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The perceived 'classroom readiness' and support of Western Australian primary graduate teachers

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**The perceived ‘classroom readiness’ and support of
Western Australian primary graduate teachers**

Submitted for the award of
Master of Education

Samantha Jade Edwards

USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.

PREFACE

I am so grateful for my chosen profession. Primary school teaching is a challenging and inspiring career that has enabled me to develop and refine greater patience, collaborative skills and creativity. Working with young children is a fulfilling and fascinating vocation, and I continue to learn and grow with every successive year. Teaching is one of my biggest passions in life, and to think I almost abandoned it before I ever truly began is hard to imagine. Yet, I remember the first six months of teaching were incredibly difficult. Accepting a difficult position in which I had very limited prior experience, I was ‘thrown into the deep end’. Further, I was not aware of my graduate teacher entitlements, nor was I provided them. There was no support or communication from the school leadership team, nor was any form of mentor made available to me. I felt completely overwhelmed and underqualified. I questioned my career choice and in December of that year, resigned from my position.

Thankfully, I did not leave the profession entirely. After two years of living abroad working as a relief teacher and in childcare, I returned to Australia and gained employment in a different and brilliant school. I was provided support and advice from school leaders and colleagues, while learning about the newly implemented Australian Curriculum. However, several of my colleagues were graduate teachers, and I noticed how overwhelmed and stressed they were. They had the support of quality teachers, but they were also busy juggling their classroom demands, attending Graduate Teacher Modules, and frantically writing their Teacher Registration Board WA (TRBWA) portfolios. At the time, I wondered what my experience as a graduate teacher might have been like, had I been lucky enough to have my first job at this supportive school. However, I also queried why it was necessary to burden graduate teachers with extra work, during an already busy time in their careers.

Through conducting this research project, I wished to learn more about the impacts of graduate teacher support processes, and how current graduate teachers themselves believe we can best support them. All brilliant teachers start their careers as a graduate, and we need brilliant teachers to make a difference to student outcomes.

ABSTRACT

Graduate teachers are expected to be ‘classroom ready’ upon graduation, yet research suggests they are not. The difficulties faced by graduate teachers in their first years of teaching often result in low self-efficacy and attrition, which in turn can affect the achievement of their students.

Since its establishment in 2010, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) have implemented a competency framework for both teachers and Initial Teacher Education (ITE) providers, aimed at improving not only all teacher quality in Australia, but the quality of ITE, graduating teachers and the support structures provided to them. This research project investigated how six primary graduate Department of Education of Western Australia (DoEWA) teachers perceived their ‘classroom readiness’, in light of these reforms. A qualitative methodology based in phenomenology was employed, as the study sought to describe the experiences of these graduate teachers with regard to the formal and informal support offered to them, including mechanisms such as the Graduate Teacher Modules and In-Class Coaching. Interviews were undertaken with the six teachers upon commencement of their second year of teaching.

The findings revealed that graduate teachers did not perceive themselves to be ‘classroom ready’ upon ITE completion, however they did not expect to be, nor did it make them wish to quit the profession. Further, the Graduate Teacher Modules were perceived as a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to graduate teacher professional learning, as opposed to targeting specific needs relating to the graduate teachers and their varied professional contexts. While the In-Class Coaching Program provided a small element of support to participants, overall it increased their workload and stress. This finding indicates the need for a review into the delivery of the In-Class Coaching Program. Ultimately, unofficial mentoring from colleagues was identified as offering the greatest form of support for the participants, suggesting the need to re-think the way schools and DoEWA offer support to graduate teachers.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

- i. Incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree of diploma in any institution of higher education;*
- ii. Contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; or,*
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I also grant permission for the library at Edith Cowan University to make duplicate copies of my thesis as required.

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A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature.

Date

1st June 2020

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Overall, I greatly enjoyed the process of completing this research project. I am passionate about the issue of supporting graduate teachers, and have found the academic process so fulfilling. However, there have been many challenging moments throughout its completion. I have struggled to dedicate quality time spent to my partner, family and friends, while also continuing my work as a full time Level 3 Classroom Teacher and occasional Acting Deputy principal. After a lot of hard work, I have succeeded in completing a Master's thesis and I must acknowledge those around me who were so pivotal in helping me get to this point.

I am so grateful for the advice, guidance and constant support from my Research Supervisors Dr Geoffrey Lowe, Dr Julia Morris and Mr Jason Boron. The incredible intellect of each of these wonderful people is so inspiring, with each contributing their expertise with enthusiasm and kindness. This support has been consistently given without question, and I am so thankful.

To my principal and colleagues at Como Primary School, thank you for providing me both the support of study time to complete my thesis, and of course, for showing understanding and kindness when the deadlines of study and the regular difficulties of teaching would align.

To the participants of this study, thank you for your contributions to the completion of this research project. Thank you for giving your time to meet with me, and discuss with such candour your experiences.

To my beautiful friends and family, thank you for listening to me and encouraging me, as always. To my grandfather, for always inspiring me.

To my wonderful partner Daniel, thank you for your constant commitment to making me laugh and keeping me positive throughout this journey. Thank you for motivating me to persevere with my goals and be the best I can be.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the tireless, selfless and hard-working teachers everywhere. Society is not always kind nor appreciative of the complexities and challenges of our profession. I wish to acknowledge all teachers who dedicate their lives to improving those of their students.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Explanation
AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
ATAR	Australian Tertiary Admission Rank
BTSF	Beginning Teacher Support Funding
DoEWA	Department of Education Western Australia
ECU	Edith Cowan University
GTIL	Great Teaching, Inspired Learning
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
LANTITE	Literacy and Numeracy Test for Initial Teacher Education
MOE	Ministry of Education (Singapore)
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program: Literacy and Numeracy
NIE	National Institute of Education (Singapore)
NSW	New South Wales
NSWDoE	New South Wales Department of Education
NTIP	New Teacher Induction Program (Ontario, Canada)
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OCT	Ontario College of Teachers (Ontario, Canada)
OMoE	Ontario Ministry of Education (Ontario, Canada)
PISA	The Programme for International Student Assessment
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TEMAG	The Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group
TPA	Teacher Performance Assessment
TSE	Teacher Self-Efficacy
TRBWA	The Teacher Registration Board of Western Australia
VDET	Victoria Department of Education and Training
WA	Western Australia

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction to the Chapter

The ‘classroom readiness’ of graduate teachers has been widely discussed, and recent reforms at both national and state levels have sought to address the issue. In 2010, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) was established as the national leadership and regulatory body for teaching and teachers. Subsequently, the implementation of AITSL’s Professional Standards for Teachers (the Standards) and the Accreditation Standards and Procedures by state-based teacher regulatory bodies have seen reforms to Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programs, changes to accreditation procedures for ITE course providers, the introduction of the Standards into practice, and the creation of a nationally consistent approach to induction to support graduate teachers. This has been formalised in Western Australia (WA) by the Teachers’ Registration Board of WA (TRBWA) and the Western Australian Department of Education (DoEWA), who oversee the implementation of quality induction processes in DoEWA schools. This study set out to investigate the perceived value of these reforms, from the perspective of six recent primary graduate DoEWA teachers.

Chapter One introduces this study by outlining the background to the research and the research problem. This is followed by a summary of the aims of this study, the research questions and an overview of the methodology. Finally, a description of the actions taken, how the thesis has been organised and the significance of the study is then addressed, before concluding the chapter.

1.1 Background

Through the completion of my Bachelor of Primary Education degree in 2011, I felt confident I was effectively prepared to gain employment and teach with success. I was provided five practical placements throughout my degree, and while they had presented challenges expected for me as a preservice teacher, I felt high self-efficacy in the profession. I believed all of my assignments would directly assist me in meeting the requirements of a competent teacher. However, when appointed to my first teaching position, I was not prepared for the realities of the classroom. The transition from ITE into the classroom was more difficult than I had anticipated. Despite having completed a teaching degree, I felt anxious, stressed and isolated, and almost quit the profession altogether. Other graduate teachers I spoke to echoed my sentiments. As graduates, we felt lost and unsupported in the classroom, and in the profession. Upon graduation, the support that had been provided to us as pre-service teachers swiftly vanished. In its place was the harsh reality of all that classroom teaching embodies, from dealing with difficult student behaviour, managing parent meetings and correspondence, maintaining accurate and descriptive assessment records, and attempting to plan with the unnecessary detail required of us during ITE. Regardless of my success as a pre-service teacher in

both practical placements and the university units, my self-efficacy as a graduate teacher declined along with my motivation for teaching.

1.2 Context of the Study

Historically and globally, this would appear to be the experience of many graduate teachers (Buchanan et al., 2013; Constantine, 2017; Hartsuyker et al., 2007; Ingvarson et al., 2014; Miles & Knipe, 2018; Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG), 2014; Veenman, 1984). Graduate teachers are expected to be ‘classroom ready’ from their very first day of teaching, yet the research suggests they are not. The difficulties faced by graduate teachers in their first years of teaching leads to low self-efficacy and attrition, which in turn can affect the achievement of their students (AITSL, 2016b; Lindqvist, Nordänger & Carlsson, 2014; McKinnon, 2016; Zee & Koomen, 2016). In an attempt to mitigate these issues, the Australian government commissioned the Top of the Class (Hartsuyker et al., 2017) and the Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers reports (TEMAG, 2014). Both reports recommended the need for change in ITE, resulting in the Australian Government empowering AITSL to lead reform. From 2015 AITSL implemented the Professional Standards for Teachers and the Accreditation Standards and Procedures for ITE providers, to improve the quality of ITE courses and subsequent graduating teachers. In WA, the TRBWA has been charged with implementing AITSL reforms.

In addition to standardising teacher quality and improving ITE, AITSL mandated the need for states to provide nationally consistent induction processes for all graduate teachers. Prior to AITSL’s requirements, DoEWA had already committed to an induction program for its graduate teachers. This was achieved through a monetary allowance designed to support the establishment of classroom resources for beginning teachers, a graduate teacher professional learning program, In-Class Coaching and mentoring (Crosswell & Beutel, 2013). However, while TEMAG (2014) acknowledged that from 2006 DoEWA has offered a “highly structured, centralised [program] in conjunction with [its] local professional learning [institute]” (p. 40), it announced in 2014 that in WA “beginning teachers will take part in a mandatory two-year Graduate Teacher Professional Learning Program” (p. 42). Of the four Graduate Teacher Modules, the first three are to be completed sequentially (Module One and Module Two in the first year of teaching, and Module Three in a graduate’s second year). Module Four is available for graduate teachers to access at any point within their first thirty months of teaching (DoEWA, 2019b, p. 5). All Graduate Teacher Modules aim to provide targeted professional learning for graduate teachers, while also supporting the establishment of professional networks between new teachers in the state system.

Initially, graduate teachers were also entitled to 25 hours of face-to-face In-Class Coaching within their first year of teaching (Crosswell & Beutel, 2013). However, after the implementation of

AITSL reforms in 2015, the program evolved into an application-based system comprising between “10-20 hours of individual support to graduate teachers in their first and second year of teaching” (DoEWA, 2016, p. 15). Since 2019, the program has required participants to have attended their first Graduate Teacher Module before engaging “with a trained graduate teacher coach for one semester of individualised support” (DoEWA, 2019a, p. 1).

1.3 Definitions

For this study, a graduate teacher is defined as one who has completed ITE and is within their first two-years of teaching, in line with the defined AITSL Professional Standards for Teachers, and subsequent TRBWA registration requirements.

AITSL (2018) defined being ‘classroom ready’ as graduate teachers who “are ready to succeed in the classroom, and who will have a positive impact on student learning” (para. 6). Graduate teachers are therefore required to undertake full responsibility for teaching and learning from the moment they begin. However, according to AITSL (2016a), the “transition of graduates to full engagement in the profession ... occurs for most teachers during their first two years in the classroom” (p. 3). This second notion is reflected by DoEWA (2019), who acknowledge this transition period, and explain that DoEWA’s Graduate Teacher Modules “assist graduates in the transition from university to becoming ‘classroom ready’ and beyond” (para. 4). Therefore, AITSL and DoEWA have conflicting views on the timeframe and/or the definition of ‘classroom readiness’. For the purposes of this research project, the first AITSL definition will be applied, with ‘classroom ready’ applying to graduate teachers upon completion of ITE.

1.4 Problem Statement

In the past, graduate teachers have not considered themselves ‘classroom ready’, with school principals echoing this view (McKenzie, Weldon, Rowley, Murphy & McMillan, 2013). Additionally, graduate teachers have reported feeling unprepared by their ITE courses and unsupported once they entered the classroom (AITSL, 2016; McKenzie et al., 2013). In light of AITSL reforms, there is a need to investigate whether issues surrounding ‘classroom readiness’ have been effectively addressed through ITE reforms and graduate teacher in-school support, or whether the issues persist.

1.5 Aim of the study

As these educational reforms have been implemented fully since the beginning of 2017, it is timely to explore whether both the AITSL and DoEWA initiatives have in fact improved graduate teacher self-efficacy and feelings of ‘classroom readiness’ among current WA graduate teachers. By speaking directly with current graduate teachers, this study aims to understand their experiences in assessing the success and the effectiveness of the reformed support mechanisms.

1.6 Research Questions

Based upon the problem statement and aims, the study attempts to answer the following research question:

Following the introduction of the AITSL and DoEWA reforms designed to support graduate teachers, how do primary graduate DoEWA teachers describe their ‘classroom readiness’ and the support provided to them in their initial year of teaching?

1.6.1 Secondary Research Questions

The study then aims to answer the following secondary questions:

- 1) How do primary graduate DoEWA teachers describe their ‘classroom readiness’ in relation to their ITE courses?
- 2) How do the primary graduate DoEWA teachers describe the quality of support provided by the Graduate Teacher Modules in terms of building ‘classroom readiness’?
- 3) How do primary graduate DoEWA teachers describe the support provided through the In-Class Coaching Program in terms of building ‘classroom readiness’?

1.7 Organisation of the Research

In order to answer the research questions, this study sought to investigate the experiences of primary graduate DoEWA teachers who have benefitted from the AITSL and DoEWA reforms. Accordingly, the study employed a qualitative methodology based in phenomenology. The study sought to describe the phenomenon of ‘classroom readiness’, in terms of ITE preparation and the provision of support mechanisms, as perceived and experienced by graduate teachers. As such, a qualitative interview method was utilised. Six graduate teachers were interviewed upon commencement of their second year teaching. This ensured a holistic reflection based on their first year experiences, and their perception of the effectiveness of the first two Graduate Teacher Modules and the In-Class Coaching.

An independent, semi-structured interview method was prepared in the Interview Protocol Document (Appendix A). This allowed for consistency between each of the six participants, but also for flexibility and the maintenance of a conversational tone. The questions were written to solicit detailed, honest and unbiased responses from the participants. Interviews were recorded, and upon completion, the audio files were professionally transcribed. The interview texts were coded and analysed according to phenomenology theory (Cresswell, 2013). This included the coding of chunks of text and phrases in each interview to establish ideas and ascertain meaning from the descriptions.

From there, the codes were then integrated against the relevant interview question. This created a common narrative of the graduate teacher experience for each question. These narratives and themes were then aligned to the corresponding research questions. Chapter Three outlines the methods and processes for the study in greater detail.

1.8 Organisation of the Study

Table 1.1 presents the organisation of the thesis, outlining the order of chapters and summarising their contents.

Table 1.1: Organisation of the study

Chapter number and title	Summary of the chapter
Chapter 2: Literature Review	This chapter discusses the literature surrounding quality teacher education and where it is happening in the global context. The history of Australian ITE reforms are outlined, including details surrounding formation of AITSL and the competency frameworks, before a description of ITE and graduate support in WA. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of research on the current reality for graduate teachers, including difficulties and retention processes.
Chapter 3: Method of Inquiry	Chapter 3 begins with Part 1, which describes the study's position within the body of research paradigms. It describes the research methodology chosen before describing a range of qualitative methods. Part 1 concludes with a description of qualitative interviews as the chosen research method, as well as the specific structure and questions chosen. Part 2 of Chapter 3 illustrates the procedures followed in completing the research, including coding and analysis, and trustworthiness.
Chapter 4: Findings	This chapter presents the findings from the six individual interviews. The responses to each interview question are presented separately and in chronological order.
Chapter 5: Discussion	Chapter 5 begins with a summary of the emergent themes and subthemes revealed by the interviews. Each theme is subsequently discussed in relation to the literature outlined in Chapter 2. It concludes with answers for the research questions and makes recommendations for future practice.
Chapter 6: Conclusion	The final chapter summarises the aims of the study, its significance, limitations and recommendations for future research.

1.9 Conclusion

Think of the best teacher you know. At one time, that teacher was a beginner, full of potential and with foundational skills, but with little of the confidence, professional understanding and rich and flexible repertoire of skills that characterise those at the height of the profession. (AITSL, 2016a, p. 3)

Historically, graduate teachers, including me, have felt inadequate in their transition from ITE into teaching. Often with limited support from school leadership teams, many graduate teachers have been overwhelmed by the disconnect between ITE preparation and the full workload requirements of teaching in the range of classroom contexts in which they gain employment. AITSL's reforms seek to combat these issues and improve graduate teachers' transition from ITE into the profession, and in

turn, produce ‘classroom ready’ teachers. Substantial time and financial resources are being employed to achieve the AITSL reform requirements. Now is the time to ascertain their success.

This study is significant as it seeks to evaluate whether WA graduate teachers are benefiting from the AITSL-mandated induction and support processes provided by their school leadership teams, ITE courses and DoEWA. This study aims to describe the experiences of primary graduate DoEWA teachers in the phenomenon that is their first years of teaching, with the hope of improving outcomes for all stakeholders.

“If we teach today’s students as we taught yesterday’s, we rob them of tomorrow.” John Dewey

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 Introduction

Chapter One established the background relevant to this study. An introduction into both the personal reasons for its undertaking, and the relevance of the research in the national and state-wide education systems were briefly addressed. Chapter One also introduced the problem statement, aims of this study and the research questions it sought to answer, before outlining the research methods and the presentation of its findings.

Chapter Two examines the literature on quality teacher education, before presenting examples of best practice in high performing international educational systems, namely Singapore, Finland and Ontario, Canada. The chapter draws comparisons between the successful components of these education systems, and the Australian system. Next, detailed information is presented into the literature surrounding the current AITSL Standards, the subsequent accreditation processes and regulations in Australia, and the WA regulatory body and ITE institutions. Chapter Two then examines literature on the realities faced by graduate teachers in Australia, including ‘reality-shock’ and attrition. Finally, Chapter Two concludes with a look to the future, evaluating what has been revealed in the literature, and what is missing.

2.1 Why We Need Quality Teachers

Hattie (2003) stated “excellence in teaching is the single most powerful influence on achievement” (p. 4). In 2008, Hattie implored “not all teachers are effective, not all teachers are experts, and not all teachers have powerful effects on students” (p. 59). According to Hattie, it is only quality teachers who maximise student learning and achievement. In addition to the need for quality teachers to ensure learners reach their full potential, Ingvarson and Rowe (2007) noted that 21st century global changes occurring in economic, technological and social fields require “responses from an increasingly skilled workforce, [and] make high quality educational provision an imperative - especially high quality teaching” (p. 2). Since teachers are “the most valuable resource available to both schools and higher education institutions in the realisation of this goal, an investment in teacher quality and on-going professionalism is vital” (p. 2). Thus, quality teachers are imperative to a country’s economic, technological and social advancement.

2.2 What is Quality Teacher Education?

AITSL has argued that quality teachers are the product of quality teacher education (AITSL, 2017). Therefore, before defining what quality teacher education is, it is first necessary to define the characteristics of teacher quality. Aston, Clinton, Dawson and Koelle (2018) identified the following ten characteristics of a quality teacher: 1) high self-efficacy; 2) a cognitive ability to think creatively,

critically and competently; 3) can exhibit social and emotional competencies such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making; 4) can communicate effectively; 5) holds a belief in the importance of teaching and high expectations of students; 6) is highly motivated; 7) has cultural competence and holds positive views on diversity; 8) an agreeable personality that relates to their communication style; 9) engages in self-reflection; 10) and works cooperatively with their colleagues and school leaders.

Aston et al. (2018) argued that “all ten characteristics have a direct or indirect effect on teacher practice, student outcomes and school outcomes” (para. 28). For Hattie (2008) however:

We need to talk about quality teachers in terms of what they do and the effects they have on students. Too often our discussion on what constitutes quality in teachers emphasizes the personal and professional attributes. Maybe we should constrain our discussion from talking about learning qualities of teachers to the quality of the effects of teachers on learning. (p. 175)

Currently, the AITSL Professional Standards for Teachers define the best teachers as those who are performing at the highest competency level: Lead teacher. AITSL (2011) described Lead teachers as being “recognised and respected by colleagues, parents/carers and community members as exemplary teachers” (p. 8). They initiate, lead and demonstrate excellent abilities across the three domains of teaching: Professional Knowledge, Professional Practice and Professional Engagement, which are outlined in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: The AITSL Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2011)

Domain	Standard
Professional Knowledge	Know students and how they learn Know the content and how to teach it
Professional Practice	Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning Create and maintain supportive learning environments Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning
Professional Engagement	Engage in professional learning Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community

Further classification of Lead teachers by AITSL includes a combination of the attributes identified by Aston et al. (2018), and those described by Hattie (2008). AITSL (2011) stated that Lead teachers:

have demonstrated consistent and innovative teaching practice over time. Inside and outside the school they initiate and lead activities that focus on improving educational opportunities for all students. They establish inclusive learning environments, meeting the needs of students from different linguistic, cultural, religious and socio-economic backgrounds. They continue to seek ways to improve their own practice and to share their experience with colleagues. (p. 8)

Further, mirroring Hattie (2008), AITSL described Lead teachers as those who:

lead processes to improve student performance by evaluating and revising programs, analysing student assessment data and taking account of feedback from parents/carers. This is combined with a synthesis of current research on effective teaching and learning. (p. 8)

Thus, definitions of what constitutes the highest standard of teaching by Aston et al. (2018) and Hattie (2008) are embedded in AITSL's description of Lead teachers. A teacher can begin to attain Lead teacher status through the achievement and regular demonstration of the Standards and competencies, after progressing through the three earlier teacher competency stages: Graduate teacher, Proficient teacher, and Highly Accomplished teacher. Teachers can gain certification of Lead teacher status through three stages of assessment by authorities throughout jurisdictions, states or territories (AITSL, 2017a).

This competency-based approach to measuring teacher quality has evolved throughout Australia in response to both national and global research (Delandshere & Aruns, 2001; Dinham, Ingvarson & Kleinhenz, 2008; Ingvarson & Rowe, 2007; Ingvarson et al. 2014; Lauden, 1992). According to Ingvarson et al. (2014), a consensus emerged “around the principles that guide the design, delivery and assessment of effective teacher education programs” (p. 12) within teacher education research. From research into effective learning and teaching, the use of “well-written teaching standards” (Ingvarson et al., 2014, p. 29) was identified as the best way ITE programs could design, deliver and assess beginning teachers in their learning, through the support of a set of expectations of what they should know and be able to do.

The assertion that teachers need to be competent is not only difficult to refute (Biesta, 2015), but forms the base of Australia's current ITE programs and accreditation system. Biesta (2015) described competence as “an integrative approach to professional action that highlights the complex combination of knowledge, skills, understandings, values and purposes” (p. 4). However, some have contested the sufficiency of this measure of teacher effectiveness (Korthagen, 2004; Biesta, 2015; Wringe, 2015). Korthagen (2004) explained that trying to “put the essential qualities of a good teacher into words is a difficult undertaking” (p. 78). He illustrated that:

A ‘good teacher’ will not always show ‘good teaching’: although someone may have excellent competencies, the right beliefs, and an inspirational self and mission, the level of the environment may put serious limits on the teacher's behaviour. (p. 87)

Biesta (2015) also questioned the value of teacher competencies, stating:

Any attempt to describe in full everything that teachers should be competent at runs the risk of generating lists that are far too long and far too detailed. The existence of such lists can result in a situation where teacher education turns into a tick box exercise focused on establishing whether students have managed to achieve everything on the list. (p. 4)

Biesta did not completely refute all or any forms of teaching competency frameworks. Instead, he simply queried their application in isolation. Effective teachers, according to Biesta (2015) are also capable of applying the correct judgment of when and how they should apply the competencies to their practice across a range of foreseen and unforeseen circumstances. The ability to judge in an educational way, or to ask whether everything a teacher does is educationally desirable, is “absolutely central to good teaching” (Biesta, 2015, p. 18). Therefore, “teacher education should not be a question of how a student can acquire practical wisdom; rather it is a question of how the student can become educationally wise,” (p. 18) and in turn, become a quality teacher.

Wringe’s (2015) view of quality teachers and ITE closely links with Biesta (2015). He outlined three key elements of ITE programs that should be taught in relatively equal measure: the learning of procedures, the teaching of skills and developing the virtuosity of teaching and education.

So much for simply learning to teach. Might this not be sufficient: that the teacher be sufficiently well qualified in her subject to articulate its content accurately, punctilious in the performance of procedures necessary to the smooth running of a school and satisfactory coverage of the curriculum, as well as being sufficiently skilled, with all that implies for background understanding of learners, of the process of learning, to manage a class properly and transmit her knowledge at a level appropriate to her particular pupils by means of skilfully chosen materials and activities? That at least would be a start. (Wringe, 2015, p. 30)

Wringe (2015), like Biesta (2015), identified the third dimension of a quality teacher as one who is an active consumer of education research. An effective teacher has an excellent repertoire and application of skills. Skill doesn’t simply mean having the ability to perform a range of procedures or embody competencies. It also involves the “making of choices, judgments of better or worse among a range of available options [which can] only be judged to have been successfully acquired in light of actual outcomes” (Wringe, 2015, p. 26). Teachers continuously have to make choices that relate to the best interests of “this child or this group to help them achieve here and now” (p. 36). All teachers know that choices will vary depending on many different variables affecting their classroom, school and student. Similarly, Hattie (2008) stated:

The act of teaching reaches its epitome of success after the lesson has been structured, after the content has been delivered, and after the classroom has been organized. The art of teaching, and its major successes, relate to “what happens next”—the manner in which the teacher reacts to how the student interprets, accommodates, rejects, and/or reinvents the content and skills, how the student relates and applies the content to other tasks, and how the student reacts in light of success and failure apropos the content and methods that the teacher has taught. Learning is spontaneous, its own, but requires passion, patience, and attention to detail (from the teacher and student). (p. 16)

Wringe (2015) believes ITE should teach the applied skill of making judgements through learning philosophy. He reasoned it should be taught to ITE students and applied in their classrooms, not espousing any particular doctrine, but “in the general attitude it engenders and in its insistence on

returning to fundamentals rather than relying too heavily on tradition, received wisdom, current fashions in ‘common sense’ or religious and political ideology” (p. 36).

Hattie (2008) argued “there is no set of essential experiences that must be taught, let alone a “correct” order for teaching students to become teachers” (p. 154). Like Biesta and Wringe, Hattie described the need for teachers to make appropriate judgements. However, he also prioritised the need for teacher judgements to be based on evidence. Hattie stated “it seems surprising that the education of new teachers seems so data-free; maybe this is where future teachers learn how to ignore evidence, emphasize craft, and look for positive evidence that they are making a difference” (p. 154).

Furthermore, Hattie explained:

Teacher education might be more successful if it placed more emphasis on learning and teaching strategies; on developing teachers’ conceptions of teaching as an evidence-based profession (learning from errors as much as from successes); creating an appraisal system that involves a high level of trust and dependence on observed or videotaped reflection/evaluation of practice; and providing beginning teachers with a range of different teaching methods to use when current ones do not work. (p. 176)

These definitions of ‘quality teachers’ and ‘quality teacher education’ are embodied in the Standards. Graduate teachers are expected to “demonstrate the capacity” (AITSL, 2011, p. 19) to learn “from errors as much as from successes” (Hattie, 2008, p. 176) and modify teaching according to student achievement. As outlined by Miles and Knipe (2018):

As beginning teachers become early career teachers, there is a shift from advanced beginner to competent performer. Unlike the novice and advanced beginners who are rules driven, competent performers are personally involved in their actions and as such select a plan of action for each situation, based on interpretation and judgment. (p. 106)

According to AITSL, teachers can demonstrate ‘judgements’ through selecting and evaluating different teaching strategies based on research. However, this is not ‘expected’ until the third tier of the Standards, as a Highly Accomplished Teacher. The issue confronting ITE in Australia lies in ensuring graduate teachers are equipped with ‘good teaching’ skills, and more specifically, make and apply effective judgement, based on evidence, and adapt their teaching accordingly.

2.3 Where Is Quality Teacher Education Happening?

Australian schools and teachers have been described as needing to improve students’ results (Adams, 2019; Bolton, 2019; Mills & Goos, 2017; Wilson, Daunton & Baumann, 2015). Wearne (2018) quoted former Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, stating Australia’s schools “can and must do more” to help students reach their potential, in light of the Gonski 2.0’s landmark report into the nation’s education system, which claimed it has “failed a generation” of children (Gonski et al., 2018; Grattan, 2018; Hutchens, 2018). Blame for ‘low’ student achievement is often apportioned to teachers and more specifically, ITE programs. Fischetti (2016) stated that since the 1970s, there have been

more than 100 reports critiquing teacher education in Australia. The former Federal Minister for Education Simon Birmingham (2017) continued this pattern of criticism, stating that to achieve better outcomes for Australian students, the foundation lies in delivering a quality reform agenda within ITE. However, in order to accurately assess the quality of the Australian education system, it is valuable to review successful international examples.

2.3.1 Singapore

In the last two rounds of Programme for International Students Assessment (PISA) testing, Singapore schools ranked first and second, respectively (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2015; 2018). Some have attributed the Singaporean students' success to a high-pressure pedagogy, one that is saturated in rote-memorisation, passive learning, excessive homework and didactic teaching methods employed by both the teachers and tutors of these students (Hong, 2017; Jelita, 2017). Furthermore, Tan (2019) stated "while such a system ensures social efficiency and high performance, it has also produced a learning environment that tends to downplay critical and innovative thinking in the students" (p. 230). However, others dispute this and instead, argue that this perception of unilateral pedagogy is no longer the case, and that Singaporean children excel not only on standardised tests but also PISA's creative and problem-solving assessments (Fletcher-Wood, 2018; Maxwell, 2017; Ripley, 2013). They claim that Singapore has cultivated a strong teacher workforce, coupled with a fervent focus on curriculum and pedagogy. As Fletcher-Wood (2018) stated, effective teachers are "made not born" (para. 1). Further, the 2013 Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) revealed Singapore's 'expert' teacher workforce had a larger proportion of younger teachers with fewer years of experience. Thus, it could be argued that the 'making of' Singaporean teachers is the key to their high PISA scores. Therefore, it is worth examining how Singapore is preparing its future teachers.

Since 2005, the Ministry of Education in Singapore (MOE) has instructed teachers and other educational stakeholders to support the goal of 'every student, a thinking student' and to reject "indoctrination, didactic teaching, passive learning and rote memorisation" (Tan, 2019, p. 230). Furthermore, to "nurture higher-order thinking in students, the MOE has reduced the content component of school subjects so that more curriculum time can be channelled to the learning and exercise of cross-disciplinary thinking skills and dispositions" (Tan, 2019, p. 230). With the support of substantial investments in teacher education and educational research, the National Institute of Education (NIE), Nanyang Technological University, works alongside the MOE to improve pedagogy and practice in Singaporean schools (Tan, Choo, Kang & Liem, 2017).

Not only is the NIE the sole tertiary institution responsible for ITE, it also plays a major role "in the professional development of in-service teachers in Singapore's mainstream education" (Tan et

al., 2017, p. 428). Furthermore, substantiating Hattie's claim that ITE institutions should be asking "about evidence of what works best in teacher education and subject it to the same scrutiny found in other research studies about teachers and schools" (2008, p. 155), the NIE is also the country's leading educational research body. "Many of its faculty members are actively leading and undertaking key research on educational policy, pedagogy, and practice in Singapore schools and classrooms through competitively-funded projects" (Tan, Choo, Kang & Liem, 2017, p. 428). In addition, the NIE research projects are based in empirical studies of classrooms, schools and other authentic learning environments. This research is part of the "dynamic tripartite relationship between research, policy and practice" (Poon, 2011, p. 18) through which Singapore education policy is created. As explained by Poon (2011):

Policy formulation is often triggered/influenced by several factors such as parents' views, government needs, industry needs, and economic and social agendas. Once policy is formed, it is translated into practice but the relationship is by no means one-sided. This is because practice also drives and influences policy decisions. Policy formulation is informed by both formal collection of data as well as less formalised data collection, such as via good ground knowledge of practices and needs in schools through in-depth understanding of the landscape via visits and focus-group discussions with different stakeholders in education. The evidence-base provided by research, informs both policy and practice while practice in turn, also influences what research focuses on. (p. 18)

From the tripartite relationship, Singapore's ITE system is based on a V3SK framework (Tan, 2019). The V3SK framework "sketches the essential values (V), skills (S) and knowledge (K) needed by all pre-service teachers in the 21st century" (p. 231). Tan (2011) justified the addition of 'values' in teacher education, stating "when there is rapid pace of technological development combined with the constant upheavals on the sociopolitico-economic fronts, it is values that provide the anchor of stability, consistency and centredness in a changing vortex" (p. 27). He explained:

A three-dimensional Values paradigm comprising: Learner-centredness, Teacher Identity and Service to the Profession and Community forms the centre of our teacher education goals. Learner-centred values refer to teachers' belief in the learner. Teachers should know about their learners better than anybody else because they are not only equipped to understand the learner but because they place the learner at the heart of their teaching goals. Teacher identity focuses on the sense of pride in the profession in terms of their role and the quest for excellence, beyond academic results. There is a moral component of doing a job well so that it inspires others. Service to the profession and community refers to growth, development and advancement through continuous learning and sharing of knowledge and best practices. (p. 27)

The emphasis on an integration of values, skills and knowledge is also "consistent with the international literature on teacher education competences" (Tan, 2019, p. 231).

In Australia, where ITE courses have traditionally maintained the aim of ensuring all pre-service teachers have achieved a set of standards by graduation, there remains the risk of providing "a shallow coverage of the complex skills needed to improve student learning" (Toon & Jensen, 2017, p.

10). This approach means Australian pre-service teachers get less time to “explore critical concepts in depth and practice them to mastery” (p. 7). By contrast, Singaporean pre-service teachers are required to focus on “fewer topics in greater depth, as opposed to covering more material, [and this] is more likely to induce teachers to use that knowledge in their teaching” (Toon & Jensen, 2017, p. 7). In addition, the ‘values’ component of the Singaporean ITE V3SK framework is not clearly represented as evidence in the AITSL Standards.

Another critical contributing factor to Singapore’s success is the increased opportunity for pre-service teachers to connect their ITE learning to practical experiences. According to Toon and Jensen (2017), many beginning and pre-service teachers in Australia feel as though “their training lacks practical applicability, and that they are not ready when they start teaching” (p. 4). This issue mainly stems “from fragmentation: a disconnect between what a teacher learns in teacher preparation and what [they do] in a classroom, and then what [they] learn in [their] professional development” (p. 4). By contrast, due to the close collaboration between the NIE and MOE, connections are fostered between preparation and practice through significant investments in feedback loops, action research projects, K-12 school curriculum, and incentives for academics to conduct school-based research (Toon & Jensen, 2017). As noted previously, Singapore ensures the MOE, the NIE and schools engage in structured and frequent collaboration (Toon & Jensen, 2017). They use this feedback loop to improve teacher preparation, something that Henderson et al. (2018) and White et al. (2018) claim is lacking within the Australian system. For example, approximately five years ago, schools reported back to the NIE that graduates were lacking practical skills. This led to a re-structure of the ITE courses, resulting in the prioritisation of core classroom teaching skills over theoretical concepts (Toon & Jensen, 2017).

Unlike Singapore, the Australian system is not centralised to one overarching tertiary institution, which could present a difficulty in applying a similar approach to Australian ITE courses. Further, it must be acknowledged that the political and social contexts of Singapore are different to those of Australia. Despite this, Australia could adopt Singapore’s model of fostering a strong collaboration between stakeholders, ITE that encompasses both explicit skills and content, an emphasis on values education, and the implementation of action research to evaluate the effectiveness of ITE programs.

2.3.2 Finland

Finland has also been identified as a success in ITE due to the excellent teachers it produces, and the results they obtain (Hancock, 2011; McGaw, 2016; Sahlberg, 2010; Stewart, 2012). Finland achieved this by firstly raising the status of teaching as a profession, which ensures only the best candidates are selected for teacher training (Hancock, 2011; McGaw, 2016; Sahlberg, 2010; Stewart,

2012), and secondly, by providing comprehensive ITE courses (Hancock, 2011; McGaw, 2016; Sahlberg, 2010; Stewart, 2012). While the political and social contexts of Australia and Finland differ, an overview of the Finnish ITE and education system has been included for comparison to Australia due to its highly competitive ITE entry requirements, and its lack of formal standardised testing in primary schools.

In Finland, teaching is a highly admired profession, and it is a highly competitive process to become a teacher. Only the “best and brightest are able to fulfil those professional dreams” (Sahlberg, 2010, p. 2). The high status of the teaching profession is due to a combination of autonomy, trust, respect and quality working conditions (Paronen & Lappi, 2018). The autonomy of Finnish teachers to choose their own pedagogy and assessment strategies, as well as having the ability to contribute to defining the local curriculum fosters a culture of respect, as Paronen and Lappi (2018) explained:

Teachers are accountable to themselves and the learners, not to external bodies. Teachers are not formally evaluated, and there are no inspections of schools or learning materials. The absence of national tests until the end of general upper secondary education also gives teachers the privilege to concentrate on learners and their learning instead of preparing them for external evaluation. (p. 9)

Carter (2017), Karp (2018) and Singhal (2019) state that the consistent use of National Testing Data from NAPLAN to apportion the blame of ‘poor performance’ to Australian teachers does little to improve the status of the profession. Sonnemann and Nolan (2019) stated that “Australia’s brightest [post-secondary] students are increasingly rejecting teaching” (para. 2). Hunter (2019) highlighted that teaching has become “less attractive for high achievers over the last 40 years at the same time as the profession’s pay has shrunk relative to other sectors ... only 3 per cent now choose the profession” (para. 7). Further, the minimum entry scores into ITE courses in Australia are relatively low. All WA programs accept applicants with an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) of 70 or above, which includes the top 30% of students of that year. However, the percentages of ITE students that actually have an ATAR ranking above 70 dropped significantly to 42% of all students in 2015 (Goss & Sonneman, 2019; McGaw, 2016), and those that have an ATAR ranking above 80 was as low as 25% in 2018 (Sonnemann & Nolan, 2019).

By comparison, Paronen and Lappi (2018) stated that only 10 to 11 per cent of Finnish applicants have been admitted into primary ITE courses since 2011. Through establishing stricter entry requirements, teaching has been made an even more attractive career option, enabling “teacher preparation programmes to select from the top quartile of secondary school graduates” (OECD, 2010, p. 126). In 2016, “the proportion of applicants admitted to class teacher education was smaller than the proportion admitted to medical or law faculties” (Paronen & Lappi, 2018, p. 18). Importantly, there is no other pathway to become a teacher, with the university degree operating as the sole licence to teach (Stewart, 2012; Sahlberg, 2010).

In 2015, the Australian government empowered AITSL to develop selection criteria that all accredited ITE providers to adhere to from January 2017. Like Finland, both academic and non-academic requirements are included in the selection criteria for ITE applicants. As above, Australian ITE courses can accept any applicants who have finished school in the top 30% of students. However, providers also have the option of accepting candidates if they have demonstrated “relevant academic ability” in other studies (be it through university, TAFE or ‘other’ tertiary education providers) with “average grade results” in both partially and fully completed qualifications (AITSL, 2015a, p. 7).

By contrast, to enter an ITE course in Finland, applicants are first required to have the necessary scores in their high school assessments. From there, successful applicants are required to sit an examination into best practice in teaching pedagogy. In addition, prospective applicants are observed in a classroom environment and assessed on their interpersonal skills, their ability to communicate and their ability to interact socially with children. Finally, the top applicants from the first two stages of assessment are interviewed regarding their motives for becoming a teacher. Once they are officially selected through this intensive process, they are eligible to complete a highly rigorous ITE program at the government’s expense (Sahlberg, 2010). Their studies in a “broad-based curriculum” ensures ITE student-teachers “possess balanced knowledge and skills in both theory and practice” (Sahlberg, 2010, p. 3). In addition, ITE comprises of explicit direction in research-based education, alongside the pre-service teachers’ completion of action research through a compulsory Master’s thesis.

In addition to theory and research, over the five-year ITE course, approximately 15 to 20 percent of overall preparation time comprises professional practice (Sahlberg, 2011). There are three stages of professional practice in Finland, “orientation, intermediate practicum, and advanced practicum, which expand student teachers’ responsibilities” (Niemi, 2015, p. 283). During each of these phases, pre-service teachers “observe lessons conducted by experienced teachers, practice teaching while being observed by supervisory teachers, and deliver independent lessons to different groups of pupils while being evaluated by supervising teachers and department of teacher education professors and lecturers” (Sahlberg, 2011, p. 36). Mirroring Singapore’s system, Finnish schools work closely with universities, and the schools that take on pre-service teachers have “higher professional staff requirements ... [and] ... supervising teachers have to prove they are competent to work with student teachers” (Sahlberg, 2010, p. 5). Furthermore, Sahlberg (2011) added:

Teacher training schools are also expected to pursue research and development roles in collaboration with universities’ departments of teacher education and, sometimes, with the academic faculties that also have teacher education functions. These schools can, therefore, introduce sample lessons and alternative curricular designs to student teachers. These schools also have teachers who are well prepared in supervision as well as in teacher professional development and assessment strategies. Because teacher education is so strong, Finnish

teachers are very well prepared to take a teaching job as soon as they are assigned to a school. (p. 36)

Upon completion, a beginning teacher will have a “combination of a three-year Bachelor’s degree and a two-year Master’s degree in appropriate subjects [which] qualifies teachers to teach subjects in primary and secondary schools or general subjects in vocational institutions” (Niemi, 2016, p. 33). With rigorous admittance requirements and robust ITE course structures, Finland’s focus on developing high quality teachers has improved their students’ results (Sonnemann & Nolan, 2019) while ensuring a quality work environment for its teachers.

2.3.3 Ontario, Canada

Ranked sixth in the 2015 and 2018 PISA assessments, Canadian schools are achieving success for their students. Canada’s PISA success can be attributed to the recent reforms to ITE, and the necessary acknowledgement of the highly diverse student population, similar to that of Australia. According to the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE, 2019), the strength of educational outcomes in Canada lies in the quality of its teachers. Unlike Singapore and Finland, there is no nationally integrated ITE system in Canada, with responsibility falling to the individual provinces or territories (Canadian Teachers’ Federation, 2019; NCEE, 2019; Van Nuland, 2011). Each province has the “power to establish its own autonomous education system and make all decisions regarding schools, teachers and curriculum pertaining to education within the specific province/territory” (Canadian Teachers’ Federation, 2019, para. 1). Van Nuland (2011) explains that ITE courses are “markedly different in structure and duration and that these differences have a significant influence on delivery, time allocation and utilisation, students’ learning experiences and students’ opportunities for clinical practice” (p. 412). Comparisons can be drawn between Ontario’s education system and Australia, not solely for its high rankings of inter-province achievement within Canada (The Conference Board of Canada, 2014), but also for the large diversity within its schools. Levin, Glaze and Fullan (2008) explain “education in Ontario has all the challenges one might anticipate — large urban areas and very remote rural areas, significant urban and rural poverty levels, high levels of population diversity, areas with sharply dropping enrolment and others with rapid growth” (p. 274). Furthermore, overhauls in Ontario education and ITE systems have proved successful in recent decades (Levin, Glaze & Fullan, 2008; NCEE, 2019; Russell & McPherson, 2001).

Due to high teacher attrition prior to 2004, Ontario initially increased available places to ITE to improve recruitment (Darling-Hammond, 2017). However, by 2008, due to low ITE attrition and a significant surplus of teachers, the number of ITE places was reduced. In 2014 Ontario then undertook “major steps to reform teacher preparation in order to address the province’s oversupply of teachers, and at the same time, increase the quality of teachers” (NCEE, 2019, para. 8). Not only did the Ontario Ministry of Education (OMoE) increase admission requirements for ITE, but by halving the

allocation of student places, ITE entry was also made more competitive (Darling-Hammond, 2017; Hughes et al., 2015; NCEE, 2019). According to NCEE (2019), only one in five applicants are currently accepted into ITE courses. Not only has Ontario, like Finland, restricted entry to ITE courses to the top applicants, but since 2014, students have been required to complete at least three years of full-time tertiary study in a discipline other than education (Hughes, Laffier, Mamol, Morrison, & Petrarca, 2015; NCEE, 2019). Only once they have completed an undergraduate degree can applicants apply to complete the two years of post-secondary study in education (Ontario College of Teachers (OCT), 2019). Students can either complete a concurrent program of professional education, which is “undertaken at the same time as a program leading to a post-secondary degree in a discipline other than education” (OCT, 2019, p. 4). Alternatively, a consecutive program of professional education can be completed, but only if the prospective student already holds a postsecondary qualification (OCT, 2019, p. 4). In addition, the OMoE added an 80-day practicum requirement for all preservice teachers, which is in contrast to Australia where only undergraduate ITE students are required to complete 80-days of practicum, as opposed to 60-days for Master of Teaching students (AITSL, 2018).

In addition to improving ITE, the OMoE have implemented reforms to the support provided to newly qualified Ontarian teachers. Fantilli and McDougall (2009) identified previous difficulties of newly qualified teachers, stating that “almost instantly, a beginning teacher has the same responsibility as a teacher with many years of service” (p. 814). Since Lortie (1966) described new teachers being ‘thrown in the deep end’ and left to sink or swim as the “Robinson Crusoe approach”, literature has continued to refer to the ‘sink or swim’ socialisation of graduate teachers for the past fifty years (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009; Gaede, 1978; Johnson, Ratsoy, Holdaway & Frieson, 1993; Tenore, Dunn, Laughter & Milner, 2010; Zhang & Zeller, 2016). In addition, Russell and McPherson (2001) highlighted that traditionally, “teacher education programs do little to dismantle the common view that a full-blown “teacher” emerges from a preservice program, rather than a novice or intern ready to begin teaching” (p. 4).

Prior to the ITE reforms in Ontario, from 2002 to 2005 Ontarian teachers had to undertake a written test in order to become a registered and qualified teacher (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009). However, Broad and Evans (2006) noted that Canadian educational systems, including ITE, have undergone a paradigm shift. Professional learning to support teachers’ work is now considered to be located within a “professional growth” paradigm rather than the more traditional “deficit” paradigm (Broad & Evans, 2006). This notion “of ongoing professional growth [now underpins] established ITE programs across Canada” (Ghambir, Broad, Evans & Haskell, 2008, p. 6). Consequently, the written test for graduate teachers was eliminated in 2005, and from 2006 the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) was introduced (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009; NCEE, 2019; Kutsyuruba, Godden & Tregunna,

2014; Levin, Glaze & Fullan, 2008). The implementation of the NTIP could be a contributing factor to the high rankings attained by Canadian students on the PISA 2012, 2015 and 2018 tests.

Driskell (2019) highlighted that top-performing education systems “recognize that even after completing pre-service training, new teachers need structured support from trained mentors” (para. 1). Since its implementation in 2006, the NTIP has provided:

the second job-embedded step along a continuum of professional learning for new teachers, building on and complementing the first step: initial teacher education programs. It provides professional support to help new teachers develop the requisite skills and knowledge to be effective as teachers in Ontario. (OMoE, 2018, p. 3)

While the OMoE has mandated participation in the NTIP, the program structure is designed by individual local school boards (Driskell, 2019). To ensure consistency across districts, the OMoE has stipulated that all NTIP programs are required to include:

1) Orientation for new teachers by the school and school board; 2) Professional development and training in specified areas; 3) Mentoring programs established by the school board and principals; and 4) Two teacher performance appraisals for each new teacher in the first 12 months of hire. (Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario (ETFO), 2014, p. 2)

In the initial implementation stages of the NTIP, graduate teachers were provided a one-on-one mentor. However, the OMoE (2018) have since undertaken research-driven changes and the NTIP now includes a “mentoring web of multiple mentors existing within an environment of relational trust” (p. 5). From a list of desirable qualities, including “good standing with knowledge of curriculum and teaching strategies and demonstrated problem solving skills” (Driskell, 2019, para. 8), mentor teachers are selected by local school boards and allocated to graduate teachers. The OMoE have further mandated that mentors are to be trained in areas including: “developing a mentoring plan; delivering feedback sensitively and effectively; and resolving crises” (Driskell, 2019, para. 8). The OMoE (2018) ensure authentic learning to occur by allowing the flexibility of NTIP programs to differ among graduate teachers. To achieve this, participating graduates are required to set professional goals and are offered a menu of professional learning. This “allows for voice, choice and personalized construction of learning based on authentic learning opportunities directly connected to the real world classroom experiences and learning goals of each individual new teacher” (OMoE, 2018, p. 11).

Finally, to ensure the ongoing success of the NTIP, the OMoE have committed sufficient funding for the program. Funding is first provided to employ the staff who oversee and coordinate the program, as well as for resources that support professional learning for graduate teachers, mentors and principals. In addition, the OMoE allocate funding to release both mentors and graduate teachers from the classroom. While release times differ between districts, the OMoE tightly regulates time provision to ensure mentorship is as effective as possible (Driskell, 2019).

The Ontarian drive to support graduate teachers through effective inductions, in the form of mentoring programs and differentiated professional learning is a success. This is supported by the Hay Group (2014), who were commissioned by AITSL to provide a report into best practices in education relating to the induction of new teachers in Australia. According to Hay Group (2014):

Various studies have investigated whether a direct link between induction and student outcomes exists, with the majority focusing on academic achievement, but the existing empirical evidence is not sufficient to establish the existence of a causal relationship ... While the research does not establish a direct link, a comprehensive review of empirical research by Ingersoll and Strong concluded that despite limitations identified in the various studies, they collectively provide support for the claim that induction (often equated with mentoring) has a positive impact on student achievement, as well as teacher commitment and retention and teacher classroom instructional practices (2011). Ingersoll and Strong found that almost all of the studies reviewed showed that the students of new teachers who experienced some form of induction achieved better testing or academic outcomes. (p. 15)

2.4 ITE Reform in Australia

The course of AITSL's establishment began in 2007, with the release of the Top of the Class report. The report categorically stated that "the teacher education system is not in crisis. It currently serves Australia very well but could do better" (Hartsuyker et al., 2007, p. 7). While Australia may not top the PISA assessment rankings, according to Buckingham (2012) it is "problematic to judge the quality of a diverse and challenging education system against a single assessment, no matter how good it may be" (p. 12). Buckingham (2012) further added that while there is no problem in using the educational data provided by PISA, reform targets based on PISA ranking comparisons alone is flawed. "If all OECD countries improved their education system significantly, they would improve outcomes for students but there would be no change in the rankings" (Buckingham, 2012, p. 12).

The Top of the Class report did not rely on PISA testing to assess the quality of ITE programs. Instead, it drew upon graduate, teacher and principal surveys which, as presented in the report, "are useful, but not sufficient to fully inform policy and practice in teacher education" (Hartsuyker et. al., 2007, p. 22). Rather, the report suggested "a good measure of effectiveness of teacher education courses is the quality of the graduates in real school settings" (p. 22). Twelve key recommendations were made in the Top of the Class report. Through their implementation, the recommendations would:

Ensure that teacher education has a sound research evidence base; that it meets high standards that are determined by all stakeholders yet retains the vitality, diversity and innovativeness that is necessary if it is to remain relevant; that it is resourced properly; that it is delivered by means of strong and authentic partnerships, and that it is career-long. (Hartsuyker et. al., 2007, p. 3)

The report recommended the need to implement and/or improve the research base for education, the requirement for a national system of teacher education (the establishment of AITSL),

stricter regulations on the entry of applicants into ITE, improved practicum and partnerships in ITE, an induction into the teaching profession, support for on-going professional learning throughout teacher careers, and of responsibility for funding of ITE.

The Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers report produced by TEMAG in 2014 reiterated many of these recommendations. The Action Now report, like the Top of the Class Report, maintained a “solid focus on student outcomes as the fundamental drive for teacher quality” (p. 1). However, it listed 38 recommendations for implementation to ensure the quality of teaching is “world class” (p. 2). The report noted the “declining performance of Australian students in international testing” had driven the public debate and in turn, the requirement for improving the quality of Australian teachers (TEMAG, 2014, p. 2). Ultimately, while PISA data may not have provided TEMAG with a complete and objective view of ITE in Australia, it did offer credibility to the proposed reforms to the Australian government.

In line with elements of successful international ITE systems, the Action Now report addressed issues such as consistency of collaboration between universities and schools. TEMAG (2014) reported that while some universities and schools were excellent at supporting pre-service teachers through effective partnerships, others merely included the provision of a “procedural document from the provider [but with] almost no other interaction with provider staff” (p. 28). An important recommendation of the TEMAG report was the need for stronger links and a “shared understanding” (TEMAG, 2014, p. 29) between schools and ITE providers to ensure adequate preparation of graduate teachers.

Following the TEMAG report, PTR Consulting was commissioned by AITSL in 2018 to undertake an evaluation of the progress made in implementing the reforms. According to the TEMAG Evaluation: School-University Partnerships report, the current challenge lies in the “implementation and change management strategies for embedding partnerships in ITE. The foundations are in place. Progress is being made with partnership agreements and opening communication channels between providers, teacher regulatory authorities...[and] education departments” (p. 4). Furthermore, the TEMAG Evaluation report states that there is a consensus view that:

implementation strategies, while on the right track, are in some respects underdeveloped, variable and warrant close attention to build on the current momentum. The next step should be to clarify roles and responsibilities among providers, Authorities, education departments and other employers, and schools in advancing and implementing the priority tasks through partnerships. (p. 4)

While the notion of partnerships between universities and schools is not new, the TEMAG Evaluation report stated that “putting the systems and practices in place to implement reform at a national scale is new and ambitious and there are challenges to manage” (p. 25).

One key issue identified in the 2014 TEMAG report was, unlike Finland where there is only one pathway into ITE, some institutions in Australia offered ITE courses that had not been accredited with the necessary strength and rigour. In particular, the “online provision of initial teacher education was a particular concern” (p. 9). This concern has increased since the report, with a reported 10% increase in student numbers undertaking courses online, up from 15% to 25% in 2016 (AITSL, 2018d, p. 10). Further, students who did study “via an external (i.e. online) mode of attendance had an 82% success rate, 6% below the average undergraduate rate” (AITSL, 2018d, p. 51).

Key proposals recommended by the Action Now report included a strengthened national quality assurance process, a sophisticated and transparent selection for entry to teaching, the integration of theory and practice, a robust assurance of classroom readiness, and “a need for national leadership to build Australia’s capability to drive strong, evidence-based practice in initial teacher education and to manage its teaching workforce” (TEMAG, 2014, p. 13). Many recommendations mirrored those of higher PISA performing systems such as Singapore, Finland and Ontario cited in this chapter. From this, the implementation of the AITSL Standards and course accreditation processes was an evidence-based step in the right direction for Australian schools. Further examination of the AITSL approach is now addressed.

2.5 The Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership

Established in 2010, AITSL is wholly owned and funded by the Australian government, and aims to promote “excellence so that teachers and leaders have the maximum impact on learning in all Australian schools and early childhood settings” (AITSL, 2019a, para. 4). In 2017, AITSL tabled the 2017-2020 Strategic Plan which comprised six guiding principles, two of which explicitly related to ITE. In 2019, AITSL released an updated 2019-2022 Strategic Plan which contained the same two guiding principles linked to ITE. The first is that “graduate teachers are well-prepared to teach when they enter the classroom” (2019a, p. 2). As outlined previously, this principle is evident in the policy of the high performing systems in Singapore, Finland and Ontario, namely in how graduate teachers are prepared. The second states “evidence and knowledge drive our decisions and we evaluate and learn as we progress” (p. 2). This is closely linked to the notions of Hattie (2008), and is embedded in the ITE programs in Singapore, Finland and Ontario. The development of the Professional Standards for Teachers in 2011, as well as the national Accreditation Standards of ITE providers in 2015 was also led by AITSL, and both sets of standards are discussed in the next section of this chapter.

2.5.1 The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers are “a public statement of what

constitutes teacher quality. They define the work of teachers and make explicit elements of high-quality, effective teaching in 21st century schools that will improve educational outcomes for students” (AITSL, 2011, p. 3). The Standards describe four levels of teacher proficiency: Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead teacher. Given that this study is focusing on graduate teacher experiences, the literature review now only examines the Graduate Standards, which encompass the required competencies of teachers from the commencement of employment.

In total, there are 33 Graduate Teacher Standards, organised into three domains: Professional Knowledge (content knowledge and pedagogical theory), Professional Practice (the skill in applying the knowledge) and Professional Engagement (reflected in continued professional learning and upholding a respect for the profession, arguably linked to the “virtuosity” of a teacher as described by Biesta (2015)). AITSL presents the three domains and subsequent standards as the skills and competencies that a graduate should exhibit. The Graduate Standards are presented in Appendix A.

Since the beginning of 2018, graduate teachers must also complete the Literacy and Numeracy Test for Initial Teacher Education Students (LANTITE), which is designed to ensure “teachers are well equipped to meet the demands of teaching and assist higher education providers, teacher employers and the general public to have increased confidence in the skills of graduating teachers” (Australian Centre for Education Research (ACER), 2018, para. 1).

In addition to the LANTITE, from 2020 pre-service teachers must complete a Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA) in their final ITE year. The TPA is assessed by the ITE course providers and is a requirement for graduation (AITSL, 2018a, p. 1). Evidence must demonstrate pre-service teacher’s skills, knowledge and practices “across the spectrum of teaching activities including planning, teaching, assessing and reflecting” (AITSL, 2018a, p. 1) with all evidence directly aligned to the Graduate Teacher Standards. Further, ITE providers must ensure the TPA assessment is both valid and reliable, with measurable achievement criteria. As the TPA is a relatively new ITE provision, with trials completed since 2018, little research yet exists on its impact.

2.5.2 The National Accreditation Standards for ITE providers

Based upon the Top of the Class Report (2007) and the Action Now Report (2014), the need for more robust and rigorous ITE course accreditation was apparent. AITSL worked with key stakeholders to ensure “greater clarity and rigour around what providers must do to gain accreditation, and ensure that trained accreditation panels apply the same high standards across Australia” (AITSL, 2017c, para. 3). New standards and accreditation procedures were approved in December 2015 by all state education ministers, and ITE providers are now required to demonstrate ‘evidence of impact’ (AITSL, 2017c) by demonstrating that pre-service teachers are ‘classroom ready’.

There are seven overarching standards, supported by a total of 27 supporting standards, that ITE providers must address in order to maintain accreditation. The overarching standards are presented in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: National Accreditation Standards (AITSL, 2015b)

1	Program Outcomes
2	Program Development
2	Design and Delivery
4	Program Entry
5	Program Structure and Content
6	Professional Experience
7	Program Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement

Once programs are accredited, they report to AITSL annually, and include data demonstrating impact, updates to their programs, nationally required data to contribute to national and/or jurisdictional collections and for compliance and accountability purposes, and additional data as per the Authority's request (AITSL, 2015b).

The move towards a nationally centralised accreditation body mirror the approaches in Finland and Singapore. The Australian government, through the restructuring and empowerment of AITSL, has applied evidence-based research to education reform. In theory, implementation of the AITSL Standards and the Accreditation Standards should be improving Australian student outcomes. Before addressing the impact of these reforms, it is necessary to review how the governing bodies in WA are applying the AITSL reforms.

2.6 Western Australia: ITE Accreditation

Before graduates can teach in WA, they must first complete an accredited ITE course. Since the passing of the Teacher Registration Act in 2012, the Teachers Registration Board of WA (previously known as WACOT), now administers ITE course accreditation. Subsequent to the agreed national approach, the TRBWA developed the WA Standards for the Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs in August 2016. These virtually mirror the national approach, and accredited ITE course providers in WA include Edith Cowan University (ECU), Curtin University, Montessori World, Murdoch University, the University of Notre Dame and the University of Western Australia (UWA). Each provider offers a range of course structures. According to the Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) (2017), ECU currently has the highest reported employment rates for teaching graduates. The literature view now focuses on the ECU course structures, with a brief comparison of each of the other providers' Primary Education Degree courses (except Montessori World).

2.7 Edith Cowan University ITE Courses

For those intending to become primary school teachers, ECU offers two course options: a four-year undergraduate Bachelor of Education, a one-year Graduate Diploma of Education (which was phased out as of 2018, however is relevant to participants interviewed in this study) or a two-year postgraduate Master of Teaching (ECU, 2018).

In addition to academic entry requirements which include English capabilities and, if no ATAR was completed, the completion of a university preparation course or TAFE course, entry requirements align with the 2015 AITSL reforms. However, ECU also requires applicants to pass non-academic assessment criteria. “Applicants’ non-academic capabilities are judged based on the submission of a 500-word personal statement ... [which] ... will outline why they wish to become a teacher” (ECU, 2018, para 2.). In line with Standard 3.2 of the AITSL course accreditation guidelines in Table 3.1, providers must “apply selection criteria for all entrants, which incorporate both academic and non-academic components that are consistent with engagement with a rigorous higher education program” (AITSL, 2015b). However, only ECU, Notre Dame University and UWA require a personal statement, with UWA’s statement being particularly detailed and specific. Neither Curtin University nor Murdoch University request any personal statements from their applicants.

2.7.1 Bachelor of Primary Education

The Bachelor of Education course requires applicants to have achieved a minimum ATAR score of 70, like all WA accredited ITE institutions. Once the applicant has satisfied both the academic and non-academic entry requirements, they begin their study through scaffolded units across eight semesters. The Bachelor’s degree includes three numeracy units, four literacy, five for general teaching learning and assessment, one Indigenous education, one unit catering diverse abilities, eight units covering the scope of the remaining curriculum, four professional practice units and the option to specialise in any of the preceding areas, with four units of work dedicated to that area (ECU, 2018).

2.7.2 Graduate Diploma of Education (Primary)

Prior to December 2017 (TRBWA, 2017), ECU offered a one-year Graduate Diploma of Education. To be considered for the course, applicants required the successful completion of a Bachelor’s degree from an approved university, as well as the academic and non-academic requirements ECU necessitates to enrol. The course included units in education and pedagogy, literacy, numeracy, curriculum and workplace learning. However, this course was replaced by the Master of Teaching (MTeach) as of 2018, as Standard 4 of the AITSL course accreditation standards and procedures requires programs to comprise of at least two years of full time study in education

(AITSL, 2015b). While the Graduate Diploma course is no longer available, it remains relevant to participants of this study.

2.7.3 MTeach

The ECU one-year Graduate Diploma of Education was replaced by the MTeach course in 2018. To apply, applicants must have completed at least one year of full-time equivalent study relevant to one or more learning areas of the primary school curriculum (ECU, 2018). While entrants to this course have already completed a degree, the reduced course duration means pre-service teachers complete only three practical units, two literacy and numeracy units, five units for the other curriculum learning areas and four for general teaching, learning and assessment.

2.8 Professional Teaching Standards: The Teacher Registration Board of WA

The TRBWA is responsible for both the accreditation of ITE programs in WA, and also for the registration of all K-12 teachers who teach in a WA education venue (TRBWA, 2018a). In WA, there are three main education providers: The State Government (DoEWA), Catholic Education WA (CEWA) and the Association of Independent Schools WA (AISWA). According to the Teacher Registration Act (2012), all who teach in any WA school, regardless of provider, must be registered with the TRBWA. To ensure teacher quality complies with the AITSL Standards, and to “detail the abilities, experience, knowledge or skills expected of registered teachers” (TRBWA, 2012, p. 1), the TRBWA developed the Professional Standards for Teachers in Western Australia in 2012. These were approved by the Minister for Education “under section 20 of the *Teacher Registration Act 2012 (Act)*” (TRBWA, 2012, p. 1). Apart from “minor amendments” (TRBWA, 2012, p. 2) in order to accommodate early childhood teachers working in childcare (they will also be required to be registered in WA), the WA professional standards are almost identical to the AITSL Standards. Of the four registration categories, only the Full Registration and Provisional Registration categories are relevant to this study.

2.8.1 Provisional Registration

Prior to working in a school, graduate teachers must obtain Provisional Registration. Since a teacher cannot progress into Full Registration until they have demonstrated all the competencies of a Proficient teacher (the second level of the Standards), those who are still demonstrating capabilities at the Graduate level can only have Provisional Registration. The TRBWA provides a three-year window for graduates to remain provisionally registered. They also offer teachers the opportunity to apply for Full Registration after a minimum of 100-days experience. A graduate teacher who has not made an application to transition to Full Registration within the required three years will “no longer be entitled to teach and will need to make a new application for teacher registration” (TRBWA, 2018b, para. 4).

Transition to Full Registration is largely dependent on employers. School or workplace assessments determine whether a teacher is meeting the Standards at the Proficient Level (TRBWA, 2018b). This means graduate teachers are heavily reliant on their more experienced colleagues and/or administration team working directly with them. This ensures the declaration of Full Registration is correctly made on their behalf. Again, it is clear that strong support and partnerships are required for not only pre-service teachers but also for graduate teachers entering the workplace and moving to full registration. Accordingly, DoEWA has implemented both Graduate Teacher Modules and the In-Class Coaching opportunities to support graduate teachers.

2.8.2 Full Registration

Teachers are considered fully registered when they hold a teaching qualification from an AITSL accredited ITE program or “a teaching qualification recognised by the Teacher Registration Board of Western Australia (TRBWA) as equivalent” (TRBWA, 2018b, para. 1). The allowance of state directorates to have this added responsibility of determining other “equivalent” qualifications is of interest, considering one of AITSL’s goals is to ensure common, high standards among all Australian teachers. Further, Full Registration requires teachers to be “proficient to the prescribed standard in English, both oral and written”, meet the Proficient level of the AITSL Standards, be a “fit and proper person” (para. 6), and to have taught for a minimum of 100 days in the five years previous to application in an Australian or New Zealand school.

2.9 Graduate Teacher Induction in Australia

In July 2016 AITSL established guidelines for teacher induction into the profession. The guidelines set out a “nationally consistent approach to ensure quality induction and support for beginning teachers as they navigate their first years in the profession” (AITSL, 2016a, para. 2). As AITSL (2016a) explained:

Substantial Australian and international research demonstrates that high quality induction has a dramatic effect on this transition process. It can strengthen the skills and knowledge of early career teachers, expand their teaching repertoire, improve job satisfaction and commitment and reduce teacher attrition in the early years. It supports early career teachers to manage their own wellbeing and career development. High-quality induction programs lead to graduate teachers having a material impact on learner outcomes. Induction is an investment with high returns. (p. 5)

Induction is regulated at the state and territory level and differ between the states and territories, as well as between education systems including government, independent and Catholic systems in areas such as mentoring support, structured graduate programs or release time for beginning teachers (Révai, 2018). AITSL’s 2016 guidelines for all systems state that inductions must be:

based on research and reflect what is known about the most effective forms of support for graduates. They offer a foundation for high quality induction. They will assist in developing, managing, delivering and evaluating programs that enable graduates to take a major step towards belonging to and fully engaging in the profession. This will, in turn, support early career teachers to maximise their impact on learner outcomes. (AITSL, 2016a, p. 3)

In Australia, the two largest state education systems are New South Wales (NSW) and Victoria (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 2018). Therefore, both were selected for comparison with DoEWA's induction processes.

2.9.1 Induction in NSW

In NSW, Beginning Teacher Support Funding (BTSF) has been made available under the Great Teaching, Inspired Learning (GTIL) reforms (NSWDoE, 2019a). Principals are accountable for the following four conditions in order to receive graduate support funding:

- beginning teachers have reduced responsibilities or teaching loads sufficient to support the development of their skills;
- beginning teachers are provided with ongoing feedback and support that is embedded in the collaborative practices of the school;
- mentoring structures and collaborative practices support beginning teachers within the school or across a cluster of schools, and any teacher mentors have access to specific training and flexibility in their teaching responsibilities to support classroom observation and provide structured feedback; and
- beginning teachers have access to professional learning that focuses on classroom and behaviour management, strategies to build student engagement, collaborative professional practices within the school and productive relationships with parents and care givers. (NSWDoE, 2019a)

In NSW it is the responsibility of the principal and the school staff to provide professional learning and induction. This includes progressing the graduate teacher, at their own pace over the first two years, through four phases: Orientation; Developing Focus; Refining Practice; and Proficient Accreditation (NSWDoE, 2019b). In addition, NSWDoE stipulates that schools follow the department's 5C model of school-based induction: customised, connections, context, curriculum and classroom. "A quality induction customises the support provided to cater for the specific needs of each beginning teacher. It connects teachers according to needs and focuses on context, curriculum and the classroom" (NSWDoE, 2019b, para. 2). This approach mirrors Ontario, where graduate teacher induction is designed and implemented by local school boards (Driskell, 2019).

2.9.2 Induction in Victoria

Victoria's approach is different from NSW. According to the Victorian Department of Education and Training Victoria (VDET), principals are provided with the Principal and School Leader Guide to Induction of Graduate Teachers (2019), which outlines expectations and the support mechanisms available for graduate teachers within their school. The guide provides principals with an

Induction Timeline and Checklists for Graduate Teachers in Year 1 and Year 2 of their teaching career. Furthermore, principals are required to ensure graduate teachers are appointed a mentor within the school. In response to the AITSL reforms, VDET (2016) developed guidelines for mentoring graduate teachers, with the intention to “support the further development of experienced teachers in their important role of mentoring less experienced colleagues” (p. 1). The guidelines not only highlighted the benefits of quality mentoring relationships, but citing “various international studies” (p. 48), the guidelines outlined “ineffective or counter-productive mentoring practices, which had a negative impact on beginning teachers, both personally and professionally” (p. 48). Through the inclusion of the ineffective practices, VDET reiterate the crucial role mentors play in “shaping the profession of teaching, both now and well into the future” (p. 49).

No such explicit guidelines or induction requirements have been implemented in WA as yet, although it has been recommended. In addition to the induction obligations for school leaders, other system-level components are in place to support graduate teachers in Victoria. According to the VDET (2019), these include:

- Graduate Teacher Conferences support graduate teachers to build professional practice and identity and establish professional networks beyond their own schools.
- The Effective Mentoring Program (EMP) to prepare teacher mentors for supporting graduate teachers’ professional growth and wellbeing during the first two years of employment.
- The Mentoring Capability Framework for graduate teachers, mentor teachers and school leadership to support and guide the mentoring relationship.
- The Graduate Teacher Learning Series – an online professional learning series designed to address specific graduate needs, reflect graduate voice and encourage development of professional networks; and
- A graduate teacher induction portal that consolidates resources and information for graduate teachers. (p. 8)

Victoria’s induction processes for graduate teachers appear to be more generic than the 5C model of NSW. However, both states adhere to AITSL’s induction requirements, including provision of mentoring programs, professional learning and leadership contact (ATISL, 2016a).

2.9.3 Induction in WA

In WA, the induction of graduate teachers is different from NSW and Victoria. DoEWA’s Institute for Professional Learning has supported its graduate teachers through an induction program since 2012 (Crosswell & Beutel, 2013), and DoEWA’s Statewide Services has continued to oversee its implementation. The program includes: the provision of targeted professional learning Graduate Teacher Modules; optional access to an In-Class Coaching Program; a plan for school induction processes; and clear entitlements such as extra release time and a graduate teacher allowance to purchase classroom resources (DoEWA, 2019). The DoEWA (2019e) outlines that it is school leaders

who influence a graduate teacher's "developing view of schools, public education and the teaching profession ... [and] ... ensure that early career teachers are given opportunities to thrive and achieve Full Registration with the TRBWA" (p. 3). However, unlike NSW and Victoria, the DoEWA only suggests an approach for schools to take. In WA, it is suggested that school leaders ensure the induction includes elements, as outlined in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: DoEWA Induction elements (adapted from DoEWA, 2019)

Element	Description
Customise in-school support	Develop an in-school induction kit that includes key documents and practical information, such as school operational plan, school business plan, behaviour management plan, assessment policy, community links and performance development documents.
Leadership contact	Engage, share and provide feedback opportunities; discuss the school's vision, priorities, policies and procedures, and familiarise your graduate with any support programs available to staff; Provide opportunities for follow up, feedback and support through regular meetings as part of the school day. Ensure teacher wellbeing becomes a part of this support.
Practice-focused mentoring	Allocate school-based mentors to provide support and information on school processes, and model and share good practice; Provide mentors with training through accessing the Department's Mentoring program; Support practice-focused mentoring through time allocation.
Practical information	Ensure graduate teachers register online through Professional Learning Information System (PLIS) for the Modules, in the recommended timeframes; Encourage graduate teachers to apply for the In-Class Coaching Program (ICCP) to align with the Department's preferred pathway towards full registration with the TRBWA; Discuss expectations and requirements for transitioning to full TRBWA registration.
Networks and collaboration	Provide opportunities for graduate teachers to lead and deliver professional learning to colleagues; Encourage involvement in network opportunities.
Study of teaching/ classroom observation	Provide opportunities to observe and reflect on experienced teachers in action.
Targeted professional learning	Allocate time for graduate teachers to review professional learning content; Notify graduate teachers of other mandated professional learning courses, such as, Child Protection and Abuse Prevention, Aboriginal Cultural Appreciation, Accountable and Ethical Decision Making and Students Online policy course; Provide opportunities for graduate teachers to develop specific skills and interests.
Time allocation	Allocate time to engage in school networks through collaboration, coaching, work shadowing or attending professional learning

In addition to the above, principals must ensure their graduate teachers attend the fully funded Graduate Teacher Modules and provide funded release time. The release time (a total of sixteen days, including eight for the Graduate Teacher Modules) is intended to meet the needs of each graduate teacher and include some form of school-based induction and mentoring (DoEWA, 2019b). According to DoEWA (2019b), the induction program is designed to enhance the effectiveness of

early career teachers in the classroom, supporting their “transition from university to being classroom ready and beyond” (para. 6).

2.9.3.1 Graduate Teacher Modules

The Graduate Teacher Modules form a large component of DoEWA’s Graduate Teacher Induction Program. Over their first thirty months of teaching, all graduates employed in the public school sector are required to complete the program. The stated purpose of the program is to build graduate teachers’ skills, effectiveness and confidence, help them to gain a deeper understanding of the AITSL Standards and assist them in transferring their learning to their own teaching practice (DoEWA, 2019c). Four two-day modules are spread over the first two years of teaching, and include a combination of face-to-face and online learning, as well tasks to complete between each successive module. An outline of the Graduate Teacher Modules is presented in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4 DoEWA Graduate Teacher Modules (DoEWA, 2019c).

Module Focus	Content
Module 1: the Professional Standards for Effective Classroom Practice and preparing graduates for transitioning to Full Registration	The Department’s induction program and support at individual, school and system levels; qualities of highly effective teachers; explicit lesson design, learning intentions and success criteria; Graduate teacher retention, well-being and resilience strategies; student engagement strategies; building relationships with students, colleagues and parents; creating safe learning environments; positive behaviour management strategies.
Module 2: facilitating student learning and continues registration transition support	Teaching through the lens of the <i>Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework</i> ; pedagogy that enhances learning for diverse learners; the gradual release of responsibility model; collaborative learning concepts; feedback for learning; policy requirements and reporting frameworks; TRBWA requirements to transition to full registration; compiling rich evidence sets; developing student voice.
Module 3: reviews current research about assessment and making judgements	Self-efficacy and goal setting; principles of assessment; formative assessment strategies; metacognition strategies; student agency; self and peer assessment; explicit planning for assessment; moderation of student work.
Module 4: initially finished the program with a conference on quality teaching and professional achievements and aspirations. Since the beginning of 2019, Module 4 focuses on de-escalation and positive handling	Team-teach and team building activities; keeping people safe and happy; understanding emotions and challenging behaviours; personal space, body language, circles of danger, safe stance, calm stance and scripts; the conflict spiral: stages of crisis; post incident learning and support: understanding the processes; risk and reduction planning including: the legal framework, policies, guidance, recording, reporting and planning; and de-escalation and positive handling strategies.

The Graduate Teacher Modules aim to provide graduate teachers the opportunity to engage in regular, competency-based professional learning whilst working in a classroom to practice and refine

their skills. As yet, there appears to have been little or no independent assessment of the effectiveness or otherwise of the Graduate Teacher Modules.

2.9.3.2 In-Class Coaching Program

Along with the Graduate Teacher Modules, the Institute for Professional Learning “provides graduates with a personalised professional learning experience facilitated by a trained teaching and learning advocate from the Institute” (DoEWA, 2019c, para. 1). Unlike the Graduate Teacher Modules, the In-Class Coaching Program is voluntary and only available through an application-based system. Additionally, the coaching supplied is not entirely face-to-face; it is a mix of school visits and telephone sessions. Further, only graduates who have completed the first of the Graduate Teacher Modules have a permanent or contract position in a school and the ability to commit to six external coaching sessions, on top of regular teaching duties, the Graduate Teacher Modules and preparation for full teacher registration are eligible for the program. As with the Graduate Teacher Modules, it would appear timely for an investigation into the effectiveness of this program.

2.9.3.3 In-School Mentor Program

DoEWA makes an important distinction between the role of mentor and in-class coach. While both roles are important in supporting graduate teachers’ professional growth, the mentor “shares expertise and offers in-context solutions, while the coach focuses on self-reflection” (2019b, p. 8). In addition to the Graduate Teacher Modules and optional In-Class Coaching, DoEWA advises graduate teachers to participate in a form of in-school mentoring, and provides mentor support through the ‘Mentoring Graduate Teachers Program’ (DoEWA, 2019d). It is “designed to develop the skills and knowledge of staff and enable them to approach their role as a graduate teacher mentor with confidence, commitment and enthusiasm” (DoEWA, 2019d, para. 7). While mentorships are not compulsory DoEWA clearly states that to best support graduate teachers, schools should adopt their own mentoring policy (DoEWA, 2019b). While generic studies exist on the impacts of in-school mentoring programs (Hay Group, 2014; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011), there appears to have been little or no independent assessment of the effectiveness of mentoring for DoEWA teachers as yet.

2.10 The Current Reality

Prior to the introduction of the AITSL Standards, ITE Course Accreditation reforms and various support mechanisms in place for graduate teachers, McKenzie et al, (2013) identified concerns relating to the quality of graduates entering the profession, the ‘reality-shock’ of entering a classroom upon graduating, graduate teacher attrition and the general self-efficacy of graduate teachers. While AITSL (2019b) reported improvements in the perceived quality of graduate teachers,

research suggests ‘reality-shock’, attrition and the self-efficacy of graduate teachers remain problematic for some Australian graduate teachers (AITSL, 2016b; Constantine, 2017).

2.10.1 The Quality of Graduates

According to McKenzie et al. (2013), only half of graduate primary school teachers described their ITE course very helpful or helpful in preparing them for the classroom. Graduates reported feeling most prepared in Standards 2, 3, 6 and 7 (p. 92). Conversely, graduates felt underprepared in Standard 1 and 5 (p. 93). McKenzie et al. (2013) also reported that in Standard 4 45% of primary graduates stated that they need further support in dealing with difficult student behaviour and 43% needed further learning in supporting students with disabilities (p. 93). However, this research was undertaken before AITSL mandated ITE course reforms.

The study by McKenzie et al. (2013) also revealed that school principals considered graduate teachers to be underprepared. McKenzie et al. (2013) stated that less than 20% of principals felt the graduate teachers were at least ‘well prepared’ to teach a wide range of students, and only 29% reported their graduates could manage classroom activities. Further, only 23% of principals considered graduates capable to make effective use of assessment information, and less than 12% of principals considered graduates to be effective at dealing with troublesome class behaviour (p. 174). Again, this report predated AITSL reforms to ITE courses.

However, in 2017 graduate teachers were asked to assess “three focus areas: whether they experienced good teaching practices during their study, whether their studies improved their generic skills, and whether they were satisfied with their course overall” within the first four months of their career (AITSL, 2019b, p. 81). 77% of undergraduate students reported satisfaction with their ITE course in 2017, however only 58% considered the quality of teaching in ITE as satisfactory. Despite this, 86% of “reported that their qualification prepared them for employment”. Postgraduate ITE students “were significantly less likely than their ITE undergraduate counterparts to agree that the course had improved their generic skills (67%)...[however] ... they had higher levels of satisfaction with the quality of teaching they had experienced in their course (63%)” (p. 81). In addition, only 81% of postgraduate students reported feeling prepared for employment after ITE completion. While this indicates an improvement from 2013, AITSL (2019b) stated between 2015 and 2017, undergraduate ITE students’ “overall satisfaction with their course significantly decreased ... [and] ... Postgraduates’ overall satisfaction with their course did not significantly change” (p. 82).

By contrast, improvements were noted in “employer perceptions of graduate readiness for employment” (p. 87). AITSL (2019b) stated “87% of employers of recent ITE graduates from undergraduate programs ... [and] ... 86% of employers of...graduates from postgraduate programs

were satisfied with the graduate's performance" (p. 87). Further, the employers of 95% of ITE graduates from undergraduate courses, and 91% from postgraduate courses, considered them sufficiently prepared by their ITE courses (AITSL, 2019b). While the data indicates some improvements in the quality of graduate teachers entering ITE, disparities between graduate teachers' perceptions and those of their employers remain. Further, the data also indicates the need for the continued improvement in ITE quality.

2.10.2 'Reality-shock'

For decades, a substantial body of literature has reported the 'reality-shock' for graduate teachers in their first year of teaching (Constantine, 2017; Correa, Martínez-Arbelaiz & Aberasturi-Apraiz, 2015; Ewing & Manuel, 2005; Fantilli & McDougall, 2009; Miles & Knipe, 2018; Morrison, 2013; Veenman, 1984). Veenman (1984) explained that the "transition from teacher training to the first teaching job could be a dramatic and traumatic one" (p. 143), with a 'reality-shock' causing the "collapse of the missionary ideals formed during teacher training by the harsh and rude reality of everyday classroom life" (p. 143). According to Veenman (1984), graduate teachers experienced eight problems in their first years of teaching including: "classroom discipline, motivating students, dealing with individual differences, assessing students' work, relationships with parents, organization of class work, insufficient and/or inadequate teaching materials and supplies, and dealing with problems of individual students" (p. 143). In an Australian study, Buchanan et al. (2013) revealed that little had changed, and that "adjusting to full-time teaching demands, managing colleague and parent relationships, understanding the cultural contexts of the school and coping with the clash between expectations of pre-service teaching and the realities of in-service teaching" (p. 113) remained the key issues faced by graduate teachers. These findings closely correlate with the findings reported by McKenzie et al. (2013).

Correa, Martínez-Arbelaiz and Aberasturi-Apraiz (2015) stated that "these problems are familiar both to old and new teachers [but] they cause feelings of demotivation and insecurity among the latter group of teachers" (p. 67). Furthermore, Constantine (2017) highlighted that the first year of teaching for graduate teachers involves "confronting and negotiating the gap between their expectations and reality" (p. 32). According to Ure et al. (2017), this gap between expectations and reality could occur because ITE students "often perceive the theoretical knowledge and skills they learn during university as separate, or in competition with, the practical knowledge and skills they aim to apply in future workplaces" (p. 102); a disconnect that can lead to the disengagement of ITE students with course content and delivery.

However, it is important to note that "changes in the teaching context and in the demands made by schools affect all teachers, but they are experienced with special intensity during the first

years of the teaching career” (Correa, Martínez-Arbelaiz & Aberasturi-Apraiz, 2015, p. 68). Further, as highlighted by Miles and Knipe (2018), even though the majority of graduate teachers in their study perceived themselves to be “prepared as well as could be..., they understood that the complexity of the work of teaching is difficult to teach through university initial teacher education degrees” (p. 110). Given long standing reporting of ‘reality-shock’ for graduate teachers, the impacts of the AITSL reforms in reducing ‘reality-shock’ needs to be investigated.

2.10.3 Attrition

AITSL (2016b) described attrition as occurring when pre-service teachers do not finish ITE, a graduate never works as a teacher, or when a teacher leaves the profession within the first five years of employment. While “discussions about attrition and retention are not always clear on which of these stages they are referring to,” (AITSL, 2016b, p. 4) this study focuses on the latter, because according to Australian media and research, 30% to 50% of graduate teachers will leave the profession within the first five years (Brennan, 2016; Manuel & Carter, 2016; McKinnon & Walker, 2016; Molloy, 2019; Moore, 2019; Singhal, 2017). However, AITSL (2016b) explained that “estimates in the Australian literature often appear to be based on information from the UK or US where national data are more comprehensive” (p. 8). Weldon (2018) stated:

Statements on early career teacher attrition tend to gravitate to one overarching proportional figure with little consideration of the figures’ underlying definitions which can involve important differences such as those between the primary and secondary teacher workforce, or between metropolitan, regional, and rural schools. Attrition in recent Australian literature is generally portrayed as high, negative, and specifically related to the context of employment—lack of support, burn out ... which ignores a number of other relevant contexts and issues such as short-term contracts and lack of ongoing positions, personal issues such as illness or family concerns, or choosing to leave to pursue an alternative career. (p. 62)

Attrition of teachers, regardless of the causes, creates problems for schools and students (Lindqvist, Nordänger & Carlsson, 2014). A less stable teacher workforce results in educational and organisational disturbances, as well as financial costs to governments and institutions. In addition, research indicates that teacher attrition has a “harmful effect on student achievement, especially in poorly performing schools, and that turnover also negatively affects the students of those teachers who remain in the same school from one year to the next” (Lindqvist, Nordänger & Carlsson, 2014, p. 95). Therefore, while the attrition rate of graduate teachers in Australia is an issue, there is currently no reliable evidence on attrition rates to support the claims of its severity. Regardless, this study premised on the assumption that ITE preparation reforms, and DoEWA support mechanisms for graduate teachers should lower the attrition rate, whatever it may accurately be. According to AITSL, graduate teachers cited heavy workload and lack of support as fundamental reasons for their leaving of the profession (2016b). McKinnon (2016) stated that the “lack of support isn’t because other teachers are lazy and bad, or that school principals don’t care,” but because experienced teachers who

are potential mentors for these graduates “do not have time to take on any additional work” (para. 11). Lack of support for graduate teachers, in the form of a mentoring from another teacher, is a recurring theme in the literature. McKinnon (2016) stated that “one of the simplest ways is to support teachers in schools is through mentoring,” (para. 28) while the OECD also acknowledged that the “provision of support to teachers [is] a policy direction for school systems internationally” (OECD, 2005, p. 169). However, as outlined by Weldon (2018):

Policies have changed in the last decade and additional supports have been provided in various jurisdictions around Australia. However, it is currently not known—nor do we currently have any means of knowing—to what extent these policies have made a difference. Defining common terms such as early career teacher, or attrition, and collecting national Australian data to monitor actual attrition rates over time and for important subsets of the teaching workforce is an important and overdue innovation that would impact policy makers, ITE design, and schools. (p. 72)

In accordance with AITSL’s requirements, NSW, Victoria and WA all include mentoring as part of their graduate teacher induction packages. Yet to be determined is the impact of AITSL’s mandated mentoring requirements upon graduate teachers’ development in their first years of teaching.

2.10.4 Self-Efficacy

The literature reports that while a moderate number of graduate teachers perceive themselves to be adequately prepared by their ITE courses, others do not (Jensen, Sandoval-Hernández, Knoll, & Gonzalez, 2012; Pendergast, Garvis, & Keogh, 2011; Woolfolk Hoy & Burke-Spero, 2005). Teacher self-efficacy, or TSE, as defined by Mo Ching Mok and Moore (2019) is “grounded in Bandura’s conception of self-efficacy ... [and] ... are beliefs that teachers hold about their capacity to affect student performance” (p. 1). Woolfolk Hoy and Burke-Spero (2005) similarly define TSE as the “beliefs teachers hold about their own perceived capability” (p. 3) and claim low TSE to be a potential factor in the attrition of graduate teachers. According to Zee and Koomen (2016):

Teachers with poor efficacy for classroom management and instructional strategies may be more prone to feel emotionally exhausted and uncommitted to their occupation than educators with high efficacy. This may cause them to leave the profession entirely... Notably, for both preservice and inservice [sic] teachers, low TSE for classroom management seems to be the most important trigger to abandon their job. (p. 51)

However, Zee and Koomen (2016) also found:

TSE is not directly related to teacher attrition and retention. Rather, teachers with low self-efficacy seem to experience higher levels of emotional exhaustion and lower levels of satisfaction and commitment, ultimately leading them to quit their job. These indirect effects imply that positive feelings of well-being, such as commitment and satisfaction, are the mechanism through which TSE exerts its influence over teachers’ intention to stay or leave. (p. 51)

According to Zee and Koomen (2016), having high self-efficacy can indirectly link to the potential success and retention of graduate teachers (Woolfolk Hoy & Burke-Spero, 2005). Further, research indicates that teacher self-efficacy can greatly influence overall effectiveness with students (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001; Woolfolk Hoy & Burke-Spero, 2005; Zee & Koomen, 2016). Zee and Koomen (2016) highlighted that while there is a modest association between students' academic achievement and their teacher's TSE in primary school, student motivation is more greatly impacted by TSE than academic results. Thus, higher teacher self-efficacy could not only improve graduate teacher retention, but improve student motivation and to a lesser extent, achievement.

2.10.5 Providing Support to Improve Retention and Self-Efficacy

A direct link between graduate teachers' self-efficacy and their levels of satisfaction with the support and preparation they received was highlighted by Woolfolk Hoy and Burke-Spero (2005). They revealed that "confident new teachers gave higher ratings to the adequacy of support they had received than those who ended their year with a shakier sense of their own competence" (p. 346). This aligns with Zee and Koomen (2016), who stated "teachers are likely to build a healthy sense of general self-efficacy when ... colleagues express faith in their capabilities" (p. 16). Further, Klassen and Tze (2014) noted the value of developing high self-efficacy in graduate teachers through training and professional development opportunities. They stated that ITE courses and workplaces can:

deliberately target self-efficacy by providing opportunities for successful practice, by providing supportive feedback when appropriate, by providing exposure to competent and credible models, and by assisting pre-service teachers in ways to manage debilitating emotions such as stress and anxiety that can hamper effectiveness. Diverse models of professional development ... including models that support individuals, mentoring models, and collaborative and cooperative models—can be offered to help build the self-efficacy of new and experienced teachers. (p. 73)

Similarly, the opportunity for graduate teachers to develop new learning through collaborative professional learning, and their engagement in a professional learning community, contribute to higher graduate teacher retention. Further, Buchanan et al. (2013) identified two broad factors "critical to the retention of teachers: the opportunity for professional learning; and the contribution of their work environment (including support, collegiality and possibility physical environment) to their sense of self-worth as teachers" (p. 124). They further explain that graduate teachers who continue teaching:

find themselves in supportive environments: valued and welcomed by colleagues; supported by a proactive mentor; and regularly assisted by experienced teachers. This circumstance contributes to their professional learning as well as their sense of collegiality and belonging in the school (and perhaps the profession more widely). Under these conditions [graduate teachers] are likely to become better at teaching more quickly and experience more success more often than those in unsupportive environments - and contribute more to their schools. (p. 124)

According to the Hay Group (2014), it is school leaders who “are the champions of culture as they are uniquely positioned to develop and bring the organisation together around the shared meaning and purpose” (p. 40). For quality induction and support for graduate teachers, it is principals and deputy principals who must “role model the attitudes and behaviours necessary to drive the changes required” (p. 40). However, support for graduate teachers from all stakeholders (colleagues, administrators, mentors, peers and parents) is fundamental to teacher retention (Buchanan et al., 2013; Kutsyuruba, Godden & Tregunna, 2014; McCray, 2017). Gutiérrez (2018) further highlighted that in a study “conducted on more than eight thousand teachers, having a sense of community was the greatest predictor of teachers’ self-efficacy” (p. 33). For graduate teachers, the quality of the relationships within school communities can affect their self-efficacy, subsequent successes as a teacher and ultimately their decision to leave or to stay in the field (McCray, 2017).

Arguably, such opportunities exist within the current reform structures embedded through the recent Australian graduate teacher induction reforms described in this chapter. However, investigation into the effectiveness of these reforms is now needed. The literature shows that effectively implemented support systems such as mentoring, inductions into the school environment as well as the profession, and ongoing professional learning can build graduate teachers’ self-efficacy and produce committed, effective and enthusiastic teachers. Additionally, with adequate preparation in ITE to create ‘classroom ready’ teachers, these measures could potentially support both the retention of graduate teachers and contribute to greater student engagement and achievement.

2.11 Conclusion

Research spanning decades into the training of quality teachers has identified it to be a complex and multifaceted issue, one that generates ongoing discussion by educational practitioners and theorists around the world. In Australia, the process of centralising the responsibility for teacher quality standards and ITE reforms is well documented. Further, stakeholders in the Australian education system have continued to identify both successes and flaws in the competencies, standards and procedures of training institutions. McKinnon (2016) however, believes progress has been made in the quality of ITE, with the national accreditation standards forcing providers to be accountable for the quality of their courses and how their pre-service teachers perform. “What’s missing,” McKinnon stated, is “a strategy to retain these graduates once they’re in the system” (2016, para. 13).

Research is now required into the impact of ITE reforms upon graduates. Tests such as PISA or NAPLAN can potentially offer a form of evaluative assessment for AITSL, the TRBWA and universities on the impact of these changes. However, as PISA and NAPLAN offer assessment in terms of student outcomes rather than evaluating teacher quality, it is important to note that any

evaluations of the reforms from these sources would not be comprehensive. Further, little evidence can be drawn on how these policies impact self-efficacy and the broader experiences of graduate teachers. The question to be asked is whether the current reforms, structures and post-graduate support provided for new teachers is improving the overall ‘classroom readiness’ of graduates.

The time is right for research into the realities faced by graduates after ITE course reforms, the subsequent (and theoretical) higher standard of capabilities, the provision of induction processes through programs such as the Graduate Teacher Modules, In-Class Coaching and school-based mentors. It is necessary to evaluate the outcome of these reforms for recent graduate teachers who have been through the revised system. A study into their realities, issues, successes and feelings toward ITE, their preparation for the classroom and induction processes could provide greater insight into the success of the programs. According to AITSL, Australian university graduates should be adequately prepared to teach upon the completion of their ITE course. However, the graduates themselves should assist in determining whether they are ‘classroom ready’. Only then can a true evaluation of the reforms be made.

2.12 Summary

Chapter Two has examined the definition of quality teachers, quality teacher education and the evidence of best practice of ITE and graduate teacher support in the high performing education systems of Singapore, Finland and Ontario. It has outlined the successful components of these international systems against the current Australian context. A detailed description of the establishment of AITSL and its reforms to ITE and teacher competencies in Australia followed, before an outline of the WA regulatory body TRBWA and the WA ITE course providers. Chapter Two then examined the literature surrounding the challenges faced by graduate teachers in Australia, before outlining the importance of self-efficacy and potential tools for improving it for graduate teachers. Chapter Two concluded with an overall evaluation of the literature, and why this research project is now justified.

Chapter Three will detail the method of inquiry for this study. Beginning with Part 1, it locates the study’s position within the body of research paradigms. It then identifies the research methodology chosen before describing a range of qualitative methods. Part 1 concludes with a description of qualitative interviews as the chosen research method, as well as the specific structure and questions chosen. Part 2 of Chapter 3 presents the procedures followed in undertaking the research, including participants, methods of data collection, coding and analysis, and validity and reliability of the data.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 Introduction

Chapter Two introduced the literature that informed this research project. Chapter Three now addresses the research methods. The chapter commences with Part 1, which outlines and defines research paradigms through descriptions of different ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies, before addressing the research paradigm selected for this study. The chapter then unpacks qualitative methodology and the different methods used in this approach, before outlining the research approach chosen for this study. Part 2 of Chapter Three will justify the research approach and provide information on the selection of participants, and the methods employed to ensure confidentiality and other ethical requirements. It will also outline how the Interview Protocol Document was created and address the coding and analysis procedures undertaken before concluding with an explanation of how validity and reliability have been addressed.

PART 1

3.1 Research Paradigm

Before describing the methodology employed in this study, it is important to locate this study within the wider body of research paradigms. There are two basic approaches to research design: quantitative and qualitative methodology. Quantitative methodology is employed to collect, analyse and generalise numerical data that examine the effects of specified circumstances on an outcome of interest (Bell, 2010; Lakshman, Sinha, Biswas, Charles & Arora, 2000; University of Southern California, 2019). Alternatively, qualitative data seeks to obtain insights rather than statistical data into individuals' experiences of the world (Bell, 2010). A method is chosen based on the research paradigm of the researcher themselves (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017), and the implications of their research question. Every person has their own view of what constitutes truth and knowledge, and this view will guide their thinking, their beliefs, and their assumptions about society (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012). This is known as a paradigm. Paradigms, therefore, will also reflect how researchers see the world and how they interpret and act within that world (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). A research paradigm can be defined as "the conceptual lens through which the researcher examines the methodological aspects of their research project to determine the research methods that will be used and how the data will be analysed" (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017, p. 26).

Lincoln and Guba (1994) outline three fundamental questions which establish the research paradigm: (1) the ontological question; (2) the epistemological question; and (3) the methodological question (p. 108). Ontology is "a specification of a conceptualization" (Gruber, 1994, para. 1) and raises "basic questions about the nature of reality and the nature of the human being in the world"

(Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 245). Furthermore, it also raises the question of what is there than can be known about a reality (Lincoln & Guba, 1994). The epistemological question asks “what is the nature of the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be known?” (Lincoln & Guba, 1994, p. 108). Scotland (2012) stated epistemological assumptions “are concerned with how knowledge can be created, acquired and communicated, in other words what it means to know” (p. 9). Thirdly, the methodological question asks how the inquirer can go about finding out whatever they believe can be known (Lincoln & Guba, 1994). It is “concerned with why, what, from where, when and how data is collected and analysed” (Scotland, 2012, p. 9). Finally, Scotland (2012) stated that the research methods, or the specific techniques used to collect and analyse data, are traced back through methodology and epistemology to an ontological position. “It is impossible to engage in any form of research without committing (often implicitly) to ontological and epistemological positions” (p. 10). Accordingly, the research paradigm must be clearly articulated in any study.

Within the literature, a number of different research paradigms are described as being dominant within all research. Three common approaches described are positivist/post-positivist, interpretivist-constructivist and critical. A brief summary of each of these paradigms is presented below, before the paradigm underpinning this study is outlined.

3.1.1 Positivist/Post-positivist Paradigm

Positivism follows the ontological position of realism: that there is only one reality or truth and it exists regardless of the researcher (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Lincoln & Guba, 1994; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006; Patel, 2018; Sale, Lohfeld & Brazil, 2002; Scotland 2012). The epistemology of positivism is objectivism, where the researchers discover “absolute knowledge about an objective reality” (Scotland, 2012, p. 10). In objectivism, “the investigator and the investigated “object” are assumed to be independent entities, and the investigator to be capable of studying the object without influencing it or being influenced by it” (Lincoln & Guba, 1994, p. 110). Positivist methodology is directed at explaining the relationships between variables and predicting outcomes based on cause and effect relationships (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012; Scotland, 2012). Positivists seek to formulate laws, yielding a basis for prediction and generalizations; thus positivist methods often generate quantitative data (Scotland, 2012, p. 10). Such methods include the use of standardised tools such as questionnaires, surveys, scientific experiments and tests.

Post-positivism is ontologically and epistemologically similar to positivism, however there are key differences (Scotland, 2012). Post-positivism addresses the perceived limitations of positivism, acknowledging “reality is assumed to exist but to be only imperfectly apprehendable because of basically flawed human intellectual mechanisms and the fundamentally intractable nature of phenomena” (Lincoln & Guba, 1994, p. 110). Post-positivism is thus ontologically based in critical

realism, which claims “reality must be subjected to the widest possible critical examination to facilitate apprehending reality as closely as possible (but never perfectly)” (Lincoln & Guba, 1994, p. 110). Post-positivist findings are considered probably true, but require close and ongoing critical examination (Lowe, 2008). Similarly, with acknowledgement to such subjective elements and imperfect apprehension, the post-positivism paradigm requires the researcher to remain objective, as a ‘regulatory ideal’. While replicated findings could be true (Lincoln & Guba, 1994), the paradigm upholds the principle of falsification, which “argues that scientific theories can never be proven true” (Ernest, 1994, p. 22) because it would require “all attempts to refute them [to] fail” (Scotland, 2012, p. 110). Finally, methodologies in the post-positivist paradigm are based on an assumption that to “understand some scientific theories more than empirical data is needed” (Scotland, 2012, p. 110). Consequently, emic viewpoints and contextual information is sought in addition to quantitative data (Lincoln & Guba, 1994; Lowe, 2008; Scotland, 2012).

3.1.2 Interpretivist-constructivist Paradigm

Interpretivism involves individuals seeking an understanding of the world in which they live (Creswell, 2013). It follows the ontological position of relativism. Relativism is the view that reality is subjective, individually constructed and therefore it differs from person to person: and there are as many realities as there are individuals (Scotland, 2012, p. 11). The constructed realities “are not more or less “true,” in any absolute sense, but simply more or less informed and/or sophisticated” (Lincoln & Guba, 1994, p. 111). Epistemologically, interpretivism follows subjectivism, whereby the “investigator and the object of investigation are assumed to be interactively linked so that the “findings” are literally created as the investigation proceeds” (Lincoln & Guba, 1994, p. 111). In other words, interpretations are made by researchers based on what they find, but also shaped by their own experiences and background (Creswell, 2013). According to Scotland (2012), interpretive methodology seeks to understand phenomena from an individual’s perspective, cultural or historical contexts of different people or investigating interaction among individuals. Lincoln and Guba (1994) suggest that in order to obtain these understandings, there must be “interaction between and among investigator and respondents” (p. 111). Interpretive methodology does not reduce events to “simplistic interpretations” (Scotland, 2012, p. 111), but instead, new layers of understanding are uncovered through rich descriptions and inductive analysis. Examples of methods include qualitative tools such as open-ended interviews, focus groups and open-ended observations. Since any analyses comprises the researchers’ interpretations, researchers need to “make their agenda and value-system explicit from the outset” (Scotland, 2012, p. 12).

3.1.3 Critical Paradigm

The critical paradigm “situates its research in social justice issues and seeks to address the

political, social and economic issues, which lead to social oppression, conflict, struggle and power structures at whatever levels these might occur” (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017, p. 3). Ontologically, critical theory aligns with historical realism. Historical realism, as defined by Lincoln and Guba (1994) is a “virtual reality shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender values [that have] crystalized over time” (p. 109). Critical epistemology is one of subjectivism “which is based on real world phenomena and linked with societal ideology” (Scotland, 2012, p. 13). “The investigator and the investigated object are assumed to be interactively linked, with the values of the investigator (and of situated “others”) inevitably influencing the inquiry” (Lincoln & Guba, 1994, p. 110). Due to its transactional nature, the methodology of the critical paradigm requires a dialogue between the researcher and the participants of the inquiry, and “that dialogue must be dialectical in nature to transform ignorance and misapprehensions ... into more informed consciousness” (Lincoln & Guba, 1994, p110). Thus, critical theory applies a qualitative methodology through the use of tools such as ethnographic studies, open-ended interviews, focus groups, open-ended observations and journals.

3.2 The Research Methodology for This Study

This study is guided by the following research question:

Following the introduction of the AITSL and DoEWA reforms designed to support graduate teachers, how do primary graduate DoEWA teachers describe their ‘classroom readiness’ and the support provided to them in their initial year of teaching?

The question implies the need to:

- Speak with graduate teachers
- Obtain in-depth responses from the individuals’ perspective
- Describe, interpret and explain graduate teachers’ experiences

Therefore, the research paradigm chosen for this study was interpretivist-constructivism, as the study sought to understand the lived and perceived experiences of graduate teachers. Meaning was uncovered through the in-depth interviews with the participants and inductively analysed. As such, a qualitative methodology was applied.

3.3 Qualitative Methodology

Qualitative research aims to understand individuals’ perceptions of the world (Bell, 2010). In the broadest sense, qualitative research produces descriptive data: “peoples’ own written or spoken words” (Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2016, p. 7). Qualitative researchers empathise and identify with

the people they study. They do this while suspending their own perspectives, in order to understand how the people being studied perceive their experiences. Furthermore, rather than collecting data to assess preconceived hypotheses or theories, qualitative researchers usually develop concepts and understandings through broader and more generalised questions and methods, using non-numerical and unstructured data (Punch, 2005; Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2016).

Qualitative research can be conducted through the following approaches:

Case study

A case study investigates an instance, i.e. a unit of human activity or innovation, that is embedded in the real world and which can only be understood in context. It seeks to answer a specific research question pertaining to one person's experience, using multiple sources of evidence that are abstracted and collated to get the best possible answer to the problem (Bell, 2010; Gillham, 2010).

Action Research

Action research can be used in almost any setting where a problem involving people, tasks and procedures needs a solution, or where some change of feature results in a more desirable outcome (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p. 297). It is applied research in which the researcher themselves have identified a need for change or improvement and engage in continuous research cycles of iterative research through action and a feedback loop (Bell, 2010). Active researchers are actively located within the research process.

Grounded Theory

The grounded theory approach aims to discover theories and hypotheses directly from gathered data, rather than from *a priori* assumptions. Researchers generating grounded theory seek to demonstrate plausible support for their developed theories, rather than to completely prove them (Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2016).

Ethnography

Ethnography is a "portrayal and explanation of social groups and situations in their real-life contexts" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 170). Ethnographic researchers, through conducting participant observations, have to be accepted by the individuals of the subject group and attempt to share (as far as possible) the same experiences to better understand why the group acts in the way that they do (Bell, 2010).

Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry begins "with the experiences as expressed in lived and told stories of individuals" (Creswell, p. 70). It can "involve reflective autobiography, life story, or the inclusion of excerpts from participants' stories to illustrate a theme developed by the researcher" (Gray, 1998, p. 12). Due to its portrayal of a deeply personal experience of the individual, narrative stories are

primarily gathered through interviews, as well as many other forms of data such as observations, pictures, documents and other sources (Creswell, 2013; Gray, 1998).

Phenomenology

While narrative inquiry analyses the experiences and stories of a single or perhaps two individuals, a phenomenological study “describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon” (Creswell, 2013, p. 76). Data are collected from participants who have experienced a phenomenon through, for example, an interview. The data is then developed into a broader, composite description of the overall experience for all of the individuals, including what they experienced and how they experienced it (Creswell, 2013). Smith (2018) listed seven types of phenomenology: transcendental constitutive, naturalistic constitutive, existential, generative historicist, genetic, hermeneutic and realistic.

This study aimed to understand how primary graduate DoEWA teachers perceive and experience the phenomenon of ‘classroom readiness’ and the formal support provided for them in their first year of teaching. Graduate teachers’ experiences were obtained through interviews to develop a rich description of their experiences with this phenomenon. According to Smith (2018) hermeneutic phenomenology “studies interpretive structures of experience, how we understand and engage things around us in our human world, including ourselves and others” (para. 37). Therefore, the approach chosen for this study is a qualitative methodology informed by hermeneutic phenomenology, using qualitative interviews.

3.4 The Research Method for This Study

Jacob and Furgerson (2012) stated that “at the heart of qualitative research is the desire to expose the human part of the story” (p. 1). This can be undertaken by allowing the story to be told by those who experience it. As defined by Dexter (1970), interviews are more than a conversation between two people but rather, they are purposeful conversations.

Interviews, according to Edwards and Holland (2013), exist on a continuum of either quantitative methodology, which aligns to structured survey questions; or qualitative methodology, which is characterised by interviews that are more flexible and with open ended questions. Quantitative structured interviews are based on a sequence of questions in the form of a questionnaire, asked “in the same order and the same way of all subjects of the research, with little flexibility available to the researcher” (Edwards & Holland, 2013, p. 3). Further, due to the nature of quantitative data and positivist approaches, often the main objective of structured interviews is “for neutral interviewers to obtain comparable information from a potentially large number of subjects” (p. 3) and as such, develop a generalised relationship of cause and effect from the data.

Bell (2010) stated “one major advantage of the interview is its adaptability” (p. 161), as the ability to probe for responses and investigate ideas and feelings further is something that cannot be

done in a survey. The major forms of qualitative interviews are unstructured and semi-structured (Edwards & Holland, 2013). Typically, unstructured interviews allow “the interviewee to talk from their own perspective using their own frame of reference and ideas and meanings that are familiar to them” (p. 30). Furthermore, since an unstructured interview does not follow a set list of questions, unexpected themes can develop and the researcher must “adjust the content of the interviews and possibly the emphasis of the research as a result of issues that emerge in any interview” (p. 30). As Bell (2010) outlined, it is important for participants to be granted the freedom to “talk about what is of central significance to them rather than to the interviewer” (p. 136). However, to ensure all important topics crucial to the study are covered, semi-structured interviews can be employed. Semi-structured interviews allow interviewees the space to answer the questions on their own terms, while still providing the researcher with some structure for comparison across the participants in the study (Edwards & Holland, 2013). By covering the same topics and potentially even the same questions, the researcher can develop a rich description of the experiences of the participants, as per a qualitative methodology informed by phenomenology study. The core features of qualitative interviews include:

- An interactional exchange of dialogue.
- A topic-centred, autobiographical approach with flexible structure.
- Contextual and situational perspectives brought to focus by the researcher so that knowledge can be produced. (Edwards & Holland, 2013, p. 3)

Brinkmann (2013) stated researchers need to address four key elements when conducting qualitative research: purpose, descriptions, life world and interpretation of meaning.

Purpose

Through establishing the purpose of the research, questions are structured to loosely follow a framework for the interview. Castillo-Montoya (2016) supports this, outlining the necessity of researchers to align interview questions with the research questions. He explains the alignment of each can “increase the utility of interview questions in the research process (confirming their purpose), while ensuring their necessity for the study (eliminating unnecessary ones)” (p. 814).

Descriptions

Secondly, the goal of interviews is to gather descriptions of how the interviewees experience the phenomenon being studied (Brinkmann, 2013; Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Seidman, 2013). Therefore, good interview questions will invite the interviewee to give descriptions of their experiences and avoid abstract or purely reflective answers. As Castillo-Montoya (2016) explained, interview questions should help participants tell their stories “one layer at a time, but also need to stay aligned with the purpose of the study” (p. 812). The Harvard College Sociology Department’s guide

for qualitative interviews specifies that interviewers should not ask questions “that require your respondents to do your analysis for you. This is your job.” (2019, p. 3).

Lifeworld

Thirdly, interviews are used by qualitative researchers to elicit descriptions that can be applied to the greater, real world (or “life world”) context (Brinkmann, 2013, p. 23). In qualitative research, this is also known as transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) or external validity/reader generalizability. “If one thinks of what can be learned from an in-depth analysis of a particular situation or incident and how that knowledge can be transferred, generalizability in qualitative research becomes possible.” (Merriam & Grenier, 2019, p. 29). In essence, since qualitative research draws from different ontologies and epistemologies than quantitative research, generalizability needs to be thought of differently between the two methods (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Therefore, in qualitative research, the extent to which the reader can use data from an interview data set and apply it to their own context will determine its generalizability. Lincoln and Guba (1985) explain that it is the duty of the researcher to provide enough detail of a study’s context with rich description to ensure the reader can determine how closely their situations match and, as such, transfer the research findings to their own contexts. In other words, the interpreted results from my own interviews with my participants should be meaningful and trustworthy to those within the WA graduate teacher context.

Interpretation of meaning

Finally, Brinkmann (2013) stated that researchers must “engage in interpretations of peoples’ experiences and actions as described in the interviews” (p. 23). However, since the meanings that qualitative interviewers often seek are “multiple, perspectival and contradictory” (p. 24), careful analysis must be conducted to ensure there is no bias, nor locally constructed meaning. This final element needs to be addressed in two ways. Firstly, the interview data need to be accurate prior to analysis. As described by Thomson (2011), “the data must accurately reflect what the participant has said or done” (p. 78).

Secondly, to guarantee the analysis of the interview data is reliable, it is necessary to provide complete transparency of the analytical procedures when presenting it. Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) state that a researcher must exhibit transparency by informing the reader of the path taken to arrive at the subsequent interpretation. Thomson (2011) explained that to impart transparency, the researcher must provide the clear processes involved in their interpretation, by including details such as the method of sample selection, interview protocol, the coding procedures, the research design and the researcher’s own epistemological viewpoints. As summarised in Merriam and Grenier (2018), “there are strategies that researchers can employ that will enhance the trustworthiness of their research” (p. 30). Using rich description in conjunction with an awareness of ethical practice can

ensure reliability and validity of the study (Merriam & Grenier, 2018). Part 2 of this chapter will outline, with transparency, the path taken to interpretation of the data in this study.

3.5 The Interview Structure

Qualitative interviews can be conducted individually for participants, or as part of a focus group. Focus groups “involve a small group of people engaging in collective discussion of a topic previously selected by the researcher” (Edwards & Holland, 2013, p. 36). In social sciences and qualitative methods, focus groups are popular due to their ability to provide in-depth information about both the way people think about an issue and their reasons why (Bell, 2010; Laws, 2003). They are considered advantageous when interaction among the focus group will likely provide the best information, when the group members are similar, cooperative and when time is limited (Creswell, 2013). However, care must be taken in selecting participants for focus groups to ensure the best information is yielded. As Hayes (2000) explained, different participants within a focus group can influence the contributions made by other participants. If there is an imbalance in the demographic elements such as age, gender and ethnicity within the focus group, participants may “feel socially constrained and not contribute freely to the discussion” (Hayes, 2000, p. 395).

Like focus groups, individual interviews allow for rich descriptions about participants’ personal experiences and perspectives (Bell, 2010; Hofisi, Hofisi & Mago, 2014; Laws, 2003). However, unlike focus groups, individual interviews allow for privacy, anonymity and honesty. Denscombe (1998) stated that in focus groups, if “group members regard their opinions as contrary to prevailing opinion within the group, they might be inclined to keep quiet, or moderate their views somewhat” (p. 115). By contrast, the “privacy of the one-to-one interview does not pose this difficulty” (p. 115).

While there are many strengths to employing an individual interview method, there are also limitations to their use. Individual interviews are more time consuming than focus groups, both to implement and analyse (Bell, 2010). Additionally, “it is a highly subjective technique and therefore there is always the danger of bias” (Bell, 2010, p. 157). Consistency and validity could present a problem when conducting multiple individual interviews rather than one focus group. However, by providing transparency and reliability within this study, questions of validity can be addressed.

Ultimately, given the nature of this study and its requirement to solicit the personal experiences of graduate teachers, I chose to honour the privacy of each participant in order to encourage genuine and truly honest responses through conducting individual, semi-structured interviews. Interviews also allowed for rich descriptions by all participants, contributing to greater accuracy in understanding the phenomenon of their experiences.

3.6 Interview Questions

It is important that interview questions are broad and open-ended yet precise to ensure each participant has the opportunity to clearly articulate a meaningful and detailed answer (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Creswell, 2013; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012; Kennedy, 2006; Seidman, 2006). Broad questions allow participants to possibly “say things [the interviewer] would have never thought to ask and often those things become one of the most important parts of [the] study” (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012, p. 4). It is imperative that the interview questions closely aligned to the research questions to ensure the information collected related to the information that was sought. However, interview questions are not to be delivered in the form of the research questions (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012; Kennedy, 2006; Maxwell, 2013). As described by Maxwell (2013), the research questions formulate what the researcher wants to understand, while the interview questions are asked to gain that understanding. “The development of good interview questions (and observational strategies) requires creativity and insight, rather than a mechanical conversation of the research questions into an interview guide” (Maxwell, 2013, p. 101). Thus, a careful balance was established to ensure the interview questions were written in a non-threatening, linguistically accessible way, while still aligning closely to the research question.

As described by Castillo-Montoya (2016), by including “four types of questions: (1) introductory questions, (2) transition questions, (3) key questions, and (4) closing questions” (p. 822), the conversational tone of the interview can be preserved while still maintaining focus and direction for the inquiry. With this in mind, Table 3.1 presents the interview questions employed in this study.

Table 3.1: Interview Questions

Question purpose	Question number	Question
Introductory	1	Tell me about your teaching experiences this year?
Transition	2	How does your teaching this year compare to last year?
	3	Tell me about that first year of teaching – what did you cope with and what did you find challenging?
	4	Was your first year easier or harder than you had anticipated when you were at university?
Key Questions	5	How well do you feel your university course prepared you for that first year of teaching?
	6	How has the on-the-job learning been compared with your university preparation?
	7	Tell me about how you’ve been supported in your role as a graduate teacher within the school. What sort of support were you given?
	8	Could you describe your experiences with the Graduate Teaching Modules (In-Class Coaching) you’ve completed so far? What sort of content have they covered?
	9	Have you found the Graduate Modules valuable? In what ways?
	10	Have you been allocated a mentor at your school?
	11	Tell me about that experience.
	12	Can you give me two stars and a wish for the In-Class Coaching?
Closing Questions	13	Overall, what experience has been the most valuable so far in your career in helping your development as a teacher?
	14	If you could wave a magic wand, describe what support, real or imaginary, you would want to help you during your first year in the classroom if you were to repeat it.

3.7 Summary of Part 1

Part 1 of Chapter Three has provided definitions of research paradigms through descriptions of common ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies. From an analysis of the research question against these descriptions, the research paradigm chosen for this study was interpretivism-constructivism. As such, a description of qualitative methodologies followed. The study seeks to describe, interpret and explain graduate teachers’ experiences of the phenomenon of ‘classroom-readiness’ and the perceptions of the support they are provided. Thus, a qualitative methodology, informed by phenomenology, research approach was chosen. In addition, Part 1 has outlined the research method for this study. It has examined the potential strengths and limitations of both focus groups and individual interviews, before justifying the choice of individual interviews.

PART 2

3.8 Introduction

The aim of this research was to understand graduate teachers' perceptions of their 'classroom-readiness' and their experiences with induction and support, following introduction of AITSL mandated reforms. Part 2 of Chapter Three will now specify the methods and processes used to achieve the research aims, and answer the research question.

3.9 Participants

Six graduate teachers were invited to participate in this study. This allowed for a range of experiences while also reaching saturation. Six were chosen as because less than six graduates could limit the ability to generalise graduate teacher experiences, while more than six could have resulted in inconveniencing more participants than required as data saturation had been reached. Each participant satisfied the selection criteria outlined in 3.9.1.

3.9.1 Selection

In order to understand the experiences of recent graduates, six primary graduate DoEWA teachers were selected based upon the following criteria:

- The participants selected had graduated from WA ITE institutions after 2017, following full implementation of the AITSL, TRBWA and DoEWA reforms.
- Purposeful selection was made to ensure more than one ITE course location and length was represented in the findings.
- Only primary generalists were selected to ensure consistency
- All participants are working in a DoEWA school, as only these teachers have access to the Graduate Teacher Modules and In-Class Coaching.
- As the modules are undertaken over a two-year time period, graduate teachers who were in their second year of teaching, with prior experience with the first two Graduate Teacher Modules were selected.
- Purposeful, detached sampling of participants was conducted to ensure a breadth of the graduate teacher experience: graduate teachers who both had and had not participated in the In-Class Coaching Program, as well as graduate teachers who had completed both a four-year degree and a two-year Master of Teaching.

Some participants were recruited through word of mouth from graduate teachers who completed their final teaching practice at my school of employment. I intentionally did not choose graduate teachers working at my school, as I am in a position of unequal power for those teachers. I

sought assistance from my graduate teacher colleagues in placing me in contact with peers from their graduating classes at ECU and Notre Dame Universities, as well as through the Graduate Modules they had attended. I also employed convenience sampling, and utilised my membership of the Facebook group ‘Graduate Teachers Network (Primary)’ to seek out participants. I posted details of the study on the group forum requesting only that potential participants accurately represented the aforementioned requirements. Sampling bias was avoided by using neutral language in the initial request for participants, avoiding any indication of my own biases towards the research topic. Furthermore, all communication with participants avoided any discussion about their perspectives prior to the actual interviews.

3.9.2 Background of Participants

From the received expressions of interest, six participants were selected for interview. The following section describes each participant, who were assigned pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality and anonymity.

Alex, 27, is a Year 4 teacher in a middle to high socioeconomic suburb within the Perth metropolitan area. Alex’s school has over 500 students from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds. From 2018 NAPLAN data, 96% of students in Years Three and Five achieved above the National Minimum Standard in Reading and Numeracy, and 92% in Writing. Alex completed a two-year Masters of Teaching (Primary) at the University of Notre Dame. He completed his final teaching placement at a Catholic primary school in a low socioeconomic suburb in Perth’s inner north.

Simon, 32, is a Year 4 teacher in a school placed between a middle socioeconomic and a middle to low socioeconomic suburb in the Perth metropolitan area. The school has less than 260 students with a large EAL/D student base. From 2018 NAPLAN data, 95% of students in Years 3 and 5 achieved above the National Minimum Standard in Reading, Writing and Numeracy. Simon completed a one-year Graduate Diploma of Education at ECU. He completed his final teaching placement at his current school.

Charles, 28, is a Year 1 / 2 teacher in middle to low socioeconomic suburb in Perth’s south metropolitan area. The school has approximately 320 students. From 2018 NAPLAN data, 76% of students in Years 3 and 5 achieved above the National Minimum Standard in Reading, Writing and Numeracy. Charles completed a one-year Graduate Diploma of Education at ECU, and his first professional position was long service leave cover for three terms in a middle to high socioeconomic area in Perth’s central suburbs, a school in which he also completed a preservice practicum.

Helen, 30, is a Year 4, 5 and 6 teacher in a small town over 650 kilometres from Perth. The town population is between 600 and 700 people, with approximately 30 students attending the school. No NAPLAN data has been provided online for Helen’s school. Helen completed a Bachelor of

Education (Primary) at ECU, part time over five and a half years. Her first professional placement was in an Indigenous Community located 700km North East of Perth. After six months in this position, Helen moved to her current position.

Lana, 29, is a Year 2 teacher in a low socioeconomic area south east of the Perth metropolitan area. The school has almost 900 students, with a focus placed on behaviour management and self-regulation. From 2018 NAPLAN data, 68% of students in Years 3 and 5 were achieving above the National Minimum Standard in Reading, Writing and Numeracy. Lana completed a two year Masters of Teaching (Primary) at the University of Notre Dame. Her preservice placement schools have included middle to high socioeconomic areas in the Perth metropolitan area.

Zara, 25, is a Year 3 / 4 teacher in a middle socioeconomic suburb of the Perth metropolitan area. The school has approximately 450 students with little ethnic diversity. From 2018 NAPLAN data, 94% of students in Years 3 and 5 achieved above the National Minimum Standard in Reading, Writing and Numeracy. Zara completed a four-year Bachelor of Education (Primary) at ECU. She completed her final teaching placement at the same school in which she is currently working.

3.10 Ethics and Support

Full ethics approval was granted by ECU before the commencement of this study. Once participants had indicated interest in participating either via Facebook or through colleagues, they were sent an email that briefly summarised the research. Upon responding to the initial email, the participants were provided with letters informing them of the research (in greater depth) and consent forms. The consent forms, approved by ECU ethics, outlined the rights of the participants to withdraw at any point of the research duration without explanation. Participants were also guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality through the immediate and continued use of pseudonyms in communications with the transcription provider and subsequent data analysis. Copies of the participation invitation and consent letter are contained in Appendix B.

3.11 Procedures

Timing

As a researcher and teacher, I was aware of the potential difficulties of conducting the interviews during busy periods such as the beginning of term, especially for graduate teachers. To solicit accurate responses without any bias stress may cause, interviews were conducted at times and dates of their choosing within a two-week window. The interviews were largely conducted in the last two weeks of Term 1, 2019. This ensured the participants had been given the opportunity to settle in to the school year.

Each of the six participants were interviewed at a location of their choosing, with four nominating a café local to their current workplace. One participant, Charles, was interviewed at a mutual friend's house, with this interview lasting almost 90 minutes. Helen's interview was conducted over FaceTime from both of our homes, since she is located 700kms from Perth. Her interview was also approximately 90 minutes. For the other participants, the interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes, except Zara. Zara was a very succinct and direct interviewee, completing the interview in approximately 20 minutes.

Due to our connection through a mutual friend, Charles's responses were sometimes emotion-laden, yet he did not wish the interview be suspended. As the interviewer, I maintained a professional distance from Charles while still expressing empathy, as his experiences mirrored my own and I could understand his stress and frustration. I maintained the same empathetic but professional distance throughout all of the interviews. Each interview was professionally transcribed.

3.12 Interview Protocol

To ensure the interviews were conducted effectively and efficiently, I created and implemented an Interview Protocol Document to guide my questioning. More than just a list of the questions to be asked, an interview protocol includes the procedural elements of interviewing (Jacob & Ferguson, 2012). Furthermore, through the document I was also able to utilise a clear and reliable interview protocol to increase the quality of the data obtained from participants (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Jacob & Ferguson, 2012).

Twenty-four hours prior to the established interview time and date, participants were given a copy of the planned interview framework. This ensured they were given sufficient time to query any meanings or implications of the study and to prepare their answers, in addition to providing the opportunity for them to withdraw. Additionally, participants were informed that should they become upset during an interview, the interview would be suspended. Participants also had the opportunity to be referred to PeopleSense: a support service provided free for DoEWA teachers. Due to being provided the questions in advance, Charles's answers sometimes pre-empted the question prior to it being asked, with several questions being answered in a large monologue. As such, his responses have been organised into the relevant sections in Chapter Four.

The interview protocol used for this study (Appendix 1) included a script to begin and conclude the interview. The script was designed to prompt the critical details about the study with each participant (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Jacob & Ferguson, 2012). While each had received an information letter outlining important details of the study, the script was beneficial to ensure informed consent had been given, and serve as a reminder to ask the participant to sign a statement reflecting this (Jacob & Ferguson, 2012). Furthermore, the script provided "wording that will help [to] alleviate

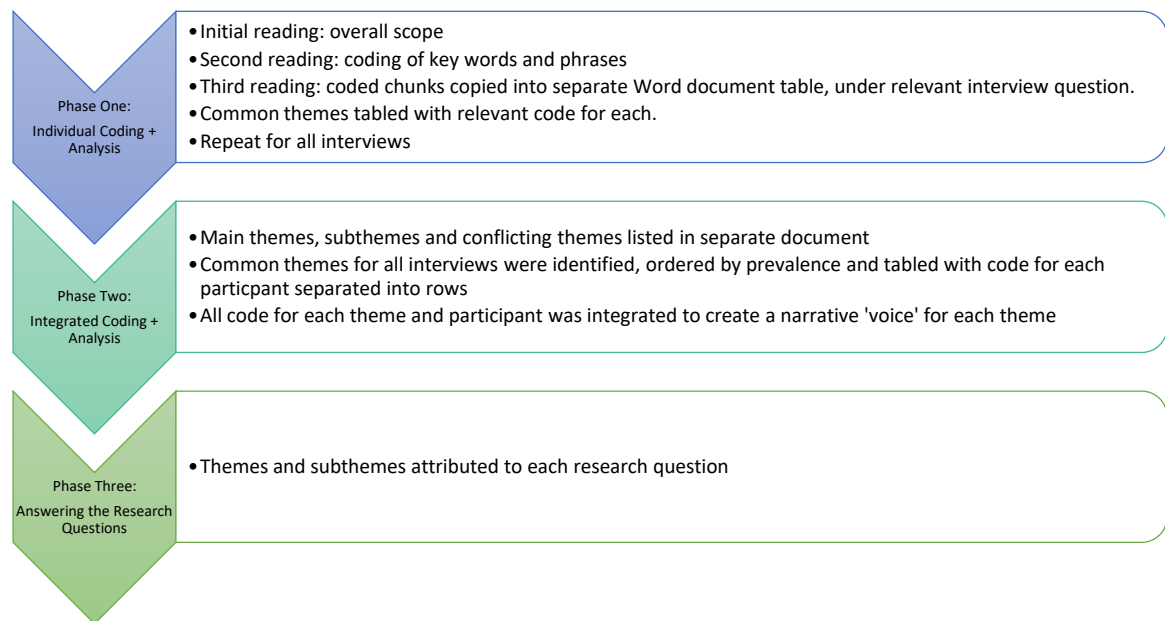
any concerns ... about confidentiality” (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012, p. 3) and finally, as a way in which I could build a rapport with the participants by telling them about myself (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012).

3.13 The Interview Process

After initial introductions and the formalities in the interview protocol addressed, the questions commenced. During the interviews with Simon and Zara, there were moments when they appeared confused by the question and as such, their answer did not accurately reflect the responses that were sought. For example, Chapter Four illustrates when Simon was asked about his experiences this year, in Question One, he started talking about his experiences in his first year. Subsequently, when asked Question Two regarding how his current teaching compares to the previous year, he described both his previous year and the current year. Similarly, Zara appeared to confuse the word ‘mentor’ in Question 10 for the In-Class Coaching Program and as such, described her decision not to have a mentor outside of school because she already had one. The analysis and coding of the data in Chapter Four reflects these anomalies.

3.14 Coding and Analysis

This study employed a phenomenology theoretical framework, and this is reflected in the coding and analytical processes. Each interview was audio recorded, with the mp3 files being sent to the Transcription Service within one day of completion. After a transcribed interview was returned, an initial reading was completed in line with a phenomenology informed qualitative research approach (Green, 2005; Mann, 2009). Each interview was thoroughly reread after establishing an initial understanding. Upon the second reading, chunks of wording and phrases that reflected perspectives, experiences or feelings were digitally highlighted throughout. This is highlighted in Phase 1 of the coding and analysis process, as illustrated in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Coding and Analysis

The left column of the Word document table contained the relevant interview question. Then, chunks of text that corresponded to each relevant question was added to the right column. The same chunk of text was used throughout the question-based analysis if it was suitable. This process formed a description for each question, written through illustrative quotes from the transcripts (Mann, 2009).

Phase Two of the coding processes began with the creation of a new Word document, replacing the interview questions with common ideas and responses that were revealed in the interview questions. After this process was completed for each interview, the coded text for each participant was integrated into the document, under the corresponding response type. Each participant's responses were still identified separately within this document. Quotes and themes that presented conflicting views among the participants were intentionally included, reflecting different facets that needed to be considered (Mann, 2009) and removing potential bias through omission.

Emergent themes at this stage of analysis became evident. Phase Three included creating a fourth word document to ascertain a list of themes. The themes were then "sorted into a hierarchy based on their ... comprehensiveness" (Mann, 2009, para. 18).

The hierarchy of themes were added to another Word document, where illustrative quotes from all participants pertaining to the theme were combined into one narrative. This helped to establish a clear graduate teacher 'voice' for each theme and subtheme.

Finally, each emergent theme and subthemes were assigned to the research questions.

3.15 Validity and Reliability

Bell (2010) stated “whatever procedure for collecting data is selected, it should always be examined critically to assess to what extent it is likely to be reliable and valid” (p. 117). In its broadest sense, validity “tells us whether an item or instrument measures or describes what it is supposed to measure or describe” (Bell, 2010, p. 117). Reliability is “the extent to which a test or procedure produces similar results under constant conditions on all occasions” (p. 117). Noble and Smith (2015) state that in qualitative research, reliability relates “to the ‘trustworthiness’ by which the methods have been undertaken and is dependent on the researcher maintaining a ‘decision-trail’; that is, the researcher’s decisions are clear and transparent” (p. 34). This ‘decision-trail’ has been clearly articulated throughout this thesis, providing reliability. Furthermore, the congruence of reliability and validity in qualitative research is described by Lincoln and Guba (1985), who state “since there can be no validity without reliability, a demonstration of the former is sufficient to establish the latter” (p. 316). As such, both validity and reliability are addressed not as separate entities in this section, but through clear articulation of validity processes.

In quantitative studies, validity or ‘credibility’ is based on the construction of an instrument used to gather data, and its precision in generating accurate findings (Golafshani, 2003; Noble & Smith, 2015). Qualitative research however, “is based on subjective, interpretive and contextual data” (Thomson, 2011, p. 78) where “the researcher is the instrument” (Patton, 2001, p. 14). Thus, “the positivist viewpoint of validity and the canons of rigor that are applied to quantitative research are not entirely applicable to qualitative research” (Thomson, 2011, p. 78).

As outlined in Part 1 of this chapter, qualitative researchers, as the instrument of analysis, must develop valid “interpretations of peoples’ experiences and actions as described in the interviews” (Brinkman, 2013, p. 23). To ensure validity, five categories of judgement were developed by Maxwell in 1992 as a point of measurement (Thomson, 2011). Each of the five categories of qualitative validity for this research will now be addressed.

Descriptive validity

Descriptive validity is the factual accuracy of what a participant has said, and refers to the precision of both the data and the reporting of the data in a study (Maxwell, 1992; Thomson, 2011). Descriptive validity “forms the base on which all the other forms of validity are built upon” (Thomson, 2011, p. 78). To achieve descriptive validity, the data “must accurately reflect what the participant has said or done” (Thomson, 2011, p. 78). Through voice recording and verbatim transcription of the interviews, I have ensured the data is presented accurately and as such, is credible. Additionally, to ensure descriptive validity, the tone or meaning of what was said by each participant has been included. Features of speech such as stress, intonation or pitch “are essential to the understanding of the interview” (Maxwell, 1992, p. 289).

Interpretive validity

Interpretive validity refers to the ability of a researcher to report a participant's meaning of events, objects and behaviours (Maxwell, 1992). Thomson (2011) explained that the key for interpretive validity is that "the interpretations are not based on the researcher's perspective but that of the participant" (p. 79). Interpretive validity is "inherently a matter of inference from the words and actions of participants in the situations studied" (Maxwell, 1992, p. 49). As such, the meaning drawn from the data is based on direct quotes from the participants. Throughout the interviews, clarifications are made with the participants or, upon analysis, I identify or explain clarifications.

Theoretical validity

Theoretical validity "goes beyond concrete description and interpretation and explicitly addresses the theoretical constructions that the researcher brings to, or develops during, the study" (Maxwell, 1992, p. 50). This validity is based on whether the theories and concepts described by the researcher are contextually accurate to what is in the data. As Thomson (2011) explained, if a theory is suggested by a researcher, they should "be able to produce data that supports his/her theory, if not then they have failed to 'fit' the theory to the existing data" (p. 49). This study rests theoretically on emergent themes and subthemes within a phenomenon. As such, the inferences and interpretations made from the data closely link back to the literature review. Furthermore, I was aware of my own personal views and potential biases relating to the support provided to graduate teachers. The study was undertaken because of my negative experiences in my first year of teaching, and I therefore wished to investigate the impact of the reported reforms. Because of this, I had to be acutely aware of allowing for positive experiences of graduate teachers as well as the negative or indifferent, to ensure my own unintentional biases could be quelled during analysis. In addition, I held a previous assumption from colleagues' experiences of the Graduate Teacher Modules. In order to combat this, I placed Question 9 in the Interview Protocol Document to ensure any bias I held regarding the Graduate Teacher Modules could be challenged upon analysis.

Generalisability

Generalisability was described in Part 1 of this chapter as being possible when "one thinks of what can be learned from an in-depth analysis of a particular situation or incident and how that knowledge can be transferred" (Merriam & Grenier, 2019, p. 29). Thomson (2011) stated "qualitative research generalizability is problematic" (p. 79) due to the experiences of participants relating uniquely to their own contexts and perspectives. However, Maxwell (1992) explains qualitative studies are usually not designed to allow systematic generalizations to some wider populations" (p. 293). Similarly, the results of a phenomenological study can be generalised to a group with similar characteristics and experiences to the sample group (Mann, 2009). This study has outlined the ITE

and professional contexts of the participants, allowing for a degree generalisability with other graduate primary teachers in DoEWA schools within their first year of teaching.

Evaluative validity

Evaluative validity refers not to the data but instead assesses the evaluations drawn by the researcher (Thomson, 2011). As described in Part 1, Auerbach and Silverstein's (2003) explanation of 'transparency' measures how well the researcher informs the reader as to how they arrived at their interpretation. To do this, the researcher must provide complete transparency of the analytical procedures undertaken when presenting a study. Thomson (2011) explained that this should include; "the method of sample selection, the research design, the interview protocol; the coding procedures and the researchers own epistemological viewpoints" (p. 80). Thus, it is also necessary for the researcher to outline their personal experiences and viewpoints that may have resulted in methodological bias, as well as clearly and accurately present the participants' perspectives (Noble & Smith, 2015). In Chapter Six, I acknowledge that this thesis represents only one account for the outcome of the research.

3.16 Summary of the Chapter

Part 2 of this chapter has outlined the actual research undertaken in this study. It has provided an explanation into participant selection, methods to assure confidentiality and anonymity as well as other ethical requirements. Part 2 has also justified the creation and details of the interview protocol document before a description of the coding and analysis processes. Finally, validity and reliability have been addressed.

The key points contained in both parts to this chapter included:

- A broad summary of research ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies as a means to justify the research paradigm of this study
- The validation of a qualitative interview research approach
- Details regarding the research design and protocols
- Information on the participants
- A description of data analysis procedures
- An outline reflecting the validity and reliability of the research

Chapter Four now presents the interview findings, with participant responses organised separately and in chronological order. To conclude, Chapter Four will outline the findings and emergent themes which will be discussed in detail in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 Introduction

Chapter Three provided an overview of common research paradigms, and justified the research approach employed in this study. The chapter argued for a phenomenology-informed qualitative method through qualitative interviewing, and provided a description of the research design and protocols. Information was provided on the study participants, followed by an outline of the data analysis and coding procedures, based upon a phenomenology research approach. Chapter Three concluded with a brief summary of how validity and reliability were established.

Chapter Four now presents the findings from the six individual interviews. The participant responses to each question contained in the Interview Protocol Document are presented separately and in chronological order. A brief outline of the main themes of Chapter Four follows, as a prelude to being fully discussed in Chapter Five. Finally, Chapter Four concludes with an overall summary.

4.1 Background

Each individual interview was conducted during the final two weeks of Term 1 of 2019. Upon the conclusion of the interviews, the audio files were professionally transcribed.

4.2 Question One: Tell me about your teaching experiences this year?

Question One was an icebreaker question, the purpose of which was to allow the participants to 'settle in' to the interview. For five of the six participants, their experiences teaching in their second year were positive. Alex stated:

It's been good, it's been challenging. I've gone from 26 students to 31, so that extra couple of students has made a lot of difference. But I've enjoyed it, the school's still good and everything else, it's just dealing with personalities in the classroom and trying to work out how they mould together or not and stick them in certain corners of the classroom, which I may have run out of corners.

Simon described his second year of teaching as:

This year I feel a lot more confident and comfortable ... Taking the experiences of last year with that class, figuring out what worked and what didn't work and then being able to amend that for a new class was really important ... I was lucky enough to be teaching the same year group for the second year in a row, which I think is also quite helpful for a graduate ... having that second year in the same year group has been quite beneficial ... I feel a lot more confident, a lot more able. There's nothing that I really didn't discover last year that I'm now discovering this year if that makes sense.

Similarly, Lana stated:

It's actually been good, really good, compared to last year ... so far this year's been good.

Helen reflected that this year is:

An improvement on last year. Teaching practices, I'm teaching the same year level, so...I have an idea of what I need to - I know the content a lot better now, so that's definitely helped.

By contrast, for Charles, who had started a new school at the beginning of his second year:

I feel like I'm still a first year ... This year has been just a whole new level of stressful and hectic. Going into a brand-new school that I have never taught in before, in a year group I have very, very limited experience in - so I've gone from prac, to teaching in Upper - Years 4, 5 and 6 - to having a split 1/2 class of 22 kids. There's just been a lot of new thrown at me and I don't really deal with the new at the best of times but it's just been a lot of new kind of rolled into of one ... I feel like I should be early childhood trained but I don't know whether that is the influence of my school last year ... I genuinely feel like sometimes I just don't know how to teach these kids.

4.3 Question Two: How does your teaching this year compare to last year?

Question Two was a transition question. The purpose of transition questions is to maintain a conversational tone while directing the interview towards the key questions of the session. Five of the six participants described their teaching as more effective this year compared to last year. Alex reflected:

I think I feel more confident in what I'm doing this year, style wise and everything else ... I feel in terms of lesson plans and introduction and conclusion and all that kind of stuff, I'm better at than I was last year. So, having that extra experience has helped. Just trialling things, seeing what works, what don't, speaking to other teachers, just another year of experience, I guess. So just that experience that comes with it.

Simon explained:

In terms of how I went with the year, I would say, like many, feeling thrown in the deep end a little bit. But starting off, day one, Term 1 first year of teaching it is a very, very steep learning curve. You don't know the school. You know a fair bit about teaching and learning, but obviously every school context is a little different. Not only are you getting used to a new job you're also getting used to a new way of doing things in a new business, so that can be quite confronting. Obviously everyone else knows what they're doing, it's IEP [Individual Education Plan] week, so everyone knows its IEP week whereas as a grad you're like what's IEP week? The first term was a steep learning curve, and then Term 2, Term 3, Term 4 I felt getting into a bit of a groove, and certainly now I feel a lot more confident and a lot more comfortable.

Lana reflected:

[My mentor told me last year to] write down anything that you were like, that was a disaster, that just didn't work, or things that did. So, I kept a journal last year of things, especially in Term 1, all the routine stuff, which like - you know, everyone's like, routines, routines. I was like, I don't understand what that means, so I wrote down everything. At the time it was a bit annoying, but I guess I also learned throughout the year. But then looking back at that at the beginning of this year, I was just like, woah, like, how much I had learned last year to this year, to just how much smoother the term has gone ... Like, last year, I reckon Term 3 was when I was like, alright, things are okay, whereas this term I feel by, like, Week 6, it was like, yeah, they've got it now. So, huge difference.

For Zara:

Last year I felt it was very hit the ground running. You're kind of testing the waters a little bit. You didn't really know if what you were doing was working. What I did find at the end of the year, I got to reflect a little bit more and go okay, that didn't work last year and I spent the six weeks just going this might work. So, I do feel that last year it was very much "I've no idea what I'm doing" and this year I have a little bit more of an understanding of what I'm doing ... As much as I planned and organised and got everything ready over the holidays, the first week it was like, this isn't working for this kid and I forgot I had to do IEP straightaway and all sorts of assessments that you have to do ... So, I felt because we were stressed out at the start of the year last year, it was a lot harder, and this year has been a lot easier.

Helen explained:

I feel that this year, being a second-year grad, I have a better understanding of behaviour management techniques ... My planning, I feel that it has improved since the beginning of last year. I have struggled with doing term plans. I plan that far in advance, because things happen and kids don't - I'm not up to that stage yet where there would be those issues. I think I was trying to plan where the uni wanted me to plan, for pracs. You don't have time to do that amount of detail, and it's very unrealistic. So I think with what I've started to do more so this year and to the latter part of last year has been a lot - I've been able to get a work plan done because I'm not including the amount of detail that I thought I would have to include.

Unlike the previous five participants, Charles began his second year of teaching in a new school and a new year level. He described the experience as:

Having going from Year 5s for the majority of the year down to this level, I was shocked. I was really shocked and so I think the school has something to do with that because obviously for that many of the kids to come through and be at that level there's something missing there, there has to be ... I've been grateful in that the support of the staff at the school has been really lovely. I have been able to talk to - there's another new teacher there who's a third-year graduate. She's been really lovely in sharing her experiences as a Year 1 teacher with me but I think being my first Term 1 as well - I didn't teach Term 1 last year because I started in early Term 2. Going through what Term 1 is like as a teacher is in itself just mayhem and then having to deal with - just I think the little things kind of building up on top of each other was quite hard ... and that first day with the kids seeing how low their literacy and numeracy levels were, I was just shocked.

Despite this, he described feeling more confident in elements of his teaching:

I feel like my behaviour management and my trust in myself is a lot better this year. Last year my cohort - there was only very small instances where I had children with behaviour issues. I do feel like the whole school behaviour approach which we had, I rarely had to use because of the fact that the behaviour was predominantly positive in the classroom. This year it's quite the opposite ... there is a lot more bad behaviour as opposed to positive behaviour. Last year I think I was able to build on being able to have the confidence and making decisions about behaviour and making my decisions about teaching and classroom expectations that I went in this year with the confidence to be able to set that up. I do feel like my behaviour management is one of my best qualities. I do feel like the way I run my classroom, the way I transition between lessons, all of that I feel like I really developed last year and that I am really happy with. I feel like I've run with that really well this year.

4.4 Question Three: Tell me about that first year of teaching – what did you cope with and what did you find challenging?

Question Three was also a transition question. As it contained two parts, the responses to each have been separated below.

4.4.1 What did you cope with?

Four participants identified their organisational skills as helping them cope with their first year of teaching. Zara responded:

I think maybe just I'm a very organised person, so when things got thrown at me, I was like okay, I can just get on with it. I knew how to adapt to a situation, I knew how to go okay, well this isn't the way forward, I need to get this done, I've got to prioritise that. So, I felt like I was really good at that.

Simon explained:

I'm a fairly well organised person to begin with. Once I got my head around the term calendars and the way we do things I was never behind in assessment tracking, in reporting, in absences, those things came quite naturally to me ... I wasn't new to employment and I wasn't new to roles and responsibilities. I think for me the business side of teaching, the admin side of the business of teaching I think came quite naturally to me ... I'm quite good at finding information myself. Once uni had prepped you with all of the tools of finding what to teach and how to teach, well not so much how but what to teach, I feel that I kept on top of that quite well as well.

Helen also referred to previous employment when describing how she coped. Along with “building positive relationships with the students”, she explained:

Being professional, because before I went to uni, I worked full time in a professional job for three and a half years, so that definitely assisted me ... Yeah, and as silly as it may sound, but how do you use a photocopier machine and how to talk on the phone and how to dress professionally, as well.

Lana mirrored Zara and Simon's responses:

Yeah, admin, fine. I guess we don't get taught any of that. You just pick it up as you go. But that's not too tough. That was okay... so I think all that side to it, I was like, yeah, you've just got to get it done, you know? Yeah. Yeah. So, it was okay.

Three participants attributed their ability to cope with elements of their first year to the support provided to them in the school. Alex explained:

I think the classroom management was pretty good ... Yeah, I felt really included and that, so I felt really supported, any teacher I spoke to they helped me out. So that bit made me feel a lot better coping wise, than just being landed in the deep end and do it yourself ... I was really supported with the other teachers around. We collaboratively planned most things, but the other Year 4 teacher, see there was three of us last year and only two this year. She's done Year 4 for a long time, so it was basically just going what she'd done and just tweaking things. Whilst it was collaboratively, it was based on what she'd done previously.

Simon shared this experience, stating:

I definitely did cope well with things. I felt that I coped well with the first year. My partner's also a teacher, so he teaches secondary up at [another school] ... He's in his sixth year of teaching now. I watched him go through his first year of teaching. I've got lots of other teacher friends as well, so I knew that it was going to be quite a year. But I feel like I came out the other end of it relatively unscathed. There was no real moment of I can't do this I want to chuck it in. I felt that I coped quite well with the year.

Similarly, Charles explained:

Last year the position I was offered was at a prac school that I had worked at. I was familiar with the staff, I was familiar with some of the kids and the school grounds and the processes of that school. That takes the edge off having to learn I think a lot of the new things and I feel like I did step in - again starting in Term 2 - I stepped in and picked up a lot of the programs that were already in place by the teacher who went on long service leave.

4.4.2 What did you find challenging?

Lana's first placement in her teaching career was at a very low socioeconomic school. The students presented regularly with difficult behaviours, which she described as challenging. She reflected:

They're a really tough year group. So, the whole Year 2 cohort last year were really low... My class at the time, I was like, I've got about six that can't read. I had so many behaviours. I was kind of like, I'm up for anything to make this easier. So, we ended up streaming ... So, I got that middle-high group, but we still all got about three tier three behaviours in our classes. So, it was still tough, but I think - if we hadn't had done that, I don't know if I would have coped ... But then what we did create was, kind of like, my class became a bit of like - they had no one higher than them to look up to, and they had no one lower than them to look down to or help ... So, I don't think I - yeah, that, I wasn't really prepared for. So, maybe, yeah, that was just tough. Every day was tough ... Well, not didn't cope. Coped with it. I actually learned a lot. I feel like I didn't even teach anything, because all it was, was so much behaviour control and crowd control, and strategies, and - so, that was probably the main thing the focus was on, yeah. I definitely coped. Made it.

Unlike Lana, Simon identified the most challenging aspect was the amount of detail to which he initially planned his lessons. He first reflected:

I tend to be a bit of a perfectionist, so - well I coped well with not everything being perfect. But, I was surprised that not everything was perfect if that makes sense.

When asked to explain this 'perfectionism' in more detail, Simon explained:

I think when you're at uni and you have to write these massive lesson experience plans, and then daily work plans to the nth degree, it sets unrealistic expectations of what you can actually achieve when you're out in the real world ... Initially, when you're doing lesson experience plans they're three pages long, they're just unrealistic ... For one lesson in one day, it takes longer to write the plan than it does to deliver the lesson. I think that sets you up to have this thing in your mind that when you go out into the real world that, if you didn't know better that, that's what you had to do ... That's where I think teachers get burned up, because they don't have the knowledge of real world practices. Because you are in some sense a little bit on your own when you get into a school ... I think it's important for universities to start teaching students that this isn't how it's going to be in the real world, so let's do this but then let's move into the real world a little bit sooner in that sense.

Helen, like Simon, also described the challenging workload associated with planning and assessing. For Helen, planning for a MAG [multi-age group] class presented the greatest difficulty:

I found the workload challenging, because I didn't have the direction that I wanted from the principal, as in what to - what I needed to teach in what semester and what they were assessing. So I found that challenging, as well as assessment, too, because there are certain assessments that I believe that are important to do on your own children ... But the principal we had last year argued that they weren't important and that we didn't need to do them ... So we - that was challenging because I felt like, well, I've learnt all this stuff at uni and you're telling me completely a different story ... So ... I felt torn, like what is truth? What's not? What do you want me to do? What do I not need to do sort of thing ... going into my first teaching job and because I graduated mid-2017, so the four months in the latter part of 2017, I taught Kindy to Year 3. So that's five year levels, and having to grab all those content descriptors and ensure that I ticked all the boxes was actually really difficult. I think that contributed a lot to the workload, not knowing how to tick all those boxes, how to teach all those content descriptors, how to assess the kids on what needed to be done ... Getting the content descriptor and being like, okay, I've got to teach that. How do you want me to teach that?... I didn't know - did not know what to do. It was very overwhelming.

Similarly, Charles found it challenging to be in a new environment. He described his second year of teaching as feeling “like my first year all over again”, and attributed this to starting at a new school and in a new year level. As such, it is worth including what he described as challenging this year, despite being his second year. He reflected:

The little things kind of building up on top of each other was quite hard ... that first day with the kids seeing how low their literacy and numeracy levels were, I was just shocked. I went into a bit of a tailspin, like I don't know how to teach these kids. I really felt like I was not going to be able to benefit them or let them grow this year so it has taken me a while to actually find my feet I think. I'm finally - I feel like I'm getting there but it has taken a lot of extra work for me to be able to feel like I can do this job this year ... I've got Year 2s who aren't meeting that Pre-Primary requirement. From what I have spoken to the Pre-Primary teachers and the deputy of the school these kids aren't identified as being an educational risk. So I'm still trying to get my head around whether that's just normal or whether I have a higher standard of what they should be when they come into Year 1 and Year 2, but that in itself was a shock.

Zara stated the most challenging thing for her was:

Again, the teaching part. Just been able to get to the content ... Just being able to really make sure I can get to those students who needed it. I found the parents to be quite difficult as well. That was - the school and everything was really supportive. I just found those things really hard.

The biggest challenge described by Alex was the administrative tasks that come with teaching, including IEPs, reporting and attending meetings. He explained:

I guess IEPs and I knew we'd have meetings, I didn't really think about not how many, but just all the different meetings and PLCs and whole school and that kind of thing. But certainly, IEPs wasn't something that I knew about, it wasn't something I really learnt a huge amount about, or got my head around. Then reports as well, that was quite difficult ... Yeah more the admin side of things more than anything else, was challenging. I knew it was going to be part of it, but I just didn't really think about how challenging it could be.

Overall, with regards to the most challenging aspects of the first year of teaching, Simon generalised:

My personal opinion is that no teacher's ready after any duration of initial teacher training ... I think if you take what you can from the situation, and so if you put in all you've got then you'll get the most amount back ... That's my personal opinion. Whether I did four years or two years or one year, I think that first year was always going to be a steep learning curve.

4.5 Question Four: Was your first year easier or harder than you had anticipated when you were at university?

Question Four was designed to steer the participants towards reflecting on their ITE courses. All described their first year of teaching as difficult. However, some of the participants knew it was going to be difficult. Simon and Alex actually considered it better than they anticipated. Alex explained:

I thought the admin things were probably harder than I thought, so like the reporting and IEPs. But the actual curriculum and teaching, I thought it was probably a little bit easier. There wasn't a day I regretted going in to teaching, there was hard days but not a single point that I thought, oh maybe I made the wrong choice. I loved, I got home and even if it was a tough day, I still loved my job and quite glad that I picked it.

When asked to clarify whether it was easier than he had anticipated, Alex added:

I think a little bit, but I think as well that the fact that I've got a school that I feel really supported at, I can ask anyone questions and they'll help me out. I know that there's other graduates out there that don't necessarily have that, from talking to friends. So I feel quite lucky and I think if I'd landed at a different school, that might not have been the case. But just how supported I've been at [my current school] has made a big difference as to how easy I felt it to be, or easier, not easy, but easier ... First year out doing your own thing, I just thought it was going to be difficult, and learning on the run, which we're still doing anyway. But a bit more, so I think because I was so supported, that made a huge amount of difference, if I wasn't so supported, then I think I would have felt it was harder than what I thought.

Simon mirrored the view that his first year was easier, stating:

I think it was easier ... Yeah, I think so. Only because I knew what real world planning was going to look like because of my partner ... I think I was lucky that I knew what it was going to probably look like ... I think the sooner you get in and the sooner that you realise that there are things that are important and that you can influence, and there are things that aren't so important and you have no control over. You have to let those things fall away. If you don't that's where you risk becoming overworked and burnt out. I think when I realised that, well, the way that I was going to be writing lesson plans or the way that I was going to be tracking assessments, once I realised it was for my eyes only that's where it probably became easier.

While Helen's first year was sometimes easier than she anticipated, she described her expectations of it as:

It went through waves. Some days were harder than I thought and some days I really thought oh my goodness, what have I got myself into? But that didn't happen as often as the really good days, like I would have days that I would come home and say, yeah. I've chosen the correct career, profession, and I'm happy with what's happening, and yeah, so that - positive days happened more ... I knew - look, I was prepared that it would happen wherever ... You

have your good days, you have your bad days. It's human nature for you to have moods. You're working with children. You're working in a female-dominant workplace as well, and you've got that influencing it as well, so I think I was quite realistic. Because I've worked in a professional environment before, I think that also helped me understand what could be expected.

Similarly, Lana explained:

I don't think anything could have prepared me. I don't think anything could have prepared me. I think if I hadn't have done a degree before this, and worked in a job before any of this, I wouldn't have - yeah, wouldn't have been able to do it, I don't reckon. But just being a mature student made a big difference ... I knew it was going to be tough, because it was the cohort, and the school, and being in [low socioeconomic area]. I was like, it's going to be hard work. But, yeah... I knew it was going to be hard. I think I went in being like, I'm ready. I was just like, bring it on, sort of thing, and it was. It was tough, but - yeah, probably not as hard as I thought, because I did my prac, one of the pracs, at [middle socioeconomic area], [high socioeconomic area], and one in [high socioeconomic area]. So, just different level of students. Like, what we did there was just so different to what we did at [current school] ... and the parents and everything, yeah. So, definitely harder than I thought, but I, deep down, was like, I'm ready for it ... I was like, bring it on. It's going to be awful.

For Zara and Charles however, their first years were more difficult than expected. Zara described her first year as:

So much harder. It was just hard. You don't go into it thinking this is your whole life for the whole year. I understand you always have that balance, but for the first year it was like my job was my whole life and every waking moment I just thought about my job. That's what I found really hard ... Honestly, when I went and learned everything, I was like wow I can use that in my classroom, and then I went into my first year and I was like I can't use this, I've no time to use it ... I think [university] might just need to be a little bit harder than what it actually is, because you kind of go into your third year and you suddenly get all this - you have to start forward planning and assessing. But I feel like the first and second year it's just getting that experience and I do think it needs to be a little bit harder than what it is.

Charles also described his first year as being harder than he had anticipated:

I knew it was going to be harder, I did know that but I just don't think I anticipated just how hard. I think it's because the training wheels are really just completely taken off. You have so much independence that at the start you are kind of like this is incredible, I can make all these decisions without having to run it past someone but then that quickly wears off and it's am I doing this correctly? Have I done enough, are these kids learning - I think that was the biggest thing I was so concerned with last year. At the end of the year I looked back and I was like did I actually have a difference on their education and it was a really scary thought for me to have ... I honestly don't think I did last year. I really don't.

4.6 Question Five: How well do you feel your university course prepared you for that first year of teaching?

Question Five was the first of the Key Questions to directly address the research questions. Participants' responses varied from feeling completely unprepared to feeling as prepared as they believed possible. For Alex:

I think behaviour management, lesson planning or planning in general and curriculum it did [prepare me]. It's the admin side of things that I don't think it – like we touched on reports

but there wasn't a huge amount, or certainly didn't feel, having gone through now a year of doing reports, didn't feel like as big a focus uni wise. Doing, I guess, that might have made a difference, because I did a two-year postgrad, so trying to cram it all in, that might have been different if I'd have done undergrad ... But certainly, doing that way, it felt like we just glossed over a little bit and didn't do a huge amount, certainly didn't look at IEPs or how to write IEPs or anything like that. It was more the admin side of things I think I struggle with, because I didn't feel like that was something we did at uni. But the planning, the behaviour management and the planning and everything else, I think was good.

Zara's perception closely mirrored Alex. She reflected she was generally pleased with the curriculum content of her ITE, but disappointed in its lack of administrative practice required for the role. She stated:

It's hard to explain. I think they did the best they could with what they had. I don't think - I think they did prepare me quite well. It was just some things I wish that they could improve on, like, for example, the literacy programs, all the literacy programs. I felt it was applied to one specific area of literacy, where I wish we could have learned about the different resources we had for spelling and reading and how to apply them in different learning areas, not necessarily just doing a forward-planning document for one thing. So, I do wish they'd supported me there. I also wish that they'd prepared me more on parent communication, IEPs and all those admin kind of documents. Because when I walked in, it was like whoa, we have to do all this as well as teach my class ... So, I feel like they've got the teaching side really well. It's just more of the admin side.

Helen also described positives and negatives from her course. She stated that her university prepared her:

Pretty well. The good thing about going to ECU and doing Bachelor of Education there was they had more prac than, say, Murdoch and Curtin. We were in the classroom I think it was like the fifth week into the first semester, one day a week. So it was pretty early on within your starting your degree that if you knew that if you wanted to do - if you wanted to be a teacher.

Yet, while Helen stated she was pleased with the amount of professional practice provided in her ITE, she reflected:

I think that the units heavily rely on people to be a certain type of learner. I'm quite a kinaesthetic learner, where I need to be able to learn about something and then go implement it, so learn by doing. So I - because my ... second, third and fourth-year pracs were all lower primary, I really only got the chance to have a go at implementing things that you would use in a Year 1, 2, 3 class. So welcome to the start of the 2018 year, and all of a sudden, I'm teaching Year 4, 5, 6 and I was finding that I had to go back through my uni textbooks, which I have kept and I still have, to refer to how do you want me to teach this? Is it the same in upper primary as you would in junior primary? ... Also, because a uni semester is only 10 weeks long, I felt that they jammed way too much content into the one semester and to keep up with all that information just coming at you, it was just - yeah. Sometimes, it would be really full on, and to be honest, I'm very surprised that I've actually remembered a few things from uni.

Lana also described her course positively, but she had not anticipated working in her current school context. As such, she reflected that her ITE:

Was awesome. Like, I did love it. I think, because when I was at uni, I probably didn't see myself working, maybe, in [low socioeconomic area]. Like, I kind of didn't really - didn't

know where I'd be. So, I don't know if I'd be like, oh, I wasn't prepared enough from uni. I think at uni, I learned a lot, and I remember we delved into a bit of behaviour management and those little things, but we never did any learning on trauma, or the extra things that come along with being in a school in [low socioeconomic suburb], you know, low socioeconomic areas, and even that, at uni, you didn't really learn. It was very, I guess, tunnel, shallow ... just like, just your everyday classroom, all the work needs to get done, but it wasn't about, like, what about the behaviours? We learned about, make sure you build relationships with the children, how important that is and all that, but I don't - it wasn't - I guess I just didn't link it to a school in [low socioeconomic area], really.

Like the others, Simon described having mixed feelings about his ITE preparation. He explained:

On paper, I think it prepared me in every way that it could ... Obviously with any course or any university course there are going to be good moments and not so good moments, and it could - that comes down to people. There are a few lecturers and tutors that probably weren't as beneficial as others ... I think there was elements where it could have been more useful.

When asked to provide an example of a useful unit from his ITE, Simon continued:

It was a pedagogy type where we had to write down our philosophy of teaching and do a few other activities, and then make a brochure using our information that parents could then read. These were real world things that were making us think about what kind of teacher we're going to be like, and what our communication with parents was going to be like ... I think it certainly helped. Both the lecturer and tutor were fantastic in that course, they had real world knowledge and real world experience. The tutor, I think her name was [de-identified] she came from a background where she had worked with really troubled boys. Her experiences were fantastic to hear about.

Overall, Simon summarised he was adequately prepared for teaching because of the effort he put into his studies. He reflected that if he had to rate his university course on a scale from one to ten:

I think I would probably lean towards sevens and eights ... Only because I put into it what I wanted to get out of it. There are plenty of students that don't attack their studies in that way, and wonder why they're not prepared ... I think the university can only do so much. Same as our students in our classes, you give them all the tools it's up to them to use them ... I think it could have easily not prepared me, but I didn't let that happen and I think that that's the difference. Some people allow it to happen.

Charles stated his ITE had some good elements:

I do feel like the supervisors I had on my prac were fantastic. They provided a lot of feedback on my planning and my assessing and watching me in class and I found that really beneficial. I do appreciate that I was sent to a low socioeconomic area for my second prac because that is quite similar to what I'm dealing with now so I can draw some similarities between those two experiences.

However, he also identified gaps in his preparation and described being unprepared for the realities of the classroom. He explained:

I feel like it gave me some good based theory, the theory of planning and assessing and it being this beautiful cycle [sarcasm]. I feel like it did not prepare me enough for the classroom at all ... my two pracs were both middle upper [primary]. I had a Year 5/6 class and a Year 4 class. I had no experience, no guidance with any year groups below Year 4 and I feel like that was a big gap in my education at university. I also feel like they didn't really go into different ways to plan for the wide variety of kids that we get now. They hammer into you differentiation and no student learns the same but they didn't really delve into how to cope

with that ... Last year I know I struggled with it and I didn't do it very well ... The theory of it is there, I know I need to do it, but I just don't feel like I was ever really taught well enough how to do it ... It felt like it was really surface level.

Like Simon, Charles described:

At the end of the day, I know I've spoken to teachers at my current school who have been teaching for 10, 15 years and they say there is no amount of experience you can have before you teach that's going to prepare you and I think that's the truth.

4.7 Question Six: How has the on-the-job learning been compared with your university preparation?

Charles was the only graduate not to be asked this Key Question explicitly due to his long and descriptive previous answers providing, in the interviewer's opinion at the time, sufficient detail.

Charles's perspectives of his on-the-job training versus his ITE preparation is presented under Question Eight. For the rest of the participants, all described their on-the-job learning as being more intense than their ITE preparation. Simon explained:

It's a very, very steep learning curve. Every day is different. I think - I'm in a small school, so there are plenty of opportunities to do things outside the classroom that if you were in a bigger school you might not get those opportunities in your first year. I think that added to the learning curve a little bit, because there was that expectation that you could participate in learning area leaders, leader roles and that kind of thing. Given my background it was obvious that I would be involved in that, because I was a website also a software engineer, so the dual technologies they go hand-in-hand ... I think that added to the learning curve.

In Lana's instance, the school's behaviour management policy and the corresponding teaching strategies were explicitly explained to her, due to the demands of the students at her school:

On the job, I learned so much. Being a huge school, we have - each team has a team leader. Each team also has - this year, anyway, we've got an academic coach as well. So, they kind of float. They do - I think they've got three year levels each. They float around. They're the ones that come and observe you and things like that, give you feedback.

In addition, Simon described the administrative tasks required for his role as classroom teacher, but not learned in his ITE. He reflected:

You don't really get - you know what an IEP is from uni, but you don't really have to write one, and every school does them differently so it's hard to really prepare a student or a teacher for writing IEPs. But, yeah, certainly that was one thing that I wasn't really sure how to approach. I didn't know whether I had to use a word document or where to find them, so I certainly had to branch out and find people that I could approach.

He concluded that the learning curve in his first year compared to his ITE was:

Very steep but very beneficial ... Yeah, definitely. There's nothing that I really didn't discover last year that I'm now discovering this year.

Zara also described her on-the-job learning was where she learned many of the skills she needed for the classroom. Zara described:

I do find that I have learned a lot more these past two years than I had in my fourth year and my third year. I guess because it's a practice, you keep learning as you go. So, I don't know,

I'm learning more but you couldn't possibly have learned that at university ... You can only be taught so much and also in a short amount of time we are at uni, but then you get into the reality of a full-time job, I think you will pick up a lot more than you do at uni. That's nothing against it, it's just what it is.

Similarly, Alex stated the on-the-job learning was more intense, but that he expected it. He explained:

I feel it's been more beneficial on the job learning than obviously uni. Because ... until you get out in to the real world as such, it doesn't mean anything ... Some theories might work for certain kids or certain classrooms, but until you actually get out there and put them in to place or try them, you don't know. I think that on the job makes a big difference. You put the theories in to place and try things, but actually realising what works and what doesn't, I think is probably more beneficial over the long term.

Helen described the learning curve as being the greatest in relation to specific DoEWA policies and procedures. She explained:

Learning about the department portal, learning about all these blinkin' policies. Oh my gosh, there are so many policies. It's ridiculous, and you want me to know this all by heart? Expectations - massive expectations. It's just ridiculous ... Because obviously as a teacher, our workload is quite intense at times. It can be a bit of a mental overload, having to learn all these things within your first week, or you have come across a principal that expects you to know all that stuff already. So yeah, do you know - I think to learn that type of crap during uni would be beneficial, and I think also more on assessment, too. I really - yeah. That's a scary thing, assessment. What do I need to keep? What do I not need to keep? What do I legally need to keep as well, and how long for? Because some people - our principal last year said, no, you can just get rid of all the math tests and it's fine. We don't need to keep those, but then we've been told that, yeah, we do need to keep them. Well, do we or don't we?

4.8 Question Seven: Tell me about how you've been supported in your role as a graduate teacher within the school. What sort of support were you given?

This question generated a wide range of responses from the participants. All referred to the provision of time to complete the Graduate Teacher Modules first. Charles stated:

There was the Department of Education graduate support so I got my Graduate Modules - I was able to attend both of those which was fantastic ... I was essentially given what the Department of Education says you have to get.

Simon had a similar experience of support in his school, explaining that his principal:

Made sure that I got all of my entitlements, so grad allowance, extra allocation, time to go off to PL [Professional Learning], forwarding me PLs that might be of interest to me.

However, Simon also described additional support provided by his school. He stated:

Basically, I could walk into [my principal's] office any time I like and have a chat to her, and she's always got the chair ready for you to sit in ... I think she's been willing to help that learning. She's been willing to provide extra resources, and she's also been willing to listen and provide advice and so on.

Alex mirrored this, explaining:

I can take [the graduate entitlement days] whenever I want to and so I feel supported there ... I used them last year for reporting, assessments ... Just things like that, if I feel I'm overwhelmed with needing to plan things, or needing to mark things, then I'll just take a day just to focus on that, just to get ahead of the game. But mainly around report time for me anyway.

Alex, like Simon, described added support provided by his principal, reflecting:

The principal keeps on checking in on my every now and then, just to make sure I'm going alright, don't have any issues and that kind of thing ... just asking how I'm going, which sometimes is necessary I think, the teaching side of things, just in general coping with bits and pieces that come with teaching ... I know that if I wanted her to see more, then I could try, ask her to come in and view a lesson and give me feedback and she would.

Lana also described the support provided by the school administration team, including a formal induction. She reflected on this, stating:

I think I came in - it would have been the end of the year before. All the new staff, which was about four of us. Yeah, we had an induction morning. It was quite good, yeah. Got to go through all the basics. I actually went in and observed, maybe like three or four times, in Term 4 of the year before as well, once I knew I had the job, and I was like, am I able to come in and observe? Because they kept saying, we run all these programs, we do things so differently, and it was - kept saying all this, and I was like, what do you mean? Like, am I an idiot for doing this when I don't know what I'm in for? So, I watched a few lessons, and I remember being like, wow, this is epic.

Then, upon entering her first year of teaching at the school, Lana was provided extra support. She explained that an academic coach, part of the leadership team, would:

Come in, definitely weekly, I reckon it would have been. Towards the beginning of the last year, I had another teacher ... She came in and modelled quite a few of the classes at the beginning, especially like the morning charts and all that. So, I had a lot of people model things for me, which was really good. Then, [another teacher] would come in, feed back, watch me, help me out, float around ... Then, during our DOTT time, we would go to other classrooms and I'd watch, because I find watching, I guess, I learn the most. So, I'd go and watch.

Zara also described support from both her line manager and the other staff in her school. She explained:

My line manager, she's very supportive ... I basically came in there crying the first term going I don't know what I'm doing. They were really good like that. They're just a calm presence and you can just let everything off your chest which is, as a graduate, I think that's all you needed ... So, if I went I don't know what to do with my assessments, my line manager would go, okay, you can do this, or another teacher can go you can do this and this is what the school provides, this is where you get help.

Unlike Simon, Alex, Lana and Zara, Charles did not feel supported in his first school. When asked to elaborate, other than the graduate teacher entitlements, Charles stated there was "nothing". He described the differences between his first and current school administration support:

No checking in, no extra support, no guidance unless I sought it. I rarely did that ... I felt like I would rarely have to go to admin if I had a question but I would have - I think in comparing it to this year, still being a graduate, I've had the principal of the school in my classroom once a week watching me teach and providing feedback. I've had the deputy come and see me multiple times in terms of discussing the issue of behaviour and how I'm dealing with it. So there's been a lot more support and a lot more just general checking in and having a discussion about how I'm coping and the choices that I'm making and I guess how I'm running the classroom and how I'm teaching. I've had a lot more of that in these four weeks than I did over the whole year last year ... it's like admin weren't even there for me last year, which is a horrible thing to say but it's the truth.

Charles continued to reveal his frustrations with the administration team at his first school, adding:

Even if it's just coming to watch you teach for 10 minutes or just saying let's sit down once a term and have a discussion about how you're coping. Because the reality is teaching as you will know as a teacher, it's so much more demanding than the eight to three. Making the shift from an office job to a teaching job is - it's like apples and oranges. It's just insane. The stuff that you take home with you at night mentally on top of the physical workload really affects you. I think admin would have - it would have been beneficial for them to recognise that and just put their head in my door when it wasn't just something that they needed.

Helen was not granted her graduate entitlements in her first teaching position, and explained her difficult experiences with the school administration team:

We were told that we weren't allowed to use our graduate days, that they weren't on offer, that they weren't to be used ... if we wanted to attend a graduate module, we would have to go during the school holidays ... I did not feel supported by this principal. Being fresh out of uni, I did not feel that - in hindsight, I did not have good enough behaviour management experience to be able to control and manage a group of kids who were Aboriginal that had extreme behavioural difficulties ... So I felt like because I was chunked in the deep end, and it was either sink or swim, and the - so the behaviour would escalate, and I wouldn't exactly know what to do, because obviously I haven't experienced that, because I've done my prac in the city. The principal basically told me that they're not happy with the way that I was handling behaviour, that the kids weren't learning, and blamed me for a lot of things ... I wanted to say, well, what do you expect? I'm a graduate teacher. I need support. I don't need blame ... I felt extremely belittled and insignificant and not supported whatsoever ... and I left that school - I made that decision to not stay on, because I knew that the principal and his wife would be there the following year, and I did not want to work with them.

As above, Helen described how a lack of support led her to change schools after four months. While the support has improved, Helen described the difficulties of administration priorities and budgeting as impacting her professional development support:

The problems I've encountered here is that PD isn't always available, because I'm obviously 800 kilometres from Perth, so if we were going to go to PD, they either need to offer it in Esperance, which is over a 200-kilometre round trip, or they need to offer it in Kalgoorlie, which is 800 kilometres, round trip, or in Perth, which is 1600 kilometres round trip, and the school budget doesn't allow for that. The travel - the school budget's very tight, so completed the graduate modules, one and two last year, got number three coming up next month, and last year, I went to ECWA conference in June, and that was in Perth. I used my graduate day to go for that, because then relief was being funded through the department ... I found that to be really beneficial, and - but this year I've been told, I was told this morning, that that's not a possibility for me to go to that, because the budget's too tight and they can't afford to send me to that conference.

While the participants described mixed experiences with the administration teams, four acknowledged the large amount of support from other teachers within the school. For Alex, Charles, Lana and Zara, this was especially the case. Alex described:

Yeah, I've got an official mentor within the school, who's the deputy, who was a Year 4 teacher and deputy last year, and she's just deputy this year. So, she's down as my official mentor, and I can go to her about stuff ... [but] the main person I speak to is another Year 4 teacher, mainly because she's there with me and we do the same things ... We have chats most days, not just me asking her questions, but just having conversations about where we're at in terms of the curriculum and teaching it, one's ahead or one's behind, need to catch up ... That's probably where I've felt the most supported, that's probably what's made me feel most comfortable. She was the same last year as well, because she taught Year 4 last year as well. So, while I feel supported within the whole school, I think it's just more that one teacher that I can walk in at any point and bounce ideas, or just discuss how the day's going and that kind of thing.

Zara also referred to other teachers in the school as being a positive support to her, stating:

I found that they were really good at just listening ... I had great other teachers as well like older senior teachers, and not necessarily everyone gets along but it's nice to go in and go okay, I need this or just to have a bit of a rant as well and just get things off your chest.

Similarly, Charles described his colleagues as being hugely supportive in both schools. He explained:

I felt that the staff at the school - in terms of my colleagues and the other teachers - were so much more supportive and open and able to offer solutions for issues that I had [compared to the administration team] ... I don't think I would still be teaching if it weren't for the other staff members at the school last year and at the school this year ... Everyone was always so supportive and just willing to offer help or solutions or feedback on any little thing that you needed ... when I got my new position ... I was freaking out about having to swap to such a low year level ... I had so many people offering me resources and ideas and walking me through what they'd done ... and just being so open and so generous with their time and their thoughts that that's invaluable.

Simon also described the benefits of support from experienced teachers. However, he explained:

[The principal] encouraged me to find a mentor in school. When I went back to her I said to her there's not really a person that I think, wow, that's the kind of teacher I want to be like. There's not really that person at my school. For me, I think it's better for me to take bits and pieces from lots of different people, and so invent my pseudo-mentor if you will.

4.9 Question Eight: Could you describe your experiences with the Graduate Teaching Modules you've completed so far? What sort of content have they covered?

Despite Question Eight containing two parts, the responses have been combined below. When asked about the Graduate Teacher Modules, Charles was the only participant who incorrectly believed that they were not compulsory and that he was doing more than what was technically required of him.

Overall, there were mixed reviews of the Graduate Teacher Modules. Simon, Alex, Zara, Helen and Charles described both positive and negative elements. For Alex:

I found the presenter makes a lot of difference to what I get out of them a little bit. The first one we had a presenter that would talk, discuss the topics. But if we ended up, through discussion, just going ahead ... He'd give us time to chat to peers but not too much time. Whereas the second grad module presenter, even if discussions went ahead of the program, when we got to those slides and to talk about that, we would then revisit. Even though we felt like we'd already covered those, and give us 10 minutes to discuss something that would take us two minutes. It just felt like it was a bit of wasting time from that regard. But overall, the content I found helpful.

Similarly, Simon spoke of the benefits of a good presenter, but also negatively about the amount of time taken for discussion:

They've been beneficial to a certain extent. The people that facilitate them they've both been really outstanding people ... the only downfall is that - because everyone's at a different stage in their development, and a lot of people aren't so good at finding information themselves, there are lots of questions that are asked that really are not relevant to you as a person ... I found that a lot of the time was wasted on questions that could easily be answered either online or by asking another person at school. It's great to ask those things, but ... it's kind of taking away from what it should be about.

Zara described appreciating the ideas and intention of the content, but struggled with transferring it to her own practice:

I like them and I see the purpose of them. I also don't like some of the things that they teach. I'm not necessarily saying that it's not proven and it's not a great thing. I just think in the reality of what's happening in schools, it's very hard to approach it. Like for example, the graduate model three, we learned about self-efficacy and visible learning. It's all lovely and I love it all, but it's - they showed us that this is the way of teaching; how are you implementing it? It's like hang on, I'm only doing a small amount of that. I feel like we're not really getting to the point of how to implement it in an easier way to make things easier for schools ... So, with the graduate program itself, I learned a couple of things but a lot of it is very hard to apply to my own school.

Similarly, while describing the positive elements of the Graduate Teacher Modules, Helen identified some of the content as difficult to connect to her school context:

They are very good, definitely recommend all participants to complete them. However, it's very frustrating when no one understands teaching in MAG classes. They think, ah, it's just a split class. Yeah, it a split class, but I've actually got three or four year levels in my year, so I've got those four content descriptors, plus the differentiation required in those four content descriptors. Whereas in a split class, you may have two content descriptors, or even in a single stream, you've got one. I find that go to any PD or any grad mod that they're talking about planning or curriculum or whatever, they're always targeted towards single-stream or split class, and they don't understand the MAG context. You feel like - just like left aside, discarded kind of thing.

Like Helen, Lana described frustration with other graduate teachers who did not share her context:

I think, because I went to - I did mine in [de-identified], so I think a lot of people were from schools - no one was from anywhere, sort of, low socioeconomic area, so I just felt like

everything everyone was saying was not relevant. So, I just felt like this is a waste of my time. A lot of whingeing, a lot of people saying, oh, I didn't get any support, this is horrible, blah, blah, blah. I was like listening, and going, I've got lots of support. I'm dealing with other problems than like, you know, your principal telling you, you can't use the internet for a day, and things like that.

However, Helen did comment positively about the Graduate Teacher Modules including some practical content:

I know that in Grad Mod Two, they talked about the code of conduct with the department, and that's the first time I've ever seen that document. That was in late August last year, just over 12 months after I first started teaching. So it's like, oh, we have a code of conduct. Okay ... I find that in the two days, there was a lot of information basically thrown at you, and obviously I can't remember everything.

Some of Charles's experience mirrored this:

The first module felt a little bit like a rehash of uni. We looked a lot at lesson planning and assessing and different teaching strategies. It wasn't particularly worthwhile for me at the time because I was doing relief at the time, but I wanted to get started and get the ball rolling because I wanted to do the second modules.

Simon described Module Two as being better than the first:

The second one I think was more beneficial was more - there was teaching strategies in both, so instructional strategies in both, but the second one seemed to be a bit more meatier if you will.

Charles described the value of Module Two as:

incredibly beneficial. It focused a majority of the time on how we prepare our portfolio to move our registration to full from provisional ... That was the most enlightening and beneficial two days I have had because it really looked at what was expected from us. It was really clear in terms of the format that we need to go through and how the process works for us and be signed off for full registration - because that's essentially our goal as a graduate.

Like Charles, Lana stated that the Graduate Teacher Modules were similar to university, but unlike Charles, did not see as many benefits:

They're okay ... The first one was a waste of my time ... I think it was just like it was being back at uni. It was very much like, let's all share our experiences, and let's all talk about everything ... So, I just found it didn't - the first one, I was not into. I think the second one was a bit better. I actually can't even remember what it was about.

However unlike Lana and Helen, Charles commented that he was eventually placed with people in a similar context to him. But, he also described the initial frustration of those who he did not share experience with. He stated:

They grouped us in years that we worked in ... Being able to talk about similar experiences and similar learning difficulties, similar programs, that was a really therapeutic and beneficial thing as well ... [But] I think the first half of the first day was a bit more of an open session. You'd have the Pre-Primaries and Year 1 teachers talking ... and the uppers would sit there like, that has no relevance to us at all. So when they split us into our teaching years it immediately just transformed into this networking and collaborative environment where you

were able to take away different ideas, different programs, different behaviour approaches which was really good.

When asked to compare ITE to the Graduate Teacher Modules, Charles stated:

[The Graduate Teacher Modules] built a lot on the university preparation ... because you can bring your own experience to the modules, and other people bring their own experiences, it felt a lot easier to relay it back to the classroom. A lot of what we did in uni just felt purely theoretical - in theory when you get this kid, in theory when you plan for maths. When we did the modules it was take a kid from your class right now, apply these steps to them, what would you do. It's so much easier to look at different strategies and different approaches when you have that real example waiting for you back in the classroom to go and test it on and you have people giving you real examples as well. So it's almost like the theory of uni but you've got that real-life application already which makes it better.

Charles explained that the graduate teachers were required to complete in-between Module homework tasks. For Charles, Simon and Helen, the tasks were arduous. As Charles explained:

There's the in-between module tasks which they kind of sell it to you as you can include it in your portfolio for your full registration ... The first in between module task I didn't do probably to the best of my ability because it wasn't a priority for me ... Term 3 when I went to do the task I had kind of forgotten it a little bit and it was purely just we had to choose a teaching strategy, implement it in the classroom and provide some work samples - so it was a little bit of extra work and probably not really that beneficial. The second module task we needed to identify a student at educational risk and put some strategies in place, so essentially like writing an IEP... again it has not been a priority ... it feels like homework that we shouldn't need to do ... From what you could gaze around the room nobody gave it the time that I think the Department of Education anticipated.

While Charles described feeling as though he had not put his full time and energy into the in-between module tasks, he explained that he felt:

Anxiety [about completing the homework tasks] and only because it's part of a growing list of tasks that I will never, ever, ever, ever, ever finish. It's frustrating because my priority should be my current classroom. My priority shouldn't be completing all these extra things on top of what I'm already doing. They're not negative feelings are - sorry that they are negative feelings, they're not positive feelings - it feels really stressful to add it onto everything else that we need to be doing.

Simon's experience with the tasks was similar to Charles. He described:

The first in-between module task was about putting an instructional strategy into practice, which was quite beneficial. I will say that I kind of feel there is so much happening in your first year of teaching, such a steep learning curve, you're learning school processes that sometimes I personally feel that they're adding to the workload, if that makes sense, by doing the in-between module task ... We've got to try instructional strategy in the classroom but it's preparing the documentation for presentation at the next module that's adding to your workload.

Simon found the homework stressful, explaining it was because he was:

probably time poor. Particularly first year teachers they're already are incredibly time poor and so we're adding another layer to the workload.

Helen's view of the in-between module tasks matched Charles and Simon:

I hate [them] ... Between Module One and Two, I had to complete this presentation thing on something - I know I did mine on learning intentions and talked about that, spoke about the retention of content that was learnt in that lesson when the lesson's targeted with a learning intention and success criteria. See, I can't remember? It makes you think, ah, how valuable was that if it doesn't stick?... It was pretty burdensome ... It's teaching 101. But to stop and put that all together, that takes time, and time management is something that I struggle with. I don't know if that's normal. There's nothing really to compare it with, but yeah, to have the time to put that together is just a bit too much.

Unlike Charles, Simon and Helen, the other three participants did not consider the homework to be stressful. Alex explained:

It's homework that we're doing in class anyway, it's just gathering the evidence to then take it to the next module. I don't feel like I've had to do anything above what I'm doing, other than maybe just putting it together and working out how I'm going to present it. But that, if I've got the info, that took me half an hour in between grad Module One and Two and the same for two and three. It's not any extra time particularly, it's just ... I don't have a big problem with it.

Zara mirrored this, reflecting:

It wasn't actually extra work because I was already doing it and that's the whole point of it. I didn't find it too much extra work. I could see it being extra work if you're not doing it.

Lana did not describe the homework tasks as beneficial. She reflected:

I think I did it a couple of nights before ... I think [it wasn't onerous] at all. I think that when I got the thing, I looked at it and I was like, oh yeah, I think I'll do this, and I wrote it down at the time. So then, when I opened it up again, I was like, oh yeah. I'll do that ... So, yeah, it was a bit like uni. It was a bit of sort of like, oh, it's not really relevant to me, is what I felt.

4.10 Question Nine: Have you found the Graduate Modules valuable? In what ways?

Five out of the six participants described the ability to talk to peers in similar contexts as a beneficial element of the Graduate Teacher Modules. Alex stated:

Yeah, so the biggest thing I think is, the biggest thing that I've got out of it as well is talking to other peers that are in the same situation. How they've coped, what their situation is, how they've coped with it, different things like that. Because you can still learn off other teachers, but if they're more experienced, it's been a while since they've maybe gone through what you've gone through. I think it's good just to chat to people that have gone through that same situation as well, and have discussion about what's worked, what hasn't, and that kind of thing.

Helen shared this view, reflecting:

I found them really beneficial because I can go there and talk to other graduates who are in the same boat as me, and I completed grad mod two in town, and there were teachers - there was one teacher from another school that was teaching three year levels. We got to share our experiences and we both understood, because we're both teaching in a MAG class. So being able to talk to other grad teachers and who you realise that - ah, this is normal. These feelings are normal. These workload issues or how you plan things is normal. It's quite reassuring.

Charles stated:

It is a good networking experience and also on a probably more selfish level, it's a two-day break from the classroom ... I think it's nice that they're tailored to graduates ... we also spent some time looking at the Department of Education Code of Conduct, which is something that you would never touch probably with a 10-foot pole in a school because teachers have been there for 10, 20 years and they're expected to know all those things ... those things which aren't ever told and you don't really think to question, that was really beneficial - going into the Department of Education's Code of Conduct because I never would have thought to go and read it ... So really tailored to the fact that they know we wouldn't know that so the Department recognised that as a graduate we need to be informed of the Code of Conduct ... We went through OH&S a little bit as well but it was predominantly based around our teaching skills. So the stuff that's really tailored almost like an induction to the Department, that's really good too. That's valuable.

Similarly, Simon too reflected that “learning from other people's experiences can be beneficial in the same context.” But like Charles, he described additional beneficial elements of the modules. He stated:

A lot of the things that you might have been taught tend to get locked away a little bit. The grad module using instructional strategies starts bringing them out a little bit. Also, it gives you time away from school and to reflect on what's happening, how you're going, what the - finding what's working, what's not working so well.

Alex concurred:

It's things like extra strategies, which we might have learnt at uni, but jumping straight in to school, it might have been in the back of the mind and sort of forgot about. So, it's that refresher more than anything else ... I was writing down stuff to do back at school about what I'd, not forgot about, but was you know... When you get in to school life and it's the day to day stuff, you kind of sort of forget what you've learnt. So just a good reminder of going oh yeah, I can do that, or I'll try that and see if works or not.

While Lana admitted she perceived the modules to be a ‘tick-box exercise’, she summarised that:

Yeah. I didn't - if anything, if anything, it was - it is nice to talk to other teachers that are grads, and also it is nice - from a different school. It was interesting hearing everyone's sides to it. I walked away going, wow, I'm really lucky where I am, even though it's tough and the children are tough. I was very much like, wow, I get a lot of support, and I - yeah. I just felt lucky, if anything.

4.11 Question Ten: Have you been allocated a mentor at your school? Tell me about that experience.

Question Ten related directly to the research questions. Some participants had been allocated an official mentor, whereas others considered their mentor as the teachers they receive help from. Of the six participants, only Alex, Lana and Zara had been allocated an official mentor. Alex's official mentor was his line manager, the deputy principal. Lana's experience was similar. When asked if she had an official mentor, she stated:

Yeah, [it's] probably just [de-identified], yeah. She was - being our team leader, we'd meet every Wednesday. Yeah. She was my go-to person, pretty much, and she was often - because

of, you know, if I had behaviours, and you're sending, you know, kids to the office, you're like that child's coming in, and you're debriefing later, so you just have a lot of contact with them. Yeah. So, she'd be my main one. Then, we have two behaviour coaches as well, and this year, out of the classroom. Last year, they were half in, half out. This year, they were fully out. So, we deal with them a lot as well. So, they kind of become a coach in that sense of it all.

Like Alex and Lana, Zara's official mentor was her line manager, however she was confused by the term 'mentor' and thought it was referring to a coach. She responded to the question as:

No, not really. I did one - an in-class program. I did speak to another graduate at my school and she didn't like it very much and it took up a lot of her time. So, I felt I was already supported enough in my school and had that mentor role from the line manager and I just didn't feel like I had the time to go and speak to a mentor about everything as well as teaching.

Alex's experience with his official mentor accurately summarised both Zara's and Lana's experiences too. He stated:

It's just a deputy or a senior teacher that is a mentor ... I don't necessarily go directly to them all the time, just because they are my mentor ... there's no real point where I'll sit down with my mentor and have an official meeting. I'm sure if I needed that or wanted that, then that could happen easily, that wouldn't be an issue. But I've had meetings with her about other things, but not necessarily officially or directly about my mentoring. I'll go in and ask her about IEPs or she'll go over them with me once I've done them, or reports and that kind of thing. But that's not necessarily booking in a time per say, it's just if she's free, I'll just go in and say do you mind if I, or send her an email and just go do you mind if I just pop in and quickly go over that. So, I guess it's official from that point of view.

Alex utilised his official mentor when he required assistance for administrative type tasks, specifically for:

IEPs and also report comments as well, so particularly last year, because we're week six at the moment. Particularly last year I did my IEPs but before I had a chat with the parents, it was just made sure I was actually doing what I should be doing, or I had what I should have on them. That was a chat with my mentor them, and then also with report comments as well, so I did what I thought report comments should be. I've been given various comments from other teachers as well, as a sort of a sounding board.

When asked about official mentors, the remaining participants referred to other teachers with whom they had worked, or had contact with. While the mentorship was not considered "official", each of them described the benefits of a mentoring relationship. For Charles:

They were the other Year 5 teacher and the way that the classrooms were set up was an open classroom situation. The previous Year 5 teacher and herself had done quite a bit of collaborative planning and teaching and I think because I stepped in to take over from the other teacher who went on maternity leave, I essentially stepped into that same kind of collaborative teaching and planning role, which I thoroughly enjoyed and it was great. Towards the beginning of that I said to the Year 5 teacher you're like my unofficial mentor. She was like I'm happy to be that for you and that's essentially what she was, someone who I could talk to and bounce back and forth from and have a debrief at the end of the day - so essentially someone who I think provided me with a little bit of extra support purely probably because we worked so closely together.

Lana described the strong team environment at her school as being supportive. While she had an official mentor, Lana also identified other members of staff. She explained that the school is:

Super-supportive, yeah. Everyone's on the same page. I remember when I started, when I had my interview, they kind of said, how do you cope with criticism? I remember being like, oh, I guess fine, because that means you need to improve on something. Then, their second question was like, how do you deal with crying in front of people, or something like that. It went from one extreme question, to how do you deal with crying in front of people? I was like, oh, I cry all the time. They were like, you will cry on this job, and you will get upset, and we are all here to help you ... I remember them saying, crying is good, and we're there. If you need to cry and walk out of your room, that's absolutely fine. Someone will walk in and take over for you.

Lana continued:

Like today, when I had my moment, it was just after recess, and I was like, oh, and [de-identified] came around was like, [de-identified], send your class to me, I'll just take them. I was like, no, it's fine. I was fine today. I was like, no, no, but the fact - like, everyone's just there, and they're like, it's fine if you cry ... Everyone's just like, it's fine. If they see you being like, help, they're like, let me help. You know? Everyone's so supportive ... I feel like last year, everyone cried millions of times. But then you feel better ... So, it is good. So, heaps of support. I don't think you could do it without. Like, honestly, if today happened and no one was there to be like, are you okay, you'd just be like, what's the point? You know? Whereas today they were like, it's not working, we need a new plan. Let's meet tomorrow. Great.

For Helen, being in a small remote school meant her options for mentors, both official and unofficial were limited. She explained:

Well, the teacher next door to me is a graduate teacher in the Australian - in Australia. She's taught years before in South Korea and Abu Dhabi. She's from South Africa, and we have a good relationship. We support each other, so we bounce ideas off one another quite regularly, so she's like an unofficial mentor ... We do debrief, and we do share lessons, because she is teaching lower primary, and I was like, hey, I've got this from my prac or when I taught K to 2, and here, you can use it. She's taught other primary as well before, overseas, so she's shared a few lessons with that, too.

Unlike Zara, Charles, Alex, Lana and Helen, Simon's experience with a mentor was not with a teacher in his school. For Simon:

Having a friend as a teacher at another school, having my partner to support me and having some key people at school, not in an official capacity but in a way where I can access the information for myself and how I see fit. Because obviously there's things that you like from certain people, but there's not really that person that I think, wow that's what I want.

4.12 Question Eleven: Can you give me two stars and a wish for the In-Class coaching?

Of the six participants, two had completed the In-Class Coaching and one had recently signed up to the program. The other three participants had heard about the program from colleagues. Alex was due to commence the In-Class Coaching later in the school year. He explained:

I knew about it from, I think it might have been someone from the Department visiting uni ... When I did my first grad module in the first semester from graduating, I knew of it but I didn't necessarily want it there and then, because I just wanted to try and just find my feet first, sort of know how I wanted to use that in class coaching, before using it ... Then when I went to my second grad module, I applied for In-Class Coaching then.

Alex made no further comments about his perceptions of the coaching. Simon and Lana, who had partaken in the program, did not consider the program to be particularly beneficial for them.

Simon explained:

I think it would be good for certain people. I don't know whether I should have taken the offer up ... I had heard about it, I had not - I kind of avoided in my first year and I was intent on avoiding it in my second year as well but my Principal brought it up again and said it might be good. I had feedback from my partner that it wasn't so good ... I've had two phone calls. I had to complete a reflection checklist in the first phone call. Then the second one we had to set a goal to achieve. That is lovely, but I'm not finding it very beneficial. Probably because - I think it would be beneficial for someone that's may be new to employment. If you were going straight from uni into a school and, so you go from school to school then, yes, you probably would find benefit in talking to someone and having that support and that advice. But given that I've had three years already I'm not finding it as useful. Questions like 'How does that make you feel?', I find them a little bit irrelevant. I don't know if it's me being cynical.

He continued:

I just felt like it was extra pressure ... It's something that I don't really want to have to think about just yet. I feel like she's trying to come up with things for me to do so she could be useful to me, but it's adding to my workload ... It is. I think it's just another layer adding on ... [and because I've finished my portfolio and was made permanent] maybe the coaching is not so useful ... Simply because I think she's trying to invent things for me to do.

When Simon was asked to provide the "two stars and a wish" for the coaching, he reflected:

Okay, so I think it's nice to have someone to chat to about things that are happening in the classroom, and sometimes it's nice to have that outside contact. I think it's nice to have a person that's not judgmental and remains confidential with what you tell them. I wish it wasn't adding to the workload. Yeah.

Lana's experience mirrored Simon's. While there were beneficial elements, Lana also explained the difficulties of working with her coach. She explained:

I don't think I realised what was involved ... But maybe just my lady's really full-on ... she emails me lots of things all the time, and I have to read all this stuff ... She's coming to watch me next week, and I have to choose which strategy she's going to be watching me on. She's sent me, like, I reckon 12 PDF documents, all different strategies, and she wants to meet an hour before, an hour after, and I'm now just in that point of, damn, I regret this, because it's just a bit much ... I'm looking at it like, this is annoying. But I know, deep down, in the end it will be good, because we've had - I've had three phone calls with her ... [in the] second one, she just asked me, you know, what's working well at the moment, and let's make some goals for you ... Then she called again and checked in to see if I'd put all those things in place, which I hadn't because it had been two weeks. I was like, no, I haven't done that in two weeks. I'm dealing with other stuff too... she's coming in next Monday, and I'm just sort of like, oh my God, it's week 10 ... I haven't looked at the 12 PDF documents that are the

strategies ... I'm sure it will be really useful, and I think she's going to film me. So, I'm like, cool, but also, I'm like, it's just an added stress at the moment.

When providing "two stars and a wish", Lana responded:

The fact that the AITSL standards, she's kind of - we're doing that there and then, and I think as I'm talking about it, she's like, you've covered that, you've covered that, which is awesome. So, it's like, doing things without me knowing. She is, I guess, a third party. She has no - she's kind of like you. You're very confidential, I can say anything to her, which at first, I was like, oh, that doesn't really bother me, I've got nothing too bad to say. But as you start talking about things, you kind of go, oh, that is annoying, or whatever. So, that's quite good. She's like, someone else to talk to ... I wish maybe I had waited until next semester. I think it was just a bit much ... I wish I'd just left it a bit longer, I think. Because I've got heaps of time. Not heaps of time to do my portfolio, but I'll get there. I know I will. I feel confident in myself, but yeah. It's just an added thing I don't think I should have committed to, maybe. But you've got to be positive. I feel it will be useful ... it's making me be responsible for my learning.

Zara, Charles and Helen had opted not to sign up for the In-Class Coaching Program. As explained previously, Zara was confused by the term 'mentor' and 'coach' but explained:

I did speak to another graduate at my school and she didn't like it very much and it took up a lot of her time. So, I felt I was already supported enough in my school and had that mentor role from the line manager and I just didn't feel like I had the time to go and speak to a mentor about everything as well as teaching.

Similarly, Helen described:

I've chosen not to do that, because the time factor. When I heard about it, I was like, how is that going to fit into my - the 24 hours that I have in day? It's very funny because last semester, Semester 2 last year, my colleague completed the In-Class Coaching and she - it was very overwhelming for her. She was very busy. There's a lot of work involved. She said it was very good and very beneficial to her, but I could see how stressed it made her, and just seeing how stressed she was, I decided that I didn't want to do it, because I didn't want that added pressure, added more work.

Charles discussed his views on the In-Class Coaching Program. He reflected:

I'd push myself to do the In-Class Coaching Program because one of the things that I was disappointed in was the fact that admin didn't take the time to come and watch me teach and give me feedback ... I would have liked to do that, I would have really benefited from someone watching me and giving me feedback that was focussed solely on my teaching and didn't have different motivations. If the deputy came into my classroom it wasn't to watch me teach, it was to give me a message. It was to pull a kid out for something. It was never solely for the fact to benefit my teaching so if I engaged in class coaching I would have probably had that need met which is one of the biggest things I feel like I didn't get last year ... The in-class coaching, I feel like it came with a little bit of a - not a stigma but it was like if you choose to do it, it felt a bit like clinical ... it was so competitive that the odds of you getting one I think were pretty slim. In reflection, I'm pretty sure that was why I decided not to do it because I was like the odds of me getting someone anyway are as slim to none so I'm not going to go through that process.

4.13 Question Twelve: Overall, what experience has been the most valuable so far in your career in helping your development as a teacher?

The purpose of Question Twelve was to allow the participants to reflect on positive contributions to their self-efficacy and their development as a teacher thus far. Gaining employment and receiving immediate on-the-job experience was described by Zara and Simon as highly supportive to their development as teachers. Zara explained:

I think just honestly being in a school. Literally just running in and going okay, well I'm going to try this and if it's not going to work, then I'm not going to do it anymore and that's it. That's been the most valuable, and having the opportunity to do things that you want to do. I think I was really lucky to get where I am in the job I got and I think that's a very valuable.

Similarly, Simon reflected that immediately gaining on-the-job experience was most helpful to him, as well as the guidance and tutelage of experienced teachers. He described:

I think a few things have aligned. I was lucky enough to have some really fantastic tutors, really supportive principal and lucky enough to be given employment. Obviously this is tied towards people that have been employed, but that's a really big part of becoming a teacher. Because if you don't have employment to go into then you're not putting anything into use, and so that initial teacher training becomes almost a blink in the past because you're not able to put it into practice.

Lana and Alex however both described their ITE courses as a main contributor towards their development as a teacher. Lana explained:

Uni was good, because I did two years, the two-year masters. I think if I'd just done a DipEd, I think that wouldn't have been enough. I definitely, in two years, was like, yeah, we've covered - I think we worked out, we covered pretty much everything you'd do in an undergrad degree, just take out all the fluffy things like the subjects that everyone has to do. So, uni was good. Uni definitely prepared me ... prac was good.

Alex reflected that the professional practices were valuable:

Certainly, the pracs at uni, having those two 10-week pracs, because there's nothing better than getting in to the classroom and working out what works and what doesn't.

However, Alex and Lana described different components of their ITE courses as beneficial.

For Lana:

Uni was good. Uni definitely prepared me, but I would have learned the most last year, doing on-the-job, definitely.

Alex, Simon, Charles and Helen described collaborating with other teachers in similar classroom contexts as beneficial. Alex explained:

I think probably the unofficial mentor [has been the most valuable] ... mainly because it's that day to day communication, they're doing the same thing. I found that really supportive in terms of giving lesson ideas or if they've done a lesson before me, they'll tell me what hasn't worked for them, or maybe to do it a different way ... and vice versa as well, if we're chatting about things and I've gone ahead, I can give her information. So, it's not necessarily a one-way conversation ... When I've done something or she's seen it and gone I'll give that a go, that's made me feel pretty good as well, obviously being new to the game. I feel, I mean they're all connected, the uni and the official mentor and everything else. But I think if I could

only choose to have one, I think it would be that unofficial mentor that's in there with you. Because yes, the uni was good for learning the curriculum and other bits, but I feel like I can probably do that through her if need be.

Similarly, Charles reflected:

I think it's a dead tie between being thrown into this new environment in this new year level this year and having the opportunity to collaborate with essentially a partner teacher last year ... Stepping into what's already been established as a collaborative environment with an open classroom, it's like having your hand held. It's like we're taking your training wheels off but we're going to put one back on. Let's just see how you go ... The collaborative environment though is what I took away from it because being able to have someone to ask questions, to plan with, to assess with, to teach with, that was incredibly not only beneficial but enjoyable. I really loved that and that sparked joy. I really, really loved that. It made me look forward to going in on some of the days when I was maybe a bit down or a bit stressed. Having that other teacher there was uplifting and really lovely. So that's - yeah, I found that very valuable.

Charles, like Simon and Zara, also identified immediate employment, and building experience from the beginning of the year, as strongly contributing to his development as a teacher.

This year, being thrown into the new school context, the new year group as much as I have hated it, it has forced me to stand on my own two feet. It has forced me to be responsible. It has forced me to find my own very independent teaching style but that's a thousand times more rewarding ... I've got my own classroom where I feel like it's my own ... I feel like finally being able to find my feet and having the time to collaborate with those other two teachers is what has helped me find my feet. The adjustment to not so much the curriculum, - the curriculum for 1/2 is I feel like I could teach that ... but it's just the fact that the students I have, their ability levels - being able to tailor it to that is what I'm struggling with. So having those two other teachers there to talk to about that, they've been in similar situations with a couple of students or they've got ideas about what I could do, they've shared resources with me. They've shared ideas with me and that collaborative nature is what's gotten me to the positive point I'm at today ... They're coming from multiple years of multiple students' abilities and just have this vast knowledge that surpasses mine tenfold in terms of saying one time I had this kid who did this, I tried this.

Helen affirmed the support provided by other experienced teachers as helping her development as a teacher. However, due to her isolation in her remote school, Helen sourced support from alternative means:

One of the most valuable things - this might be a bit weird - is the teacher community on Instagram. I don't know if you've come across it, but there are a lot of teachers on there who have their own Instagram, and they share what they're doing in class. They share lesson ideas or resources or a sale on TPT [Teachers Pay Teachers] or a sale at Blake Education or Elizabeth Richards or something. That is very valuable. For example, there's a teacher on there who is - there's a few teachers, actually, who are technology teachers, and they'll quite often jump on there, and they'll explain this app that they use in the class and how they can use it. Yeah, so because I'm so isolated, I think I find that very valuable, because it's another source of professional development, really, and I can talk to teachers who are in the same context with teaching MAG classes, as well, and find out what they're doing and what's working for them and what's not working for them. So I think that's very valuable.

4.14 Question Thirteen: If you could wave a magic wand, describe what support, real or imaginary, you would want to help you during your first year in the classroom if you were to repeat it.

The purpose of this final question was to conclude the interview with a positive reflection from the participants. For five of the participants, their 'magic wand' response was for more help, in various ways. For Helen, it was guidance on how to plan the teaching and learning for her class:

So planning, preparation, so being able to know what I need to teach in what order, when I need to teach it and how do I teach it? Your first year, you've got all of these things coming at you, and then, I'll sit down and be like, right, I've got these three content descriptors. I've got this achievement standard. I've got these judging standards. How do I put those together and make this amazing plan, term overview or whatever? Yeah, and this is the resource you should do. Follow this, yeah. That would be nice ... Instruction manual, yeah. Day one, do this. Day two, do this.

Similarly, Zara wished for greater guidance on daily classroom management:

I guess how to manage - again, how to manage the classroom, how to manage EAs because you go through school - you go through uni and you learn how to teach yourself but not necessarily how to approach education systems as well. So, I guess how to do that.

Lana wished for support in the form of another adult in the classroom would be the best support for her:

Just having another set of hands. Another human there. That would be nice. Like, all the time ... Yeah. It would just be nice to, like - you know, like while you're teaching, they're helping just to, like, settle everyone, and if there's those couple of kids that are just not, you know, not there, or - you know, yeah. Another set of hands.

Simon and Charles each desired a dedicated in-school mentor to support graduate teachers. In Simon's perspective:

It's all well and good to say that you'd like to have someone guiding you. But it's also nice being your own boss in the classroom. Personally, I think ITE maybe should include some kind of paid internship style of learning, because you do learn a lot when you're on prac, but obviously you can't sustain prac because you don't get paid for it ... I think it would be good to ... have some kind of element of paid internship where you can learn from someone that's highly experienced and actually wants to do it ... it's all well and good to say I'll go find myself a mentor, but being a mentor is not something that many people take lightly or really want to do sometimes because that adds to their workload ... I think would be fantastic to have some kind of programme where maybe there are experienced mentor teachers out there that can go into a classroom and be a mentor in the classroom. Maybe that's their job that they get release time for, or that's their full-time job rather than just an advocate on the end of the phone is not so helpful sometimes.

Similarly, Charles described his wish to have a coach in the school who is also part of the leadership team. He reflected:

I would have preferred [a coach] in the school. I feel like if they're in the school, they get the context a lot better and they can give you feedback that's a lot more applicable. I feel like if it's outside of the school they can give you all these ideas that you can't execute or you may not be able to execute because you don't have the time or you don't have the resources or you

don't have the school structure ... I've never had an induction, I didn't have anyone check in with me during the terms. If there's someone who could take up those roles or take up that responsibility, I feel like I would be in a much more positive place than a graduate - I feel like I'm still a first year. I don't feel like I really grew much last year. I feel like if I had someone - but in reflection that shouldn't be a choice. I had a year at university and I'm then trusted with 26 children. I feel like I should be viewed as a graduate, I was a graduate, and there should have been some support there, the school should have made that choice. It should be something admin need to consider at all schools.

Charles continued:

No magic wand, just do it. But then when it got to the end of the year and going through what I went through with admin, it made it quite obvious that having a more structured approach, and someone maybe a bit higher up, to walk me through those issues that I may have been having with student behaviour or with making sure my planning and assessment were at a level they should have been - that should have all come from admin ... Graduates need support and I think particularly coming from a Grad Dip when a lot of us are a bit older, we're not going to ask for it because - this is my third career in 10 years which is probably something to say about our generation. So the business side of things and planning and dealing with parents and that, I can do that confidently but the teacher side of things is where I'm new and so it shouldn't matter if I'm 20, 30, 55 a graduate is a graduate and the school needs to remember that.

Five participants described their magic wand wish to be a mentor or colleague. Alex did not, explaining:

For me I wouldn't necessarily change anything, I don't feel like I could get more support, which I know I'm very very fortunate for, and very grateful for as well ... I know I'm quite fortunate in how I've experienced the first year. Yeah, I wouldn't necessarily change anything. So, I feel very grateful, very lucky to be in the position I was in.

4.15 A Brief Summary of the Findings

Overall, the majority of participants considered their second year of teaching easier, due to the steep learning curve experienced in their first. Five of the six participants continued working in the same year level and at the same school between their first and second years of teaching. Responses indicated that overall, their sense of self-efficacy was greater in the second year, as each described an improvement in their confidence and teaching abilities. However, this was not reflected by Charles, who had changed to a new school and in a new year level in his second year.

The findings revealed that the participants perceived success across a range of elements in their first year of teaching. Some described coping effectively with their ability to organise, and the ability to complete administrative tasks. Other participants attributed the support and resources from colleagues as helping them cope.

A number of challenges were identified by participants in their first year of teaching. Three gained employment in schools and/or classroom contexts in which they had not anticipated, or had limited experience in. These participants described feeling overwhelmed and stressed. Others described lesson planning and administrative tasks as being time consuming, stressful and adding

significantly to the workload. Four of the six participants' responses reflected low self-efficacy in their ability to cater to individual student learning needs or behaviour management. While all of the participants expected their first year of teaching to be difficult, only two described it as being more difficult than they had anticipated during ITE. All participants experienced cycles of positivity and negativity with their confidence and self-efficacy throughout their first year. Despite this, not one considered leaving the profession during this time.

Each participant described positive elements to their ITE courses. For Alex and Zara, the curriculum content covered was adequate, however they described feeling unprepared in understanding and managing all of the administrative tasks required of teachers. All six identified the practical and applicable components of ITE as the most beneficial, especially professional practices. Despite this, all participants identified some deficits in their ITE. No participant perceived themselves to be 'classroom ready' upon ITE graduation. However, no participant revealed an expectation that they would fully prepared.

All participants' initial descriptions of school-based support mechanisms included the willingness of principals to grant the DoEWA Graduate Teacher Entitlements. Beyond this, contrasting experiences with levels of school leadership support were revealed. Four participants described high levels of support from the leadership team, while two indicated an absence of leadership support altogether. Only three participants had been allocated an official mentor within their schools, however all six described receiving support from unofficial mentors. These unofficial mentor-type relationships were established with another teacher in their school, or externally through peers or the internet, and all participants described these relationships as a key source of support.

All participants had completed at least two of the four Graduate Teacher Modules. Positive elements were reported by the participants, including the practical and more detailed content of Module Two. However, four participants identified more negative than positive elements. While participants did not consider attending the Graduate Teacher Modules as burdensome, most did express dissatisfaction with the in-between module tasks. The tasks were described by some as onerous and time consuming, contributing to their already heavy workload. Others reflected that the in-between module tasks were manageable, but not necessarily beneficial to their professional development. The participants identified the opportunity to talk with other graduate teachers in similar contexts as the greatest benefit of the Graduate Teacher Modules.

For those who had participated in the In-Class Coaching Program, the intensity of the coaches diminished the effectiveness of the program. Lana and Simon both saw some potential merit in the program, however both described feeling stressed by the additional workload it created. Those who had not completed the coaching opted not to, based on the negative experiences shared by colleagues or peers.

Participants identified a range of contributors as aiding them most in their development as teachers. ITE was cited by Alex, Lana and Simon as establishing a quality foundation of skills and

knowledge. Simon and Zara described obtaining immediate employment, and thus gaining on-the-job experience, as greatly assisting their professional development. Helen, Charles, Alex and Simon also identified helpful colleagues or professional networks as a form of quality support. Upon reflection, all six participants described the value of having a colleague from a similar context as providing the best support for them. This support included assistance in planning and programming, classroom management, and/or utilising education assistants. When describing other ideal forms of support, each participant reiterated a desire for more help from experienced colleagues, with the exception of Alex. Throughout the entirety of his interview, Alex consistently referred to the large amount of support provided by his colleagues and the school leadership team.

4.16 Summary and Conclusion

Chapter Four has presented the interview findings in interview question order according to the Interview Protocol Document. In summary, findings indicated that participants in this study felt underprepared and overwhelmed during their first year of teaching. Levels of self-efficacy and attitudes towards the profession varied between the participants. From this, themes emerged surrounding the levels of support provided to participants by their school leadership team, colleagues and DoEWA. The emergent themes presented in Chapter Four will be presented and discussed in Chapter Five, with direct reference to the literature presented in Chapter Two as applicable.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 Introduction

Chapter Four presented the interview data in sequential order according to the Interview Protocol Document. A broad summary of the emergent themes then concluded the chapter. From the themes, a number of subthemes also emerged. A detailed discussion around the emergent themes and subthemes will follow, relating each to the literature outlined in Chapter Two, where applicable. To conclude, Chapter Five will answer the research questions that informed this study and make recommendations for future practice.

5.1 Emergent Themes

This study endeavoured to examine the impacts of the recent AITSL reforms, and the DoEWA implementation of these reforms, from the perspective of current graduate primary teachers. Five major themes emerged from the interviews, and are set out in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1 Emergent Themes

Overarching theme	Description
Participants are not 'classroom ready' but do not wish to quit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The participants described a steep learning curve; shock; stressed; overwhelmed; large workload. The participants described feeling at times like they did not know what to do. The participants did not want to leave the profession despite their challenges.
ITE preparation is not adequate in regards to making participants 'classroom ready'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The participants described ITE as being a good starting point for their career. ITE courses were described as lacking enough connection to the realities of a classroom. ITE students' perceptions of their future employment led to lack of engagement in other contexts covered in their ITE course. ITE courses are 'theory-heavy'. The participants perceived practice placements and hands on/real life examples the most beneficial components of their courses. The participants did not expect to be classroom ready from ITE.
There were mixed experiences with the Graduate Teacher Modules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Module One perceived as similar to ITE: positive and negative responses. Content in Module One did not relate to participants' contexts. The second module was considered beneficial. The in-between module tasks were either time consuming or not educative. There were differing benefits of the modules.
The In –Class Coaching Program was not considered entirely beneficial or supportive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For those who had participated, there were some positive elements. Ultimately, the In-Class Coaching Program was not beneficial and caused stress and extra work. Participants decided against in-class coaching because of colleagues' negative experiences.
The best support was initially expected to come from administration, but it came from unofficial mentors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support was expected to come from administration, and was initially identified as the graduate entitlements. For those that had them, the official mentor was a leader within the school. Unofficial mentors took the role of supporting and guiding. Some participants had to create their own 'pseudo-mentor'. The majority of support, and the most effective, came from their colleagues i.e. the teacher next door or 'pseudo-mentors'.

5.2 Theme 1: Participants Were Not ‘Classroom Ready’

The first overarching theme that emerged from the interviews was that the participants did not feel classroom ready. This theme and its subthemes and descriptions is outlined in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Theme 1 Participants Were Not ‘Classroom Ready’		
Overarching Theme	Sub-Theme	Description
Participants are not ‘classroom ready’	The participants described a steep learning curve; shock; stressed; overwhelmed; large workload.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceptions of unpreparedness in areas such as programming, assessment, administration and behaviour management.
	The participants described feeling at times like they did not know what to do.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teachers described a large amount of time spent to programming, IEPs, meetings and other administrative tasks.
	The participants did not want to leave the profession despite their challenges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Despite feeling overwhelmed, all the participants felt they were confident in their choice of degree.

Despite successfully completing their ITE courses, participants did not perceive themselves to be completely prepared for teaching and the expectations that come with it. This closely aligns with the literature describing ‘reality-shock’ (Constantine, 2017; Correa, Martínez-Arbelaiz & Aberasturi-Apraiz, 2015; Fantilli & McDougall, 2009; Miles & Knipe, 2018; Morrison, 2013; Veenman, 1984). In this study, not only was the first year of professional teaching “a very, very steep learning curve” as described by Simon, but many recalled not knowing what to do in their classrooms. Lana stated:

It was just learning 100 miles an hour, learning all these strategies for all these different types of children all at once, [it] became a bit overwhelming.

Furthermore, beyond planning, teaching and assessment, participants described writing IEPs, attending meetings, writing reports and completing general administrative tasks overwhelming and excessively time consuming. When combined with low self-efficacy upon entering the classroom, the unexpectedly high teaching workload in addition to general administrative tasks led to the participants reporting stress, shock and feeling overwhelmed. Despite this, and contrary to the assumption that ‘reality-shock’ causes attrition, each of the participants in the study did not indicate a desire to quit the profession. Helen explained:

You have your good days, and your bad days. I would have days that I would come home and say, “Yeah, I’ve chosen the correct career, profession.”

5.2.1 A Steep Learning Curve for AITSL Standards 1, 2 and 3.

Data presented by McKenzie et al. (2013) indicated that most Australian graduate teachers felt highly prepared for AITSL Standards 2 and 3, yet underprepared for Standard 1 (p. 135). However, this study revealed that four of the six participants perceived themselves as not being ready in any of the first three Standards. Zara explained that teaching on her own for the first time was challenging:

You really didn't know if what you were doing was working ... I basically came in there crying the first term going, "I don't know what I'm doing."

Zara, like other participants, felt lacking in the essential knowledge and skills for teaching.

General low-self efficacy was mirrored in Charles's reflections. He explained:

[In my first week of teaching I felt] I don't know how to teach these kids. I really felt like I was not going to be able to benefit them or let them grow. I genuinely feel like sometimes I just don't know how to teach these kids ... Am I doing this correctly? Have I done enough? Are these kids learning? At the end of the year I looked back and I was like, 'did I actually have a difference on their education?' and it was a really scary thought for me to have. I honestly don't think I did last year.

Ultimately, in terms of the first three AITSL standards, four participants felt they were not 'classroom ready', which led to low self- efficacy and feeling overwhelmed. Graduate teachers perhaps labour under the false pretence that their courses will ensure they know exactly what to do from day one. The expectation of AITSL to have 'classroom ready' teachers upon graduation could be contributing to this unrealistic expectation, as negotiating the gap between expectations and the reality is something that appears to cause 'reality-shock' for graduate teachers. As noted by Correa, Martínez-Arbelaiz and Aberasturi-Apraiz (2015), problems encountered in the classroom "are familiar both to old and new teachers [but] they cause feelings of demotivation and insecurity among the latter group of teachers" (p. 67). With experience, teachers learn to accept this as a reality of teaching, and as Hattie (2008) explained, learn as much from errors as successes. Arguably, it is only with the lived experience of triumphs and failures can all teachers be expected to apply effective strategies and judgements, and feel confidence and competent. Yet it may be an unrealistic expectation for graduate teachers to be 'classroom ready', as for graduate teachers with limited lived experience, initial failures can amplify low self-efficacy and stress.

5.2.2 Overwhelming Workload

While the majority of participants in this study did not perceive themselves to be 'classroom ready' in terms of teaching and learning, all described additional difficulties managing the workload and administrative tasks. Zara stated:

It was just hard. You don't go into it thinking this is your whole life for the whole year. For the first year it was like my job was my whole life and every waking moment I just thought about my job.

Participants cited administrative tasks, programming and planning, meetings with staff and parents, as well as writing IEPs as adding significantly to their workloads. This is echoed in the literature, with Buchanan et al. (2013) identifying the adjustment to full-time teaching demands as a difficulty faced by new teachers. Importantly, little appears to have changed since the study by Veenman (1984), where the problems faced by participants included "assessing students' work, relationships with parents, organization of class work, insufficient and/or inadequate teaching

materials and supplies” (p. 143). Further, the participants in this study did not anticipate how much time and energy these elements would require. Charles explained:

I was just shocked. I had a year at university and I'm then trusted with 26 children. I went into a bit of a tailspin ... It's so much more demanding than the eight to three. It's just insane. The stuff that you take home with you at night mentally on top of the physical workload really affects you.

Three participants, having worked in an office environment prior to teaching, found some of the more menial tasks such as taking attendance, assessment tracking and participating in meetings, manageable. Lana explained:

I think if I hadn't have done a degree before this, and worked in a job before any of this, I wouldn't have - yeah, wouldn't have been able to do it, I don't reckon. But just being a mature student made a big difference.

However, three participants described feeling otherwise. Alex stated:

More the admin side of things more than anything else, was challenging. I knew it was going to be part of it, but I just didn't really think about how challenging it could be.

From the interviews, it is clear that each participant, at some stage, struggled with low self-efficacy and did not perceive themselves to be ‘classroom ready’. Each participant reported feeling stressed, shocked or overwhelmed by the workload and administrative tasks in their first year of teaching. This has been a consistent theme in the literature (Constantine, 2017; Fantilli & McDougall, 2009; Miles & Knipe, 2018; Veenman, 1984). The issues faced by the participants in this study would appear to be the same as those highlighted by Veenman (1984). Despite ITE reforms instigated from 2015, the issue still appears to persist. Further, neither the reforms to ITE or the Standards have referenced a clear need for graduate teachers to cope with a large workload or administrative requirements. Instead, focus area 7.2 of the Standards (Appendix A) broadly describes the need for teachers to comply with legislative, administrative and organisational requirements. Further, AITSL (2016a) does indicate in the induction guidelines that colleagues “can strengthen the [graduate teacher's] capacity to manage the personal demands of the role. . . [because they] . . . need help in learning the formal requirements and rules and understanding the formal expectations of colleagues and the community” (p. 7). There should be no expectation that graduate teachers have had the life experience of other administrative jobs to handle the workload associated with the first year of teaching. However, they do have full responsibility for student learning “from their first day in the classroom” (TEMAG, 2014, p. 34).

5.2.3: No Desire to Quit

Participants described feelings of stress, ‘reality-shock’ and difficulty managing their teaching workloads. However, participants added they had anticipated these challenges. Simon reflected “I think that first year was always going to be a steep learning curve.”

Alex, like the other participants, described being “thrown in the deep end”. Despite this, he stated that he considered himself “quite lucky” due to the support from his colleagues. However, it is worth noting that no participant described the desire to leave teaching in their first year. Alex summarised:

There wasn't a day I regretted going into teaching. There was [sic] hard days, but not a single point that I thought, oh maybe I made the wrong choice. I loved, I got home and even if it was a tough day, I still loved my job and quite glad that I picked it.

What the AITSL Standards do not outline, but is reflected in the description of quality teachers by Aston et al. (2018), is that they believe in and value teaching. Each participant described feeling overwhelmed by the realities of the classroom, but not one described a desire to quit the profession during these difficult times.

The closest reflection of the commitment to teaching in ITE courses is mirrored in Singapore's V3SK framework, which includes the “essential values (V), skills (S) and knowledge (K) needed by all pre-service teachers” (Tan, 2019, p. 231). As described in Chapter Two, ‘values’ in teacher education is a three-dimensional paradigm consisting of Learner-Centredness, Teacher Identity, and Service to the Profession, and forms the centre of Singapore's ITE goals (Tan, 2011, p. 27). Singaporean ITE courses instil an ethos of placing learners at the heart of teaching goals, establishing a sense of pride in the profession, striving for excellence beyond academic results with commitment and integrity, which in turn inspires others (Tan, 2011). While it might not be explicitly outlined in AITSL documents, the underlying values held by the participants in this study could reflect that which is taught in Singaporean ITE values education.

5.3 ITE Does Not Create ‘Classroom Ready’ Teachers

The second major theme revealed in the interviews was that participants did not perceive themselves to be fully prepared in terms of ‘classroom readiness’. This theme and its correlating subthemes are outlined in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3 Theme 2 ITE Does Not Create ‘Classroom Ready’ Teachers

Overarching Theme	Sub-Theme	Description
ITE preparation is not adequate in regards to making participants ‘classroom ready’	The participants described ITE as being a good starting point for their career.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than half of the participants felt they had a good base knowledge from ITE but it wasn’t enough for the reality of a classroom.
	ITE courses were described as not connecting to the realities of a classroom.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The level of detail expected in lesson programming in ITE is not realistic for full time teachers. • Classrooms are multi-ability, multi-behavioural and multi-age in the real world but limited exposure in ITE.
	ITE students’ perceptions of future employment led to lack of engagement in their ITE course.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lack of connection between what a ‘real classroom’ will be like and the content in ITE meant not all of the participants could get the most out of their courses.

ITE was described by participants as providing foundational content knowledge, with Charles stating it included “some good based theory”, and Alex reflecting it was “good for learning the curriculum and other bits”. As reported by McKenzie et al. (2013), only half of graduate primary school teachers found their ITE course very helpful or helpful in preparing them for the classroom. This perception is challenged by AITSL (2019b), where at least 91% of graduate teachers’ employers considered them well prepared from ITE. While the participants in this study described learning the basic theories of teaching and learning, the practical elements of their ITE were identified as the most beneficial. Further, the findings did not appear to correlate with AITSL (2019b). Charles explained that ITE courses:

Hammer into you differentiation and ‘no student learns the same’ but they didn’t really delve into how to cope with that. The theory of it is there, I know I need to do it, but I just don’t feel like I was ever really taught well enough how to do it. It felt like it was really surface level.

Additionally, some participants did not know the context of the school they would gain employment in, and described not taking advantage of the learning opportunities presented in ITE. Lana stated ITE prepared her in:

Just your everyday classroom, all the work [that] needs to get done, but it wasn’t about, like, what about the behaviours? We learned about ... make sure you build relationships with the children, how important that is and all that, but I don’t - it wasn’t - I guess I just didn’t link it to a school in [de-identified: low socioeconomic area], really.

Finally, while the participants did not describe themselves as ‘classroom ready’, most reflected that they did not expect to be completely ‘classroom ready’ upon ITE graduation. In Chapter One, the two ‘classroom ready’ time points as identified by both AITSL and DoEWA were outlined. As stated, this study employed the AITSL definition of ‘classroom ready’; that it commences from the completion of ITE and upon entry into the profession. However, the participants revealed that their

development of ‘classroom readiness’ appeared to align more closely to the DoEWA definition, occurring in the transition from ITE through the first years of teaching.

5.3.1: A Good Starting Point

Each participant described the foundational skills taught in ITE that supported their transition into teaching. Most also enjoyed their courses, with Zara stating:

Uni was really good. I did like uni, and then prac. Some of the things we learned, I did take on, but I think the main thing I learned from uni is how to be organised and how to forward plan ... They did the best they could with what they had. They did prepare me quite well. I feel like they've got the teaching side really well. You can only be taught so much and also in a short amount of time we are at uni.

Alex identified “behaviour management, lesson planning or planning in general and curriculum” as the most valuable components of his ITE course. These attitudes were reflected in Miles and Knipe’s (2018) study, which found that the majority of graduate teachers considered themselves “prepared as well as could be ... they understood that the complexity of the work of teaching is difficult to teach through university initial teacher education degrees” (p. 110). Simon described the role pre-service teachers have in maximising their ITE experiences. He stated:

Obviously with any course or any university course, there are going to be good moments and not so good moments, and it could - that comes down to people ... [university] ... Could have easily not prepared me, but I didn't let that happen and I think that that's the difference. Some people allow it to happen ... I put into it what I wanted to get out of it. There are plenty of students that don't attack their studies in that way, and wonder why they're not prepared. I think the university can only do so much.

According to AITSL Course Accreditation Standard 3.2, universities must incorporate both academic and non-academic components to the selection criteria of prospective ITE entrants (AITSL, 2015b). Simon’s description could also reflect the difficulties faced by universities in attracting high achieving candidates. As highlighted Sonnemann and Nolan (2019), “Australia’s brightest [post-secondary] students are increasingly rejecting teaching” (para. 2). Regardless of the minimum ATAR ranking of 70 required to enter ITE courses, the percentage of students that actually have an ATAR ranking of above 70 dropped significantly to 42% in 2015 (Goss & Sonneman, 2019; McGaw, 2016), and as low as 25% for those that have an ATAR ranking above 80 (Sonnemann & Nolan, 2019). ITE courses cannot be solely responsible in adequately preparing pre-service teachers to fully attain the complex competencies of the Graduate Teacher Standards. If the candidates themselves are not high academic achievers, what expectations can be placed on ITE? The impact of attracting high achievers into ITE remains consistent through the literature and mirrors some observations of participants in this study.

5.3.2 The Disconnect Between ITE and the Realities of the Classroom

Despite his own contributions to the success of his ITE course, Simon reflected:

My personal opinion is that no teacher's ready after any duration of initial teacher training. Whether I did four years or two years or one year, I think that first year was always going to be a steep learning curve.

Regardless of ITE course, participants differed in their perceptions of ITE preparation.

Charles described not being prepared for the classroom “at all”, while Zara added:

When I went and learned everything, I was like wow I can use that in my classroom, and then I went into my first year and I was like I can't use this, I've no time to use it ... [There are] ... some things I wish that [the ITE course] could improve on ... I do wish they'd supported me there.

Lana stated:

I remember we delved into a bit of behaviour management and those little things, but we never did any learning on trauma, or the extra things that come along with being in a school in [low socio-economic areas], and even that, at uni, you didn't really learn.

Simon perceived a large gap between ITE preparation and the realities of a classroom as especially prevalent in the expectations of planning and documentation:

When you're at uni and you have to write these massive lesson experience plans, and then daily work plans to the nth degree, it sets unrealistic expectations of what you can actually achieve when you're out in the real world ... Initially, when you're doing lesson experience plans they're three pages long, they're just unrealistic. For one lesson in one day, it takes longer to write the plan than it does to deliver the lesson. I think that sets you up to have this thing in your mind that when you go out into the real world that, if you didn't know better that, that's what you had to do ... That's where I think teachers get burned up because they don't have the knowledge of real world practices.

More than half of the participants described feeling unprepared for writing IEPs, a task that directly links to AITSL Standards 2, 3 and 4. Alex explained:

IEPs [weren't] something that I knew about, it wasn't something I really learnt a huge amount about, or got my head around.

Among the participants interviewed, differentiation was something more than half found challenging. Helen explained:

At uni, we mainly did assignments on one content descriptor, having to plan for one content descriptor. I only remember having to do one assignment [on it] ... It wasn't until my ATP where I was exposed to a Year 1/2 split class and how to basically navigate having to teach two different content descriptors at the same time ... So welcome to the start of the 2018 year, and all of a sudden, I'm teaching Year 4, 5, 6, and I was finding that I had to go back through my uni textbooks, which I have kept and I still have, to refer to ... how do you want me to teach this? Is it the same in upper primary as you would in junior primary?

As discussed previously, Buchanan et al. (2013) highlighted “coping with the clash between expectations of pre-service teaching and the realities of in-service teaching” (p. 113) as a key issue for graduate teachers. This clash potentially emerges from a deficit in ITE preparation. The description of a disconnect by Toon and Jensen (2017) mirrors some of the experiences of the participants in this study. The lack of “practical applicability ... [for graduate teachers means] ... that they are not ready

when they start teaching” (Toon & Jensen, 2017 p. 4). Further, the Australian ITE system needs to improve the connections between real-world practices and what is taught in ITE (Henderson et al., 2018; White et al., 2018). AITSL have led strong reforms to improve ITE courses through accreditation measures, including the need for providers to demonstrate “evidence of impact” (AITSL, 2017c). Yet, there is limited information surrounding the ITE course providers’ application of feedback of not only the graduate teachers, but the feedback of supervising teachers about the pre-service teachers’ skill deficits and strengths. This could be a valuable resource for course providers to ensure ‘classroom ready’ teachers in not only the AITSL-defined standards, but the day-to-day running of an efficient classroom while planning and catering to the needs of students.

In addition, the TPA has been implemented for ITE course graduates since 2018. This could provide greater insight into the quality of graduate teachers and the standard of their ITE courses. In this study, the TPA had not yet been enacted and as such the impacts of the assessment were not addressed by the participants.

5.3.3: Breadth of Teaching Opportunities Revealed in ITE

Helen explained that she did not expect to teach in a MAG classroom after her ITE. While Helen’s situation was uncommon, it was not unique. She felt unprepared for this teaching role by her ITE. Charles shared a similar experience:

When I was at university, I didn't think I would be teaching lower levels. So when we would look at the content for lower levels, I probably didn't put enough energy into learning those style or learning that content because I felt like it would never apply to me and here I am. That was obviously not a great choice ... [my] ...two pracs were both middle upper. I had no experience, no guidance with any year groups below Year 4 and I feel like that was a big gap in my education at university.

Charles admitted to not taking full advantage of his ITE because he assumed he would always teach in middle to upper primary contexts. This subtheme emerged in three of the interviews; participants were not necessarily aware of the ranging teaching possibilities available to them upon graduation. Lana stated:

When I was at uni, I probably didn't see myself working, maybe, in [a low socioeconomic school]. I kind of didn't really - didn't know where I'd be. So, I don't know if I'd be like, oh, I wasn't prepared enough from uni.

This phenomenon was described by Ure et al. (2017), who described the disengagement of ITE students from course content when it did not reflect their perceived future workplaces. Further, the difficulties faced by participants in “confronting and negotiating the gap between their expectations and reality” (Constantine, 2017, p. 32) in addition to the “complexity of the work of teaching [being] difficult to teach” in ITE (Miles & Knipe, 2018, p. 110) created issues for the participants in this study. The lived experience of teachers is what enables them to make effective judgements (Biesta, 2015; Hattie, 2003; Wringe, 2015). Any changes in the teaching context between

ITE practice and employment upon graduation can result in the loss of the only lived experience to make effective judgements, and be ‘classroom ready’ upon appointment in a contextually different school. This presents a challenge for graduate teachers to effectively satisfy the Graduate Teacher Standards. Thus, the question to be asked is whether graduate teachers can be fully ‘classroom ready’, given the vast range of school contexts. What responsibility do pre-service teachers have in preparing to teach in the range of classrooms they may hypothetically teach in, or is it through teaching practice that participants acquire the skills outlined in the Graduate Teacher Standards? Participants in this study did not know the types of classrooms they would teach in, nor did they get the opportunity to fully prepare for these teaching contexts, and therefore perceived themselves as unprepared.

5.3.4: Theory-heavy ITE Courses

Most participants described their ITE courses as theory-heavy, and missing important practical components required for the realities of teaching. As Charles stated:

A lot of what we did in uni just felt purely theoretical - in theory when you get this kid, in theory when you plan for maths.

Helen explained:

I think that the units heavily rely on people to be a certain type of learner ... [they] ... jammed way too much content into the one semester and to keep up with all that information just coming at you. It would be really full on. To be honest, I'm very surprised that I've actually remembered a few things from uni.

Hattie (2008) argued, “there is no set of essential experiences that must be taught, let alone a “correct” order for teaching students to become teachers” (p. 154). Instead, Hattie identified the need for teachers to be able to make judgements based on classroom evidence, something that is difficult to obtain in a decontextualized university classroom. He also noted:

Teacher education might be more successful if it placed more emphasis on learning and teaching strategies; on developing teachers’ conceptions of teaching as an evidence-based profession (learning from errors as much as from successes); creating an appraisal system that involves a high level of trust and dependence on observed or videotaped reflection/evaluation of practice; and providing beginning teachers with a range of different teaching methods to use when current ones do not work. (p. 176)

Since participants in this study identified a surplus of theory, rather than practical components in their ITE courses, Hattie’s (2008) recommendations could circumvent some of the issues uncovered in this study.

5.3.5 Participants did not Expect to be ‘Classroom Ready’

Despite ITE course accreditation being based upon on their ability to create ‘classroom ready’ teachers, no participants described feeling sufficiently prepared, nor did they expect to be. As Lana explained:

I don't think anything could have prepared me. I knew it was going to be hard. I went in being like, I'm ready. I was just like, bring it on, sort of thing, and it was. It was tough ... definitely harder than I thought, but I, deep down, was like, I'm ready for it. I was like, bring it on. It's going to be awful.

Miles and Knipe's (2018) study reflects this, citing that graduate teachers "understood that the complexity of the work of teaching is difficult to teach through university initial teacher education degrees" (p. 110). Perhaps it is only through teaching after ITE that graduate teachers can realistically apply theory and make effective judgements. Alternatively, a greater number of practicums may need to be included in ITE. It is necessary to determine whether graduate teachers can be 'classroom ready' without the experience of applying evidence-based judgements in the context they will ultimately teach.

5.4 Theme 3: Different Experiences with the Graduate Teacher Modules

The literature highlighted the importance of quality inductions in developing success and retention of graduate teachers (AITSL, 2016a; Broad & Evans, 2006; Driskell, 2019; Ghambir, Broad, Evans & Haskell, 2008; Hay Group, 2014). As of 2006, the Graduate Teacher Modules have formed a large component of the DoEWA induction program. The modules aim to build graduate teachers' skills, self-efficacy and understanding of the AITSL standards (DoEWA, 2019c). As the Graduate Teacher Modules have not yet been formally evaluated, the participants' experiences have not been compared to other findings. However, this study revealed that the overall content, delivery and homework requirements of the Graduate Teaching Modules were not necessarily perceived as beneficial by all participants. This theme and the corresponding subthemes are outlined in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4 Theme 3 Different Experiences with the Graduate Teacher Modules

Overarching Theme	Sub-Theme	Description
There were mixed experiences with the Graduate Teacher Modules	Module One perceived as similar to ITE: positive and negative responses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negative perceptions: content too similar to ITE, while the positive perception was it could be related it to their classroom.
	Content in Module One did not relate to participants' contexts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants integrated with a range of contexts but lacked connecting with others in similar contexts.
	The Module Two was considered beneficial.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very practical, relevant to their needs.
	There were differing benefits of the modules.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants enjoyed the practical elements of gaining TRBWA status, most referred to the networking as an enjoyable and positive element.
	In-between module tasks onerous.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some rushed the tasks without too much effort, others found them time consuming and stressful.

Module One was criticised for being too similar to ITE, lacking engaging content or being delivered to other graduate teachers who are in different contexts and/or stages of their professional development. Charles explained:

The first module felt a little bit like a rehash of uni ... You'd have the pre-primaries and year one teachers talking about things that they would do and the uppers would sit there like "That has no relevance to us at all".

By contrast, Alex stated:

It's things like extra strategies, which we might have learnt at uni, but jumping straight in to school, it might have been in the back of the mind and sort of forgot about. So, it's that refresher more than anything else.

Unlike the conflicting evaluations of Module One, Module Two was more widely regarded as beneficial. Its content was considered to have greater application and relevance to professional needs, including supporting the transition from Provisional to Full TRBWA Registration.

Participants added varied perspectives of the in-between module tasks. Overall, these homework tasks were not considered beneficial, primarily because they were stressful and time consuming. Helen reflected:

I hate [them]. Between Module One and Two, I had to complete this presentation thing on something... See, I can't remember? It makes you think, ah, how valuable was that if it doesn't stick? It was pretty burdensome.

Other participants described the homework tasks as lacking educational value since they could be completed without significant thought. Lana stated:

I think that when I got the [task], I looked at it and I was like, oh yeah, I think I'll do this, and I wrote it down at the time. So then, when I opened it up again, I was like, oh yeah. I'll do that ... [When asked if it was beneficial] ... not really.

Overall, the participants' opinions differed in relation to the first two Graduate Teacher Modules. However, the most beneficial aspect for participants was the opportunity to talk with other graduate teachers. Alex summarised:

The biggest thing that I've got out of it as well is talking to other peers that are in the same situation. How they've coped, what their situation is, how they've coped with it, different things like that. Because you can still learn off other teachers, but if they're more experienced, it's been a while since they've maybe gone through what you've gone through.

5.4.1: Contrasting Views of Module One.

Three participants described Module One as beneficial. They acknowledged the similarities of the content to ITE, and remarked on the relevance and purpose of the content in a real-world context. As Charles explained:

It built a lot on the university preparation ... [but] ... because you can bring your own experience to the modules, and other people bring their own experiences, it felt a lot easier to

relay it back to the classroom. Take a kid from your class right now, apply these steps to them, what would you do. It's so much easier to look at different strategies and different approaches when you have that real example waiting for you back in the classroom to go and test it on. You have people giving you real examples as well. It's almost like the theory of uni but you've got that real-life application already which makes it better.

Lana described:

The first one, I was not into. I actually can't even remember what it was about ... It was a bit of sort of like, oh, it's not really relevant to me, is what I felt. It was very much like, let's all share our experiences, and let's all talk about everything. No one was from anywhere, sort of, low socioeconomic area, so I just felt like everything everyone was saying was not relevant. I just felt like this is a waste of my time. A lot of whingeing, a lot of people saying, oh, I didn't get any support, this is horrible, blah, blah, blah. I was like listening, and going, I've got lots of support. I'm dealing with other problems than like, you know, your principal telling you, you can't use the internet for a day, and things like that.

Similarly, Helen reflected:

[When] they're talking about planning or curriculum or whatever, they're always targeted towards single stream or split class, and they don't understand the MAG context. You feel like - just like left aside, discarded kind of thing.

All graduate teachers in WA are required to complete the same Graduate Teacher Modules, regardless of the school demographics, whole-school processes or the specific professional learning needs of the teachers themselves. By contrast, in NSW schools provide targeted graduate professional learning, and as such it can be catered specifically to their needs (NSWDoE, 2019b). This customised approach is advocated by Broad and Evans (2006) and the OMoE (2018), who noted that in Ontario, professional learning to support all teachers is located within a “professional growth” paradigm and as such, tailors professional learning to each graduate teacher. While the AITSL Standards reflect this, with levels of progression outlined across domains from Graduate to Lead teacher, the ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to professional learning for graduate teachers in WA may not be the most effective application of ongoing graduate professional learning.

5.4.2: Module Two is Beneficial

In contrast to Module One, all participants concurred that Module Two was beneficial. For three participants, the module was helpful due to its practicality. Alex noted it supported graduate teachers to “build up that portfolio” (Simon) and assisted them to transition from Provisional to Full TRBWA registration. Charles explained:

That was the most enlightening and beneficial two days I have had because it really looked at what was expected from us. It was really clear. The format that we need to go through and how the process works for us and be signed off for full registration - because that's essentially our goal as a graduate. We want to get our Full Registration.

Module Two was also considered beneficial because, as Charles stated, it was “really tailored, almost like an induction to the Department”.

Since ITE courses aim to prepare pre-service teachers to work in the Independent, Catholic and/or DoEWA systems, it is unlikely most ITE units would cover elements specific to the government system in sufficient detail. As such, Module Two appeared to provide the targeted professional learning DoEWA graduate teachers required, mirroring the customised and contextual elements of the NSWDoE 5C model (2019b).

5.4.3: In-Between Module Tasks of Little Perceived Benefit

Graduate teachers were expected to complete homework tasks between Modules. Participants were divided over the impact these in-between module tasks had on their workload. Some described indifference for the tasks, as Alex stated:

it's homework that we're doing in class anyway, it's just gathering the evidence to then take it to the next module ... [the tasks] ... take a bit of reflection and zone in on what you should be doing and are doing, but maybe not giving much thought process to.

Charles explained:

I didn't do probably [the in-between module tasks] to the best of my ability because it wasn't a priority for me ... so it was a little bit of extra work and probably not really that beneficial ... It has not been a priority ... if I gave it the time and energy but it feels like homework that we shouldn't need to do ... It's extra ... [and] ... from what you could gaze around the room nobody gave it the time that I think the Department of Education anticipated.

Completing the in-between module tasks contributed to Charles's stress levels and low self-efficacy:

It's frustrating because my priority should be my current classroom ... [I felt] ... Anxiety and only because it's part of a growing list of tasks that I will never, ever, ever, ever, ever finish. My priority shouldn't be completing all these extra things on top of what I'm already doing. It feels really stressful to add it onto everything else that we need to be doing.

While the in-between module tasks were not considered a burden by all, their value was unanimously questioned. However, this finding appeared to be at odds with the literature. In Singapore, the increased opportunity for pre-service teachers to connect their theoretical learning in ITE to practical experience was described as a critical contributing factor to Singapore's successful teachers. Additionally, Toon and Jensen (2017) described the fragmentation between ITE, professional experience and professional learning as a key issue for graduate teachers in Australia.

While the Graduate Teacher Modules are part of post-ITE professional learning, the structure of applying theory to real-world contexts is shared with Singapore's ITE approach. Theoretically, the in-between module tasks should provide a clear link for the participants to apply evidence-based theory to their classroom. Teachers are then given the opportunity to reflect on the success or failure of the approach with their peers, via professional learning seminars provided during school hours. Despite the literature supporting this approach, the participants cited already heavy workload as

inhibiting its success, added to their stress levels. Increased time provision to complete the tasks, or the structure of the tasks themselves, could improve the impact of the Graduate Teacher Modules.

5.4.4: The Benefits of Networking with Other Graduate Teachers

While participants' perceptions of the modules differed, so too did their opinions of the benefit of each of them. For some, simply a break from the pressures of the classroom was valuable. As Charles reflected:

On a probably more selfish level, it's a two-day break from the classroom. It's two days I can mentally have a little bit of relaxation, whilst also working on my teaching skills.

Other participants described benefiting from revisiting of teaching strategies and ideas from their ITE courses. Zara stated:

I like them and I see the purpose of them. I learned a couple of things. There are some teaching strategies that I learned from it. Some of the visible learning things, I think that was great.

Participants agreed that the opportunity to talk to other graduate teachers was the most beneficial aspect of the modules. Zara reflected "talking about your experiences with other participants was the best thing about it". Similarly, Helen explained:

[The Modules are] really beneficial because I can go there and talk to other participants who are in the same boat as me ... being able to talk to other grad teachers and who you realise that - ah, this is normal. These feelings are normal. These workload issues or how you plan things is normal. It's quite reassuring.

Participants' experiences in building professional relationships contributed positively to their valuing of the Graduate Teacher Modules, and it in turn, enhanced their self-efficacy. This sentiment is reflected in the literature. Gutiérrez (2018) highlighted in a study "conducted on more than eight thousand teachers, having a sense of community was the greatest predictor of teachers' self-efficacy" (p. 33). Furthermore, Buchanan et al. (20013) stated that a supportive environment which values and welcomes new teachers:

contributes to their professional learning as well as their sense of collegiality and belonging in ... the profession more widely ... Under these conditions [participants] are likely to become better at teaching more quickly (p. 124).

In summary, interviews revealed that the content, structure and differentiation of the Graduate Teacher Modules need further development in order to improve the overall perception of their value. However, the positive networking experiences reported by participants, reveals that the mere existence of the Graduate Teacher Modules provides benefits that support graduate teachers.

5.5 Theme 4: In-Class Coaching Program had Limited Support or Benefit

All participants commented on the In-Class Coaching Program, whether directly themselves

or indirectly through feedback via colleagues or peers in other schools. The interviews revealed that despite some positive elements provided by the program, it did not support the participants. This major theme and its subthemes are outlined in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5 Theme 4 In-Class Coaching Program was Not Effective

Overarching Theme	Sub-Theme	Description
In-Class Coaching Program was not considered entirely beneficial or supportive	For those who had participated, there were some positive elements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The benefit of having someone external from the school to touch base with.
	Participants decided against In-Class Coaching because of colleagues' negative experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peers had completed it and did not recommend.
	Ultimately, the In-Class Coaching was not beneficial and caused stress and extra work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The coaches added pressure or workload to the participants.

Participants reflected that it either added to their workload, or it did not align with their professional learning needs. Lana stated:

It's just an added stress at the moment ... It's just an added thing I don't think I should have committed to.

Helen explained:

I've chosen not to do that, because the time factor. How is that going to fit into my - the 24 hours that I have in day? My colleague completed the In-Class Coaching and she - it was very overwhelming for her.

5.5.1: In-Class Coaching Program: Positive Elements

Both Lana and Simon had completed the In-Class Coaching Program, and were encouraged to participate in the program by leaders within their school. Simon stated:

I had heard about it ... I kind of avoided in my first year and I was intent on avoiding it in my second year as well but my Principal brought it up ... I've started this semester. Once again I kind of feel like it's good - I think it would be good for certain people. I think it's nice to have someone to chat to about things that are happening in the classroom, and sometimes it's nice to have that outside contact. It's nice to have a person that's not judgmental and remains confidential with what you tell them.

Lana received useful assistance from her coach in developing her portfolio for Full Registration and identifying the relevant AITSL standards:

She's highlighted a few of them for me. So, I was like, that's good. She sent that to me, so I'm like, if I get anything out of this it will be that, which is really useful. Because she's like, it sounds like you've done 4.2, and 4.1, and ... I was like, great. She's like, you've covered that, you've covered that, which is awesome. So, it's like, doing things without me knowing.

AITSL (2016b) described a lack of support as a fundamental reason for graduate teachers leaving the profession. McKinnon (2016) explained that many potential coaches or mentor teachers

“do not have the time to take on any additional work” (para. 11). As such, the provision of a paid coach to support graduate teachers could also help alleviate the workloads of other DoEWA teachers working alongside graduates.

5.5.2: In-Class Coaching Program: Negative Elements

Employing professional graduate support coaches is in line with best practice (Buchanan et al., 2013; Klassen & Tze, 2014; McCray, 2017; McKinnon, 2016; OECD, 2005). However, the experiences of study participants who enrolled suggested otherwise. Aside from the opportunity to have a confidential conversation, Simon explained that it was not relevant to his teaching practice:

I had to complete a reflection checklist in the first phone call. Then the second one we had to set a goal to achieve. That is lovely, but I'm not finding it very beneficial ... Questions like “How does that make you feel?”, I find them a little bit irrelevant. I don't know if it's me being cynical.

Unlike Lana, Simon had already completed his portfolio for his TRBWA registration, and therefore stated his coach was “trying to invent things for [him] to do”. He stated that his coach:

realised that I had already finished doing my progression to proficient, so I didn't need her help on my portfolio ... [because of this, I feel]... like she's trying to come up with things for me to do so she could be useful to me, but it's adding to my workload ... I just felt like it was extra pressure.

Similarly, Lana felt pressure when interacting with her coach:

I don't think I realised what was involved. Maybe just my lady's really full-on ... she emails me lots of things all the time, and I have to read all this stuff. I don't know ... She's coming to watch me next week, and I have to choose which strategy she's going to be watching me on. She's sent me, like, I reckon 12 PDF documents, all different strategies, and she wants to meet an hour before, an hour after, and I'm now just in that point of, damn, I regret this, because it's just a bit much. I'm looking at it like, this is annoying ... Then she called again and checked in to see if I'd put all those things in place, which I hadn't because it had been two weeks. I was like, no, I haven't done that in two weeks. I'm dealing with other stuff too ... I wish I'd just left it a bit longer ... Because I've got heaps of time, not heaps of time, to do my portfolio, but I'll get there.

By definition, the role of an in-class coach is to provide guidance and support for professional self-reflection. While this form of support could benefit some graduate teachers, it is important to note that it is provided in exchange of graduate teachers' time. In this study, this use of time burdened the participants, who described their coaches as possibly justifying their roles through the creation of extra work for the participants. Further, it is imperative to ensure the coaches are purposefully assigned to specific graduate teachers. This was addressed in VDET's (2016) mentoring guidelines, which stated that “the ways in which mentors and their beginning teachers are selected and paired has an impact on the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship” (p. 45).

Mentor pairings that considered local contexts, taking into account the beginning teacher's strengths and limitations and the ability of mentor and beginning teacher to get along both

personally and professionally, were crucial to the success of mentoring relationships. (VDET, 2016, p. 45)

Further, the VDET guidelines identify detrimental impacts mentors could have on graduate teachers, mirroring the experiences of Simon and Lana. According to VDET (2016), mentors can “misread the needs of their beginning teacher, or [are] unwilling. . . to offer sufficient challenge to stretch their colleague’s current levels of knowledge and expertise” (p. 48). Further investigation into the pairing processes of graduate teachers with in-class coaches could provide greater insight into the prevalence of this theme among other DoEWA graduate teachers.

5.5.3: Participants Had Heard of Negative Experiences

While two participants had engaged with the In-Class Coaching Program, the other participants shared their colleagues’ negative experiences. Helen described “a lot of work involved” for her colleague as:

it was very good and very beneficial to her, but I could see how stressed it made her, and just seeing how stressed she was, I decided that I didn't want to do it, because I didn't want that added pressure, added more work.

Similarly, Zara explained:

I did speak to another graduate at my school and she didn't like it very much and it took up a lot of her time.

Overall, while the In-Class Coaching Program was described as containing useful elements, there was a common perception that it added to graduate teachers’ workload and stress. This led to the participants avoiding the In-Class Coaching Program because of the negative experiences of their colleagues. Rather than supporting graduate teachers, the program appears to be adding to their first year burdens.

5.6 Theme 5: Unofficial Mentors More Supportive than School Leaders

The fifth major theme revealed in the interviews was that support from the school leadership team was less effective or consistent than the support given by unofficial mentors. This theme and its corresponding subthemes is outlined in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5 Theme 5 Unofficial Mentors More Supportive than School Leaders

Overarching Theme	Sub-Theme	Description
The support was expected to come from administration, but it came from unofficial mentors	Support was expected to come from administration, and was initially identified as the graduate entitlements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The participants first described the entitlements they received when describing support. Some referred to the lack of support that came from administration.
	For those that had them, the official mentor was a leader within the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only three of the six participants had been assigned a mentor, who was a member of the leadership team (Deputy).
	Unofficial mentors took the role of supporting and guiding. Some participants had to create their own ‘pseudo-mentor’.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All six participants had an unofficial mentor- four of which relied on the teacher next door or with the same year level. Two of the six participants found mentors outside their school community- either through friends or social media communities.
	Collaborative teachers best form of support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The best support came from other teachers working in similar contexts to the participants- either within the school or externally.

Driskell (2019) reported that top-performing education systems, such as Ontario, “recognize that even after completing pre-service training, new teachers need structured support from trained mentors” (para. 1). DoEWA guidelines suggest that as a part of the AITSL mandated induction, schools should adopt mentoring policies to support graduate teachers (DoEWA, 2019b). However, despite being embedded in the School Education Act Employees' (Teachers and Administrators) General Agreement (2017), the provision of mentors varied among study participants. Some were assigned ‘official’ mentors, in the form of a line manager or other leadership/administration team members in the school. Alex stated:

I've got an official mentor within the school, who's the deputy, who was a Year 4 teacher and deputy last year, and she's just deputy this year. So, she's down as my official mentor, and I can go to her about stuff ... [however] ... there's no real point where I'll sit down with my mentor and have an official meeting.

Other participants sourced their own mentor. This was often a team-teacher who worked alongside the participants or in the adjacent classroom. Charles described:

Colleagues and the other teachers were so much more supportive and open and able to offer solutions for issues that I had, that that was my first point of call and generally that would solve an issue for me.

Yet Simon and Helen, who described the difficulty of finding one specific mentor in their school, identified the combination of colleagues, teacher-friends, or even the Instagram teaching community as assuming the role of a mentor. Simon explained:

There's not really a person that I think, wow, that's the kind of teacher I want to be like. There's not really that person at my school. For me, I think it's better for me to take bits and pieces from lots of different people, and so invent my pseudo-mentor if you will.

Irrespective of the provision of a mentor, participants expressed an expectation of leadership support. When initially recounting support provided to them, each participant first acknowledged the school leadership team. This is in line with DoEWA (2019e), who state that school leaders are those who should “ensure that early career teachers are given opportunities to thrive and achieve Full Registration with the TRBWA” (p. 3). When Simon was asked about the support he was provided, he immediately reflected that his principal:

made sure that I got all of my entitlements, so grad allowance, extra allocation, time to go off to [PL], forwarding me PLs that might be of interest to me.

Three participants described both expecting and receiving adequate support from the school leadership team, through either the principal or deputy. Alternatively, two participants revealed having no substantial interaction with their leadership team and as such, described feeling unsupported. Charles reflected:

Admin weren't even there for me. I don't feel like I was given the time to be inducted as a new staff member or viewed as a graduate and then offered extra support in terms of school policies and processes, school expectations as a teacher.

The interviews revealed that all participants benefited from mentoring programs regardless of the form they took. Participants also considered the most supportive element of their induction to be collaboration with an experienced teacher, rather than a formal mentor. Further, while support from peers was considered greatly beneficial and educative, those who felt supported by the school leadership team described experiences that enhanced their self-efficacy than those who didn't.

5.6.1: Support was Expected to Come from School Leaders

Participants referred to the commitment of their school's leadership team when initially identifying the provision of support in their first year of teaching. This included principals' levels of flexibility in allocating the Graduate Teacher Entitlements. Permission to attend the Graduate Teacher Modules was considered an essential support, as well as being granted Graduate Release Time, as allocated to all DoEWA graduate teachers. Lana explained:

I had grad time, which I think every grad gets ... The entitlement you're meant to get, and I got all of it, which is good. I didn't have to ask or anything ... They'd schedule it in within the term. So, they'd be like, oh, in week 5 you can have two hours in the morning on a Tuesday, and they'd put that in.

Lana, Charles and Helen described the difficulty of negotiating the Graduate Release Time. As Charles explained:

I was given my Graduate Release Time reluctantly by one deputy and very gratefully by an acting deputy.

By contrast, Alex, Simon and Zara were freely granted their release time, and each used the time to write student reports and their TRBWA portfolios. DoEWA (2019b) states that principals must ensure their graduate teachers attend the Graduate Teacher Modules, and it is compulsory for them to provide funded release time for their graduates. Thus, it is to be expected that each participants' principal upheld the formal requirements of induction.

While the provision of graduate release time was acknowledged as a form of support, only four participants described having any active support from school leadership. Simon explained:

My principal is also very welcoming and encouraging, and also full of knowledge and experience, so I've been lucky to have her support where there are some schools where you don't really get that ... Because she's so approachable, because we are a small school that certainly has helped me in getting that. She made sure that I got all of my entitlements, so grad allowance, extra allocation, time to go off to [PL], forwarding me PLs that might be of interest to me. Basically, I could walk into her office any time I like and have a chat to her, and she's always got the chair ready for you to sit in. I think she's been willing to help that learning. She's been willing to provide extra resources, and she's also been willing to listen and provide advice and so on.

However, Charles described a lack of leadership support:

I was disappointed in was the fact that admin didn't take the time to come and watch me teach and give me feedback. I've never had an induction ... No checking in, no extra support, no guidance unless I sought it ... If the deputy came into my classroom it wasn't to watch me teach, it was to give me a message. It was never solely for the fact to benefit my teaching ... I feel like I should be viewed as a graduate, I was a graduate, and there should have been some support there, the school should have made that choice. It should be something admin need to consider at all schools ... Graduate teachers need support ... the teacher side of things is where I'm new and so it shouldn't matter if I'm 20, 30, 55 - a graduate is a graduate and the school needs to remember that ... to walk me through those issues that I may have been having with student behaviour or with making sure my planning and assessment were at a level they should have been - that should have all come from admin.

Overall, each participant expected leadership support, especially as it is mandated by AITSL and DoEWA. Whether the participants were aware of the mandate, their responses indicated that not all school leaders were forthcoming in providing this support. For those that did not perceive sufficient leadership support, experiences of low self-efficacy were more prevalent than those who had. This phenomenon is supported by the literature (Buchanan et al., 2013; Gutiérrez, 2018; Hay Group, 2014; Kutsyruba, Godden & Tregunna, 2014; McCray, 2017), where principals and deputy principals are identified as key role models for a school's ethos in providing support for graduate teachers.

5.6.2: Official Mentors Were School Leaders

Three participants were provided an official mentor. However, their perceptions of a mentor differed from AITSL's guidelines. DoEWA (2019e) cites AITSL's induction requirements in their handbook for school leaders, stating that simple or sporadic check-ins on a graduate teacher's wellbeing, and impromptu conversations do not count as mentoring (AITSL, 2016a). Despite this, participants considered a member of the leadership team as an 'official mentor', even if the mentorship was informal. Alex's official mentor was his deputy principal:

I've had meetings with her about other things, but not necessarily officially or directly about my mentoring. I'll go in and ask her about IEPs or she'll go over them with me once I've done them, or reports and that kind of thing. But that's not necessarily booking in a time per say, it's just if she's free, I'll just go in and say do you mind if I, or send her an email and just go do you mind if I just pop in and quickly go over that. IEPs and also report comments as well.

Line managers and the school leadership team are highly capable of effectively supporting graduate teachers. School leaders often have high levels of experience with the curriculum, behaviour management practices, and DoEWA policies and strategies. In addition, the leadership team has the ability to implement changes to the support structures provided to graduate teachers at a school level, such as assigning mentors, reducing responsibilities or teaching load, and identifying quality professional learning opportunities. The induction policy of graduate teachers in NSW reflects this flexibility where it is the duty of the principal to ensure proper induction processes are implemented, and their funding is dependent on it. Principals ensure "beginning teachers have reduced responsibilities or teaching loads sufficient to support the development of their skills" (NSWDoE, 2019a, para. 5). A reduced responsibility load or face-to-face teaching time for graduate teachers could support them in overcoming many of the difficulties uncovered in this study.

It is within the power of the leadership team to directly support graduate teachers, to formally work with them to identify their specific needs, and implement actions accordingly. Structuring a more formal mentor relationship in line with AITSL's recommendations could provide better support for graduate teachers.

5.6.3: Unofficial Mentors Provided Best Support

Participants who were provided an official mentor described having 'open-door' policies, but it was still perceived as less accessible. Lana stated:

You'd need their assistance when they wouldn't be there, and then they'd come in and watch you and be like, oh, you need to do this, this, and this, and you're kind of like, but you haven't watched me in a few weeks and seen what I've been doing.

Unofficial mentors were revealed to be far more beneficial to all participants, especially teachers working in the same year level, or in the adjacent classroom. Alex explained:

The main person I speak to is another Year 4 teacher, mainly because she's there with me and we do the same things. We have chats most days, not just me asking her questions, but just having conversations about where we're at in terms of the curriculum and teaching it.

Charles also described being dependent on the unofficial mentor within his school. He explained that he:

relied really heavily on the other teacher who I shared a lot of the planning and assessing with ... Someone who I could talk to and bounce back and forth from and have a debrief at the end of the day - so essentially someone who I think provided me with a little bit of extra support purely probably because we worked so closely together.

The experiences of study participants appeared to contradict the claim by McKinnon (2016), who stated that experienced teachers “do not have time to take on any additional work” (para. 11). Participants described in great detail the quality of support provided by mentors who were not allocated any extra time to do so. By following the lead of NSWDoE (2019a) and providing teacher mentors with “access to specific training and flexibility in their teaching responsibilities to support classroom observation and provide structured feedback” (para. 7), there could be significant improvements to the support of graduate teachers in WA, as well to as the classroom teachers best placed to support them.

5.6.4: Participants Created Their own “Pseudo-Mentors”

Two participants could not access an unofficial mentor within their schools. Despite his principal encouraging him to find one, Simon explained the difficulty of doing so:

Being at a small school I would say that there's not really a teacher that is, oh that's the wow teacher. Do you know what I mean? I think some schools have those teachers where they're the guru. They know a lot of information and they're so ready to help people. I don't think there's really that person at my school at the moment. We don't have any Level 3 teachers. We've got a few senior teachers, but they're coming towards the end of their career and some of them are part-time.

Instead, Simon “was having to use my outside of school resources a little bit more.” Finding a mentor meant he had to “take bits and pieces from lots of different people” to create, as he termed it, a ‘pseudo-mentor’.

Similarly, Helen similar difficulties and described the stronger support she received from the online teaching community on Instagram. She explained:

They share lesson ideas or resources or a sale on TPT or a sale at Blake Education or Elizabeth Richards. That is very valuable ... There's a few teachers, actually, who are technology teachers, and they'll quite often jump on there, and they'll explain this app that they use in the class and how they can use it ... Because I'm so isolated, I think I find that very valuable ... [it's] another source of professional development. I can talk to teachers who are in the same context with teaching MAG classes, as well, and find out what they're doing and what's working for them and what's not working for them. So I think that's very valuable.

There is limited research into the levels of support provided by online teacher communities such as Instagram. However, it is well documented that support for graduate teachers comes from all stakeholders (colleagues, administrators, mentors, peers and parents), and central to teacher retention (Buchanan et al., 2013; Kutsyuruba, Godden & Tregunna, 2014; McCray, 2017). Furthermore, Buchanan et al. (2013) outlined that graduate teachers who “find themselves in supportive environments: valued and welcomed by colleagues; supported by a proactive mentor; and regularly assisted by experienced teachers” (p. 124) not only improve their self-efficacy, but also contribute more to their schools.

The importance of all forms of support is strongly reflected in the participant interviews in this study. Feeling included in the collegiate community, discussing lessons and ideas with the ‘teacher next door’ and receiving non-judgmental feedback from colleagues were aspects each participant described as contributing positively to their self-efficacy and professional development. Further, not one participant expressed the desire to quit the profession. Ultimately, any form of mentor was perceived to be highly beneficial. As such, the connection between mentoring, official or not, and the retention and self-efficacy of participants was clear.

5.7 Summary of Findings

The emergent themes from the interviews revealed that the participants in this study felt overwhelmed and stressed, and suffered ‘reality-shock’ in their first year of teaching. Participants cited a steep learning curve transitioning from ITE into professional teaching, with high workloads impacting their self-efficacy.

ITE courses were described as providing good theoretical knowledge, but participants did not perceive themselves to be fully prepared for the realities of teaching upon graduation. They named practical units as the most beneficial components of ITE, but importantly, ITE did not provide professional experiences contextually similar to the participants’ first teaching positions, adding to their sense of ‘reality-shock’.

Despite the best intentions of DoEWA support programs, including the Graduate Teacher Modules and In-Class Coaching, many of the participants described them as either added burdens on their workloads, or to be lacking in applicable and contextually relevant professional learning. A more customised and flexible, school-based approach to professional learning for graduate teachers, in line with NSW and Ontario, could provide improvements in this area.

While a few schools provided formal induction for participants, including an official mentor from the leadership team, all participants identified collaborative colleagues as providing the greatest support. Where participants could not access one specific mentor figure, a ‘pseudo-mentor’ was created through a combination of several mentors, or the online Instagram community.

Regardless of the perceived quality or absence of relevant ITE preparation, DoEWA support programs or the guidance of the school leadership teams, not one study participant expressed the

desire to quit teaching altogether. It became apparent through the interviews that ‘reality-shock’ did not directly lead to attrition of the participants in their first year of teaching. McKinnon (2016) stated “one of the simplest ways to support teachers in schools is through mentoring” (para. 9). In this study, the value of quality mentoring relationships was revealed to be the key factor of the self-efficacy of primary graduate DoEWA teachers.

5.8 Answering the Research Questions

This thesis asked the following research question:

Question 1 – Following the introduction of the AITSL and DoEWA reforms designed to support graduate teachers, how do primary graduate DoEWA teachers describe their ‘classroom readiness’ and the support provided to them in their initial year of teaching?

Participants in this study did not consider themselves ‘classroom ready’ upon graduation from ITE, nor did they expect to be. Formal support mechanisms, including official mentors, Graduate Teacher Modules and In-Class Coaching, while of some value, were considered less effective than informal supports, such as collaborative relationships with colleagues. Participants identified regular discussions, feedback, support and collaboration with informal mentors as the most beneficial element during their first year of teaching. It would appear from the experiences of this study’s participants, that graduate teachers may still not feel ‘classroom ready’ despite recent reforms.

The thesis then sought to answer three secondary research questions:

Secondary Research Question 1 - How do primary graduate DoEWA teachers describe their ‘classroom readiness’ in relation to their ITE courses?

While no participants described feeling ‘classroom ready’ upon graduation, perceptions of their individual competency deficits varied. For those who had worked in a professional environment before, the ability to manage time and administrative tasks was easier. Those who commenced teaching in similar contexts to their final teaching practice also described feeling more prepared. Most of the participants felt overwhelmed by the development of IEPs for their students, as well as reporting and managing behaviour. McKenzie et al. (2013) noted prior to AITSL reforms that only half of graduate teachers considered themselves prepared for the classroom, particularly in the aspects cited by the participants in this study. However, AITSL (2019b) highlighted an improvement in graduate teachers’ perceptions of ‘classroom readiness’ in 2017, with between 81% and 86% of graduate teachers reporting that ITE had prepared them for employment. Overall, participants in this study still described their ITE coursework as largely theoretical and lacking in practical application,

except when describing their practicum experiences. Again, no participant reported feeling fully 'classroom ready' upon ITE graduation.

Secondary Research Question 2 - How do the primary graduate DoEWA teachers describe the quality of support provided by the Graduate Teacher Modules in terms of building 'classroom readiness'?

While participants did not perceive themselves as 'classroom ready' upon commencing teaching, they did describe feeling more advanced in their professional learning than what was provided in Module One. The benefits of the Graduate Teacher Modules included establishing professional connections, sharing experiences with other graduates and preparing for TRBWA Full Registration, rather than improving their 'classroom readiness' per se. It was revealed that the Graduate Teacher Modules could deliver greater support and professional growth for graduate teachers if a selection of differentiated modules was provided. While participants identified deficits in the Graduate Teacher Modules, their mere existence provided some indirect benefits, such as interacting with other graduates, and providing the opportunity to have a break from the classroom. Thus, the Graduate Teacher Modules make a qualified contribution to the support of graduate teachers, their self-efficacy and retention.

Secondary Research Question 3 - How do primary graduate DoEWA teachers describe the support provided through the In-Class Coaching Program in terms of building 'classroom readiness'?

Overall, participants described challenges in relation to the In-Class Coaching Program. Despite the best intentions of the coaches, and an opportunity to build on their professional portfolios, both participants who had engaged in the program did not describe it as supportive. Instead, each found the program added to their workloads and built stress, without contributing to their 'classroom readiness'. However, it should be noted that these conclusions are only founded on the direct experiences of two participants, in addition to indirect comments by others. Thus, this conclusion is only based on the evidence and small sample size in this study.

5.9 Recommendations for Future Practice

Based upon the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made for supporting first year DoEWA primary graduate teachers. These recommendations are presented in an order that relates to the secondary research questions.

Recommendation One – Greater Collaboration between ITE Providers and Professional Experience Mentor Teachers

ITE providers should seek and apply feedback from professional experience mentor teachers on the strengths and weaknesses among pre-service teachers during their professional practices.

Since the AITSL reforms, ITE course providers must ensure undergraduate pre-service teachers complete at least 80 days of professional practice, and 60 days for postgraduate ITE students. During this time, pre-service teachers work closely with their professional experience mentor teachers, while in communication with an ITE supervisor. While both ITE supervisors and professional experience mentor teachers assess pre-service teachers, there is limited evidence of the use of these assessments to address overarching deficits in ITE provision (Henderson et al., 2018; White et al., 2018). Since graduate teachers in this study did not perceive themselves to be ‘classroom ready’ upon completion of ITE, it would be valuable to have a direct feedback mechanism from professional experience mentor teachers to ITE providers to ensure the honest articulation of pre-service teachers’ strengths and weaknesses in the formation of future ITE content. In Singapore, education policy is “informed by both formal collection of data as well as less formalised data collection, such as via good ground knowledge of practices and needs in schools through in-depth understanding of the landscape via visits and focus-group discussions with different stakeholders in education” (Poon, 2011, p. 18). Such a system could be introduced in WA, whereby recommendations from the professional experience mentor teachers be formative in the structure of ITE content and improve the quality of ITE graduates.

Recommendation Two – Reduce Responsibilities and Face-to-Face Teaching Load in the first year of teaching

DoEWA should consider giving graduate teachers reduced face-to-face teaching time, as well as reduced responsibilities in the school, in their first year of teaching.

Graduate teachers in this study were not ‘classroom ready’ upon graduation. It may be that only the lived experience of teachers enables them to make effective judgements (Biesta, 2015; Hattie, 2003; Wringe, 2015), and there is no guarantee a graduate teacher would have the requisite quality experience teaching in a context similar to their first school of employment. It is therefore through mentored professional practice that a graduate teacher can transition into effectively demonstrating all of the AITSL Graduate Standards and therefore be considered truly ‘classroom ready’. For this to occur, this study recommends that all graduate teachers in WA be given a mandated reduced teaching load, in line with induction processes in NSW. While DoEWA currently offers Graduate Release Time as part of its Graduate Teacher Entitlements, as revealed by the participants in this study, it is granted at the discretion of the school leaders. In NSW, “beginning teachers have

reduced responsibilities or teaching loads sufficient to support the development of their skills” (NSW, 2019a, para. 5). By reducing the responsibilities and face-to-face teaching time of a graduate teacher in their first year, it could reduce ‘reality-shock’ and stress, while providing time to adjust to the school context. In addition, it would allow for maximum participation in the Graduate Teacher Modules, and provide time to refine administrative procedures, such as IEPs and reports, that become faster with experience.

Recommendation Three – Differentiate the Graduate Teacher Modules

DoEWA should provide differentiated Graduate Teacher Modules to support the varying contexts, needs and abilities of graduate teachers.

In Ontario, Broad and Evans (2006) noted that professional learning is located within a “professional growth” paradigm rather than the more traditional “deficit” paradigm. An assumption that all graduate teachers in WA have the same “deficits” is not conducive to professional growth, and there are dramatically varied school contexts in which graduate teachers are employed. The VDET provides “the Graduate Teacher Learning Series – an online professional learning series designed to address specific graduate needs, reflect graduate voice and encourage development of professional networks” (p. 8). DoEWA could adopt this approach to professional learning for graduate teachers, while maintaining the positive impacts experienced in the current face-to-face model. This could be achieved by providing a suite of differentiated Graduate Teacher Modules, whereby graduate teachers and their mentors work collaboratively to select appropriate modules according to their professional needs.

Recommendation Four –In-Class Coaching Program Review

DoEWA should review the purpose, quality and impact of the In-Class Coaching Program on graduate teachers in WA.

The intention of the In-Class Coaching Program is to provide graduates with a personalised professional learning experience facilitated by a trained teaching and learning advocate from the Institute for Professional Learning (DoEWA, 2019c). In addition, this is supported by the literature which suggests high performing education systems “recognize that even after completing pre-service training, new teachers need structured support from trained mentors” (Driskell, 2019, para. 1). Thus, the employment of professional coaches to support graduate teachers should be an effective support tool, but this was not the case for study participants. As previously noted, this finding is based on the direct experiences of two participants, in addition to indirect comments by a relatively small sample size. Despite the limitations of this finding, it is still pertinent, as AITSL (2016b) highlighted that heavy workloads were a major contributor to graduate teacher attrition. If the very mechanisms designed to support graduate teachers add significantly to their stress and workloads, DoEWA must

“subject it to the same scrutiny found in other research studies about teachers and schools” (Hattie, 2008, p. 155), and revise the In-Class Coaching Program to suit those it intends to serve.

Recommendation Five – Support Peer-Mentoring Relationships

In addition to the allocation of an official mentor from the school leadership team, DoEWA should encourage the provision of time for a teacher colleague to support graduate teachers as a secondary mentor.

Participants in this study described their unofficial mentors as their best support in their first year of teaching. However, unofficial mentors were not provided time to support graduate teachers, despite often working in the same context or the adjacent classroom. It is recommended that these relationships become formalised and release time be mandated for these colleagues to ensure ongoing support is manageable and enduring. A member of the leadership team should be directed on the responsibility for mentoring in relation to administrative elements, such as IEPs, parent meetings and report writing, and the principal should ensure this is provided. This approach would effectively mirror Ontario, where the OMoE strictly regulates the provision of funding to provide professional learning resources to principals, graduate teachers and mentors, as well enforcing the provision of release time for both graduate teachers and their mentors (Driskell, 2019).

5.10 Conclusion

“Beginning teachers have responsibility for student learning from their first day in the classroom. This means they must be classroom ready upon entry to the profession” (TEMAG, 2014, p. 34). In practice however, the expectations the AITSL Teaching Standards place on graduate teachers appear to be unrealistic. Australian schools need graduate teachers who embody AITSL competencies, however graduate teachers cannot be ready for every teaching context. The participants in this study revealed that despite their ITE providers deeming them competent against the Graduate Teacher Standards, they did not perceive themselves as ‘classroom ready’, and the study has accordingly recommended that the expertise of professional experience mentor teachers be acknowledged and utilised in the reviews of the effectiveness of ITE units. Mirroring the successful Singaporean model, a collaborative feedback loop should be established between schools and ITE course providers to improve the quality of ITE courses and subsequent graduate teachers in ‘classroom readiness’.

Secondly, there is a need to improve DoEWA support mechanisms provided to graduate teachers in their transition to *becoming* ‘classroom ready’. Rather than maintaining an expectation that graduate teachers will be ‘classroom ready upon graduation’, the experiences of participants in this study indicates that more targeted support needs to be provided to first year DoEWA teachers,

through reduced responsibilities and a reduction in face-to-face teaching time. In addition, the DoEWA should adopt elements of Ontario's and VDET's graduate teacher professional learning model and offer the granted autonomy to choose from a range of Graduate Teacher Modules, depending on their school context and their professional learning needs, and through consultation with their mentors. Finally, the role mentoring contributes to the support of graduate teachers must be championed by DoEWA and school leaders, and teacher-mentors must be supported to establish and effectively implement the mentoring relationship.

5.11 Summary of the Chapter

Chapter Five discussed the emergent themes and subthemes revealed in the interview findings, against those presented in the literature. These themes have formed the response to each of the research questions, and guided the generation of recommendations for future practice. Chapter Six now concludes the study, and discusses the significance of the research in consideration of the limitations faced. Recommendations for future research will conclude the chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

6.0 Introduction

Chapter Five discussed the findings presented in Chapter Four against the literature outlined in Chapter Two. It presented the themes and subthemes revealed by the interviews and provided answers to the research questions that underpinned this study. Chapter Six seeks to revisit the aim of the study as outlined in Chapter One in light of the reported findings. A brief assessment of the findings against the problem statement follows, before addressing the significance of the findings in relation to the research questions. Chapter Six also addresses the limitations of this study and make recommendations for future research. The chapter then concludes with remarks relating to the ongoing support of primary graduate DoEWA teachers.

6.1 The Aim of This Study

This study endeavoured to examine the perspectives of current graduate primary teachers on the impacts of the recent AITSL reforms, and their implementation by DoEWA. It was premised on the need to investigate whether the reforms have contributed to an improved perception of ‘classroom readiness’ among graduate teachers, and whether DoEWA support mechanism effectively support graduate teachers in their first year of teaching. Through speaking directly with a small representative cohort of recent primary graduate DoEWA teachers, the study sought to understand their first-year teaching experiences, in light of the reformed support mechanisms. It asked the following primary research question:

Following the introduction of the AITSL and DoEWA reforms designed to support graduate teachers, how do primary graduate DoEWA teachers describe their ‘classroom readiness’ and the support provided to them in their initial year of teaching?

To answer this question, the study examined the perceived ‘classroom readiness’ of the participants upon ITE graduation, and their insights into the support of DoEWA support mechanisms, namely the Graduate Teacher Modules and In-Class Coaching, in enhancing their sense of ‘classroom readiness’.

Using phenomenology as its theoretical base, the study concluded that, despite the reforms, primary graduate DoEWA teachers in this study did not consider themselves ‘classroom ready’ upon ITE graduation. The findings indicated that the participants did not consider their ITE courses adequate in making them ‘classroom ready’, however most did not expect to be. Despite the recent reforms, the study revealed that ‘reality-shock’ continues to be a common experience among graduate teachers, leading to low self-efficacy and stress in their first year of teaching. The study also concluded that formal DoEWA support mechanisms designed to help graduate teachers, including the

Graduate Teacher Modules and In-Class Coaching, provided limited positive benefits and added to the already heavy workloads of the participants.

Most importantly however was the impact of informal mentor relationships established between graduate teachers and collaborative teaching partners. The collaborative creation or sharing of resources, professional conversations, and a mutual understanding of classroom contexts were cited as the most valuable form of support for graduate teachers in terms of capacity building and developing positive self-efficacy.

6.2 The significance of this study

The findings of this study are significant because substantial resources are being expended to support graduate DoEWA teachers. However, this study has identified that the reforms may not be effectively achieving their purpose in WA.

The accreditation of ITE courses by AITSL has ensured a degree of consistency and accountability for the preparation of pre-service teachers across Australia. Interview findings suggested that despite these reforms, graduate teachers still do not perceive themselves to be ‘classroom ready’. Participants spoke highly of the value of practical elements of their ITE courses, highlighting the stronger impact of practising judgements and gaining first-hand experience for future employment. The combined variation of achievements of pre-service teachers in their studies, and the inability of ITE to prepare them for all potential classrooms, appeared to generate shortfalls in ‘classroom readiness’ resulting in ‘reality-shock’. This finding is important as it has identified that there is still room for improvement in the content and delivery of ITE programs. Through adopting Singapore’s approach of ensuring strong collaboration and feedback between schools and ITE course providers, this issue can be addressed.

In this study, participants held contrasting views of the benefits and inadequacies of the Graduate Teacher Modules. Participants described the value of discussing first year experiences with other graduate teachers. When their school contexts were similar, the value of the dialogue was greater. The professional learning in DoEWA standards and procedures was deemed helpful by some of the participants. However, others described the repetitious and irrelevant content of Module One as frustrating. Ultimately, according to the findings of this study, implementing a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to graduate teacher professional development appears to be impractical. A change in emphasis to differentiated modules from compulsory modules could be a valuable way to make professional learning more relevant for graduate teachers. Similar approaches are available in NSW and Ontario, where professional learning and induction is tailored to the needs of the graduate teachers, as determined by their school principals. Further, VDET graduate teachers can select from a range of online professional learning modules according to their professional needs. While these systems provide differentiated professional learning opportunities, the findings presented in this study found that a highly valuable element of the modules was the ability of participants to interact with

other graduate teachers. Therefore, this study has highlighted the need for a suite of face-to-face differentiated learning modules. This could lead to more purposeful, engaging and effective professional learning for DoEWA graduate teachers.

Despite the theoretical value of an In-Class Coaching Program, this study concluded it is inefficacious in the support it provides. Instead, the In-Class coaches either provided a level of administrative assistance to the participants in completing their TRBWA registration portfolios, or it added to their workload and stress. It is timely to review the In-Class Coaching Program so that it practically supports graduate teachers to develop the “confidence, professional understanding and rich and flexible repertoire of skills that characterise those at the height of the profession” (AITSL, 2016a, p. 3), rather than adding more to their already heavy workloads. This study did not conclude that ‘reality-shock’ and low self-efficacy of graduate teachers is necessarily contributing to attrition, nor are the current support mechanisms devoid of impact. However, the burden of implementing deficient induction programs on graduate teachers needs to be addressed. The mere existence of support mechanisms is propitious, and now it is timely to refine the current approaches and address the issues within them. Accordingly, this study has made a series of recommendations for practice, which can be summarised as:

- the need for ITE providers to employ the use of feedback loops between schools and ITE providers as implemented in Singaporean ITE. This would require Australian ITE providers to seek and apply feedback from professional experience mentor teachers on the strengths and weaknesses among pre-service teachers during their professional practices.
- the need for DoEWA to consider giving graduate teachers reduced face-to-face teaching time, as well as reduced responsibilities in the school, in their first year of teaching. This approach would mirror NSWDoE’s mandated induction requirements for principals in order to support graduate teachers in their first year.
- the need for DoEWA to provide differentiated Graduate Teacher Modules to support the varying contexts, needs and abilities of graduate teachers. Differentiation of graduate teacher professional learning currently exists in NSW, Victoria and Ontario. However, DoEWA should continue the well-regarded and beneficial face-to-face element of the Graduate Teacher Modules, but allow for a range of professional learning topics.
- the need for DoEWA to review the purpose, quality and impacts of the In-Class Coaching Program on primary graduate DoEWA teachers.
- the need for DoEWA to allocate an official mentor from the school leadership team, as well as mandate the provision of time for a collaborative teacher-mentor to support graduate teachers as a secondary ‘unofficial’ mentor. This recommendation is currently implemented in Ontario, where the Ministry of Education strictly enforces mentoring for graduate teachers, ensuring time and funding is allocated appropriately.

6.3 The Limitations of the Study

This study has taken an interpretivist-constructivist approach to addressing the research questions, with the aim of understanding the lived experiences of graduate teachers. As the

phenomenon of ‘classroom readiness’, in relation to ITE preparation and support mechanisms, was explored through interviews and the subsequent inductive analysis of in-depth descriptions from the participants, the findings and recommendations are based upon the beliefs, values and interpretations of both the researcher and the participants. Through careful construction of the interview questions and full disclosure of the coding and analysis processes, an attempt has been made to ensure all perspectives were acknowledged and included in the findings.

While an attempt was made to include a range of ITE providers, as well as the participants across a range of schools, it was not possible to represent all ITE course providers, or school demographics in this study of six graduate teachers in WA. Further, only graduate teachers from DoEWA schools were selected, thus limiting the findings to only the government system.

Since the interviews were conducted during Term 1 of 2019, there have been amendments to accreditation procedures for ITE course providers. The Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA), as outlined in Chapter Two, was introduced for all pre-service teachers in 2018, with full implementation from 2020. As such, no participants in this study completed the assessment. There would be value in examining the impacts the TPA on ITE course content and future graduate teacher ‘classroom readiness’.

This study represents only one approach to investigating the research problem of graduate teacher ‘classroom readiness’. Therefore, only one interpretation was concluded through in-depth interviews and rich descriptions. In future, a survey approach could be implemented to capture a greater number of graduate teachers’ experiences. Alternatively, multiple interviews could be conducted throughout the first two years of teaching to better ascertain levels of perceived support.

6.4 Recommendations for future research

Chapter Two highlighted AITSL’s (2016b) definition of attrition as occurring when a pre-service teacher does not finish ITE, never works as a teacher, or leaves the profession within the first five years. This study suggests that ‘classroom readiness’ and ‘reality-shock’ do not necessarily contribute to graduate teacher attrition per se. Therefore, it is recommended that further research be conducted into the causes of attrition for teachers and support mechanisms to help retain these teachers.

The experiences of graduate teachers in Module One and Two of the Graduate Teacher Modules were explored. Further research into the impacts of Module Three and Four could provide greater understanding of the value to graduates. Additionally, this could be completed alongside investigations into the retention rates of teachers beyond three years in the profession.

It is recommended that further research into the perceptions of post-AITSL reforms in ITE and teacher induction programs, including the development of TPA, be undertaken throughout

Australia. Future studies may also include the experiences of graduate teachers in the Catholic and private sectors. It is recommended that these future studies employ the use of quantitative tools, such as questionnaires and surveys, prior to ITE graduation and again at the conclusion of each semester within the first two years of teaching to supplement data gathered through qualitative interviews. In addition, it is recommended that studies be conducted into the experiences of teachers in regional and remote schools specifically, to discern whether the creation of ‘pseudo-mentors’ is prevalent among graduate teachers in isolated contexts, as well as to determine their perceptions of ‘classroom readiness’ and the quality of support provided to them, given their isolation.

6.5 Conclusion

AITSL have led mandated reforms to ITE and induction processes for graduate teachers throughout Australia. Accordingly, DoEWA have implemented these reforms and created evidence-based mechanisms to support WA teachers in their first years of teaching. The intention of this study was not to join the chorus of criticism against the quality of the education system in Australia, and most definitely not its teachers. Instead, it acknowledges the immense challenges faced by graduate teachers and also the efforts of ITE course providers and DoEWA in attempting to adequately prepare and support them in the role. It is hoped that this research project may lead to the consideration of its recommendations, and ultimately a review of ITE provision and graduate support. Graduate teachers represent the future of teaching (AITSL, 2019b). It is critical that all stakeholders contribute to the continued improvement, refinement and evaluation of the mechanisms designed to support graduate teachers, as they navigate their path to ‘classroom readiness’. Further, the formally unacknowledged work of classroom teachers who support graduate teachers needs to be recognised, remunerated and championed. As Bill Gates said, “students deserve great teachers, and teachers deserve the support they need to become great” (2012).

I don't think I would still be teaching if it weren't for the other staff members at the school ... Everyone was always so supportive and just willing to offer help or solutions or feedback on any little thing that you needed ... I had so many people offering me resources and ideas and walking me through what they'd done when they were in the lower years and just being so open and so generous with their time and their thoughts ... that's invaluable.

Charles

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Appendix A

The Graduate Teacher Standards (AITSL, 2011)

Professional Knowledge		
Standard 1: Know Students and how they learn		
1.1	Physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students and how these may affect learning.
1.2	Understand how students learn	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of research into how students learn and the implications for teaching.
1.3	Students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds	Demonstrate knowledge of teaching strategies that are responsive to the learning strengths and needs of students from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds.
1.4	Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	Demonstrate broad knowledge and understanding of the impact of culture, cultural identity and linguistic background on the education of students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.
1.5	Differentiate teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of strategies for differentiating teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities.
1.6	Strategies to support full participation of students with disability	Demonstrate broad knowledge and understanding of legislative requirements and teaching strategies that support participation and learning of students with disability.
Standard 2: Know the content and how to teach it		
2.1	Content and teaching strategies of the teaching area	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the concepts, substance and structure of the content and teaching strategies of the teaching area
2.2	Content selection and organisation	Organise content into an effective learning and teaching sequence.
2.3	Curriculum, assessment and reporting	Use curriculum, assessment and reporting knowledge to design learning sequences and lesson plans.
2.4	Understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians	Demonstrate broad knowledge of, understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages
2.5	Literacy and numeracy strategies	Know and understand literacy and numeracy teaching strategies and their application in teaching areas.
2.6	Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	Implement teaching strategies for using ICT to expand curriculum learning opportunities for students.
Professional Practice		
Standard 3: Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning		
3.1	Establish challenging learning goals	Set learning goals that provide achievable challenges for students of varying abilities and characteristics.
3.2	Plan, structure and sequence learning programs	Plan lesson sequences using knowledge of student learning, content and effective teaching strategies.
3.3	Use teaching strategies	Include a range of teaching strategies.

3.4	Select and use resources	Demonstrate knowledge of a range of resources, including ICT, that engage students in their learning.
3.5	Use effective classroom communication	Demonstrate a range of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to support student engagement.
3.6	Evaluate and improve teaching programs	Demonstrate broad knowledge of strategies that can be used to evaluate teaching programs to improve student learning.
3.7	Engage parents/carers in the educative process	Describe a broad range of strategies for involving parents/carers in the educative process.
Standard 4: Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments		
4.1	Support student participation	Identify strategies to support inclusive student participation and engagement in classroom activities.
4.2	Manage classroom activities	Demonstrate the capacity to organise classroom activities and provide clear directions.
4.3	Manage challenging behaviour	Demonstrate knowledge of practical approaches to manage challenging behaviour.
4.4	Maintain student safety	Describe strategies that support students' wellbeing and safety working within school and/or system, curriculum and legislative requirements.
4.5	Use ICT safely, responsibly and ethically	Demonstrate an understanding of the relevant issues and the strategies available to support the safe, responsible and ethical use of ICT in learning and teaching.
Standard 5: Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning		
5.1	Assess student learning	Demonstrate understanding of assessment strategies, including informal and formal, diagnostic, formative and summative approaches to assess student learning.
5.2	Provide feedback to students on their learning	Demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of providing timely and appropriate feedback to students about their learning.
5.3	Make consistent and comparable judgements	Demonstrate understanding of assessment moderation and its application to support consistent and comparable judgements of student learning.
5.4	Interpret student data	Demonstrate the capacity to interpret student assessment data to evaluate student learning and modify teaching practice/
5.5	Report on student achievement	Demonstrate understanding of a range of strategies for reporting to students and parents/carers and the purpose of keeping accurate and reliable records of student achievement.
Professional Engagement		
Standard 6: Engage in professional learning		
6.1	Identify and plan professional learning needs	Demonstrate an understanding of the role of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers in identifying professional learning needs.
6.2	Engage in professional learning and improve practice	Understand the relevant and appropriate sources of professional learning for teachers.
6.3	Engage with colleagues and improve practice	Seek and apply constructive feedback from supervisors and teachers to improve teaching practices.

6.4	Apply professional learning and improve student learning	Demonstrate an understanding of the rationale for continued professional learning and the implications for improved student learning.
<hr/> Standard 7: Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community <hr/>		
7.1	Meet professional ethics and responsibilities	Understand and apply the key principles described in codes of ethics and conduct for the teaching profession.
7.2	Comply with legislative, administrative and organisational requirements	Understand the relevant legislative, administrative and organisational policies and processes required for teachers according to school stage.
7.3	Engage with the parents/carers	Understand strategies for working effectively, sensitively and confidentially with parents/carers.
7.4	Engage with professional teaching networks and broader communities	Understand the role of external professionals and community representatives in broadening teachers' professional knowledge and practice.

Appendix B



INFORMATION LETTER

16 January 2019

MOUNT LAWLEY CAMPUS

2 Bradford Street, Mount Lawley
Western Australia 6050
☎ 134 328

www.ecu.edu.au

ABN 54 361 485 361 CRICOS IPC 00279B

Dear teacher,

RE: Western Australian Primary Graduate Teachers Perceived Classroom-Readiness (Research Project)

My name is Samantha Edwards, and I would like to invite you to participate in a research project seeking to explore graduate teachers' perception of classroom-readiness, through your experiences with your Initial Teacher Education (ITE) course, Graduate Teacher Modules and/or In-Class Coaching programs. This research project is being undertaken as part of the requirements of a Masters of Education Research degree at Edith Cowan University under the supervision of Dr Geoffrey Lowe and Dr Julia Morris from the School of Education at ECU.

The project aims to provide insights into the current graduate teacher classroom readiness to teach by interviewing a selected sample of teachers.

The project is particularly focused upon:

- What graduates perceive to be have been beneficial in their ITE courses.
- Their perceptions of the value of the Graduate Teacher Modules, and the In-Class coaching programs.

From there, the project hopes to make *recommendations for improvement* of each of these support mechanisms.

This study will potentially provide participants with an opportunity to:

- Participate in a research project designed to help them make sense of their recent graduate teacher experiences.
- Contribute to a research project designed to support graduate teachers.

The study has the potential to identify positive graduate teacher experiences within the current support mechanisms implemented by AITSL and DoEWA, as well as identify areas that could be improved to better support graduate teachers.

Participation in the project

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to engage in two, one-hour face to face interviews, completed over the course of one semester at mutually convenient times. I am inviting graduate teachers who have completed as a minimum: one year of teaching in a Western Australian Department of Education school, two of the Graduate Teacher Modules and potentially one semester of In-Class Coaching. Interviews will be scheduled at a venue of mutual convenience. Interviews will be audio-recorded for transcription, however pseudonyms for both yourself and the school in which you work will be used.

Participation in this project is entirely voluntary. If you choose to participate and then change your mind, you are able to withdraw at any time. There are no consequences relating to a decision to withdraw, and withdrawing will not affect ongoing professional relationships with yourself or the school.

Risks and benefits

I do not envisage any risk to yourself as a result of your participation in this project, aside from time taken to talk with me. If you do experience upset or anxiety upon reflection, the interview will be suspended and support service details provided to you. Furthermore, a copy of the interview questions will be provided one week prior to the commencement of the interviews. The benefit of participation includes providing data to inform potential improvements to the graduate teacher experience.

Confidentiality

To ensure confidentiality, all data will be de-identified, and paper copies will be stored in locked filing cabinet on the ECU Mount Lawley campus in Dr Lowe's office, while electronic data will be stored on the researcher's password-protected computer. The data will be stored for a minimum of seven years after the completion of the project, at which time it will be destroyed. The identity of participants will not be disclosed at any time. Participant privacy, and the confidentiality of information disclosed by participants, is assured at all other times. A copy of the findings will be presented to you at your request.

Research approval

Edith Cowan University Human Research Ethics Committee has approved the research, and permission has been obtained from the WA Department of Education to conduct this project. A copy of the research approval letter to indicate this project has met the policy requirements of the Department of Education is enclosed.

If you would like to participate in the project, please sign the informed consent document attached and return it via email or in person to Samantha Edwards. If you have any further questions about the project, please don't hesitate to contact me on [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]. Alternatively, you may choose to contact my Principal Supervisor, Dr Geoffrey Lowe at g.lowe@ecu.edu.au. If you have any concerns or complaints about the research project and wish to talk to an independent person, you may contact:

Research Ethics Officer
Edith Cowan University
270 Joondalup Drive
JOONDALUP WA 6027
Phone: (08) 6304 2170
Email: research.ethics@ecu.edu.au

Thank you again for your support for the project, and your interest in this research. This information letter is for you to keep.

Yours sincerely,

Samantha Edwards
Masters of Education Research Student
School of Education, Edith Cowan University

Consent Form
Western Australian Primary Graduate Teachers Perceived Classroom-Readiness
(Research Project)

- I have read and understood the information letter about the project.
- I have taken up the invitation to ask any questions I may have had, and am satisfied with the answers I received.
- I understand that my personal participation in the project is entirely voluntarily.
- I am willing to become involved in the project, as described in the information letter.
- I understand that the interview will be audio-recorded, with all electronic data stored on a password protected laptop.
- I understand an anonymous transcription will be made from the audio-recording by a professional transcriber.
- I understand that I am free to withdraw my personal participation at any time without affecting my relationship with ECU.
- I give permission for my contribution to this research to be published in a journal, provided that my name or the school are not identified in any way.
- I understand that I can request a summary of findings once the research has been completed.

Name (printed):

Signature:

Date: / /

Please forward a copy of your signed consent form to: sedwar18@our.ecu.edu.au

Appendix C

Interview Protocol Document

- As you know, my name is Sam Edwards and I will be leading us through an interview today as a part of my Masters by Education Research degree.
- The goal of the study I am conducting is to explore your perception, as a graduate teacher, of your classroom-readiness for your first year of teaching.
- I am interested in finding out about how you feel about your ‘readiness’ in relation to your experiences with your Initial Teacher Education (ITE) course the Graduate Teacher Modules *and/or In-Class Coaching programs*.
- You were selected through me directly approaching you, having worked at the same school as you during 2018 until you received a new placement for 2019.
- I would like you to feel comfortable saying what you really think and how you really feel. The purpose of the interview is to get your real and honest responses to the questions.
- If it’s okay with you, I will be recording our conversation on my iPhone, since it is hard for me to write down everything while simultaneously carrying an attentive conversation with you.
- Everything you say will remain confidential, meaning that only myself and my supervisors will be aware of your answers. Once the data is written up, pseudonyms will be used for both you and the schools in which you teach/have taught.
- Prior to the interview, you were sent an introductory letter and two consent forms (one to sign and one to keep) prior to the session today.
- The interview will take up to 90 minutes and will follow this designed interview protocol. If at any point you wish to pause or stop the interview, please just let me know and we can suspend the conversation.
- Before we begin, do you have any questions?

Fantastic. So firstly...

Introductory	1	Tell me about your teaching experiences this year?
Transition	2	How does your teaching this year compare to last year?
	3	Tell me about that first year of teaching – what did you cope with and what did you find challenging?
	4	Was your first year easier or harder than you had anticipated when you were at university
Key	5	How well do you feel your university course prepared you for that first year of teaching?
	6	How has the on-the-job learning been compared with your university preparation?
	7	Tell me about how you’ve been supported in your role as a graduate teacher within the school. What sort of support were you given?
	8	Could you describe your experiences with the Graduate Teaching Modules (in-class coaching) you’ve completed so far? What sort of content have they covered?
	9	Have you found the Graduate Modules valuable? In what ways?
*Only ask if relevant	10	Have you been allocated a mentor at your school?
	11	Tell me about that experience.
	12	Can you give me two stars and a wish for the In-Class Coaching?
Closing	13	Overall, what experience has been the most valuable so far in your career in helping your development as a teacher?
	14	If you could wave a magic wand, describe what support, real or imaginary, you would want to help you during your first year in the classroom if you were to repeat it.

- Firstly, I wish to thank you so much for your time today. I really appreciate your honest and thoughtful responses and how this will help me in writing my thesis. How did you feel that interview went? Do you have any final questions?

Appendix D

Simon Interview Transcript

FILE DETAILS

Audio Length: 39 minutes
Audio Quality: ☐ High ☒ Average ☐ Low
Number of Facilitators: One
Number of Interviewees: One
Difficult Interviewee Accents: ☐ Yes ☒ No
Other Comments:

Facilitator: Tell me about your teaching experiences this year.
 Interviewee: I've been teaching since the start of last year.
 Facilitator: Yeah.
 Interviewee: I managed to get a job at my prac school, which was good, nice and handy. I managed to get permanency in that first year so I'm now a member of staff, which is nice.
 Facilitator: Yeah, awesome.
 Interviewee: I know that it's not the normal way. Lots of people have far different experiences than I have had, a lot of people have trouble getting jobs or obtaining permanency. But in terms of how I went with the year, I would say, like many, feeling thrown in the deep end a little bit.
 Facilitator: Do you mean last year or this year particularly?
 Interviewee: Last year.
 Facilitator: Last year.
 Interviewee: This year I feel a lot more confident and comfortable.
 Facilitator: Okay.
 Interviewee: But starting off, day one, Term 1 first year of teaching it is a very, very steep learning curve. You don't know the school. You know a fair bit about teaching and learning, but obviously every school context is a little different. Not only are you getting used to a new job you're also getting used to a new way of doing things in a new business, so that can be quite confronting. Obviously everyone else knows what they're doing, it's IEP week, so everyone knows its IEP week whereas as a grad you're like what's IEP week?
 Facilitator: Yeah.

- Interviewee: The first term was a steep learning curve, and then Term 2, Term 3, Term 4 I felt getting into a bit of a groove, and certainly now I feel a lot more confident and a lot more comfortable.
- Facilitator: Fantastic and you're teaching itself, like your skills as a teacher, and your ability to be a teacher and everything it embodies...
- Interviewee: Yes
- Facilitator: ...how has that been different this year compared to last year?
- Interviewee: I think taking the experiences of last year with that class, figuring out what worked and what didn't work and then being able to amend that for a new class was really important. I was lucky enough to be teaching the same year group for the second year in a row, which I think is also quite helpful for a graduate. If I was to change year groups after the first year then some of that hard work would have been undone a little bit by having to run a new set of curriculum descriptors, and doing all those kinds of things that go with teaching a new year, making new resources.
- Facilitator: Yeah, definitely.
- Interviewee: I think having that second year in the same year group has been quite beneficial. I think I've been able to - I had a fairly difficult first class, so I think now that this class, there's still some curve balls, but now with this class it feels a lot more - I feel a lot more confident, a lot more able.
- Facilitator: Okay, so tell me about you as a teacher with that first class. What were you doing to try and combat some of the, what I assume to be, difficult things?
- Interviewee: Yeah, sure. I think they were a boisterous class, so literally there was... There was 17 boys and eight girls.
- Facilitator: Okay, and what year group?
- Interviewee: Year 4, so a challenging year, and also boys are going through some like shit, excuse my French, in Year 4 as they start changing. A challenging year group with a challenging set of kids, because they were so loud and out there, lovely kids and so willing to learn. Some really bright children at the same time, four of the kids I taught last year went onto PEAC so they were successful getting in, one of them with a teacher nomination, the other three in their own right. I had some really bright kids as well and that's also, as you know a challenge.
- Facilitator: Yeah, so what did you do to cater to that? Behaviour management-wise for those boisterous boys, what was your first port of call as in your skills, what did you do to try and adapt to that?
- Interviewee: Well I think you pick up a lot during the teacher education about...
- Facilitator: Uni you mean?

- Interviewee: Yeah, you - in the grad dip you spend one of the units looking at different education theories so they try and help you cultivate your own. Whether that works or not that's what you discover when you get into the classroom. I already knew going into the classroom that I wanted to add some kind of cooperative behaviour management strategy. What that looked like in the classroom that was always going to be the challenge.
- Facilitator: Yeah.
- Interviewee: I think with these kids I certainly put them through the wringer. I chopped and changed a lot of the things that I was doing.
- Facilitator: Why is that?
- Interviewee: Well, just finding what works I think.
- Facilitator: Yeah, of course.
- Interviewee: Because you haven't done it before, so you're so busy trying to figure out what's working what's not working that you do tend to chop and change strategies in that first year. I think that's certainly something that I did. At one point I used grid points, then I used class dojo, then I used little tennis balls, then I thought no stuff at all we'll do intrinsic and that's what...[Laughter]...Rightly or wrongly I was always going to put these kids through the wringer I think.
- Facilitator: Yeah, fair enough, yeah for sure.
- Interviewee: They coped well with it, which I think was good for me as well because they were an understanding class. They knew me from being a prac teacher there, so they knew that I was their first - well that they were my first proper class.
- Facilitator: Yeah, of course.
- Interviewee: They were good sports about it, which I thought was helpful.
- Facilitator: Compared to this year then? Are you still doing intrinsic?
- Interviewee: Yeah I am, but only because I think these kids are capable of it.
- Facilitator: Okay.
- Interviewee: The year - so when they're in Year 3 their teacher uses class dojo a lot.
- Facilitator: Of course.
- Interviewee: When they got to me I'd say to them, listen guys, I think you're too old for class dojo now. I think you're capable of doing the right thing without earning points, because it's the right thing to do and that you want to learn and that you want to work well in the classroom. They said, yeah, yeah, we could do that.
- Facilitator: Okay, so it's worked.
- Interviewee: Yeah it's working so far.

- Facilitator: Fantastic. With that first year of teaching what did you find easy to cope with? What did you cope well with?
- Interviewee: I think I coped well with...
- Facilitator: If anything.
- Interviewee: I definitely did cope well with things. I felt that I coped well with the first year. My partner's also a teacher, so he teaches secondary up at [de-identified].
- Facilitator: Was he a graduate as well?
- Interviewee: Not at the same time.
- Facilitator: Okay, at one stage obviously.
- Interviewee: Yeah, at one stage. He's in his sixth year of teaching now. I watched him go through his first year of teaching. I've got lots of other teacher friends as well, so I knew that it was going to be quite a year. But I feel like I came out the other end of it relatively unscathed. There was no real moment of I can't do this I want to chuck it in. I felt that I coped quite well with the year. I'm a fairly well organised person to begin with. Once I got my head around the term calendars and the way we do things I was never behind in assessment tracking, in reporting, in absences, those things came quite naturally to me.
- Facilitator: Admin was quite easy for you.
- Interviewee: Yeah, I wasn't new to employment and I wasn't new to roles and responsibilities. I think for me the business side of teaching, the admin side of the business of teaching I think came quite naturally to me.
- Facilitator: Yeah, and in terms of curriculum and planning?
- Interviewee: I'm quite good at finding information myself. Once uni had prepped you with all of the tools of finding what to teach and how to teach, well not so much how but what to teach, I feel that I kept on top of that quite well as well.
- Facilitator: Fantastic, so you said not how, do you feel...
- Interviewee: Well I mean - that's - no, that's probably - that's not really a loaded statement I don't think. There's only so much they can give you...
- Facilitator: Because you were?
- Interviewee: Twelve months.
- Facilitator: Twelve months, yeah.
- Interviewee: Yeah. My personal opinion is that no teacher's ready after any duration of initial teacher training.
- Facilitator: Okay.
- Interviewee: I think if you take what you can from the situation, and so if you put in all you've got then you'll get the most amount back.
- Facilitator: Okay.

- Interviewee: That's my personal opinion. Whether I did four years or two years or one year, I think that first year was always going to be a steep learning curve.
- Facilitator: Yeah, and so what did you find you maybe perhaps didn't cope so well, or you didn't cope as well as you would have thought in that first year?
- Interviewee: Probably - I tend to be a bit of a perfectionist, so - well I coped well with not everything being perfect. But, I was surprised that not everything was perfect if that makes sense.
- Facilitator: Yeah, so do you mean your lesson itself or your work sheets?
- Interviewee: Well probably more about - yeah probably data collection a little bit I think when or even less than documentation. I think when you're at uni and you have to write these massive lesson experience plans, and then daily work plans to the nth degree, it sets unrealistic expectations of what you can actually achieve when you're out in the real world.
- Facilitator: Tell me more about that.
- Interviewee: I think, because you spend so much time. Initially, when you're doing lesson experience plans they're three pages long, they're just unrealistic.
- Facilitator: For one lesson in one day.
- Interviewee: For one lesson in one day, it takes longer to write the plan than it does to deliver the lesson. I think that sets you up to have this thing in your mind that when you go out into the real world that, if you didn't know better that, that's what you had to do.
- Facilitator: Yeah.
- Interviewee: That's where I think teachers get burned up, because they don't have the knowledge of real world practices. Because you are in some sense a little bit on your own when you get into a school.
- Facilitator: Yeah, so you're expecting - you're taught to write lesson plans as a three page statement. Whereas you get into the classroom and it's not...
- Interviewee: No, it's not like...
- Facilitator: ...matching up.
- Interviewee: No.
- Facilitator: Yeah, okay.
- Interviewee: I think it's important to get to - to understand that lessons have to have goals, lessons have to have outcomes and lessons have to have a purpose. But I think it's important for universities to start teaching students that this isn't how it's going to be in the real world, so let's do this but then let's move into the real world a little bit sooner in that sense.

- Facilitator: Yeah, okay great. On that, what did you - with uni preparing you, you did mention that they're preparing you with those three page lessons, was that first year easier or harder than you had actually anticipated when you were at uni?
- Interviewee: I think it was easier.
- Facilitator: It was easier in your first year?
- Interviewee: Yeah, I think so. Only because I knew what real world planning was going to look like because of my partner.
- Facilitator: Okay.
- Interviewee: I obviously don't advocate his practice, but his lesson plans seem to be on a post-it note these days, do this, it's fairly basic. But in his mind he knows what the outcome is and that what the achievement - of what he's trying to achieve. I think I was lucky that I knew what it was going to probably look like.
- Facilitator: Okay.
- Interviewee: I think the sooner you get in and the sooner that you realise that there are things that are important and that you can influence, and there are things that aren't so important and you have no control over. You have to let those things fall away. If you don't that's where you risk becoming overworked and burnt out. I think when I realised that, well, the way that I was going to be writing lesson plans or the way that I was going to be tracking assessments, once I realised it was for my eyes only that's where it probably became easier.
- Facilitator: Yeah, fantastic well that's good. How well do you feel like your university course primarily, just university course, how well do you think that prepared you for that first year of teaching?
- Interviewee: On paper, I think it prepared me in every way that it could.
- Facilitator: Okay.
- Interviewee: Obviously with any course or any university course there are going to be good moments and not so good moments, and it could - that comes down to people. There are a few lecturers and tutors that probably weren't as beneficial as others.
- Facilitator: What made them not beneficial?
- Interviewee: Where they didn't really understand the content themselves, or have the context in which to help us apply it. For example, I had a house unit where the tutor who was primarily giving us most of the information, she had a high school context and she didn't - she was - it was her first time teaching this course and the first time that this course was being taught.
- Facilitator: Okay.

- Interviewee: Those elements combined meant that that unit was not as useful as it could have been. We spent all the lectures just going over the ACARA website, then going to the tutor and then she was looking over the notes and then trying to make heads or tails of it herself.
- Facilitator: Okay.
- Interviewee: I think there was elements where it could have been more useful.
- Facilitator: What was a useful one for instance?
- Interviewee: For example, I had - there was a unit in my second semester called, gosh I can't remember, foundations of education or something like that.
- Facilitator: Okay. Like a pedagogy type one?
- Interviewee: Where we had a fantastic lecturer and a fantastic... Yeah, it was a pedagogy type where we had to write down our philosophy of teaching and do a few other activities, and then make a brochure using our information that parents could then read. These were real world things that were making us think about what kind of teacher we're going to be like, and what our communication with parents was going to be like.
- Facilitator: Did that prepare you for your course?
- Interviewee: Well I think it certainly helped. Both the lecturer and tutor were fantastic in that course, they had real world knowledge and real world experience. The tutor, I think her name was [de-identified] she came from a background where she had worked with really troubled boys. Her experiences were fantastic to hear about.
- Facilitator: Yeah, quite inspiring.
- Interviewee: Yes, definitely, definitely.
- Facilitator: Yeah, awesome. Perhaps on a scale of one to 10, how well do you feel like your university course prepared you?
- Interviewee: I think...
- Facilitator: What they delivered and provided.
- Interviewee: I think I would probably lean towards sevens and eights.
- Facilitator: Okay.
- Interviewee: Only because I put into it what I wanted to get out of it. There are plenty of students that don't attack their studies in that way, and wonder why they're not prepared.
- Facilitator: Yeah.
- Interviewee: I think the university can only do so much. Same as our students in our classes, you give them all the tools it's up to them to use them.
- Facilitator: Yeah.
- Interviewee: It's no different being a university student as to being a primary school student.

- Facilitator: Yeah, that's it.
- Interviewee: Yeah, I think it could have easily not prepared me, but I didn't let that happen and I think that that's the difference. Some people allow it to happen.
- Facilitator: Yeah, okay great. With the on-the-job learning then...
- Interviewee: Yeah.
- Facilitator: ...compared to university prac, tell me about that.
- Interviewee: Well as I said it's a very, very steep learning curve. Every day is different. I think - I'm in a small school, so there are plenty of opportunities to do things outside the classroom that if you were in a bigger school you might not get those opportunities in your first year. I think that added to the learning curve a little bit, because there was that expectation that you could participate in learning area leaders, leader roles and that kind of thing. Given my background it was obvious that I would be involved in that, because I was a website also a software engineer, so the dual technologies they go hand-in-hand.
- Facilitator: Yeah definitely.
- Interviewee: I think that added to the learning curve. Also being at a small school I would say that there's not really a teacher that is, oh that's the wow teacher. Do you know what I mean?
- Facilitator: Okay, yeah.
- Interviewee: I think some schools have those teachers where they're the guru. They know a lot of information and they're so ready to help people. I don't think there's really that person at my school at the moment.
- Facilitator: Is that a positive or a negative?
- Interviewee: I think that's a negative.
- Facilitator: Okay.
- Interviewee: We don't have any Level 3 teachers. We've got a few senior teachers, but they're coming towards the end of their career and some of them are part-time. I think for me I was having to use my outside of school resources a little bit more. It just so happened that my Principal is also very welcoming and encouraging, and also full of knowledge and experience, so I've been lucky to have her support where there are some schools where you don't really get that.
- Facilitator: Yeah.
- Interviewee: Because she's so approachable, because we are a small school that certainly has helped me in getting that...
- Facilitator: Getting used to it.
- Interviewee: Getting used to it and getting that knowledge.

- Facilitator: When you - let's say first term, Year 1 was there something that you're like, hey, I've never had any experience of this whatsoever from my uni course.
- Interviewee: Many things.
- Facilitator: For instance IEPs.
- Interviewee: You don't really get - you know what an IEP is from uni, but you don't really have to write one, and every school does them differently so it's hard to really prepare a student or a teacher for writing IEPs. But, yeah, certainly that was one thing that I wasn't really sure how to approach. I didn't know whether I had to use a word document or where to find them, so I certainly had to branch out and find people that I could approach.
- Facilitator: Yeah.
- Interviewee: I later discovered that we use SEN for it, the SEN system. We use them on - we give the student, or our school gives the students IEPs if they're going to get a D grade in a strand of maths or English. Then we use - we tend to do one or two goals based on the previous or previous to that if need be, so I knew none of that.
- I had some IEPs from my class that I was teaching from the year before, and so that helped me a little bit. But they were very long and verbose, so I found that that first time writing IEPs, mine were really long and verbose, they had far too many goals. That was something that I certainly learnt from when the second time came around. I've just gone through that process again and they're a lot different this time.
- Facilitator: Yeah. What you're saying is you're on the job learning had actually been...
- Interviewee: Yeah, really...
- Facilitator: ...as you said very steep, very steep, but...
- Interviewee: Very steep, but beneficial.
- Facilitator: Yeah, beneficial.
- Interviewee: Yeah, definitely. There's nothing that I really didn't discover last year that I'm now discovering this year if that makes sense.
- Facilitator: Okay, yeah. All your learning happened - not all your learning obviously, but uni...
- Interviewee: No, I'm still learning.
- Facilitator: Yeah, but uni versus that first year, which one's been the most?
- Interviewee: Definitely the first year of working, yeah definitely.
- Facilitator: Yeah, beautiful. Tell me, you've mentioned a little bit about your Principal, but tell me about how you've been supported in your role as a graduate teacher within the school.

- Interviewee: She made sure that I got all of my entitlements, so grad allowance, extra allocation, time to go off to [PL], forwarding me PLs that might be of interest to me. Basically, I could walk into her office any time I like and have a chat to her, and she's always got the chair ready for you to sit in. I think she's been willing to help that learning. She's been willing to provide extra resources, and she's also been willing to listen and provide advice and so on.
- Facilitator: Yeah, and so with the extra days you mentioned was that all free for you to take as you please or were there certain things you had to do to get that day?
- Interviewee: Well to begin with we had a relief deputy for someone's service leave in the first term of last year, and he just decided to give me an extra 50 minutes of DOTT a week.
- Facilitator: Okay.
- Interviewee: From that respect I didn't really - I could have said no and I could have said I wanted it. But I didn't really know how it was supposed to work at that stage, so I was like oh okay 50 minutes of DOTT that's fantastic, so I just took it. Then later I discovered that eight or four days a year [might be] for grad modules and then the rest is to use as you please. When I got towards the end of the year and I calculated how much I had used I realised that I had two and half days still owing, and so my Principal let me take that as release time to do reports...
- Facilitator: Fantastic.
- Interviewee: ...and work on my portfolio.
- Facilitator: Portfolio, and so that's again this year as you wish?
- Interviewee: Well in the second year I think we have - we're only given the four days for grad modules.
- Facilitator: Yeah, okay.
- Interviewee: That's what I'll be taking this year.
- Facilitator: Support with time and with grad entitlements and things like that.
- Interviewee: Yeah.
- Facilitator: Then an open door policy, you'd say, with your Principal?
- Interviewee: Yeah, absolutely.
- Facilitator: What other support has been put into place within the school?
- Interviewee: Like I mentioned, she encouraged me to find a mentor in school. When I went back to her I said to her there's not really a person that I think, wow, that's the kind of teacher I want to be like. There's not really that person at my school. For me, I think it's better for me to take bits and pieces from lots of different people, and so invent my pseudo-mentor if you will.

Having a friend as a teacher at another school, having my partner to support me and having some key people at school, not in an official capacity but in a way where I can access the information for myself and how I see fit. Because obviously there's things that you like from certain people, but there's not really that person that I think, wow that's what I want.

Facilitator: Yeah, and you've mentioned it's a small school so it's single stream school I'm guessing.

Interviewee: Yes.

Facilitator: Okay.

Interviewee: With - well kind of we've been increasing our enrolments in the last couple of years, so we've actually two Year 1s and a 2/3 class in addition to our single stream as well.

Facilitator: Would you go to another teacher perhaps in Year 5 and say, oh I've got a child having difficulty with this maths concept what would you do?

Interviewee: Yeah, absolutely, so there's that option talk to the teacher previous. The current Year 3 teacher she's obviously a really good resource for knowing the children because she taught them all.

Facilitator: Yeah, of course.

Interviewee: That's been really helpful, so I've developed a really nice relationship with her.

Facilitator: Yeah, and some of that performance management within the school.

Interviewee: Yeah, so it's a process that happens twice a year or three times a year for grads at our school. I met with [de-identified] in Term 1, Term 3 and Term 4, so went through that performance checklist so that was the self-management tool. We have meetings those three times throughout the year. But like I said, if there's anything ever you wanted to touch base about, extra PL or things you're finding difficulty with there is that open door policy.

Facilitator: Yeah, and so the goals you'd set in those performance management meetings are directly aligned to goals that you specified or the...

Interviewee: Yes.

Facilitator: ...standards or a combination?

Interviewee: Combination of both, one of the goals was to - was more of a generic goal was to try and - to complete my graduate file for progression to proficient last year, so that was one of the goals that I'd set, my general area. Some of the other goals were things to do with the students, to do with my learning, so trying to get some [unclear] improvement in AC testing and that kind of thing.

Facilitator: Yeah, and so they would support you to achieve those goals...

Interviewee: Yes, they would.

- Facilitator: ...by giving you the time as you said and the feedback and things like that, yeah, beautiful. You've mentioned the portfolio and things like that, so obviously that comes in part - in module two, correct with the grad modules?
- Interviewee: Yes.
- Facilitator: Can you describe your experiences with the grad modules?
- Interviewee: I think they've been - so I've done the first one, I've done one and two. They've been beneficial to a certain extent. The people that facilitate them they've both been really outstanding people, so there's always lots of information to go around.
- I would say the only downfall is that - because everyone's at a different stage in their development, and a lot of people aren't so good at finding information themselves, there are lots of questions that are asked that really are not relevant to you as a person. For example, you have people would say, oh what's a file, what's a - you know those kind of things that were happening.
- Facilitator: Yeah, okay.
- Interviewee: These are teachers, they're Bachelor trained or they've been in - they've already done their first year. Really there were such varied people at these things that I found that a lot of the time was wasted on questions that could easily be answered either online or by asking another person at school. It's great to ask those things, but it comes to a point where we're getting to the specifics and it's kind of taking away from what it should be about.
- Facilitator: Yeah, and so what's the content that you covered in the two?
- Interviewee: In the first one it was all about professional standards from memory, so how to be a professional in the school. The second one I think was more beneficial was more - there was teaching strategies in both, so instructional strategies in both, but the second one seemed to be a bit more meatier if you will.
- Facilitator: Yeah, and so what do you mean?
- Interviewee: A lot more instructional strategies.
- Facilitator: More applicable then?
- Interviewee: Yeah, suppose so. I think it wasn't so - it wasn't really the course that I felt was irrelevant it was people that were making it irrelevant if that makes sense.
- Facilitator: Okay, yeah. Tell me about any tasks that you had to do in between each unit.
- Interviewee: Yeah, so the first in between module class was about putting an instructional strategy into practice, which was quite beneficial. I will say that I kind of feel there is so much happening in your first year of teaching, such a steep learning curve, you're learning school processes that sometimes I personally feel that they're adding to the workload, if that makes sense, by doing the in between

module task. I mean in between module task of course, we've got to try instructional strategy in the classroom but it's preparing the documentation for presentation at the next module that's adding to your workload.

Facilitator: Did you find it stressful doing that?

Interviewee: I did, I did yeah.

Facilitator: Why do you think you found it stressful?

Interviewee: Just because probably time poor. Particularly first year teachers they're already are incredibly time poor and so we're adding another layer to the workload.

Facilitator: Yeah, fair enough. You found them - how have you found them valuable then?

Interviewee: Because the year of the grad dip was so deep and varied that a lot of the things that you might have been taught tend to get locked away a little bit. The grad module using instructional strategies starts bringing them out a little bit. Also, it gives you time away from school and to reflect on what's happening, how you're going, what the - finding what's working, what's not working so well, and to also an extent learning from other people's experiences can be beneficial in the same context.

Facilitator: Yeah definitely, if you're asking the right question.

Interviewee: Yeah, if they're asking the right questions.

Facilitator: You said that you have not got an official mentor and sort of picked and chosen.

Interviewee: Yes.

Facilitator: With the in-class coaching have you participated in that at all?

Interviewee: I've started this semester. Once again I kind of feel like it's good - I think it would be good for certain people. I don't know whether I should have taken the offer up.

Facilitator: How did you get the offer?

Interviewee: I had heard about it, I had not - I kind of avoided in my first year and I was intent on avoiding it in my second year as well but my Principal brought it up again and said it might be good. I had feedback from my partner that it wasn't so good.

Facilitator: Okay.

Interviewee: Just was more about reflection and feelings rather than practical knowledge, and I'm kind of finding the same myself now.

Facilitator: Okay, so what have you done so far? What does it entail?

Interviewee: I've had two phone calls. I had to complete a reflection checklist in the first phone call. Then the second one we had to set a goal to achieve. That is lovely, but I'm not finding it very beneficial. Probably because - I think it would be

beneficial for someone that's may be new to employment. If you were going straight from uni into a school and, so you go from school to school then, yes, you probably would find benefit in talking to someone and having that support and that advice. But given that I've had three years already I'm not finding it as useful. Questions like how does that make you feel, I find them a little bit irrelevant. I don't know if it's me being cynical.

Facilitator: No that's fair enough.

Interviewee: But also there was the question last time when I was speaking to her on the phone where she rightly said, she realised that I had already finished doing my progression to proficient, so I didn't need her help on my portfolio. She asked me what I was interested in. I said, well, I'd like to start thinking over the next couple of years about possibly trying to maybe get to highly accomplished and I'd be going for a Level 3 submission down the track. She said also - she rightly said highly accomplished is all about supporting colleagues which is absolutely accurate.

She said also what do you do to support your colleagues. I thought it's a valid question, but I am doing quite a bit. I'm the male for digital technologies, I've given PL about certain things that we've had coming to the school. I get given release time to help teachers with their sub-efficacy of teaching digital technologies, and sometimes even trouble shooting so there are lots of things that happen organically.

She's like but how could you help your school? I was like what are you getting at? You obviously have something on your mind, and said well can you run a PL. I said, well I have but - I could but the thing is in school all our PL days are taking up, our staff meetings are all allocated, and I haven't met a teacher at my school that is willing to stay back after school to do a PL, and so that wasn't really - I just felt like it was extra pressure.

Facilitator: Okay.

Interviewee: It's something that I don't really want to have to think about just yet. I feel like she's trying to come up with things for me to do so she could be useful to me, but it's adding to my workload.

Facilitator: Straight from your [master class].

Interviewee: It is. I think it's just another layer adding on.

Facilitator: Yeah okay, interesting.

Interviewee: I think my goal last year was to get that portfolio done, because I didn't know whether I was going to be employed this year. I know it's easier to have a Principal to have you sign off.

- Facilitator: Yeah.
- Interviewee: That's what I did. But it just so happened that I got given permanency in the same year, which is fantastic, but it means that for me maybe the coaching is not so useful.
- Facilitator: Okay.
- Interviewee: Simply because I think she's trying to invent things for me to do.
- Facilitator: Okay. Forgive my very primary school teacher question, but Two Stars and a Wish in-class coaching give me two positive things about it that you've experienced?
- Interviewee: Okay, so I think it's nice to have someone to chat to about things that are happening in the classroom, and sometimes it's nice to have that outside contact. I think it's nice to have a person that's not judgmental and remains confidential with what you tell them. I wish it wasn't adding to the workload. Yeah.
- Facilitator: Fair enough. Overall then, what experience do you think has been the most valuable so far in your career in helping your development as a teacher from the first day of initial teacher education to now.
- Interviewee: I think a few things have aligned. I was lucky enough to have some really fantastic tutors, really supportive Principal and lucky enough to be given employment. Obviously this is tied towards people that have been employed, but that's a really big part of becoming a teacher. Because if you don't have employment to go into then you're not putting anything into use, and so that initial teacher training becomes almost a blink in the past because you're not able to put it into practice.
- Facilitator: Yeah.
- Interviewee: I think some great things have aligned for me, so probably the people that I've been dealing with have been the most beneficial.
- Facilitator: Yeah, so your tutors, your Principal that you've had that would be the two biggest?
- Interviewee: Yeah, I think so.
- Facilitator: Yeah, great. If you could wave a magic wand, so what support real or imaginary, make it up if you need to, what support would you have wanted to help you during that first year in the classroom?
- Interviewee: That's a hard question. I think - it's all well and good to say that you'd like to have someone guiding you. But it's also nice being your own boss in the classroom. Personally, I think initial teacher education maybe should include some kind of paid internship style of learning, because you do learn a lot when

you're on prac, but obviously you can't sustain prac because you don't get paid for it.

Facilitator: Yeah.

Interviewee: I think it would be good to go into, well in your first year, to have some kind of element of paid internship where you can learn from someone that's highly experienced and actually wants to do it. Whereas because when you start in a school it's all well and good to say I'll go find myself a mentor, but being a mentor is not something that many people take lightly or really want to do sometimes because that adds to their workload.

Facilitator: Yeah.

Interviewee: I think, yeah ideally some kind of internship would have been good.

Facilitator: What you're saying it sounds almost like an apprenticeship.

Interviewee: Yeah, because you do learn the most on the job in any job. In my undergrad, when I was learning to be a software engineer I learnt - I spent three years learning how to be a software engineering, I get into a job where I'm doing what they taught me to do, but it's still a massive steep learning curve. Yes, you know how to do it in a textbook level but you don't know how they do it, or you don't know what systems they use, so it's no different really. Getting into a school, and every school is going to be different, I think would be fantastic to have some kind of programme where maybe there are experienced mentor teachers out there that can go into a classroom and be a mentor in the classroom. Maybe that's their job that they get release time for, or that's their full-time job rather than just an advocate on the end of the phone is not so helpful sometimes.

Facilitator: Yeah.

Interviewee: Exactly, yeah.

Facilitator: Thank you so much for your time. Is there - do you have any other questions?

Appendix E

Stage 1 Coding Table for Simon's Interview

Simon: "My personal opinion is that no teacher's ready after any duration of initial teacher training"	
Feelings about teaching experiences this year	<p>I managed to get permanency in that first year so I'm now a member of staff, which is nice</p> <p>This year I feel a lot more confident and comfortable</p> <p>certainly now I feel a lot more confident and a lot more comfortable.</p> <p>taking the experiences of last year with that class, figuring out what worked and what didn't work and then being able to amend that for a new class was really important</p> <p>I was lucky enough to be teaching the same year group for the second year in a row, which I think is also quite helpful for a graduate</p> <p>If I was to change year groups after the first year then some of that hard work would have been undone a little bit by having to run a new set of curriculum descriptors, and doing all those kinds of things that go with teaching a new year, making new resources</p> <p>having that second year in the same year group has been quite beneficial</p> <p>I feel a lot more confident, a lot more able</p> <p>There's nothing that I really didn't discover last year that I'm now discovering this year if that makes sense</p>
Feelings about first year teaching	<p>I managed to get a job at my prac school, which was good, nice and handy.</p> <p>I would say, like many, feeling thrown in the deep end a little bit</p> <p>But starting off, day one, Term 1 first year of teaching it is a very, very steep learning curve.</p> <p>You don't know the school. You know a fair bit about teaching and learning, but obviously every school context is a little different</p> <p>Not only are you getting used to a new job you're also getting used to a new way of doing things in a new business, so that can be quite confronting</p> <p>Obviously everyone else knows what they're doing</p> <p>it's [IEP] week, so everyone knows its IEP week whereas as a grad you're like what's IEP week?</p> <p>The first term was a steep learning curve, and then Term 2, Term 3, Term 4 I felt getting into a bit of a groove</p> <p>I was lucky enough to be teaching the same year group for the second year in a row, which I think is also quite helpful for a graduate</p> <p>I already knew going into the classroom that I wanted to add some kind of cooperative behaviour management strategy</p> <p>What that looked like in the classroom that was always going to be the challenge</p> <p>I chopped and changed a lot of the things that I was doing</p> <p>just finding what works</p> <p>Because you haven't done it before, so you're so busy trying to figure out what's working what's not working that you do tend to chop and change strategies in that first year</p> <p>But I feel like I came out the other end of it relatively unscathed. There was no real moment of I can't do this I want to chuck it in. I felt that I coped quite well with the year.</p> <p>My personal opinion is that no teacher's ready after any duration of initial teacher training</p> <p>Whether I did four years or two years or one year, I think that first year was always going to be a steep learning curve.</p> <p>Because you are in some sense a little bit on your own when you get into a school</p> <p>it's important to get to - to understand that lessons have to have goals, lessons have to have outcomes and lessons have to have a purpose</p>

	<p>But I think it's important for universities to start teaching students that this isn't how it's going to be in the real world, so let's do this but then let's move into the real world a little bit sooner</p> <p>I knew what real world planning was going to look like because of my partner it's a very, very steep learning curve</p> <p>Every day is different</p> <p>I'm in a small school, so there are plenty of opportunities to do things outside the classroom that if you were in a bigger school you might not get those opportunities in your first year</p> <p>that added to the learning curve a little bit, because there was that expectation that you could participate in learning area leaders, leader roles and that kind of thing</p> <p>Very steep, but beneficial</p>
What was/has been challenging	<p>so a challenging year, and also boys are going through some like shit, excuse my French, in Year 4 as they start changing</p> <p>A challenging year group with a challenging set of kids, because they were so loud and out there, lovely kids and so willing to learn</p> <p>I had some really bright kids as well and that's also, as you know a challenge.</p> <p>Also being at a small school I would say that there's not really a teacher that is, oh that's the wow teacher. Do you know what I mean?</p> <p>I think some schools have those teachers where they're the guru. They know a lot of information and they're so ready to help people. I don't think there's really that person at my school at the moment.</p> <p>We don't have any Level 3 teachers. We've got a few senior teachers, but they're coming towards the end of their career and some of them are part-time. I think for me I was having to use my outside of school resources a little bit more.</p>
What has been easy / manageable	<p>having that second year in the same year group has been quite beneficial</p> <p>I definitely did cope well with things. I felt that I coped well with the first year. My partner's also a teacher, so he teaches secondary</p> <p>I watched him go through his first year of teaching. I've got lots of other teacher friends as well, so I knew that it was going to be quite a year.</p> <p>I'm a fairly well organised person to begin with. Once I got my head around the term calendars and the way we do things I was never behind in assessment tracking, in reporting, in absences, those things came quite naturally to me</p> <p>I wasn't new to employment and I wasn't new to roles and responsibilities. I think for me the business side of teaching, the admin side of the business of teaching I think came quite naturally to me</p> <p>Probably - I tend to be a bit of a perfectionist, so - well I coped well with not everything being perfect.</p> <p>I knew what real world planning was going to look like because of my partner</p> <p>I think I was lucky that I knew what it was going to probably look like the sooner you get in and the sooner that you realise that there are things that are important and that you can influence, and there are things that aren't so important and you have no control over.</p> <p>You have to let those things fall away. If you don't that's where you risk becoming overworked and burnt out. I think when I realised that, well, the way that I was going to be writing lesson plans or the way that I was going to be tracking assessments, once I realised it was for my eyes only that's where it probably became easier</p>
University preparation	<p>I think you pick up a lot during the teacher education</p> <p>in the grad dip you spend one of the units looking at different education theories so they try and help you cultivate your own</p> <p>Whether that works or not that's what you discover when you get into the classroom</p> <p>I'm quite good at finding information myself. Once uni had prepped you with all of the tools of finding what to teach and how to teach, well not so much how but what to teach,</p>

	<p>My personal opinion is that no teacher's ready after any duration of initial teacher training</p> <p>I think if you take what you can from the situation, and so if you put in all you've got then you'll get the most amount back</p> <p>Whether I did four years or two years or one year, I think that first year was always going to be a steep learning curve.</p> <p>when you're at uni and you have to write these massive lesson experience plans, and then daily work plans to the nth degree, it sets unrealistic expectations of what you can actually achieve when you're out in the real world</p> <p>Initially, when you're doing lesson experience plans they're three pages long, they're just unrealistic.</p> <p>For one lesson in one day, it takes longer to write the plan than it does to deliver the lesson. I think that sets you up to have this thing in your mind that when you go out into the real world that, if you didn't know better that, that's what you had to do</p> <p>That's where I think teachers get burned up, because they don't have the knowledge of real world practices</p> <p>I think it prepared me in every way that it could</p> <p>Obviously with any course or any university course there are going to be good moments and not so good moments, and it could - that comes down to people. There are a few lecturers and tutors that probably weren't as beneficial as others</p> <p>Where they didn't really understand the content themselves, or have the context in which to help us apply it</p> <p>We spent all the lectures just going over the ACARA website, then going to the tutor and then she was looking over the notes and then trying to make heads or tails of it herself</p> <p>there was elements where it could have been more useful</p> <p>[in another unit] Where we had a fantastic lecturer</p> <p>it was a pedagogy type where we had to write down our philosophy of teaching and do a few other activities, and then make a brochure using our information that parents could then read</p> <p>These were real world things that were making us think about what kind of teacher we're going to be like, and what our communication with parents was going to be like</p> <p>it certainly helped. Both the lecturer and tutor were fantastic in that course, they had real world knowledge and real world experience</p> <p>The tutor came from a background where she had worked with really troubled boys. Her experiences were fantastic to hear about</p> <p>[rating uni course out of ten] I would probably lean towards sevens and eights</p> <p>Only because I put into it what I wanted to get out of it. There are plenty of students that don't attack their studies in that way, and wonder why they're not prepared</p> <p>I think the university can only do so much</p> <p>Same as our students in our classes, you give them all the tools it's up to them to use them</p> <p>It's no different being a university student as to being a primary school student</p> <p>think it could have easily not prepared me, but I didn't let that happen and I think that that's the difference. Some people allow it to happen</p> <p>you know what an IEP is from uni, but you don't really have to write one, and every school does them differently so it's hard to really prepare a student or a teacher for writing IEPs</p>
Support provided	<p>It just so happened that my Principal is also very welcoming and encouraging, and also full of knowledge and experience, so I've been lucky to have her support where there are some schools where you don't really get that</p> <p>Because she's so approachable, because we are a small school that certainly has helped me in getting that</p> <p>so I certainly had to branch out and find people that I could approach</p>

	<p>She made sure that I got all of my entitlements, so grad allowance, extra allocation, time to go off to [PL], forwarding me PLs that might be of interest to me. Basically, I could walk into her office any time I like and have a chat to her, and she's always got the chair ready for you to sit in. I think she's been willing to help that learning. She's been willing to provide extra resources, and she's also been willing to listen and provide advice and so on</p> <p>Support with time and with grad entitlements and things like that</p> <p>she encouraged me to find a mentor in school. When I went back to her I said to her there's not really a person that I think, wow, that's the kind of teacher I want to be like. There's not really that person at my school. For me, I think it's better for me to take bits and pieces from lots of different people, and so invent my pseudo-mentor if you will</p> <p>Having a friend as a teacher at another school, having my partner to support me and having some key people at school, not in an official capacity but in a way where I can access the information for myself and how I see fit.</p> <p>there's that option talk to the teacher previous. The current Year 3 teacher she's obviously a really good resource for knowing the children because she taught them all</p> <p>That's been really helpful, so I've developed a really nice relationship with her</p> <p>if there's anything ever you wanted to touch base about, extra PL or things you're finding difficulty with there is that open door policy</p> <p>I get given release time to help teachers with their sub-efficacy of teaching digital technologies</p>
Support needed / missing	<p>Also being at a small school I would say that there's not really a teacher that is, oh that's the wow teacher.</p> <p>some schools have those teachers where they're the guru</p> <p>They know a lot of information and they're so ready to help people. I don't think there's really that person at my school at the moment</p> <p>We don't have any Level 3 teachers. We've got a few senior teachers, but they're coming towards the end of their career and some of them are part-time</p>
Grad modules	<p>They've been beneficial to a certain extent. The people that facilitate them they've both been really outstanding people, so there's always lots of information to go around. because everyone's at a different stage in their development, and a lot of people aren't so good at finding information themselves, there are lots of questions that are asked that really are not relevant to you as a person</p> <p>Really there were such varied people at these things that I found that a lot of the time was wasted on questions that could easily be answered either online or by asking another person at school.</p> <p>The second one I think was more beneficial was more - there was teaching strategies in both, so instructional strategies in both, but the second one seemed to be a bit more meatier if you will.</p> <p>it wasn't really the course that I felt was irrelevant it was people that were making it irrelevant</p> <p>the first in between module class was about putting an instructional strategy into practice, which was quite beneficial.</p> <p>I kind of feel there is so much happening in your first year of teaching, such a steep learning curve, you're learning school processes that sometimes I personally feel that they're adding to the workload, if that makes sense, by doing the in between module task we've got to try instructional strategy in the classroom but it's preparing the documentation for presentation at the next module that's adding to your workload</p> <p>[Did you find it stressful doing that?] I did, I did yeah</p> <p>Just because probably time poor. Particularly first year teachers they're already are incredibly time poor and so we're adding another layer to the workload.</p>

	<p>Because the year of the grad dip was so deep and varied that a lot of the things that you might have been taught tend to get locked away a little bit. The grad module using instructional strategies starts bringing them out a little bit</p> <p>it gives you time away from school and to reflect on what's happening, how you're going, what the - finding what's working, what's not working so well, and to also an extent learning from other people's experiences can be beneficial in the same context</p>
Coaching	<p>I've started this semester. Once again I kind of feel like it's good - I think it would be good for certain people. I don't know whether I should have taken the offer up I had heard about it, I had not - I kind of avoided in my first year and I was intent on avoiding it in my second year as well but my Principal brought it up again and said it might be good. I had feedback from my partner that it wasn't so good</p> <p>Just was more about reflection and feelings rather than practical knowledge, and I'm kind of finding the same myself now</p> <p>I've had two phone calls. I had to complete a reflection checklist in the first phone call. Then the second one we had to set a goal to achieve. That is lovely, but I'm not finding it very beneficial.</p> <p>I think it would be beneficial for someone that's may be new to employment. If you were going straight from uni into a school and, so you go from school to school then, yes, you probably would find benefit in talking to someone and having that support and that advice</p> <p>Questions like how does that make you feel, I find them a little bit irrelevant. I don't know if it's me being cynical</p> <p>she realised that I had already finished doing my progression to proficient, so I didn't need her help on my portfolio.</p> <p>I just felt like it was extra pressure</p> <p>It's something that I don't really want to have to think about just yet. I feel like she's trying to come up with things for me to do so she could be useful to me, but it's adding to my workload</p> <p>I think it's just another layer adding on</p> <p>I think she's trying to invent things for me to do</p> <p>I think it's nice to have someone to chat to about things that are happening in the classroom, and sometimes it's nice to have that outside contact.</p> <p>it's nice to have a person that's not judgmental and remains confidential with what you tell them. I wish it wasn't adding to the workload</p>
Mentor	<p>[the principal] encouraged me to find a mentor in school. When I went back to her I said to her there's not really a person that I think, wow, that's the kind of teacher I want to be like. There's not really that person at my school. For me, I think it's better for me to take bits and pieces from lots of different people, and so invent my pseudo-mentor if you will</p> <p>Having a friend as a teacher at another school, having my partner to support me and having some key people at school, not in an official capacity but in a way where I can access the information for myself and how I see fit.</p> <p>but there's not really that person that I think, wow that's what I want.</p> <p>when you start in a school it's all well and good to say I'll go find myself a mentor, but being a mentor is not something that many people take lightly or really want to do sometimes because that adds to their workload.</p>
Best thing to assist teaching growth	<p>Definitely the first year of working</p> <p>a few things have aligned. I was lucky enough to have some really fantastic tutors, really supportive Principal and lucky enough to be given employment.</p> <p>this is tied towards people that have been employed, but that's a really big part of becoming a teacher. Because if you don't have employment to go into then you're not</p>

	<p>putting anything into use, and so that initial teacher training becomes almost a blink in the past because you're not able to put it into practice</p> <p>probably the people that I've been dealing with have been the most beneficial</p>
Support wish	<p>it's all well and good to say that you'd like to have someone guiding you. But it's also nice being your own boss in the classroom</p> <p>I think initial teacher education maybe should include some kind of paid internship style of learning, because you do learn a lot when you're on prac, but obviously you can't sustain prac because you don't get paid for it</p> <p>it would be good to go into, well in your first year, to have some kind of element of paid internship where you can learn from someone that's highly experienced and actually wants to do it</p> <p>ideally some kind of internship would have been good</p> <p>you do learn the most on the job in any job</p> <p>Getting into a school, and every school is going to be different, I think would be fantastic to have some kind of programme where maybe there are experienced mentor teachers out there that can go into a classroom and be a mentor in the classroom.</p> <p>Maybe that's their job that they get release time for, or that's their full-time job rather than just an advocate on the end of the phone is not so helpful sometimes</p>

Appendix F**Stage 2 Overarching Themes (sample)**

Thrown in the Deep End Alex	any teacher I spoke to they helped me out made me feel a lot better coping wise than just being landed in the deep end and do it yourself I think it was just the unknown Whereas this was a new school, where I'd be thrown in the deep end in terms of having my own class and trying things
Simon	I would say, like many, feeling thrown in the deep end a little bit very steep learning curve. Not only are you getting used to a new job you're also getting used to a new way of doing things in a new business, so that can be quite confronting The first term was a steep learning curve I think that first year was always going to be a steep learning curve. you are in some sense a little bit on your own when you get into a school it's a very, very steep learning curve Very steep, but beneficial My personal opinion is that no teacher's ready after any duration of initial teacher training
Charles	just a whole new level of stressful and hectic. a lot of new thrown at me it's just been a lot of new kind of rolled into of one very hard to deal with - very, very hard to deal with Going through what term one is like as a teacher is in itself just mayhem I was just shocked I went into a bit of a tailspin it has taken me a while to actually find my feet that in itself was a shock I was shocked I was really shocked try and find my feet as much as I have hated it, it has forced me to stand on my own two feet. forced me to be responsible It has forced me to find my own very independent teaching style I knew it was going to be harder, I did know that but I just don't think I anticipated just how hard. the training wheels are really just completely taken off. I just don't think I anticipated just how hard
Helen	what is truth? What's not? What do you want me to do? What do I not need to do? actually really difficult that contributed a lot to the workload, not knowing how to tick all those boxes, how to teach all those content descriptors, how to assess the kids on what needed to be done very overwhelming Some days were harder than I thought and some days I really thought oh my goodness, what have I got myself into? I was chucked in the deep end Your first year, you've got all of these things coming at you I found the workload challenging, because I didn't have the direction that I wanted from the principal I didn't know - did not know what to do. Oh my gosh, there are so many policies That's a scary thing, assessment What do I need to keep? What do I not need to keep? What do I legally need to keep as well, and how long for?
Lana	there were so many behaviours. It was just an absolute disaster My God, is this going to be a disaster I wasn't really prepared for that was just tough. Every day was tough I don't think anything could have prepared me. I don't think anything could have prepared me. I knew it was going to be hard I went in being like, I'm ready. I was just like, bring it on, sort of thing, and it was. It was tough definitely harder than I thought, but I, deep down, was like, I'm ready for it I was like, bring it on. It's going to be awful It was just learning 100 miles an hour, learning all these strategies for all these different types of children all at once, became a bit overwhelming.
Zara	it was very hit the ground running You're kind of testing the waters a little bit. You didn't really know if what you was doing was working.

	<p>I've no idea what I'm doing because we were stressed out at the start of the year last year, it was a lot harder really hard [really hard] Fitting it in So much harder. It was just hard You don't go into it thinking this is your whole life for the whole year The actual getting what you need to teach and getting it done was the hardest for the first year it was like my job was my whole life and every waking moment I just thought about my job. That's what I found really hard, just that was it. . I basically came in there crying the first term going I don't know what I'm doing The actual getting what you need to teach and getting it done was the hardest when I walked in, it was like whoa, we have to do all this as well as teach my class</p>
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Appendix G

Thematic Coding Table- All Interviews

Overarching Themes

- Thrown in the deep end
- Didn't feel ready for the classroom but didn't expect uni to fully prepare them either
- Initial low self-efficacy
- With support- readiness/self-efficacy improved
- Without support- consistently low self-efficacy
- Grads expect admin to support them
- Getting work at a prac school is good but makes it difficult to start somewhere new
- Second year more confident
- Uni has unrealistic expectations
- Best support was collaboration with other teachers (peer teacher, mentor, online groups)
- Grad modules similar to uni
- Two attitudes to in-between module tasks –
 1. Fine because they're doing them; or
 2. Onerous and an added burden
- Best thing about grad modules; talking to other grads
- Coaching is extra work and not supportive
- Having prior work experience helps
- Admin need to be fair with allocating grad days/entitlements
- Grad days are highly valued
- How the principals allow them to utilise
- Mentors "official" not happening
- Unofficial mentors: the teacher next door

Themes and Research Questions

CLASSROOM READINESS/FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCES

-thrown in the deep end/not ready/didn't expect uni to prepare them/low self-efficacy

GRADUATE MODULES

-similar to uni

-mixed reviews

-dislike in-between tasks

-good for peer collaboration

IN-CLASS COACHING

-don't support self-efficacy → add to stress/burden

SO WHERE DOES THE SUPPORT COME FROM?

-colleagues

-admin

WHAT SUPPORT MEANT FOR VIEWS TO 'CLASSROOM READINESS/SELF-EFFICACY

-no support = low self-efficacy

-Support = high / good self-efficacy

THEMES	DATA/CODE/QUOTES
Classroom Readiness: Not Ready So much new to learn - Steep learning curve - High workload - Overload of policies/procedures /IEPS/admin - Planning : full time teachers	I think it was just the unknown very steep learning curve. Not only are you getting used to a new job you're also getting used to a new way of doing things in a new business, so that can be quite confronting Whereas this was a new school, where I'd be thrown in the deep end in terms of having my own class and trying things The first term was a steep learning curve I think that first year was always going to be a steep learning curve. you are in some sense a little bit on your own when you get into a school it's a very, very steep learning curve just a whole new level of stressful and hectic. a lot of new thrown at me it's just been a lot of new kind of rolled into of one

<p>cannot plan like uni teaches students to</p> <p>- Feelings in first year : Shocked + stressed, No attrition</p>	<p>very hard to deal with - very, very hard to deal with not knowing how to tick all those boxes, how to teach all those content descriptors, how to assess the kids on what needed to be done very overwhelming</p> <p>I didn't know - did not know what to do okay, I've got to teach that. How do you want me to teach that?</p> <p>It was just learning 100 miles an hour, learning all these strategies for all these different types of children all at once, became a bit overwhelming.</p> <p>it was very hit the ground running</p> <p>You're kind of testing the waters a little bit. You didn't really know if what you was doing was working.</p> <p>I've no idea what I'm doing</p> <p>. I basically came in there crying the first term going I don't know what I'm doing</p> <p>I don't know how to teach these kids</p> <p>I really felt like I was not going to be able to benefit them or let them grow</p> <p>I genuinely feel like sometimes I just don't know how to teach these kids</p> <p>am I doing this correctly?</p> <p>Have I done enough, are these kids learning</p> <p>At the end of the year I looked back and I was like did I actually have a difference on their education and it was a really scary thought for me to have</p> <p>I honestly don't think I did last year. I really don't</p> <p>what is truth? What's not? What do you want me to do?</p> <p>What do I not need to do?</p> <p>actually really difficult.</p> <p>[getting a job in term 2 at prac school, covering maternity leave] I was familiar with the staff, I was familiar with some of the kids and the school grounds and the processes of that school.</p> <p>That takes the edge off having to learn I think a lot of the new things. I feel like I relied heavily on the programs that were given to me by the school and relied really heavily on the other year five teacher who I shared a lot of the planning and assessing with</p> <p>Last year I know I struggled with it and I didn't do it very well [differentiation]</p> <p>I still don't feel like I did enough in the classroom to meet the higher kids and the lower kids</p> <p>I knew it was going to be harder, I did know that but I just don't think I anticipated just how hard. the training wheels are really just completely taken off.</p> <p>You have so much independence that at the start you are kind of like this is incredible</p> <p>I can make all these decisions without having to run it past someone but then that quickly wears off</p> <p>I'm really scared about how low these kids are. that in itself was a shock</p> <p>I'm not going to be able to get them up to a standard they need to be at by the end of the year</p> <p>Having that shock of the low literacy and numeracy levels I feel like I should be early childhood trained</p> <p>I don't know whether that is the influence of my school last year</p> <p>my first instinct was I'm not early childhood trained, I can't teach these kids. there were so many behaviours. It was just an absolute disaster</p> <p>Workload</p> <p>Going through what term one is like as a teacher is in itself just mayhem it has taken me a while to actually find my feet I was chunked in the deep end Your first year, you've got all of these things coming at you I found the workload challenging, because I didn't have the direction that I wanted from the principal that contributed a lot to the workload, Oh my gosh, there are so many policies It's ridiculous, and you want me to know this all by heart? That's a scary thing, assessment What do I need to keep? What do I not need to keep? What do I legally need to keep as well, and how long for? Expectations - massive expectations It's just ridiculous our workload is quite intense at times a mental overload</p> <p>I was chunked in the deep end I have struggled with doing term plans I think I was trying to plan where the uni wanted me to plan, for pracs You don't have time to do that amount of detail, and it's very unrealistic</p> <p>I'm teaching three year levels, so that for a graduate is quite overwhelming as well, to teach the three year levels what I needed to teach in what semester and what they were assessing. So I found that challenging, as well as assessment, too the principal we had last year argued that they weren't important and that we didn't need to do them. So we - that was challenging because I felt like, well, I've learnt all this stuff at uni and you're telling me completely a different story</p> <p>having to grab all those content descriptors and ensure that I ticked all the boxes was actually really difficult learning about the department portal, learning about all these [blinkin'] policies</p> <p>Because I've worked in a professional environment before, I think that also helped me understand what could be expected. I think if I hadn't have done a degree before this, and worked in a job before any of this, I wouldn't have - yeah, wouldn't have been able to do it, I don't reckon. But just being a mature student made a big difference it was a lot harder really hard [really hard] Fitting it in So much harder. It was just hard You don't go into it thinking this is your whole life for the whole year The actual getting what you need to teach and getting it done was the hardest for the first year it was like my job was my whole life and every waking moment I just thought about my job. That's what I found really hard, just that</p>
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	<p>was it. The actual getting what you need to teach and getting it done was the hardest when I walked in, it was like whoa, we have to do all this as well as teach my class more the admin side of things more than anything else, was challenging I knew it was going to be part of it, but I just didn't really think about how challenging it could be I feel the most anxious and nervous I've ever been, I'm not normally an anxious or nervous person, or don't normally lose sleep over anything. But for the first couple of days of last year, I was you know, keeping waking up at night and that kind of thing.</p> <p>IEPs wasn't something that I knew about, it wasn't something I really learnt a huge amount about, or got my head around. reports as well, that was quite difficult. more the admin side of things more than anything else, was challenging I knew we'd have meetings, I didn't really think about not how many, the admin things were probably harder than I thought, so like the reporting and IEPs I think I was lucky that I knew what it was going to probably look like the sooner you get in and the sooner that you realise that there are things that are important and that you can influence, and there are things that aren't so important and you have no control over. You have to let those things fall away. If you don't that's where you risk becoming overworked and burnt out. I think when I realised that, well, the way that I was going to be writing lesson plans or the way that I was going to be tracking assessments, once I realised it was for my eyes only that's where it probably became easier That's where I think teachers get burned up, because they don't have the knowledge of real world practices the little things kind of building up on top of each other was quite hard I was just shocked it's so much more demanding than the eight to three</p> <p>It's just insane The stuff that you take home with you at night mentally on top of the physical workload really affects you</p> <p>I was just shocked I had a year at university and I'm then trusted with 26 children. I went into a bit of a tailspin that in itself was a shock I was shocked I was really shocked try and find my feet I knew it was going to be harder, I did know that but I just don't think I anticipated just how hard. I would say, like many, feeling thrown in the deep end a little bit. as much as I have hated it, it has forced me to stand on my own two feet. forced me to be responsible. It has forced me to find my own very independent teaching style the training wheels are really just completely taken off. Some days were harder than I thought and some days I really thought oh my goodness, what have I got myself into? It went through waves didn't happen as often as the really good days You have your good days, you have your bad days</p> <p>I was quite realistic. My personal opinion is that no teacher's ready after any duration of initial teacher training. I'm finally - I feel like I'm getting there but it has taken a lot of extra work for me to be able to feel like I can do this job this year So I'm still trying to get my head around whether that's just normal. Every day is different. try and find my feet It has forced me to find my own very independent teaching style but that's a thousand times more rewarding. These students are under my responsibility and everything in here is 100 per cent me. My God, is this going to be a disaster.</p> <p>I wasn't really prepared for. that was just tough. Every day was tough. I don't think anything could have prepared me. I don't think anything could have prepared me. I knew it was going to be hard</p> <p>I went in being like, I'm ready. I was just like, bring it on, sort of thing, and it was. It was tough. definitely harder than I thought, but I, deep down, was like, I'm ready for it. I was like, bring it on. It's going to be awful. there is no amount of experience you can have before you teach that's going to prepare you and I think that's the truth.</p> <p><u>Didn't expect what happened</u></p> <p>I did not have good enough behaviour management experience to be able to control and manage a group of kids who were Aboriginal that had extreme behavioural difficulties. I had to teach technologies, which I never taught in my life, obviously being a new learning area. I didn't think I would be teaching lower levels...whether I have a higher standard of what they should be. I had no experience, no guidance with any year groups below year four and I feel like that was a big gap in my education at university. I think, because when I was at uni, I probably didn't see myself working, maybe, in [LOW SOCIOECONOMIC SCHOOL]</p> <p>I kind of didn't really - didn't know where I'd be.</p>
<p>Quality uni preparation</p> <p>A good base</p> <p>Good for the right people</p> <p>REAL WORD most beneficial</p>	<p>I think you pick up a lot during the teacher education. in the grad dip you spend one of the units looking at different education theories so they try and help you cultivate your own. I think it prepared me in every way that it could. behaviour management, lesson planning or planning in general and curriculum it did. I think knowing the curriculum, the uni's obviously a bit better for that, because you've come out of it knowing as much as you can. Because uni you can do all the, even the pracs are really helpful, but all the theory and everything else. the uni was good for learning the curriculum and other bits</p> <p>it gave me some good based theory. But definitely, uni was really good. I did like uni, and then prac. some of the things we learned, I did take on, but I think the main thing I learned from uni is how to be organised and how to forward plan. I think they did the best they could with what they had. they did prepare me quite well. I feel like they've got the teaching side really well. you can only be taught so much and also in a short amount of time we are at uni. Once uni had prepped you with all of the tools of finding what to teach and how to teach, well not so much how but what to teach, I think if you take what you can from the situation, and so if you put in all you've got then you'll get the most amount back. Obviously with any course or any university course there are going to be good moments and not so good moments, and it</p>

	<p>could - that comes down to people. I think the university can only do so much. I went to [Notre Dame], and it was awesome. I did love it.</p> <p>So, I don't know if I'd be like, oh, I wasn't prepared enough from uni at uni, I learned a lot, and I remember we delved into a bit of behaviour management and those little things. uni was good. Uni definitely prepared me, but I would have learned the most last year, doing on-the-job, definitely</p> <p>[rating uni course out of ten] I would probably lean towards sevens and eights.</p> <p>PRAC PREPARED BEST AT UNI</p> <p>I remember being a bit freaked out after the first prac, being like, this is so much work, and being really like, oh, I don't know if this is for me.</p> <p>so much to plan, and be on your game. Just all the earlier finishes, and people that - all the work that you had to change to help the lower and all that. Just being like, whoa, this is too much.</p> <p>when I went and learned everything, I was like wow I can use that in my classroom, and then I went into my first year and I was like I can't use this, I've no time to use it. It wasn't until my ATP where I was exposed to a year one/two split class and how to basically navigate having to teach two different content descriptors at the same time. I ended up doing two lots of 10-week pracs, which I found really beneficial, because you get to know the kids a little bit by then, even if it was first prac or last prac. your ATP is about as close as you're going to get and I was actually very lucky to have my ATP at my school. the supervisors I had my on my prac were fantastic. provided a lot of feedback on my planning and my assessing and watching me in class and I found that really beneficial. [at ECU] they had more prac it was pretty early on within your starting your degree that if you knew that if you wanted to do - if you wanted to be a teacher. I think the amount of prac that ECU offer prepared really well. [in another unit] Where we had a fantastic lecturer. It was a pedagogy type where we had to write down our philosophy of teaching and do a few other activities, and then make a brochure using our information that parents could then read. These were real world things that were making us think about what kind of teacher we're going to be like, and what our communication with parents was going to be like. it certainly helped. Both the lecturer and tutor were fantastic in that course, they had real world knowledge and real world experience. The tutor came from a background where she had worked with really troubled boys. Her experiences were fantastic to hear about.</p>
<p>Negative/indifferent uni experiences</p> <p>It doesn't prepare you for the realities of a busy classroom</p> <p>Heavy on theory</p>	<p>My personal opinion is that no teacher's ready after any duration of initial teacher training. first year was always going to be a steep learning curve. when you're at uni and you have to write these massive lesson experience plans, and then daily work plans to the nth degree, it sets unrealistic expectations of what you can actually achieve when you're out in the real world. Initially, when you're doing lesson experience plans they're three pages long, they're just unrealistic.</p> <p>For one lesson in one day, it takes longer to write the plan than it does to deliver the lesson. I think that sets you up to have this thing in your mind that when you go out into the real world that, if you didn't know better that, that's what you had to do. That's where I think teachers get burned up, because they don't have the knowledge of real world practices. I feel it's been more beneficial on the job learning than obviously uni. until you get out in to the real world as such, it doesn't mean anything. the theory of planning and assessing and it being this beautiful cycle [sarcasm]. it did not prepare me enough for the classroom at all. my two pracs were both middle upper. I had no experience, no guidance with any year groups below year four and I feel like that was a big gap in my education at university. they didn't really go into different ways to plan for the wide variety of kids that we get now. They hammer into you differentiation and no student learns the same but they didn't really delve into how to cope with that. The theory of it is there, I know I need to do it, but I just don't feel like I was ever really taught well enough how to do it. It felt like it was really surface level. I think I was trying to plan where the uni wanted me to plan, for pracs. You don't have time to do that amount of detail, and it's very unrealistic. at uni, we mainly did assignments on one content descriptor, having to plan for one content descriptor. I only remember having to do one assignment. It was a literacy assignment in my second year that was planning for a year four/five split class</p> <p>It wasn't until my ATP where I was exposed to a year one/two split class and how to basically navigate having to teach two different content descriptors at the same time. I really only got the chance to have a go at implementing things that you would use in a year one, two, three class. So welcome to the start of the 2018 year, and all of a sudden, I'm teaching year four, five, six, and I was finding that I had to go back through my uni textbooks, which I have kept and I still have, to refer to how do you want me to teach this? Is it the same in upper primary as you would in junior primary? I think what I'm getting at is there's no magic book for those sort of things. It would have been really nice if someone had told me that, and maybe I would have written down some more games that teachers have done so I've got that prepared. to learn that type of crap during uni would be beneficial, and I think also more on assessment, too. I remember we delved into a bit of behaviour management and those little things, but we never did any learning on trauma, or the extra things that come along with being in a school in [low socioeconomic</p>

	<p>areas], and even that, at uni, you didn't really learn. just your everyday classroom, all the work needs to get done, but it wasn't about, like, what about the behaviours? [prac] when I went and learned everything, I was like wow I can use that in my classroom, and then I went into my first year and I was like I can't use this, I've no time to use it. I think it might just need to be a little bit harder than what it actually is. some things I wish that they could improve on, like, for example, the literacy programs, all the literacy programs. I wish we could have learned about the different resources we had for spelling and reading and how to apply them in different learning areas, not necessarily just doing a forward-planning document for one thing. I do wish they'd supported me there. I feel like they've got the teaching side really well. It's just more of the admin side</p> <p>you go to do your ATPs, you do your teaching, like wow, yeah, I can do this. Then because I finished [mid-year] the next part I was like oh, I've just gone from teaching to now actually having to do it a lot more</p> <p>there are some things they need to improve on. that I have learned a lot more these past two years than I had in my fourth year and my third year [on the job]. I'm learning more but you couldn't possibly have learned that at university.</p> <p>THEORY HEAVY</p> <p>Once uni had prepped you with all of the tools of finding what to teach and how to teach, well not so much how but what to teach. There are a few lecturers and tutors that probably weren't as beneficial as others</p> <p>Where they didn't really understand the content themselves, or have the context in which to help us apply it. We spent all the lectures just going over the ACARA website, then going to the tutor and then she was looking over the notes and then trying to make heads or tails of it herself. there was elements where it could have been more useful. you know what an IEP is from uni, but you don't really have to write one, and every school does them differently so it's hard to really prepare a student or a teacher for writing IEPs. IEPs wasn't something that I knew about, it wasn't something I really learnt a huge amount about, or got my head around. It's the admin side of things that I don't think it – like we touched on reports but there wasn't a huge amount, or certainly didn't feel, having gone through now a year of doing reports, didn't feel like as big a focus uni wise. we just glossed over a little bit and didn't do a huge amount, certainly didn't look at IEPs or how to write IEPs or anything like that. Some theories might work for certain kids or certain classrooms, but until you actually get out there and put them in to place or try them, you don't know</p> <p>there is no amount of experience you can have before you teach that's going to prepare you and I think that's the truth. A lot of what we did in uni just felt purely theoretical - in theory when you get this kid, in theory when you plan for maths. We looked at child safety and because that's obviously a state law, like state-wide in terms of how you interact with children and physical contact and things like that - so we looked at that but that was pretty much the extent of what we looked at university, outside of the scope within the classroom of planning and assessment. what we did in uni just felt purely theoretical</p> <p>I think that the units heavily rely on people to be a certain type of learner. they jammed way too much content into the one semester and to keep up with all that information just coming at you. it would be really full on. to be honest, I'm very surprised that I've actually remembered a few things from uni. I think if I hadn't have done a degree before this, and worked in a job before any of this, I wouldn't have - yeah, wouldn't have been able to do it, I don't reckon. it did not prepare me enough for the classroom at all. The theory of it is there, I know I need to do it, but I just don't feel like I was ever really taught well enough how to do it. It felt like it was really surface level.</p>
<p>Opposing quotes to 'overwhelming'</p> <p>Overall positive view despite the challenge</p>	<p>I know I'm quite fortunate in how I've experienced the first year. Yeah, I wouldn't necessarily change anything. So, I feel very grateful, very lucky to be in the position I was in</p> <p>But I feel like I came out the other end of it relatively unscathed. There was no real moment of I can't do this I want to chuck it in. I felt that I coped quite well with the year.</p> <p>Some days were harder than I thought and some days I really thought oh my goodness, what have I got myself into? didn't happen as often as the really good days would have days that I would come home and say, yeah. I've chosen the correct career, profession. I'm happy with what's happening. positive days happened more. You have your good days, you have your bad days. I definitely coped. Made it. definitely harder than I thought, but I, deep down, was like, I'm ready for it. I was like, bring it on. It's going to be awful. I think I did a good job as a graduate teacher. I'm a very organised person, so when things got thrown at me, I was like okay, I can just get on with it. I knew how to adapt to a situation, I knew how to go okay, well this isn't the way forward, I need to get this done, I've got to prioritise that. So, I felt like I was really good at that. There wasn't a day I regretted going in to teaching. there was hard days but not a single point that I thought, oh maybe I made the wrong choice. I loved, I got home and even if it was a tough day, I still loved my job and quite glad that I picked it.</p>
Didn't expect uni to prepare them	<p>until you get out in to the real world as such, it doesn't mean anything. My personal opinion is that no teacher's ready after any duration of initial teacher training. There is no amount of experience you can have before you teach that's going to prepare you and I think that's the truth. I'm learning more but you couldn't possibly have learned that at university. I think the university can only do so much. I think, because when I was at uni, I probably didn't see myself working, maybe, in [LOW SOCIOECONOMIC SCHOOL] I kind of didn't really - didn't know where I'd be. So, I don't know if I'd be like, oh, I wasn't prepared enough from uni. Uni definitely prepared me, but I would have learned the most last year, doing</p>

	on-the-job, definitely. I think they did the best they could with what they had. you can only be taught so much and also in a short amount of time we are at uni.
<p>GRADUATE MODULES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first module was widely criticized as being the same as uni and some waste of time Others liked the refresher <p>Second module was better, more applicable and relevant</p> <p>The in-between module tasks were overall considered either okay but not worthwhile/educative or a burden that added to the workload.</p> <p>Benefits included: Getting a break from the classroom Talking with other graduate teachers</p>	<p>They're okay.</p> <p>MODULE ONE: The first module felt a little bit like a rehash of uni. The first one was a waste of my time. it was just like it was being back at uni. the first one, I was not into. I actually can't even remember what it was about. We had to share - I think it was like a teaching strategy, or something like that, with everyone. Like, you know, you - pair sharing, or how you're getting them into groups, or routines. How you're moving them through the room. It's like, share one of those strategies. [beneficial?] Not really. It was a bit of sort of like, oh, it's not really relevant to me, is what I felt. It was very much like, let's all share our experiences, and let's all talk about everything. no one was from anywhere, sort of, low socioeconomic area, so I just felt like everything everyone was saying was not relevant. I just felt like this is a waste of my time. A lot of whingeing, a lot of people saying, oh, I didn't get any support, this is horrible, blah, blah, blah. I was like listening, and going, I've got lots of support. I'm dealing with other problems than like, you know, your principal telling you, you can't use the internet for a day, and things like that.</p> <p>The first one we had a presenter that would talk, discuss the topics, but if we ended up through discussion just going ahead the need be, then he would carry on with the slides. We'd just be frustrated with him, because we'd already discussed it. Even though we felt like we'd already covered those, and give us 10 minutes to discuss something that would take us two minutes. It just felt like it was a bit of wasting time from that regard. because everyone's at a different stage in their development, and a lot of people aren't so good at finding information themselves, there are lots of questions that are asked that really are not relevant to you as a person. because everyone's at a different stage in their development, and a lot of people aren't so good at finding information themselves, there are lots of questions that are asked that really are not relevant to you as a person. Really there were such varied people at these things that I found that a lot of the time was wasted on questions that could easily be answered either online or by asking another person at school. it wasn't really the course that I felt was irrelevant it was people that were making it irrelevant. I also don't like some of the things that they teach. I'm not necessarily saying that it's not proven and it's not a great thing. I just think in the reality of what's happening in schools, it's very hard to approach it. It's all lovely and I love it all, but it's - they showed us that this is the way of teaching; how are you implementing it? It's like hang on, I'm only doing a small amount of that. I feel like we're not really getting to the point of how to implement it in an easier way to make things easier for schools. a lot of it is very hard to apply to my own school a lot of the things I was just I don't - I see it working, I just don't have time to do it.</p> <p>I guess to tick the boxes, that I've done them.</p> <p>FIRST MODULE POSITIVE it's things like extra strategies, which we might have learnt at uni. almost like the theory of uni but you've got that real-life application already which makes it better. It built a lot on the university preparation. to have that refresher of stuff you have learnt, or maybe a bit more in-depth about stuff you've sort of glossed over at uni and then a bit more detail too. They've been beneficial to a certain extent. it felt a lot easier to relay it back to the classroom. take a kid from your class right now, apply these steps to them, what would you do. It's so much easier to look at different strategies and different approaches when you have that real example waiting for you back in the classroom to go and test it on. you have people giving you real examples as well. almost like the theory of uni but you've got that real-life application already which makes it better. So, it's that refresher more than anything else. When you get in to school life and it's the day to day stuff, you kind of sort of forget what you've learnt. So just a good reminder of going oh yeah, I can do that, or I'll try that and see if works or not. I found the presenter makes a lot of difference to what I get out of them a little bit. overall, the content I found helpful to build up for that portfolio as well. I use it as a self-reflecting bit as well. The people that facilitate them they've both been really outstanding people, so there's always lots of information to go around</p> <p>The second one I think was more beneficial was more - there was teaching strategies in both, so instructional strategies in both, but the second one seemed to be a bit more meatier if you will. The second modules were incredibly beneficial. That was the most enlightening and beneficial two days I have had because it really looked at what was expected from us. It was really clear. the format that we need to go through and how the process works for us and be signed off for full registration - because that's essentially our goal as a graduate. We want to get our full registration and then we can just focus on the teaching side of it. we looked at moving our registration to full registration from provisional. I think the second one was a bit better. we also spent some time looking at the Department of Education Code of Conduct, which is</p>

	<p>something that you would never touch probably with a 10 foot pole in a school. those things which aren't ever told and you don't really think to question, that was really beneficial going into the Department of Education's Code of Conduct because I never would have thought to go and read it. That I found really beneficial really tailored to the fact that they know we wouldn't know that the Department recognised that as a graduate we need to be informed of the Code of Conduct. really tailored almost like an induction to the Department, that's really good too. That's valuable. in grad mod two, they talked about the code of conduct with the department, and that's the first time I've ever seen that document.</p> <p>Between module tasks, yeah. We had to do two of them. the first in between module task was about putting an instructional strategy into practice, which was quite beneficial. using instructional strategies starts bringing them out a little bit.</p> <p>it gives you time away from school and to reflect on what's happening, how you're going, what the - finding what's working, what's not working so well.</p> <p>It wasn't actually extra work because I was already doing it and that's the whole point of it. I didn't find it too much extra work. I could see it being extra work if you're not doing it. I think that when I got the thing, I looked at it and I was like, oh yeah, I think I'll do this, and I wrote it down at the time. So then, when I opened it up again, I was like, oh yeah. I'll do that. [Beneficial?] Not really. It's homework that we're doing in class anyway, it's just gathering the evidence to then take it to the next module. I don't feel like I've had to do anything above what I'm doing, other than maybe just putting it together and working out how I'm going to present it. It's stuff that I'm doing in class anyway, so it doesn't really make too much difference. the in-between module tasks just a bit of reflection and zone in on what you should be doing and are doing, but maybe not giving much thought process to.</p> <p>I didn't do probably to the best of my ability because it wasn't a priority for me. so it was a little bit of extra work and probably not really that beneficial. it has not been a priority.</p> <p>if I gave it the time and energy but it feels like homework that we shouldn't need to do. It's extra. From what you could gaze around the room nobody gave it the time that I think the Department of Education anticipated. It's frustrating because my priority should be my current classroom. Anxiety and only because it's part of a growing list of tasks that I will never, ever, ever, ever, ever finish. My priority shouldn't be completing all these extra things on top of what I'm already doing. it feels really stressful to add it onto everything else that we need to be doing.</p> <p>I kind of feel there is so much happening in your first year of teaching, such a steep learning curve, you're learning school processes that sometimes I personally feel that they're adding to the workload, if that makes sense, by doing the in between module task. we've got to try instructional strategy in the classroom but it's preparing the documentation for presentation at the next module that's adding to your workload.</p> <p>[Did you find it stressful doing that?] I did, I did yeah. Just because probably time poor. Particularly first year teachers they're already are incredibly time poor and so we're adding another layer to the workload. [module tasks] which I hate. between module one and two, I had to complete this presentation thing on something...</p> <p>See, I can't remember? It makes you think, ah, how valuable was that if it doesn't stick? It was pretty burdensome.</p> <p>It's teaching 101. But to stop and put that all together, that takes time, and time management is something that I struggle with. to have the time to put that together is just a bit too much.</p> <p>it looks good as a beginning teacher on my resume to show that I've engaged in additional professional development that's not compulsory. on a probably more selfish level, it's a two-day break from the classroom. it's two days were I can mentally have a little bit of relaxation. whilst also working on my teaching skills. it's nice that they're tailored to graduates. I like them and I see the purpose of them. I learned a couple of things. There are some teaching strategies that I learned from it. Some of the visible learning things, I think that was great. They are very good, definitely recommend all graduate teachers to complete them.</p> <p>But.....</p> <p>I kind of feel there is so much happening in your first year of teaching, such a steep learning curve, you're learning school processes that sometimes I personally feel that they're adding to the workload. It wasn't particularly worthwhile for me at the time because I was doing relief. You'd have the pre-primaries and year one's teachers talking about things that they would do and the uppers would sit there like, that has no relevance to us at all.</p> <p>it's very frustrating when no one understands teaching in MAG classes. they're talking about planning or curriculum or whatever, they're always targeted towards single-stream or split class, and they don't understand the MAG context. You feel like - just like left aside, discarded kind of thing. in the two days,</p>
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	<p>there was a lot of information basically thrown at you, and obviously I can't remember everything. The first one was a waste of my time</p> <p>Ultimately...</p> <p>the biggest thing that I've got out of it as well is talking to other peers that are in the same situation. How they've coped, what their situation is, how they've coped with it, different things like that. Because you can still learn off other teachers, but if they're more experienced, it's been a while since they've maybe gone through what you've gone through. talking about your experiences with other graduate teachers was the best thing about it. really helpful to see what's happening in other classrooms. I think it's good just to chat to people that have gone through that same situation as well, and have discussion about what's worked, what hasn't, and that kind of thing. to be able to chat with other people in the same boat. to also an extent learning from other people's experiences can be beneficial in the same context. bouncing off other people, other teachers, graduate teachers.</p> <p>Being able to talk about similar experiences and similar learning difficulties, similar programs, that was a really therapeutic and beneficial. really beneficial because I can go there and talk to other graduates who are in the same boat as me. We got to share our experiences and we both understood, because we're both teaching in a MAG class. it is nice to talk to other teachers that are grads, and also it is nice - from a different school. It was interesting hearing everyone's sides to it. I walked away going, wow, I'm really lucky where I am, even though it's tough and the children are tough. So being able to talk to other grad teachers and who you realise that - ah, this is normal. These feelings are normal. These workload issues or how you plan things is normal. It's quite reassuring.</p>
<p>In class coaching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some positives • Negatives • Adding to the workload • Other graduates avoiding them based on what their friends have said 	<p>I've started this semester. Once again I kind of feel like it's good - I think it would be good for certain people. I think it's nice to have someone to chat to about things that are happening in the classroom, and sometimes it's nice to have that outside contact. it's nice to have a person that's not judgmental and remains confidential with what you tell them.</p> <p>the girl in my team, [de-identified], she was like, oh yeah, I had it. It's really, really good, because they help you do your [SAOs] and stuff for your portfolio, if I can get any extra help, why not? But I know, deep down, in the end it will be good.</p> <p>The AITSL standards. She's highlighted a few of them for me So, I was like, that's good. She sent that to me, so I'm like, if I get anything out of this it will be that, which is really useful. Because she's like, it sounds like you've done 4.2, and 4.1, and...I was like, great. she's like, you've covered that, you've covered that, which is awesome. So, it's like, doing things without me knowing. She is, I guess, a third party, I can say anything to her, which at first, I was like, oh, that doesn't really bother me, I've got nothing too bad to say. But as you start talking about things, you kind of go, oh, that is annoying, or whatever. So, that's quite good. She's like, someone else to talk to. She said, I'm not even here to look at your - you know? I'm more here to - whatever you need me to do. So, it's making me be responsible for my learning.</p> <p>But...</p> <p>I don't know whether I should have taken the offer up I had heard about it, I had not - I kind of avoided in my first year and I was intent on avoiding it in my second year as well but my Principal brought it up. I had feedback from my partner that it wasn't so good. Just was more about reflection and feelings rather than practical knowledge, and I'm kind of finding the same myself now. Questions like how does that make you feel, I find them a little bit irrelevant. That is lovely, but I'm not finding it very beneficial. I don't know if it's me being cynical. she realised that I had already finished doing my progression to proficient, so I didn't need her help on my portfolio. I just felt like it was extra pressure. It's something that I don't really want to have to think about just yet. I feel like she's trying to come up with things for me to do so she could be useful to me, but it's adding to my workload.</p> <p>I think it's just another layer adding on. I think she's trying to invent things for me to do. I wish it wasn't adding to the workload.</p> <p>I don't think I realised what was involved. maybe just my lady's really full-on. So, she emails me lots of things all the time, and I have to read all this stuff. I don't know. She's coming to watch me next week, and I have to choose which strategy she's going to be watching me on. She's sent me, like, I reckon 12 PDF documents, all different strategies, and she wants to meet an hour before, an hour after, and I'm now just in that point of, damn, I regret this, because it's just a bit much.</p> <p>I'm looking at it like, this is annoying. Then she called again and checked in to see if I'd put all those things in place, which I hadn't because it had been two weeks. I was like, no, I haven't done that in two weeks. I'm dealing with other stuff too. but she's coming in next Monday, and I'm just sort of like, oh my God, it's week 10. They're going to be an absolutely nightmare. I haven't looked at the 12 PDF documents</p>

	<p>that are the strategies. it's just an added stress at the moment. Then week 3, she was like, our phone call is rescheduled. I was like, shit. I wish I'd just left it a bit longer</p> <p>Because I've got heaps of time. Not heaps of time to do my portfolio, but I'll get there. It's just an added thing I don't think I should have committed to, maybe.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>I've chosen not to do that, because the time factor</p> <p>how is that going to fit into my - the 24 hours that I have in day? my colleague completed the in-class coaching and she - it was very overwhelming for her. She was very busy. There's a lot of work involved. She said it was very good and very beneficial to her, but I could see how stressed it made her, and just seeing how stressed she was, I decided that I didn't want to do it, because I didn't want that added pressure, added more work.</p> <p>I feel like it came with a little bit of a - not a stigma but it was like if you choose to do it, it felt a bit like clinical. they viewed you maybe once a semester. it was so competitive that the odds of you getting one I think were pretty slim. why I decided not to do it because I was like the odds of me getting someone anyway are as slim to none so I'm not going to go through that process when I felt like I had a bit of mentor thing happening. I did speak to another graduate at my school and she didn't like it very much and it took up a lot of her time</p>
Support from admin	<p>The principal keeps on checking in on my every now and then, just to make sure I'm going alright, don't have any issues and that kind of thing. just asking how I'm going, which sometimes is necessary I think, the teaching side of things, just in general coping with bits and pieces that come with teaching. the principal watched me one lesson last year, but that was also part of performance management as well</p> <p>I know that if I wanted her to see more, then I could try, ask her to come in and view a lesson and give me feedback and she would. I know that would happen.</p> <p>I filled out a form about where I'd like to change performance management, so the areas I want to improve on and sat down and had a chat about them. my line manager is the principal, so she came in and viewed a lesson based on my goals from that plan to try and fix. she gave me feedback on that lesson and then had another chat later in the year, just about how I was going with the goals and that kind of thing. It was general goals</p> <p>a good way of just it can be generally about the job, not necessarily you have to hit this requirement of an AITSL standard, because you can always link in the general bit to an AITSL standard. it's not so rigid, so that for me anyway, feels a bit more comfortable, so yeah, so supportive in that regard. my Principal is also very welcoming and encouraging, and also full of knowledge and experience, so I've been lucky to have her support where there are some schools where you don't really get that.</p> <p>Because she's so approachable, because we are a small school that certainly has helped me in getting that. She made sure that I got all of my entitlements, so grad allowance, extra allocation, time to go off to [PL], forwarding me PLs that might be of interest to me. Basically, I could walk into her office any time I like and have a chat to her, and she's always got the chair ready for you to sit in. I think she's been willing to help that learning. She's been willing to provide extra resources, and she's also been willing to listen and provide advice and so on.</p> <p>Support with time and with grad entitlements and things like that. she encouraged me to find a mentor in school. if there's anything ever you wanted to touch base about, extra PL or things you're finding difficulty with there is that open door policy.</p> <p>I had the principal of the school in my classroom once a week watching me teach and providing feedback. the deputy come and see me multiple times in terms of discussing the issue of behaviour and how I'm dealing with it. just general checking in. having a discussion about how I'm coping and the choices that I'm making and I guess how I'm running the classroom and how I'm teaching.</p> <p>when I had my interview, they kind of said, how do you cope with criticism? I remember being like, oh, I guess fine, because that means you need to improve on something</p> <p>their second question was like, how do you deal with crying in front of people, or something like that. They were like, you will cry on this job, and you will get upset, and we are all here to help you. I remember them saying, crying is good, and we're there. If you need to cry and walk out of your room, that's absolutely fine.</p> <p>I have a class slightly over but I do get extra support from the deputies. the school and everything was really supportive. My line manager, she's very supportive</p> <p>It's not necessarily like she's coming in going okay, you're going like this. It's more about I go up to her.</p>
Admin lack of support	<p>the support that they offered me was the principal would put his wife in. I did not feel supported by this principal.</p> <p>The principal basically told me that they're not happy with the way that I was handling behaviour. I left that school - I made that decision to not stay on. I did not want to work with them. PD isn't always</p>

	<p>available, because I'm obviously 800 kilometres from Perth. the school budget doesn't allow for that. The travel - the school budget's very tight.</p> <p>I was disappointed in was the fact that admin didn't take the time to come and watch me teach and give me feedback I've never had an induction. I didn't have anyone check in with me during the terms. they never watched me teach admin weren't even there for me. I don't feel like I was given the time to be inducted as a new staff member or viewed as a graduate and then offered extra support in terms of school policies and processes, school expectations as a teacher. but just in terms of what was expected of me and the students I was dealing with and what I could do, I felt like there was nothing. I felt like I wasn't visited by admin to see how I was going. I felt like by the end of the year when comments were being made about my students' progress and about my teaching, that they were unfounded because nobody viewed me teach and nobody looked at my documents. that was my performance management, that wasn't a feedback as a graduate session.</p> <p>No checking in, no extra support, no guidance unless I sought it. That was meant to be focussed on me, that was meant to be helping me to set goals and move forward but the whole tone of it was you gave it a good crack, thanks anyway, see you later. a performance management to me should be structured and it should be the same for all employees regardless of when you started. I didn't feel like I was there to help the school improve. I felt like I should have been there to help me improve. just saying let's sit down once a term and have a discussion about how you're coping. just put their head in my door when it wasn't just something that they needed. There had been no talk of my change of registration at the school</p> <p>If the deputy came into my classroom it wasn't to watch me teach, it was to give me a message. [admin coming in] It was never solely for the fact to benefit my teaching so if I engaged in class coaching I would have probably had that need met which is one of the biggest things I feel like I didn't get last year. I feel like I should be viewed as a graduate, I was a graduate, and there should have been some support there, the school should have made that choice. It should be something admin need to consider at all schools. I do feel like I'm not supported. Graduates need support and I think particularly coming from a Grad Dip when a lot of us are a bit older, we're not going to ask for it. the business side of things and planning and dealing with parents and that, I can do that confidently but the teacher side of things is where I'm new and so it shouldn't matter if I'm 20, 30, 55 a graduate is a graduate and the school needs to remember that. having a more structured approach, and someone maybe a bit higher up, to walk me through those issues that I may have been having with student behaviour or with making sure my planning and assessment were at a level they should have been - that should have all come from admin.</p>
Official mentor	<p>I've got an official mentor within the school, who's the deputy, who was a Year 4 teacher and deputy last year, and she's just deputy this year.</p> <p>No there's no real point where I'll sit down with my mentor and have an official meeting. I'm sure if I needed that or wanted that, then that could happen easily, that wouldn't be an issue. I've had meetings with her about other things, but not necessarily officially or directly about my mentoring. I'll go in and ask her about IEPs or she'll go over them with me once I've done them, or reports and that kind of thing. But that's not necessarily booking in a time per say, it's just if she's free, I'll just go in and say do you mind if I, or send her an email and just go do you mind if I just pop in and quickly go over that. IEPs and also report comments as well. That was a chat with my mentor then, and then also with report comments as well. she was probably my mentor.</p> <p>She was my team leader, but mentor as well. being our team leader, we'd meet every Wednesday. Yeah. She was my go-to person you're debriefing later, so you just have a lot of contact with them. Yeah. So, she'd be my main one. Then, we have two behaviour coaches as well, and this year, out of the classroom they kind of become a coach in that sense of it all. Being a huge school, we have - each team has a team leader. Each team also has - this year, anyway, we've got an academic coach as well. they've got three year levels each. They float around. They're the ones that come and observe you and things like that, give you feedback. it was good.</p> <p>in first year I was like, oh, great. I could suck in all the information. helping out so much with the admin side, you'd need their assistance when they wouldn't be there, and then they'd come in and watch you and be like, oh, you need to do this, this, and this, and you're kind of like, but you haven't watched me in a few weeks and seen what I've been doing she'd come in, definitely weekly, I reckon it would have been She came in and modelled quite a few of the classes at the beginning. I had a lot of people model things for me, which was really good. Then, [de-identified] would come in, feed back, watch me, help me out, float around.</p>

<p>Unofficial mentor/the teacher next door</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easily the best support mechanism 	<p>I've got a school that I feel really supported at, I can ask anyone questions and they'll help me out. Just trialling things, seeing what works, what don't, speaking to other teachers. made me feel a lot better coping wise. I was quite fortunate.</p> <p>another Year 4 teacher guided me along and she'd throw lesson plans at me and that kind of thing. wasn't too bad, as I say I was really supported with the other teachers around.</p> <p>felt made a bit of difference. I feel quite lucky.</p> <p>I just thought it was going to be difficult, and learning on the run, which we're still doing anyway. because I was so supported, that made a huge amount of difference. if I wasn't so supported, then I think I would have felt it was harder than what I thought.</p> <p>how supported I've been at [deidentified []] has made a big difference as to how easy I felt it to be, or easier, not easy, but easier. I was really supported with the other teachers around. We collaboratively planned most things</p> <p>so it was basically just going what she'd done and just tweaking things. it was collaboratively, it was based on what she'd done previously. it was really supportive. I know that there's other graduates out there that don't necessarily have that, from talking to friends. even just recess, staffroom chats, if I've got something that I want to ask either a senior teacher, or someone who's particularly strong in maths or English or that kind of thing. I'll just go to them and just have a chat with them at some point. IEPs and also report comments as well.</p> <p>I found that really supportive in terms of giving lesson ideas or if they've done a lesson before me, they'll tell me what hasn't worked for them, or maybe to do it a different way. I know I'm one of the lucky ones that have felt supported the whole way through from everyone</p> <p>I don't feel like I could get more support, which I know I'm very very fortunate for, and very grateful for as well</p> <p>I know I'm quite fortunate in how I've experienced the first year. Yeah, I wouldn't necessarily change anything. So, I feel very grateful, very lucky to be in the position I was in.</p> <p>That's probably where I've felt the most supported, that's probably what's made me feel most comfortable. while I feel supported within the whole school, I think it's just more that one teacher that I can walk in at any point and bounce ideas, or just discuss how the day's going and that kind of thing.</p> <p>someone who I could talk to and bounce back and forth from and have a debrief at the end of the day - so essentially someone who I think provided me with a little bit of extra support purely probably because we worked so closely together. colleagues and the other teachers - were so much more supportive and open and able to offer solutions for issues that I had, that that was my first point of call and generally that would solve an issue for me. willing to offer help or solutions or feedback on any little thing that you needed. so incredibly supportive. so many people offering me resources and ideas. walking me through what they'd done</p> <p>being so open and so generous with their time and their thoughts that that's invaluable.</p> <p>If I hadn't have had that towards the end of last year I would not have made anywhere near the kind of start I made this year</p> <p>being able to talk to the teachers in my block and other teachers in the school about it. those ideas and the sharing of the resources again it's really helped for me. having the opportunity to collaborate with essentially a partner teacher. being thrown into this new environment in this new year level this year. stepping into what's already been established as a collaborative environment with an open classroom, it's like having your hand held. It's like we're taking your training wheels off but we're going to put one back on. Let's just see how you go. be able to find my feet but know that I had someone right there. being able to have someone to ask questions, to plan with, to assess with, to teach with.</p> <p>having those two other teachers there to talk to about that, they've been in similar situations with a couple of students or they've got ideas about what I could do, they've shared resources with me. that collaborative nature is what's gotten me to the positive point I'm at today.</p> <p>[another teacher] he knew what to do and he taught me how to use them. Then I found a little bit more the judging standards of how to apply them to the judging standards, so I found that really helpful. They're just a calm presence and you can just let everything off your chest which is, as a graduate, I think that's all you needed. if you go into a school and you've got people there that are snappy and stressed all the time, if you walk in and go this is what's wrong and they sit there and listen and they go okay, this is what you need to do next, I found that they were really good at just listening. great other teachers as well like older senior teachers, and not necessarily everyone gets along but it's nice to go in and go okay, I need this or just to have a bit of a rant as well and just get things off your chest.</p> <p>really good. [the school] is amazing, so much support. So, everything we do, we do together. It's all planned together. It's easy, because we do everything together. this year's been good. I was quite nervous, like in the holidays, like oh my God, we're going to do it all again. but I'll get there, I know I will. during</p>

	<p>our DOTT time, we would go to other classrooms and I'd watch, because I find watching, I guess, I learn the most. So, I'd go and watch. wow, I get a lot of support, and I - yeah. I just felt lucky, if anything. I've got lots of support. If they see you being like, help, they're like, let me help.</p> <p>Everyone's so supportive. I feel like last year, everyone cried millions of times. But then you feel better. it is good. So, heaps of support. I don't think you could do it without, honestly, if today happened and no one was there to be like, are you okay, you'd just be like, what's the point?</p>
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