the "key process which facilitates construction and reconstruction is interpretation" (Sarantakos, 2005, p. 39).

Therefore Symbolic Interactionism was an ideal framework for this study as it facilitated a way of "conceptualising people's practices and lived realities" (Gray, 2004, p. 24). It provided a lens through which to explore the voices of pre-service teachers and their interpretations and the meaning made of their experiences with their supervising teacher and the influence of these experiences on their professional learning (Allen & Wright, 2014). In this research, Symbolic Interactionism was implemented as a framework of data collection and analysis using focus group sessions and in-depth interviews. This was an effective method to explore the experiences, interpretations and meaning made by pre-service teachers of their interactions in the relationship with their supervising teachers.

3.3 Research Design

In order to investigate the research questions (outlined in Section 2.6) a qualitative research design in the form of an exploratory case study method was used. As suggested by Moody (2009) pre-service teachers' voices are underrepresented in the literature related to evaluative research of teacher education programs. In particular he proposed that a stronger focus on the perceptions of pre-service teachers would enhance the understanding of professional experience based on their daily experiences and interactions in schools (Moody, 2009). Therefore, it was decided to focus on those voices through a case study investigation embedded in a Symbolic Interactionism framework. This approach facilitated insight into the meaning made by pre-service teachers through their interpretation of their experiences of the relationship with their supervising teacher.

A case study takes the form of an “empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context” (Yin, 2012, p. 4). It provides the opportunity to gain detailed analysis of “events or conditions and their relationships” (Soy, 1997, p. 1) and enables “new learning about real world behaviour and its meaning” (Yin, 2012, p. 4). Case studies are particularly appropriate when attempting to discover the nature and impact of casual relationships in a multifaceted context where there are many variables which makes purely quantitative research not feasible. The research design in this investigation was a single embedded case study which contained multiple units of data collection for analysis (Yin, 2012). The multiple units of data comprised focus groups plus in-depth individual interviews collected from two cohorts of pre-service teachers. This allowed for analysis within and across the units of data collected. It also enabled a comparison both within and across the two cohorts in the study.

The participants selected for this case study were Primary undergraduate pre-service teachers in the Bachelor of Education (Primary) Degree participating in a four-week professional experience. Qualitative data was collected from two cohorts of undergraduate pre-service teachers at different stages of their Bachelor of Education (Primary) Degree. Each cohort had recently completed the professional experience component for their year of study:

- Cohort One comprised second year pre-service teachers who had recently completed their first teaching professional experience
- Cohort Two were third year pre-service teachers who had recently completed their second teaching professional experience during the data gathering period.

Within each cohort three separate groups participated in the study. In each cohort, two groups took part in focus group sessions and a separate group participated in in-depth semi-structured interviews. Therefore, overall there were six groups involved in the data collection as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Overview of Research Design

COHORT 1: 2nd Year BEd Pre-service Teachers - Completed: 1 x Prof. Experience in 2nd Year prior to data collection		
	Focus Group Session	*In-depth Interviews*
Group 1	6 x pre-service teachers	
Group 2	6 x pre-service teachers	
Group 3		9 x pre-service teachers
COHORT 2: 3rd Year BEd Pre-service Teachers - Completed: 1 x Prof. Experience in 2nd Year, plus 1 x Prof. Experience in 3rd Year prior to data collection		
	Focus Group Session	*In-depth Interviews*
Group 1	6 x pre-service teachers	
Group 2	6 x pre-service teachers	
Group 3		9 x pre-service teachers

For each cohort, the data was collected in a sequence. Focus group sessions for both cohorts were undertaken first and later followed by the in-depth semi-structured interviews.

Focus group data collection took place closely following the completion of the in-school professional experience program. This allowed for a clear and recent recollection by the pre-service teachers of their experience perceptions in the relationship with their supervising teacher and their interpretations and meaning made within that experience.

In-depth interviews were conducted for both cohorts after the completion of the focus group sessions. This enabled the further exploration of the themes and issues raised in the focus groups to provide greater depth and insight into the group responses. Additionally, in order to broaden the range of responses and insights gained, the nine interviewees from each cohort had not taken part in the focus group discussions. In this way, the in-depth interviews added to the range of responses and supported the development of the rich descriptions of relationship experiences between pre-service and supervising teachers. They also provided some triangulation to the focus group data.

3.4 Procedure

3.4.1 Ethics Approval

Prior to the commencement of this research, ethics permission for data collection was obtained from the Australian Catholic University Human Research Ethics Committee. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the University's Head of the School of Education NSW (see Appendix A).

Written informed consent was obtained from the pre-service teachers who volunteered to participate in the focus groups and semi-structured in-depth interviews prior to the data collection. Each cohort of subjects was clearly advised that participation was voluntary and would be undertaken on an anonymous basis. To ensure a clear understanding of their role in the study, an information sheet and consent form was provided to each participant (see Appendices B and C). This sheet outlined the research and its objectives, what their involvement would mean, how the data would be collected, analysed and stored, and who the research would benefit. Copies of interview transcripts were made available to any participant upon request.

Anonymity as a form of protection of the participants from identification in the research was carefully put in place (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Participants were assured of confidentiality and were informed that pseudonyms would be used for all participants in the focus groups and semi-structured interviews. Confidentiality was ensured by removing any identifiable information from the data and access to the data was restricted to those people directly involved in conducting the research. Participants were advised that they could withdraw from any stage of the study at any time without reason and that this would not result in prejudice of any kind. All data collected would still be treated with complete confidentiality as outlined above. To ensure privacy, the data collected was stored in computer files which could only be accessed by a password. As soon as possible the identifying features were removed. The printed copies of data were stored in a secure location in the researcher's office.

Within this study, it is recognised that there is a fundamental ethical issue involving the relationship of the researcher as a lecturer at the university where the

participants are the pre-service teachers. To ensure that the ethical considerations of a power imbalance were accounted for, the researcher did not directly teach or assess the pre-service teachers being studied.

The research study was initiated and undertaken with pre-service teacher participants who had already completed their professional experience program for the year of study. Therefore, supervising teachers were not informed as part of the ethics procedures as they did not participate in the research and were not identified within the data collection analysis.

It was recognised that pre-service teachers may experience a range of emotions when relating their experiences with their supervising teacher during focus groups and individual interviews. Emotional support structures were provided for any pre-service teacher who experienced anxiety or distress during focus groups or interviews, including the interviews being stopped and emotional support provided. Contact details were available if required for assistance from the University counsellors.

3.4.2 Focus Group Sessions

Focus groups are both an interview and observational strategy of data collection (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Focus group data gathering sessions took place at the University in a confidential setting following the recent completion of the professional experience program for the coursework year. The focus group questions were made known to the participants prior to the interviews and were asked in a conversational style. This allowed for interaction and discussion between the participants within the focus groups and facilitated follow-on questions for greater depth of clarity and insight. Observation notes were written of the participants' informal interactions to record the intensity of the discussion or evidence of humour which provided further insight into the participants experiences with their supervising teachers.

3.4.3 In-Depth Semi-structured Interviews

In accordance with the interpretivist theoretical perspective of this case study, in-depth semi-structured interviews were held with 18 pre-service teachers (nine participants from each cohort) to obtain more detailed data regarding their

relationship experiences with their supervising teacher and their interpretations. The interviews were conducted in similar conditions at the University in a one-to-one confidential setting with only the researcher and participant present. The interviews took place after the completion of the focus group data collection. The interviews followed the general interview guide approach (Patton, 2002). In this approach, the categories which have been identified in the focus groups were made known to the participants in advance, with the researcher deciding on the sequence and wording during the interview. The interview began with an unstructured informal conversation building to the interview guide approach, before moving to open ended questions which increased response comparability (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). All questions were covered by the completion of each interview. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Interview subjects were assured of anonymity and confidentiality and that this was a voluntary process which they could withdraw from at any time.

3.5 Data Collection

Data was gathered in a two-stage process of focus group sessions followed by in-depth interviews. All participants were from the same Bachelor of Education (Primary) Degree but were at different stages of progress in their course. This meant that they were also at different stages of professional development based on their varied in-school professional experience. Pre-service teachers were contacted via email and announcements at lectures and tutorials following their professional experience, inviting them to take part in the study in the focus groups and individual interviews. The main criteria for participation was not deemed on the participants being representative of the group in terms of age, gender, status or the outcomes of any previous teaching experience. Rather, the participants who volunteered for the study shared the same characteristics of their group in terms of the amount of course work covered, the professional experience preparation and the number of professional experience placements completed (Creswell, 2008). This type of sampling provided the diversity deemed to be sufficient to represent the broad ranging views of the two cohorts. This is aligned to the principles of qualitative research adopted for the study. Table 3.2 shows the data collection process by cohort.

Table 3.2 Data Collection Schedule and Activities

DATA COLLECTION ACTIVITIES		
TIMING	**COHORT 1** **2nd Year BEd Primary** Previously completed: 1 x in-school professional experience	**COHORT 2** **3rd Year BEd Primary** Previously completed: 2 x in-school professional experiences
STAGE 1 Following 4 x week block professional experience	**2 x focus group sessions** • 6 x undergraduate pre-service teachers in each group	**2 x focus group sessions** • 6 x undergraduate pre-service teachers in each group
STAGE 2 Following 4 x week block professional experience and focus group sessions	**9 x in-depth semi-structured interviews** • 9 x undergraduate pre-service teachers interviewed separately • Participants did not take part in the focus groups	**9 x in-depth semi-structured interviews** • 9 x undergraduate pre-service teachers interviewed separately • Participants did not take part in the focus groups

3.5.1 Focus Groups Data Collection

The focus groups provided detailed insights through the interaction of the people involved within the social context of the interview and data gathered (Silverman, 1993, p. 94). Each member of the group was able to share a common experience and it also "harnessed group dynamics and group processes into the process" (Walter, 2010, p. 314).

In this investigation, 24 pre-service teachers were involved in focus group data gathering. As suggested by Patton (1987) focus groups are both an interview and observational strategy of data collection usually involving six to eight participants. Therefore, in each cohort the two focus groups involved six undergraduate pre-service teachers in each group. The small number in each focus group allowed time for the participants to share, discuss, raise issues, compare and contrast experiences and respond to the comments of others.

The focus group sessions were held following the completion of the four-week professional experience block teaching for each cohort. These group discussions

centred on the experiences and interpretations by the participants of their relationship with their supervising teachers. The meaning made of those experiences was discussed in a broad framework covering key areas of expectations, positive/negative outcomes, concerns/anxieties and overall professional learning.

Focus Group Session Questions

A pre-determined set of seven questions formed the basis of the focus group discussions. The focus group questions were asked in a conversational manner to allow for interaction and discussion. Responses were explored to determine the pre-service teachers' interpretation and meaning made of the relationship experiences and how this impacted on their overall professional learning.

Four focus groups were conducted following their professional experience. Two focus groups were held for each cohort with six participants in each group. The 24 participants overall, shared common characteristics related to their stage of course work progression, their professional experience preparation and the number of placements completed.

The focus group questions were originally derived from the reading of the literature related to the relationship shared between the pre-service and supervising teacher. As pre-service teacher professional experience anxiety was significantly represented in the literature, a specific anxiety question supplemented by memory joggers was asked. This question was included to gather data to assess the influence of the relationship with the supervising teacher towards reducing pre-service teachers' professional experience anxiety. The focus group questions had been piloted earlier in the academic year for suitability and refinement prior to the research period of this study. This pilot was conducted by the researcher with pre-service teachers in a similar initial teacher education professional experience. Questions were then refined into the final set of seven focus group questions. The full range of questions is presented in Appendix D.

Some examples of key areas explored in the focus group questions covered: Expectations and perceived outcomes of the professional experience, for example:

- *How do you know you had a successful professional experience (or not) and did it fulfil what you hoped to achieve?*

The development of the relationship with the supervising teacher, for example:

- *How would you describe the relationship you developed with your supervising teacher?*

Concerns/anxieties related to the professional experience, for example:

- *How did the supervising teacher ease your anxiety?* (planned question based upon the literature reviewed)

The influence of the relationship experience on teacher development, for example:

- *Following your professional experience what have you learnt about yourself as a teacher?*

Following the semi-structured interview model (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009), supplementary questions were asked by the researcher to unpack the responses of the participants. An example of this was when participants were asked *following your professional experience what have you learnt about yourself as a teacher?* The participants were asked to explain the extent their relationship with their supervising teacher contributed to their teacher development and what they had learnt about themselves as a teacher.

3.5.2 In-Depth Semi-Structured Interviews Data Collection

In this study, the in-depth semi-structured interviews followed the general interview guide approach (Patton, 2002). In this approach, the key relationship elements which had been identified in the focus groups were made known to the participants in advance. However, the researcher decided on the sequence and wording of questions during the interview. The duration of the interviews extended from approximately 40 minutes to one hour depending upon the richness and complexity of the interview discussion. Each interview was undertaken in a one-to-one confidential setting.

To enable the researcher to gain an overall view of the participant's professional experience relationship with their supervising teacher, each interview began with an informal conversational style to put the participant at ease. The interview then moved to open ended questions which increased response comparability and

responses were further explored by asking subsequent questions as needed, to fully unpack comments or experiences being described.

Individual Interview Themes and Questions

In order to broaden the range and further explore the responses of the participants in the focus groups, individual in-depth interviews were conducted with 18 pre-service teachers. Nine pre-service teachers from each cohort, who did not take part in the focus group discussions, participated in the interview phase of data collection. The aim of the interviews was to explore depth of meaning and to develop greater clarity and understanding of the participants' perceptions and interpretation of the relationship they had shared with their supervising teacher and how this influenced their professional learning.

Prior to the in-depth interview stage of the data collection, the responses of the focus groups were analysed to identify the key themes that emerged. A set of eight open-ended questions was then developed to explore those themes in depth during the individual interviews.

Key theme areas explored in the in-depth interviews covered:

Prior expectations of the professional experience, for example:

- *What were you hoping to get out of your professional experience?*

Concerns/anxieties related to the professional experience, for example:

- *What did the supervising teacher do to help you feel at ease and settle in?*

The influence of the relationship on goals for the professional experience, for example:

- *What were you looking for from your supervising teacher?*

Influences on overall professional learning, for example:

- *Describe how important you feel the relationship you experienced with the supervising teacher is towards having a successful professional experience?*

Supplementary questions were asked to unpack the participants' responses to explain how the relationship with their supervising teacher contributed to their response. The full range of questions can be found in Appendix E.

3.6 Participants in the Study

As previously described, two cohorts of pre-service teacher education students enrolled in different years of the same Bachelor of Education (Primary) Degree program were invited to take part in this research. The participants were selected using purposeful homogeneous sampling to obtain groups who were representative of the broader cohorts (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). The criteria for selection was based on participants sharing the same characteristics of their group in terms of the amount of course work covered, the professional experience preparation and the number of professional experience placements completed (Creswell, 2008). Participants, who met the characteristics for each Cohort outlined above, were randomly selected from volunteers willing to take part in the study.

3.6.1 Overview of Cohort One

Cohort One consisted of 21 participants - 12 focus group subjects and nine in-depth interview subjects. The Cohort One participants were second year Bachelor Education (Primary) Degree pre-service teachers participating in their first teaching professional experience in their teacher education program. In the initial phase of this teaching experience, the participants were expected to plan, prepare and teach a small number of lessons in consultation with their supervising teacher. In the block teaching phase, the number and frequency of lessons were expected to increase through half days to full days of teaching. The relationship with the supervising teacher included mentoring for teaching, assessment feedback related to lesson preparation and planning, and overall evaluation of progress.

3.6.2 Overview of Cohort Two

Cohort Two also consisted of 21 participants – 12 focus groups participants and nine in-depth interviewees. These participants were third year Bachelor of Education course pre-service teachers who had already completed their first teaching professional experience. Based on their prior years of study and their greater experience, these participants were required to undertake a higher level and frequency of teaching in the placement and to demonstrate more advanced teaching competencies and expertise. During the block period of teaching, the

Cohort Two participants were expected to increase their level of teaching, management and organisation and to take on overall responsibility for the class by the end of the experience. Their relationship with the supervising teacher was expected to move from one of professional mentoring to a more equal collegial role. However, the supervising classroom teacher was still responsible for the formal assessment of teaching and overall evaluation of progress related to readiness to teach unsupervised.

3.6.3 Focus Group Participant Characteristics

As outlined above, the participants of the study were from two cohorts of pre-service teachers at different points of the Bachelor of Education (Primary) Degree. The criteria for selection were based on participants sharing the same characteristics of their group in terms of the amount of course work covered, the professional experience preparation and the number of professional experience placements completed (Creswell, 2008). Participants who met these characteristics were randomly selected from the volunteers willing to take part in the study.

All of the 12 participants in each focus group were female and had entered their Bachelor of Education (Primary) course directly from school. The high number of female and direct school entry participants reflected the demographic characteristics in the overall Bachelor of Education (Primary) cohort.

During the focus groups all of the participants indicated they had successfully passed their recent professional experience. All but two Cohort Two participants indicated that they had experienced a positive relationship with their supervising teachers. However, the experiences overall for all of these participants were diverse and varied and therefore provided a broad range of data to inform the study.

3.6.4 In-Depth Semi-Structured Interview Participant Characteristics

To broaden the scope of responses and to gain a deeper insight into the focus group discussions, a series of in-depth interviews took place. From the overall group of volunteers in the study, two groups of participants (one from each cohort)

were selected using the same form of purposeful homogenous sampling to form the interview groups.

Eighteen participants (nine from each cohort) took part in the semi-structured in-depth interviews but had not taken part in the focus group sessions. Consistent with the focus group participants, each interviewee was representative of their cohort related to tertiary progression, classroom teaching experience and relationship experiences with supervising teachers. These participants provided a broadening of the range of responses related to pre-service and supervising teacher relationships and provided an enrichment of the understanding related to the focus group responses.

Of the 18 pre-service teachers who took part in the interviews, 16 were female and two were male (see Appendix F) which was representative of their Bachelor of Education (Primary) program of study that was heavily balanced towards the female gender. In contrast to the focus groups, the participants had not entered the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course directly from school and this provided the basis for a broader cross-section of views.

In Cohort One, five of the interview subjects were in the age range of 19 to 22 and had progressed to tertiary study directly from schooling. Three subjects were in the 24-27 age bracket and had experience in a variety of employment largely in the retail and service sector prior to commencing their undergraduate teaching degree. Only one participant was in the older age bracket of 39 years. This subject named Carly (pseudonym) had a background which included working as a teacher's aide at the local Primary school her children attended.

Cohort Two were one year further advanced in their studies and a similar profile of subjects was evident. Six interviewees were in the 21-22 age range, having progressed to their teaching studies directly from school. Two participants were aged 23 to 26 years and had undertaken employment in retail management and hospitality sectors. One subject was 32 years of age. This subject named Mitchell (pseudonym) was previously employed in advertising prior to commencing his undergraduate teaching degree.

3.7 Analysis of Data

In the exploratory interpretivism perspective of this study, the data analysis was predominately inductive in nature (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Inductive data analysis leads to themes being established which are based on the data. This iterative process of analysis was relevant in this study due to the Symbolic Interactionism framework of the study in which interpretation was a key feature. The inductive data analysis required a back and forth process by which the researcher gradually interpreted the information to make comparisons to the literature. The interpretations developed and/or changed as more data was collected and analysed through the use of inductive reasoning (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). Continual comparison of the data facilitated a process in which the researcher was able to identify and refine the concepts and their properties and explore the relationships between them (Taylor & Bogdan as cited in Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009)

3.7.1 Focus Group Analysis

The data gathered from the focus group discussions were analysed in two focus areas: content and informal interactions.

Content Analysis

The content of the focus group data was analysed using the constant comparative method, which is a form of the inductive data analysis. This method involved the simultaneous comparison of all data to place it into categories (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). The coding of the categories allowed the data to be organised without losing the richness of the meanings within the material. Using the NVivo 9.2 narrative data analysis program, the emphasis was on looking for similarities and differences in responses and then grouping the information into categories (Walter, 2010).

Codes were developed and refined from the data being analysed (Creswell, 2008), then the relationships between the codes were explored looking for overlap and frequency. The categorised and coded data were then interpreted to establish any concepts or ideas and grouped into themes (Walter, 2010) related to the relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher. Once these

themes had been identified, they formed the basis of the questions for further exploration in the in-depth semi-structured interviews.

Informal Interaction Analysis

To support and/or confirm the significance of the codes and themes identified in the focus group responses, the observational notes group interactions were also informally analysed. This involved observing and noting "verbal and non-verbal expressions, discontinuities in the interaction, the intensity of discussion, the strategic use of humour and discord between the participants" (Walter, 2010, p. 428). This analysis not only provided information about the strength of opinions but also the level of consensus or disagreement related to topics and themes.

3.7.2 In-Depth Interviews Analysis

In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with 18 participants to explore in greater depth the themes identified in the focus group discussions. Data gathered in the in-depth interviews were first analysed using open coding to establish categories, then through the use of axial coding (Creswell, 2008). In this process the codes that were developed were more "rigorously specified and elaborated most commonly through the development of subcategories" (Walter, 2010, p. 422).

To ensure rigorous analysis using axial coding of the data obtained, the continued use of the constant comparative analysis method was employed (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). This involved comparison of the significant themes that emerged from the focus groups with the themes and categories that emerged from the semi-structured interview data. This approach enabled the identification of consistent professional experience relationship elements and strategies and an analysis of their interrelationship (Creswell, 2008).

The constant comparative method through the use of axial coding, allowed the data from the semi-structured interviews to be compared within each separate cohort and across the two cohorts in order to fully explore the commonalities and differences in themed responses that emerged.

3.8 Reliability of the Research

In this research study a rigorous approach was used to provide a “rich and nuanced description of the meaning that people give to their experiences” (Walter, 2010, p. 71).

This rigour was reflected in the focus on providing a thorough description of the purpose of the study to the two cohorts concerned. along with a random and unbiased selection of participants. Data collection was undertaken in a consistent, relevant and confidential form, and analysis procedures based on proven methods provided the input for the findings and outcomes (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994).

Credibility was ensured in this study using a variety of methods. Prolonged engagement as a form of credibility (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) was achieved through the interaction with both cohorts across four focus group discussions and 18 in-depth semi-structured interviews. Furthermore, credibility of the individual interview data was ensured through the use of member checks where the participants were invited to review the transcripts of their interviews to confirm what was written was a true and accurate record of their thoughts and opinions (Kalof, Dan, & Dietz, 2008). Analysed data was regularly reviewed and discussed with the researcher’s doctoral supervisors to ensure the trustworthiness of the analysis process.

Dependability in the form of “how truthful the researcher is and how truthful the research is” (Kalof et al., 2008, p. 163) was achieved through the use of an audit trail. It is the responsibility of the researcher to accurately present the data, be honest in data collection and be thorough in its presentation (Kalof et al., 2008). This took the form of a researcher’s journal (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994) which included the original interviews and notes, along with the steps taken as part of the constant comparative method of data analysis.

3.9 Summary

This Research Design chapter has provided an outline of the context of the study which explored pre-service teachers’ experiences in their relationship with their

supervising teachers during their professional experience component of their initial teacher education course, pre-service teacher interpretation and meaning making in the relationship and the impact of the relationship on the pre-service teachers' professional learning. It has detailed the research design of the case study methodology and the procedure involved. Based on an Interpretivism perspective using a Symbolic Interactionism paradigm, the qualitative methods approach used has been carefully detailed to describe the participants involved and the data collection and analysis involving focus groups sessions and semi-structured interviews of pre-service teachers.

The results of the analysis of data will be presented in Chapters 4 and 5, followed by a comprehensive discussion of these results in Chapter 6.

Chapter 4

Results of the Focus Group and In-Depth Interview Analysis: Themes 1 and 2

4.1 Overview

The results of the data analysis conducted in this study are reported in Chapters 4 and 5. The results of the analysis of the focus group discussions and the semi-structured in-depth individual interviews are reported through a sequence of detailed explorations of the themes that emerged from the data analysis.

To investigate these areas data was gathered through the recording and transcription of focus group discussions and individual in-depth interviews. Data collection took place following the completion of the professional experience component relevant to the year of study for the two pre-service teacher cohorts.

4.1.1 Overview of the Findings

While the professional experience of pre-service teachers included a range of relationships in the school community, the results revealed that the most important and influential of those relationships was that formed with their supervising teacher. Overall, the results suggest that positive experiences in the relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher built trust and confidence. This provided a platform from which the professional learning of the pre-service teacher was enhanced and developed. In this environment, the pre-service teacher was supported to become an active participant in their professional learning and gained greater influence related to the outcomes. As a result, they expressed a strengthened belief in their ability to teach and a consequent consolidation of their perceived identity as a teacher and the confirmation of teaching as their career choice.

However, the development of these experiences was shown to be complex and varied. Across both cohorts the results identified a range of positive and negative factors that influenced the development of the relationship. Where it was less

positive, the professional learning of the pre-service teacher was negatively affected to varying degrees. They reported a diminished effect on their teaching confidence and their sense of personal identity as teacher. Where the relationship was viewed as positive, while participants identified successful overall outcomes, they were still able to nominate key elements and strategies that could be improved.

The range and complexity of the key factors that influenced the relationship experiences are fully detailed in Chapters 4 and 5 and further explored in the Chapter 6 Discussion.

4.2 Overview of the Emergent Themes

Analysis of the data revealed a consistency of outcomes across both cohorts. Overall, 80% of focus group and individual interview participants identified their relationship experience as positive with their supervising teacher. Using the constant comparative method of analysis (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) a number of common themes and sub-themes emerged, despite the differences in the amount of in-school professional experience that had been undertaken by the different cohorts. Also, as stated in Chapter 3 Research Design, as anxiety had been identified in literature, a focus group question about anxiety was included, to determine if the supervising teachers' relationship with the pre-service teacher contributed to reducing pre-service teachers' professional experience anxiety.

As detailed in Section 3.6 of the Methodology Chapter, Cohort One comprised pre-service teachers who had completed their first professional experience while Cohort Two were completing their second professional experience.

An interesting finding was the multi-layered aspect of the results. Overarching themes were revealed to be comprised of themes and sub-themes and then more specifically key elements and strategies that the pre-service teachers perceived as influential in the meaning made from their experience with their supervising teacher. A key finding of the study was that this set of strategies were consistent across cohorts, even though the implementation of these strategies varied depending on the experience of the participants.

4.2.1 Key Themes and Sub-Themes

Analysis of the data from the pre-service teachers' focus groups and semi-structured interviews, identified two broad overarching themes related to the pre-service and supervising teacher relationship. The Interpersonal Aspect of the relationship related to the personal and emotional support supplied by the supervising teacher during professional experience. The Professional Mentorship Aspect of the relationship related to the supervising teacher's advice and guidance in the development of the pre-service teacher's professional competencies to be an effective teacher. In each of these aspects a series of themes and sub-themes emerged. These showed that the relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher is a significant influencing element of the professional experience. The two main themes to emerge were:

Theme 1: The Influence of the Interpersonal Component of Pre-service Teachers' Relationship Experiences - related to the elements and strategies of personal and emotional support supplied by the supervising teacher during professional experience (Section 4.3).

Theme 2: The Influence of Professional Mentorship in the Relationship - related to the elements and strategies of supervising teachers' mentoring advice and guidance in the development of the pre-service teachers' competencies and expertise (Section 4.4).

Additionally, as a result of the exploratory research design of this study, two further themes fully detailed in Chapter 5, emerged from the analysis of the data regarding the pre-service teachers' interpretation of their experiences in their relationship with their supervising teacher during professional experience. These two themes were:

Theme 3: The Influence of the Relationship on the Development of Teacher Self-Efficacy - related to the development of the pre-service teacher's belief in their ability to undertake the tasks of teaching, which was based in the relationship of trust formed with the supervising teacher (Section 5.2).

Theme 4: The Effect of the Relationship on Emerging Teacher Identity and Career Confirmation - related to supervising teacher recognition and facilitation of the emergent teacher identity and support of career choice (Section 5.3).

Sub-Themes

Within each of the four themes a series of sub-themes emerged, which revealed in more detail that the relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher is a significant influencing element of professional experience. The sub-themes comprised a complex and diverse range of elements as shown below:

Theme 1: The Influence of the Interpersonal Component of Pre-service Teachers' Relationship Experiences

Sub-Themes

- Establishment of an effective rapport with the pre-service teacher
- Development of a supportive interpersonal approach to establish an effective relationship
- Negative outcomes in the interpersonal component
- Recognition and support of pre-service teacher workload stress
- Pre-service teacher's resilience in the interpersonal component of the relationship

Theme 2: The Influence of Professional Mentorship in the Relationship

Sub-Themes

- Establishment of shared expectations and effective communication channels to develop professional learning
- Encouragement of pre-service teachers' teaching style
- Providing information related to the needs and abilities of the class
- Explicit modelling by the supervising teacher of good teaching practice
- Influence of supervising teacher feedback
- Pre-service teacher resilience in the professional mentorship component of the relationship

Theme 3: The Influence of the Relationship on the Development of Teacher Self-Efficacy

Sub-Themes

- Development of trust and confidence in the pre-service teachers' ability to teach
- Influence of supervising teacher feedback on the development of teacher self-efficacy
- Influence of lack of trust in teaching competencies and negative feedback

Theme 4: The Effect of the Relationship on Emerging Teacher Identity and Career Confirmation

Sub-Themes

- Recognition of emergent teacher identity
- Connection of the pre-service teacher to the professional staff community
- Contribution of the relationship to teacher identity formation
- Relationship indicators of teacher career confirmation

Influential Elements and Strategies

Within each of the sub-themes outlined above, a multilayered range of key elements/strategies were identified by the participants as influential in the development of their relationship with the supervising teacher. At times these elements/strategies were found to be specifically related to the theme/sub-theme. At other times they worked in an interrelated way across themes/sub-themes to affect the quality of the relationship experience and the subsequent professional learning outcomes.

A summary table of the key elements and strategies that were identified by the participants under each theme/sub-theme as influential in meaning making in the relationship with their supervising teacher, can be found in Appendix G. The results that emerged related to the themes, sub-themes, and key elements and strategies, are outlined in this and the following chapter using illustrative quotes from participants.

The results for Themes 1 and 2 are outlined in this chapter while the results related to Themes 3 and 4 are reported in Chapter 5.

4.3 Theme 1: The Influence of the Interpersonal Component of Pre-service Teachers' Relationship Experiences

4.3.1 Sub-Theme 1: Establishment of an Effective Rapport with the Pre-service Teacher

The establishment of an effective rapport emerged as the most influential component in the development of a relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher.

Analysis of the data from the focus groups and individual interviews identified that the key influential elements and strategies developed in the relationship were important for both the affective and teaching competencies development of the pre-service teachers. The data also showed that the degree that the elements and strategies within the interpersonal and professional mentorship components interrelated was influenced by the pre-service and supervising teacher relationship.

Key Elements and Strategies

The key elements and strategies that were based in the effective aspects of the relationship directly affected professional learning. These were particularly related to the personal and emotional support supplied by the supervising teacher during professional experience with an emphasis on its effects on pre-service teacher anxiety.

The participants identified the following key elements and strategies as influential in the development of the interpersonal component of the pre-service teacher's experiences in developing the relationship with their supervising teacher:

- Effects of the relationship on pre-service teacher anxiety
- Initial building of rapport

Effects of the Relationship on Pre-service Teacher Anxiety

The analysis of the planned question about professional experience anxiety, resulted in both cohorts expressing levels of anxiety related to their professional experience; this was particularly evident in the early part of the experience. The results revealed that the establishment of an effective rapport with the supervising teacher, positively affected the levels of anxiety felt by the pre-service teachers.

The participants in the focus groups from both Cohort One and Cohort Two expressed similar general feelings of anxiety about starting their professional experience which they described as "*nervous excitement."* There were a number of reasons suggested for this feeling including:

- uncertainty about "*heading into the unknown*"
- anxiety about what the students and supervising teacher would be like
- concern about the weight of expectations of their performance and outcomes
- some sense of trepidation about how they would be viewed by the parents.

The results revealed that the concerns of Cohort One centred mainly around the unknown as they had never undertaken a professional experience. Their anxiety appeared to be generated from a fear of the unexpected and what to do if something went wrong as shown in the following comment:

> *I was still quite nervous going in the first day, because there are so many expectations. You know, I already knew this information, so what if I get something wrong or stuff something up. (Focus Group, Cohort One)*

Despite their prior coursework preparation, the participants expressed a sense of anxiety that the unfamiliar environment of professional experience may lead them to making a mistake as described in this Cohort One Focus Group comment:

> *We went in with some expectations that there would be something to worry about. We didn't know what it was, but there might be something to worry about and that's why we were a little bit more anxious than excited. (Focus Group, Cohort One)*

This sense of anxiety was also clearly evident in the in-depth interview data from Cohort One participants as expressed below by Kelly, who talked about the degree of her anxiety and identified that it stemmed from a fear of the unknown, including her potential relationship with the supervising teacher:

> *I was very nervous. I was extremely nervous. I get a bit anxious, so before my first visit, I was very scared.... I think that my worst fear was going into prac and getting a teacher that didn't get along with me. (Kelly, Cohort One)*

In contrast, participants from Cohort Two who had previously undertaken a professional experience were clearly able to articulate varied aspects of their anxiety. These were often influenced by what they had experienced in their prior school-based teaching professional experience.

The comments shown below highlighted the anxiety caused when a prior professional experience did not result in the desired professional learning outcomes.

> *My previous prac wasn't as successful as I had hoped for. I was petrified of going into the younger grades because I had only taught Stage Three in the past. (Focus Group, Cohort Two)*

This comment identified a commonly expressed concern about teaching a different grade with no prior experience of teaching this age. However, as shown below, the benefit of the positive interpersonal relationship shared with their supervising teacher had reduced anxiety and enabled the pre-service teacher to achieve the desired professional learning:

> *In comparison to last year, my teacher this year wanted to get to know me as a person before she even met me and I explained my situation. I was totally honest with her and I feel that worked in my favour and we ended up developing a strong relationship. I wouldn't have been able to get through without her. She was excellent! (Focus Group, Cohort Two)*

Initial Building of Rapport

As can be seen above, the analysis of the comments from both focus groups indicated that anxiety related to their experience still existed despite Cohort Two having a greater amount of professional experience. While the anxiety of Cohort One was mainly self-focused related to entering the unknown in terms of expectations, Cohort Two in contrast had a clearer idea of what to expect due to their previous professional experience.

The more experienced Cohort Two participants, demonstrated a recognition of the role the supervising teacher contributed to reducing their anxiety. However, they showed added insight in identifying how the pre-service teacher contributed to anxiety reductions by building an initial rapport in the relationship with the supervising teacher as explained below:

> *Just talking with my supervising teacher more than last year, finding out about her personal life and sharing a bit about my own. Going out of my way to show that I was willing to do whatever to help out. (Focus Group, Cohort Two)*

This sense of confidence was not generally evident in the Cohort One focus group participants. They lacked the learning from a prior professional experience to contribute significantly to rapport building with their supervising teacher in the initial stages of their professional experience. Rather than discussing strategies on how they built a relationship, Cohort One commented on how in the initial stage of their professional experience they mediated their anxiety initially by focusing on the end goal of why they were completing their professional experience:

> *I think it's always daunting to start something new and step in with something you haven't tried before; but I think because we took the plunge and we envisioned ourselves doing teaching in the future, it was all right. (Focus Group, Cohort One)*

Further analysis of Cohort One as shown in the comment below indicated that over time they learnt strategies to build a rapport with their supervising teacher:

I was always asking her how her day was and helping her out and trying to get everything prepared. I was always there as early as she was. I think our relationship was based on mutual respect. (Focus Group, Cohort One)

4.3.2 Sub-Theme 2: Development of a Supportive Interpersonal Approach to Establish an Effective Relationship

The results revealed 80% of the participants in the professional experience focus groups developed a positive relationship with their supervising teachers over time.

These participants described a supportive approach to the interpersonal relationship by their supervising teacher. They highlighted the value of the mentoring nature of their supervising teacher demonstrated in the following attributes:

The supervising teacher:

- Made them feel welcome
- Used the initial meeting to ease pre-service teacher anxiety
- Was prepared for the pre-service teacher
- Displayed good communicator skills
- Used informal communication methods
- Provided assistance with lesson preparation
- Demonstrated the desire to get to know them as a person as well as a teacher
- Provided a supportive interpersonal approach
- Recognised and supported pre-service teacher workload stress.

This was consistent across both cohorts as shown in the sample comments below:

…my teacher made me feel really welcome and the whole school did, actually right from the beginning. She gave me all of her programs from day one and just printed them all out, bound them, and gave them to me. I had my own desk. She put me up on the calendars for birthdays; my birthday was up there, and all things like that. She really, really made me feel welcome. (Focus Group, Cohort One)

I knew where everything was and that was my own space, so I could use that and I wouldn't be infringing on the classroom or anyone else's learning, or the teacher's space. It made me feel like a teacher in my own right. (Focus Group, Cohort Two)

Key Elements and Strategies

The pre-service teachers identified the following key elements that influenced the development of their relationship with the supervising teacher through a supportive interpersonal approach:

- Importance of the informal approach
- Influence of the initial interactions
- Pre-service teacher's contribution to the relationship
- Development of the relationship over time.

Importance of the Informal Approach

Cohort One and Cohort Two focus groups identified similar supportive strategies used by the supervising teachers in informal approaches to reduce their anxiety and to make them feel part of the school community. These strategies included:

- Informal conversation with them when they arrived
- Introducing them to other staff
- Showing them around the school
- Introducing them to the students
- Checking if they were coping with all the new information.

Both cohort focus groups indicated the most effective approach that the supervising teacher employed to build the relationship was through the use of informal conversation often referred to as *"a casual chat"*. This reduced pre-service teachers' anxiety and established the platform for a positive relationship as demonstrated in the range of responses below:

At the beginning it was very professional. Then we started talking about our weekends, our families but not overly. We'd make jokes in

the classroom – it just broke all the barriers. (Focus Group, Cohort One)

I felt this teacher wanted me to be there and we would have a normal conversation, not necessarily to do with school or anything, but being able to just talk and have a conversation was good. (Focus Croup, Cohort One)

(She asked) lots of questions as well. She asked me about myself and then told me a bit about herself. I found it useful as an opening to get to know her as well; to start feeling at ease and it gave me a chance to work her out. (Focus Group, Cohort Two)

The two focus group comments above were confirmed and further explored in individual interviews concerning the importance of developing an informal and supportive rapport in the interpersonal connection, between the pre-service and supervising teacher at the beginning of the relationship.

As expressed below, Kelly from Cohort One described how her supervising teacher recognised her anxiety and used informal conversation to ease her initial anxiety and provide support:

She sensed right away that I was freaking out. She just sat down and I had tea with her actually – she wasn't really formal. So, she was a bit relaxed. I think that's what she did to put me at ease, just her demeanour. (Kelly, Cohort One)

This informal approach had a positive effect on Kelly and her developing relationship with her supervising teacher:

I went away sort of relieved a little bit, cause I felt good that - I actually felt that I could ask her anything if I needed to. (Kelly, Cohort One)

Influence of Initial Interactions

Greater insight into the importance of the supportive approach of the supervising teacher was provided by the in-depth interview data. This revealed that the initial meeting between the pre-service and supervising teachers was influential in the development of the relationship. When it was positive, a platform was set on which an effective relationship could be built.

The impact of an informal personal and welcoming approach to the relationship was summed up in the following statement from Brooke in Cohort One who was in a job share situation with two supervising teachers. In a job share situation in an Australian Primary school, two teachers share the teaching of the class. Normally one teacher will teach for three days a week and the other teacher for two days. This requires the two teachers to plan together and co-ordinate the teaching and assessment of the students. Brooke's comments captured the feelings evident across both cohorts and indicated how a positive interpersonal relationship was often initially enhanced by how the supervising teacher orientated the participant to the school:

> *They were both really warm and friendly, and they wanted to help. They tried to give me as much support as they could, especially when I was first there. I think even just little things like on the first day sort of sitting with me in the staff room was really nice. They didn't just leave me…. they showed me where things were and explained different things. That was really comforting as I felt like I knew more of what was happening. (Brooke, Cohort One)*

The results also showed that the rapport established in the initial interactions with the supervising teachers was also found to relieve pre-service teacher anxiety related to the expectations of the professional experience. This included the impact of varied teaching styles as revealed in the comments of Carly. She indicated that she quickly developed a rapport with her supervising teacher. This enabled her to overcome issues involved with anxiety about her teaching as shown in this comment:

It was quite friendly, open, and I could discuss anything. She was quite happy for me to ask anything and I was happy with her giving me the feedback, whether it was good or bad. (Carly, Cohort One)

As expressed by Carly above, the results showed that where a participant had developed a positive interpersonal relationship with her supervising teacher, this facilitated their ability to communicate confidently to clarify preparation of teaching and to accept the professional feedback.

It was also of interest that the value of positive initial interactions was shared across cohorts and often commenced prior to the initial face-to-face meeting. The data showed that for many participants the initial contact occurred over the phone. However, it was clear that irrespective of the form of the first interaction, it had an important influence on the pre-service teacher perceptions of the potential for the development of the relationship as described below:

…..a week out from starting, I got a phone call from my supervising teacher for this new school, and she was just fantastic, and I knew right from the beginning. She said, "I found out that you're going to be a part of my class and I just wanted to get to know you briefly over a phone call." And she invited me in for the day to see the classroom and she took me around the school and everything. (Anna, Cohort Two)

Overall the results outlined above showed that the interpersonal approach and initial rapport building worked in an interrelated way to influence the development of the pre-service and supervising teacher relationship. The comments highlighted above were indicative of the thirteen individual interview participants who experienced a positive relationship with their supervising teacher. These participants identified that their relationship with the supervising teacher had a direct influence on their professional learning as seen in the following comment:

My prac teacher was definitely a quality teacher. Every lesson was well constructed and integrated. I had a good supervising teacher who modelled good teaching and I actually learnt a lot from my prac. It's modelling the teaching techniques and reinforcing the techniques.

> *You are observing their strategies and behaviour. They are going to shape you into the teacher you are going to be.* (Vicki, Cohort One)

In contrast the five students who experienced a poor relationship with their supervising teacher found that the relationship negatively impacted upon their professional learning as indicted in this comment:

> *I didn't like my supervising teacher's style of teaching. It was like a traditional approach and chalk and talk with handouts. It's bad in the relationship if you're not getting the support that they are supposed to give. It's hard to build you confidence and feel like you've learnt in preparation for your parc next year.* (Melissa, Cohort One)

Pre-service Teacher's Contribution to the Rapport Building

An important finding was that the participants who experienced a positive rapport with their supervising teachers, were able to identify how they also had contributed to the building of this relationship. As reported in the 'Initial Building of Rapport' section earlier in this chapter, Cohort Two applied knowledge learnt from their previous professional experience relationship to initially contribute to the establishment of a rapport with their supervising teacher. Cohort Two participants indicated that they further contributed to the rapport with their supervising teacher as the professional experience developed.

The analysis of the Cohort Two focus group data showed that the pre-service teachers appreciated the value of a strong interpersonal relationship with their supervising teacher. The results revealed that they went into their professional experience with the deliberate intention to show they were enthusiastic, proactive and dedicated in an effort to build on their shared rapport. They identified a range of relationship building strategies that were effective for the pre-service teacher:

- Consistent professional levels of preparation and organisation
- Ensuring good channels of communication with their supervising teacher
- Showing initiative to undertake extra classroom tasks and extra curricula activities

- Responding to and acting upon constructive feedback and assessment in a professional manner
- Demonstrating relevant and effective self-assessment skills.

The results revealed that the participants in Cohort Two, due to their broader experience, put thought and effort towards building a shared rapport. They used the strategy of asking questions to their supervising teacher for information and clarification to show they were enthusiastic and organised:

> *The questions - asking questions. I had to clarify everything and I think she really appreciated and not to just jump into something and just assume that she would want this. Just asking all those questions and offering to help all the time showed that I was ready to help her out and built trust. (Focus Group, Cohort Two)*

As outlined above, the results suggest that prior professional experience had an influence in the pre-service teachers' mindset at the commencement of professional experience. As outlined in the previous sections, the establishment of a positive rapport between the pre-service and supervising teacher contributed to the reduction of pre-service teacher professional experience anxiety. However, an important finding was that the participants who had previously experienced a relationship with a supervising teacher were able to recognise rapport building signs from their supervising teacher, such as the informal "*getting to know you chat*" and provided methods of communication with the supervising teacher. These participants applied conscious affective and emotional effort to contribute to the rapport. Furthermore, analysis of the data of Cohort One indicated that even though they are unaware of what to expect at the commencement of their professional experience, they learned to read the rapport building signs from their supervising teacher and can contribute to the process in a positive manner.

Development of the Relationship Over Time

Another important result to emerge was that positive relationships were often enriched over time. This was shown to be a key element in the development of the pre-service teachers' sense of their professional role. The comments from Vicki from Cohort One, captured this development when she spoke about the

relaxed relationship she shared with her supervising teacher over time that enhanced her professional learning:

> *My supervising teacher was a calm and supportive person who was easy to work with and always made me feel part of the room even if I wasn't teaching the lesson. She made me feel involved from the first day and helped me become part of the normal routine. The most important part of your prac is having a good supportive supervising teacher who you can learn a lot from through modelling good teaching practice so I can learn to be a better teacher. As a student teacher I developed my teaching by learning her methods, observing her behaviour and strategies. She helped shape me into the teacher I am going to be. (Vicki, Cohort One)*

4.3.3 Sub-Theme 3: Negative Outcomes in the Interpersonal Component

The data in the individual interviews confirmed the effectiveness of the anxiety reducing strategies identified above by focus group participants in relation to rapport building and developing supportive relationships. However, the results also revealed several key areas of concern.

Key Elements and Strategies

- Lack of preparedness by the supervising teacher
- Lack of availability and time by the supervising teacher
- Lack of informal communication

Lack of Preparedness by the Supervising Teacher

As identified in the focus groups, one of the key elements of the development of a positive rapport was that the supervising teacher was willing to accept a pre-service teacher for professional experience. A lack of awareness and preparation by the supervising teacher was found to have a negative effect on the development of the relationship. A comparison of the data from Cohort One and Cohort Two focus groups found similar factors impeded the establishment of the interpersonal component of the relationship with their supervising teacher.

The focus group participants who did not develop a positive interpersonal relationship with their supervising teacher described how this occurred from the commencement of their professional experience. A common theme amongst these participants as shown in the comments below was that the supervising teacher was not prepared or welcoming when they arrived at an inconvenient time, such as during a staff briefing where the teacher was not able to greet them::

> *All the staff members at my school were in a staff meeting when I arrived.... I think my teacher ran off at the last minute to go to class and then she came back and she said, "oh, you're in my class. Do you want to come with me?" I did feel a lack of connection. (Focus Group, Cohort One)*

> *I didn't really like the school as much as last year. My supervising teacher wasn't organised. I thought it wasn't as welcoming and didn't have the same feeling as the school I had before. (Focus Group, Cohort Two)*

An example of this experience was articulated by Elizabeth from Cohort Two in her individual interview. Before she arrived on the first day of her second professional experience, an inexperienced supervising teacher had been unexpectedly appointed under the guidance of an experienced supervising teacher. The participant described the stress and anxiety caused by the lack of preparedness by the newly appointed supervising teacher:

> *One thing that made it difficult was the classroom teacher didn't actually know that I was going into her class, so the first day that I got there, the actual classroom teacher didn't even know I existed, so then that threw it out from the start. I was quite distressed on my first day, because I was being so thrown around, and confused, and I didn't know really what was happening. They both weren't talking to each other on what they wanted and left it to me, and so I would go some days and actually not know what they wanted from me which was quite difficult and quite distressing. I was crying a lot. (Elizabeth, Cohort Two)*

The level of the participant's stress and anxiety was clearly evident. She highlighted the debilitating impact that the anxiety caused personally and how a poor interpersonal relationship and a lack of communication can negatively influence professional learning.

Lack of Availability and Time by the Supervising Teacher

The focus group and in-depth interview results also revealed the importance of the supervising teacher having adequate time available to interact and discuss expectations and progress with the pre-service teacher. This often resulted in the development of a limited rapport and a perceived lack of support from the supervising teacher, as clearly identified by Anna from Cohort Two, in relation to her first teaching professional experience:

> *The teacher that was there was also the Religious Education Co-ordinator, so he really didn't have time for a prac student. He kind of had interests in other areas.... The support wasn't there from the school either which didn't help. (Anna, Cohort Two)*

The participant felt that her supervising teacher had limited time for her. There was no "*getting to know you chat*" or support during her professional experience. Her comments revealed that the lack of rapport and support felt by the participant caused sufficient anxiety for her to question her career decision to become a teacher:

> *On my first prac, I had what can only be described as an awful prac. I learned a lot of what I didn't want to be as a teacher and just had really no support from my supervising teacher or the school. If I didn't enjoy this one, then I really was going to drop out and not continue. So yeah, I was looking for a positive experience out of it (the second placement). (Anna, Cohort Two)*

In her second teaching professional experience, the same participant did receive effective interpersonal support. This led to a more positive and supportive initial connection with her supervising teacher and to her completing a successful professional experience as described below:

> *My supervising teacher was amazing and always there for me. It's great having a teacher who helps you so much. I would have dropped out if it wasn't for the good relationship between my teacher and I. (Anna, Cohort Two)*

Some focus group participants during their professional experience felt devalued, due to their supervising teacher being frequently absent. Often this was because the supervising teacher was a leadership team member of the school, was called away to other responsibilities or released from class to attend to special projects. At times this resulted in the participant being placed in a position of responsibility beyond that expected for their level of experience:

> *My teacher was the Assistant Principal. He had Assistant Principal things, and he'd open the adjoining doors when he was absent. There was one time where someone did hurt themselves, and they had to go to the office. But I didn't know what to do. I'm pretty sure you have to give them some kind of slip. This was my second day at this school. (Focus Group, Cohort One)*

This type of incident outlined above, resulted in elevated anxiety and left a feeling that the pre-service teacher was not a high priority for the supervising teacher.

Lack of Informal Communication

As mentioned, limited availability by the supervising teacher for participants at the initial meeting with their supervising teacher, caused them to feel ill at ease due to the lack of time for the informal "*getting to know you chat*." In contrast, the participants who had positive experience in their relationship had cited this element as a key factor in establishing a platform for the rapport to develop. The participant from a Cohort One focus group referred to this as a "*lack of connection."*

The lack of the informal "*getting to know you*" conversations between pre-service teachers and their supervising teachers was highlighted as a negative element by participants who experienced a poor relationship. They highlighted instances where the supervising teacher failed to communicate with them as a person as well as a pre-service teacher as shown in these two Focus Group comments:

My teacher still didn't know my name by the end. The kids all got it right. But then she didn't know my name, not even my first name, not my second name. (Focus Group, Cohort One)

As for my supervising teacher our relationship was more of a professional relationship. We'd just discuss things about the class and the school. It wasn't on a personal level as much as last year. On my prac last year I was kind of friends with my supervising teacher (Focus Group, Cohort Two)

The results showed that when the informal aspect of the relationship was missing, it was a source of frustration for some pre-service teachers; they felt the supervising teacher did not get to know them on a personal basis. This contrasted with participants who highlighted the positive influence of a sound informal interpersonal relationship, which reduced their anxiety and provided an environment conducive to the enhancement of their professional learning.

4.3.4 Sub-Theme 3: Recognition and Support of Pre-Service Teacher Workload Stress

The recognition of the workload stress affecting pre-service teachers was also identified by both Cohort One and Cohort Two focus groups as an important aspect of the relationship.

Key Elements and Strategies

The participants identified the key elements and strategies their supervising teachers had used to support them in relation to their workload stress:

- Supervising teacher awareness of workload stress

Supervising Teacher's Awareness of Workload Stress

The large workload demands during their professional experience was commented on by 95% of the participants, as they were required to meet with their supervising teacher, write their lesson plans, create and prepare the resources to teach the lessons, assess the students and write their own evaluations for each lesson.

Most participants found the workload demands tiring as described by Brooke from Cohort One:

> *I spent so much time planning and programming whilst I was on prac, but that was probably a common thing. I always loved doing the work, but I just remember being exhausted all of the time and going home from school needing to do other things to get ready. (Brooke Cohort One)*

Brooke's comment was typical of 80% of participants regarding workload stress. The participants described how their supervising teacher inquired about workload to ensure they were not stressed, as shown in this Cohort Two participant:

> *…. and she always asked me, "Do you feel stressed? Is it too much work?" She always made the point of asking me if I did feel stressed. (Focus Group, Cohort Two)*

The participant described the supportive nature of their supervising teacher as being indicative of a positive interpersonal rapport that had been developed. The results revealed 70% of the participants stated that their supervising teacher inquired about workload stress. This acknowledgement about workload stress reassured the participants that the supervising teacher was aware and supportive.

Supervising teachers can play a pivotal role in reducing workload stress by being sensitive to the needs of their pre-service teachers. This type of support, which included the provision of extra time to meet with the pre-service teacher to assist in planning, was consistent across both cohorts. The participant recognised and appreciated the supportive role of the supervising teacher as shown below:

> *She came in on a Thursday (an extra day), sat me down and went through all the program and helped me out. She knew I have a lot of expectations and a lot of workload and tried to alleviate some stress and that was really positive. (Focus Group, Cohort Two)*

The results revealed that when the supervising teacher was conscious of the workload requirements and actively worked within the relationship to "*alleviate some stress,"* this supported the pre-service teacher. Such a proactive approach

provided a platform upon which a positive relationship could be established.

Eleven of the eighteen individual interview participants highlighted the fact that workload stress was monitored by their supervising teacher over time, by gradually increasing the expectations, depending on the participant's progress and level of anxiety, as experienced by Nicole from Cohort One:

> *My supervising teacher did sort of spoon feed me a lot at the beginning, but I was the sort of person who needed that. She said "This is how you do it. You're welcome to mimic me and you can change to do it your own way as we go on." She even helped with the photocopying at the beginning. She asked "Do you feel comfortable doing it? Are you ready to move on? Are you ready to do this?" It was a big thing that helped me*. (Nicole, Cohort One)

The participants also highlighted that their performance as assessed by their supervising teacher contributed to a reduction of workload stress as shown in this comment:

> *Having a good relationship builds your confidence which affects the way you teach, reducing the amount of effort, time and detail you put into your lesson plans, because you have impressed your supervising teacher.* (Tara, Cohort Two)

The participants stated that by putting in hard work to impress their supervising teacher at the beginning of their professional experience, especially with lesson planning, resulted in the supervising teacher expecting less written detail in their lesson plans, once the participant had demonstrated effective lesson planning.

4.3.5 Sub-Theme 4: Pre-service Teachers' Resilience in the Interpersonal Component of the Relationship

An interesting finding from the results indicated that pre-service teachers were able to show resilience by applying strategies learnt in their prior professional experience to enable them to cope with a lack of an interpersonal relationship with their current supervising teacher.

Key Elements and Strategies

- Establishment of interpersonal relationships with other teachers
- Resilience through flexibility and persistence

Establishment of Interpersonal Relationships with Other Teachers

Prior to her second professional experience, Lisa from Cohort Two had hoped to build her teaching competencies through constructive feedback from her supervising teacher. However, an effective interpersonal relationship was not established with her supervising teacher. This was compounded by her supervising teacher's feedback of her teaching practice which was highly critical and lacked affirmation when compared to her previous experience:

> *This year, it was a lot more difficult. My teacher was nowhere near as nice to me as last year. We didn't get along very well. I got support from the other staff members. They were really friendly and helpful (Lisa, Cohort Two)*

Due to the interpersonal component of the relationship lacking in her second professional experience placement with the supervising teacher, the results showed this participant found she lacked the confidence to develop her teaching competencies. However, she had shown resilience and had established relationships with other teachers on the staff to compensate for the lack of an interpersonal relationship with her supervising teacher.

Resilience through Flexibility and Persistence

Another example of resilience was evident in the comments of Elizabeth, who as mentioned previously, had been placed with an inexperienced teacher under the overall supervision of a more experienced supervising teacher. This situation created conflict and confusion for the participant leading to anxiety and stress:

> *Very challenging. I put this down to my teachers. I had a supervising teacher who wasn't the classroom teacher, so therefore, the classroom teacher would have one idea of what she would like to happen in her classroom, and then the supervising teacher had another idea of what should be happening in the classroom..... so I*

found it very hard to manage that conflict. The whole situation was just very unsettling. (Elizabeth, Cohort Two)

The participant never developed an interpersonal relationship with either of her two supervising teachers. To meet the professional experience expectations, she described how she tried to be flexible with her approach to teaching to reduce her anxiety:

I guess one thing it did teach me was to be very flexible, and to know that everyone has a different approach to teaching. (Elizabeth, Cohort Two)

The participant stated that due to the two supervising teachers' differing expectations she had to find a method of satisfying both. She developed an innovative approach using emails:

.... so I had to find a balance between the two, and then in the end, I would cc both of them in the email and make sure they both got all my lesson plans, they both looked at them, they both got a chance to say, "Can we alter this and this?" Then they're both on the same page and weren't confused. It worked. I had to make it work. (Elizabeth Cohort Two)

Elizabeth highlighted a key strategy used by some Cohort Two participants, in that she made a conscious decision that despite not having a workable interpersonal relationship with her supervising teachers, she would be proactive to meet the professional experience expectations. She was resilient in her attitude when she stated, "*It worked. I had to make it work."* The confidence developed from her prior professional experience where a good relationship with the supervising teacher had been established. She also identified another key element, which was the value of a wider support network:

I don't think I would have made it through, but then that comes back down to family support, support from other teachers, like outside of the school, like from the school that I worked at, as an aide, support from them, support from friends, and their prac experiences. It wasn't just me. (Elizabeth, Cohort Two)

These responses from Lisa and Elizabeth were indicative of Cohort Two participants who had been in a teaching situation and had developed a level of resilience. The participants' experience demonstrated it was possible to meet professional experience expectations when in a poor interpersonal relationship with a supervising teacher. However, the participants' experience also highlighted that this was a difficult task which resulted in limited professional learning.

The limiting effect of a poor interpersonal relationship was another important finding that was highlighted in the experience of Renee who was placed in a job share situation. Renee had developed a positive interpersonal relationship with one of her supervising teachers as they shared similar teaching beliefs and personalities. However, Renee experienced a difficult relationship with the second supervising teacher:

> *It was her personality and teaching style. I felt with Caroline we were similar and our relationship was based on mutual respect. Whereas with Chris at the end of the week, she didn't talk to me much. It felt uncomfortable. (Renee, Cohort Two)*

The participant indicated that balancing the two different personalities of her supervising teachers caused her anxiety. She found that the supervising teacher with whom she had developed an interpersonal relationship, recognised the challenges and offered emotional support:

> *She (Caroline) said, "I do feel for you. I think that it is a very challenging thing to ask of you to have two separate teachers." But she did say to me, "If you do have any issues, please contact me." And that's where that sigh of relief came in. (Renee, Cohort Two)*

This positive rapport with the first supervising teacher led to an increase in the participant's confidence. The participant identified the importance of communication between herself and the supervising teachers. Also, the participant ensured that she contacted both supervising teachers in her emails, so both were informed minimising misunderstandings.

Where the participant received informal feedback from the first supervising teacher, she developed greater confidence in her teaching. However, the

participant felt the relationship with the second supervising teacher was controlling and directive which was a limiting factor. Another consequence of this limitation was that Renee felt she had to teach using the same teaching style as the supervising teacher to meet professional experience expectations. This was a key element identified by other pre-service teachers who had poor relationships with their supervising teacher. Renee's comments highlight this finding:

> *With the first teacher, I felt so confident as we got on well. I felt like I could sort of experiment with new things that I heard or sort of learned at uni and I loved going - I loved going on Monday morning. With the second teacher I felt I was being a lot stricter and I didn't like that. I felt I become that way, because I felt like she was watching me and I couldn't say anything. (Renee, Cohort Two)*

The element of resilience was again displayed by this pre-service teacher. Despite the difficulties of balancing the different personalities of her two supervising teachers in the job share situation, the participant passed her professional experience. The participant attributes her success to the fact she *".... was persistent. I was very persistent."* The participant sums up her learning from her professional experience in this comment about professionalism and resilience:

> *I would try to maintain that positive relationship (with both teachers). I have to be professional and I need to be resilient as well, and think, "I am here to be the teacher. I'm here to teach these kids. I'm here to do the best thing I possibly can, no matter what the circumstance." And I definitely think that that's what got me through. (Renee, Cohort Two)*

The experiences of Lisa, Elizabeth and Renee demonstrate that the lack of the interpersonal component of the relationship with the supervising teacher can have an impact on the pre-service teacher's confidence and professional learning. However, analysis of the data indicated that the pre-service teachers are capable of resilience by applying strategies learnt in prior professional experiences. These strategies include comparing their current relationship situation to their prior relationship to determine what elements are missing and deciding how they are going to compensate for these missing elements, such as ensuring clear

communication with their supervising teachers to minimise misunderstandings and seeking the emotional interpersonal support they need from significant others to compensate for the lack of a strong interpersonal relationship with their supervising teacher.

4.3.6 Summary of Theme 1

As outlined above, the results revealed the significance of the development of an effective rapport and a supportive interpersonal relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher (see Section 4.3). The informal communication approach adopted by the supervising teacher in getting to know the pre-service teacher as a person was shown to reduce anxiety. The establishment of a positive rapport contributed not only to the reduction of the anxiety of pre-service teachers during professional experience but provided a strong base from which to develop their professional learning (see Section 4.3.1). The results also revealed that both the pre-service and supervising teachers contributed to the establishment of effective rapport building. Furthermore, when confronted with relationships where the interpersonal component was lacking, this required pre-service teachers to demonstrate resilience through applying a number of different strategies to improve the situation and enhance their professional learning (see Section 4.3.5). The pre-service teachers identified the importance of the role and strategies that supervising teachers employ in establishing a strong interpersonal relationship.

The impact of a positive rapport in the interpersonal component was shown to be fundamental in establishing a relationship with the supervising teacher where the pre-service teacher felt supported personally and emotionally. This facilitated support positively influenced their participation within their professional experience and facilitated the development of their professional learning.

4.4 Theme 2: The Influence of Professional Mentorship in the Relationship

4.4.1 Sub-Theme 1: Establishment of Shared Expectations and Effective Communication Channels to Develop Professional Learning

Analysis of the data indicated that the relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher contained a significant mentoring aspect. The data showed that where a strong mentoring relationship was established between the pre-service and supervising teachers, this built on the foundation of the interpersonal component and enhanced pre-service teachers' professional learning.

Analysis of the Cohort One and Cohort Two focus group and individual interview data indicated a similar finding related to the importance of the establishment of shared expectations between the pre-service and supervising teacher. This was fundamental to the mentoring component of the relationship. Pre-service teachers identified it was beneficial in terms of lesson preparation and implementation of teaching.

Key Elements and Strategies

The results revealed a number of important key elements related to shared expectations. These elements and key strategies, listed below, were identified by the participants as being influential in the development of mentoring aspects of the relationship with the supervising teacher:

- Establishment of effective communication channels
- Shared expectations of the supervision approach
- Explanation of class routines, organisation and management of the learning environment
- Support in the development of lesson planning and programming expectations.

Establishment of Effective Communication Channels

Clarity of communication including verbal, written and electronic was highlighted as important by the participants from both cohorts in the focus groups and individual interview data. The opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification

was highlighted as an essential element in establishing a relationship with the supervising teacher. This formed part of the establishment of the rapport with their supervising teacher and allowed the pre-service teachers to feel comfortable to ask questions and discuss their professional learning.

Developing effective communication channels was shown to be important to promote interaction. Initially this often took the form of the provision of phone numbers and email addresses by the supervising teacher which was a common element mentioned by the participants of both cohorts:

> *My supervising teacher said "Have my email address and my phone number. I'd rather you call me if you need clarification or are stressed out." (Focus Group, Cohort Two)*

> *.... even just a very small thing, but the first day I met them, they both gave me their email address, their mobile phone numbers, and their home numbers and said, "Call me anytime." (Brooke, Cohort One)*

Effective avenues of communication provided an opportunity for the participants to discuss aspects of their professional experience with their supervising teacher which resulted in reduced pre-service teacher anxiety and a strengthening of the relationship.

Shared Expectations of the Supervision Approach

Focus group participants from both cohorts highlighted that when they understood and accepted the supervision approach of their supervising teacher, this enhanced their professional learning. The supervision approaches varied, however Cohort One participants indicated that the most effective model of supervision involved a collaborative approach between the pre-service and supervising teacher as shown in this comment below:

> *My teacher and I worked together from her program. She gave me her program and I copied her, in the structure of her teaching completely and she was comfortable with that and I knew I'd get through the outcomes. When I wanted to venture out a bit she*

trusted me and said "You can do that, that's a good idea. That was really good." (Focus Group, Cohort One)

Cohort One individual interviews results supported the value of the collaborative supervision approach for participants in their first professional experience. This approach often included a period of observation by the pre-service teacher to gain some idea about the class and the teaching style of the supervising teacher. Another effective strategy revealed in the results was the use of a non-judgemental approach by the supervising teacher. Kelly, who was suffering from anxiety at the beginning of her professional experience, clearly expressed the type of reassurance that could be gained in this supportive approach by her supervising teacher:

She just said she's going to watch, she's not going to make any rude judgments, or anything like that. It just put my nerves at ease. (Kelly, Cohort One)

In contrast, Cohort Two focus group participants, highlighted the value of a supervision approach which, whilst still being supportive, had a greater focus on improving their teaching competencies. The quality of constructive lesson evaluations received from their supervising teacher was identified by 75% of the Cohort Two focus group participants as shown in the comment below:

My teacher was very good with evaluating every lesson. At the start of the prac he'd write positive comments about each lesson and then something to work on. So, there were always positives and something that could be built on. I thought this was good as it gave me something to aim for in the next lesson. (Focus Group, Cohort Two)

The Cohort Two individual interview results supported focus group findings by identifying lesson feedback focused on teaching competencies as being a significant and effective element of the supervision approach implemented by the supervising teacher as outlined by the following Cohort Two participant:

Well, I was happy that she wasn't just being positive all of the time. She really let me know about the things I really needed to improve

like student management. She gave lots of constructive criticism and I was very happy. She also positively appreciated things I did. (Diane, Cohort Two).

The above comment highlighted the importance placed on a balanced and supportive supervision in the honest lesson evaluation which was supplied by her supervising teacher as part of the supervision approach. The lesson evaluation was constructive and affirming. The comment reflected those of many other Cohort Two participants who indicated that they valued constructive feedback from their supervising teacher which would improve their teaching competencies and their professional learning.

A comparison of the two cohorts indicated the importance of the supervision approach being relevant to the experience level of the pre-service teacher. When pre-service teachers were participating in their first professional experience, the results indicated that a supervision approach which acclimatised the pre-service teacher to teaching and provided supportive feedback was most effective. In contrast, for Cohort Two participants who had completed a prior professional experience, more direct lesson evaluation and feedback was shown to enhance their teaching competencies.

Overall analysis of the data for both cohorts indicated that pre-service teachers benefitted from a supervision approach which was supportive of their needs and provided constructive feedback targeted at their level of teaching experience to enhance their professional learning.

Explanation of Class Routines, Organisation and Management of the Learning Environment

Both cohorts highlighted the importance of understanding the basic routines, organisation and strategies which allowed the learning environment to function effectively. The Focus Group participants valued the input of the supervising teacher in relation to the efficient teaching and management of the classroom:

At our school they had a two week block of programs and routines. My teacher taught me the program and routines for the first two weeks. She set out what lessons I'd be teaching. That was really

helpful. (Focus Group, Cohort One)

The Cohort One individual interview participants focused on the significance of being introduced to the routines which underpinned good management in the classroom. This included basic routines such as the morning greetings and roll marking as described by Vicki and Carly from Cohort One:

> *In the morning, she greets each child as they walk in the room, Instead of just greeting her, they also greeted me. Little things like that made me feel very welcome. (Vicki, Cohort One)*

> *'.... every morning she would take the roll. It would be good morning, and they would say good morning back to her.' (Carly, Cohort One)*

Anxiety related to classroom management was also identified by Cohort One participants as an area where mentoring by the supervising teacher could be effective. Jessica explains in the comment below, how her supervising teacher helped develop her confidence in her student management:

> *I was a bit nervous. I knew everybody or most of the class was gonna be taller than me. She actually brought it up with me because she saw my height. "You might feel a bit uncomfortable or a bit edgy or something," she said. "But you just need to be confident and you need to stand your ground. When you speak, just speak with confidence and just show them that you know you're still the teacher and you are in charge. (Jessica, Cohort One)*

The participant's supervising teacher's advice was designed to promote confidence. The participant felt supported and followed the advice later commenting "*I never felt uncomfortable."*

Another area of mentoring support was captured in the comments of Brooke from Cohort One. She highlighted the value of the supervising teacher explaining policies related to the school as a community and learning environment:

> *She explained the different policies to me. I felt like I was as informed as I could be about the school and the way it worked. That was really*

comforting because I felt like I knew more of what was happening. (Brooke, Cohort One)

Additionally, Cohort One participants identified the significance of meetings with colleagues in the school community to effectively plan and engage in professional dialogue:

.... we were allowed to go to staff meetings every week. We had curriculum meetings and we had staff general meetings. At the curriculum meetings, they'd introduce a new policy, where they'd choose people to work with this policy or this committee. (Nicole, Cohort One)

The results revealed that Cohort One pre-service teachers recognised the importance of participating in the broader school community. The facilitation of this interaction by the supervising teacher was seen as a valuable form of mentoring related to understanding the school as an organisation working collaboratively and a community of learners.

In contrast, Cohort Two participants built upon the basic organisation and routines learned in their prior professional experience. They identified the higher level of learning that took place through the observation of teaching and management routines and strategies demonstrated by their supervising teachers:

Observing the management strategies of your teacher is the best way to learn. When I was observing I'd pick up the little ways he would interact with the class and the way to get them settled or focused. I tried to use some of those same things as well. (Focus Group, Cohort Two)

The Cohort Two individual interview data provided greater insights into this finding. The participants indicated that besides adopting the effective strategies of the supervising teacher they developed the confidence to implement their own strategies, as described by Mitchell of Cohort Two:

.... she had a difficult class as well with discipline. She used rhyming and clapping techniques; short rhymes, where kids would respond....

It was good to see. It included body language like hands in the air or clapping. I adopted her strategies, which was good, because I hadn't used them before. Then I tried a few things on my own as well. (Mitchell, Cohort Two)

Cohort Two pre-service teachers stated they had learnt student management skills in their previous professional experience. The data revealed that during the subsequent teaching placement, the participants focused on the further enhancement of their student management expertise. This included using the supervising teacher's student management modelling as a basis to develop their own strategies.

The results indicated overall, that the supervising teacher had significant input towards pre-service teachers' learning related to the routines and management strategies which operated in the classroom. For Cohort One participants, the focus was on the supervising teacher's explanation of the routines and strategies to ensure effective management and teaching. In comparison, Cohort Two participants observed, assessed and at times adopted the management and organisational practices of their supervising teacher, which often led to the enhancement of their own management and teaching practices.

Support in the Development of Lesson Planning and Programming Expectations

Lesson planning is a fundamental expectation of professional experience. Analysis of the focus group data from both cohorts indicated that lesson planning was a source of anxiety for pre-service teachers and that the approach adopted by the supervising teacher directly influenced their levels of anxiety and stress. Cohort One, in their initial professional experience, indicated that a positive rapport with the supervising teacher enabled a supportive and collaborative approach to lesson planning which reduced anxiety:

When I first started, my first lesson that I taught, he went through it with me and planned the whole thing with me. All I had to do was put it in the lesson plan table. So, he helped me plan the whole lesson. I was fine with that. (Focus Group, Cohort One)

In most cases the supervising teachers knowing that Cohort One participants were learning basic lesson planning adopted a collaborative approach and were generally supportive by planning together. For Cohort Two, the results indicate that the supervising teacher had the expectation that the pre-service teachers, having already successfully completed a professional experience, should take greater responsibility for their lesson planning with less guidance from the supervising teacher:

> *My supervising teacher gave me the program of what they did across the Stage and said to me do with it what you want and experiment. He obviously checked my lesson plans, but he left it open to me. I had the opportunity to do what I wanted. (Focus Group, Cohort Two)*

The two examples above showed the difference in the mindset mentoring approaches and expectations of the supervising teachers related to lesson planning. In the initial professional experience supervising teachers provided guidance through collaborative support with the pre-service teacher. In the subsequent teaching placement, the supervising teachers were prepared to give the pre-service teacher greater freedom to plan the lesson themselves under their expert supervision.

However, the level of mentorship was shown to be complex. If a supervising teacher was too open ended with lesson planning, this could lead to stress for a pre-service teacher as shown in the comment below:

> *My teacher didn't give me a whole lot of guidance. She used to give me a topic and say "Go away and develop lessons on the topic," which I did. After the lesson she'd give me feedback "You could have done something with ICT or the computer." But I had no idea of how to incorporate ICT. (Focus Group, Cohort Two).*

The above comment indicated the frustration that came from the supervising teacher's expectation that pre-service teachers participating in their second professional experience should be highly skilled in lesson preparation. The comments from the two focus groups demonstrated that lesson planning is a learnt skill. The results indicate lesson planning was a skill initially significantly supported

by the supervising teacher, before moving to an approach where there was less support, but still required advice to minimise anxiety and enhance teaching competencies.

The individual interview data supported the focus group comments regarding the importance of supervising teacher guidance in the demands of lesson planning. For example, individual interview participants highlighted the way the supervising teachers approached supporting lesson planning as being significant. Supervising teachers who provided significant guidance and discussed the lesson at length with the pre-service teachers, facilitated the development of confidence and skills:

> *My teacher showed me her program and would explain to me how she had have taught that, such as a particular concept in the past.... I would try them, the plans and things, and she was very happy for me to try different ways of teaching. (Brooke, Cohort One)*

Comments from the interview participants indicated that the level of confidence in their lesson planning abilities varied, depending on the relationship that existed with their supervising teacher. In a positive relationship the supervising teachers encouraged the pre-service teacher to do most of the planning on their own, but then discussed the lesson with the pre-service teacher prior to the teaching of the lesson as shown below:

> *.... she said, "Oh, go home and think about what you want to do, write up a lesson plan, and come tomorrow, and you will be fine." We discussed it in the morning, and I think we might have changed one little thing. (Ashley, Cohort One)*

Where a supervising teacher was supportive in their comments and advice about the lessons, this gave the participant the confidence to plan lessons. This often resulted in the pre-service teacher feeling that the supervising teacher believed they were capable of effective planning. In contrast, where the relationship was less positive, the lack of professional dialogue and advice related to lesson planning impacted on the pre-service teacher's belief in their teaching ability:

> *It was really hard for me to do lesson plans before I went into the prac because it was all just on the spot.... So I ended up just not*

planning my lessons and going in and then they would just tell me what to do and I would just teach on the go.... I didn't want to go. I hated it at first. I wanted to change to a different school.... (Rebecca, Cohort Two)

The results revealed that professional dialogue with the supervising teacher was effective both prior to teaching the lesson in the beginning of the planning phase and also as feedback after the lesson plan had been developed. However, as shown in Rebecca's experience the lack of guidance and support in lesson planning from the supervising teacher, highlighted how stressful and influential this could be for the pre-service teacher. The results also suggest that once pre-service teachers knew the approach their supervising teacher would take towards lesson planning and their expectations, their anxiety in teaching practice was reduced.

4.4.2 Sub-Theme 2: Encouragement of Pre-service Teachers' Teaching Style

The participants who indicated that they developed a positive relationship with their supervising teacher discussed how this had provided them an opportunity to develop their own teaching styles.

Key Elements and Strategies

Two key elements emerged from the results which influenced the development of individual teaching styles for both cohorts:

- Influence of positive informal relationships
- Effect of positive reinforcement and development of a sense of professional trust

Influence of Positive Informal Relationships

Cohort One focus group participants measured the development of their teaching competencies and style according to the level of their professional experience success:

Well I felt that I had a successful prac because I came out more knowledgeable in my teaching. My teacher made a note of saying

how much she had seen in my progress. It's always a success in prac when the teacher can see the progression because that is the sort of thing I wanted to have in my teaching. (Focus Group, Cohort One)

An important result to emerge was that positive informal relationships were shown to be a key element in the development of pre-service teachers' sense of their professional role and their teaching style. The comments of Nick from Cohort One, captured this development when he spoke about the relaxed informal relationship he shared with his supervising teacher:

Yeah.... we'd just have a chat after school. He might ask me about my job and then I just ask him what he is doing, about his family and stuff. We'd just talk about it and see what a teacher's life is actually like…. I guess at the start of the relationship you can talk to them and they can talk to you and build a relationship first. Then you can ask any questions or get further information as you get into the teaching side of things. He gave me guidance in my teaching, which I think he did really well. (Nick, Cohort One)

The results highlighted two key strategies that supervising teachers used to develop the emerging teaching styles of pre-service teachers. Firstly, where an informal approach was taken by the participant's supervising teacher, this facilitated insight into the role and expectations of a teacher. Secondly, where the supervising teacher encouraged the pre-service teacher to work with individuals and small groups during the first days of the professional experience, they were able to clarify any initial questions or concerns with the supervising teacher. Nick later stated that, *".... things like that helped me a lot"* and indicated that it assisted him to acclimatise to the class and develop confidence in his teaching role.

Effect of Positive Reinforcement and the Development of a Sense of Trust

Comments from Cohort One participants highlighted the value of positive reinforcement supplied by the supervising teacher in developing the pre-service teacher's confidence in their teaching competencies. This strategy was shown to develop a sense of trust between the pre-service and supervising teachers.

Cohort One participants highlighted the value of being trusted to explore their teaching and to make their own decisions. The individual interview participants valued that the development of their own teaching style was encouraged and supported by their supervising teacher as shown in the comment below:

> *.... she really wanted to help and she kept on giving me options. She'd say, "You can teach it this way, or you can teach it this way, or you can teach it this way. It's up to you. This is what I would do and why I would do it." (Kelly, Cohort One)*

The participant found this to be beneficial as she felt trusted and was able to take risks to develop her teaching. In this scenario if an aspect of the lesson was unsuccessful the participant felt supported.

Being trusted professionally to explore their teaching styles was also a common theme among the Cohort Two focus groups and individual interview participants who experienced a positive relationship with their supervising teacher:

> *Something that was really helpful for me was just to get my own mindset with teaching. My teacher gave me a unit to do. I went through the stages of planning, presenting, assessing and reporting back to her. It was really good to have that flexibility. Just to be my own kind of teacher. (Focus Group, Cohort Two)*

> *I didn't want to be a clone of her teaching. Of course, there are things you see that you don't really like.... But yes, a lot of things I did like which I wanted to implement into my own teaching. I really did like it. I felt like a casual (teacher). (Diane, Cohort Two)*

The results indicated that the Cohort Two participants showed increased confidence in their ability and desire to be recognised as a teacher and to develop their own teaching style. As shown above, they often expressed the desire to develop their own professional learning beyond that of the teaching practice being demonstrated by their supervising teacher.

However, again this aspect of the relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher was shown to be complex. Where participants found the

mentoring aspect of the relationship with their supervising teacher to be less positive they were given little guidance. They were often less able to develop their teaching style and taught without the confidence to take risks to develop their teaching as shown in the feeling of Rebecca below:

> *I just took on board everything that they did and kind of moulded myself into how they taught and how they wanted it structured. (Rebecca, Cohort Two)*

The results indicate that when the mentoring aspect was effective and expectations made clear by the supervising teacher, then the opportunity for the pre-service teacher to develop their teaching style was enhanced. Pre-service teachers in their initial teaching experiences looked upon the development of teaching competencies as evidence of professional experience success. However, once this success was assured, pre-service teachers will use the support and feedback they received from the supervising teacher to further develop their teaching competencies and style.

4.4.3 Sub-Theme 3: Providing Information Related to the Needs and Abilities of the Class

Both cohort focus groups highlighted that the pre-service teacher's anxiety reduced when they were informed of the needs and abilities of the students.

Key Elements and Strategies

The results indicated that when the pre-service teachers were informed of the needs and abilities of the class, they felt better prepared to plan their lessons and cater for individual learning needs and management issues. The participants highlighted two key elements and strategies utilised by supervising and pre-service teachers:

- Supervising teacher informs the pre-service teacher about the needs and abilities of the class
- Pre-service teacher observation of the supervising teacher catering for the needs and abilities of the class

Supervising Teacher Informs the Pre-service Teacher about the Needs and Abilities of the Class

Cohort One focus group results indicated that the supervising teacher often outlined the needs of the students in the class and suggested strategies to accommodate the students' needs:

> *We sat down and specifically went through each child. If there was something we wanted to talk about like learning disabilities, brighter kids or if they had a language barrier or anything like that. We sat and talked. She gave me strategies to deal with it. That was really helpful. (Focus Group, Cohort One)*

The participants found this basic information about the needs of the students valuable and helped them plan and implement effective teaching strategies which catered for the students' learning along with attitudinal and behavioural needs. The individual interviews supported this finding by indicating two methods supervising teachers used to share information about the class to the pre-service teacher. The first method involved the supervising teacher explaining to the pre-service teacher, the learning approaches and management plans of the students prior to teaching as described in the comment below:

> *Well, before we even started teaching, she discussed all the children with me and how each of them operates and warned me beforehand of what I should look out for. She would discuss all the decisions with me of what she had planned. (Joanne, Cohort One)*

Cohort Two focus group participants expressed similar comments about the value of being informed about the needs of the students. However, they indicated that the supervising teacher recognised they had developed some teaching competencies in their previous professional experience. As a consequence, the supervising teachers encouraged the pre-service teachers to make their own judgements about the students and implement effective teaching strategies:

Well she went through the difficult students and the high achievers. She said this is what you can do or maybe you can do something of your own. She did leave it open for me. (Focus Group, Cohort Two)

He gave me the background information about the students but left it up to me to make my own judgements and opinions about what they could or couldn't do, their strengths and weaknesses. (Focus Group, Cohort Two)

Participants from both cohorts highlighted the importance of understanding the management needs of the class. When they appreciated why the decisions were made, this clarified their understanding of the management approach.

Pre-service Teacher Observation of the Supervising Teacher Catering for the Needs and Abilities of the Class

The second method of informing the pre-service teacher about the needs and abilities of the class to emerge from the results, was the value of the pre-service teacher's observation of students in the class with the supervising teacher modelling teaching and management strategies:

I said to her, from the first week or two, I'd like to just watch and see how she ran a classroom, and I feel that that made me see her teaching style and how she dealt with some of the children. It allowed me to get to know the children without being their teacher straight away…. (Anna, Cohort Two)

The methods of informing the pre-service teachers about the needs and abilities of the class differed across the cohorts. However, if they were based on the clear communication of effective teaching skills and management, the results indicated that they were equally effective. The results show that when pre-service teachers were informed of the needs of the class, they perceived themselves to be better prepared to plan the lessons and implement strategies to teach and manage the class. The data also indicated that supervising teachers recognised the developing teaching competencies of pre-service teachers. The results indicate in an initial professional experience, supervising teachers inform the pre-service teacher of the needs of students and provide teaching and management

strategies. However, in subsequent professional experience, supervising teachers expect pre-service teachers, due to their more extensive experience, to make their own judgments and implement effective teaching strategies to cater for the needs of students.

4.4.4 Sub-Theme 4: Explicit Modelling by the Supervising Teacher of Good Teaching Practice

The participants of both cohort focus groups highlighted that the modelling of 'good teaching' practice by the supervising teacher assisted them to develop their own teaching practice and student management skills.

Key Elements and Strategies

Both cohorts identified the supervising teacher's modelling of good teaching practice as a significant element of their professional learning. The participants identified the following key elements and strategies which are incorporated in the modelling of good teaching practice:

- Observation of supervising teacher good teaching practice enhances pre-service teacher teaching practice
- Effective modelling of good teaching practice includes Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Components

Observation of Supervising Teacher Good Teaching Practice Enhances Pre-service Teacher Teaching Practice

The focus groups highlighted the modelling of teaching practice demonstrated by their supervising teacher as an effective way to learn:

> *I learned a lot by observing, seeing how he was with the class in the first few days, seeing the different things that he was doing. (Focus Group, Cohort One)*

> *Observing your teacher do things is the best way to learn. I think you can try things but without seeing it done first, it's harder. When I was observing to start with I'd pick up those little ways that he interacted*

with the class or like the little things to get them settled, or to focus them and try to build on that. (Focus Group, Cohort Two)

These comments demonstrated the value placed by pre-service teachers on the observation of the good teaching practice of their supervising teacher. Cohort Two focus group participants also identified how teaching strategies used by their supervising teacher could be integrated into their own teaching practice:

She said, "I actually want you to try something, don't just rely on mine." I had two things that I introduced plus her thing because she had so many. She was really good like that, really open and really wanted me to just experiment. (Focus Group, Cohort Two)

The more experienced Cohort Two pre-service teachers' confidence and teaching practice was enhanced through the supervising teacher's encouragement to explore their own teaching practice using the modelled quality practice as a scaffold.

The individual interview data supported the focus group findings. Both cohorts indicated that the observation of effective teaching modelled by their supervising teacher enhanced their teaching competencies. Good teaching practice was described by the participants as including "*lesson planning, teaching strategies, classroom routines and organisation* and *student management*."

The participants from Cohort One recognised the mentoring component in the teaching style of their supervising teacher:

First of all, I wanted the opportunity to put everything that I've learned into practice. Also, I wanted to see all of the different teaching styles of different teachers.... (Ashley, Cohort One)

I was hoping to witness different teaching styles and then hoping to learn how to teach myself, like a mentor teacher. (Nick, Cohort One)

The comments of Cohort Two expressed a high level desire to extend the development of their own teaching style by observing and comparing the modelled teaching practice of the supervising teacher across different grades:

> *I hoped to be challenged in my teaching, so that I could become a better teacher. I wanted to try out different management strategies I observed in this prac, especially as I was going from having a second year prac in Kindergarten to a Year Six prac for the recently completed practicum. I wanted to better know how to cater for different needs in the class. (Elizabeth, Cohort Two)*

As shown above, the Cohort Two pre-service teachers indicated that they saw the need to extend their repertoire of teaching strategies previously observed by adding newly observed teaching practice to cater for the individual needs of the students.

Effective Modelling of Good Teaching Practice Includes Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Components

The analysis of the data revealed that the quality of the relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher was important in relation to the effect of the modelled practice. When there were strong interpersonal and professional mentorship components to the relationship, the observed modelling of the supervising teacher resulted in positive outcomes:

> *I loved it. I think it was the teacher. I learned a lot, a lot more than what I expected about class management and children management. (Carly, Cohort One)*

> *She would encourage me to try it and then we'd talk about it later on. If it didn't work then we'd talk about how to make it better. It was good to have that opportunity to try different things because that's the only way you learn. (Mitchell, Cohort Two)*

The two comments reflected the views of both cohorts. In a positive pre-service and supervising teacher relationship, the supervising teacher's modelling of good teaching practice contributed to the pre-service teacher's development of their own teaching style and professional learning.

4.4.5 Sub-Theme 5: Influence of Supervising Teacher Feedback

Both cohort focus groups identified feedback from the supervising teacher as having a significant impact on the quality of the professional learning for the pre-service teachers.

Key Elements and Strategies

The participants from both cohorts expressed similar views regarding feedback as being an essential aspect in the relationship between pre-service and supervising teacher. They identified several key elements and strategies in their relationship with their supervising teacher which involved aspects of feedback from the supervising teacher:

- Value of constructive supervising teacher feedback
- Influence of supervising teacher's formal and informal feedback
- Relationship influence on the pre-service teacher's perception of feedback

Value of Constructive Supervising Teacher Feedback

The focus group participants indicated they preferred constructive verbal and written feedback. The results revealed 80% of the participants stated that the feedback from their supervising teachers met this criteria as shown below:

> *My evaluation was pretty spot-on. She gave me about a page and a half. Nice, clear, written legible, everything was very spot-on. There was constructive criticism and she taught me how to deal with it as well. Instead of just saying, "You do this, this and this wrong," she would say, "Maybe in the next lesson you can kind of modify it to be like this," which was good. (Focus Group, Cohort One)*

> *It was done in a very teacher-like way, a lot of positive praise. She'd layer it within, giving the actual constructive feedback. Mine was never negative. I felt that was really helpful to me. I learnt things. (Focus Group, Cohort Two)*

Constructive and timely feedback was identified as a key finding by both cohort focus groups. The focus group participants highlighted the positive benefits of

constructive feedback which was delivered in verbal and written form. Their comments indicated that the feedback they received helped build their confidence and allowed them to develop their teaching competencies:

> *My teacher would go "Yeah that was really good. She'd say I liked that, or I didn't like that." Honestly after every lesson I'd get a whole page of notes to work on. I really took this on board. That was the best reflection because I read it through in consultation with her. (Focus Group, Cohort Two)*

The key aspects identified in the results were the influence of the supervising teacher's feedback towards improving the pre-service teacher's teaching competencies and the value of discussing the feedback with the supervising teacher. The individual interviews confirmed the findings related to the influence of constructive feedback on the pre-service teachers' professional learning:

> *It's very important because without that constructive feedback, I feel like I wouldn't be able to improve. She would say, "Okay you're doing this wrong and these are some steps that you could take." (Vicki, Cohort One)*

While the perceived value of feedback was clearly evident, the results also revealed that it was varied and lacked consistency. The individual interview participants highlighted that the balance between constructive verbal and written feedback from their supervising teachers varied in type, amount and quality of constructive advice. The comments of Jessica from Cohort One, indicated how written constructive feedback which was discussed with her, helped develop her teaching competencies and confidence:

> *She would give me a lot of written feedback and positive comments like "You did a great job. Good work!" If it was negative, she wouldn't put it as positive. She would put it as things to work on or things to improve and that made me feel comfortable. I never felt bad about it. It really helped a lot. She'd talk about how well I was doing with other teachers and that boosted my confidence a lot as well. (Jessica, Cohort One)*

In contrast, Adele from Cohort Two received feedback which was largely verbal and lacked constructive advice as to how she could improve her teaching practice:

> *A lot of times, he would just talk to me afterwards and then he would ask me, "How do you think you went?" And he would ask me that first before he told me anything. I'd say, "Oh, I think okay." And then he would be like, "Yeah, no you did. You did fine." There wasn't a lot of advice telling me what I could do better (Adele, Cohort Two)*

This was again contrasted by Diane from Cohort Two in the comment below. Her professional learning was influenced by the balance between the affirming aspect of the feedback and the value of the constructive advice:

> *She'd give lots of constructive criticism, and I was very happy, but she did also positively appreciate the things I did. I mean if it's too much of the constructive criticism and no positives, you think you're not improving. (Diane, Cohort Two)*

While the consistency of feedback was varied, the variations did not appear to be cohort related. The comments above highlighted the belief of most participants, that supervising teacher feedback needs to affirm what has been done well, with constructive advice and strategies to improve aspects of their teaching practice.

The participants of both cohorts identified that their professional learning was enhanced by supervising teacher feedback that was delivered appropriately, affirmed their teaching competencies and provided constructive guidance towards improving their teaching practice. Both cohorts agreed that achieving the correct balance between affirmation and constructive feedback is a key element in the feedback process. Analysis of the data from both cohorts indicated if there was too much affirmation and not enough constructive advice, then the pre-service teacher did not receive the professional guidance they require to develop their teaching. Conversely, too much constructive criticism and not enough affirmation resulted in the pre-service teacher doubting whether they were developing their teaching competencies.

Influence of Supervising Teacher's Formal and Informal Feedback

The in-depth interview data revealed that the supervising teacher feedback could be either formal or informal in nature. Formal feedback was expected and provided by the supervising teacher in the form of verbal and written feedback focused on the pre-service teacher's teaching competencies usually related to lesson preparation, teaching, management skills and assessment. Informal feedback involved the casual comments made by the supervising teacher about the pre-service teacher's performance, which were directly related to any specific teaching lesson or another expectation of supervision. Both the formal and informal feedback were perceived by the pre-service teachers to contain affirmation and constructive elements that could have a significant influence on their teaching confidence as described by Tara from Cohort Two:

> *I think she always outlined where I did well first and then she went to the constructive feedback. She would nod if I had done something well. She would kind of give me hand gestures to continue that because she really liked that and to focus on that. She smiled to me while she was writing down notes. So, things like that that made me feel really good, and pretty much just your confidence builds a lot through that. (Tara, Cohort Two)*

Relationship Influence on the Pre-service Teacher's Perception of the Feedback

Another important finding was the quality of the relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher affected the way feedback was perceived. The participants who had experienced a positive relationship with their supervising teacher described a similar approach to the way feedback was delivered. At times the feedback had a significant impact in building teaching confidence:

> *She (the supervising teacher) asked, "Can you save your Smartboard program on my hard drive?" And she told the Year 1 teacher next door and she said, "You need to save this on your hard drive." My teacher said, "I was really proud of you that you just decided to go for it." It was just a pretty proud moment. My confidence grew again,*

and so I decided to do another one the next day. She liked that one too. It was just a confidence boost. (Nicole, Cohort One)

The affirming power of the informal comments made by the participant's supervising teacher had a positive effect on the participant's confidence. Many of the elements which have been identified as being significant in a positive relationship between pre-service and supervising teachers such as the rapport, informal and formal communication, shared expectations, understanding the needs of the class and the recognition of good practice, were also evident in the formal and informal feedback the pre-service teacher received concerning their teaching practice. In a positive relationship, the pre-service teachers indicated that they were willing to accept the feedback even if they did not always agree with it:

My supervising teacher was very good and supportive. She was really friendly and welcoming. She was a good teacher. I would never criticise. I will just ask her maybe to clarify or give me an example if she can. Even if she told me something I didn't personally agree with. She'd say, "You know, that's not a good idea." I didn't say, "Oh, but I learnt that at uni." I'd just say "Okay," and that's what I took on to do for next time for the class. I took on her feedback. (Tara, Cohort Two)

It was shown that the strength of the relationship influenced the confidence of the participant to question and discuss the feedback given by her supervising teacher in an appropriate way. The results revealed when there was a rapport between the participants and supervising teacher, the participants responded to being treated as a teacher and an equal, by having the confidence to enter into professional dialogue about their practice, whilst exercising the professionalism required to disagree appropriately and respectfully without damaging the positive relationship. The affirming and constructive feedback which allowed for professional dialogue between two equals, enabled the participants to take risks to develop their own teaching style as described by Jessica from Cohort One:

I couldn't have done my prac without my supervising teacher. You need a lot of clarification from them. They have basically got it all and have to give it to you from their experience. For you to be able to

get that experience from them, that is the main aim of prac. It helps develop a teaching style and for them to help you become the best teacher you can be. (Jessica, Cohort One)

In contrast, where the relationship was not positive, this had a negative influence on perceptions of how feedback was received as described by Lisa from Cohort Two below, who experienced a poor relationship with her supervising teacher:

My prac was trying. I didn't get out of it want I really wanted. I got feedback but no constructive feedback whatsoever. The feedback was just shallow. I didn't know if I was doing the right things. I really would like to know what I am good at and what I am not good at as that helps me improve my teaching. (Lisa, Cohort Two)

4.4.6 Sub-Theme 6: Pre-service Teacher Resilience in the Professional Mentorship Component of the Relationship

Participants in both cohort focus groups identified the need for mentored support and guidance from their supervising teacher to develop their teaching competencies and their overall belief in their ability to be a teacher.

As has been highlighted in this study, mentoring by the supervising teacher was a fundamental influence in developing the pre-service teacher's professional learning. Participants who experienced a positive professional mentorship indicated that their confidence increased. When there was a lack of professional mentorship in the relationship, stress was placed upon pre-service teachers resulting in increased levels of anxiety.

However, the results also revealed that at times when pre-service teachers experienced a lack of mentoring support from their supervising teacher, a level of resilience developed which enabled them to gain this support from within themselves and other sources.

Key Elements and Strategies

The results revealed important key elements and strategies related to pre-service teachers' abilities to demonstrate resilience. These elements and key strategies listed below, were identified by 90% of participants as important in overcoming the

stress and resultant anxiety for pre-service teachers resulting from the lack of the effective mentored support from supervising teachers:

- Support for the teaching preparedness
- Differences in pedagogical beliefs
- Collegial support from other teachers
- Influence of the learning environment

Support for the Teaching Preparedness

Pre-service teachers in both cohorts identified the value of prior knowledge to effectively prepare for teaching. This was particularly important for Cohort One participants in their first professional experience placement due to their limited experience and teaching competencies. This was particularly evident in relation to being informed about the learning and behavioural needs of the class. Participants who experienced a positive professional mentorship relationship highlighted the value of their supervising teacher informing them of the learning and behavioural needs of the class. In contrast, focus group participants from both cohorts who experienced a poor professional mentorship relationship received little support in these areas as described in these Cohort One focus group comments:

> *I didn't know what to do and I didn't really know what procedures to follow. And that stress from prac actually did affect other things at home. I got a bit moody and angry and I'd yell at people, things like that. (Focus Group, Cohort One)*

> *I asked, "Are there any special needs?" She said, "I'm not telling you. You can work that out for yourself." I then asked, "Are there any gifted and talented kids that might need any extra help or something like that?" She said, "You can work that out yourself." I asked, "Are there any people who can't sit next to each other? She said, "I'll throw you in the deep end. It will give you experience of teaching." I thought, "Oh, this isn't settling at all. (Focus Group, Cohort One)*

The above statements demonstrated the stress placed upon a pre-service teacher when there is a lack of professional mentorship in the relationship. This stress is particularly evident when a pre-service teacher is in their first professional

experience placement, due to the lack of the pre-service teacher's teaching competencies. The results showed that in this type of situation, some pre-service teachers demonstrated resilience by focussing on their teaching and viewing it as an opportunity to develop their skills despite the limited feedback from their supervising teacher. In these circumstances, for a number of the participants, the lack of professional mentorship guidance and constructive feedback, may have adversely affected their teaching confidence. However, the opportunity to teach the class facilitated the development of resilience and teaching competencies. An example of this was the comment from a Cohort One participant whose anxiety level was reduced when the supervising teacher took time off in the final week of the professional experience. In this time the pre-service teacher took sole responsibility for the class. This focused her teaching skills and promoted her teaching confidence:

> *For me, my relationship with my supervising teacher was best when she took time off and wasn't in the room because it was just me and the kids. And the kids and I had a great dynamic and I loved the kids. When she wasn't there, they actually responded to me better and then I felt better by myself. (Focus Group, Cohort One)*

Differences in Pedagogical Beliefs

While resilience was evident across both cohorts, the results showed it varied depending on the level of experience of the pre-service teacher and the teaching circumstances. Several of the participants in the focus groups were placed in Primary classroom job share situations. In such placements, if two supervising teachers had similar pedagogical beliefs to the pre-service teacher, a good relationship between all three developed. However, where issues arose in the professional mentorship component of the relationship, the Cohort Two participants showed that their greater amount of professional experience provided the resilience and skills to manage more effectively than Cohort One. They were often able to find workable solutions to the relationship problems as shown in the example below:

> *And in my case I had two teachers, which was interesting. One I developed quite a strong relationship with from the get go. I had to*

sort of create two relationships at the one time as they were both opposites when it came to teaching. I had to keep them both happy. (Focus Group, Cohort Two)

The above comment highlighted the difficulty in having to balance relationships with two supervising teachers, who held different pedagogical beliefs and varying expectations in terms of lesson preparation, teaching and student management. The participant stated, "*there was always that sort of awkward tension in a way,"* balancing the relationships. However, as shown in the example above, the Cohort Two participant was able to *"keep them both happy"* as she had previous experience of having formed a relationship with her supervising teacher on her prior professional experience. This prior relationship experience enabled her to accommodate the pedagogical differences of her two supervising teachers and their differing expectations.

Collegial Support from Other Teachers

The individual interviews provided greater insights into how pre-service teachers demonstrated resilience when there was a poor professional mentorship component of their relationship with the supervising teacher.

The pre-service teacher indicated that they often relied on their own initiative to seek support. This was clearly demonstrated by Melissa from Cohort One. Despite affirming her teaching, the supervising teacher demonstrated a lack of professionalism and failed to provide the professional guidance she required to develop her teaching competencies:

He was so nice to me. He did nothing when it came to good teaching, however he would frequently compliment my classroom management abilities. He said that I was beyond my years. But he did nothing when it came to good teaching….he's not very nice to the children; he's completely disorganised. I hated it! But that was the sort of teacher he was. (Melissa, Cohort One)

The participant stated that her supervising teacher was welcoming and affirmed her teaching competencies. However, her comment *"He did nothing when it came to good teaching,"* highlighted an issue with the way the supervising teacher acted

professionally in terms of teaching preparation and good teaching practice along with the way he treated the students. As previously stated, pre-service teachers are looking for supervising teachers to demonstrate effective teaching practice, give guidance and provide constructive feedback. In Melissa's case, despite affirming her teaching, the supervising teacher failed to provide the professional guidance she required to develop her teaching competencies. The lack of professionalism led the participant to question the sincerity of his positive comments:

> *.... he generally had really nice things to say about me, so it does make me feel bad, but he said some bad things about other people in the school, including the principal. He's very two faced, so I don't know how much of it was genuine. (Melissa, Cohort One)*

The limited professional guidance identified by Melissa was consistent with the comments of other interview subjects who did not observe the supervising teacher demonstrating good teaching practice or engaging in professional dialogue. It was an interesting finding that when these two key elements in effective mentoring were missing, the participants demonstrated resilience by seeking positive mentoring relationships with other teachers on staff:

> *.... she inspired me. She's warm, she's compassionate and a good teacher. I definitely want to be a compassionate teacher. It was nice watching this particular person 'cause she's so softly spoken and she's so lovely. She is prepared and organised and gave me advice about teaching. (Melissa, Cohort One)*

Influence of the Learning Environment

The importance of establishing the professional mentorship component of the relationship with a supervising teacher was also evident in the experience of participants from Cohort Two. In a number of cases, despite having experienced positive and supportive mentoring relationships with previous supervising teachers, Cohort Two participants also identified the need to seek collegial support from other teachers to develop their professional learning.

This level of resilience was particularly important where the learning environment was unfamiliar or when the pre-service teacher was also unfamiliar with the pedagogical model and ability levels of the students. In this type of situation it was clear from the results, that where a supervising teacher seemed to be disinterested or lacking time to provide constructive advice, this lack of professional guidance negatively affected pre-service teachers' development.

The data also revealed that Cohort Two pre-service teachers were able to draw on their previous experience to demonstrate resilience and develop problem solving skills. An example of this was provided by a participant from Cohort Two who unfamiliar with the pedagogical approach in an open learning environment, located in a demographic where English was the second language. The participant described how the supervising teacher considered her to be another teacher in the open learning space, rather than a pre-service teacher on professional experience requiring professional guidance in a mentoring relationship:

> *I ended up kind of being another one of those teachers (in the room). I didn't try to implement my own behaviour management strategies which I did with my last prac. Just kind of happy for me to fit in. I had to adapt and make do with it all. (Rebecca, Cohort Two)*

Consistent with the findings related to Cohort One, the participant found she developed a professional mentorship relationship with the other teachers in the open learning space. The results indicated that this type of collegial support facilitated the confidence to teach effectively in the open space. In contrast to the experiences of Cohort One, the interview data showed that this type of collegial support enabled more experienced participants to work at a higher level of expertise and competence. As shown in the following comment, this resulted in the ability to recognise and value the team teaching approach:

> *.... the other teachers they were good and helped make it a learning experience. They asked me how I was feeling and helped with advice. I found the team teaching really beneficial, because you could have times where you could relax and bounce ideas off the teachers. (Rebecca, Cohort Two)*

The experiences of the participants discussed in this section, indicated that the lack of an effective professional mentorship in the pre-service and supervising teacher relationship impacted on the professional learning of the pre-service teacher during professional experience. However, participants who lacked the professional mentorship component of the relationship demonstrated resilience by applying effective strategies to overcome problems which arose. These included using a positive mindset focused on their own teaching as a catalyst to develop their expertise despite the limited support from the supervising teacher. Additionally, for Cohort Two pre-service teachers, previous experience provided a basis to develop the resilience to accommodate pedagogical differences. Across both cohorts, the resilience to seek positive relationships with other staff members facilitated problem solving and enabled the development of teaching skills and expertise. These key elements and strategies provided an opportunity for the participants described in this section to compensate for the lack of professional mentorship by their supervising teacher. However, the results also revealed that these strategies did not always produce the degree of professional learning identified by participants who experienced a positive professional mentorship relationship with their supervising teacher.

4.4.7 Summary of Theme 2

The professional mentorship theme highlighted the importance of supervising teachers providing support for the development of the teaching competencies of pre-service teachers. Key elements identified were the importance of clear communication of shared expectations, effective explanation of the needs of the class and the modelling of good teaching practice (see Section 4.4). Cohort One in the initial stages of their professional learning, perceived the professional mentoring by their supervising teacher as a sequenced introduction to the knowledge and skills needed to be an effective teacher. In comparison Cohort Two with their greater amount of professional experience, identified the benefit of receiving direct and constructive lesson evaluations and professional advice from their supervising teacher to improve their teaching practice.

Supervising teacher feedback was identified as being a key element of the pre-service teacher's professional learning (see Section 4.4.5). Both Cohort One and

Cohort Two participants indicated that they were influenced by feedback that was both affirming of their teaching performance and provided constructive advice on how they could improve their teaching practice. Permeating the professional mentorship relationship between pre-service and supervising teachers was the formal and informal nature of feedback. It should be noted that formal feedback and professional advice provided by supervising teachers was expected as part of the assessment component of the professional experience expectations.

An important finding of the study was that informal feedback was found to be influential and valued in both the interpersonal and professional mentorship components of the relationship. The results indicated that informal feedback was a significant element of the relationship as it was unsolicited by the pre-service teacher. It eased anxiety and affirmed teaching progress. In a positive professional mentorship relationship, the supervising teacher's comments and feedback affirmed the pre-service teacher teaching practice and enhanced professional dialogue within the learning environment.

Analysis of the data also revealed the inhibiting nature of an ineffective professional mentorship relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher and its impact on pre-service teacher professional learning. A key finding of the study was that those pre-service teachers in a poor mentoring relationship, were often able to demonstrate resilience to mitigate concerns (see Section 4.4.6). Developing a positive mindset towards their own professional learning and using their initiative to seek support from other teachers in the school community were shown to be beneficial strategies to compensate for the ineffective professional mentorship component of the relationship with the supervising teacher.

As outlined at the beginning of this chapter two sub-themes emerged from the analysis of the data, linked to the Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Aspect themes; the development of the pre-service teacher self-efficacy and the formation of their teacher identity. These two themes are outlined in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5

Results of the Focus Group and In-Depth Interview Analysis: Themes 3 and 4

5.1 Overview

As previously outlined in Section 4.2, analysis of the pre-service teacher focus groups and individual interview data revealed that the relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher influenced the development of the pre-service teacher's self-efficacy and emergent teacher identity. It was revealed in this exploratory study that the development of teacher self-efficacy and teacher identity were present in both the Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship components of the relationship. The interaction of the two components on the development of teacher self-efficacy and teacher identity was found to be interrelated and highly individualistic depending on the perceptual experiences of the pre-service teachers who participated in the study. This chapter reports on the results which revealed the influence of the pre-service teachers' interpretation of the influence of relationships with their supervising teachers on teacher self-efficacy development and teacher identity formation.

5.2 Theme 3: The Influence of the Relationship on the Development of Teacher Self-Efficacy

The data analysis found that when a sound interpersonal and professional mentorship relationship existed between the pre-service and supervising teacher, the pre-service teacher perceived a sense of trust by the supervising teacher in their teaching competencies. Furthermore, the pre-service teacher's perception of supervising teacher trust positively influenced their belief in their ability to teach, which resulted in an enhancement of their teacher identity leading to a confirmation of teaching as the correct career choice.

5.2.1 Sub-Theme 1: Development of Trust and Confidence in Pre-service Teachers' Ability to Teach

Analysis of the data from the Cohort One and Cohort Two focus groups and individual interviews indicated that a successful pre-service and supervising teacher relationship was identified by the participants through the strategies used by supervising teachers to build confidence in their teaching competencies. These included:

- provision of positive reinforcement and encouragement
- provision of guidance and support in lesson planning and preparation
- encouragement to the pre-service teacher to evaluate the supervising teacher's lessons
- extension of the pre-service teacher's teaching practice through collaborative goal setting
- provision of regular constructive verbal and written feedback
- use of non-verbal positive reinforcement.

Key Elements and Strategies

The reassurance provided by the supervising teacher's positive reinforcement consolidated the pre-service teacher's confidence which led to the development of their teaching competencies and teacher self-efficacy. This was expressed in the pre-service teacher's belief that they can effectively carry out the skills and functions of a teacher (Main & Hammond, 2008). The pre-service teachers identified two key elements related to supervising teacher trust as being influential towards the building of their teacher self-efficacy:

- Influence of supervising teacher trust on the development of teacher self-efficacy
- Methods supervising teachers implement to build trust and self-efficacy

Influence of Supervising Teacher Trust on the Development of Teacher Self-Efficacy

The focus group participants identified that a key aspect in the development of belief in their teaching competencies was the trust shown by the supervising teacher. Trust was demonstrated in a variety of ways and resulted in strengthened levels of teacher self-efficacy. Some participants commented that trust was initially shown when the supervising teacher was willing to have them teach the class during the professional experience:

> *And it's just developing that relationship so that they can trust you, trust that you do a good job as well because it's their class at the end of the day. (Focus Group, Cohort Two)*

Trust was also demonstrated when the supervising teacher was willing to let the pre-service teachers teach the class in their absence:

> *One of the weeks she was away because she wasn't well. She said, "I'm not going be there for the next three days, so I've left you the casual papers and everything that I want you to follow. You won't have a problem. Just go ahead with the schedule. You'll have a casual teacher in the room, but that is because that's what needs to happen." That built my confidence a lot! (Focus Group, Cohort Two)*

Participants from both cohort focus groups identified the importance of the trust that developed between the supervising teacher and themselves. This was especially evident when the supervising teacher was experiencing personal health issues and relied on the pre-service teacher to support them during a challenging time:

> *My teacher was losing her sight, it was a safety issue as well for the kids because she couldn't see. Since she couldn't see, I was actually helping her type out her reports, and when she had meetings with the children's parents. And she did give me that confidence to do it as well; that's the kind of teacher I want to be. (Focus Group, Cohort One)*

This participant's comments indicated the value of a strong positive relationship based on trust which resulted in the confidence to offer advice as seen below:

> *There was an autistic boy in the class. Because I was at a special school for autistic children in a previous community engagement, I was telling her little tips that my supervising teacher could use. She appreciated that. (Focus Group, Cohort Two)*

At times where a trusting relationship was established, the pre-service teacher felt confident to provide professional advice to their more experienced supervising teacher in a mutually beneficial environment of professional learning.

Methods Supervising Teachers Implement to Build Trust and Self-Efficacy

This opportunity for mutual learning was a positive outcome of the trusting relationship. The results revealed that trust which led to the development of teacher self-efficacy was demonstrated in a variety of methods by the supervising teacher. It was revealed that trust could come from something as basic as being responsible for the morning routine:

> *"You can let the kids into the class. They're all yours." Things like that, it's nice to hear. The first time, it's a bit like, "Oh no. Hopefully, it goes well. Hopefully, she's happy with the way I do it." And sometimes, it didn't work, but she still kept letting me have a go, and I think that was really good. She didn't put me down about it. (Diane, Cohort Two)*

The participant highlighted the importance of the supervising teacher's trust in her to conduct a classroom management procedure. Although daunted at first by having such a responsibility, the trust provided by the supervising teacher facilitated her teaching self-efficacy to develop.

Trust was also shown to be a key component in lesson planning and assessment of students. Vicki from Cohort One, described how her teaching efficacy grew when the supervising teacher trusted her to conduct the assessments:

She showed that she trusted me by letting me do some assessing that she needed done. I did some testing and without her hovering over me. She just gave me the instructions and a quick explanation, "Okay, off you go. Can you please do that for me one day?" (Vicki, Cohort One)

Lesson planning was another key area of teaching efficacy development. Many participants expressed the trust displayed by their supervising teacher when transitioning from reviewed lesson plans to planning their own lesson plans. This was clearly demonstrated in the comment below from Kelly from Cohort One, when her supervising teacher stopped looking at her lesson plans:

I wrote out my lesson plans and then I sent them to her. She read over them, but she only did that about two times and she didn't want to see them anymore, cause she said that I did them well enough and she trusted me. (Kelly, Cohort One)

The participant stated that she was surprised by the level of trust shown in her by her supervising teacher and commented on the positive effect of the trust:

It made me feel happy because - I was a bit proud 'cause I thought, "Oh I must be doing good if she doesn't want to see my lesson plans anymore. She must trust me." (Kelly, Cohort One)

For many participants, trust in lesson planning was even more influential when it included developing lesson plans directly from the supervising teacher's learning program, as experienced by Tara in Cohort Two, when expected to plan from the supervising teacher's program:

Well, she gave me the whole program to do, I guess, that showed that she trusted me a lot. She gave me the school laptop to take home to make a Smart Board activity on it. (Tara, Cohort Two)

The developing beliefs in their teaching abilities related to trust placed in the pre-service teacher was common across both cohorts.

5.2.2 Sub-Theme 2: Influence of Supervising Teacher Feedback on the Development of Teacher Self-Efficacy

The significance of feedback provided by the supervising teacher was a contributing factor in the pre-service teacher's professional learning in the professional mentorship component of the relationship. As previously identified, this feedback from the supervising teacher could be formal or informal in nature.

Key Elements and Strategies

The study revealed that positive and constructive supervising teacher feedback to the pre-service teachers demonstrated trust and confidence in the pre-service teacher's ability which enhanced their teacher self-efficacy. Feedback was also found to be a significant element that empowered pre-service teachers to take responsibility for the learning and take risks to develop their teaching:

- Feedback enhances pre-service teacher confidence and the development of teacher self-efficacy
- Empowering aspect of formal and informal feedback

Feedback Enhances Confidence and the Development of Teacher Self-Efficacy

Feedback in professional experience was shown to take many forms. Formal and informal feedback and positive reinforcement, were shown to be effective strategies to build teacher self-efficacy.

The participants of both cohorts identified positive reinforcement as being influential in the development of confidence. Positive reinforcement included the supervising teacher establishing a learning environment where pre-service teachers could explore their own teaching style:

> *I think there was one strategy when I was teaching I totally screwed up. I kind of looked at the teacher and she said, "It's okay go for it, keep going, don't worry about it, let it go, or start afresh or just move on." I think that was really helpful, because I didn't have to stop and get anxious about what I was doing. (Focus Group, Cohort One)*

Focus group participants described occasions when the supervising teacher provided informal comments about their teaching practice demonstrating a level of support, which resulted in increased teacher self-efficacy:

> *I made a smart board resource. She said, "That is the most amazing thing I've ever seen can you give me a copy?" Really it wasn't that big, but the fact that she's taking on my stuff, makes me feel so privileged, honoured and confident. (Focus Group, Cohort Two)*

This comment was representative of similar comments made by participants in both focus groups. The power of informal feedback along with the formal verbal and written feedback from their supervising teachers, helped to build the pre-service teachers' confidence and their belief in their ability to teach.

Overall, the informal feedback in the form of comments provided by the supervising teacher was shown to have a significant influence on pre-service teachers' self-efficacy. The informal feedback also had a positive impact on the participants' self-esteem as shown below:

> *The teacher said, "Hey look at the children at the moment, look at the students. They've learned something; they can tell you what they've learned." She said, "That's really good." That really boosted my self-esteem and confidence as a teacher and actually as a person in general. (Focus Group, Cohort Two)*

Participants measured their level of success based upon the feedback they received from their supervising teacher by making reference to comments the supervising teacher had made about their progress:

> *The teacher at the beginning said, "You need to practice behaviour management." By the end she said, "Beautiful, you've got student management strategies you can use for the rest of your life!" (Focus Group, Cohort Two)*

The participants of both cohort focus groups highlighted that the positive affirmation of their progress by the supervising teacher increased their confidence which enhanced the development of their teaching style.

The impact for both cohorts of positive and constructive feedback from the supervising teacher as an element of trust was a key component in the development of the pre-service teachers' self-efficacy. The individual interviews provided further insight into this area.

Twelve individual interview participants supported the findings of the focus groups related to feedback as a significant element in the pre-service and supervising teacher relationship, which resulted in increased teacher self-efficacy.

The participants provided a deeper understanding of both positive and negative potential influence of the feedback they received from their supervising teachers and how it could affect their teacher self-efficacy:

> *I think so, definitely because if they put you down or make you feel insignificant, or if you feel like they're criticising you not in a constructive way, and then you probably would avoid trying new things and trying different lessons. (Tara, Cohort Two)*

The individual interview data highlighted the influence of the range of feedback in developing the confidence to take risks to improve participants' teaching skills and competencies. This is further explained in the next section.

Empowering Aspect of Formal and Informal Feedback

The empowering influence of supervising teacher feedback was revealed in the interview data analysis. This was particularly evident when supervising teacher trust based on positive and constructive feedback, empowered some participants to take responsibility for teaching the class. This was especially effective where the pre-service teacher was given whole class responsibility due to the absence of the supervising teacher. Ashley from Cohort One, was one of a number of pre-service teachers who were given the responsibility for teaching the class, due to the prolonged ill health of their supervising teacher. Ashley highlighted the importance of the supervising teacher's affirmation of her teaching skills:

> *.... so positive in telling me how I was doing such a great job. She would just say things like, "You don't even seem like you're a prac*

student. You're just so confident. It's just natural to you." (Ashley, Cohort One)

The results showed that the supervising teacher's positive and constructive feedback empowered the pre-service teacher and enhanced their self-efficacy to perform fundamental teaching tasks effectively even though there were casual teachers in the classroom:

We made new table groups, to fit in with the new topic, so I had to set up the classroom. I wrote out the daybook and stuff and also had to prep the casual teacher. (Ashley, Cohort One)

The participant's increased confidence and self-efficacy from the positive feedback from her supervising teacher, enabled her to take the lead teacher role in the room and elicited further positive comments from significant others:

Awesome! My older sister's a teacher and she said, "I told you you'd be good at it." And my parents said, "Oh, you're doing so well." It was really good. (Ashley, Cohort One)

It was clear that the level of encouragement supervising teachers placed in the participants and the supportive positive feedback they received from significant others, consolidated and developed their teacher self-efficacy and empowered their teacher identity:

I just grew heaps in confidence - And again, it just made me want to just go out and start teaching - Just really confident - Just really good. (Ashley, Cohort One)

These types of situations, were shown in the results to offer opportunities to develop new skills and teaching styles:

I came out of that third week with a whole new level of confidence. Still using her management techniques, I'd tinkered a little bit. My different strategies and my different sort of thought processes and how I would try things a little bit different. It was huge for me.... (Mitchell, Cohort Two)

This participant who had responsibility for the class due to the supervising teacher absence, showed how the confidence placed in him by his supervising teacher increased his belief in his teaching abilities. The results revealed teacher self-efficacy facilitated the trialling of strategies in teaching and student management. The participant also highlighted the benefits of working collaboratively with other teachers in the community to build teacher self-efficacy:

> *It was our class's turn for school assembly, so we had to do that as well. I got some help from another grade teacher, having to manage that. Initially it was quite difficult to get my head around. It's quite hard having to organise something like that. (Mitchell, Cohort Two)*

The participant appreciated the support provided by other colleagues in the community. The influence of feedback on the development of teacher self-efficacy was highlighted in this following comment:

> *No doubt, in any positive feedback I'm always looking for affirmation if what I'm doing is the right thing. I think her saying to "Yes, you're ready for full days," confirmed I was ready. (Mitchell, Cohort Two)*

The results showed that the participant's experience of taking responsibility for the class with the confidence of their supervising teacher supported by positive feedback about the quality of their teaching, increased participants' teacher self-efficacy and gave them the opportunity to take risks to develop their teaching style. Even for pre-service teachers in Cohort One who had limited experience, the combination of positive and constructive feedback and trust was shown to be powerful. An example of this was revealed by Jessica, who was asked to take responsibility for the class for half a day, due to her supervising teacher being unexpectedly required at a meeting:

> *It was one of their normal classroom teachers and I took the class for the rest of the day. They liked me, "You know, we trust you enough." I never took anyone on my own. They felt comfortable enough to leave me in there and not rush off and have to find another teacher because it was very last minute. (Jessica, Cohort One)*

For the participant, this responsibility was daunting as she was in the initial stages of her professional experience. However, the confidence displayed in her ability by the experienced teachers and significant others in the school community, enabled Jessica to feel like a teacher at an early stage of her professional development:

> *The Principal recognised that I had done a good job and she came up to me after that and showed me how much she appreciated it. I thought it was a really good experience. It made me feel so good, like, I felt like a teacher. I felt like I'd finished my uni degree and everything. (Jessica, Cohort One)*

Confidence in the ability of the pre-service teachers demonstrated through the informal and formal comments made by the supervising teacher in their relationship with the pre-service teacher was a key contributing factor to the development of the pre-service teacher's teaching competencies and contributed towards their teacher self-efficacy.

5.2.3 Sub-Theme 3: Influence of Lack of Trust in Teaching Competencies and Negative Feedback

The results clearly showed the powerful influence of the development of trust and confidence in pre-service teachers' competencies, which was often conveyed through formal and informal feedback. This was shown to positively influence pre-service teachers' belief in their ability to teach and thus enhance their teacher self-efficacy.

However, the results also highlighted some examples of the negative impact when experiences between the supervising and pre-service teacher did not develop into a positive and trusting relationship. This was relevant across both cohorts.

While these negative experiences were not the case for thirteen of the eighteen of individual interview participants, the following examples provided a valuable insight into their effects on the emerging teacher self-efficacy of the pre-service teachers:

> *I feel that it held me back not having the best supervising teacher during my prac. I had a bad relationship and wasn't getting the*

support that the teacher is supposed to give. It was really hard to develop my confidence and feel prepared. I just did his style of teaching which is not what I actually aspire to be as a teacher. (Melissa, Cohort One)

It definitely made it more challenging not having a positive relationship with my teacher. I was confused and didn't know what was happening. I didn't know if I was doing the right thing or how it would impact on my teaching. Normally I am a very confident person but reflecting on my teaching and the situation I wasn't so confident. I kept questioning, "Am I doing it the right way?" (Elizabeth, Cohort Two)

5.2.4 Summary of Theme 3

The results revealed that when the participants perceived that they were trusted by their supervising teacher, that this had a significant influence on their confidence and the development of their teacher self-efficacy (see Section 5.2.1). Trust was perceived by the participants in a variety of ways including permission to implement basic classroom routines, conduct assessment activities, encouragement to plan lessons based on their pedagogical beliefs and teach the class in the supervising teacher's absence. Fundamental to the development of trust within the relationship, was the positive feedback supplied by the supervising teacher related to the participants' teaching competencies. These comments could be formal or informal resulting in the promotion of professional dialogue which enhanced the participants' professional learning. When the participants perceived that the supervising teacher approved of their teaching competencies this increased their self-efficacy and the development of their teaching style in a supportive environment (see Section 5.2.2).

5.3 Theme 4: The Effect of the Relationship on Emerging Teacher Identity and Career Confirmation

5.3.1 Sub-Theme 1: Recognition of Emergent Teacher Identity

Previous research has shown that pre-service teachers enter their initial teacher education course with a desire to become a teacher (Patrick, 2013; Wilks et al., 2019). This desire is often based on their previous educational experiences and their interaction with children during their lives. Many pre-service teachers at the start of their teacher education course have a sense of the type of teacher to which they aspire.

Key Elements and Strategies

The results of this study revealed that pre-service teachers want to be recognised as aspiring teachers eager to learn the knowledge and skills to be effective in the profession. This study found that the relationship pre-service teachers share with supervising teachers during professional experience, can influence the pre-service teacher's emerging professional teacher identity. Two key elements were revealed as being influential in the development of emerging teacher identity in the pre-service teacher:

- Recognition as a teacher by the supervising teacher
- Recognition of developing teaching competencies

Recognition as a Teacher by the Supervising Teacher

The participants of both cohort focus groups indicated that the pre-service teachers desired to be recognised as a teacher by the supervising teacher, school students and teaching staff. Focus group participants stated that being recognised as a teacher by their supervising teacher made them feel welcome, eased anxiety and consolidated their emerging teacher identity as described in this Cohort Two focus group comment:

> *I went in there and my supervisor said, "here's your desk and this is where you sit and everything. Feel free to walk around the classroom and do whatever you like. Everything is here for you." I just went in*

there and I had my own space. I knew where to put things; I knew where to go. (Focus Group, Cohort Two)

Recognition of pre-service teacher's emerging teacher identity was identified as an important aspect of the developing relationship with the supervising teacher. Cohort One focus group participants indicated that being involved in the lesson planning process with other teachers helped consolidate their sense of their emerging teacher identity and enhanced their confidence:

When it came to preparing lessons because there were two Kindergarten teachers and prac students we would get together and talk about what we were going to do next week and how we could integrate the lessons. I had a lot of freedom to plan and got all the help I needed to make the lesson. It gave me confidence that they had confidence in me. (Focus Group, Cohort One).

The participants highlighted the value of the professional learning that pre-service teachers received through collaborative lesson planning with other teachers. This supportive environment in which they were treated as teachers, promoted their professional learning and gave them the confidence to develop teaching competencies in lesson planning. Working collaboratively with colleagues is a fundamental aspect of a teachers' practice.

Participants in Cohort One individual interviews, indicated that even though it was their first professional experience, they desired to be valued as a teacher by their supervising teacher as seen in the following sample comment:

She was a great teacher, she let me observe and kept involving me and things like that. Just actually treated me as an equal, not just as a parent-helper or as a helper in the classroom. I was always the teacher so even when she was teaching, she would include me in lessons and explain her ideas of why she was doing things as she was going along. (Carly, Cohort One)

An interesting point to emerge from the results was the desire by Cohort One participants to be recognised as a teacher not just a pre-service teacher. The influence of this more equal relationship was shown in the following comment:

> *Well, that's why you're there. I guess if they didn't do that then you would be second-guessing your ability, your reasons to be there. If you're treated as an equal then that gives you confidence, it just reinforces your ideas. (Carly, Cohort One)*

Recognition of Developing Teaching Competencies

This recognition as a teacher on a more equal basis by the supervising teacher was revealed to be more profound in the Cohort Two individual interview participants due to their greater amount of professional experience. The Cohort Two participants articulated that recognition of their emerging teaching identity in the relationship enhanced the development of their own sense of teacher identity:

> *Well, she introduced me to the class, and introduced me as a teacher, like helping teacher, basically so that we're two teachers in the class, so she didn't say anything like "student teacher." I think she just wanted the kids to just see me as a teacher. After a while they really looked at me like I was their teacher as well. She was really inclusive and always asked me questions to get my opinion. (Diane, Cohort Two)*

Many participants identified the relationship with their supervising teacher as being instrumental to them feeling like a teacher. The participants valued the inclusive manner of the supervising teacher where they were involved in the daily teaching and decisions made. Tara from Cohort Two clearly identified the inclusive nature of her supervising teacher who wanted to get to know her and in particular, to understand what she wanted to learn from her professional experience:

> *She was really friendly, very welcoming and she took me around the school, introduced me to all the teachers by saying my name, not just "This is my prac student." She actually said my name, and she always used my name a lot. She let me take the kids in and out of the classroom each time and just really own the class. But I mean,*

from the get-go she was very, very good; really asked a lot of questions, really getting to know me, what I've learnt so far, and what I want to learn. She also, asked me what I wanted to gain from it. (Tara, Cohort Two)

A key strategy revealed was the effect of the participant's supervising teacher engaging in informal talk to get to know her as a person and to ascertain her professional goals and expectations. It was through this combination of knowing the pre-service teacher as a person and an emerging teacher, that the supervising teacher was able to effectively assist with her professional learning.

The link between recognition of emerging teacher identity by the supervising teacher leading to the enhancement of professional learning was clearly evident in the results. Interview data revealed that other elements were particularly important to Cohort Two pre-service teachers who were focused on future employment. Key elements included the organisation of the school and the support from other teachers. This was important for participants who wanted to be regarded as a teacher in anticipation of casual teaching in the future:

I would say, to come out ready to casual teach essentially; to have that confidence level where I could step into the classroom. Have a set of management tools I could use when I can casual teach. For me it was seeing different teachers with their different management approaches that was important. (Mitchell, Cohort Two)

As discussed, participants in both cohorts have highlighted the significance of the relationship with the supervising teacher and their recognition of the pre-service teacher's learning needs towards their professional learning. Where the supervising teacher recognised the participant's confidence and desire to be recognised as a competent teacher, the effect was positive as shown below:

She was quite confident I think, for me to handle, plan and teach lessons. From the beginning of the second week where we could teach full days, she said to me straightaway, "You're ready." I think the teacher and the school provided me every opportunity for me to

achieve my objectives. I felt comfortable when I left with the class as well. (Mitchell, Cohort Two)

The interview results show that supervising teacher's awareness of the ability and confidence of the pre-service teachers were key aspects in meeting the desire to be recognised as a teacher who was classroom ready. The contribution of the supervising teacher towards achieving his goals was recognised by many participants.

They also highlighted the significance of pre-service teachers being placed in schools with supervising teachers who recognise their emerging teacher identity, goals and provide opportunities for them to develop their teaching competencies.

Recognition as a teacher was highlighted as a significant aspect within the pre-service and supervising teacher relationship. Where the supervising teacher introduced the participant as a teacher to the class students and worked collaboratively towards the development of their professional learning, this enhanced their emerging sense of their teacher identity and contributed to consolidating their decision to become a teacher.

5.3.2 Sub-Theme 2: Connection of the Pre-service Teacher to the Professional Staff Community

Professional experience takes place within a school community comprising teachers, students and parents. The professional staff component of the school community involves teachers working collaboratively to enhance the learning outcomes of students. Pre-service teachers when they undertake professional experience become part of the staff community. The results showed that the interaction and interrelation of pre-service teachers into the school community was an important influence in their emerging teacher identity.

Key Elements and Strategies

The results of the study revealed that pre-service teachers can find interactions with the teaching staff an anxious experience. The participants identified three elements and strategies involving their relationship with their supervising teacher,

which helped them in their interactions and relationships with other teachers in the professional staff community:

- Inclusion in the professional staff community reduces interaction anxiety
- Strategies for building staff relationships are learnt over time
- Positive staff relationships promote collegial collaboration and professional learning

Inclusion in the Professional Staff Community Reduces Interaction Anxiety

Participants of both cohort focus groups highlighted that being included as a member of the staff professional community contributed to their emerging teacher identity. Both cohort focus groups' participants indicated that being introduced to the staff by the supervising teacher assisted their acceptance as part of the staff community as shown in the comment below:

> *My supervising teacher introduced me to all the staff. She took me around the school and made sure I met every single staff member. She really spent time with me during recess and lunch and made sure everything was going okay. She was just so friendly towards me and really made me feel welcome and at ease. (Focus Group, Cohort Two)*

Cohort One focus group participants in their first professional experience identified that relating to the staff community was a source of anxiety. Their lack of professional experience often led them to be less definite as to why this was the case, with limited explanation as to how they would manage with this aspect of their professional experience as described in this comment:

> *I would say some prac students find safety in associating with other students rather than mixing with the staff, because of their anxiety... (Focus Group, Cohort One)*

The Cohort One individual interviews identified a number of strategies supervising teachers used to ease the pre-service teachers' staff community anxiety. As shown below, supported interaction in the staff room was an effective strategy.

The supervising teacher made direct connections for the pre-service teacher with the staff community:

> *.... she'd invite me to sit next to her. There were a lot of times when she wasn't in the staff room, I felt I couldn't sit at the main table. I clung onto her when were in the staff room, so I sat down next to her. She did introduce me a lot to other teachers, but if she didn't introduce me to one teacher, she'd just start talking and then I'd feel invited to talk as well. (Nicole, Cohort One)*

Reduction of pre-service teacher anxiety has been highlighted as a significant aspect in this study by the participants in their relationships with supervising teachers. As outlined above, an awareness by the supervising teacher of the participant's staff interaction anxiety was an important element. The supervising teacher made the connection for the participant to other teachers to reduce the participant's anxiety and this was revealed as an effective strategy. The importance of the supervising teacher taking time to introduce other members of the staff and orientating the pre-service teacher to the school was another strategy which influenced the emerging sense of teacher identity as shown in the following example:

> *She made me feel involved from the first day. She introduced me to all the teachers and took me on a tour of the school. And set me up with an interview later with some Assistant Principals.... Just by setting up other networks, when I had a question about support staff, she would directly take me to the staff and go, "This is Gail, she does our learning support. If you want, would you like to have a chat with her for a few minutes?" (Vicki, Cohort One)*

The results revealed the effectiveness of the supervising teacher supporting staff relationships, by introducing participants to teaching staff and ensuring they were included in conversations. The inclusive nature of the supervising teacher was also shown to be valuable in providing support and professional learning relationships:

> *She always included me in the conversations and she always made sure that I wasn't left out. When I sat at a table at lunch time if I had any questions and she didn't know how to answer it, she'd ask it to someone else. So, I got support from everyone. (Kelly, Cohort One)*

As can be seen in the results outlined above, the introduction and connection of the pre-service teachers to the staff community were particularly important for Cohort One participants. The more experienced Cohort Two pre-service teachers provided greater insight through their responses outlined below.

Strategies for Building Staff Relationships are Learnt Over Time

Cohort Two's greater professional experience gave a deeper insight into how the influence of the social dynamics of the staff community based upon their learning from their prior professional experience. The results indicated that they felt that depending on the personality of the teachers and the culture of the school, the staffroom could be described either as a welcoming or an uncomfortable environment. Concerns were expressed by 60% of the participants in Cohort Two, about being accepted by the other teachers. They spoke of fears of "*mistakenly sitting in someone's chair, whether or not to put something in the fridge* or *should they pay towards the cost of the tea or coffee they drank?"* Although minor, the results showed these issues tended to make the pre-service teachers anxious as they did not wish to offend the staff members as seen in this comment:

> *I noticed on my last prac that we had a long staff room table and me and other prac students would kind of sit on the end. It's a little bit awkward at first. I remember asking, "Is it ok if I put my food in the fridge or just grab a cup from the cupboard?" or something like that, because I'd feel bad for using their coffee. (Focus Group, Cohort Two)*

Cohort Two participants identified the learning from their previous professional experience as valuable in being accepted by the staff community during their placement. The participants suggested strategies they felt could be successful for pre-service teachers in being accepted by the staff community including, "*asking before sitting in a chair, mingle rather than sit with other pre-service teachers,"* and

"*participate in conversations."* The participants indicated they found being active participants in the unfamiliar social situation of adults of varying ages daunting, but with effort they could effectively participate socially with teachers in the staff community as described in this example:

> *I found the beginning of the prac, you do sort of stay with your student teacher group, you don't, really venture out. They sort of stuck together. But we talked to a few more of the teachers in the staffroom. It was a lot easier by the end of prac. (Focus Group, Cohort Two)*

Overall, the Cohort Two participants identified the benefits of taking a proactive approach. The results clearly showed their awareness of the need to build a relationship with other teachers through engaging in conversations with teachers in the staffroom and making connections in which their teacher identity was strengthened.

Positive Staff Relationships Promote Collegial Collaboration and Professional Learning

Another key element to emerge from the results was the influence of positive staff relationships related to professional learning. Once a relationship with the staff was established, the individual interview participants from both cohorts commented on the professional learning support they received from teachers in the school community. They recognised the professional benefits which came from establishing relationships with the teachers in the school community. This included the positive benefits of professional support from other teachers through the role that the supervising teacher plays as a link to the staff community:

> *I guess she sort of introduced me to all the other staff members, just little things, like showing me where everything is, especially with my stage that I was on. I felt comfortable going in to all their rooms and asking for things, or even just having a chat about teacher things in the staff room. (Joanne, Cohort One)*

As shown above, the results highlighted the link between the interpersonal informal discussions and professional dialogue as a key part of the pre-service teacher's

professional learning. When established by a supervising teacher, the relationship with a professionally supportive staff was shown to be a positive benefit to pre-service teacher's professional learning:

> *I'd walk into the staff room and my supervising teacher would introduce me to other teachers. She's said to the other teacher, "My student teacher was interested in this. I was wondering if you would like to talk to her about it." They were always willing to offer us advice or just to say "How's today going?" "How is your lesson?" "What are you doing next week?" Just always welcoming and friendly. (Vicki, Cohort One)*

> *I think the staff have a massive impact on your professional experience, not just your supervising teacher but the staffroom as a whole. The staff this year were amazing. They said "Welcome to the team" and when I finished "See you next year when you're casual teaching." You might have a good supervising teacher, but you also need a good staff behind you to be successful. (Anna, Cohort Two)*

As outlined in the comments above, the data indicated that establishment of a relationship with the staff community was a source of anxiety for pre-service teachers. Cohort One in their first professional experience were shown to rely primarily on the supervising teacher as the conduit through which relationships with the staff were formed. The results showed that once the relationships had been established through the supervising teacher, the Cohort One participants were able to further develop these relationships and reduce anxiety. In contrast, Cohort Two used learnt strategies from their prior professional experience to help build a rapport with their supervising teacher and developed a relationship with the staff community. It is evident from the data that despite the varying levels of professional experience of the two cohorts, that the supervising teacher contributed to the establishment of relationships with the staff community, which ultimately reduced anxiety and benefited the professional learning of pre-service teachers through the interpersonal and mentoring support of the staff. This was shown to support their emerging teacher identity.

5.3.3 Sub-Theme 3: Contribution of the Relationship to Teacher Identity Formation

The results detailed in the previous section indicated that the relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher contributed to the pre-service teacher's emerging professional teacher identity formation. This study found that the participants often had a basic concept of the type of teacher they wanted to be based upon their observation of former teachers they admired. The relationship with their supervising teacher was shown to have a positive or negative influence on the further development of their sense of teacher identity depending on the interactions which occurred.

Key Elements and Strategies

Analysis of the data revealed that there were three significant elements of the student and supervising teacher relationship which contributed towards or inhibited the formation of their pre-service teacher's professional identity:

- Emerging teacher identity inspired by former teachers
- Supervising teacher influence on teacher identity formation
- Inhibiting influence of the supervising teacher relationship on teacher identity formation

Emerging Teacher Identity Inspired by Former Teachers

The results revealed many pre-service teachers entered the initial teacher education course with a limited concept of their teacher identity. Both cohort focus groups' participants were able to relate the influence of positive experiences that they had with certain teachers when they were at school as a student themselves. This was shown to often result in the inspiration to become a teacher encapsulated in the comment below:

> *I want to be that kind of teacher that inspires others, because she inspired me to be a teacher, because I wanted to be like her and I learnt a lot from her. She was just really nice and she made all her lessons fun. Everything was exciting. I feel like I learnt a lot from her. (Focus Group, Cohort One)*

These positive experiences were identified by the participants as their motivation to pursue a career as a teacher:

> *I think that's why we're all primary school teachers, because we all had good primary experiences, because if we had not had positive experiences, it would probably steer us away from going back to primary school. (Focus Group, Cohort Two)*

The participants reflected on the personal and professional teaching qualities that these inspirational teachers displayed and which they admired:

- Being excited about being a teacher
- Building an inclusive class community
- Being caring and tolerant
- Making learning enjoyable
- Being helpful.

Participant comments largely described their emerging teacher identity in interpersonal component terms rather than related to teaching competencies:

> *I'd like to be a helpful teacher, obviously in teaching but also help in every area of the students' lives. I want them to be able to trust me and be comfortable around me so they see me as a supportive person as well as a teacher. I want to make learning fun and be an engaging teacher.* (Jessica, Cohort One)

> *I want to have a good relationship with the kids. I'd like to acknowledge the kids when they work hard. I'd like to be a caring, approachable and supportive teacher.* (Tara, Cohort 2)

This strong affective side of the teacher identity was evident when the participants were asked to identify their sense of their own teacher identity at this stage of their training. Despite the difference in the level of experience between the two cohorts, the responses were similar with affective qualities dominating their response. Key elements highlighted included: *enthusiastic, caring, creative, engaging, confident, resourceful, supportive, approachable, knowledgeable, fun, exciting, memorable and inspirational.* The participants particularly identified the

memorable quality as having a significantly positive influence on the lives of students they taught. The strength of this aspect of their teacher identity was reflected in the way teachers influence students' lives:

> *They're like little balls of potential. What was that lecture where someone said, "What was the most influential and important job in the world?" Everyone said, "the President or whatever." Then they said, "no, it's teachers". So I guess that sums it up. We shape the Presidents of the future. They go through us one day. (Focus Group, Cohort One)*

The sense of teacher identity being initially formed from the influence of significant former teachers was consistently evident across both cohorts.

Supervising Teacher Influence on Teacher Identity Formation

The ongoing formation of teacher identity was clearly linked by both cohorts to the quality of the pre-service and supervising teacher relationship. Following their professional experience, both cohort focus groups identified how the establishment of a supportive interpersonal learning environment, was built upon a positive relationship with their supervising teacher and contributed to the development of their emerging teacher identities:

> *Something that was really helpful for me which I realised was beneficial, was that she actually gave me my own unit to teach. I got to go from the beginning through the stages of planning, presenting, assessing and reporting back to her. That was really good for me. Just to be my own kind of teacher. She gave me advice and it was good to have that kind of flexibility. That made me feel really comfortable as a teacher. (Focus Group, Cohort One)*

The statement above identified a correlation between the interpersonal component of the pre-service teachers' teacher identity and the positive influence of the relationship with the supervising teacher that emerged from 80% of the participants during professional experience. This included the building of a rapport in the relationship with the pre-service teachers, based upon trust. The results

highlighted further elements of the relationship with the supervising teacher, which enabled the pre-service teachers to consolidate their emerging teacher identity:

- Trust shown by the supervising teacher
- Encouragement to experiment with their teaching
- A collaborative rather than controlling approach to the relationship
- A supportive and encouraging environment
- Provision of constructive feedback about their teaching
- Supervising teacher modelling of teaching practice, organisation and student management.

These key elements above were consistently identified across both cohorts. The results indicated that positive relationships with the supervising teacher enhanced pre-service teachers' emerging teacher identity. The freedom to develop their own teacher identity based upon mutual trust was clearly revealed as shown in this comment below:

> *I felt I don't have to be this person. I don't have to be like this person. I can be the best teacher that I can be. And my teaching style will develop through time and my experiences. (Focus Group, Cohort One)*

The individual interviews provided an opportunity for a deeper exploration of how the relationship contributed to teacher identity formation. Consistent with focus group discussions, when asked about their teacher identity the individual interview participants invariably started with the interpersonal elements. In depth questioning during the individual interviews revealed that teaching competencies, were seen to be especially important in the formation of their teacher identity. These included competencies related to *content knowledge, differentiated tasks, integrated work, reflective of practice, constructivist, effective student management, good communicator, organisation* and *technology orientated*.

Analysis of the individual interviews indicated there was a close link between the Cohort One participants and the teacher identities displayed by their supervising teachers. Cohort One participants who had positive relationships, valued key elements of the teacher identity of their supervising teacher as described below:

The relationship she had with her kids, - It was friendly. It was compassionate, but it was also that kind of teacher-professional as well. She was always balanced and the way she treated the kids, it was beautiful. It was respectful. She was organised, but also, she was human. She did make mistakes and she was unorganised sometimes. But she was really comforting. The way she involved me in the staffroom was helpful. (Nicole, Cohort One)

In common with the thirteen positive relationship individual interview participants, the comment from the pre-service teacher above identified with the interpersonal attributes of her supervising teacher's identity which she wished to incorporate into her own identity as a teacher. She also found some faults but they are minor in comparison. The impression the supervising teacher created on the participant was a powerful influence as outlined by Nicole from Cohort One:

I want to be like my supervising teacher. I wrote her a card at the end of the block and I said, "I want to be a teacher like you, exactly like you." She was amazing. She was just who I wanted to be. (Nicole, Cohort One)

The influence of the interpersonal aspects of the participant's supervising teacher on emerging identity was consistently expressed across both cohorts:

I'd like to be a teacher like my supervising teacher. Obviously, a quality teacher, but I'd like to be a teacher that my children can come to me, to have that relationship of trust, to be a fair teacher; to be a teacher that encourages students to reach that next level. (Vicki, Cohort One)

In contrast, Cohort Two individual interview participants in their second professional experience tended to make comparisons between their current and prior supervising teachers in relation to teacher identity and the identity of the supervising teacher as highlighted by the sample comment below:

I really liked the way my supervising teacher taught the kids, and some of the qualities she had. She really focused on the positives. My supervising teacher last year just focused on the negatives. I

noticed there were better outcomes in student relationships if you focus on the positives. (Diane, Cohort Two)

I learnt a lot from the teacher this year. Last prac the teacher was OK, but she just yelled at the kids and they weren't allowed to do anything. But this year it was complimenting when doing the right things and focus on the positives. The teacher was really smart, she was really amazing. Her modelling is so good. I learnt a lot. (Tara, Cohort Two)

Comparison between the comments of the two cohorts indicated that during their first professional experience, pre-service teachers were more strongly influenced by the aspects of the teacher identity of the supervising teacher. Whereas pre-service teachers in their second professional experience were more discerning about the elements of their supervising teacher's teacher identity which they wished to adapt. This discernment was revealed in the results to be based on a greater understanding of their own teacher identity shaped over time during their professional experience.

However, it was shown that supervising teacher identity discernment did begin during the initial professional experience, where the participants were clearly able to identify elements to which they related and those elements to which they did not value. This was clearly captured in the following comment:

The good thing about having the supervising teacher is you see in them some things that you want to be like and perhaps some other features that you don't want to be like. (Brooke, Cohort One)

It was clearly shown in the interview comment above that having completed professional experience, the pre-service teacher was able to be pragmatic about what she could learn about her own teacher identity by observing and assessing the teacher identity of her supervising teacher. This highlighted that not every element displayed by the supervising teacher's identity applied to her own teacher identity.

This ability to evaluate the key elements that the pre-service teachers trusted to incorporate in their own teacher identity was shown to be clearly influenced by the

supervising teacher. The supervising teachers were seen to contribute through the inclusive way they involved the pre-service teacher as a fellow professional in terms of the class and the staff as shown in the following comment:

> *He referred to me as "Sir." By doing this the students automatically think that I'm already a teacher.... It feels good because you're actually starting to realise you're becoming a teacher. (Nick, Cohort One)*

Supervising teacher feedback in the form of positive feedback was also shown to consolidate emerging teacher identity:

> *She regards me as a teacher as well. When I got to the classroom, I didn't feel like just a prac student. The kids didn't treat me like just a prac student either. They actually treated me like a staff member at the school. (Tara, Cohort Two)*

An interesting result to emerge was when the supervising teacher recognised the participants' emerging teacher identities within the provision of constructive feedback, the pre-service teachers were more willing to take risks with their teaching in a learning environment where they would be supported by their supervising teacher. This facilitated the participants to incorporate the aspects of the supervising teacher practice they admired, yet at the same time develop their own teaching style as Brooke describes below:

> *I found her teaching style was more on the traditional side. Whereas I would want to try being more constructivist, I guess, in my teaching approach. I definitely looked up to her as a teacher, and that is something I would like to be like as well. (Brooke, Cohort One)*

Sixteen individual interview participants in both cohorts stated the understanding that their teacher identity was still developing. The participants recognised they still have a great deal to learn about their teaching practice and the profession as expressed by the following Cohort One participant:

> *I feel like I'm getting there. I don't think I can honestly say that I'm there. I would love to say it, but I don't think that would be honest to*

say I'm fully there. There's still a lot of learning to do but I feel like I'm definitely heading down that path. (Vicki, Cohort One)

The participant comments reflected that their emerging teacher identity, would take time and experience in the profession to be fully realised.

Inhibiting Influence of the Supervising Teacher Relationship on Teacher Identity Formation

In contrast to the influence of positive relationships with the supervising teacher in consolidating emerging teacher identity, a small number of participants in both cohorts experienced poor relationships with their supervising teachers. These participants, due to the difficulties they experienced in their relationship with their supervising teachers were teaching to meet the professional experience expectations in order to cope. An example of this was one participant who was placed in a situation where the supervising teacher was an inexperienced teacher who lacked the professional knowledge to mentor the participant and lacked the confidence to make decisions. This type of scenario resulted in participants teaching to simply complete the professional experience requirements rather than developing and enriching their teaching style as described by Elizabeth:

I had to just put some things in place to calm myself down, and just roll with it, and just do what I could to get through those four weeks and make it the best experience I could. (Elizabeth, Cohort Two)

In this type of experience, the results showed that the participant focused on meeting required expectations due to the poor relationship, rather than developing their teaching style in accordance with their teacher identity. Another result to emerge was that where participants did not experience a positive interpersonal relationship with their supervising teacher, they often received non-constructive feedback. In these circumstances, participants tended to model their teaching style to match the style of the supervising teacher to meet expectations:

I didn't come up with many creative, cool things as I did last year. It was what needs to be done. I'd use the same things in my voice, tones of my voice as my supervising teacher. I'd use the same phrases that she would use. I'd start giving the same responses and

doing the same jokes that she would do, so she wouldn't have a problem with me doing it. (Lisa, Cohort Two)

The participant above who did not have a positive relationship with her supervising teachers indicated that she lacked the confidence to take risks to develop her teaching. She felt that she was unable to explore her teaching style to inform and confirm her teacher identity. As shown in the comments below this result was not related to the differing teaching levels of the cohorts. Rather, the participants linked this experience directly to the quality of the relationship. Melissa from Cohort One and Rebecca from Cohort Two described how a poor relationship experience resulted in teaching to meet expectations, inhibited the development of teacher identity and negatively impacted the pre-service teacher's professional learning:

I did what was totally against what we were learning but that was the sort of teacher my teacher was. I did a traditional approach at the front of the room, just chalk and talk and handouts. It wasn't beneficial for the children and they weren't learning. That's not exactly what I aspired to be as a teacher. (Melissa, Cohort One).

I just took on board everything that they just did and kind of moulded myself into how they taught and how they wanted it structured (in the open classroom) just like them and not how I wanted to teach. I feel very nervous and unprepared about my casual teaching next year because I don't feel like I've had the experience that I should have. (Rebecca, Cohort Two)

Both comments highlight the impact of a poor relationship with the supervising teacher related to developing teacher identity and professional learning. The participants revealed that teaching in a similar style to the supervising teacher was aimed to please them, rather than to develop teaching expertise and teaching identity. Similarly, Rebecca's comment about how she "*moulded myself into how they taught and wanted it structured,"* supported Melissa's comment about the negative impact of a poor relationship. This had a negative impact on the overall professional learning.

The results revealed when a positive relationship was experienced with supervising teachers who exhibited valued elements of the pre-service teacher's ideal teacher identity, this enhanced and facilitated the pre-service teacher's sense of their own teacher identity. The results also indicated exposure to a number of different teacher identities of supervising teachers during professional experience placements, provided the opportunity for pre-service teachers to reflect and make comparisons between the varied elements of teacher identities. This was shown to influence and support the refinement of their own teacher identity.

5.3.4 Sub-Theme 4: Relationship Indicators of Teacher Career Confirmation

Participants from both cohort focus groups found that the influence of the supervising teacher comments related to teaching as career confirmation was significant when participants related the comments to transitioning into the teaching profession.

Key Elements and Strategies

During their professional experience, the pre-service teachers received diverse feedback related to their progress from their supervising teachers. The participants identified two key elements of the feedback related to career confirmation and development:

- Feedback providing confirmation of teaching as the correct career choice
- Feedback providing guidance for future career direction

Feedback Providing Confirmation of Teaching as the Correct Career Choice

The results of this study showed that the development of teacher identity was linked closely to the belief of pre-service teachers in their choice of teaching as a career. The data analysis revealed 70% of the participants commented the supervising teachers had positively confirmed their decision of teaching as a career choice. The focus group results revealed that this was particularly relevant when pre-service teachers in professional experience were placed with a supervising teacher who displayed similar teaching and personal qualities to past and inspirational teachers in their lives. Participants commented that when the

supervising teacher displayed teaching and personal characteristics to which they aspired, that this helped them confirm their career choice as a teacher:

> *Last prac I didn't know. I didn't know if I wanted to be a teacher or if I was being the right sort of teacher; but now I know that I can be the teacher that I want to be because my supervising teacher this time was exactly like me. (Focus Group, Cohort Two)*

The focus group participants indicated that a successful professional experience confirmed they were a teacher and teaching was the correct career choice. This was shown to be directly related to the quality of the relationship established with the supervising teacher. The comment below clearly identified the importance of a positive relationship on whether teaching was the correct career choice:

> *On my first prac I had no support from my supervising teachers. They both had other responsibilities and didn't have time for me - I learnt nothing. I didn't know if I wanted to continue. This prac I wanted a positive experience, so I could decide if I wanted to be a teacher. (Anna, Cohort Two)*

The participant developed a positive relationship with her supervising teacher in her second teaching professional experience. This was a typical example of the influence of the relationship on teacher career confirmation:

> *Amazing! I will be a teacher! It was really, really good, and I feel it was all the supervising teacher. From the beginning, you could see she was there to offer support. (Anna, Cohort Two)*

The comment above showed how career confirmation was often identified in the results as being influenced through positive feedback. The participants often attributed teacher confirmation directly to the supportive relationship established with the supervising teacher:

> *I think that key person was my teacher, my supervising teacher. She was absolutely amazing. She was the ideal teacher that I had in my mind. She's said, "You really should be a Primary teacher. I think you're more than capable. All these self-doubts that you have are*

unexplained because the things I see you doing in class contradict it." And that also helped me gain my own confidence in deciding whether I wanted to do Primary teaching or not. (Nicole, Cohort One)

Thirteen individual interview participants that experienced a positive relationship with the supervising teacher reported that this helped them develop their confidence. This then increased their sense of their teacher identity, which contributed to confirmation of teaching as the correct career choice.

Feedback Providing Guidance for Future Career Direction

As outlined above, confidence in teaching as a career choice had positive effects for pre-service teachers. The focus group participants commented that by the end of the professional experience they were looking to their future careers. Where this forward looking process was encouraged by the supervising teacher, this was particularly influential. The results showed this was relevant across both cohorts as shown in these two comments:

My teacher said as soon as I get my teacher number, I should let him know 'cause he books the casual teachers.' (Focus Group, Cohort One)

Personally, my teacher said to me, "I want to put your name straight on the casual list." That was a good thing for me. (Focus Group, Cohort Two)

The focus group participants identified that informal feedback and encouragement to apply for casual teaching at the school, following their professional experience, contributed to their career confirmation. This was particularly powerful where participants such as Adele below, identified the supervising teacher's trust, which enhanced their confidence and teacher identity

And then I got offered a job teaching, not that class, but another Year Six class... So I think when that happened, that showed me that they - not just my supervising teacher but the Assistant Principal and others who had seen me, that I was a capable teacher and that they

trusted me with a class of my own. I think that was massive - I was actually really shocked when they offered it to me. It boosted my confidence massively and showed that they trust me as a teacher. (Adele, Cohort Two)

The confirmation of her teacher identity and career choice through a positive relationship with the supervising teacher was an important influence on teacher identity as Adele explains in the following comment:

I had a successful prac where my supervising teacher showed confidence in me and made me really realise "Yes I am a teacher and yes I am a capable teacher." (Adele, Cohort Two)

A successful professional experience built upon a positive pre-service and supervising teacher relationship, allowed the pre-service teacher to envision their future professional teacher career confident in their own teacher self-efficacy and teacher identity:

I'm also hoping to make some good connections out in the teaching world, to try and get around to some local schools near me; get my face out there and make a good impact, so they'll think about me for casual work or things like that later on - I would like to be known as a quality teacher. (Vicki, Cohort One)

5.3.5 Summary of Theme 4

A key finding to emerge from the data from the focus groups and individual interviews was a desire from the pre-service teachers for their supervising teachers, to recognise their emerging teacher identity and respect them as an equal and to work with them in a proactive and affirming relationship (see Section 5.3.1). This desire for the recognition of their teacher identity was evident in the inexperienced Cohort One participants and it contributed to developing their confidence towards their teaching related tasks in their first professional experience as they learnt the art of teaching. Cohort Two having already undertaken a professional experience and supervising teacher relationship, built upon their increased confidence (see Section 5.3.2). They applied the positive aspects of being recognised as a teacher to further enhance their teaching

competencies. However, the data also highlighted that a poor or negative relationship with the supervising teacher was shown to have a detrimental impact upon the participants' professional learning. At times participants were able to gain support by substituting missing elements of the relationship from significant others in their professional and personal lives to meet professional experience expectations. However, the overall result indicated limited development of their teacher identity and lower levels of confidence in their choice of teaching as a career.

The final finding was that where a positive relationship existed between the pre-service and supervising teacher, the participants interpreted this as confirmation of themselves as a teacher and teaching as the correct career choice (see Section 5.3.4). The participants' career confirmation interpretation was based on the trust within the relationship developed from the positive feedback they received from the supervising teacher. Within a relationship of trust, the participants' teacher identity was shown to be enhanced which resulted in the further confirmation of teaching as the correct career choice.

The key findings of the four themes which emerged from the study into the relationship of the pre-service and supervising teacher, are discussed in the following Chapter 6 in light of the literature related to the current context of the teaching professional experience.

Chapter 6

Discussion of Key Findings

6.1 Overview

In this chapter, an overview of the findings of the study is presented along with a discussion of the results. The discussion focuses on the key results to emerge from the detailed analyses presented in Chapters 4 and 5. It highlights the pre-service teachers' interpretations of their experiences in their relationships with their supervising teachers during the professional experience component of their teacher education program and the influence of these experiences on their professional learning.

As previously detailed in Section 3.6, two cohorts were investigated; Cohort One completed their first in-school professional experience and Cohort Two had completed their second professional experience.

The three key research questions examined in this study are as follows:

> *1. What are pre-service teachers' experiences of their relationship with their supervising teacher during professional experience?*
>
> *2. What are the interpretations and meaning made by preservice teachers in these relationship experiences?*
>
> *3. How do these experiences influence pre-service teachers' professional learning and development as teachers?*

6.1.1 Introduction

This research was based in the broader theoretical framework of Symbolic Interactionism and their meanings made through their interpretation of their interactions with others. In the school professional experience environment, Symbolic Interactionism is evident in the ways in which pre-service teachers

interpret their perceptions of the communication and social interactions with their supervising teachers and how they respond to the meaning created.

The seminal research by Herbert Walberg (1976) related to the psychology and influence of learning environments was found to be particularly relevant to this study. The results supported his findings and that of subsequent research into classroom relationships (Evans et al., 2009; Frenzel et al., 2007; Kelly, 2010; Kennedy, 2006; Pech, 2010), that perceptual learning takes place through an individual's interpretation of the interactions within the setting and the social relationships they experience. In this environment, an individual's learning is affected by their interactions with others (Walberg, 1976). This psychological aspect related to perceptual learning, was found to be especially pertinent to the relationship experiences of pre-service teachers with their supervising teachers during professional experience. The results of this study reinforced this finding in relation to effects of the relationship on pre-service teachers' willingness to take risks with their teaching to enhance their own teaching style and consequently provide them with the opportunity to enact and refine their teacher identity.

Two key environment linked dimensions proposed in the earlier work of Moos (1974) and subsequent studies by Evans et al. (2009), Kelly (2010) and Lorsbach and Jinks (1999), that is, relationships and personal development, were also supported by this study. The perceptions and interpretation of the varied experiences in the relationship formed with supervising teachers directly influenced the emotions related to teaching experienced by the pre-service teachers; this affected their personal learning. Furthermore, the interrelated roles of the pre-service and supervising teachers and the variable understandings developed resulted in relationship experiences which influenced both the personal and professional learning. The way the pre-service teachers interpreted and mediated their perception of these interactions within the professional experience environment, contributed to their degree of professional learning and the maintenance of their perceived level of success in their professional experience.

6.2 Outline of the Findings

Those participants who perceived and interpreted a positive relationship with their supervising teacher, also identified an increased level of professional learning and a strengthening of their belief in their teaching abilities (see Section 5.2.3). This was in contrast to those participants who perceived they experienced a negative relationship with their supervising teacher. These pre-service teachers interpreted their professional learning, teacher self-efficacy and subsequently teacher identity formation as being inhibited by the negative nature of the relationship (see Section 5.2.3).

When pre-service teachers perceived and interpreted that a positive relationship was established with their supervising teachers, then the learning environment became productive and the pre-service teachers felt confident to explore their own teaching style (see Section 4.4.2). This then acted to enhance or confirm their sense of themselves as a teacher and to strengthen their overall belief in their ability to teach. However, for the participants who perceived and interpreted a negative relationship with their supervising teacher, the results indicated that the opposite effect occurred. These participants reported that their professional learning was hindered due to their teaching confidence being threatened. They identified what could be called a 'teaching for survival mode,' which negatively impacted on the development of their own teaching style and the formation of their teacher identity (see p. 171).

As described in the Results Chapters 4 and 5, a multi-layered structure of influence was revealed in the investigation of the relationship between the pre-service and supervising teachers. This level of complexity and diversity evident in this structure of influence was an important finding of this study. This is discussed in the following sections.

Multi-Layered Influence of the Pre-service and Supervising Teacher Relationship

The relationship experienced by pre-service teachers with their supervising teachers in the learning environment was shown to be highly influential.

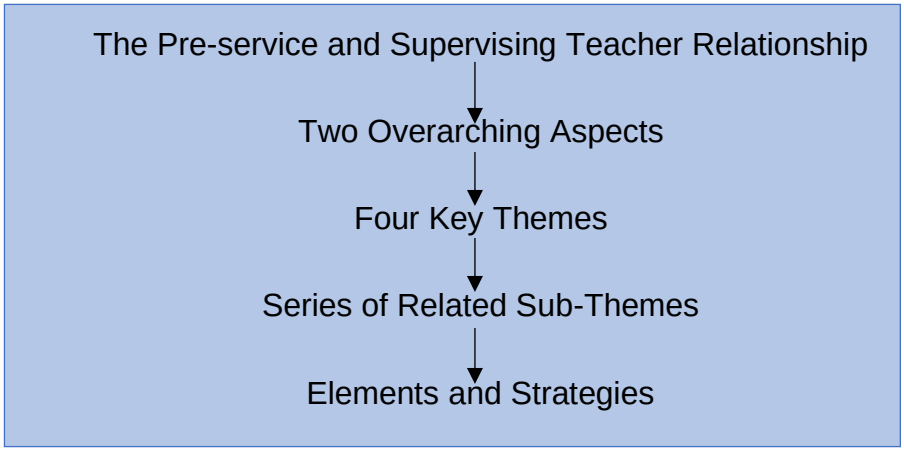

Figure 6.1 Multi-Layered Structure of Results

As demonstrated in Figure 6.1 above and outlined in Section 4.2, the results revealed a multi-layer structure of the influence of the pre-service and supervising teacher relationship. This consisted of two broad overarching themes: the Interpersonal Aspect (see Section 4.3) and the Professional Mentorship Aspect (see Section 4.4). Within each of these aspects a series of themes and sub-themes were revealed. As shown in the reporting of the results, within these themes and sub-themes a further specific level of key elements and strategies emerged. The results also showed that there was a level of interrelationship between the aspects. This interrelationship is highlighted throughout the following discussion.

The findings affirmed the importance of both the Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Aspects of the relationship which had been established in previous research studies (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Ditchburn, 2015; Dobbins, 1996; Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Hogan & Bernay, 2007; Reynolds et al., 2016). It was clear that the themes and sub-themes which operate in each aspect and the degree to which the two aspects interrelate had a profound influence on the pre-service teachers. This influenced their professional learning and their conceptualisation of themselves as a teacher. However, the influence of these two aspects of the pre-service and supervising teacher relationship was complex and varied as revealed in the multi-layered structure outlined in Figure 6.1.

Within the overarching Interpersonal Aspect in the professional experience undertaken by the pre-service teachers, they specifically identified the

interpersonal component of the relationship as a key area in which teacher anxiety was experienced (see pp. 88-90). The participants identified the desire to form a positive relationship with their supervising teacher including the expectation of affective support in the interpersonal component (see p. 90). As suggested by Dobbins (1996), Haigh and Ward (2004), Hastings (2008) and Kligour et al. (2015), pre-service teachers are expected to navigate a myriad of different and at times competing factors. These include their personal anxieties and emotions, the expectations placed upon them by their university course, the model of supervision and the culture of the school. They can also be affected by the nature and pedagogical beliefs of their supervising teacher, the students they teach, the physical setting of the room and their own personality and level of confidence.

Analysis of the experiences of the pre-service teachers showed that within the broad Professional Mentorship Aspect, their professionality was developed through the key professional mentorship component of their relationship with their supervising teacher (see Section 4.4). In the professional mentorship component, the support, professional advice and guidance were provided by the supervising teacher. Professionality in the form of the knowledge and skills which constitute teaching competency, was shown to be a key element of professional learning (Davies, 2013). Ferrier-Kerr (2009) and Moody (2009) have proposed that when a positive professional relationship was established between the pre-service and supervising teacher, they were less anxious when asked to perform more difficult tasks related to teaching. These findings were supported in this study with the results showing that when the supervising teacher provided effective mentoring support, the teacher self-efficacy of the pre-service teacher was enhanced (see Section 5.5.2). This facilitated the participants' competencies in the performance of teaching skills which contributed to the ongoing development of their own teaching style and their emerging teacher identity. The following discussion of results are detailed under the relevant themes and specific sub-themes that were shown to be of key influence in the relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher.

6.3 Theme 1: The Influence of the Interpersonal Component of Pre-service Teachers' Relationship Experiences

6.3.1 Effects of the Relationship on Pre-service Teacher Anxiety

The results of the planned question on pre-service teacher professional experience anxiety which had been identified in the literature prior to the commencement of this study, revealed that the anxiety perceived by the participants was mainly due to evaluation anxiety, teaching expectations, student management issues and professional concerns (see pp. 88-90). The participants identified that a positive relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher contributed to a reduction in their level of anxiety (see pp. 91-93). The result reinforced the previous findings of Dobbins (1996), Haigh and Ward (2004) and Hastings (2008), that a fundamental element in the learning environment which is a key factor in the reduction in anxiety levels, was the pre-service teacher's interpretation of the dynamics of the relationship they shared with their supervising teacher.

The results supported the significance of the interpersonal component of the relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher. This was consistent with a number of research findings by Beck and Kosnik (2002), Hogan and Bernay (2007), Ferrier-Kerr (2009) and Moody (2009). In particular, the finding that anxiety was a key factor was clearly evident in the results of the focus group discussions (see p. 91). The proposal from previous research that this anxiety could result from a fear of the unknown and could be detrimental to learning (Campbell & Uusimaki, 2006; Dobbins, 1996; Kyriacou & Stephens, 1999; Ngidi & Sibaya, 2006) was evident in the Cohort One pre-service teachers' responses (see pp. 89-90).

This was highlighted in 70% of the participants' comments and is encapsulated in the following sample statement:

> *I was still quite nervous going around the first day, because there are so many expectations. You know, I already knew this information, so what if I get something wrong or stuff something up. (Kelly, Cohort One)*

In contrast, while the anxiety of Cohort Two participants was also clearly revealed, this was shown to only be partially related to experiencing the unknown (see p. 91). Due to their prior professional experience, Cohort Two anxiety levels were also associated with making comparisons to the relationship with their previous supervising teacher (see p. 91). Participants who had already experienced a poor relationship with a supervising teacher were anxious about the potential for that to occur again (see p. 90). In contrast, the pre-service teachers who had experienced a positive relationship during their first professional experience were less anxious overall, but still expressed some tentative concern whether they would experience such a positive relationship for a second time (see p. 90).

Overall, regardless of the amount of professional experience, the participants from both cohorts of this study identified the importance of focused support from supervising teachers to mediate and alleviate anxieties and apprehension (see Section 4.3.2). This was highlighted as particularly important when entering the professional experience environment and was consistent with the findings of Beck and Kosnik (2002). Those pre-service teachers who experienced a positive relationship were able to identify the elements and strategies their supervising teacher used to reduce their anxiety and give them emotional support (see Section 4.3.1). These strategies are discussed in the following section.

6.3.2 Establishing a Rapport with the Pre-service Teacher

Within the Interpersonal Aspect identified in this study, the building of a rapport between the pre-service and supervising teacher in the interpersonal component of the relationship was highlighted as a significant element by the 90% of participants both in the focus groups and individual interviews, who commented on the importance of this factor (see Section 4.3.1). They highlighted a variety of key strategies included within this element from their experiences with their supervising teachers. These included putting the pre-service teacher at ease through the use of informal communication and getting to know the pre-service teacher as a person (see p. 92). The importance of showing they were eager and prepared to have a pre-service teacher working in their classroom was another important strategy along with being conscious of the professional experience workload stress. These strategies were shown to be effective in developing a

welcoming and supportive environment which was appreciated by the participants of both cohorts as it reduced anxiety. However, when the supervising teacher wasn't prepared, this caused anxiety and stress (see pp. 99-101).

Furthermore, the study also identified that the participants in Cohort Two used the learning from their prior relationship experience with their supervising teacher to contribute to the rapport establishment process (see pp. 97-98). The results revealed that both the pre-service and supervising teachers played a role in the building of the rapport. For the pre-service teacher, this varied depending upon their levels of anxiety and the experience they brought to the relationship. Where the pre-service teachers were able to learn and respond to the rapport building strategies of the supervising teacher, the initial relationship began to develop effectively over time and a positive and productive learning environment was established (see pp. 98-99).

Influence of Initial Interactions

The results highlighted the importance of pre-service teachers feeling welcomed by the supervising teacher as suggested by Sanderson (2003). Both cohorts highlighted that meeting prior to the professional experience enabled a rapport to be established (see pp. 95-97). As suggested by Sheridan and Young (2017) the importance of the initial meeting and conversation between pre-service and supervising teachers was influential in enhancing the development of positive relationships. This was particularly significant for Cohort One as it eased their anxiety related to experiencing concerns about the unknown when it came to their supervising teacher (see p. 95). For Cohort Two participants, the initial meeting was shown to offer the opportunity to use their previous knowledge and expertise to establish a productive base from which to develop an effective working relationship (see p. 96). Overall, the initial interaction had a positive impact on the emerging pre-service and supervising teacher relationship.

As proposed by Harwell and Moore (2010) the contribution of a positive relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher can play a significant role in a successful professional experience. It was shown to contribute to a reduction in anxiety and stress often leading to improved performance.

Whereas, a less positive relationship was shown to have the opposite effect, resulting in greater stress and anxiety leading to diminished performance and professional learning (Buckworth, 2017; Harwell & Moore, 2010).

Preparedness by the Supervising Teacher

The level of preparedness for the pre-service teacher displayed by the supervising teacher was identified as a key rapport building element in the interpersonal component (see. 92-93). This was a strategy that influenced the initial establishment of the relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher. Preparation and organisation were identified by the participants as key expectations of the professional experience and in their future professional life. The results revealed, from the pre-service teacher's perspective, the importance of the supervising teacher being prepared, relating to them as an individual and communicating in an organised and inclusive manner (Allen & Wright, 2014). This was often evident in the form of a welcoming informal approach which eased anxiety and informed the pre-service teacher of the classroom practices and routines as captured in the following sample statement:

> *Yeah.... we'd just have a chat after school. He might ask me about my job and then I just ask him what he is doing, about his family and stuff. We'd just talk about it and see what a teacher's life is actually like. (Nick, Cohort One)*

The participants identified a range of elements as signs of the preparedness level of the supervising teacher including, providing class lists and timetables, scope and sequence learning charts, having read the professional experience guidelines and report expectations, and provision of relevant school policies and other documents (see pp. 92-93). Where this was evident, a positive relationship began to form. Where preparedness was poor, the influence on the emerging relationship was shown to be of a more negative nature (see pp. 99-101).

Supervising Teacher Awareness of Workload Stress

Another key element identified was that the participants of both cohorts appreciated when their supervising teacher was conscious of their University workload requirements and the stress it caused (see Section 4.3.4). Gretchen and Midford (2015) and Martinez (1998) highlight the importance of the supervising teacher managing pre-service teacher workload stress. In terms of the Interpersonal Aspect of the relationship, the participants expressed a sense of reassurance in the interpersonal component, when the supervising teacher was aware of the demands of time, preparation and performance expected of the pre-service teacher (see p. 104). The value of simple informal conversations, which showed their supervising teacher was aware of their workload demands and implemented strategies to support them, was referred to by 80% of the participants in the focus groups and individual interviews comments. (see p. 104). This supervising teacher awareness of workload demands supports Walkington's (2005b) contention that the pre-service teachers' professional experience workload needs to be monitored to reduced levels of stress and anxiety in order to enhance professional learning.

Pre-service Teacher's Contribution to the Relationship

An interesting outcome from the study was the finding that the participants indicated that to build a relationship with their supervising teacher required a significant amount of emotional work on their behalf (see p. 98). This was especially important when the relationship was poor. Emotional work can be characterised as involving understanding, sensitivity and empathy towards others (Isenbarger & Zembylas, 2006). The emotional labour involved is the effort one undertakes to suppress their own emotional feelings to emotionally support others (Hargreaves, 1998). The participants were able to identify the level of emotional work they contributed to supporting the building of a rapport with their supervising teacher. The results also revealed that to emotionally support pre-service teachers, the supervising teachers were also perceived to have invested time in emotional work. Consistent with Walberg's (1976) theory on the validity of perceptual learning, the study results indicated that the participants were perceptive to when their supervising teachers were building a positive personal

relationship rapport. There were many instances in this study, where the participants identified the emotional work by their supervising teachers in building the relationship (see pp. 93-94). However, it was unclear whether the degree of emotional labour exercised by the supervising teachers to build a rapport with the pre-service teacher was a natural part of their personality or whether it was something the supervising teacher had to consistently and consciously apply.

6.3.3 Influence of the Interpersonal Component of Pre-service Teachers' Relationship Experiences Summary

The findings of this study indicate that from the perspective of the pre-service teachers, the interpersonal component of the relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher is a fundamental element of the overarching Interpersonal Aspect, which contributes to the level of success in the professional experience for the pre-service teacher (see Section 4.3). This finding has supported the seminal work of Moos (1974) and Walberg (1976), who proposed that people conceptualise their environment by interpreting the nature of the personal relationships in the environment they share with others. Emotions are fundamental to teachers and are formed in the relationships they establish (Hargreaves, 1998). Therefore, the pre-service teachers' interpretations of their relationship experiences with their supervising teachers were an important component of their emotional well-being and their professional learning. The results showed that when supervising teachers were conscious of the need to establish a positive interpersonal relationship with the pre-service teacher, they utilised effective strategies. These included adopting informal conversational methods, to put the pre-service teacher at ease and relieve anxiety (see pp. 93-94). They were also inclusive and supported the pre-service teachers as individuals. When pre-service teachers were perceptive of their supervising teachers' efforts in establishing a positive rapport, the results indicated they felt supported and an effective relationship was formed (se pp 92-94).

Emotional work is a significant element of the Interpersonal Aspect of the relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher. It was apparent, that pre-service teachers recognised and appreciated that supervising teachers applied emotional work within the relationship in order for the positive

interpersonal relationship to develop. As previously noted, whether the supervising teacher's emotional labour came naturally or was consciously applied in the relationship during the professional experience was not clearly indicated in the results of this study. What was clearly evident was that the amount of emotional time and effort invested by both the pre-service and supervising teacher has a direct effect on the quality of the relationship formed (see Section 4.3.2).

Results in this study indicated 70% pre-service teachers entered their professional experience with elevated levels of anxiety (see pp. 88-90). The findings revealed that when a positive interpersonal relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher developed early, this was effective in easing anxiety and building their sense of their belief in their teaching abilities and confidence (see Section 4.3.2). These factors can lead to a greater degree of professional learning and stronger teacher self-efficacy for the pre-service teacher. Furthermore, Palmer (1998) contends the sort of people drawn to teaching are people centred. Therefore, establishing a positive interpersonal component of the pre-service and supervising teacher relationship during professional experience was an important element contributing towards the pre-service teachers' level of professional learning.

6.4 Theme 2: The Influence of Professional Mentorship in the Relationship

6.4.1 Shared Expectations and Communication Channels to Develop Professional Learning

Professional mentorship was defined by the participants as the guidance supplied by the supervising teacher to the pre-service teacher, to develop their teaching skills. Research by Dobbins (1996) Hogan and Bernay (2007), Reynolds et al. (2016) and Wilks et al. (2019), highlighted that along with seeking emotional support, pre-service teachers also were looking for professional support to develop their professionalism. Participants involved in this study were required to develop professional learning and focused on the attainment of key teaching skill competencies, pedagogical knowledge and strategies related to student management (see Section 4.4).

Additionally, the pre-service teachers were expected to act professionally as a teacher and follow a professional code of conduct within the relationships they maintained with others in the school community including students, colleagues and parents.

The results showed that when the professional mentoring support provided by the supervising teacher was based on a set of shared expectations, then the participants were less anxious when required to perform more difficult tasks and when asked to meet the expectations outlined above (see Section 4.4).

Shared Expectations - Through Communication

A central aspect of the Symbolic Interactionism theory is that communication between individuals is key to the construction of meaning. Through the establishment of effective channels of communication, expectations are clarified for both partners in the relationship, and teaching fundamentals such as lesson planning, class academic and behavioural needs, teaching strategies and feedback can be clarified (Gurl, 2018; Hogan & Bernay, 2007). The participants of both cohorts in this study who experienced a positive professional mentorship component in the relationship with their supervising teacher, highlighted the value of effective avenues of communication established early in the relationship (see Section 4.4.1). Connectivity aspects such as exchanging email addresses, phone numbers and setting times when both partners could meet to plan and provide feedback led to the establishment of clear expectations shared by both the pre-service and supervising teacher (see p. 112). Conveying basic classroom information such as routines and approaches to classroom management (see pp. 114-117), assisted the participants to be prepared to teach in the context in which they had been placed as highlighted in the following example:

> *She explained different policies to me. I felt like I was as informed as I could be about the school and the way it worked. That was really comforting because I felt like I knew more of what was happening. (Brooke, Cohort One)*

Shared Expectations - Pedagogical Practices

In this study it was evident that expectations by the supervising teacher, related to the teaching style and practices of the pre-service teacher, were an important and influential component of the relationship they shared (see pp. 112-114). Martinez (1998) highlighted the significance of what the supervising teacher viewed as 'good teaching.' This study supported this finding of the importance of the supervising teacher's view. It revealed that where a shared view of pedagogical beliefs between the pre-service and supervising teachers was evident, this was influential on professional learning. The supervising teacher's interpretation of what they constituted as good teaching has emerged as a significant influence on the planning and teaching of the pre-service teacher. Good teaching demonstrated by the supervising teacher was particularly important for Cohort One participants due to their teaching inexperience (see Section 4.4.4). For example, good teaching provided them with a model of teaching competencies on which to base their personal teaching and development. This was in contrast to Cohort Two who were more discerning about what they considered to be good teaching (see pp. 127-128). They indicated that by comparing and contrasting the teaching of the supervising teacher from their previous and current professional experience with their own teaching practice, they were better able to further enhance their teaching style and pedagogical approaches (see p. 127).

When similar pedagogical approaches to teaching were shared by the pre-service and supervising teacher, the participants indicated that they felt the freedom to teach using their preferred teaching style (see Section 4.4.2). They valued the opportunity to teach in a style they felt would be supported by their supervising teacher which built their confidence.

However, in some cases the results revealed that there was an expectation by the supervising teacher that good teaching should reflect their own teaching style. In these instances, if the participants did not share the same pedagogical beliefs with the supervising teacher, they indicated that they could not plan or teach in the way they preferred (see pp. 136-137). A lack of pedagogical professional guidance by the supervising teacher at times produced frustration and low levels of motivation in the pre-service teachers.

As outlined above, it was clear that if the supervising teacher recognised and mentored the development of good teaching practice by the pre-service teacher through shared expectations, then this promoted pre-service teacher professional learning.

6.4.2 Influence of Supervising Teacher Feedback

Analysis of the pre-service teachers' experiences found that common and shared understanding of expectations was equally important in relation to the supervision approach employed by the supervising teacher (see Section 4.4.5). Supervision and evaluation of teaching performance are accountability requirements of the professional experience to ensure that pre-service teachers are able to teach effectively. Both cohort focus groups identified feedback from the supervising teacher as being a significant aspect which impacted on the quality of their professional experience (see pp. 129-131). Provision of feedback on an individual's performance enhances better practice (Ponticell & Zepeda, 2004). Results in this study support the findings of Gurl (2018), Haigh and Ward (2004) and Martinez (1998), that the type of supervision model adopted by the supervising teacher will influence the degree of collaboration and professional dialogue between the pre-service and supervising teacher (see p. 130). They showed it assisted the participants, if they understood what was expected of them in terms of preparation and how and when the feedback about their teaching would be provided.

Interview participants provided greater insights into the types of supervision models that were more influential than others in producing positive professional development outcomes (see pp. 112-114). In both cohorts 75% of participants found that they responded positively to experiencing the collaborative style of supervision outlined in Maynard and Furlong's (1993) *Reflective* model (see p. 113). In this model the pre-service teacher works in collaboration with the supervising teacher in dialogue, discussing evaluation feedback jointly when planning teaching experiences and development of teaching skills. This type of collaborative support was especially significant to Cohort One who were in the initial stages of learning how to teach with a focus on lesson planning (see p. 113). In contrast, Cohort Two participants were able to engage with their supervising

teacher at a higher level (see p. 114). As suggested by Zeichner's (1983) *Inquiry Orientated* paradigm, the pre-service teachers worked in collaboration with their supervising teachers through reflection and shared pedagogical discussion. Cohort Two identified that their supervising teachers as part of this pedagogical discussion, expected them to take a greater role in lesson planning and preparation due to their prior learning from their professional experience (see p. 118).

The value of collaborative discussion was also highlighted by Harris et al. (2013) analysing the dialogue used during lesson feedback sessions by supervising and pre-service teachers. When the supervising teacher used a collaborative approach, there was greater critical reflection by the pre-service teachers resulting in "pedagogical talk" (Harris et al., 2013, p. 42). In this study the notion of pedagogical talk was identified as important by Cohort Two participants. They were looking to further develop their teaching competencies beyond the basic strategies they had learnt in their previous professional experience (see p. 113).

Overall, the results demonstrated that for both cohorts where an open collaborative approach was used, the pre-service and supervising teacher shared a positive relationship and a strong sense of working together. This resulted in enhanced professional learning (see p. 114).

An interesting finding of the study was the degree to which the models of supervision can be diverse or produce varied outcomes. In some cases, results revealed that Maynard and Furlong's (1993) *Apprenticeship* model of supervision was experienced by some participants or their supervising teacher was disinterested (see Section 4.4.6). In this model the pre-service teacher adopted the role of an apprentice and the supervising teacher acted as the master teacher or neglectful. Participants found that communication was one-way from the supervising teacher and there was little collaborative dialogue. This model of supervision corresponds to Zeichner's (1983) *Behaviouristic* professional experience paradigm. When the supervising teacher adopted the master teacher role, dictating expectations with limited consultation or neglectful the experiences were unproductive for the participants' professional learning (see Section 4.4.6).

The importance of the mentoring and assessing roles of the supervising teacher were clearly identified in this study (see Section 4.4). Previous research by Cattley (2007), Ditchburn (2015), Martinez (1998), Millwater and Ehrich (2008) and Walkington (2004), identify the mentor versus assessor dilemma related to the supervising teacher role. The findings highlighted the issues when the supervising teacher rather than acting as a mentor wasn't prepared and differed in pedagogical beliefs (see pp. 136-137). The results revealed when the pre-service teacher perceived and interpreted their supervising teacher as more of a mentor rather than assessor, then the pre-service teacher's professional learning was enhanced (see Section 4.4.5). However, when the supervising teacher was perceived as not fulfilling their mentor role, the pre-service teachers were less likely to develop their own teaching style with apprehension of failure. This subsequently negatively influenced their professional learning (see Section 4.4.6).

6.4.3 Communication Related to Student Needs and Classroom Organisation

Another important element to emerge from the results in the professional mentorship component was the pre-service teachers' desire to be informed about the needs of their students and classroom organisation (see Section 4.4.3). This included the organisational routines, and academic and behavioural issues which could affect their teaching (see pp. 114-17; 127). From the pre-service teachers' perspective, they were looking for support and guidance from their supervising teacher to effectively prepare and develop strategies to deal with these issues. For Cohort One the emphasis was on learning the routines, organisation and basic student management which underpinned the effective classroom learning environment (see pp. 115-116). In contrast, Cohort Two valued the supervising teachers' recognition of their student management skills they had developed in their prior professional experience (see pp. 116-117). They responded particularly to encouragement by the supervising teacher to use their professional judgement to develop strategies.

Participants of both cohorts reported that information about the organisation, academic and behavioural needs of the class provided by the supervising teacher at the beginning of the professional experience, was beneficial in reducing the pre-service teachers' level of anxiety (see pp. 115-116). This form of anxiety was

identified by participants as related to the teaching competencies aspect of their professional experience expectations. The requirement to implement and be assessed on effective teaching and management strategies by the supervising teacher produced less anxiety when they were fully informed of the needs of the class (see pp. 115-116).

Participants found that the supervising teachers varied in the degree to which they informed the pre-service teacher about the organisation and needs of the class (see p. 130). Research by Ferrier-Kerr (2009) and Roland and Beckford (2010), highlighted that supervising teachers viewed their role as that of an experienced expert. In this study some supervising teachers were shown to look on their role as purely administrative, by fulfilling the professional experience expectations (see Section 4.4.3). However, where a positive relationship had been established, a more collaborative reflective approach developed which enhanced the pre-service teacher's professional learning (see Section 4.4.5). It was also revealed that some supervising teachers believed it was the role of the pre-service teacher to observe and assess the class to develop their own teaching strategies and management plan (see p. 135). This was often found to be effective for the more experienced Cohort Two participants who were given this opportunity. However, it was clearly established that a lack of knowledge about the classroom organisation and needs of students could be daunting for pre-service teachers (see pp. 135-136). Therefore, informing the pre-service teacher about the organisation and needs of the class was an essential component of professional mentorship.

6.4.4 Explicit Modelling by the Supervising Teacher of Good Teaching Practice

Within the Professional Mentorship Aspect of the pre-service and supervising teacher relationship was the key finding of the importance and influence of the supervising teacher to demonstrate good teaching practice in the professional mentorship component (see Section 4.4.4). Beck and Kosnik (2002) refer to the supervising teacher as a 'critical interventionalist' who models good teaching practice and takes time to explain and discuss their teaching pedagogy. This was supported in the results as the importance of observing good teaching practice by the supervising teacher was identified in both cohort groups (see p. 120). Cohort

One pre-service teachers were conscious of their lack of teaching experience. They indicated the need for their supervising teacher to provide them with effective examples of good teaching practice to support their emerging teaching style and confidence (see pp. 126-127). Where the supervising teachers were experienced, confident in their teaching strategies and capable of sharing this practice with their pre-service teacher, this was important in the development of teaching skills and belief in teaching ability (Roland & Beckford, 2010). This was particularly influential for Cohort Two pre-service teachers looking to expand and extend their own teaching style through observing and learning from their supervising teacher (see p. 127). Both cohorts of pre-service teachers interpreted the modelling of good teaching practice as an important component of the professionalism of their supervising teacher (see Section 4.4.4).

The supervising teacher acting organised as part of professionalism was identified by the participants of this study as being a key element of good practice within the professional mentorship component of the relationship. The participants identified the positive influence of their supervising teachers acting professionally in terms of their organisation, preparation and the degree of support and guidance they provided for them as pre-service teachers (see pp. 137; 167). This finding supports Allen and Wright's (2014) contention of the role the supervising teacher plays in assisting preservice teachers to integrate theory into practice and was consistent with Bandura's (1997) proposal to the positive effects of *vicarious experiences* which enhanced teacher self-efficacy development.

6.4.5 Influence of Professional Mentorship in the Relationship Summary

The results of this study confirmed the importance of the Professional Mentorship Aspect of the pre-service and supervising teacher relationship. Through their experience with their supervising teachers, pre-service teachers identified key elements of the professional mentorship component that influenced their relationship with their supervising teacher. These included shared expectations related to teaching and classroom management, informing the pre-service teacher about class and teaching routines and needs along with the academic, behavioural and emotional needs of the class. The supervising teacher's modelling of good teaching practice was highlighted as being particularly

influential for Cohort One participants in providing the basics for the development of teaching expertise, whilst Cohort Two participants were able to reflect on the modelling as a guide to improve and modify their own competencies.

The Symbolic Interactionism framework of this study provided a sound approach from which to investigate the participants' interpretation of their perceptions of the communication with their supervising teacher, related to the professional mentorship component of their professional experience. This interpretation was shown to have a significant influence upon reducing their level of anxiety through being informed and prepared for teaching by their supervising teacher. At the core of the professional mentorship component of the relationship was the communication skills, shared pedagogical beliefs and expectations, and the supervision model adopted by the supervising teacher. However, the study highlighted the supervising teacher is both mentor and assessor. The way that the pre-service teacher perceived and mediated the duality of these two roles, had an impact upon the relationship formed and their degree of professional learning. In this study when the participants interpreted the supervising teacher to be an assessor rather than mentor, the participants felt that at times their professional learning was inhibited. Participants were less likely to take risks with their teaching when they felt the supervising teacher was focused on assessing their teaching skills rather than mentoring their overall professional learning. In contrast, when the mentor role of the relationship dominated, the participants felt affirmed and willing to take risks with their teaching in a supported environment, enhancing their teaching skills and confidence.

Where participants perceived shared expectations including pedagogical beliefs, this was shown to facilitate an understanding of the supervision approach of the supervising teacher and assisted the pre-service teachers to understand what was expected of them, how they would be evaluated and the opportunities to develop their teaching competencies. Some participants through the interpretation of their perceptions identified a pedagogical dissonance with their supervising teacher. To accommodate this dissonance, these participants matched their preferred style of teaching to that of their supervising teacher. As a consequence, depending upon the feedback they received as part of the supervision approach, these participants indicated that they preferred to teach in a manner similar to their

supervising teacher to meet professional experience expectations. The results revealed that this tended to inhibit their professional learning. Where the shared expectations were high and pedagogical dissonance was low between the two partners in the relationship, then the participants were able to develop confidence and their own teaching style. When shared expectations were poor and the pedagogical dissonances were clearly evident, the participants lacked the confidence to implement their own pedagogical practices. This was shown to negatively inhibit their professional learning and development of their preferred teaching style.

6.5 Relationship Between the Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Aspects

6.5.1 Integrated Nature of the Two Relationship Aspects

The results indicated that there was a clear interrelationship between the overarching Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Aspects within the pre-service and supervising teacher relationship. This interrelationship was shown to vary, depending upon the pre-service teacher's interpretation of their experiences of the relationship formed between them and their supervising teacher and the supervision methods implemented by the supervising teacher. When the pre-service teachers interpreted that their supervising teacher was conducive to open communication, shared expectations and pedagogy in an environment of personal and professional support and trust, then a positive interpersonal and mentoring relationship developed (see Section 4.3 and Section 4.4). As proposed in Zeichner's (1983) *Inquiry Oriented* professional experience paradigm, the pre-service teachers' professional learning and sense of teacher self-efficacy was developed through collaboration and reflective practice. This was revealed in this study and demonstrated by the pre-service and supervising teacher through the Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Aspects of the relationship (see Section 5.2). Results indicated that when the elements of the two aspects of the relationship worked positively together, this enhanced and facilitated the quality of the professional learning and the overall development of their teacher self-efficacy (see Section 5.2.2). This result supports Izadinia (2017), Milliwater and Ehrich

(2008), Purgur (2007) and Roland and Beckford (2010), who highlight the important role mentoring plays within the teaching professional experience.

In contrast, where the interrelationship between the Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Aspects was uneven or ineffective, it was shown to have a negative effect (see Section 5.2.3). In some cases when this occurred, instead of the professional experience being a positive learning experience, it became one of survival for the participant or as Zembylas (2003) describes as "care of the teacher self" (p. 229) (see p. 171). In this study this was evident for participants whose supervising teacher focussed primarily on the teaching competencies aspect of the professional experience and provided minimal personal support. This resulted in increased levels of anxiety and a lowering of confidence in their teaching skills (see Section 5.2.3). As a consequence, these participants taught to cope rather than develop their teaching style. Rather than experiencing the collaborative and professional dialogue suggested in Zeichner's (1983*) Inquiry Orientated* paradigm, those participants experienced the *Behaviourist* professional experience paradigm. The evaluation feedback was focused on the assessment of their teaching competencies with little or no supportive affirmation. As a consequence, the professional learning of the pre-service teachers in this type of situation was shown to be inhibited, as they taught to please the supervising teacher rather than developing their own teaching style (see Section 4.4.6 and Section 5.2.3).

6.5.2 Formation of the Relationship Aspects

As outlined above, the interrelationship between the Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Aspects of the pre-service and supervising teacher relationship was clearly established in this study. However, a further interesting finding was that these two aspects did not always develop simultaneously. The results showed that the formation of the Interpersonal Aspect appeared to precede the Professional Mentorship Aspect (see Section 5.2.2). As proposed by Sanderson (2003) and Sheridan and Young (2017) the establishment of the interpersonal component was revealed to be the key element in the development of a positive professional experience relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher. Important strategies were identified by the participants as

anxiety relieving influences (see p. 88-89). These included meeting with the supervising teacher prior to the commencement of the professional experience. This provided the basis for the relationship through discussing the expectations of the professional experience. However, when the supervising teacher failed to meet prior to or regularly during the placement, this cause anxiety for the participants who felt they were not a priority (see pp.101-103).

Therefore, the importance of establishing the Interpersonal Aspect first was revealed in this study. The participants also identified the value of the influence of the anxiety reduction methods utilised by their supervising teachers. These methods facilitated the essential information about teaching competencies, to be effectively communicated to the pre-service teacher, using the established interpersonal positive rapport as a basis for the professional mentorship component. When this sequence occurred within a positive relationship, the two key relationship aspects became integrated and promoted an effective professional learning environment (see Section 5.2.2).

6.6 Theme 3: The Influence of the Relationship on the Development of Teacher Self-Efficacy

As reported in Section 4.2 and further detailed in Section 5.2, teacher self-efficacy was not a specific focus of this study but it emerged from the exploratory nature of the investigation as one of the multi-layered set of themes and sub-themes revealed. Furthermore, within the interpersonal and professional mentorship components, the influence of the pre-service and supervising teacher relationship on the development of teacher self-efficacy was clearly revealed. When a positive interpersonal relationship was formed a sense of trust was developed between the pre-service and supervising teacher. This provided a strong basis from which professional mentorship was effective in developing the participants' belief in their ability to undertake the tasks of teaching.

6.6.1 Relevance of the Teacher Self-Efficacy Theoretical Framework

As seen in the previous discussion sections, the analysis of the pre-service teachers' interpretation of their experiences in the relationship with their

supervising teacher found that many aspects of their teacher self-efficacy formation were influenced as well as their professional learning. As suggested by Bandura (1997) sources of self-efficacy building interact with and influence the development of self-efficacy in varied ways. This was clearly revealed in this study related to the development of teacher self-efficacy.

The results showed that the four key sources of efficacy building identified by Bandura (1997) i.e. enactive mastery, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion and physiological and affective states (see Section 2.5.2), were influential in the development of both the interpersonal and professional mentorship components of the pre-service and supervising teacher relationship (see Section 5.2). These results are discussed in the following sections using the framework of Bandura's (1997) sources of efficacy formation.

6.6.2 Teacher Self-Efficacy - Sources of Influence

Teacher self-efficacy comprises the belief that the teacher has the ability to perform the tasks of teaching effectively. High levels of self-efficacy will generally lead to increased performance, whereas lower levels of self-efficacy will often result in a lack of confidence to commence or complete a task successfully (Bernadowski et al., 2013; Putman, 2012). When applied to a teaching situation, teachers who display high levels of self-efficacy will be able to implement effective teaching methods, persist with challenging situations, maintain motivation and engagement, collaborate with other teachers and improve their teaching practice by taking risks with innovative strategies (Putman, 2012). Furthermore, Bandura (1997) proposed that self-efficacy is most malleable in the early stages of the learning process and is influential towards self-efficacy as future teachers (Bernadowski et al., 2013).

In the professional experience situation, pre-service teachers may exhibit varying levels of teacher self-efficacy depending on their previous experience. This was supported by focus group data. Responses indicated that some pre-service teachers had concerns related to their teaching self-efficacy which manifested as anxiety due to their limited experience (see pp. 89-90). Results of this study found that their level of self-efficacy improved after having participated in their

professional experience when interpersonal and professional mentorship support was supplied by their supervising teacher (see Section 4.3 and Section 4.4).

The following sections discuss the influences of the sources of self-efficacy that were developed within the key Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Aspects of the pre-service and supervising teacher relationship.

Enactive Mastery Experiences

The interview data indicated that *enactive mastery experiences* within the required teaching program, provided opportunities for the pre-service teachers to develop their teaching skills and expertise and were a major component of the teaching professional experience for these participants (see pp. 121-123). These experiences were usually structured under the guidance of their supervising teacher. The expectation was that pre-service teachers would improve their practice by reflecting on the lessons taught and then implement teaching strategies based on this reflection along with enacting feedback provided by their supervising teacher. The confirmation of the successful teaching practice in the *enactive mastery experiences* or identification of areas needing development through the supervising teacher feedback has been shown to directly impact teacher self-efficacy (Bernadowski et al., 2013; O'Neill & Stephenson, 2012). This was clearly supported in the participant's increased self-efficacy in their teaching competencies when they successfully completed teaching tasks which were confirmed through the positive constructive feedback they received from their supervising teacher (see pp. 139-131). The influence of the supervising teacher's self-efficacy affirmation was clearly evident in the responses of the participants in the focus groups as shown in the following sample comment:

> *Well I felt that I had a successful prac because I came out more knowledgeable in my teaching. I felt that it was also successful because even my teacher made a note of saying how much she'd seen the progress. It's always a success in prac when the teacher can see the progression because that is the sort of thing I wanted to have in my teaching. (Focus Group, Cohort One)*

Confirmation by the supervising teacher of the participants' positive performance in *enactive mastery experiences* proved to be a key aspect of teacher self-efficacy development in this study (see Section 5.2.3). For Cohort One participants it enhanced their professional learning and confidence in their teaching (see p. 147). For Cohort Two participants, who were focused on developing quality in their teaching, confirmation of their performance in *enactive mastery experiences* by their supervising teacher encouraged them to take risks with their teaching which further developed their preferred teaching style (see p. 148).

However, when the participants of both cohorts were not provided with the opportunity to perform successful *enactive mastery experiences* due to either a poor interpersonal or professional mentorship component of their relationship with their supervising teacher, the outcomes were less positive (see Section 5.2.3). This resulted in diminished confidence to perform teaching tasks as they felt the supervising teacher did not trust their teaching abilities. The lack of trust negatively impacted on their teaching self-efficacy development and level of professional learning.

Vicarious Experiences

Vicarious experiences in the form of the observation by the pre-service teacher of good teaching practice modelled by the supervising teacher, were also a key influencing factor within the professional mentorship component. *Vicarious experiences* provide the opportunity for the pre-service teacher to observe good teaching practice to learn how to perform the skills involved in teaching. They also provide the opportunity to evaluate their performance against the supervising teacher's modelled good teaching practice (O'Neill & Stephenson, 2012). In this study this form of self-efficacy building information was generally gained early in the professional experience where the supervising teacher was responsible for the majority of teaching. Modelling of good practice allowed the participants to study, learn and compare their practice to that of the supervising teacher as they gradually transitioned to taking more responsibility for teaching the class (see Section 4.4.4). Cohort One participants who were in their first professional experience, were interested in learning basic teaching skills which they could

implement into their own teaching practice (see p. 127). The results of the study indicated that the *vicarious experiences* observed by the Cohort Two participants of the supervising teachers' modelling of good practice, were most significant when the *vicarious experiences* were perceived by the pre-service teachers to be similar to their own teaching style and approach (see. pp. 127; 148). Cohort Two were interested in further enhancing their teaching competencies by observing their supervising teacher's teaching skills and adopting and modifying strategies they found beneficial into their own teaching practice. This finding supports the work of Putman (2012) who proposes the "power of the vicarious experiences is dependent upon the similarity of the model to the observer" (p. 28). This was particularly influential when the pre-service teacher perceived the supervising teacher shared the same basic pedagogy.

A key element to emerge from the data analysis was that the participants appreciated the opportunity to blend their strategies with those of the supervising teacher (see p. 127). Participants highlighted the influence on their teacher self-efficacy of a combination of the observation of the modelling of quality teaching practice by the supervising teacher linked to their own good practice. This was clearly described by the following Cohort Two focus group participant:

> *She said, "I actually want you to try something, don't just rely on mine." I had two things that I introduced plus her thing because she had so many. She was really good like that, really open and really wanted me to just experiment. (Focus Group, Cohort Two)*

Cohort Two participants made comparisons between the observed teaching practice of their supervising teacher to the teaching practice of their previous supervising teacher (see p. 127). This comparison of teaching practice enabled the Cohort Two participants to analyse aspects of teaching practice which they believed were effective and incorporate them into their own teaching practice.

The interview data demonstrated that *vicarious experiences* within the professional mentorship component, were supportive and contributed to professional learning (see Section 5.2.2). The participants indicated that when the skills in the good teaching practice modelled by their supervising teacher were transferred into their own teaching practice, this enhanced their teacher self-

efficacy and encouraged them to explore and develop their own teaching style (see Section 4.4.2). However, when participants were not exposed to *vicarious experiences* through the modelling of good teaching practice, this lack of modelling inhibited their professional learning and development of their teacher self-efficacy (4.3.5). This was evident in Cohort One participants as they lacked an effective model of how to teach. For Cohort Two participants they lacked the modelling of good teaching which they could adopt or adapt to enhance their own teaching style.

Verbal Persuasion

Verbal persuasion was another significant influence in the developing teacher self-efficacy of the participants in this study (see Section 4.4.5 and Section 5.2.2). *Verbal persuasion* involves significant others supplying feedback to the pre-service teacher about the quality of their teaching performance (Bernadowski et al., 2013; Gurl, 2018). The results showed that positive *verbal persuasion* helped build pre-service teacher self-efficacy to perform teaching related tasks (see pp. 142-144). *Verbal persuasion* by the supervising teacher was linked to *enactive mastery experiences* and the participants' teaching performances. This supported similar findings in O'Neill and Stephenson's (2012) study of pre-service teachers' self-efficacy. Bernadowski et al. (2013) and Klassen and Chiu (2011), propose self-efficacy increases when pre-service teachers are provided with teaching activities and feedback which promotes success and that meaningful teaching experiences will also allow self-efficacy beliefs to become more accurate.

The impact of the feedback was shown to be related to the credibility of the person supplying the feedback and the relevance to the teaching tasks (Putman 2012). The results indicate that *verbal persuasion* in the form of constructive lesson evaluation feedback from the supervising teacher about the participant's teaching performance was particularly influential (see Section 5.2.2). This finding supports previous research by Jamil et al. (2012) and Klassen and Chiu (2011), that self-efficacy becomes more accurate when feedback is provided about the success of the *enactive mastery experience* performed. The participants noted that when constructive feedback was provided about their performance identifying areas for

improvement, this increased their teacher self-efficacy and provided them with a more accurate assessment of their progress (see pp. 144-145).

Where a strong interpersonal and professional mentorship relationship existed, the pre-service teacher interpreted a greater credibility that the feedback provided by the supervising teacher was genuine and correct (see pp. 145-146). This enabled the participants to take greater risks in the *enactive mastery experiences* of their teaching. This allowed Cohort One to consolidate their teaching competencies and Cohort Two to further develop their teaching style.

It was of particular note in this study that *verbal persuasion* included the supportive comments expressed by the supervising teacher and could be either formal or informal (see pp. 149-152). The value of informal feedback in the form of casual comments made about the participant's teaching performance by the supervising teacher was clearly identified as influential. Results in this study, found that the participants felt that positive informal comments were a powerful indicator of their performance (see p. 150). This was particularly relevant when these comments were unsolicited from the supervising teacher and not part of the formal feedback process. The participants indicated that the informal feedback increased their belief in their teaching skills and abilities (see pp. 150-151). Frequently, this feedback was in the form of casual verbal statements concerning the participant's teaching performance or positive professional attitude.

However, *verbal persuasion* was not limited to spoken language but could also be provided through written notes and body gestures and facial expression as described by this Cohort Two participant:

> *I think she always outlined where I did well first and then she went to the constructive feedback. She would nod if I had done something well. She would kind of give me hand gestures to continue that because she really liked that and to focus on that. She smiled to me while she was writing down notes. So, things like that that made me feel really good, and pretty much just your confidence builds a lot through that. (Tara, Cohort Two)*

Verbal persuasion can be “verbal, physical or a combination of both” (Gurvitch & Metzler, 2009, p. 438) As suggested by Gurvitch and Metzler (2009) non-verbal and verbal informal feedback supplied by the supervising teacher, was a powerful contributor towards building teacher self-efficacy. This was also evident, when the supervising teacher extolled the good teaching practice demonstrated by their pre-service teacher to another staff member (see pp. 146-147). The participants interpreted it as personally and professionally affirming when the supervising teacher reported their good teaching practice to other teachers, which further confirmed their teaching competencies (see p. 149). The reporting to colleague teachers by the supervising teacher of the pre-service teacher’s teaching competencies added to the overall positive feedback they received from the supervising teacher which enhanced their teacher self-efficacy.

The combination of the formal and informal feedback by the supervising teacher within the relationship, demonstrated the effectiveness of *verbal persuasion* towards building teacher self-efficacy. In this environment, two-way communication between the pre-service and supervising teacher was enhanced as a form of ‘double loop learning’ (Argyris & Schon, as cited in Walkington, 2004), which enabled collaborative professional dialogue between the pre-service and supervising teacher. When the Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Aspects were integrated in the relationship, it provided an environment for the supervising teacher’s comments concerning the pre-service teacher’s performance to be communicated effectively using both informal and formal feedback (see Section 5.2.2).

The results indicated that the supervising teacher’s *verbal persuasion* appeared to be most meaningful for participants, when it was a combination of both informal and formal feedback (see pp. 149-152). Formal feedback assessed and confirmed the participant’s performance in demonstrating the expectations of their professional experience. The informal feedback contributed an element of genuineness and support to the formal feedback, as it was freely provided by the supervising teacher and was not a requirement of the teacher assessment. Provided together within the interpersonal and professional mentorship components of the relationship, formal and informal *verbal persuasion* feedback,

was shown to be a significant contributor towards professional learning and the development of teacher self-efficacy.

Physiological and Affective States

The importance of the fourth of Bandura's (1997) sources of self-efficacy, *physiological and affective states* was clearly evident in this study. While self-efficacy can be improved by reducing stress levels related to performing tasks successfully, higher levels of anxiety can lead to lower self-efficacy (Gurvitch & Metzler, 2009). *Physiological and affective states* can be determined by an individual's response to stress and anxiety (Bernadowski et al., 2013). This was evident in the responses of the participants who indicated varied levels of anxiety (see pp. 89-90). Participants highlighted the role that the interpersonal component of the pre-service and supervising teacher relationship played in reducing pre-service teacher professional experience anxiety (see Section 4.3.2). Pendergast et al. (2011) contend that teacher educators need to be aware of the influence of emotional states on the development of self-efficacy. Results of the study indicated that when the supervising teacher was aware of the impact of pre-service teacher anxiety, they put strategies into place to reduce the level of anxiety (see Section 4.3.1 and Section 4.3.2). These strategies included using positive *verbal persuasion* through getting to know the pre-service teacher, open dialogue and the effective communication of shared expectations.

As previously discussed, to varying degrees all participants experienced anxiety related to their professional experience with some participants who were interviewed expressing moderate to high levels of anxiety (see pp. 89-90). Their comments directly linked to the relationship they shared with their supervising teachers. For Cohort One participants who had never participated in a professional experience, anxiety was mainly related to the unknown (see p. 89). Among the unknown elements identified was the type of relationship they would form with their supervising teacher. For Cohort Two participants anxiety was more closely related to what the professional experience would be like in comparison to their first professional experience (see p. 90). Their anxiety stemmed from their prior professional experience if they had a positive relationship with their supervising teacher, would their second professional experience be similar.

Conversely, if they had a poor relationship with their supervising teacher in their first professional experience, would this occur again (see p. 90).

Elevated levels of anxiety were evident during the professional experience when either the interpersonal or professional mentorship component was poorly established between the two partners (see Section 4.3.3 and Section 4.3.5). When the components were not strongly developed, this caused anxiety and stress which was debilitating, resulting in tiredness and fatigue and a diminished teaching performance. These findings were consistent with Buckworth's (2017) study which found that pre-service teachers who experience a poor relationship with their supervising teacher, felt disadvantaged and more likely to give up rather than fail their professional experience. The results indicated that in these circumstances, participants struggled to cope with the emotional demands of their professional experience. This led to weaker levels of teacher self-efficacy and affected the quality of their professional learning (see Section 5.2.3). In comparison, when the Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Aspects were integrated, this enhanced teacher self-efficacy and professional learning as discussed in the following section.

6.6.3 Integrated Sources of Teacher Self-Efficacy Within the Relationship

While Bandura (1997) contends that all four sources of self-efficacy building contribute to the development of self-efficacy, the results of this study show that each source tended to be more prominent in either the Interpersonal or Professional Mentorship Aspect of the relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher. *Enactive mastery experiences* and *vicarious experiences,* reflected elements of teaching competencies and as a consequence, were more relevant in the Professional Mentorship Aspect (see Section 4.4). Within this aspect the interaction and dialogue concerned the sharing of expectations, knowledge of the class needs, effective teaching strategies and the observation of good practice. *Verbal persuasion* was found in both the Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Aspects (see Section 4.3 and Section 4.4). However, supervising teacher *verbal persuasion* was found to be particularly significant in the Interpersonal Aspect as it had a direct influence in building a rapport and

reducing anxiety in the pre-service teacher's *physiological and affective states* (see Section 4.3.2 and Section 5.2.2).

As discussed in Section 6.5, pre-service teacher professional learning was maximised when the Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Aspects of the relationship were integrated. The results of this study revealed, as shown in Figure 7.1, that while the sources of self-efficacy were predominant in particular components of the Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Aspects, they were most beneficial towards the development of the pre-service teachers' teacher self-efficacy when they were interrelated and integrated within the two aspects

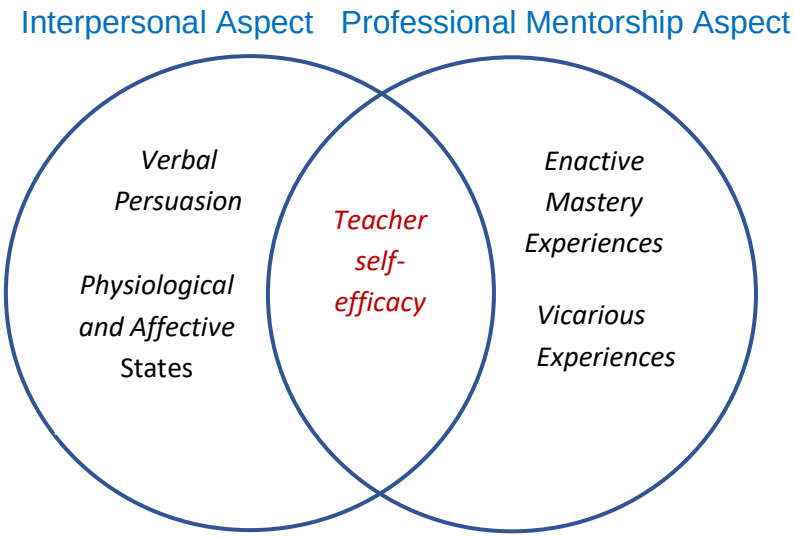

Figure 7.1 Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Aspects Integration

Figure 7.1 shows that when there was a strong interpersonal and professional pre-service and supervising teacher relationship, this allowed for the four sources of self-efficacy to interrelate and integrate within the relationship aspects enhancing pre-service teacher self-efficacy development. As discussed, supervising teacher *verbal persuasion* permeated both the interpersonal and professional mentorship components of the relationship and could be formal or informal. An example of this interrelationship of the sources of self-efficacy was the effect of the positive supervising teacher feedback (*verbal persuasion*), about the pre-service teacher's performance (*enactive mastery experiences*), and on the pre-service teacher's teaching skills that had been previously influenced by the supervising teacher's modelling of good teaching practice (*vicarious experiences*) (see Section 5.2.2).

The results confirmed that when the Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Aspects were integrated, the participants' teacher self-efficacy was enhanced through this interrelated and integrated nature of self-efficacy development sources (see Section 5.3.3).

The participants' individual interview data indicated, that a stronger level of teacher self-efficacy influenced the quality of professional learning for the participants (see Section 5.2.2). As their belief in their ability to teach strengthened, this positively influenced the development of their preferred teaching style and the emergence of their teacher identity. In contrast, where there was little or no interrelation and integration of the self-efficacy sources, this produced diminished professional learning and the development of teacher self-efficacy (see Section 4.4.3 and Section 5.2.3). This was experienced by participants who received a lack of care or non-constructive feedback from their supervising teacher in the *verbal persuasion* source. The non-constructive feedback negatively impacted their ability to effectively carry out their teaching in *enactive mastery experiences* and increased their anxiety in the *physiological and emotional states* source of self-efficacy development (see Section 4.4.3, Section 4.3.5 and Section 4.4.6). This resulted in inhibited teacher self-efficacy development and overall professional learning (see Section 4.4.6).

6.6.4 Influence of the Sources of Efficacy Building on Teacher Self-Efficacy

As discussed, the results of this study found Bandura's (1997) four sources of self-efficacy development were a significant influence on the development of the participants' teacher self-efficacy during the teaching professional experience. The individual interview data revealed that when the four sources of self-efficacy development were evident then teacher self-efficacy strengthened (see Section 4.3 and Section 4.4). Analysis of the data indicated no direct difference between the amount of professional experience and the participants' response to the confidence placed in them by the supervising teacher (see Section 5.2.1). Despite Cohort One and Cohort Two having differing amounts of professional experience, participants in both cohorts responded positively to trust being displayed by their supervising teacher which enhanced their teacher self-efficacy. Stanulis and Russell (2000) propose that trust is demonstrated by the supervising teacher when

they are willing for the pre-service teacher to teach their class and engage in teaching practice which improves student outcomes. Twelve of the eighteen individual interview participants interviewed in the focus groups and the individual interviews highlighted how their supervising teacher displayed trust as expressed in the following comment:

> *She showed that she trusted me by letting me do some assessing that she needed done. I did some testing and without her hovering over me. She just gave me the instructions and a quick explanation, "Okay, off you go. Can you please do that for me one day?" (Vicki, Cohort One)*

This participant's comment was typical of the participants whose supervising teacher demonstrated trust. The positive effect of informal affirming comments communicated by the supervising teacher has been highlighted in this study, as enhancing the level of teacher self-efficacy resulting in increased teaching confidence and professional learning (see Section 5.2.2).

Trust demonstrated by the supervising teacher in the pre-service teacher's teaching competencies was usually in the form of positive constructive feedback and encouragement in the *verbal persuasion* source of self- efficacy development (see pp. 147-152). The provision of diverse teaching tasks in the *enactive mastery experiences* enabled the pre-service teacher to develop their preferred teaching style in a supportive interpersonal and professional mentorship relationship. Trust shown by the supervising teacher also helped reduce anxiety in the *physiological and emotional states* source of self-efficacy, which contributed to allowing the pre-service teachers to take on more challenging teaching tasks to further develop their teaching competencies (see Section 5.2.1 and Section 5.2.2).

However, if the sources of self-efficacy building were not well developed in the relationship with the supervising teacher, the participants experienced anxiety, stress and self-doubt (see Section 5.2.3). Teachers with low self-efficacy struggle to cope with classroom stress (Klassen & Chiu, 2011). Anxiety and stress can have a negative influence on satisfaction levels and commitment, and at times result in a pre-service teacher withdrawing from their teaching professional

experience (Buckworth, 2017; Campbell & Uusimaki, 2006; Dobbins, 1996; Klassen & Chiu, 2011; Kyriacou & Stephens, 1999; Ngidi & Sibaya, 2006).

An important finding of this study was that pre-service teachers demonstrated resilience during stressful times (see Section 4.3.5 and Section 4.4.6). Jamil et al. (2012) contend that individual personality traits enable or inhibit pre-service teachers' ability to cope with anxious and stressful situations. This was evidenced by the capacity of some participants to compensate for limited or missing sources of self-efficacy in the relationship with their supervising teacher by substituting the missing self-efficacy source from other significant people within the school community, family, social or work environments (see pp. 137-138). These substitution strategies support the research by Jamil et al. that personality traits contribute towards the development of the four sources of self-efficacy. Participants who experienced issues with one or more of the self-efficacy development sources in the relationship with their supervising teacher, were able to show resilient personality traits by substituting the missing or lacking source from other people (see Section 4.4.6).

The substitution of self-efficacy sources as a compensation strategy was particularly evident when the supervising teacher's *verbal persuasion* was limited or non-existent. *Verbal persuasion* was identified as highly effective when the supervising teacher's feedback was integrated across the interpersonal and professional mentorship components as both formal and informal (see pp. 149-152). In contrast, when *verbal persuasion* was limited or constantly negative within the relationship, some participants appeared to compensate by substituting comments expressed by other significant people as noted above (see pp. 137-138).

When this *verbal persuasion* substitution approach was applied to compensate for limited feedback related to *enactive mastery experiences* it helped reduce anxiety in the *physiological and affective states*. However, the substitution strategy was not shown to be as effective as *verbal persuasion* directly received from the supervising teacher (see p. 140). This is fully outlined in the next section.

6.6.5 Effects of Limited Sources of Self-Efficacy

The pre-service teachers' interpretation of their experiences with their supervising teacher was clearly shown through the Symbolic Interactionism framework of this study. When participants perceived that they experienced poor relationships with their supervising teacher, resulted in stress and anxiety (see Section 4.4.3). This was particularly relevant if the participant perceived a difference in the interpersonal or professional mentorship components of the relationship with their supervising teacher compared to a previous supervising teacher.

If there was limited positive *verbal persuasion* provided by the supervising teacher to build the participant's self-efficacy, they found this difficult to mediate. Yuan and Lee (2014) contend that pre-service teachers can obtain emotional support from others in the school community and this was supported in the results. Participants compensated for the limited *verbal persuasion* by substituting positive *verbal persuasion* expressed by other teachers in the school (see pp. 137-138).

Putman (2012) highlights the significance *verbal persuasion* plays as confirmation of the level of performance. As previously noted, the results showed that when positive *verbal persuasion* comments from the supervising teacher were lacking, this could be compensated by comments received from significant others. However, an important finding was that the participants in this situation found that the quality of their professional learning was diminished because their sense of teacher self-efficacy was not supported in the relationship with the supervising teacher during professional experience as shown in the following sample comment:

> *I think so, definitely because if they put you down or make you feel insignificant, or if you feel like they're criticising you not in a constructive way, and then you probably would avoid trying new things and trying different lessons. (Tara, Cohort Two)*

The resilience shown by the participants varied with their experience of teaching and mentor relationships. For example, one participant who was in a job share situation developed an integrated interpersonal and professional mentorship relationship with one teacher (see pp. 108-110). In contrast, she only experienced

a limited professional mentorship relationship with the other teacher as they each held different pedagogical beliefs. The participant demonstrated determination and resilience to succeed in difficult circumstances, by compensating through transferring the positive self-efficacy feedback from the preferred supervising teacher to all aspects of her professional experience, as outlined below:

> *I would try to maintain that positive relationship (with both teachers). I have to be professional and I need to be resilient as well, and think, "I am here to be the teacher. I'm here to teach these kids. I'm here to do the best thing I possibly can, no matter what the circumstance." And I definitely think that that's what got me through. (Renee, Cohort Two)*

When participants were confronted with an inhibited relationship with their supervising teacher, some used the type of self-efficacy compensation strategies outlined above in order to survive their teaching professional experience. It was evident that when there was the opportunity to compensate for poor or missing sources of self-efficacy development within the relationship, some pre-service teachers were able to avail themselves of this option (see pp. 137.138). What was not clear when this occurred, was whether this act of compensating for one or more of the sources of self-efficacy was a conscious act by the pre-service teacher or subconsciously opportunistic to fill the self-efficacy source void. The result regardless of whether this compensation was done consciously or subconsciously, appeared to be a limited consolidation of teacher self-efficacy, that affects the quality of the professional learning (see p. 140).

6.6.6 Influence of the Relationship on the Development of Teacher Self-Efficacy Summary

The exploration of the relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher discovered the relationship had an influence on the development of the pre-service teachers' teacher self-efficacy. Viewed through Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy development framework, when the four sources of self-efficacy development are present within the relationship, this resulted in the enhancement of pre-service teacher self-efficacy and as a consequence the level of professional learning. The study found that when there was a positive interpersonal and

professional mentorship relationship, then the four sources became integrated. This integration of the sources of self-efficacy was built upon trust shown by the supervising teacher in the form of constructive feedback which provided the pre-service teacher with the self-efficacy to enact meaningful and at times challenging tasks in a supportive relationship environment, which enhanced their professional learning and teaching style.

6.7 Theme 4: The Effect of the Relationship on Emerging Teacher Identity and Career Confirmation

As outlined in Section 4.2 and further reported in Section 5.3, due to the exploratory nature of this study, teacher identity emerged from the interpersonal and professional mentorship component themes of the pre-service and supervising teacher relationship. When a positive interpersonal and professional mentorship relationship developed, this enhanced the pre-service teacher's teacher self-efficacy. The study discovered that when teacher self-efficacy was enhanced, this influenced the formation of the pre-service teacher's sense of their emerging teacher identity and confirmed teaching as a career choice (see Section 5.3).

6.7.1 Teacher Identity Formation

The formation of teacher identity is largely regarded as an ongoing process shaped by a range of influences contained within professional, personal, social and structural factors (Johnson et al., 2010). It is formed and reformed through contextual experience over time and is shaped by personal and professional dimensions of teachers' lives (Mockler, 2011; Walkington, 2005a). The results of this study found that the relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher was influential towards the development of the pre-service teachers' emerging teacher identity (see Section 5.3.1 and Section 5.3.3). This sense of their emerging teacher identity was also often related to teachers they had experienced in their own education.

The influence of significant teachers in the participants' past experience was identified clearly by participants in this study (see pp.164-166). Pre-service

teachers, when they enter their pre-service teacher education course, often draw upon their past observations of teachers from their own education as a frame of reference for their understanding of teacher identity (Yuan & Lee, 2014). Results from the study found 70% of participants were able to state, that there was a teacher in their own education who made a significant influence upon them (see pp. 164-165). In fact, as found in previous research by Walkington (2005a) some identified an inspirational teacher as a key influence in their career choice.

Analysis of the comments made by participants in the focus groups and individual interviews about previous teachers who had inspired them to become teachers, indicated a moral purpose which incorporated the whole self of the teacher (see p. 165). This involved more than teaching as it included intellectual, emotional and spiritual aspects (Palmer, 1998). As suggested by Palmer (1998) this moral purpose contained emotional and spiritual dimensions where the teacher seeks not just to develop the intellectual capacity of their students but to relate to the students through building an affective relationship, to develop the whole student intellectually, socially, emotionally and spiritually. The participants' comments were predominantly affective and included "*being excited about being a teacher, building an inclusive class community, caring, tolerant, made learning enjoyable* and *helpful."*

The participants in the focus groups, when describing their vision of teacher identity, highlighted largely similar affective qualities along with some professional qualities, to those they admired in the teachers who had inspired them to become a teacher (see p. 165). These included being "*enthusiastic, caring, creative, engaging, confident, resourceful, supportive, organised, professional, approachable, knowledgeable, fun, exciting, memorable and inspirational."* This description of their emerging teacher identity demonstrated the broad spectrum found in the interpersonal and professional mentorship components of the relationship. It supported the findings by Beltman et al. (2015) that early career teachers, depicted themselves as potentially confident teachers who shared positive and rewarding relationships with their students. It highlighted the importance of the relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher in both the interpersonal and professional mentorship components and contributed towards the way in which the participants identified themselves as teachers. The

key elements which were shown to influence the development of teacher identity are discussed in the following sections.

6.7.2 Emergence of Teacher Identity

As identified by Beck and Kosnik (2002) a significant element of the Interpersonal Aspect of the relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher was the emotional and personal support of the supervising teacher. The pre-service teacher's perception that the supervising teacher was welcoming and genuinely wanted them in their classroom was an important and influencing element in the development of the relationship (see pp. 95-96). Furthermore, supervising teachers often have to specifically factor in the time to work with pre-service teachers (Gurl, 2018; Martinez, 1998). This can be the case if the supervising teacher has other roles in the school which requires their time and results in a lack of time for the pre-service teacher (see pp. 101-102). The complexity of providing feedback on lesson planning, preparation and teaching progress can be difficult for a supervising teacher to accommodate and can affect the mentoring role.

The absence of a positive mentoring role by the supervising teacher was identified by participants as a negative influence on their professional experience progress and their teacher identity. In these instances, they perceived that the supervising teachers (see Section 4.3.3):

- were not prepared for their mentoring role
- were an inexperienced supervising teacher
- largely operated in the professional mentorship component providing only critical feedback with no affirmation
- were not interested in establishing a personal rapport or providing emotional support.

The lack of a rapport or emotional support from the supervising teacher was another key element identified by the participants (see pp. 101-103). In situations where the supervising teacher failed to recognise a pre-service teacher as an individual within the teaching team, this caused anxiety in the context of the professional experience (see p. 139). For some participants who perceived this as a lack of a positive rapport, their professional experience at times became one of

survival rather than the enhancement of their professional learning (see pp. 139; 171). This was consistent with Ditchburn (2015), Harwell and Moore (2010) and Patrick (2013), who suggest that pre-service teachers want to be recognised as teachers in their own right and engage in meaningful teaching activities. The results showed that recognition as both a colleague and a pre-service teacher was important and helped ease anxiety and support the development of teacher identity (see Section 5.3.1). This could be evident in simple things like arranging a personal work space in the classroom for the pre-service teacher (Patrick, 2013). The importance of being treated as an equal by the supervising teacher was particularly important to Cohort Two participants looking to enhance their own teaching competencies, building on what they had learnt during their first professional experience. A number of Cohort Two participants perceived that it increased their teaching confidence and self-esteem as shown in this sample comment:

> *I went in there and my supervisor said, "here's your desk and this is where you sit and everything. Feel free to walk around the classroom and do whatever you like. Everything is here for you." I just went in there and I had my own space. I knew where to put things; I knew where to go. (Focus Group, Cohort Two)*

When a pre-service teacher feels emotionally supported through the establishment of a positive rapport with the supervising teacher, they will feel more empowered to adopt a teaching style which reflects their pedagogical beliefs and teacher identity (see pp. 168-172). In this study when there was emotional support provided by the supervising teacher in the Interpersonal Aspect of the relationship along with guidance and positive feedback in the Professional Mentorship Aspect, pre-service teachers' self-efficacy was enhanced (see Section 5.3.3). As a consequence, they experienced greater confidence to implement their own teaching style which reflected their teacher identity in an environment which was non-threatening and supportive. This finding is consistent with Mockler (2011) and Walkington (2005a), who contend that teacher identity is consequently shaped and reshaped in the learning environment by the interactions with significant others.

6.7.3 Establishment of Staff Relationships

The findings gathered from the individual interviews, highlighted the significant role that the supervising teacher plays in acting as a facilitator for the pre-service teacher in building relationships with colleagues in the school community. This finding supported research by Yuan and Lee (2014) who found that the supervising teacher plays an important role towards integrating the pre-service teacher with the staff community (see Section 5.3.2). The relationship building role supports the pre-service teacher's developing sense of teacher identity and makes them feel part of the school community and puts them at ease (Gardner 2010). This was identified by the participants in this study who indicated that interacting with the staff was a concern (see p. 161). Furthermore, the participants highlighted their anxiety of unknowingly offending staff by accidently compromising their personal space, for example sitting in their seats or using their cups. It was an interesting insight that while incidents such as sitting in the seats of other staff or using their cups may be considered trivial by established staff, these were the very types of examples highlighted by the participants as causing anxiety (see p. 161).

The participants highlighted their anxiety of relating with teachers who were more experienced or had different interests. This anxiety was particularly significant for the participants in Cohort One, who had never experienced a professional experience placement. Cohort Two participants who had experienced a previous placement, more confidently able to identify potential unintentional acts which could cause concern and to plan with appropriate strategies (see pp. 161-161).

Key methods of easing these anxieties were highlighted in the individual interviews including informal methods used by supervising teachers in the interpersonal component of the relationship, such as introducing the pre-service teacher to the teaching and administrative staff community as indicated in the following comment:

> *I guess she sort of introduced me to all the other staff members, just little things, like showing me where everything is, especially with my stage that I was on. I felt comfortable going in to all their rooms and*

asking for things, or even just having a chat about teacher things in the staff room. (Joanne, Cohort One)

Another key element to emerge from the results was the influential role of the supervising teacher in providing emotional support within the interpersonal component, by enabling the participants to perceive acceptance by the staff community. These strategies included the supervising teacher introducing the pre-service teacher to the other teachers and administrative staff, making links for the pre-service teacher to other support and specialist teachers and involving the pre-service teacher in staffroom discussion both informally during break time and in staff meetings and professional learning situations (see pp. 162-163). Such inclusive strategies enacted by the supervising teacher supported the contention of Martinez (1998) and Roland and Beckford (2010), that in a community of learners it is the responsibility of the entire teaching staff to support the pre-service teachers' professional development. The results confirm that this inclusivity enabled the pre-service teacher to feel like part of the staff community and enhanced their professional learning by being connected with the staff in a similar way to their supervising teacher, through an interpersonal and professional mentorship relationship (see Section 5.2.3).

The findings of this study strongly supported the effectiveness of supervising teachers in contributing to the acceptance of pre-service teachers by other teacher colleagues and administrative staff, thus reducing staff room anxiety for the participants. This resulted in participants feeling accepted by the school community and more confident to construct their own relationships with staff members to support their professional learning (see p. 163).

6.7.4 Relationship Influence on Teacher Identity Formation

An interesting finding in this study was the overlapping influence of developing teacher self-efficacy with an emergent teacher identity (see Section 5.3.3). As highlighted in this study, *verbal persuasion* in the form of the formal and informal feedback in the interpersonal and professional mentorship components of the relationship was a significant element in the development of teacher self-efficacy (see Section 5.2.2). As suggested by Cattley (2007), McNay and Graham (2007)

and Zembylas (2003), feedback from significant others also contributed to the development of teacher identity.

Teacher identities are formed through collaboration with colleagues in the community (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011) and the comments in the focus groups and individual interviews supported this view. They indicated that the supervising teacher feedback to the pre-service teacher influenced the formation of their teacher identity (see Section 5.3.3). This supported the findings of Yan and Lee (2014) who found a significant link in the interaction between teacher educators and pre-service teachers towards the formation of teacher identity. The participants in this study indicated when they interpreted affirming and constructive feedback it helped shape their teacher self-efficacy which strengthened their teacher identity (see Section 5.2.2 and Section 5.3.3).

Supervising teacher feedback was evident through a range of experiences across both the interpersonal and professional mentorship components of the pre-service and supervising teacher relationship. It was clear in this study, that when a well established and integrated interpersonal and professional mentorship relationship existed, this led to a valuable exchange of informal and formal feedback from the supervising teacher (see Section 5.2.2). This resulted in a subsequent integration of the sources of self-efficacy, which influenced the participants' formation of their teacher identity. The degree of integration of the interpersonal and professional mentorship components of the pre-service and supervising teacher relationship was a key factor as suggested by Day and Kington (2008) in their teacher identity model. It was clear that when the interpersonal and professional mentorship components were in balance then the teacher identity of the pre-service teacher, was encouraged to form and consolidate (see p. 166-171). The interrelationship between the interpersonal and professional mentorship components of the pre-service and supervising teacher relationship was therefore clearly shown as a key influence on the formation of teacher identity.

6.7.5 Communication and Trust

As outlined in Section 6.6 being trusted and being able to trust their supervising teacher contributed to the participants gaining a sense of themselves as teachers,

allowing the participants to feel safe when making mistakes (see Section 4.4.2). The participants felt more confident when their supervising teachers displayed trust in them, often through "overt actions such as the freedom to try new approaches or the willingness to let them work with colleagues or parents" (Sayeski & Paulsen, 2012, p. 125). When trust was demonstrated by the supervising teacher, the participant was more confident in developing their own teaching style, which allowed them to form or confirm their teacher identity. This formation or confirmation was reinforced when the participant was recognised for the quality of their teaching by significant others in the school community, such as the principal (see p. 152).

The positive and constructive comments communicated by the supervising teacher to the participants along with significant others within the school community, established an environment of trust and contributed to the formation or confirmation of teacher identity. The findings from this study also indicate that when the interpersonal and professional mentorship components of the relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher were integrated, the participants could identify with the aim to incorporate their supervising teacher's identity, as highlighted in this Cohort One sample comment:

> *I'd like to be a teacher like my supervising teacher. Obviously, a quality teacher, but I'd like to be a teacher that my children can come to me, to have that relationship of trust, to be a fair teacher; to be a teacher that encourages students to reach that next level. (Vicki, Cohort One)*

The participants' interpretation of the perceptions of their interaction with their supervising teacher and their similarities in their teaching styles and beliefs, emphasise the influence of the relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher in teacher identity formation (see pp. 166-167). Conversely, where a poor pre-service and supervising teacher relationship existed, the participants often identified the pressure to conform with and match the teaching style of their supervising teacher (see pp. 171-173). In these circumstances they felt that their teacher identity formation was inhibited as shown in this comment from a Cohort Two participant:

I'd use the same things in my voice, tones of my voice as my supervising teacher. I'd use the same phrases that she would use. I'd start giving the same responses and doing the same jokes that she would do, so she wouldn't have a problem with me doing it (Lisa, Cohort Two)

When the components of the Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Aspects were largely integrated and the feedback from the supervising teacher enhanced teacher self-efficacy, then an atmosphere of trust developed between the pre-service and supervising teacher resulting in meaningful professional learning. This trust provided an environment which promoted a sense of confidence in their teaching style and the emergence and consolidation of their teacher identity (see pp. 166-171).

6.7.6 Anticipatory Teacher Identity Reflective Practice

The importance of the development of reflective practice was also identified in this study (see pp. 165-166). Participants who confirmed or enhanced the formation of their teacher identity, could reflect on the support shown through the formal and informal feedback from their supervising teacher and significant others in the interpersonal and professional mentorship components of the relationship (see pp.132-134). This finding supported the Beauchamp and Thomas (2010) proposal that pre-service teachers should be encouraged to reflect in such a way that envisions their future teacher self through the use of anticipatory reflective practice. In this form of reflection the pre-service teacher focuses on the type of teacher they want to become (Beijaard et al., 2004).

Such an anticipatory reflective approach supports Lauriala and Kukkonen's (2005) stages of teacher identity development, by guiding the pre-service teacher from the actual teacher identity which exists, to the ideal teacher identity to which they aspire (as cited in Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). In this study, anticipatory reflective practice towards future teacher identity was maximised by the participants, when trust between the pre-service and supervising teacher was evident in the integrated and interrelated components of the Personal and Professional Mentorship Aspects of the relationship (see pp. 166-171). The results of this study showed that when pre-service teacher anxiety was eased,

there was an increased prospect of ‘double loop learning’ (Walkington, 2004). As previously discussed, using ‘double loop learning’ the participants were able to comfortably participate in collaborative open pedagogical discussion with their supervising teacher. As proposed by Zeichner’s (1983) *Inquiry Orientated* professional experience paradigm, this collaborative reflective environment enabled the participants to consolidate or confirm their teacher identity (see pp. 166-171).

To enhance the prospect of teacher identity formation using anticipatory reflective practice, it was clear from this study that there needed to be a conscious awareness of collaborative reflection by both the pre-service and supervising teacher within the relationship. This was evident in the comments of participants who had experienced a positive relationship. They were able to think beyond their present construct as a pre-service teacher to their future teacher self by relating their learning as a teacher from practice and pedagogical discussion (see pp. 168-171). Consequently, it was clear that there needed to be a conscious effort by both the pre-service and supervising teacher, to take the collaborative reflective practice and extrapolate it to the future teacher self in consultation. Where this level of collaborative reflection was shown to be achieved for some participants, the focus of the discussion about their professional learning had shifted from the evaluation of the participant’s performance of teaching competencies, to the deeper and richer reflection of how the performance of these teaching competencies contributed to the development of their future teacher self.

Beaucamp and Thomas (2010) and Cattley (2007) propose the way to structure anticipatory teacher identity reflective practice is to ensure that the pre-service teacher engages in reflective writing with a focus not just on lesson evaluations but geared to what this means for their future teacher self. Evidence in this study indicates when a pre-service teacher perceived and interpreted there was trust in the relationship with their supervising teacher, the process of teacher identity reflection was enhanced, as open dialogue unhindered from fear or anxiety was able to occur (see pp. 166-171).

6.7.7 Teacher Career Confirmation

The results of this study indicate, that the participants who experienced a supportive cognitive, social and emotional relationship with their supervising teacher enhanced or confirmed their teacher identity and career choice (see Section 5.3.4). A teacher's self-image, self-esteem and job satisfaction are largely shaped by the feedback from others (Kelchtermans, 2009). In terms of Symbolic Interactionism, the formation of teacher identity as discussed above is not fixed but "rather the result of an ongoing interactive process of sense-making and construction" through interaction with others (Kelchtermans, 2009, p. 263). This ongoing process of teacher identity and career construction was identified by the participants when referring to the further professional development which they felt was required to refine their ideal teacher identity as shown in this sample comment:

> *I feel like I'm getting there. I don't think I can honestly say that I'm there. I would love to say it, but I don't think that would be honest to say I'm fully there. There's still a lot of learning to do but I feel like I'm definitely heading down that path. (Vicki, Cohort One)*

This comment encapsulates the findings of this study related to the benefits of a positive teaching professional experience. When the pre-service and supervising teacher relationship was influential across both the Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Aspects, this enhanced the development of the participant's teacher identity. As shown in the sample comment above, this facilitated the participants to assess their teaching skills and teacher identity at an early stage of their careers, and to identify the need for further professional learning whilst still feeling assured of their teacher career choice (see pp. 173-175).

6.7.8 Teacher Identity Conclusion

This study found that the relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher contributed to the development of their teacher self-efficacy, confidence and teacher identity. As proposed by Canrinus et al. (2012) where there was relationship satisfaction in their interactions with their supervising teacher and colleagues in a positive learning environment, then there was greater motivation,

consolidation of teacher identity and career commitment. An important finding was that where the four sources of self-efficacy were interrelated and integrated in the components of the Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Aspects of the relationship, this influenced the participants' perceived sense of teacher career confirmation (see Section 5.3.4).

Positive affirmation from the supervising teacher and other significant people in the staff community was shown to promote and facilitate positive performance during the teaching professional experience and consolidate the pre-service teacher's perception of themselves as quality teachers as shown in this comment:

> *Amazing! I will be a teacher! It was really, really good, and I feel it was all the supervising teacher. From the beginning, you could see she was there to offer support. (Anna, Cohort Two)*

As the comment above shows, when trust developed in the relationship with the supervising teacher and possibly other significant people on the staff, this was a significant element which underpinned the development of teacher identity. Eleven individual interview participants, made similar comments which stated that their supervising teacher or others in the school community supported their role as teachers and confirmed their teacher career choice (see Section 5.3.4). The comments of those participants who experienced a positive relationship was captured in the following statement:

> *I had a successful prac where my supervising teacher showed confidence in me and made me really realise "Yes I am a teacher and yes I am a capable teacher." (Adele, Cohort Two)*

It was clear that when a positive relationship contributed directly to the formation of teacher identity, participants related their teacher career confirmation to a broader view of professionalism. They perceived their teacher identity would continue to be formed or confirmed, as they would be accepted as worthy members of the teacher professional community. However, when the relationship was poorly formed between the pre-service and supervising teacher this inhibited the development of teacher self-efficacy, formation of their teacher identity and

resulted in them lacking confirmation that teaching was the correct career choice (see Section 4.3.5, Section 4.4.6 and Section 5.2.3).

6.7.9 Effect of the Relationship on Teacher Identity and Career Confirmation Summary

The results of this study found that the relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher influenced the formation of the pre-service teacher's sense of their emerging teacher identity. The study confirmed that pre-service teachers enter their initial teacher education course with a limited teacher identity based on previous teachers they experienced in their own education. An interesting finding was that initially, pre-service teachers identify with largely affective qualities of their teacher identity. These qualities relate to teaching the whole student socially and emotionally beyond academic performance.

The study also found that pre-service teachers desire their supervising teachers to recognise them as teachers in their own right. The participants in the study identified that their supervising teacher can contribute to this by treating them as a teacher by providing them their own work space, engaging in professional dialogue and establishing links for them with teacher colleagues and administrative staff.

Supervising teacher feedback and trust supplied to the pre-service teacher, were key elements contributing to the pre-service teacher's emerging teacher identity. Furthermore, by both pre-service and supervising teachers engaging in anticipatory teacher identity reflective practice, pre-service teachers can reflect and envision their ideal teacher identity and confirm teaching as the correct career choice.

6.8 Discussion Summary

This study demonstrated that the relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher is a fundamental aspect of the teaching professional experience. When viewed through a Symbolic Interactionism framework (Sarantakos, 2005) it was evident that the pre-service teachers' interpretation of their experiences in their relationships with their supervising teachers had a

significant influence. This affected the quality of the professional experience and their overall professional learning. It also influenced the pre-service teacher's belief in their ability to undertake the many and varied tasks of teaching, that is their teacher self-efficacy. Furthermore, the quality of the professional relationship directly influenced the emerging formation of the pre-service teachers' perceptions of their teacher identity and influenced their career confirmation.

The importance of a supportive learning environment where the Interpersonal Aspect integrated with an effective Professional Mentorship Aspect was a key finding of this study. It facilitated the development of a positive and productive pre-service and supervising teacher relationship and promoted professional learning. Consequently, this influenced the enhancement of teacher self-efficacy in the pre-service teachers and resulted in the confidence to develop their own teaching style and the subsequent formation of their teacher identity. This resulted in a recognition of their place in the broader teacher professional community and the personal confirmation of teaching as their career choice.

Chapter 7

Key Findings, Limitations, Recommendations and Conclusion

7.1 Overview

This chapter summarises the major findings and outlines the recommendations of the study into the pre-service teachers' experiences and interpretation of their relationship with their supervising teacher during professional experience. The chapter provides concluding discussion related to their interpretation of their relationship and how their interpretation influenced the pre-service teachers' professional learning. Further this chapter synthesises these key findings to outline the recommendations for pre-service teacher education in terms of the importance and influence of the relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher during professional experience and propose future research into this area. The limitations of the study are fully discussed and concluding remarks draw together the overall recommendations in light of the current pre-service teaching professional experience context in Australia.

7.2 Summary of the Study

7.2.1 Aims of the Research and Research Design

The context of this investigation into pre-service teachers' experiences and interpretation of their relationship with supervising teachers during professional experience was framed in the ongoing national debate in the Australian educational community regarding the quality of teacher practice in initial teacher education. These discussions emerged as a result of the Australian Government report into the quality of pre-service teacher education (TEMAG, 2014).

Professional experience within teacher training programs is regarded as an essential element of pre-service teacher education courses (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Harwell & Moore, 2010; Ngidi & Sibaya, 2006). As set out in Chapter 1, the aim of this study was to give voice to

pre-service teachers to explore their experience of the relationship they shared with their supervising teacher during their professional experience. The research investigated their interpretations of these relationship experiences and how this affected their professional learning.

The study used a Symbolic Interactionism theoretical framework as a lens through which to view the key elements, strategies and the dynamics identified by pre-service teachers which operate within the pre-service and supervising teacher relationship (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Feast & Melles, 2010; Sarantakos, 2005). It was therefore chosen to examine the relationship and the perceptions formed by the pre-service teacher and the meaning created. The research design in this study incorporated a case study methodology comprising undergraduate pre-service teachers engaged in a Bachelor of Education (Primary) Degree (Crotty, 1998). The sample consisted of two cohorts from differing levels of professional experience. Cohort One were pre-service teachers who had just completed their first professional experience with a supervising teacher. Cohort Two consisted of pre-service teachers who had completed their second teaching professional experience and therefore these participants had worked in a prior pre-service and supervising teacher relationship.

The study discovered that pre-service teacher's interpretation of their perceptions in their relationship with their supervising teacher can influence the development of their professional learning, teacher self-efficacy and the formation of their teacher identity. Literature supports that teacher self-efficacy and teacher identity are key aspects of teacher professionality (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Canrinus et al., 2012; Chong et al., 2011; Jamil et al., 2012; Johnson et al., 2010; Klassen & Chiu, 2011; Lorsbach & Jinks, 1999; McCormack et al., 2006; McNay & Graham, 2007; Walkington, 2005b). Therefore, within the Symbolic Interactionism framework, Bandura's (1997) four sources of self-efficacy development *(enactive mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion and physiological and affective states)* were used to discuss the effects on teacher self-efficacy and the subsequent influence of the relationship on the formation of teacher identity.

7.2.2 Summary of the Key Outcomes of the Study

The study established the importance of the Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Aspects within the pre-service and supervising teacher relationship. Key themes and sub-themes were identified within each aspect along with strategies and elements that influenced the professional learning of the participants.

Interpersonal Aspect

The key influencing element that emerged in the Interpersonal Aspect was the establishment of a rapport between the pre-service and supervising teacher. The participants identified a number of strategies employed by the supervising teacher that formed the framework of an effective rapport including:

- actively easing the anxieties of the pre-service teacher
- using informal communication methods
- getting to know the pre-service teacher as a person
- displaying willingness and enthusiasm to have the pre-service teacher in the classroom
- being prepared and organised for the pre-service teacher requirements
- being conscious of the pre-service teacher's professional experience and University workload.

The study established that the development within the Interpersonal Aspect takes emotional work by both the pre-service and supervising teacher. The participants were able to gauge their own emotional work in establishing and maintaining the relationship. They also identified the importance of the emotional work of their supervising teacher which was demonstrated through the understanding that was exhibited towards them. The degree to which the supervising teacher's emotional work in terms of understanding was natural or needed to be consciously applied when establishing a positive relationship was less clear.

Professional Mentorship Aspect

The Professional Mentorship Aspect of the relationship involved the participation by the pre-service teacher in developing the skills and competencies of teaching.

Key elements that were influential in the relationship formed in the Professional Mentorship Aspect included:

- the establishment of shared expectations related to professional communication between the pre-service and supervising teacher
- the impact of the supervising teacher's supervision and feedback approaches
- the effectiveness of the supervising teacher's explanation of classroom routines and management approach
- the pre-service and supervising teacher's collaboration with planning for teaching
- the supervising teacher's encouragement for the pre-service teacher to develop their own teaching style.

An important element was the participants' mediation of their interpretation of their supervising teacher as primarily mentor or assessor. When the mentor interpretation dominated the participants felt supported in developing their own teaching style. Their teacher self-efficacy became stronger and their teacher identity began to emerge and develop. To support this development in the professional mentorship component the pre-service teachers identified the value of being informed about the class students' academic and behavioural needs and relevant effective teaching strategies.

The final influencing element in the Professional Mentorship Aspect was the pre-service teacher's evaluation of the observation of the supervising teacher modelling good teaching practice. This practice included demonstrating effective teaching skills and strategies, student management strategies and displaying a high level of professionalism.

Interaction of the Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Aspects

The study found that the teaching professional experience was an anxious time for pre-service teachers as highlighted by the participants. An important finding from the focus groups and individual interviews indicated that in a positive professional experience the establishment of the Interpersonal Aspect appeared to precede the Professional Mentorship Aspect. The comments of the participants indicated that

anxiety was reduced when supervising teachers were aware of the pre-service teacher's anxiety and established a rapport which then provided a basis to enhance the development of a professional mentorship relationship.

Additionally, the results indicated another key finding that in a productive teaching professional experience, the Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Aspects integrated and interrelated. However, the degree of integration can vary depending upon the nature of the relationship, the supervising teacher's pedagogical beliefs and the supervision approach. Where similar pedagogical beliefs were interpreted by pre-service teachers as being shared by both partners in the relationship, then integration of the components of the two aspects was enhanced. This resulted in meaningful professional learning and growth for the pre-service teacher. However, when either of the Interpersonal or Professional Mentorship Aspects were interpreted as not well developed, then they were less integrated and at times resulted in a difficult professional experience. In these instances the pre-service teachers needed to mediate their perceptions of the elements within the relationship to teach in a way they felt would enable them to achieve the best outcomes possible. Therefore, it was clear from the results of this study that the degree to which the key influencing elements and strategies within the Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Aspects interact can significantly support or inhibit pre-service teacher's professional learning.

Influence on Teacher Self-Efficacy

The strong connection between the two overarching themes of the relationship, that is the Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Aspects and the development of teacher self-efficacy was an important finding within this study. The four sources of self-efficacy development comprised of *enactive mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion* and *physiological and affective states* identified by Bandura (1997), were influential in the pre-service and supervising teacher relationship. The four sources of self-efficacy building were evident within both the Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Aspects, with *enactive mastery experiences* and *vicarious experiences* being found largely in the professional mentorship component of the relationship and *verbal persuasion* and *physiological and affective states* being significant in the

interpersonal component. *Verbal persuasion* was identified as the key teacher self-efficacy development source as it permeated both the interpersonal and professional mentorship components.

A key finding of this study was that when pre-service teachers interpreted the Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Aspects as being well developed, then the four sources of self-efficacy were interrelated and integrated within the interpersonal and professional mentorship components, which provided an enhanced professional experience for the participants. The element of *verbal persuasion* was found to be a major influence across the integrated interpersonal and professional mentorship components. Affirming and constructive formal and informal *verbal persuasion* feedback communication by the supervising teacher supported the other self-efficacy sources. This resulted in the formation of a positive relationship and rapport enhancing the participant's professional learning and teacher self-efficacy.

The study also revealed that when pre-service teachers interpreted one or both of the two relationship aspects as being diminished, this had a negative effect on the development of their teacher self-efficacy due to one or more of the four sources of self-efficacy not strongly being evident. This resulted in a professional experience for the participants which caused stress and anxiety and negatively affected their ability to develop their preferred teaching style and subsequently their belief in their ability to teach.

Another interesting finding of this research was that when the relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher was not well developed, the participants were able to compensate by gaining input and teaching self-efficacy support from significant others. Often this support was from other teachers within the school teaching community or externally from their teaching related work as well as from family and friends. *Verbal persuasion* from these significant others helped reduce the anxiety caused if support for *physiological and affective states* was not being supplied by the supervising teacher in a poorly formed relationship.

This support from external sources could be described as an act of compensation through substitution by the pre-service teacher. It is not clear from the results of this study whether the gathering of this external support was a conscious or a

subconscious survival act or whether it was a normal part of the interaction with others in the school community. However, the approach of compensation through substitution in a difficult relationship enabled the participants to satisfactorily complete their professional experience. The results revealed that while this method was a coping strategy that supported the participant in their professional experience, it was limited. It did not yield the positive professional development outcomes evident when the Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Aspects were integrated in the pre-service and supervising teacher relationship.

Influence on Teacher Identity

Many pre-service teachers entering their teacher education course come with pre-set ideas related to their teacher identities. In the early stages of their teacher education course their concept of teacher identity appeared to be based on the observation of teachers from their own education who had inspired them to become a teacher.

A key finding was that the interpersonal component of the relationship influenced the affective qualities of the participant's perceived teacher identity. Where the participants interpreted a close link between their emerging teacher identity and that of the supervising teacher's pedagogical approaches, then they were less anxious and more confident in the formation of the relationship. The participants who experienced positive relationships incorporated many of the qualities of their supervising teacher's practice into their own practice resulting in the reinforcement of their teacher identity.

The final key finding of this study was that the strength of the teacher self-efficacy development influenced the formation of teacher identity. When the four sources of self-efficacy formation were fully developed in the Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Aspects, this provided the opportunity for an affirming relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher. Subsequently, this relationship resulted in constructive and collaborative feedback that was perceived and interpreted by the participants as a form of trust. When this sense of trust was present in the relationship, it enhanced reflection and analysis by the pre-service teacher in the form of anticipatory teacher identity reflective practice. The focus in the relationship then shifted from assessment of the participant's teaching

practice, to an evaluation of how this practice could be improved to develop their professionality, which directly influenced the formation of their teacher identity. Anticipatory teacher identity reflective practice was maximised when the pre-service and supervising teacher engaged in an open dialogue. Where the participants of this study felt there was trust then this enhanced their professional learning, including visualising their ideal teacher identity in dialogue with their supervising teacher.

7.3 Implications for Pre-Service Teacher Education

The results of this study exploring the pre-service teachers' interpretation of their relationship with their supervising teacher and the influence of their interpretation on their professional learning are synthesised and discussed below.

7.3.1 Recommendations for Pre-service Teacher Education

Importance of the Pre-Service and Supervising Teacher Relationship

This study has highlighted that the professional experience component of pre-service teacher education is highly influential in enhancing the pre-service teachers professional learning. In many teacher education models professional experience expectations have a major focus on performance of teaching competencies through the development of teaching skills (Haigh & Ward, 2004; Martinez, 1998; Walkington, 2005a; Zeichner, 1983). Accountability and assessment demands result in a great deal of the preparation for the professional experience being spent on educating pre-service teachers to perform these teaching skills. However, the results of this study have shown that the establishment of a positive interpersonal relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher is a crucially important component that had a significant influence on the overall development of the pre-service teacher. Equally important is the finding that this relationship is developed within both the Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Aspects. Therefore, it is important that pre-service teachers during their pre-professional experience training be prepared for the relationship they will share with their supervising teacher in both the Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Aspects.

Recommendation: The implication of these findings is that in the pre-professional experience preparation greater attention needs to be paid to educating pre-service teachers to identify the elements of the Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Aspects of the relationship they will share with their supervising teacher. Furthermore, they need to be provided with strategies to identify and enhance the elements within the relationship that will support the building of positive outcomes within both aspects to enhance their professional learning.

Value of Establishing a Positive Rapport

The results of the study have shown the importance of establishing a mutually trusting rapport built on constructive feedback and reflective practice between the pre-service and supervising teacher. The effects of this rapport have been shown to be influential in both the Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Aspects. It was clear from the results that the initial meeting is an important time in the establishment of the relationship. The study highlighted that it is during this initial meeting where the foundation is laid for the relationship to develop. Rapport building strategies were seen to be developed in both the interpersonal component of the relationship and in the professional mentorship component.

Recommendation: The implication of this finding is that in the pre-service teacher preparation for professional experience there needs to be a greater awareness and acknowledgment of the importance of the initial meeting with their supervising teacher which establishes the platform for the ongoing relationship. Fundamental to the pre-service teacher's pre-professional experience preparation should be the modelling of strategies which will assist in establishing a rapport during the initial meeting with the supervising teacher. The use of real life previous experiences of pre-service teachers, scenarios, video sketches and role plays would be a valuable learning approach.

Effects of Professional Experience Anxiety

The literature review revealed that pre-service teachers experience elevated levels of anxiety when completing their professional experience. This study explored this finding through the use of a planned question to the focus groups about the participants' professional experience anxiety. The study confirmed the findings of

previous studies that the teaching professional experience is an emotional experience for pre-service teachers. Anxiety has been shown to have a detrimental impact during pre-service teacher professional experience (Campbell & Uusimaki, 2006; Dobbins, 1996; Kyriacou & Stephens, 1999; Ngidi & Sibaya, 2006). This was particularly evident in the results which highlighted that the participants experienced elevated levels of anxiety prior to the commencement of their professional experience. The individual semi-structured interviews provided insight into this finding and indicated that a positive relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher can have a strong influence on reducing levels of anxiety.

Recommendation: The implication of this finding is that during pre-professional experience preparation pre-service teachers should participate in reflective activities to determine the issues in the relationship with their supervising teacher they feel will cause them anxiety and provide strategies to reduce this anxiety. The identification of these relationship anxiety aspects can be discussed with strategies taught to deal with their concerns.

Role of Reflective Practices in Professional Learning

In this study shared expectations were highlighted as an essential element within the relationship especially in relation to the professional mentorship component. Shared expectations included such things as a common understanding of the teaching expectations of the professional experience, a mutual understanding and acceptance of the supervision model to be used, the desired outcomes of the professional experience, and an understanding and appreciation of teaching pedagogies and beliefs. It is important that when sharing expectations with their supervising teachers, the pre-service teacher needs to be able to express clear expectations in terms of their desired outcomes from the professional experience and their teaching pedagogy.

Recommendation: The implication of this finding is that within the pre-professional experience preparation that pre-service teachers be given greater experience in reflecting upon and clarifying what they hope to achieve personally and professionally from their professional experience and interpreting this into their own teaching pedagogical beliefs. Furthermore, pre-service teachers should be

encouraged to discuss their expectations and the type and level of personal and professional support they expect from their supervising teacher, to establish clear understandings for the relationship they will share.

Influences on Teacher Self-Efficacy

A further key finding of this study is the influence that the relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher has on the development of teacher self-efficacy. The study highlighted how Bandura's (1997) four sources of self-efficacy development exist within the Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Aspects of the relationship. It was clear that when the four sources of self-efficacy were integrated in both these key aspects of the relationship, teacher self-efficacy was enhanced which also had an influence on emerging teacher identity.

Recommendation: The implication of this finding is that to maximise teacher self-efficacy that the pre-service teacher education courses include preparation for the pre-service teacher in raising the awareness and understanding about the key elements of teacher self-efficacy development and how they operate to influence the development of this key aspect of professional experience.

Importance of Interpreting Formal and Informal Feedback

Within the findings related to the development of teacher self-efficacy, the importance of *verbal persuasion* as a source of teacher self-efficacy emerged. This was seen in the form of feedback which has been identified in this study as a key influencing element of the Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Aspects of the relationship. Formal feedback was largely found within the professional mentorship component and informal feedback within the interpersonal component. Feedback to the pre-service teacher provided information about the performance of the teaching skills within the Professional Mentorship Aspect and contributed to the building of a rapport within the Interpersonal Aspect. Informal feedback was particularly important in developing teacher self-efficacy. There is substantial evidence in this study to show that informal feedback had a powerful influence for the participants due to its unsolicited and genuine nature. Due to the focus on assessment of teaching skills, pre-service professional experience usually requires the provision of formal feedback against a set of evaluation criteria. However, the

results showed the provision of informal feedback was also a highly significant influence which largely goes undocumented and therefore not widely recognised.

Recommendation: The implication of this finding is that during the pre-professional experience preparation that there be a more focused approach to educating pre-service teachers about the importance of both formal and informal feedback and how to interpret this information to gauge the level of professional experience progress. Included within this preparation should be the development of the pre-service teacher's ability to engage in professional dialogue with their supervising teacher to clarify points raised within the feedback.

Influences on Teacher Identity

This study supports the findings of previous studies that pre-service teachers enter their teacher training course with a sense of their teacher identity based upon their interaction with teachers who inspired them or through their observation of teachers. This was often expressed largely in the affective qualities of a teacher. Within professional experience the interactions involved in the relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher were shown to have a major influence on the formation of the pre-service teacher's teacher identity. However, as proposed by Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) and Cattley (2007), there is a need for pre-service teachers to challenge their pre-set concept of their teacher identity. This can be achieved through the use of reflective activities with their supervising teacher to focus on their future teacher self rather than focus solely on the immediate performance of the skills of teaching within the professional experience.

Recommendation: The implication for this finding is that in pre-service teacher education courses there be a greater emphasis on informing pre-service teachers about the factors which contribute to teacher identity and how this relates to their emerging sense of themselves as teachers. Furthermore, to enhance their teacher identity formation pre-service teachers should be encouraged to regularly reflect on their concept of their teacher identity and trained to engage in effective reflective practice techniques in collaboration with their supervising teachers. It is also recommended that pre-service teachers be trained in the use of scaffolded reflective questions similar to those proposed by Cattley (2007) as outlined in

Section 2.5.5., to enhance the quality of their reflections and discussions with supervising teachers.

7.3.2 Future Research in Pre-service Teacher Professional Experience

The results of this study have presented the opportunity to develop a number of directions for future research related to pre-service teacher professional experience. These are explored in the following section.

Building Pre-service/Supervising Teacher Rapport

This study found that pre-service teachers are often anxious about their professional experience and need emotional support. It also revealed that the supervising teacher can play a significant role in reducing anxiety. The participants identified effective methods supervising teachers used to ease anxiety and build a rapport with the pre-service teacher. However, the results showed inconsistencies in the pre-service teachers' interpretation of supervising teachers' ability to use these strategies. Therefore, a future study exploring the effective strategies used by supervising teachers skilled in building a rapport with pre-service teachers would be a valuable investigation to provide information for supervising teachers about the importance of the affective aspect of the relationship they will share with the pre-service teacher.

Exploring the Development of Teacher Self-Efficacy

A key finding in this study was the influence of the pre-service and supervising teacher relationship on the development of the pre-service teachers' self-efficacy. The study found that where there was a positive relationship the pre-service teacher's self-efficacy was enhanced. This finding has been highlighted as significant towards the development of the pre-service teachers' professional learning. Therefore, it would be advantageous to conduct a future research study specifically aimed at measuring the degree of influence of the relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher on the development of teacher self-efficacy using reliable self-efficacy research tools.

Compensating Strategies to Build Rapport

The sources of self-efficacy building (Bandura, 1997) were found to be important influential elements in the relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher. The study highlighted that through substitution from significant others in the pre-service teacher's life they were able to compensate when the sources of self-efficacy were missing or poorly developed by their supervising teacher. There has been little research related to this type of compensation strategy in professional experience and it is therefore worthy of future investigation. The aim would be to determine the effectiveness and consistency of this substitution strategy and whether it can be taught as a valuable technique to pre-service teachers prior to the commencement of their professional experience program.

Full Degree Program Study of the Relationship

This study provides an insight into Primary pre-service teachers' interpretation of the interaction between pre-service and supervising teachers during one teaching professional experience of their pre-service teacher education course. The incorporation of Cohort Two within this study who had experienced a previous professional experience provided an opportunity where relevant, to compare professional experience of the study with their previous professional experience and with the comments of Cohort One who had completed their first professional experience. This comparison provided some interesting insights into the development over time of the pre-service teachers' thoughts and interpretations about the relationship they shared with supervising teachers. It would be valuable to extend upon this study by conducting a longitudinal study which covers the full four years of a Bachelor of Education (Primary) Degree, in order to discover the ongoing developmental effect of a series of pre-service and supervising teacher relationships on the development of teacher self-efficacy and teacher identity.

Supervising Teacher Focused Study

This study is based on a Symbolic Interactionism theoretical framework where voice was given to Primary pre-service teachers' interpretation of their perceptions of their interactions with their supervising teachers. This data was analysed and discussed from the pre-service teachers' perspective which influenced their

professional learning. Although there would be considerable scope for agreement by supervising teachers it is not possible to generalise these findings as representative of what supervising teachers would view from their perspective as the major elements in the relationship with their pre-service teacher. It would be advantageous to the field of professional experience to conduct a similar study with supervising teachers, to determine the elements they feel contribute to the building of a positive relationship with pre-service teachers and the professional benefits for themselves and the pre-service teachers and compare the results with this study.

7.4 Limitations

This study has focussed on listening to the voices of pre-service teachers in an exploration of the pre-service teachers' interpretation of the relationship they shared with their supervising teacher during professional experience. It did not include input from the supervising teachers which has been flagged as an area of future research.

Within this study it is important to note that other aspects of the professional experience may influence the pre-service and supervising teacher relationship beyond the scope of this study. These aspects include the quality of the supporting professional experience course work, the culture of the school, the nature and the needs of the students in the class, the academic performance of the pre-service teacher and external private personal issues the pre-service or supervising teacher may have been experiencing during the study, which impacted on the relationship or pre-service teacher performance.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the study was conducted in a New South Wales Australia pre-service teacher education institution. With each state and territory in Australia having their own teacher education institutions and teacher accreditation authorities, the results are not necessarily able to be generalised with certainty due to differences which may exist within the teacher education programs and jurisdictional teacher accreditation expectations which need to be met.

7.5 Conclusion

Over the past five years one of the key focus areas in the national debate within the Australian educational community is on the quality of pre-service teacher education. In 2014 the Australian Federal Government commissioned the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG, 2014) Report to research the approaches used in pre-service teacher education and make recommendations for improvements. Key among these recommendations was to improve the quality of professional experience placements with an emphasis on selecting supervising teachers who were highly accomplished teachers capable of providing a mentoring environment for their pre-service teachers.

This study has contributed to this area of focus by clearly identifying that fundamental to an effective mentoring environment is the establishment of a positive relationship between the pre-service and supervising teacher. An in-depth exploration of this relationship was the focus of this study to discover what pre-service teachers experienced in the relationship with their supervising teachers during professional experience and how pre-service teachers interpreted these experiences and subsequent influence on their professional learning.

The study discovered that the relationship is complex and contains a variety of elements and strategies in the Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Aspects. Both the Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Aspects of the relationship are important and when integrated in the relationship enhanced the pre-service teachers' professional learning. Furthermore, the study revealed that the elements in the Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Aspects when viewed through Bandura's (1997) four sources of self-efficacy development had a significant influence on the pre-service teachers' professional learning and the development of their teacher self-efficacy and formation of their teacher identity. Results also revealed that when elements within the Interpersonal and Professional Mentorship Aspects were lacking, less developed or less integrated, then the level of professional learning and the development of teacher self-efficacy and teacher identity were diminished.

It is hoped that this study will contribute some significant insights into research related to the role of the relationship between the pre-service and supervising

teacher in professional experience. The implications for pre-service teacher education along with the focuses for future research highlight the importance of the role of pre-service teacher education courses in the preparation of pre-service teachers for the relationship they will experience with their supervising teacher, to produce knowledgeable, confident and highly skilled teachers in the future.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Permission Letter and Consent From: ACU Head of School, Education NSW

Associate Professor
Head of School, Education NSW
Australian Catholic University
25A Barker Rd
Strathfield NSW 2135

Dear Associate Professor

I am writing to you to seek your permission to conduct a research study involving the undergraduate Bachelor of Education (Primary) pre-service teachers at the Australian Catholic University. The study proposes to explore the relationship between the pre-service teacher and supervising teacher in the professional experience and how the relationship influenced the pre-service teacher's professional learning.

The pre-service teachers will then be invited to volunteer to participate in post professional experience focus groups to discuss these concerns and anxieties in light of the relationship they shared with their supervising colleague teacher and how this relationship influenced their concerns and anxiety and contributed towards their professional learning. Pre-service teachers will then be randomly selected to participate in in-depth semi-structured interviews to fully explore the influential aspects in this relationship and its significance to their professional learning.

The focus groups and interviews will be audio taped for later analysis and should last for approximately forty minutes. There are no risks beyond normal day-to-day living associated with the pre-service teachers' participation in this project. Their participation in this project is voluntary and they can choose not to participate or to withdraw from participation at any time during the project without having to either give a reason or justify their decision. In order to ensure confidentiality, data collected in this research project will be aggregated and participants will not be identified individually in any report, publication or by a future researcher arising from it. Participants who wish to do so can obtain appropriate feedback on the results of the project. This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University.

If you agree for the undergraduate Bachelor of Education (Primary) pre-service teachers from ACU to participate in this project, please sign both copies of the Permission Form, retain one copy for your records and return the researcher's copy to David Lee at ACU Strathfield.

If you have any questions regarding this project please contact me on telephone number 97014512 or email David.Lee@acu.edu.au Thank you.

Yours faithfully

David Lee
Lecturer in Education Studies

HEAD OF SCHOOL, EDUCATION NSW PERMISSION FORM
Copy for the Researcher to Keep

Research Project undertaken as part of a Doctor of Education Degree Program

TITLE OF PROJECT: Pre-service and Supervising Teacher Relationships in Professional Experience

NAME OF RESEARCHER: David Lee

I have read and understood the information provided in the letter requesting permission to involve undergraduate Bachelor of Education (Primary) pre-service teachers from ACU as part of the study, exploring the relationship between the pre-service teacher and supervising teacher in the practicum and how the relationship influenced the pre-service teacher's practicum professional learning.

I give my permission for the researcher to conduct post practicum focus groups and in-depth semi-structured interviews with pre-service teachers.

I am aware that I, or the pre-service teachers involved, can withdraw their consent at any time without giving a reason or having to justify my decision. I understand that the research data collected for the study may be published or may be provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify the participants in any way.

NAME OF HEAD OF SCHOOL, EDUCATION NSW: .....

SIGNATURE: ..... DATE .....

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER

Appendix B

Participant Focus Group Letter and Consent Form

PRE-SERVICE TEACHER PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LETTER – FOCUS GROUPS
Research Project undertaken as part of a Doctor of Education Degree Program

TITLE OF PROJECT: Pre-service and Supervising Teacher Relationships in Professional Experience

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr Jan Kane
NAME OF RESEARCHER: David Lee
STUDENT'S DEGREE: Doctor of Education

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in a research study which proposes to explore the relationship between the pre-service teacher and supervising colleague teacher in professional experience and how the relationship influences the pre-service teacher's professional learning.

You have volunteered to participate in a focus group to discuss the concerns and anxieties you experienced and the nature of the relationship that you shared with your supervising colleague teacher. The focus group will be digitally recorded for later analysis. The focus group should run for approximately 40 minutes in duration. It is intended that the findings of this study will be used to inform the pre-service teacher education program at ACU, to better prepare pre-service teachers for their professional experience.

There are no risks beyond normal day-to-day living associated with your participation in this project. Your participation in this project is voluntary and you can choose not to participate or to withdraw from participation at any time during the project without having to either give a reason or justify your decision. If you do agree to participate and at any stage feel uncomfortable and do not wish to answer specific questions in the focus group discussion or to continue with the focus group as a whole, then you can withdraw from the study at any time without any adverse consequences. In all aspects of the study the identity of the participants involved will remain strictly confidential. In the data gathering, analysis and reporting of results, all participants will be identified by a pseudonym and access to the data will be restricted only to members of the research team as noted above. Participants will not be identified individually in any report, publication or in any future research.

If you have any questions regarding this project you should direct them to the researcher David Lee on telephone number 97014512 or email David.Lee@acu.edu.au

At the conclusion of the research study a summary report will be available to all participants. To ensure confidentiality of the focus group discussions all participants will be given the option to check the relevant transcripts prior to the publication of the summary report. The research data will remain strictly confidential and will be stored in a secured storage facility at the Strathfield campus of the Australian Catholic University.

This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University. In the event that you have any complaint or concern about the way you have been treated during the study, or if you have any query that the researcher has not been able to satisfy, you may write to the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee care of the NSW/ACT branch of the Research Services Unit.

Chair, HREC
c/o Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research)
Australian Catholic University
Melbourne Campus
Locked Bag 4115
FITZROY, VIC, 3065
Ph: 03 9953 3150
Fax: 03 9953 3315
Email: res.ethics@acu.edu.au

Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. The participant will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this project, you should sign both copies of the Consent Form, retain one copy for your records and return the other copy to the researcher. Thank you.

David Lee

Researcher

CONSENT FORM

Copy for Researcher to Keep

Research Project undertaken as part of a Doctor of Education Degree Program

TITLE OF PROJECT: Pre-service and Supervising Teacher Relationships in Professional Experience

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr Jan Kane
NAME OF RESEARCHER: David Lee
STUDENT'S DEGREE: Doctor of Education

I ..... *(the participant)* have read and understood the information provided in the Letter to Participants. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this project by to participating in an in a focus group interview to discuss the relationship I shared with my supervising colleague teacher during my recent practicum. The interview will be audio taped for later analysis and should take approximately forty minutes in duration.

I realise that I can withdraw my consent at any time without giving a reason or having to justify my decision. I agree that research data collected for the study may be published or may be provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify me in any way.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT: .....
(block letters)

SIGNATURE: ..... DATE .....

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER DATE…….

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR DATE…….

Appendix C

Participant Individual Interview Letter and Consent Form

INFORMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS
PRE-SERVICE TEACHER INTERVIEWS
Research Project undertaken as part of a Doctor of Education Degree Program

TITLE OF PROJECT: Pre-service and Supervising Teacher Relationships in Professional Experience

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr Jan Kane
NAME OF RESEARCHER: David Lee
STUDENT'S DEGREE: Doctor of Education

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in a research study which proposes to explore the relationship between the pre-service teacher and supervising teacher in professional experience and how the relationship influences the pre-service teacher's professional learning.

You have been invited to take part in an interview to discuss the relationship you shared with your supervising teacher during your recent practicum. The interview will be digitally recorded for later analysis. The interview should last for approximately 40 minutes. It is intended that the findings of this study will be used to inform the pre-service teacher education program at ACU, to better prepare pre-service teachers for their practicum experience.

There are no risks beyond normal day-to-day living associated with your participation in this project. Your participation in this project is voluntary and you can choose not to participate or to withdraw from participation at any time during the project without having to either give a reason or justify your decision. If you do agree to participate and at any stage feel uncomfortable and do not wish to answer specific questions in the in-depth interview or to continue with the interview as a whole, then you can withdraw from the study at any time without any adverse consequences. In all aspects of the study the identity of the participants involved will remain strictly confidential. In the data gathering, analysis and reporting of results, all participants will be identified by a pseudonym and access to the data will be restricted only to members of the research team as noted above. Participants will not be identified individually in any report, publication or in any future research.

If you have any questions regarding this project you should direct them to the researcher David Lee on telephone number 97014512 or email David.Lee@acu.edu.au

At the conclusion of the research study a summary report will be available to all participants. To ensure confidentiality of the focus group discussions all participants will be given the option to check the relevant transcripts prior to the publication of the summary report. The research data will remain strictly confidential and will be stored in a secured storage facility at the Strathfield campus of the Australian Catholic University.

This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University. In the event that you have any complaint or concern about the way you have been treated during the study, or if you have any query that the researcher has not been able to satisfy, you may write to the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee care of the NSW/ACT branch of the Research Services Unit

Chair, HREC
c/o Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research)
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Ph: 03 9953 3150
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Email: res.ethics@acu.edu.au

Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. The participant will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this project, you should sign both copies of the Consent Form, retain one copy for your records and return the other copy to the researcher. Thank you.

David Lee

Researcher

CONSENT FORM

Copy for Researcher to Keep

Research Project undertaken as part of a Doctor of Education Degree Program

TITLE OF PROJECT: Pre-service and Supervising Teacher Relationships in Professional Experience

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr Jan Kane
NAME OF RESEARCHER: David Lee
STUDENT'S DEGREE: Doctor of Education

I ..... *(the participant)* have read and understood the information provided in the Letter to Participants. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this project by to participating in an interview to discuss the relationship I shared with my supervising colleague teacher during my recent practicum. The interview will be audio taped for later analysis and should take approximately forty minutes in duration.

I realise that I can withdraw my consent at any time without giving a reason or having to justify my decision. I agree that research data collected for the study may be published or may be provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify me in any way.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT: .....
(block letters)

SIGNATURE: ..... DATE .....

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER DATE…….

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR DATE…….

Appendix D

Professional Experience Focus Group Questions

1. How do you know you had a successful professional experience (or not) and did it fulfil what you hoped to achieve?

2. How would you describe the relationship you developed with your supervising teacher?

3. How did you contribute to building the relationship with your supervising teacher?

4. How did your supervising teacher help ease your anxiety? *(planned question based on the literature reviewed)*
    - Easing any anxiety you were experiencing and making you feel welcome
    - Building a rapport
    - Understanding the needs of the class
    - Helping you plan and prepare your lessons
    - Your concerns about their lesson evaluations of your teaching
    - The way and manner in which they provided lesson evaluation
    - Student management approach/issues
    - Coping with the workload and meeting Uni expectations

5. Describe how the supervising teacher helped to build you confidence (or not) as a teacher

6. Following your professional experience what have you learnt about yourself as a teacher?

7. How did your supervising teacher contribute to this sense of the teacher you think you are?

Appendix E

Professional Experience Individual Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. What were you hoping to get out of your professional experience?
2. Describe how you found your professional experience?
3. What did the supervising teacher do to help you feel at ease and settle in?
4. What were you looking for from your supervising teacher?
5. How did your supervising teacher help build your confidence?
6. How did the supervising teacher show they trusted you? Can you describe how this trust made you feel?
7. Describe the sort of teacher you'd like to be?
8. Describe how important you feel the relationship you experienced with the supervising teacher is towards having a successful professional experience

Appendix F

Individual Interview Participant Gender and Age Data

Cohort One – Pre-service teachers in their first professional experience

Pseudonym	Gender	Age
Brooke	Female	19
Ashley	Female	24
Melissa	Female	27
Kelly	Female	19
Carly	Female	39
Vicki	Female	26
Nick	Male	22
Jessica	Female	19
Nicole	Female	20

Cohort Two – Pre-service teachers in their second professional experience

Pseudonym	Gender	Age
Anna	Female	21
Diane	Female	22
Tara	Female	22
Elizabeth	Female	21
Mitchell	Male	32
Adele	Female	26
Renee	Female	22
Lisa	Female	21
Rebecca	Female	23

Appendix G

Summary of the Key Elements and Strategies Identified by Pre-service Teachers in the Relationship with their Supervising Teacher

Theme 1: *The Influence of the Interpersonal Component of Pre-service Teachers' Experiences*	
Sub-Theme	**Key Elements/Strategies**
1. Establishment of an effective rapport with the pre-service teacher.	• Effects of the relationship on pre-service teacher anxiety. *(Findings from planned question on pre-service teacher professional experience anxiety)* • Initial building of a rapport.
2. Development of a supportive interpersonal approach to establish an effective relationship.	• Importance of the informal approach. • Influence of the initial interactions. • Pre-service teacher's contribution to the relationship • Development of the relationship over time.
3. Negative Outcomes in the interpersonal component	• Lack of preparedness by the supervising teacher • Lack of availability by the supervising teacher • Lack of informal communication
4. Recognition and support of pre-service teacher workload stress.	• Supervising teacher awareness of workload stress.
5. Pre-service teacher resilience in the interpersonal component of the relationship.	• Establishment of interpersonal relationships with other teachers. • Resilience through flexibility and persistence

Theme 2: *The Influence of Professional Mentorship in the Relationship*	
Sub-Theme	**Key Elements/Strategies**
1. Establishment of shared expectations and effective communication channels to develop professional learning.	• Established of effective communication channels. • Shared expectations of the supervision approach. • Explanation of class routines, organisation and management of the learning environment. • Support in the development of lesson planning and programming expectations.

2. Encouragement of the pre-service teacher's teaching style.	• Influence of positive relationships. • Effect of positive reinforcement and development of a sense of professional trust.
3. Providing information related to the needs and abilities of the class.	• Supervising teacher informs the pre-service teacher about the needs and abilities of the class. • Pre-service teacher observation of the supervising teacher catering for the needs and abilities of the class.
4. Explicit modelling by supervising teachers of good teaching practice.	• Observation of supervising teacher good teaching practice enhances pre-service teacher teaching practice. • Effective modelling of good teaching practice includes interpersonal and professional mentorship components.
5. Influence of supervising teacher feedback.	• Value of constructive supervising teacher feedback. • Influence of supervising teacher's formal and informal feedback. • Relationship influence on the pre-service teacher's perception of feedback.
6. Pre-service teacher resilience in the Professional Mentorship component of the relationship	• Support for teaching preparedness • Differences in pedagogical beliefs • Collegial support from other teachers • Influence of the learning environment

Theme 3: *The Influence of the Relationship on the Development of Teacher Self-Efficacy*	
Sub-Theme	**Key Elements/Strategies**
1. Development of trust and confidence in pre-service teachers' ability to teach.	• Influence of supervising teacher trust on the development of teacher self-efficacy. • Methods supervising teachers implement to build trust and self-efficacy.
2. Influence of supervising teacher feedback on the development of teacher self-efficacy.	• Feedback enhances pre-service teacher confidence and the development of teacher self-efficacy. • Empowering aspect of formal and informal and feedback.
3. Influence of lack of trust in teaching competencies and negative feedback	• Influence of lack of trust in teaching competencies and negative feedback

Theme 4: ***The Effect of the Relationship on Emerging Teacher Identity and Career Confirmation***	
Sub-Theme	**Key Elements/Strategies**
1. Recognition of emergent teacher identity.	• Recognition as a teacher by the supervising teacher. • Recognition of developing teaching competencies.
2. Connection of the pre-service teacher to the professional staff community.	• Inclusion in the professional staff community reduces interaction anxiety. • Strategies for building staff relationships are learnt over time. • Positive staff relationships promote collegial collaboration and professional learning.
3. Contribution of the relationship to teacher identity identity formation.	• Emerging teacher identity inspired by former teachers. • Supervising teacher influence on teacher identity formation. • Inhibiting influence of the supervising teacher relationship on teacher identity formation.
4. Relationship indicators of teacher career confirmation.	• Feedback providing confirmation of teaching as the correct career choice. • Feedback providing guidance for future career direction.