THE IMPACT OF AN OVERSEAS PROFESSIONAL TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN A DEVELOPING COUNTRY ON PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' *STORIES OF SELF*

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Faculty of Education, Business and Science

Avondale College of Higher Education

June 2017

CERTIFICATION

Statement of Original Authorship

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ABBREVIATIONS AND SPECIAL TERMS

AITSL – Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership

Avondale – Avondale College of Higher Education

MOTO – Ministry Of Teaching Overseas Program

OSPEX – Overseas Professional Experience

ABSTRACT

This study systematically examines the impact of an overseas professional teaching experience on pre-service teachers as they seek to learn how to become authentic teachers. It articulates the principles and processes involved in pre-service teachers developing new and connected personal and professional identities (Shonia & Stachowski, 2014), referred to as *stories of self* (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999).

While there is little debate surrounding the importance of quality teacher education, there is a call for improvements in the preparation of pre-service teachers for their role as 21st century educators. Many suggest that a more authentic approach to teacher education is needed, with the inclusion of professional teaching experiences that connect the personal and professional identities of pre-service teachers (Palmer, 2007; Rodgers & Scott, 2008; Roffey, 2015). Overseas professional teaching experiences show promise for facilitating this connected identity, and for developing pre-service teachers' cultural competence, and yet, it has been recognised that more research needs to be undertaken in regard to overseas professional teaching experiences. This study responds to this dearth of research and, importantly, moves beyond the assumption that all overseas experiences are inherently transformative.

The study involved four pre-service teachers situated in a remote village school in Mahendra Jyoti in the Bagmati Zone of central Nepal. It utilised a qualitative methodology that employed a combination of narrative and grounded theory. The overarching paradigm for the research was constructivist, which allowed for the emergence of multiple realities, and allowed the design of the research project to accommodate findings in progress. A model was developed to illustrate and inform the mentioned principles and processes inherent in the development of *stories of self* of pre-service teachers working overseas.

The results of the study suggested that overseas professional teaching experiences that successfully incorporate challenge, freedom and belonging can provide a growth-fostering environment in which pre-service teachers are supported in renegotiating their *stories of self*, through a destabilising, questioning and rebuilding process.

The findings of the study are relevant to the current Australian tertiary sector, as overseas professional teaching experiences appear to be disappearing from teacher education programs within Australian universities (Cruickshank & Westbrook, 2013). Representing a single case study, the model developed in this dissertation depicts one example of the essential elements involved in the formation and merging of pre-service teacher personal and professional identities. Acknowledging this case has one site only, this study sought a depth of understanding and not a breadth, and represents a stepping stone in the body of knowledge that may help inform best practice in the design and delivery of quality professional teaching experiences.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This journey has been one of the most challenging experiences I have ever embarked on and was only made possible with the support of a number of people I would now like to acknowledge.

First, to my four participants: Gaea; Fonda; Caiden and Liam. I loved our Nepali adventure and have personally found each of you and your stories inspirational. Your experiences have directly impacted who I am, what I believe, and how I plan to prepare pre-service teachers successfully in the future. Thank you for the courage and vulnerability you have shown in sharing your stories with me and in allowing your experiences to be so openly shared with others.

Second, my thanks to the 269 participants with whom I have shared overseas professional teaching experiences over the past nine years. While this study focused specifically on a single teaching experience in Nepal, the experiences we shared together proved very valuable in the learning that took place within this investigation. May the re-unions never stop and the memories never fade!

I would especially like to thank my supervisor Associate Professor Phil Fitzsimmons. His mentorship and support have enabled me to grow in confidence and understanding, not only in this research journey, but as a person. I am grateful for the inspiration and freedom so generously given. I also want to thank Dr Barbra McKenzie who has also provided valuable support over an extended period of time in her role as one of my supervisors in this study.

Thank you especially to my family and friends who have all loved and supported me. I want to take this opportunity to thank especially Dr Darren Morton. As I have witnessed you do so many times in the lives of others you come into contact with, you too have blessed my life and inspired me to live the life for which I was designed. Thank you Mum and Dad for always believing in me and for your unconditional and never-ceasing love. Finally, to my biggest fan and strongest supporter, my wife Melissa: I am so lucky to have you as my companion through life. Thank you for continually lifting me up when I was discouraged, for

celebrating with me after every success, and for constantly inspiring me to live a life of purpose.

PROLOGUE - THE JOURNEY BEFORE

Journeys

I love to travel and explore places I have never been before. I have no interest in going on a tour where all the decisions in relation to where I am going and what I am doing have been pre-determined by another. It is likely that tours will take me on well-worn paths to already extensively explored sites and return me with stories not unlike many other travellers before me. I no longer believe that there is value in inheriting the stories of another. I believe that each of us is called to cross the threshold into the unknown (Campbell, 2008), and embark on a journey of our own to discover the thing most valuable to us – our stories (Izadinia, 2013; Thomson, 2015). Using a constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2014), this investigation attempts to embark on a new journey to allow new stories to be discovered and shared in relation to pre-service teachers and overseas professional teaching experiences in developing countries.

I have chosen a narrative approach in sharing the stories that have emerged from this journey as I have deemed it the best way to capture the richness of lived experiences (Van Manen, 1990) and to organise this experience in order to make sense of the world (Bruner, 1987; Polkinghorne, 1988). While this narrative focuses on the experiences of four pre-service teachers, my voice in this story is also of value in providing the context, setting and backgrounds to both the story and storytellers (Creswell, 2014).

At times emic descriptions (Merriam, 1998) are included to provide a view from the inside and at other times etic descriptions (Lett, 1990) feature to present my "inside-outside" research shifts (Bak, 2015). As Bak (2015, p. 108) describes, "Indeed, it is ultimately in the interplay – the spaces in-between – that the potential for enrichment lies, but it calls for attentiveness on the part of the researcher". In recognition of the value of my voice in this story, and to reveal fully the voice of my respondents, it is to be expected that the language used in how it is told will be personal, informal and often in the first person (Riessman, 2011).

The 'journey' motif appears throughout this narrative as it helps to describe the reality of the experience accurately (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Journeys require us to choose our own paths. Journeys rarely take us directly to our destination. Journeys allow us to go to places not yet explored and as a result return us with stories not yet told. Before I introduce you to the journey on which I feel called to embark, I must first describe my story of self. It is only by understanding my own story that the reader will be able to appreciate the purpose of this investigation and the value of the stories that later emerge (Creswell, 2014).

Story of Self: The Journey Towards the Question

It was in my first year as a teacher educator when a knock on my office door, followed closely by a question, changed everything. Mikaela was one of my third-year pre-service teachers and she began to build her case, even before revealing what she had to ask. "There is a school I have heard about in one of the poorest states in India," she began. "The school has over 150 students yet they are in desperate need of educated teachers," she continued. In hindsight, I should have been well prepared for the question she was about to ask, but I was not, and it caught me off guard. "Can I complete my next professional teaching experience at this school in India where I can really make a difference?" she pleaded. I will never forget the passion in her eyes and the fact that she was standing bravely alone ready to conquer the world.

It was at this point that our two stories intersected. The journey on which she was seeking my permission to embark mirrored the very experience in my own life that had moulded me the most. Instantly my memory stole me from that office, and from the woman awaiting my response, and took me back in time, allowing me to revisit the story that had now become a big part of who I was.

I was seventeen and no one in my family had ever been given the opportunity to travel outside of Australia. While it was over twenty years ago, I remember so clearly my family and I all crowding around a globe of the world and putting my thumb on Sydney and stretching my index finger all the way to Bangkok, Thailand. With no prior experience to compare with, I assumed the whole world resembled Western Sydney. After a month spent living with a refugee community on the Thai-Burmese border, I returned to Australia a different person with a new story.

The overseas experience just described started me of a reflective journey that became very influential in my decision to become a secondary teacher and subsequently teach for seven years in Australia, England, and Cambodia. Now, as a teacher educator, I was provided with an opportunity to offer a similar experience to pre-service teachers. In 2007, we took our first group of pre-service teachers overseas to complete their professional teaching experience in India. The woman whose question had ignited a passion in me to involve pre-service teachers in overseas professional teaching experiences was on this first overseas experience. She has since graduated and is currently teaching in a high school in Malaysia. In 2016, she organised and led a team of over twenty of her own high-school students back to this same school. The School of Education, in which I teach, has embraced the concept of providing pre-service teachers with an opportunity to complete one of their professional teaching experiences in a developing country. Since 2007, these experiences have been available every year and are presently offered at three locations around the world to cater for the students interested in being involved. The practice of taking pre-service teachers overseas to a developing country has come to be known as the 'Ministry Of Teaching Overseas' (hereafter termed MOTO).

For the past six consecutive years, I have led groups of pre-service primary and secondary teachers on MOTO experiences to India (2007/2008), Cambodia (2009/2010), and Nepal (2011/2012). These have involved 180 participants overall. With each MOTO experience, I have grown in my commitment and passion to continue offering pre-service teachers the opportunity to complete professional teaching experiences in developing countries. Colleagues, students, and friends have asked, a number of times, why I am so passionate about involving pre-service teachers on MOTO type experiences. The power of my response never comes close to reflect adequately the conviction of my heart. The conviction of my heart compels me to shout about how 'life changing these experiences are,' but I find myself without a voice. The will to discover this voice, to enable me to understand my own story and share it with others, drives me on this journey.

CHAPTER 1 - THE JOURNEY OUTLINED

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the journey taken in this investigation. It begins by revealing the question that gives direction to the study (Campbell, 2008; McKenzie & Fitzsimmons, 2010) and then provides a rationale for the value of the investigation by discussing the background to the research. This chapter also introduces the reader to the methodology or design of this investigation, to the participants and the researcher, and to the setting of the investigation. Discussion of the known limitations of the study follows, before the chapter concludes with a brief overview of the structure of the remaining chapters.

Research Objectives and Questions

This study investigates the experiences of pre-service teachers involved in an overseas professional teaching experience in Nepal. It focuses specifically on the nature of the impact of this overseas experience on the beliefs held by pre-service teachers that explain who they are as people and teachers. As later explained in Chapter 2, this study uses the term *stories of self*, as inspired from the work of Bruner (1987), as the guiding axiomatic thread when referring to these beliefs to adequately represent their multifaceted, dynamic and social nature (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011). The research question that gives meaning and purpose to this investigation is:

> *What is the nature of the impact of an overseas professional teaching experience in a developing country on four pre-service teachers' stories of self?*

The following sub-questions frame this inquiry:

> *1. What are the key components impacting on a pre-service teacher's stories of self on an overseas professional teaching experience in a developing country?*
>
> *2. Do the pre-service teacher's stories of self-change and if so, in what ways?*

3. What is the link, if any, between overseas professional teaching experiences in developing countries and the preparation of quality teachers for the 21st century?

Like all narrative research, this particular narrative is complex, and as such, is impossible to be shared without some repetition (Andrews, Squire & Tamboukou, 2013). Therefore, this story will be iterative in nature, repeating and enlarging on major themes in more depth as the story continues (Creswell, 2014). Nevertheless, for the purposes of writing a thesis, this story also appears somewhat linear and structured at times (Denzin, 1992), which does not reflect how this story was pieced together in the real 'lived experience' (Creswell, 2009; Scott & Garner, 2013; Van Manen, 1990). The current structure of this story has been organised to provide a clear path for the reader.

Like most investigations that use a constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2014), this study did not initially begin with the questions that now form the core of this inquiry. Like the journey itself, the formation of these questions was complex, and messy (Mellor 2001), and ever changing (Charmaz, 2014; Glaser, 1998). It was important when telling this story to ensure that the questions and themes that emerged were not forced or pre-determined by the literature, or by my personal beliefs (Linhart, 2010). As will be explained in detail in Chapter 3, this study used an emergent design (Charmaz, 2014) within a constructivist grounded theory approach, to allow this narrative to be rooted deeply within the data (Linhart, 2010). This approach meant that the research questions and methodology remained sensitive to the participants' stories (Guba & Lincoln, 1985) and continued to evolve as informed by research literature and data analysis (Charmaz, 2014).

As discussed later in Chapter 3, the process of emergent design (Charmaz, 2014) provided the basis for the initial and supporting questions to become more focused. The research question and sub-questions that frame this inquiry are therefore the endpoint rather than the starting point of this investigation. While prior to this study I had already led six overseas professional teaching experiences to three different countries and spoken to over one hundred participants, I found it difficult to articulate the changes I observed, or adequately voice their story in order to explain their 'lived experience' (Van Manen, 1990). The past participants of these MOTO experiences also appeared to struggle when attempting to articulate their story. While they had often stated how 'amazing,' 'incredible' and 'life-changing' their MOTO experiences had been, they appeared to lack real clarity in how and why they had been

impacted. This hidden understanding of the participants, and of the researcher, is known as tacit knowledge (Polyani, 1996). Tacit knowledge refers to understanding that has been gained through "intuition" (Smith, 2001, p. 314) and personal experience (Sternberg, Kaufman & Grigorenka, 2008), which cannot be explicitly expressed. It is to discover this hidden voice and transform it into explicit knowledge (Helie & Sun, 2010), so that it can be understood, articulated and shared, which motivated me to embark on this journey.

Background to the Research

In the course of this investigation, a review of the research literature of others who had already embarked on similar journeys was undertaken. While the literature did not determine the questions guiding this investigation, the research base played an important role in the evolving and iterative process that took place between identifying themes from the coding process (Charmaz, 2014) and personal reflections. We do not live separate stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). Our stories interconnect with each other, and for us to understand the significance of our own story, we must be willing first to listen to the stories of those around us (Creswell, 2014).

Quality teachers appear to make a real difference in shaping the future of Australia through the delivery of quality education (Ewing, Le Cornu & Groundwater-Smith, 2014; Hattie, 2009). Hattie (2009) identified teachers found inside the classroom as being the most influential factor, outside of the students themselves, in what makes the greatest difference to students' learning. The quality of the teacher has surfaced as more important in relation to student achievement than the student's peers, the size of the class, the home environment, the school's principal, or even the school itself (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Hattie, 2009).

Given the importance of the quality of teachers, it is important that the preparation of pre-service teachers remains sensitive to the ever-changing world in which they seek to succeed and remain relevant (Bagnall, 2015). In response to Australian demographics, Australian teachers now need to be prepared to teach in culturally diverse classrooms (Basit & Santoro, 2011) and prepare their students with an understanding of the world and its people (Stachowski, Grant & Stuehling, 2015). Quality teachers are also charged with responsibilities involving values education (Hill, 2014; Liam 2004) and the development of the whole child (Aktepe, 2015), and are expected to assist Australian young people to reach

their full potential and to make meaningful contributions to their community (Roffey, 2015). Riedinger (2015) suggests that to prepare pre-service teachers adequately for such responsibilities, they must first have developed these same qualities in themselves. To thrive in a world that continues to change, pre-service teachers will need to be guided by a clear vision for teaching by remaining responsive to the changing environments, flexible in their thinking, and adaptive in their practice (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Dervent, 2015; Ewing, Le Cornu, & Groundwater-Smith, 2014; Villegas, 2007). Churchill et al. (2011), suggest that in order to reach these ideals pre-service teachers will be able to articulate a clear understanding of their personal ideology and practice linkages.

While there is little debate surrounding the importance of quality teachers in providing quality education (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Hattie, 2009; Rowe, 2004), research suggests there are major improvements needed in how initial teacher education institutions prepare pre-service teachers for their important role in the 21st century (Franco, 2014; Le Cornu, 2010). At present, pre-service teachers appear unprepared to teach culturally diverse learners (Cushner & Chang, 2015), explain how theory informs practice (Allen & Wright, 2014; Korthagen, 2010), or transfer their teaching practices to diverse settings (Allen, 2009). They also continue to struggle with low levels of self-efficacy to approach the tasks required of them (Brown, Lee & Collins, 2015). While it is clear that beginning teachers consolidate their personal and professional understandings when they begin teaching (Rodman, 2010), research also suggests that pre-service teachers will be better prepared for the realities of school once they are encouraged to develop their own beliefs during professional teaching experiences within initial teacher education (Allen, 2009; Palmer, 2007).

Despite the challenges currently being faced, most initial teacher education continues to focus on professional knowledge and skills (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership [AITSL], 2014; Connelly & Clandinin, 1994; Dervent, 2015), without adequate attention to who a teacher is as a person, referred to in the literature as the teachers "stories to live by" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1994). These 'stories to live by,' referred to commonly in this investigation as *stories of self*, refer to an individual's core beliefs, and it is through their development that connections appear to be made between who a teacher is, what they believe and how they act both in and outside the classroom (Boon, 2011; Dolloff, 2007). It appears that initial teacher education that encourages pre-service teachers to operate from inherited stories will have little impact in how new teachers approach teaching and see themselves as

teachers (Flores & Day, 2006; Rodman, 2010). What is needed are opportunities for pre-service teachers to develop personal and professional *stories of self* (Connelly & Clandinin, 1994; Thomson, 2015) through engagement in reflective practice (Harrison & Lee, 2011; Too, 2013).

We can never reduce good teaching to technique (Marble, 2012; Palmer, 2007). While "bad teachers distance themselves from the subject they are teaching and, in the process, from their students," good teachers "join self, subject, and students in the fabric of life because they teach from an integral and undivided self" (Palmer, 2007, p.104). More emphasis on the holistic development of who a teacher is may prove to be very valuable in adequately preparing pre-service teachers to work successfully with Australian young people in the 21st century.

While the inadequacy of attempting to prepare pre-service teachers through a transmission approach, in which learning is focused on replicating the practices of others is clearly identified in the research literature (Ewing, Le Cornu & Groundwater-Smith, 2014; Hase, 2011; Marble, 2012), it appears that initial teacher education continues to overemphasise this approach in both university and professional experience offerings (Allen, 2009; Cushner & Chang, 2015; Foote, 2015; Jones, 2010; Sangster & Green, 2012). Many suggest that a more authentic approach to the preparation of pre-service teachers is needed, with the inclusion of professional teaching experiences that successfully promote reflective practice (Boud, Keogh & Walker, 2013; Dewey, 1910; Herrington, Parker & Boase-Jelinek, 2014; Schön, 1983; Tummons, 2011). While all pre-service teachers are involved with teaching experiences, it appears that these experiences may not provide the freedom, challenge, community or reflective opportunities required for real learning to occur (Grudnoff, 2011; Le Cornu, 2010, Riedinger, 2015). It is suggested that current domestic classroom teaching experiences may still be focused on a transmission model, without providing pre-service teachers with the opportunity to engage in deep reflection and develop their own *stories of self* (Allen, 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2006).

Research suggests that an overseas professional teaching experience in a developing country may be a valuable tool for initial teacher educators wishing to prepare pre-service teachers successfully (Chinnappan, McKenzie & Fitzsimmons, 2013; Cushner & Chang, 2015; Doppen & An, 2014). The reason is that such experience appears to promote reflective

practice and the development of a teacher's *stories of self* (Stachowski et al., 2015; Shonia & Stachowski, 2014; Wong, 2013).

From the research literature (Cruickshank & Westbrook, 2013; McKenzie & Fitzsimmons, 2010), it appears that reflective practice is central to the potential impact of overseas professional teaching experiences in developing countries on pre-service teachers' *stories of self*. It would appear that authentic professional reflective practice is fostered when pre-service teachers' personal and professional beliefs are challenged by authentic experiences (Hinze & Fitzsimmons, 2013). It is only through reflective thought 'on action' and 'in action' (Schön, 1983) that authentic learning takes place. Kagle (2014) and McKenzie and Fitzsimmons (2010) suggest that the catalyst that motivates this reflective inquiry is cognitive dissonance. It appears likely that the professional teaching experiences and conditions of pre-service teachers in developing countries may be very conducive to promoting reflective thought, as the pre-service teachers are required to justify their present core beliefs in an environment totally foreign that requires immediate as well as ongoing links to practice (Chinnappan et al., 2013; Stachowski, Bodle, Morrin, 2008). It seems logical that these reflective instances may become critical change agents in how a pre-service teacher functions in and beyond the overseas teaching experience.

Linked to the previous point, professional teaching experiences in developing countries typically immerse pre-service teachers in environments that promote personal and professional inner conflict, and cause the learners to question beliefs and unsubstantiated assumptions that were once taken for granted (Doppen & An, 2014; Quezada, 2004). As a result, pre-service teachers appear to experience initial confusion, perplexity and doubt and pause to examine their existing beliefs (Hinze, Matthes, McKenzie & Fitzsimmons, 2011; Walton & Rusznyak, 2013). It appears that pre-service teachers soon realise that the existing beliefs that have governed their practice in the domestic and lecture situation are inadequate, and that they need to make changes to their core beliefs. One such core belief that appears to be positively affected by an overseas experience, is self-efficacy (Pence & Macgillivray, 2008). Judging from the current literature it seems likely that pre-service teachers, provided with the opportunity to complete an overseas professional teaching experience in a developing country, will return as people with heightened efficacy, resulting from their drawing on inner resources through times of challenge (Fitzsimmons & McKenzie, 2006; Pence & Macgillivray, 2008). These findings are significant as increased self-efficacy within

teachers has been shown to: increase a teacher's effectiveness (Shaalvik & Shaalvik, 2010), positively impact student achievement (Yilmaz, 2011), and increase a teacher's enthusiasm, resilience and ability to cope with stressful situations (Oakes, Lane, Jenkins & Booker, 2013; Pendergast, Gavis & Keogh, 2011).

Overseas teaching experiences appear to develop the type of personal and professional growth required to better prepare pre-service teachers to: teach culturally diverse learners (Cushner & Chang, 2015), explain how theory informs practice (Allen & Wright, 2014), and transfer their teaching practice to varied settings (Allen, 2009). However, little is known about how this occurs, and as a result, the development of pre-service teachers' *stories of self* in overseas professional teaching experiences at present remain distant and non-transferable to other overseas and domestic professional programs (Chinnappan et al., 2013). Given that the available published research is limited, it nonetheless appears that many still wrongly assume that the mere placement of pre-service teachers in international contexts will ensure meaningful learning (Stachowski et al., 2015). If teacher educators are to successfully harness the benefits of overseas professional teaching experiences, allowing them to inform future quality practice in both overseas and domestic settings, they must first have a clear understanding of the key components of these experiences and how these elements foster reflective practice and result in new *stories of self* within pre-service teachers (Izadinia, 2013). This aim of this study is to fill the identified gap in literature by investigating the nature of the impact of an overseas professional teaching experience in a developing country on pre-service teachers' *stories of self*.

This chapter now provides an overview of the choices made in the design of this investigation, as later detailed in Chapter 3. This overview includes an introduction to the researcher, the focus participants, the setting of the investigation and the research approaches and research designs involved.

Methodology

In seeking to understand the nature of the impact of an overseas professional teaching experience in a developing country on pre-service teachers' stories of self this investigation adopted a qualitative paradigm. Qualitative research is argued to be effectively aligned with

data collection designs such as interviewing participants and observing behaviour (Creswell, 2014), particularly when concerned with the study of people in their natural setting (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Mertens, 2010). A qualitative approach will allow multiple sources of data to be used to provide a holistic perspective (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007) that will adequately represent the lived and told experiences of the participants (Charmaz, 2014).

As with all research, this investigation is "guided by a set of beliefs about the world and how it should be understood and studied" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 19). Further, if meanings are constructed from experiences connected with others, and shared through stories, then it cannot be assumed that there can be only one reality for all participants (Mertens, 2010). In making sense of their experiences, individuals develop subjective meanings that often prove to be complex and diversified (Creswell, 2014). This investigation does not attempt to provide an objective truth, but rather seeks to understand the complexity and variety of the real lived experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Mertens, 2010; Van Manen, 1990).

On this investigative journey, the researcher has acted as a "bricoleur" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) and has pieced together a variety of research approaches and research designs when they were required in this investigation. The research designs chosen in this inquiry include: research journal; participant journals; interviews and participant documents. As has already been mentioned, and as will be further explored in the methodology chapter, this investigation used an emergent design (Charmaz, 2014) within a constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2014) to ensure the story remained responsive to the participants' lived experiences (Van Manen, 1990). As such, the bricolage of research approaches and research designs constructed were not set from the onset of this investigation but rather changed and evolved in response to the interactive activity of the bricoleur and the respondents (McLeod, 2003).

In regards to the research approaches employed, I have had to make many decisions in relation to how to tell this story (Richardson, 1997; Riessman, 2011). After considering the research question and the purpose of this inquiry, a narrative approach or storytelling genre was chosen as being the most "methodologically appropriate" (Patton, 1990, p. 39). For centuries, researchers have considered narratives as valuable resources in interpreting peoples' experiences (Beattie, 2000). As humans "we are storytelling organisms and as such lead storied lives" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. xvi). We also naturally communicate

what we have learnt or are learning from these experiences using narratives (Moen, 2006). As such, the stories we share often reveal much about what we have experienced (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), who we are and our beliefs about others (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008). It is through stories that pre-service teachers will speak of their experiences and re-construct their worldview (Bruner, 1986; Connelly & Clandinin, 1994; Polkinghorne, 1995). As this investigation seeks to explore the impact of an experience on a group of pre-service teachers' *stories of self*, a narrative approach was the best way to capture the richness of the lived experiences (Van Manen, 1990) and to organise this experience and knowledge to make sense of the world (Bruner, 1987; Polkinghorne, 1988).

It is important to highlight that narratives help us to make sense of human experience, as they are representations of a person's lived experience (Bruner, 1987). The hermeneutic process that takes place as the narrator interprets what is to be shared, and the audience makes sense of the story in light of their own personal beliefs and experiences results in a story that includes individuals' constructed meanings (Bruner, 1987). In order to facilitate quality interpretation, I, as one of the costorytellers, am required to reveal much about what I have seen or been told, and much about who I am and what I believe (Creswell, 2014). It is my role to provide not only the stories shared, but position these stories in their contexts (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008). Similarly to Khan, Fazal and Amin (2014), I no longer believe that learning occurs by providing information as unquestionable truth and as such, I have used stories as suggestions to challenge the reader in the hope that through reflective practice, the reader will question beliefs and develop new stories. An explanation and justification of the use of narrative can be found in Chapter 3. This chapter now provides an overview of the participants, and a description of the setting of this story.

Introduction to the Researcher and Participants

The first question most people ask when invited to share any journey is: 'Who's coming?' Using pseudonyms, the following two paragraphs introduces the five characters who are central to this investigation, in order to provide the necessary context to the stories shared by them.

The first four characters that feature in this investigation are pre-service teachers in their second or third year of study. Gaea is 20 years old and studying secondary teaching with a

major in modern history and a minor in geography. She has had the opportunity to travel extensively already, including trips to France, Indonesia and Syria. Fonda is 19 years old and is currently studying primary teaching. Prior to this experience, she had never been overseas, nor flown in a plane. Liam, the third main character, is 21 years old and like Fonda has never been overseas. He is studying secondary teaching with a specialisation in music and really enjoys playing guitar. He loves football and follows Liverpool. Caiden, aged 23, has travelled extensively and is currently studying secondary teaching with a major in health and physical education and a minor in chemistry.

I am the fifth character in this journey. In the role of participant observer (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Peshkin, 1993) I have shared in the experiences with my participants and plan to combine my etic descriptions (Lett, 1990) as an outside observer with the emic descriptions (Merriam, 1998) of the other participants to provide a rich negotiated voice (Creswell, 2007). Rather than attempting to separate myself from the research (Creswell, 2014; Guba & Lincoln, 1985), I have chosen to place myself within the research (Riessman, 2011) by openly sharing my biases and the context of the stories shared in order to facilitate an interpretation that is more transparent. With this end in mind, I now introduce you to the overall context in which this research took place.

Setting of the Journey

The 'Ministry Of Teaching Overseas' program, referred to in this investigation as MOTO, was briefly introduced in the prologue. MOTO refers to the program run by the School of Education at Avondale College of Higher Education, hereafter named Avondale, which provides pre-service teachers with the opportunity to complete a three-week professional teaching experience in a developing country. Three separate MOTO experiences are offered each year, and interested students choose between Cambodia, India or Nepal as their MOTO destinations. While I have been on all three experiences a number of times, and would love to have included all three locations in this investigation, I decided that in order to get a more meaningful story, it would be more efficient to limit this investigation to only one of the locations. Despite the similarities between the experiences at all three locations, this investigation focuses only on the MOTO Nepal program. While MOTO generally refers to all three programs, for the remainder of this investigation the term MOTO will refer to the Nepal MOTO experience.

When participants speak of MOTO, they may be referring to one or a combination of a number of its components. While the opportunity to live and teach for three weeks in a Nepali community is a core component of MOTO, the program also involves preparation in order for understanding of the setting of the experience to occur. The MOTO program initially begins approximately nine months prior to departure, when participants make a commitment to become involved. Participants undertake a preparation program run over twelve weeks, and they take part in team social events, debriefing sessions, service projects, and an eight-day trek to Annapurna Base Camp (elevation 4,300 metres). The MOTO experience continues as participants return to Australia and to their studies, as the connections made overseas continue to pull the team back together for regular lunch dates and evening social engagements.

While the MOTO experience may well involve many locations, the two main places that form the context to this journey are Avondale and Mahendra Jyoti. Avondale is a private Christian tertiary college, and its School of Education is located in the Lake Macquarie district of NSW, Australia. Its motto, "For a greater vision of world needs", highlights the emphasis it places on preparing its graduates for a life of service in their communities. The School of Education within Avondale has approximately 550 students, most of whom are studying either primary or secondary education.

Mahendra Jyoti is a village in Kavrepalanchok District in the Bagmati Zone of central Nepal and is the setting of the three-week overseas professional teaching experience at the heart of this investigation. While it is only approximately 30 kilometres south-east of Kathmandu, the mountains that surround Mahendra Jyoti provide a real protection from the city, which has allowed the village to remain quiet, clean and peaceful. It is far from being a tourist destination and our arrival each June definitely does not go un-noticed. The place is incredibly beautiful. The houses scattered along the single dirt road pale into insignificance against the expanse of rice paddies covering the mountainsides that surround the village. Many of the children that fill the schools each day live on the slopes of one of these mountains. While there were 21 pre-service teachers taking part in this overseas teaching experience, the 4 focus participants selected for this investigation were assigned teaching responsibilities in one of two schools. Gaea, Liam and Caiden taught in Ganesh Bharati School. This school is the largest of the district and caters for approximately 220 students

from Nursery to Year 10. Fonda was involved in teaching in Shree Panchakanya Primary School, which is a small school with approximately 30 students from Kindergarten to Year 5.

Limitations of the Study

While this study has implemented strategies to strengthen its quality (Lincoln & Guba, 2013), as outlined later in Chapter 3, like most research (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015) this investigation also has limitations, which were considered when developing conclusions and making recommendations.

The most significant limitation to this investigation is the small size of the sample of participants chosen in developing the constructivist grounded theory. While the four participants were chosen specifically to account for a variety of perspectives, it is recognised that transferability of the results to all pre-service teachers is not possible in this paradigm (Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 2013). It is also recognised that a broader spectrum of respondents will benefit future research.

A second limitation to the general applicability of the results relates to the paradigm and methodology chosen. While a variety of data collection tools were employed for triangulation (Babbie, 2014) and quality purposes (Rossman & Rallis, 2012), the subjective nature of this methodology is acknowledged (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). Thus, a three level coding process was employed (Charmaz, 2014) in order to gain an understanding of the core aspects of the experience for the participants. This study also utilized constant comparison (Linhart, 2008) with the research literature focused on overseas professional teaching experiences. Having said this, it is recognised that this is a small scale case study leading to ongoing future research.

Owing to time and financial constraints, this investigation focused only on one MOTO experience and destination. As stated previously, transferability and generalisation of the results is not the purpose of the chosen paradigm in this investigation (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). Furthermore, my own personal beliefs as developed from my own experiences could represent a bias in this study. As has already been seen in the prologue to this thesis, I have attempted to offer transparency to the reader by openly disclosing my personal beliefs and point of view throughout the study.

Overview of Remaining Chapters

This thesis consists of six chapters. A brief overview of the remaining chapters is as follows.

Chapter 2 – Connecting with the Stories of Others

This chapter provides a synthesis of the literature related to this investigation and situates the stories shared in this study in the context of other stories presently being told. It discusses the current landscape of initial teacher education and highlights the limited development of pre-service teachers' *stories of self* as a present weakness in the current preparation of pre-service teachers. As a result, the chapter explores what is already known about *stories of self* and how best to develop them within pre-service teachers. In light of what is already known, Chapter 2 is concluded by an identification of the potential of overseas professional experiences in developing pre-service teachers' *stories of self* and highlights the gap in literature that this investigation aims to fill.

Chapter 3 – A New Journey Begins: Paths Chosen

This chapter describes the methodology used to explore the impact of overseas professional teaching experiences in developing countries on pre-service teachers' *stories of self*. The chapter begins with an explanation of the relationship between the researcher's philosophical worldview, the paradigm of the investigation and the research question. Following this, the bricolage of research approaches is outlined, the context of the stories is shared, and the data collection designs are explained. Finally, the question of the quality of the research study is addressed, and the chapter concludes with an exploration of the analysis process that was employed.

Chapter 4 – Findings: Stories from the Journey

In this chapter, the stories of the four focus participants, Gaea, Fonda, Liam and Caiden, are told. The reader is introduced to the background of each participant, and then their stories are shared within the context of the three main themes that emerged, namely: living in community; experimenting versus replicating; and experiencing a new reality. After each of the participant's stories is presented, an interpretive micro-summary is included for the

purpose of making sense of the stories in light of the research question and the other focus participants.

Chapter 5 – Sharing the Discoveries

In this chapter, the focus shifts from a description of the stories shared to an interpretation of their meanings. Using a model developed from the stories of the participants, the constructivist grounded theory that emerged from the investigation is explained. This constructivist grounded theory describes the growth-fostering environments found to be essential in supporting pre-service teachers to successfully develop new *stories of self*, and also explains the re-storying process. The specific *stories of self* that appear to be impacted by overseas professional experiences when supported within growth-fostering environments are identified.

Chapter 6 – Conclusions from the Journey

In this final chapter, the implications of this study to key stakeholders – government accrediting agencies, universities, schools and pre-service teachers – are discussed. The chapter concludes by highlighting the major recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2 - CONNECTING WITH THE STORIES OF OTHERS

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to analyse and synthesise the research literature shared by others in relation to the research question that drives this inquiry:

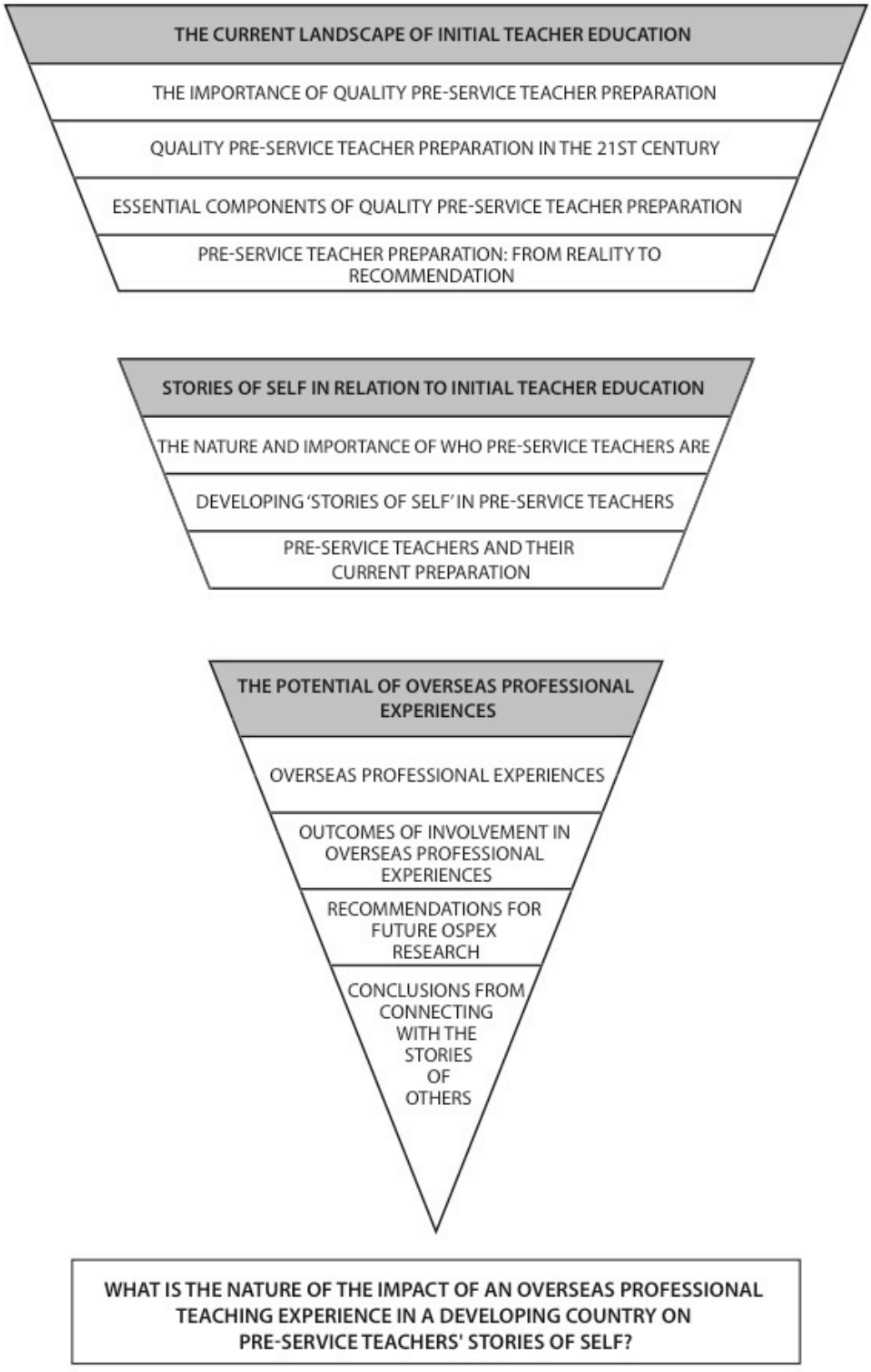
> *What is the nature of the impact of an overseas professional teaching experience, in a developing country, on pre-service teachers' stories of self?*

A person's stories do not make sense in isolation and must be negotiated continually in relationship to those around them (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011). As such, this chapter aims to place this investigation in the context of other stories presently being "lived and told" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 20) in relation to quality pre-service teacher preparation. In order to highlight the importance of this study, and provide a rationale for this investigation, this research journey begins with an exploration of the experiences as shared by others in current research (Edwards, 2014; Ridley, 2012; Squire, 2008).

In Figure 1, the overall structure of this literature review is outlined. This chapter firstly explores the current landscape of initial teacher education and in doing so acknowledges the importance of quality pre-service teacher preparation (Hattie, 2009; Milman, 2014) and highlights the nature of quality pre-service teacher preparation in the 21st century (Bagnall, 2015). In order to thoroughly prepare initial teacher educators, the literature review then focuses on the essential components of quality pre-service teacher preparation (Monk, 2015; Edwards, 2014). From the stories of others, an emergent disconnect can be identified between what is required within initial teacher education to successfully prepare pre-service to meet the demands of the 21st century and our current practices in their preparation (Cushner & Chang, 2015; Mills, 2013). In light of the major concerns facing initial teacher education programs (Cruickshank & Westbrook, 2013; Franco, 2014) the nature and importance of who pre-service teachers are, also referred to as a pre-service teacher's *stories of self* (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999), emerges from the literature as an essential component currently lacking within pre-service teacher preparation (Giles, 2011; Palmer, 2007). As such, the literature review explores what is already known about *stories of self* in relation to initial teacher

education and how best to develop these within pre-service teachers (Izadinia, 2013). As pre-service teacher's *stories of self* are found to be made explicit as a result of quality experiences (Foote, 2015; Rodman, 2010), the potential merit of a thorough investigation into overseas professional teaching experiences is explored (Stachowski et al., 2015). Attention is drawn to the present gap in literature, the filling of which may have a significant impact on the quality of the preparation of pre-service teachers (Chinnappan et al., 2013).

Figure 1: Chapter 2 Structure



Current Landscape of Initial Teacher Education

The importance of quality pre-service teacher preparation

The Commonwealth Government of Australia has recognised the importance of education and identified the improvement of the quality of pre-service teacher preparation as an integral step in raising the effectiveness of schooling (AITSL, 2014; Mergler & Spooner-Lane, 2012; Melbourne declaration, 2008). A search of the literature confirms that quality teacher preparation is an essential component in providing a quality education to young Australians (AITSL, 2014; Barr et al., 2008; Hattie, 2009; Hayes, Mills, Christie, & Lingard, 2006; Mayer, 2014; Rowe, 2003). Using a meta-analysis involving more than 50,000 studies, Hattie (2009) demonstrated that the quality of the teacher was far more significant when predicting student performance than the school the student attended, the students' peers, the school's principal, or even the student's home environment. These findings are not overly surprising in light of the research conducted by Darling-Hammond (2000) who also found that the quality of the teaching force was more important when predicting achievement levels in learners than other factors such as class-size, overall spending levels, or teachers' salaries, and suggested that to improve student achievement one must focus on the preparation of the teachers that are hired. As teachers' salaries have been found to account for the greatest amount of expenditure in school education and also appear to have the largest impact on student learning (Hattie, 2009), the importance of quality pre-service teacher preparation should not be underestimated (Jensen, 2010; Rowe, 2003).

In light of the importance of employing high-quality teachers, the obvious question arises, is initial teacher education currently preparing quality teachers? As Monk (2015) suggests, if quality teaching is directly related to the contexts in which pre-service teachers are expected to teach, it is necessary first to outline the changes that have affected schooling in the 21st century, and the impacts that these changes have had on the nature of quality teaching.

Quality pre-service teacher preparation in the 21st century

The results of research suggest that a major criticism of initial teacher education institutions, and the teachers subsequently moving into the profession, is that they have failed to remain relevant to learners in the 21st century (Ewing, Le Cornu, & Groundwater-Smith, 2014; Gunter & Fitzgerald, 2007; Oblinger, 2005). As Franco (2014) points out, "just as the

patterns viewed inside a kaleidoscope change when it is turned, the image of quality teaching changes with shifts in individuals, contexts, and ideologies" (p. 1). Bagnall (2015) suggests that if educational institutions are to remain relevant they must learn to remain aware and responsive to the ever-changing contexts surrounding them. Globalisation has been identified by Vacher (2010) and Zhao, Meyers and Meyers (2009) as one of the most significant changes impacting the teaching context, and as such, is now explored to ensure that pre-service teacher preparation remains relevant.

Australians now live in a globalised world where individuals are required to relate on a global stage (Bagnall, 2015; Biesta, Field, Hodkinson, Macleod, & Goodson, 2011). Globalisation, resulting from advances in communication, transportation and infrastructure, has connected people from diverse cultures, nations and economies like never before (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Vacher (2010) suggests that a new breed of teacher is required if schooling is to prepare young people adequately to thrive in this globalised world. While in the past pre-service teachers have been predominantly equipped to prepare their learners to understand and relate successfully with their own culture, now they are expected to prepare their learners with the ability to build relationships with people from other cultures (Bagnall, 2015; Banks, 2015; Santoro, 2015). This demand has heightened the need for pre-service teachers to be trained appropriately to enable them to provide young Australians with an "appreciation of and respect for social, cultural and religious diversity, and a sense of global citizenship" (Melbourne Declaration, 2008, p. 4). Stachowski et al. (2015) argue that it is impossible for a teacher to develop an understanding of the world and its people and successfully transfer this to their students until they have had "first hand experience themselves in crossing cultures; [and] immersing themselves in new ways of thinking, doing, and being" (p. 42).

In addition to preparing their learners for a culturally diverse world, Basit and Santoro (2011) suggest that pre-service teachers also need to be prepared to teach successfully the diversity of people sure to be in their classrooms. It is uncommon for teachers to experience homogenous groups of learners in Australian classrooms in the 21st century. Pre-service teachers now are expected to facilitate successful learning experiences for groups of learners who come from different linguistic, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds (Collins & Reid, 2012; Comber & Reid, 2006; Mills, 2012; Rudd & Smith, 2007). Even more significant is the fact that while the student population continues to become increasingly more diverse in relation to its social, cultural, and language backgrounds (Sleeter, 2015), the pre-service

teacher force is becoming more homogeneously Anglo-Australian, monolingual and of middle-class background (Allard & Santoro, 2006). The most current research found that over 81% of Australia's current teaching force were born in Australia and that teachers coming from a diversity of cultural backgrounds "are under-represented in the Australian teaching sector" (2012, p 42). Mills (2012) suggests that unless teachers are adequately prepared to connect with minority students, issues in relation to social justice will occur. As a result of these concerns, teacher education institutions are now being called to demonstrate that they are preparing their pre-service teachers to adequately teach learners from "diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds" (AITSL, 2014, p. 8).

Results of research suggest that the first step in establishing culturally competent classrooms in which diversity is embraced, is for pre-service teachers to be provided with the opportunity to examine how their "own encultured positionings shapes their interactions with their students, and their expectations of them" (Santoro, 2014, p. 420). Empathy for others has been emphasised as one of the essential attributes required for pre-service teachers to interact successfully with a diverse group of people (Bagnall, 2015; Eng, 2015; Milman, 2014). Santoro (2014) and Stachowski et al. (2015) both argue that building cultural competency within teachers requires an educational response aimed at developing an appreciation of, and respect for, people from other social, cultural and religious backgrounds, and that this will be ineffective without a real life encounter, involving people from diverse backgrounds in foreign overseas contexts (Cushner & Chang, 2015; Faulconer, 2003; Pettigrew, 2001; Tangen et al., 2015; Walters, Garii, Walters, 2009). Despite the importance of developing culturally competent teachers, Doppen (2010), suggests that many pre-service teachers have had little real interaction with people from diverse backgrounds and subsequently, as discussed below, may continue to hold negative stereotypes and ethnocentric viewpoints (Mills, 2013).

Lovat, Dally, Clement, and Toomey (2011) draw attention to the fact that, in addition to working with a more diverse student population than ever before, Australian teachers in the 21st century are charged with additional responsibilities, involving values-education and the development of the whole child. This would appear to be authentic holistic education, as it focuses on students' "physical, social, emotional, moral, spiritual and aesthetic development and wellbeing" (Melbourne Declaration, 2008, p. 4). Mergler and Spooner-Lane (2012) suggest that changing behaviour is not achieved through the gaining of knowledge alone, and

any attempt to educate young people with a focus only on a person's cognition, in isolation from their beliefs, emotions, and social milieu, is likely to be ineffective (Mergler & Spooner-Lane, 2012). As Lovat et al. (2011) state "it has been demonstrated that a values approach to education is no mere option if the fullest effects of learning are to be achieved, included but not limited to academic learning" (p. 149).

A national framework for values education in Australian Schools was agreed upon and endorsed by all states and territories and circulated to all Australian schools in February 2005 (DEST, 2005). This framework included the need for Australian young people to be caring and compassionate, to maintain integrity between their words and actions, to treat others with respect, to serve and contribute to their community and to be accepting and inclusive of people from diverse cultures. While the national framework was created over ten years ago, Aktepe (2015) suggests that the formation of values in Australian young people should remain a core focus for Australian schooling:

> [O]ne of the most crucial objectives of education … is to train individuals who value themselves, their surrounding people, and nature. They are confident in themselves and their society as a part of the world, and they are able to make contributions to society. (p. 773)

While directly teaching values as part of the curriculum has been suggested to be an important part of values education (Berkowitz & Hoppe, 2009; Pala, 2011), there are many who argue that this teaching is likely to be ineffective if it occurs in the absence of a climate that embodies those values (Berkowitz, 2011; Halstead & Xiao, 2010; Lickona, 2009; Lovat, 2009). In light of the research that suggests that values education has been shown to be influenced by social interaction (Gregory et al., 2010; Lovet et al., 2011), Riedinger (2015) suggests that for pre-service teachers to be adequately prepared to assist in the development of values within the students they teach, they must first have been given the opportunity to develop holistically themselves. While Brady (2011) warns of the dangers of "deriving an ideal set of teacher values for effective teaching" for all students (p. 57), there appears to be common values within teachers that are most likely to enhance values education (Carr, 2010; Tirri, 2010). It is suggested that teachers are more likely to successfully develop values in their students when they challenge egocentricism (Brady, 2011), interact with others with care and respect (Clement, 2010; Tirri, 2010), and promote positive human relationships (Carr, 2010; Gellel, 2010). In order to be the type of person capable of relating well with

others Mergler and Spooner-Lane (2012) highlight the importance that pre-service teachers reflect on the relationship between their personal and professional beliefs. Boud et al., (2013) suggest that for this reflection to occur, pre-service teachers need to be involved in experiences that confront their own beliefs and taken-for-granted assumptions.

In addition to the development of values, Australian schooling in the 21st century also aims to provide opportunities for all young Australians to reach their full potential and to live fulfilling and satisfying lives (Roffey, 2015). The Melbourne Declaration (2008) highlights that in order to achieve this purpose, schooling should extend beyond a focus on knowledge and skills and should also aim to develop young Australians into confident, ethical, relational, committed, participatory, responsible, and empathetic individuals. To help realise these goals and assist Australian young people to live and work successfully, The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority developed seven general capabilities to be implemented within the Australian curriculum including: critical and creative thinking, personal and social capability, and ethical and intercultural understanding (http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/). Seligman (2011) refers to living successfully as "flourishing" and argues that this wellbeing is promoted by positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning and achievement. What is clear from wellbeing research is that a critical factor in the wellbeing of students in schools is the wellbeing of their teachers (Lovewell, 2012; Roffey, 2015). In light of the importance of the student-teacher relationship, in improving wellbeing in schools (Hattie, 2009; Roffey, 2015), it is unlikely that pre-service teachers will be effective wellbeing developers unless they have first made sense out of who they are and what they believe. Stachowsi et al. (2015), argues that the level of reflection required to develop this connection is likely to occur by immersing pre-service teachers "into new ways of thinking, doing and being" (p. 42).

In addition to meeting the challenges of globalisation, including preparing a diverse student population for an interconnected and competitive world, and the added responsibility of developing values and wellbeing in their pupils, pre-service teachers are also challenged with preparing their students for a world that continues to change rapidly (Bagnall, 2015; Bernhardt, 2015; Vacher, 2010). Teacher education that predominantly prepares learners to follow scripts and the routines of others will be of very little value in the 21st century, because the curriculum and how it is best taught is likely to continue to change (Dervent, 2015; Ewing, Le Cornu, & Groundwater-Smith, 2014). As Edwards (2014) explains,

> professional practice is not just a set of low level practical skills, but can be dignified as a form of practical wisdom or intelligence - that is, as a sophisticated form of professional artistry incorporating subtle and skilled moment-to-moment cognitions. (p. 2)

Pre-service teachers will need to develop the capacity to remain responsive to the changing world if they are to be successful in developing in Australia's young people the capacity to negotiate the challenges of an uncertain future (Ewing, Le Cornu, & Groundwater-Smith, 2014; Melbourne Declaration, 2008). One suggestion for thriving in a changing world is to prepare pre-service teachers to predict the needs of their future learners (Freeman et al., 2008). This approach would require pre-service teachers to "envisage the demands of the future and ensure they are taken into account" when planning what is taught (National Curriculum Board, 2009, p. 5). The problem that teacher educators face, according to Bagnall (2015), is that the future at present is unknown. Teacher educators remain largely uninformed in relation to the challenges pre-service teachers will face, the types of learners they will be teaching, what they will need to teach, and what teaching strategies will prove most effective (Christenson, 2010; Groundwater-Smith, Brennan, Mitchell, McFadden, & Munns, 2008).

The question of how teacher education institutions prepare pre-service teachers for an uncertain future persists. Perhaps the answer lies in developing pre-service teachers who have the capacity and confidence to thrive in a changing world. Successful pre-service teachers are those who can remain responsive to changing environments and diverse student populations (Villegas, 2007). Further, they need to be flexible in their thinking, and adaptive in their practice (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2008). According to Cushner (2007), teachers likely to be successful in the 21st century will be able to think on their feet, solve presently unidentified complex problems, learn from their experiences and remain innovative in how they approach teaching. As Darling-Hammond et al. suggests (2005), pre-service teachers' practices can no longer be provided as techniques to replicate, but must be based on sound understandings of the specific needs of their students, the nature and purpose of their schools, and their core beliefs in relation to who they are (Giles, 2011). To move on the professional journey of becoming quality teachers, their practices must be based on personal beliefs that have been developed, honed and ideologically framed in light of their own experiences through reflective practice (Boud et al., 2013; Glatthorn & Fox, 1996).

In light of the demands of quality teacher preparation in the 21st century, this literature review now aims to identify the essential components of quality pre-service teacher preparation programs.

Essential components of quality pre-service teacher preparation

In relation to quality initial teacher education there appears to be three essential components required to adequately prepare pre-service teachers in the 21st century (Dervent, 2015; Giles, 2011; Monk, 2015). The first of these essential components is referred to as professional knowledge (Monk, 2015). The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) highlighted the importance of professional knowledge by placing "what teachers should know and be able to do," at the core of their professional standards (AITSL, 2014, p. 1). As professional knowledge is given priority within the professional standards document it is dealt with initially within this section. Within the graduate standards, professional knowledge relates to "the students and how they learn," and "the content and how to teach it" (AITSL, 2014, p. 3). According to AITSL (2014), to be effective, pre-service teachers will need to draw on a body of knowledge that includes how students learn and the implications for teaching; what teaching strategies are effective for diverse learners; strategies for differentiating learning to meet specific needs of students; and knowledge in relation to the content of the required key learning areas and how to teach it (p. 4).

While there is little doubt that the development of knowledge is an important element in the preparation of teachers, many argue that the development of knowledge alone is not enough to prepare teachers successfully in the 21st century (Cushner & Chang, 2015; Mirick & Davis, 2015; Scotland, 2014). Jones (2010) is of the opinion that as long as professional knowledge remains unconnected information, unrelated to who a teacher is and what they believe, it is likely that it will negatively impact upon the practices of pre-service teachers. As is expressed in the following statement there has been a significant shift in what is required of effective teachers: "The 21st century saw the role of the teacher move from one who is all-knowing and unquestionable to one who is continually learning, self aware and reflective" (Mergler & Spooner-Lane, 2012, p. 67).

The idea that knowledge can be transferred in a standardised fashion irrespective of a learner's background, beliefs and learning context is now outdated (Mergler & Spooner-

Lane, 2012). Roffey (2015) suggests that pre-service teachers' ability to teach extends beyond knowing and incorporates their ability to influence how they make others feel. Social and emotional learning emphasises the importance of a learner's connections with others and the role of emotions in fostering learning (Lovat et al., 2011). As authentic learning is promoted in environments where students feel safe to be themselves and highly valued in learning communities (Roffey & McCarthy, 2013), pre-service teachers' ability to develop quality relationships is widely acknowledged as essential if they are to be effective in educating those for whom they are responsible (Brion-Meisels & Jones, 2012; Palmer, 2007; Giles, 2010; Le Cornu, 2010). According to Roffey (2015), quality relationships are fostered in environments of trust, respect, reciprocity, collaboration and love, all of which are related to who a teacher is rather than just what they know.

In addition to professional knowledge, the second essential component on which teacher education programs focus is professional practice, also known as the capabilities graduate pre-service teachers can demonstrate (AISTL, 2011). Quality graduate teachers are required to be able to plan for and implement effective teaching and learning; create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments; and assess and provide feedback on student learning (AISTL, 2011, p. 3; Reid, 2011). While the development of professional practice is important, Cruickshank and Westbrook (2013), Dervent (2015), and Van Driel and Berry (2012) all argue the importance of maintaining close connections between pre-service teachers' practices and their beliefs through deep and ongoing reflection. Franco (2014) also highlights the importance of this connection when she states that "pedagogical practices must be developmental, adaptable and rooted in reflective practices that capitalize on teachers as life-long learners and adaptive experts" (p. 3).

According to Edwards (2014), it is likely that teacher education that attempts to prepare pre-service teachers by accessorizing them with a specific set of skills unrelated to their beliefs will prove of little value in the 21st century, and will quickly become irrelevant in the changing environment of education (Boud et al., 2013). To ensure ongoing effectiveness in a changing environment, it appears that pre-service teachers should resist enacting the practices of others (Vacher, 2010) and instead, develop their own understandings through ongoing reflective practice (Edwards, 2014). Considering the importance of the integration of behaviours and beliefs, and the vital role reflection plays in this process, it appears that

teacher educators should select teaching experience that are likely to result in deep reflective practice.

In an attempt to choose assessable outcomes, Akkerman and Meijer (2011) suggest that teacher education programs are currently primarily focused on the acquisition of knowledge and skills, expressed within a number of standards. While knowledge and skills are important components of initial teacher education, the reliance on them alone is likely to prove ineffective in successfully preparing pre-service teachers (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Dervent, 2015; Edwards, 2014; Franco, 2014; Kelchtermans, 2009). "What is required is an unorthodox approach that does not abandon the need for basic knowledge and comprehension in pre-service teacher training, yet has the viability to integrate instruction with upper level cognitive skills" (Blackbourn et al., 2011, p. 141).

While little attention is given to "who a teacher is" within the AITSL standards (AITSL, 2014) many researchers have identified this to be a third essential component of quality pre-service teacher preparation (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Alsup, 2006; Beauchchamp, & Thomas, 2006; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Malm, 2009; Mergler & Spooner-Lane, 2012). Giles (2011) asserts that "who a teacher is" is at the heart of good teaching because our ability to connect and relate to others is "integral to the relational experience we call education" (p. 62). While knowledge and skills have value in the ability to teach successfully, it is "particular human qualities or characteristics in combination with, and shining through, their knowledge and skills that allow some teachers to transform many students' lives" (Wasicsko, 2007, p. 55).

While professional knowledge may inform quality teaching, and the provision of skills assist in its delivery, the confidence, desire and commitment for pre-service teachers appears to be found within who they are as people (Mergler & Spooner-Lane, 2012). Cook (2009) explains this relationship succinctly in the statement, "how teachers teach is in direct dialog with who they are" (p. 275). As there is a direct relationship between who a pre-service teacher is, and how they are likely to teach, the development of the whole person becomes a pertinent issue in initial teacher education (Malm, 2009). It appears that those leading the preparation of quality pre-service teachers should ensure their programs adequately focus on the development of a pre-service teacher's professional knowledge, professional practice, and

especially who they are as people, later defined in this literature review as their *stories of self* (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Bruner, 1987; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999).

Given the essential components required if teachers are to be prepared to teach in the 21st century, discussed above, the question that arises is are pre-service teachers currently being adequately prepared. The next section addresses this question.

Pre-service teacher preparation: From reality to recommendation

In light of what is known about what pre-service teachers need in their preparation, there are major concerns in relation to the effectiveness of current initial teacher education programs (Franco, 2014; Le Cornu, 2010). Over the last decade the concerns surrounding initial teacher education have been ubiquitous and ongoing (Cruickshank & Westbrook, 2013; Grudnoff, 2011; Marble, 2012), and are now addressed in order to identify what is needed to improve the preparation of pre-service teachers.

Pre-service teachers inadequately prepared to teach culturally diverse learners

"Cultural competency" is defined as "the ability to recognise differences based on culture, language, race, ethnicity, and other aspects of individual identity and to respond to those differences positively and constructively" (Trumbull & Pacheco, 2005, p. 4). Pre-service teachers considered to be culturally competent are described as being more open-minded, empathetic, and knowledgeable about cultural difference and similarities, and have the ability and willingness to embrace complexity (Deardorff, 2009). Cushner and Chang (2015) suggest that intercultural competence is essential for teachers to be able to "develop rapport and build inclusive classrooms that welcome students from a wide array of backgrounds and experiences" (p. 168).

While Australian classrooms are becoming more culturally diverse, the pre-service teacher force is becoming more homogenously white and middle class (Allard & Santoro, 2004; Ambe, 2006; Mills, 2013; Scrimgeour & Ovsienko, 2015; Sleeter, 2015). A major concern, highlighted in teacher-education literature, is that many pre-service teachers have very limited contact with persons from diverse backgrounds and are not being prepared well to teach the diversity of students sure to be in their classrooms (Chinnappan et al., 2013; Santoro & Major, 2012; Scrimgeour & Ovsienko, 2015; Sleeter, 2015). Mills (2013, p. 1)

supports this claim and states that pre-service teachers are not "well prepared to teach students whose cultural values and beliefs are different" from their own. This is especially concerning when a correlation between a teacher's cultural awareness and a student's academic achievement has already been shown (Banks, 2004; Yeung, 2006). Even more concerning is the fact that pre-service teachers at present do not see themselves as ready to teach in multicultural classrooms (Gibson, 2004; Merrfyield, 2000; Premier & Miller, 2010). As Hollins and Guzman (2005) contend, this may be related to the current situation in which prospective teachers hold negative attitudes about different cultures and are unwilling to teach in schools that tend to be more ethnically diverse. As a result of such findings, a great deal of responsibility is now placed on improving the preparation of pre-service teachers to ensure they are capable of understanding and responding to students from a diversity of backgrounds (Mills, 2013; Villegas, 2007).

While universities recognise the importance of cultural competence within pre-service teachers and are required to include it in their programs (AITSL, 2014), some suggest that it is "often ineffectively addressed" (Santoro & Major, 2012, p. 310). The typical response of pre-service teacher education institutions in addressing the issues of catering for diversity in the classroom is to include one or two stand-alone units of study focused on multicultural education (Ambe, 2006; Kilgour, 2013; Premier & Miller, 2010; Sleeter, 2007). While this approach may satisfy tertiary accreditation panels, Mills and Ballantyne (2010) suggest that such approaches will have little influence on changing pre-service teachers' beliefs and breaking down ethnocentric barriers.

Cushner and Chang (2015) suggest that it is the "acquisition of intercultural competence, and not knowledge alone," that will be of most benefit in developing quality relationships between teachers and their students (p. 167). Until pre-service teachers develop a love and respect for each of their students and the ability and desire to form quality relationships with them, it could be argued that their preparation to teach young Australians successfully is incomplete (Mills, 2013; Walkington, 2005). In light of the importance of relationships, the art of teaching now appears very dependent on the beliefs a teacher holds and the connection of these beliefs to how they practise (Rodman, 2010; Scotland, 2014). As a result, it appears that those responsible for initial teacher education should move beyond the question of what pre-service teachers need to know, and begin to ask questions as to how to influence the beliefs pre-service teachers hold.

Pettigrew and Tropp (2006), and Sleeter (2007) suggest that the only experiences likely to reduce intergroup prejudice are those that include intergroup contact. Not only do the attitudes between the immediate participants involved in the contact appear to become more favourable, but also the attitudes between the entire out-group, out-group members in other situations, and "even out-groups not involved in the contact" (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, p. 766). According to Sleeter (2007), the most promising approaches in adequately preparing teachers for multiracial school is to "immerse prospective teachers in communities that are culturally different from their own" (p. 189). After conducting an extensive review of more than 200 studies of ethnic contact, Pettigrew (2001) showed that international contact with different cultures in their own countries, excluding tourist experiences, was far more beneficial in reducing prejudice compared to interethnic contact at home. It appears that pre-service teachers are unlikely to be prepared to face the challenges associated with working with students of diverse backgrounds until they are involved with experiences that "confront their own deep-seated beliefs and assumptions" (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, p. 6-7).

Gap between theory and practice in pre-service teachers

Another major concern with how pre-service teachers are currently prepared is the widely acknowledged gap that continues to exist between theory and practice (Meijer, de Graaf, & Meirink, 2011). While the importance of the integration of theory and practice has been established (Kissock & Richardson, 2010; Rodriguez-Valls, 2014; Taguchi, 2007), current research results suggest that pre-service teachers continue to complain that there is little connection between what they are being taught in university and who they are and what they do in the classroom (Allen & Wright, 2014; Korthagen, 2010). This is a major concern because, as Rodriguez-Valls (2014) suggests, quality teaching in the 21st century is reliant on teachers who "know how theory informs their practice" (p. 294). As a result of the theory-practice gap, pre-service teachers struggle to find relevance in what is being taught in their initial teacher-education programs (Allen, 2009). According to Levine (2006), teacher educators may be in danger of preparing teachers with theoretical knowledge that has never been integrated or understood in light of real experience.

If pre-service teacher education is not enabling student teachers to successfully amalgamate theoretical knowledge into practical application, it is necessary to ask what is informing the

decisions a pre-service teacher makes within their classroom. As most pre-service teachers have already experienced more than twelve years of contact with teachers prior to beginning initial teacher education and have consequently completed what Lortie (1975) refers to as an 'apprenticeship of observation,' there is a real danger that without a challenging or disruptive experience (Boud et al., 2013;Bramming, 2007) pre-service teachers are at more risk than most professionals to replicate the techniques they have observed from others, without questioning or understanding why (Kissock & Richardson, 2010).

Beliefs are not something that can be received passively from others, and to be of any significance they need to be constructed individually in direct relation to one's own background and experiences (Liakopoulou, 2012; Mills & Ballantyne, 2010). As such, teacher educators should be encouraging their learners to be involved in professional experiences where they are allowed to "search for effective pedagogies" (Rodriguez-Valls, 2014, p. 306), and test the theories of others in order to refine, expand, or dismiss their present beliefs and to develop their own personal theories to explain their practices. Garraway and Volbrecht (2011) suggest that unless pre-service teachers are immersed in experiences where they are challenged with real problems that require them to engage in authentic and intentional reflection, it is unlikely that they will develop their own personal beliefs that explain their practices as teachers to allow them to successfully negotiate the changing context of teaching in the 21st century (Bagnall, 2015; Bernhardt, 2015).

Self-efficacy of pre-service teachers

Pendergast and colleagues (2011) argue there is little doubt that the development of pre-service teachers' self-efficacy is "essential for producing effective, committed and enthusiastic teachers" (p. 47). Bandura (1986) defined self-efficacy as a person's belief in his or her own ability to undertake the actions required of them to successfully accomplish a specific task in a specific context. Teacher self-efficacy relates to one's own belief of his or her capabilities to bring about desired student outcomes in teaching effectively (Bandura, 1997; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001; Yilmaz, 2011). A teacher's self-efficacy appears important as research consistently suggests a strong correlation between a teacher's sense of efficacy and student achievement (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Ross, 1992). Put simply, teachers' beliefs about their effectiveness in teaching are critical to how successful they are as teachers (Henson, 2001; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). As a connection between efficacy

and performance has been established, an exploration of what is already known about pre-service teachers and their efficacy levels is now provided.

Earlier investigations that focused on the development of teacher efficacy during initial teacher education programs suggest that increases in teacher efficacy do occur during the beginning phases of a teacher education program (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1990; Wenner, 2001) and as a result of some professional teaching experiences (Grootenboer, 2006). The major concern is that teacher efficacy appears to decrease during the end of the initial teacher education course and even during the first year of teaching (Cherubini, 2009; Hoy, 2000). Pre-service teachers appear to be graduating with an inadequate belief in their ability to survive the teaching experience, impact pupil learning, meet children's needs, motivate students and manage behaviour (Cherubini, 2009; Pigge & Marso, 1997). Oakes et al. (2013), argue that it is a concern that pre-service teachers continue to exit their initial teacher education programs prior to achieving the desired level of teacher self-efficacy, because low levels of teacher self-efficacy have been associated with a number of negative outcomes.

The negative outcomes related to low levels of teacher self-efficacy are concerning. Brown et al. (2015), and Schwarzer and Hallum (2008) demonstrated that while teachers with high levels of teacher self-efficacy are likely to perceive difficult tasks as challenges to be overcome, teachers with low levels tend to perceive challenges as dangerous road blocks to be avoided. Low levels of teacher self-efficacy have also been linked to higher levels of burnout and stress (Oakes et al., 2013; O'Neill & Stephenson, 2012; Plunkett & Dyson, 2011), decreased enthusiasm and resilience (Pendergast, Garvis & Keogh, 2011), and lower levels of quality teaching practice and job satisfaction (Oakes et al., 2013). The significance of these negative outcomes and the fact that teacher efficacy levels decrease pre and post-graduation has caused many to question the effectiveness of initial teacher education institutions at preparing pre-service teachers who have adequate belief in themselves (Ewing & Smith, 2003; Grudnoff, 2011).

Pre-service teachers inadequately prepared to teach in rural communities

Another major deficiency in initial teacher education within Australia is the difficulty in attracting and retaining new teachers to rural and remote schools (Miles, Marshall, Rolfe & Noonan, 2006; Plunkett & Dyson, 2011). In 2011 Plunkett & Dyson reported that this

problem appeared to be on the increase and found that out of the 149 rural schools they researched, 100 still had vacancies at the start of the year. It has been suggested that a reason for this shortfall is that Australian graduates do not feel that their initial teacher education prepared them well for rural and remote teaching or living (Frid, Smith, Sparrow & Trinidad, 2009). Wallace and Boylan (2007, p. 22) found that rural schools continue to be "feared" and "avoided" by Australian pre-service teacher graduates who appear to have completed a majority of their schooling and initial teacher education in metropolitan areas. Rivzi (2007) suggests that one reason why pre-service teachers are avoiding teaching in rural schools is that their teacher education has not given them a teaching perspective that is flexible enough to be transferred to different locations. Allen (2009) argues that pre-service teachers will be far better prepared to be effective teachers in changing contexts and times when they have developed their own beliefs about teaching that can be transferred and adapted in unfamiliar contexts, rather than attempting to replicate the unsubstantiated set of skills and techniques observed in others. To enable pre-service teachers to develop such beliefs, it has been suggested that pre-service teachers need to be exposed to a wide range of experiences, including rural and remote community living involving remote locations and diverse communities within their teacher education courses (Mills, 2013; Sharplin, 2002; Wallace & Boylan, 2007).

As suggested earlier, there appears to be a gap between what is required of quality teachers in the context of the 21st century and the reality of the outcomes of the preparation of pre-service teachers (Korthagen, 2010; Mills, 2013; Oakes et al., 2013). While globalisation has increased the importance of teachers who are appreciative and respectful of culturally diverse learners (Cushner & Chang, 2015; Eng, 2015), at present research literature concludes that pre-service teachers are not being prepared well to teach children whose values and beliefs are different from their own (Mills, 2013). The identified gap between theory and practice (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011) suggests that pre-service teachers are at present lacking the ability to adequately explain their practices, and as such are unlikely to be capable of remaining responsive to the changing environments in which they are sure to be immersed (Groundwater et al., 2008). While the importance of quality pre-service teacher preparation in the development of teachers who are confident and flexible has been emphasised (Roffey, 2015; Villegas, 2007), at present pre-service teacher graduates appear to have low levels of self-efficacy (Cherubini, 2009; Oakes et al., 2013) and lack the ability to transfer who they are and what they know to diverse contexts (Frid et al., 2009). As apparent from the previous

concerns, it appears that there is something missing in initial teacher education. Teacher educators who wish to reduce the gap between what is required of pre-service teachers to be effective in the 21st century and the reality of who they appear to be, should focus primarily on the beliefs that pre-service teachers hold about themselves and others and develop their own personal theories to explain their practices (Grudnoff, 2011; Rodriguez-Valls, 2014; Scotland, 2014).

While knowledge and skills were identified as essential components in the preparation of pre-service teachers (Cruickshank & Westbrook, 2013; Monk, 2015), at present what appears to be most lacking is not what pre-service teachers know, or the skills they can demonstrate, but is rather concerned with who they are and the beliefs they hold (Cook, 2009; Giles, 2011). This essential component is commonly referred to as teacher identity (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011) or, as paraphrased from the work of Bruner (1987) and Connelly and Clandinin (1999), a pre-service teacher's *stories of self*. In order to develop an understanding of how pre-service teacher preparation may be improved I now focus on the nature of *stories of self* and how these are best developed.

Stories of Self in Relation to Initial Teacher Education

The nature and importance of who pre-service teachers are

Determining 'who a pre-service teacher is' appears central to the current issues in pre-service teacher preparation (Giles, 2011; Roffey, 2015), and it now becomes the focus of this literature review. An understanding of socio-cultural learning theory highlights to teacher educators that learning does not simply take place in a pre-service teacher's head but needs to be situated within their social, cultural and historical contexts (Anderson & Stillman, 2012; Caudle & Moran, 2013; Lowenstein, 2009). This places the learners at the centre of the learning process and requires them to be active participants in constructing knowledge that makes sense in relation to their prior understandings and experiences (Erstad & Sefton-Green, 2013; Niewolny & Wilson, 2009). According to Anderson & Stillman (2012) learning within a socio-cultural perspective challenges the "often reductive and overly simplistic views of learners and learning" and highlights the importance of recognising the importance of who pre-service teachers are in the process of initiating significant learning (p. 5).

Defining a term that accurately describes 'who a pre-service teacher is' in relation to their human qualities, characteristics, and beliefs, is very difficult (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Beauchchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop, 2004). Some have attempted to make sense of what is occurring within pre-service teachers by focusing on the outcomes of pre-service teachers' beliefs as seen in their observable patterns of behaviours commonly referred to as their disposition (Arsal, 2015; Faull, 2009; Schussler, 2006). While this approach fits well within the standards approach being applied to teacher education, the problem with attempting to understand 'who a person is' by observing their external behaviour is that it is very likely that 'who they are' will be modified as a result of being observed (Griffin, 2015; Helm, 2006; Katz & Raths, 1985). What is made clear in research literature is that who pre-service teachers are is multifaceted (Rodgers & Scott, 2008), dynamic (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011) and related to their social context (Dolloff, 2007). This literature review now examines each of these components in order to more accurately understand and describe the complexity and importance of who pre-service teachers are.

According to Beijaard et al. (2004), an individual's 'identity' can be seen as an answer to the question, "Who am I at this moment?" In answering that question, a person may refer to him or herself as being an overwhelmed teacher, a lucky spouse, a proud parent, or an eager surfer. What becomes clear in listening to any response is that a person's identity, or who they are at any given moment, is very complex and consists of sub-identities (Beijaard et al., 2004). Mishler (1999) refers to the plurality of these sub-identities using a metaphor of, "our selves as a chorus of voices, not just as the tenor or soprano soloist" (p. 8). In an attempt to gain a better understanding of the whole person, it has been common for researchers to appear to fragment pre-service teachers by referring to their separate parts (Beijaard et al., 2004; Sutherland, Howard & Markauskaite, 2010). The two parts that feature most prominently in discussions related to teacher education are pre-service teachers' professional and personal identities (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009).

In the literature, a pre-service teacher's professional identity refers to the beliefs pre-service teachers hold about what it is to be a teacher (Flores & Day, 2006; Rowe, 2003). Beijaard and colleagues (2004) suggest that these beliefs may be in relation to their roles as teachers, the needs of learners, the purpose of education, and the importance of quality teaching and learning. According to Franco (2014) unless initial teacher education successfully develops professional beliefs within pre-service teachers it is likely that the pre-service teachers'

practices will be based on the techniques they have observed in others and as such will quickly become stagnant and irrelevant.

While professional identity refers to who a person is as a teacher, personal identity entails the beliefs that explain who a teacher is as a person (Forrest, Keener & Harkins, 2010). To paraphrase Fullan and Hargreaves (1994), teachers, unlike machines, are not wheeled into the classroom in the morning and stored in the cupboard during the evenings and weekends (p. 67). Teachers are more than mere practitioners and therefore they cannot be constructed externally by the transmission of knowledge and techniques (Khan et al., 2014). Teachers are humans who have individual strengths, weaknesses, personalities, experiences and beliefs. According to Palmer (2007) initial teacher education, in the pursuit of the development of quality teachers, will need to provide opportunities for all future teachers to re-negotiate who they are and join self, subject and students in a quality learning environment.

Although there has been a tendency to compartmentalise a person into different parts, including their personal and professional identity, Palmer (2007), and Akkerman and Meijer (2011) argue that individuals naturally attempt to seek wholeness. Returning to the reference of the plurality of one's sub-identities being likened to a chorus of voices (Mishler, 1999), it appears the "better the relationships between the different identities, the better the chorus of voices sound(s)" (Beijaard et al., 2004, p. 113). Finding a capable person and adding on additional skills and techniques does not achieve quality teaching, as it is impossible to develop a teacher in isolation from who they are as a person (Palmer, 2007). Whenever we attempt to tack on skills and practices, in isolation from pre-existing beliefs and experiences, we are encouraging a person to act in separation from who they are and therefore fracturing them into unconnected, disjointed and often confused parts.

Initial teacher education has tended to focus on the development of the pre-service teachers' professional identities in isolation from their personal identities as quality teaching has been wrongly defined as something we do, rather than someone we are (Dolloff, 2007, p. 4). This helps to explain why Pietsch and Williamson (2005) argue that professional identity, or *self as teacher*, should not be considered as separate from personal identity but rather part of it. In light of this understanding, those concerned with the quality of pre-service teacher preparation should focus on providing opportunities for pre-service teachers to renegotiate themselves and synthesise their different parts, with the aim of developing coherent and

connected beings. Hermans and Kempen sum up this process as follows: "The self can be seen as a synthesising activity, that is, as a continuous self attempt to make the self a whole, despite the existence of parts that try to maintain or even to increase their relative autonomy" (1993, p. 93).

A key mechanism used to synthesise the fragmented parts of a person is their stories (Alsup, 2006; Palmer, 1997; Rodgers & Scott, 2008). Rodgers and Scott (2008) suggest that to be effective in the 21st century pre-service teachers have an innate need to construct a single story capable of holding together the different parts of who they are and what they believe. Pre-service teachers who remain ideologically fragmented as a result of never amalgamating their personal and professional selves are unlikely to develop into the flexible and responsive teachers required (Roffey, 2015). In explaining why every classroom looks and feels unique, Walkington (2005) highlights the significance of the stories each teacher has constructed in explaining who they are. It is argued that a teacher's *stories of self* directly affects their ability to make informed decisions in relation to how they teach, how they develop as teachers, and how they approach educational change (Beijaard et al., 2004; Rowe, 2003). Without a robust belief system on which to make decisions it is likely that teachers will be unable to join self and subject (Palmer, 2007), and will be forced to rely on techniques observed in others without the confidence that exists when actions are based on informed understandings.

In addition to the multifaceted, yet unitary nature of identity, it is also important to understand the fluid or dynamic state in which it exists. According to Akkerman and Meijer (2011, p. 310), "(i)dentity is not a fixed entity, but one that is dynamic and continuously constructed" during a person's lifetime. If, as discussed above, we think of our identities as the stories that synthesise our fragmented parts and make sense out of our experiences, one would expect our stories to be constantly changing as we are required to make interpretations and re-interpretations of our experiences (Beijaard et al., 2004; Cook, 2009; Daly, 2009; Izadinia, 2013). Remembering that our sub-identities do not exist in isolation from each other, but rather are different facets of the whole person (Van Manen, 1990), it is reasonable to assume that a change in one aspect of who we are will require other parts to be re-storied in order to make sense as a whole. It is no wonder that identities have been described as being volatile (Danielewicz, 2001), unstable (Rodgers & Scott, 2008), and never fully formed (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011).

While a person's identity is dynamic in nature, Akkerman and Meijer (2011) argue that an individual is recognisable over time. Who a person is in any given moment (Beijaard et al., 2004) is inclusive of not only their past but also who they want to become (Dolloff, 2007). What allows an individual to feel like the same person over time while constantly changing in relation to who they are? Once again it has been suggested that it is their stories that connect who they have been in the past, who they are in the present, and who they desire to become in the future, that allow them to experience continuity (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 1995). New stories are inclusive of old stories and while meanings constructed may change over time, the experiences themselves will each need to be accounted for in a new revised self-narrative (Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 1995). The question, 'Who am I at this moment?' (Beijaard et al., 2004) is inclusive of who I have been in the past, and therefore a person's identity is best described as the *stories of self* they hold in explaining who they are and what they believe in light of the total of what they have experienced.

The term *stories of self* also appears to reflect adequately the dynamic yet continuous nature of who a person is. As our *stories of self* connect who we are and make sense out of our experiences over time it appears inadequate for individuals to take on the practices of another without integrating them into their pre-existing *stories of self*. Rodman (2010) suggests that improved practice in the classroom heavily relies on the development of pre-service teachers' *stories of self*, as people and teachers, and how those beliefs relate to their practice.

Teacher education, being concerned with the development of the whole teacher, will encourage students to wrestle with questions such as "Who am I as a teacher?" and "Who do I want to become?" (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005). Initial teacher education should discourage pre-service teachers from adopting the voices of lecturers or supervisors or past teachers as, "the real self is something which is comfortably discovered in one's experiences, not something that is imposed upon them" (Rogers, 1983, p. 65). As *stories of self* are developed in direct relationship to one's own past experiences and beliefs, it is not surprising that Boon (2011) and Thomson (2015) highlight the futility of attempting to inherit *stories of self* from another, and argue the importance of negotiating them for oneself.

When pre-service teachers' decisions are based on replicating the techniques of others no personal and professional connections are made between how they teach and who they are, or what they have experienced over time (Kissock & Richardson, 2010). The research of Connelly and Clandinin (1999), Lindeman (1926), Mezirow (1975) and Cranton (2002) suggests that transformational learning in adults is dependent on the acknowledgement that meaning exists within individuals and seeks to engage them as active participants in a process of developing direct reflective linkages between who they are, what they believe and how they practice. To be a successful teacher practitioner, it appears that who a person is as a teacher needs to be continually renegotiated or storied into an individual's meta-narrative of who they are as a person (Palmer, 2007). This transformative process is continual, lifelong, and is obviously holistic in purpose and process and often initiated as a result of a "disorientating dilemma" which results in learners "questioning and examining assumptions in terms of where they came from, the consequences of holding them, and why they are important" (Cranton, 2002, p. 66).

In addition to making sense of a person's many parts and making sense of who a person is over time, a person's *stories of self*, also make sense of who they are in relationship to others (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Alsup, 2006). Individuals have absorbed parts of their language, beliefs and behaviours through relationships with their families, communities and societies (Rodgers & Scott, 2008). According to Dolloff (2007) a person's *stories of self* are not theirs alone, as they have been negotiated, constructed and explained in light of the social context where they are told.

While *stories of self* are often strongly influenced by the relationships with those by whom we are surrounded, Boon (2011) argues that it is important that these social stories are questioned and renegotiated for oneself rather than simply inherited without question from others. Unless a person carefully examines who they are as a social being, it is likely that many of their beliefs and actions will simply mirror those held by other people. According to Franco (2014), unsubstantiated or inherited beliefs do not enable a person to remain committed, confident and adaptable in the challenging, ever-changing and person-centered profession that is teaching.

Unfortunately, it is likely that pre-service teachers may be in danger of not constructing their own *stories of self*, since many of their beliefs about teaching and learning are already well

established prior to commencing their formal teacher preparation (Flores & Day, 2006; Lortie, 1975; Mayer, 1999; Pietsch & Williamson, 2005). Unlike many other professions, pre-service teachers often have pre-conceived notions about the type of teacher they want to become through past observations they have made as pupils (Lortie, 1975; Mayer, 1999). What is even more alarming is that these inherited beliefs and actions based on experiences, with both teachers they liked or disliked, may be very resistant to change (Flores & Day, 2006; Kagan, 1992; Moseley, Reinke, & Bookout, 2002; Pajares, 1992; Tang, Lee, & Chun, 2012). Unless these inherited beliefs and behaviours are challenged and renegotiated into pre-service teachers' own *stories of self*, it is likely that pre-service teachers will blindly enact what is known without fully understanding why they do the things they do (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Trotman & Kerr, 2001).

While a person's *stories of self* may be influenced significantly by others with whom they have been in community, it is their *stories of self* that allow them to be recognised as individuals. A person finds their individual identity, or own story of self, in the specific way they have positioned and negotiated these stories to make sense of their life's experiences. Who we see ourselves being, our *stories of self*, "has tremendous impact on how we live our life, who we invite into our lives, how we treat people, and how we expect to be treated" (Dolloff, 2007, p. 2). As such, the *stories of self* a teacher holds directly affect their ability to impact learners (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Boon, 2011; Dolloff, 2007; Hattie, 2009). While the development of *stories of self* appears to be an essential ingredient in initial teacher education (Boon, 2011; Dolloff, 2007; Walkington, 2005), it appears that currently pre-service teachers, even after graduation, continue to struggle to adequately articulate who they are and what they believe (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009).

In order to understand how improvements may be made, I shall explore what is already known about developing *stories of self*. This understanding will enable the development of better *stories of self* within pre-service teachers by involving them in appropriate learning experiences.

Developing stories of self in pre-service teachers

Different authors use different terms when referring to changes that take place in the *stories of self* that explain who a person is at any given moment (Beijaard et al., 2004). Common

terms when referring to these changes include forming (Rodgers & Scott, 2008); building (Sfard & Prusak, 2005); shaping (Flores & Day, 2006); constructing (Coldron & Smith, 1999); and developing (Watson, 2006; Olsen, 2008).

As established earlier, initial teacher education programs have been identified as a critical component in the development of pre-service teachers' beliefs in relation to who they are as teachers (Izadinia, 2013; Schepens, Aelterman & Vlerick, 2009). Despite the importance of the *stories of self* within pre-service teachers, it appears that the development of these stories typically remain an inexplicit component of initial teacher education programs (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Rodgers & Scott, 2008). Izadinia (2013) suggests that once teacher educators have a clearer understanding of how *stories of self* are developed, they will be in a better position to design programs capable of impacting a pre-service teachers' beliefs.

There is little doubt that a pre-service teacher's *stories of self* are made explicit as a result of quality experiences (Boud et al., 2013; Foote, 2015; Rodman, 2010). Experiences alone, however, are inadequate as not all experiences result in reflection and it is only through reflection that meaningful learning takes place (Cook, 2009; Danielowich, 2012; Garraway & Volbrecht, 2011). In order to understand how to develop *stories of self*, a discussion now follows on the types of experiences and environments likely to promote reflection.

The importance of reflection

According to Boud et al. (2013), reflection is the mechanism that explains how learners "recapture their experience, think about it, mull it over and evaluate it" (p. 330). As reflection is widely acknowledged as the core component in the construction of pre-service teachers' *stories of self* (Hamman *et al*., 2013; Izadinia, 2013; Sutherland et al., 2010; Young et al., 2015), it now becomes the focus of this literature review. Beauchamp and Thomas (2009), stress the importance of reflection when they suggest that reflection is what allows pre-service teachers to develop or renegotiate their own understandings to adequately explain everything they do in the classroom (Denton, 2011; Too, 2013;). Without adequate levels of reflection, pre-service teachers are unlikely to develop their own beliefs and instead are likely to simply replicate the techniques they have observed in others (Kissock & Richardson, 2010). Denton (2011) and Harrison and Lee (2011) argue that reflection allows a learner to

move beyond basing practices on habits, routines and traditions and allows them to take part in ongoing learning and development.

Research literature focused on quality teacher education reveals the futility of attempting to equip pre-service teachers only with skills and techniques without fully integrating their personal and professional attitudes and beliefs (Boon, 2011; Khan et al., 2014; Murray, Nuttall, & Mitchell, 2008; Oblinger, 2005). As detailed in previous sections reflection is one of the critical components of developing this personal and professional connectivity (Danielowich, 2012; Garraway & Volbrecht, 2011). Without reflection, Franco (2014) suggests that pre-service teachers are unlikely to be capable of remaining responsive or adaptive and as such will quickly become victims of the continually changing environment of education. It is no wonder that reflection has been identified as the very essence of quality pre-service teacher preparation and quality teaching (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Jay, 2003).

While there is little doubt of the importance of reflection in developing pre-service teachers' *stories of self*, teacher education institutions have been heavily criticized for the low levels of reflection initiated in their courses (Cruickshank & Westbrook, 2013; Murray et al., 2008). At present it appears that the reflection that does occur within pre-service teachers is "predominantly descriptive in character, focusing on the self and on concrete, day to day development" (Murray et al., 2008, p. 233). As a result of the limited reflection, the practices of pre-service teachers appear to be more influenced by their own experiences as students than by beliefs they have individually constructed through their own experiences as teachers (Risko, Vukelich, Roskos & Carpenter, 2002). As reflective practice has been shown to be at the core of how *stories of self* are developed, the process of how reflection occurs is now outlined in order to understand what is currently missing in the experiences in which pre-service teachers are currently being involved.

The first phase of reflection, essential in developing a pre-service teachers' *stories of self*, begins when the learner experiences some form of perplexity, confusion, puzzlement or doubt as a result of an experience that causes them to question their already existing beliefs (Cruickshank & Westbrook, 2013; Murray et al., 2008; Schön, 1983). Without a "forked-road situation" (Dewey, 1910, p. 11) or "crisis" (Bramming, 2007, p. 55) where learners find themselves with an obstruction in the way of reaching a belief, it is likely that they will

reflect little and consequently never develop clear connections between what they do and who they are (Dolloff, 2007). Walkington (2005) suggests that as long as pre-service teachers find themselves in predictable environments, where problems are solved and conclusions provided, one might expect learning to be of little consequence and have a limited impact on behaviour.

While the trigger of reflective practice is some perplexity, confusion or doubt, reflective practice requires the learner to move beyond a state of confusion (Boud et al., 2013). Reflection occurs when the learner searches to bring "to light further facts which serve to corroborate or to nullify the suggested belief" (Dewey, 1910, p. 10). It is within this search that pre-service teachers become conscious of their taken-for-granted values and beliefs that they may have internalised from their own experiences as students, and begin to develop their own beliefs (Chitpin & Simon, 2009; Trotman & Kerr, 2001).

One should expect the second phase of reflective practice, where learners search for answers, to be somewhat painful for the learner, as they are formulating new ideas and relationships from past experiences and existing knowledge (Boyd & Fales, 1983). It is important that at this point teacher-educators resist rescuing their students by providing them with their stories to live by (Hunter, Laursen, & Seymour, 2007), as the data the learner pauses to examine cannot give the solution if reflective practice is to occur, but can only suggest it (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Dewey, 1910). If initial teacher educators were to provide the answers for the confusion in which pre-service teachers find themselves, one might expect their curiosity to be destroyed, and subsequently, any chance of reflective practice to be eliminated. Rather than providing pre-service teachers with the stories of another, it is important that they are supported in the process of developing their own stories. This development appears to be best supported in environments that place pre-service teachers in challenging situations in which they are provided with independence and freedom, while being supported within positive social contexts. In the following, the importance of challenges, independence, and relationships to fostering reflection are explored in more depth.

The importance of challenges

Bramming (2007) and Cheng, Cheng and Tang (2010) suggests that teacher educators concerned with aiding the development of pre-service teachers' *stories of self* should seek ways to place their learners in situations where they are encouraged to examine and question their own beliefs and behaviours. This appears to be achieved most effectively when pre-service teachers are placed in challenging teaching contexts that promote confusion and inner discomfort (Smagorinsky, Cook, Moore, Jackson, & Fry, 2004; Yeo, 2015). While it may initially appear unnecessary to cause such confusion, Boud et al., (2013), Bramming (2007) and Eyers (2014) argue that it is only by destabilising a pre-service teachers' existing *stories of self*, often initially developed by habitual ways of thinking, that real transformation will result. Authoritative teaching that aims to bypass this confusion and teach by way of transmitting formulated knowledge will be ineffective in developing learning (Marble, 2012). A thesis focused on understanding how learning took place in relation to assessment found that the eight primary teachers involved learnt predominantly as a result of being challenged by complex and contradictory experiences rather than orderly and linear experiences (Eyers, 2014). Real learning that fosters reflection does not provide pre-conceived solutions to problems but rather sends the learner on a quest where they are challenged to discover the meanings of their present and past experiences (Blackbourn et al., 2011; Foote, 2015). As Marble (2012) suggests:

> The critical goal is not to simplify the experience of those learning to teach, but to complicate their experience to the point where they are forced to think, forced to encounter the other in ways that shock thought and disrupt habits. (p. 29)

As challenging pre-service teachers' beliefs appears essential in the development of their *stories of self*, initial teacher-preparation programs should aim to involve pre-service teachers in experiences that force them to see who they are and what they believe from alternative perspectives.

The importance of independence

Over four decades ago Rogers stated that "the only learning that significantly influences behaviour is self-discovered, self appropriated learning … (which involves) … truth that has

been personally appropriated and assimilated in experience" (1969, p. 153). As reflective practice is initiated when learners find themselves without answers and enter into a quest to find meaning, traditional teaching, whereby learners are led down pre-determined pathways to ensure they never get lost or experience any uncertainty or ambiguity, is likely to be ineffective ((Boud et al., 2013; Hunter, Laursen, & Seymour; Robinson, 2011). Chapman and Pyvis (2006) emphasise the importance that teacher educators resist the temptation of attempting to impart knowledge to a student by way of control and dependence, as it is only by first becoming uncertain that pre-service teachers will deliberately pause and reflect on their personal experiences and renegotiate the connections between what they have been told and what they believe (Cheng, Cheng, & Tang, 2010; Korthagen, 2010; Mantei & Kervin, 2011). Rather than proselytizing skills and techniques, it appears that teacher education needs to be more concerned with designing experiences that allow the learners to uncover their beliefs for themselves (Cheng, Cheng, & Tang, 2010; Marble, 2012). In order to accomplish this, these experiences should provide pre-service teachers with the opportunity to experiment independently with the possibility of making mistakes (Danielowich, 2012; Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008).

As real learning is not passed down but rather self-discovered (Cheng, Cheng & Tang, 2010) quality learning normally occurs when learners are placed in situations where they are provided with real problems (Korthagen, 2010; Yeo, 2015). These problems require pre-service teachers to make their own decisions (Chapman & Pyvis, 2006) and often are solved through trial and error (Marble, 2012). The term adventurous experiment, originating from the work of Lindeman (1926), describes this process of learning through experimentation. Regardless of whether learners fail or succeed with the problem they encounter, the learner provided with autonomy to link their practices to their own beliefs is more likely to engage in reflection and continue to learn (Wang, 2012). In light of how reflection occurs, developing *stories of self* appears to be more reliant on pre-service teachers being given freedom to act in relation to their own beliefs, and to learn through experimentation, rather than on being connected with an expert and provided with the opportunity to replicate their practices. Ussher sums up this assertion thus: "Student teachers require an authentic teaching context in which they have the freedom to be inquisitive, to interact, reflect, theorise and practice as they learn teaching" (2010, p. 104).

Another reason why pre-service teachers are more likely to develop their *stories of self* more effectively when immersed in experiences where they are provided with independence and freedom is that it has been shown that adults learn best when through experience they discover needs that learning will satisfy (Knowles, 1980). Put simply, Knowles (1980) suggests that for learning to be effective, pre-service teachers must first become aware of their need to know. This is referred to in quality teaching as providing the learner with relevance (DET, 2003). Unlike traditional learning that is centered on specific content deemed important to be learnt, Kearsley (2010) suggests that pre-service teachers will learn more effectively when they are placed in situations that require them to solve problems deemed important to their real life. Experiences will provide the relevance and desire to learn when the learners are placed in environments where they meet challenges that they cannot successfully navigate without further learning (McGrath, 2009). As long as teacher education provides experiences that do not push pre-service teachers beyond their initial capabilities, or ignore their past experience and beliefs, one would expect learning to be very limited.

Renegotiating ones *stories of self* at times can be a difficult task as learners are required to lose or change beliefs that may have formed a central part of who they were in the past (Beijaard *et al*., 2004). It is important to understand that who a person is appears to become more rigid with external threat, and more relaxed and adaptable when free from threat (Rogers, 1969). In developing pre-service teachers' *stories of self* one might expect them to respond more positively when placed within informal and non-threatening settings (Knowles, 1980). For learning to occur, the teacher needs to create a supportive and understanding environment free from external threats, such as grades or ridicule, which may paralyse the student/s with fear. It appears that teacher educators need to become more concerned with providing pre-service teachers with freedom and independence, and participate in their experience with them as co-learners (Bullough & Gitlin, 1995), and less concerned with evaluating and judging their performance. While freedom and independence are essential components of any quality-learning environment, it is important to understand that this does not mean isolating the learners or expecting them to complete the learning on their own. Learning is a social activity and quality learning experiences promote community and relationships.

The importance of relationships

The stories pre-service teachers believe about themselves is a "relational phenomenon" and as such, meaning is only able to be negotiated in "an ongoing reciprocal relationship between self and other" (Latta & Olafson, 2006, p. 89). Since learners develop their identity in relationship to others (Cattley, 2007), Riedinger (2015) argues the importance of placing pre-service teachers in real and supportive social contexts and views it as being essential in developing *stories of self*. Pre-service teachers negotiate who they are and what they believe through interactions with a variety of people in the school context, including students, teachers, parents and the broader community in which they belong (Avalos & De Los Rios, 2013). Owing to the essential nature of the interactions that take place, the development of a pre-service teacher's *stories of self* is regarded by Izadina (2013) as a social entity, where the learner and those they are surrounded by engage in a co-constructive task to make sense of both their individual and shared experiences (Avalos & De Los Rios, 2013; Wenger, 1998). As a result of the fact that pre-service teachers' *stories of self* are developed in relationship to those by whom they are surrounded, Akkerman and Meijer (2011) suggest that the stories pre-service teachers develop to explain who they are and what they believe are not theirs alone. In recognition of the importance of involving pre-service teachers in communities with others, in developing their '*stories of self*,' Ussher (2010) states that it "will take a whole school to educate a teacher" (p. 103).

Sociocultural theory explains that for learning to be of significance it must be developed in a context similar to that in which the learner is likely to be required to perform (Alfred, 2002; Caudle & Moran, 2013; Wenger, 1998). If teachers are to develop *stories of self* that adequately explain who they are and what they believe, to enable them to negotiate successfully the trials of real teaching, the learning must take place within a "community of practice" similar to the environment they are likely to find themselves as teachers (Harlow & Cobb, 2014, p. 79). As relationships and community form the core of the lived experience of teachers, Le Cornu (2016) argues that they should also play a substantive role in the development of pre-service teachers' *stories of self*.

Kagle (2014) also suggests that learning communities should be an essential component of developing pre-service teachers' *stories of self*, as a higher state of curiosity has been shown to develop under the influence of social stimuli. It is likely that this increased level of

curiosity develops from being exposed to different perspectives that require them to renegotiate their *stories of self* as a result of the interactions that occur between different individuals (Tan, Calabrese-Barton, Kang & O'Neill, 2013). Collaborative relationships also appear to assist learners to take more risks, gain more confidence, and to take on the realities and problems faced in the classroom (Harlow & Cobb, 2009; Kagle, 2014).

Involving pre-service teachers in a community of learners is also powerful as it provides them with the opportunity to be involved in discursive practices where they continually interact with significant others and discuss their own thoughts in relation to their teaching practices (Young *et al*., 2015). According to Harlow and Cobb (2014) and Sutherland et al. (2010), one of the most effective ways in developing *stories of self* is to provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to engage in professional dialogue with others. This type of dialogue provides a platform for pre-service teachers' "private theories to be made explicit so they can be criticized and, when found wanting, reconstructed" (Bullough & Gitlin, 1995, p. 15). According to Beauchamp and Thomas (2009), is through sharing stories that pre-service teachers express their current beliefs and also actively construct previously unconnected parts of who they are. Engaging pre-service teachers in sharing their own beliefs and listening to the stories of others provides them with the opportunity to integrate theory and practice and become aware of differences that exist between their own stories and that of others (Goodnough, Osmond, Dibbon, Glassman & Stevens, 2009). As a result, Watson (2006) has referred to providing learners with the opportunity to tell their stories as "doing identity work" (p. 525). Likewise, Walkington (2005) argues that time spent in "challenging discussions is as important as time spent in classrooms" (p. 60). Professional dialogue assists pre-service teachers in building connections between what they have experienced or observed and what they believe and as a result the development of *stories of self* is promoted (Mantei & Kervin, 2011).

An important part of constructing *stories of self* in pre-service teachers is the legitimation process (Dolloff, 2007). Becoming a teacher not only involves constructing *stories of self* that connect who one is for oneself, but involves this story being told and accepted within the stories of others (Coldron & Smith, 1999; Young et al., 2015). While pre-service teachers are deemed ready to begin teaching externally through formal accreditation processes, it is argued that for their own *stories of self* to be trusted they must first be tested through interactions with others involved in the teaching profession (Coldron & Smith, 1999). As

such, pre-service teachers must be given the opportunity to act as teachers and this act must be seen by themselves and others as legitimate (Coldron & Smith, 1999; Harlow & Cobb, 2014).

As teachers develop their *stories of self* through social exchanges, as Cohen (2010) suggests, teacher education needs to focus on the types of relationships influencing their learners. While *stories of self* are developed through social interaction, not all relationships will foster appropriate growth (McGrath, 2009; Riedinger, 2015). Collegial relationships, in which learners are treated as teachers and colleagues rather than students, have been suggested by Kagle (2014), and Walkington (2005) as essential if pre-service teachers are to feel free to speak about things of which they are still unsure. As the development of *stories of self* is promoted when learners feel comfortable sharing their real and personal stories, McGrath (2009) suggests that a level of trust between the learner and their learning community is considered to be important. Other researchers also suggest that identity development will be developed best when the pre-service teachers are engaged in relationships where they experience a high sense of belonging, are made to feel secure to be themselves, and engaged collaboratively with those around them (Caires, Almeida & Vieira, 2012; Gelfuso & Dennis, 2014; Young et al., 2015).

Stories of self have been demonstrated to develop most effectively in experiences that promote reflective practice by providing the learners with appropriate challenges, adequate independence and quality relationships. The obvious questions that remain are, first, 'What are the key experiences currently relied on in the preparation of pre-service teachers?' and second, in light of what is known about the environments likely to result in reflection, 'What is currently missing in the experiences offered to pre-service teachers in their preparation?'

Pre-service teachers and their current preparation

Despite the importance of reflection in the development of pre-service teachers' *stories of self*, researchers have suggested that the key environments currently relied on in the preparation of pre-service teachers, namely university classes and domestic professional teaching experiences, do not appear well designed at present to promote critical reflection effectively (Allen, 2009; Franco, 2014; Kissock & Richardson, 2010). In this literature review I now explore what is known about university classes and domestic professional

experiences and make a comparison to the environments known to promote quality reflection effectively.

University classes

In an effort to improve the learning that takes place within initial teacher education institutions many scholars have attempted to implement approaches that more effectively engage their learners in reflective practice (Graziano, 2016; Kwan, 2008; Maclean & White, 2007; Pegrum, Howitt, & Striepe, 2013, Kilgour, Hinze, Long, & De Berg, 2015). Problem-based learning is one such initiative that aims to provide learners with the opportunity to explore authentic open ended problems (Savery, 2015; Temel, 2014). This student-centred pedagogy has been effectively used over the past two decades in university programs in the fields of medicine, social work, dentistry, nursing and law (Bentley & Nugent, 1996; Biley & Smith, 1998; Boud & Feletti, 1997). Kwan (2008) suggests that this strategy may also be a powerful learning tool for initial teacher educators as it attempts to enhance "new knowledge construction and conceptual learning through systematic inquiry, integration, analysis and evaluation in a team collaborative manner" (p. 340). While some research has highlighted the benefits of using a problem-based learning approach within initial teacher education (Edwards & Hammer, 2007; Siegel, 2004), the research conducted by Kwan (2008) suggests that problem based learning alone is unlikely to successfully develop the essential pedagogical skills necessary to adequately prepare pre-service teachers. Like problem-based learning within medical education, it is likely that this approach may be considered time consuming, costly, and inefficient in meeting required professional standards within an initial teacher educational context (Kwan, 2008; Jones, 2006). While problem-based learning appears to be an approach worthy of further investigation as a tool within initial teacher education, it is not suggested that this approach should be a replacement for the learning that occurs by immersing pre-service teachers in real challenges in an actual school environment (Edwards & Hammer, 2007; Kwan, 2008; Selccedil, 2010).

Virtual video-based field experiences have also been used by teacher educators in an attempt to provide pre-service teachers with more authentic experiences aimed at exposing them to the complexities and challenges of a school context without leaving the university campus (Hatch, Shuttleworth, Jaffee, & Marri, 2016; Maclean & White, 2007; Santagata, Zannoni, & Stigler, 2007). This approach has been employed for at least the last 50 years as a means to

provide pre-service teachers with the opportunity to analyse concrete examples within learning communities in the company of their lecturer and classmates (Allen, 1966; Allen & Ryan, 1969). Sullivan and Mousley (1996) conducted a study on the effectiveness of video-based experiences and found that the Australian pre-service teachers involved demonstrated a change in their depth of analyses from mere descriptions of what they observed to reflections that detailed a relationship between the teacher's actions and the students' learning. Studies such as this and others including that of Richardson (1990), MacKinnon and Grunau (1991) and Maclean and White (2007) suggest that video-based experiences have the potential to increase the reflective practice of pre-service teachers when used in partnership with real professional teaching experiences.

Another alternative approach sometimes used in the initial teacher education that occurs at universities is referred to as the 'Flipped' or 'Inverted' Classroom' (Graziano, 2016; Keene, 2013). In a flipped classroom, the learners preview lectures focused on the relevant academic content before coming to class (Milman, 2012) and engage in more collaborative activities in class time focused on significant gaps they may have in their present understandings (Lasry, Dugdale & Charles, 2014). This model of teaching provides learners with more opportunity to learn at their own pace (Keene, 2013), interact with their peers and instructor (Enfield, 2013; Talley & Scherer, 2013), and learn more effectively as a result of higher levels of engagement (Egbert, Herman & Lee, 2015). This approach still assumes that lectures are an effective method for learning (Graziano, 2016) and is only likely to be successful with a cohort of learners who are highly motivated and committed to learn independently (Gaughan, 2014). While there appears to be more opportunity within this approach to develop links between one's personal and professional beliefs, the content covered within flipped classrooms will need to be linked closely to real experiences if the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge is likely to be reduced through reflective practice (Cheng, Tang, & Cheng, 2012).

In recognition of the importance of integrating experience in the education provided for pre-service teachers at universities, role playing has also been used by some initial teacher educators (Gregory & Masters, 2012; Kilgour, Hinze, Long, & De Berg, 2015; Koc, 2011). Role playing allows pre-service teachers to put theory into practice immediately and has been recognised as a valuable tool, especially in relation to developing classroom management skills (Kilgour, Hinze, Long, & De Berg, 2015; Slider, Noell & Williams, 2006) and

enhancing the engagement and core understandings of pre-service teachers (Niemeyer, Johnson, & Monroe, 2014). While pre-service teachers have found that role-plays challenge their ideas and allow them to analyse the approaches shared with them "more carefully than if the lecturer was simply presenting" (Kilgour, Hinze, Long, & De Berg, 2015, p. 16), role-plays are still only representations of real-life experiences and will therefore help to prepare pre-service teachers for real teaching experiences rather than be used as a substitute for them.

A number of other approaches have been used by initial teacher educators when attempting to increase the reflection of pre-service teachers within the confines of a university setting. Constructing professional portfolios (Chitpin & Simon, 2009), peer coaching (Buchanan & Stern, 2012), mobile learning (Pegrum, Howitt, & Striepe, 2013), discussion-based learning (Cheng, Tang, & Cheng, 2012), assessment for learning (DeLuca & Klinger, 2010) and the development of small team tutorials (Maclean & White, 2007) are just some of the approaches being utilised by initial teacher educators.

While some initial teacher educators attempt to implement a variety of strategies to increase reflective thought (Cheng, Tang, & Cheng, 2012; DeLuca & Klinger, 2010; Kwan, 2008; Pegrum, Howitt, & Striepe, 2013) the focus of the education that has occurred at university has often been criticized, rightly or wrongly, for being far too lecture-centred and lacking opportunities for pre-service teachers to be challenged by real experiences (Jones, 2010; Khan et al., 2014). While reflection is known to be stimulated through evoking curiosity, Sangster and Green (2012) suggest that at present, universities appear to overemphasise strategies that provide learners with information and techniques ungrounded in their existing understandings. It is argued that in these contexts little learning takes place at present, as the learners are predominantly passive participants in the process and often find the information presented as being irrelevant and disconnected to their own lives and experiences (Palis & Quiros, 2014; Rodriguez-Valls, 2014).

The research conducted by Foote (2015) suggests that university lectures aimed at transferring required content quickly may bypass the "cognitive crisis" of lived experiences, and subsequently rarely engage pre-service teachers in the important act of questioning their previously held beliefs and existing worldviews (p. 85). Relying predominantly on traditional lectures where the "teachers do what the students should do and the students act as disinterested observers of the process" appears to be highly ineffective as the university then

"becomes an institution where the students pay tuition to subsidize the teachers, who do all the learning" (Jones, 2010, p. 1).

University classes that overemphasise the value of lecture-based pedagogies also appear to provide little freedom for learners to develop their own beliefs in relation to their own experiences and seem to lack the community shown to be essential in the development of pre-service teachers *stories of self* (Allen, 2009; Rodriguez-Valls, 2014). Anderson and Stillman (2013) reviewed 54 empirical articles published over the past two decades and found that university classes in North America continue to operate unsuccessfully under the premise that pre-service teachers develop uniformly together in isolation from their individual backgrounds and beliefs.

While some researchers have highlighted the importance of providing pre-service teachers with autonomy, self-dependence and social interaction, university classes have been criticised for attempting to teach a cohort of students collectively, with limited opportunity for individual learners to reflect and make connections to their own experiences and to those of others (Palis & Quiros, 2014; Scoffman & Barnes, 2009). Kagle (2014) explains this by suggesting that the size of typical lecture theatres provide little opportunity for relationships to develop between learners. It appears that university classes that overemphasise the use of traditional lectures are ineffective environments for pre-service teachers to engage in the professional dialogue known to be essential if they are to test out their theories and challenge each other in their required transition from students into teachers (Harlow & Cobb, 2014).

A lack of real experiences, coupled with limited freedom and community suggests that university classes that overemphasise the role of lecture-based approaches are unlikely to be successful in promoting the type of reflection required if pre-service teachers are to develop *stories of self* that adequately explain who they are as teachers. Even those university classes that have shown to successfully integrate strategies to increase reflective practice will be unsuccessful in preparing teachers if their attempt to educate relies on university classes alone (Cheng, Tang, & Cheng, 2012; Hobson, 2003; Loughran, 2010). While in the past initial teacher education in Australia was based on the apprenticeship system that focused predominantly on learning through experience (Hyams, 1979) and later overemphasised the importance of theoretical knowledge in isolation of real experiences (De Cruz & Langford, 1990; Dyson, 2003), what is now required is an approach that integrates theory, practice and

beliefs (DeLuca & Klinger, 2010; Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009). Tsui (2009) suggests that teachers only develop links between their personal and professional beliefs when they are engaged in conscious deliberation where their "practical knowledge is theorized and [their] theoretical knowledge is interpreted in practice" (p. 437). Professional teaching experiences will always remain a core component of initial teacher education and will need to be investigated to ensure the experiences provided to pre-service teachers are likely to engage them in deep reflection.

Domestic professional experiences

Many involved in teacher education now use the term 'professional experience' to describe the time that pre-service teachers are placed in schools and involved in teaching activities (Ditchburn, 2015; Le Cornu, 2016; McKenzie & Fitzsimmons, 2010; Southgate, Reynolds & Howley, 2013). This is a relatively new term that has largely replaced other terms including "practicum," "practice teaching," and "field experience" (Sinclair, Trimingham & Pollnitz, 2006; Spooner-Lane, Tangen & Campbell, 2009; Zeichner, 2010). While many of these terms are still used interchangeably, the current change in nomenclature reflects a changing view of how "professional experience" needs to be viewed. Ramsey (2000) suggests that the term "professional experience" in place of "practicum" emphasises the importance of viewing experience as the critical context in which pre-service teachers learn. Le Cornu (2010) also supports the use of the term "professional experience", and highlights other changes in nomenclature including a change from "student teachers", to "pre-service teachers", and from "university liaison", to "university mentor" (p. 196).

While engaging pre-service teachers in experiences has been shown to be the most important component in initiating reflection (Brown et al., 2015; Murray et al., 2008), one should not assume that all experiences will effectively achieve the desired outcome (Cornbleth, 2010; Santagata, Zannoni & Stigler, 2007). When selecting appropriate experiences to adequately prepare pre-service teachers, it has been suggested that schools need to challenge the learners' beliefs (Bramming, 2007; Ewing, Le Cornu, & Groundwater-Smith, 2014; Korthagen, 2010). The domestic professional experiences have been criticized by some as not being ideal experiences, since beginning teachers are not confronted with "alternative perspectives and strategies" (Murray et al., 2008, p. 235). This may help to explain why pre-

service teachers have been shown to engage rarely in higher-level reflection in the domestic professional experience (Clarke, 2005; Franco, 2014).

Much research suggests that one reason why professional experiences are not challenging pre-service teachers with alternative ways of doing things is that too often these experiences appear to provide the learners with the opportunity only to replicate the practices of expert teachers rather than immerse them in environments that confront their existing beliefs and unsubstantiated assumptions (Armstrong, 2008; Cruickshank & Westbrook, 2013; Doppen & An, 2014; Kissock & Richardson, 2010; Wong, 2013). Unfortunately, it appears that pre-service teachers within domestic professional teaching contexts continue to feel pressure to emulate the practice of their school mentor and other experienced teachers (Ewing, Le Cornu & Groundwater-Smith, 2014; Le Cornu & Ewing, 2008; Sundli, 2007) and as a result often "value the practices of other, more experienced staff members over their own," even well after they graduate and begin teaching in their own classrooms (Allen, 2009, p. 653). While it appears that the pre-service teacher is "doing" and therefore "experiencing", without being challenged to make sense of teaching for oneself it is likely that little reflective praxis will take place and a large gap between theory and practice will remain (Allen & Wright, 2014; Bullock & Christou, 2009; Santaga, Zannoni, & Stigler, 2007; Yeo, 2015;). According to Kissock and Richardson (2010), it is unlikely that domestic professional experiences will successfully develop pre-service teachers' *stories of self,* if they continue to be focused on "replicating what they remember" rather than promoting deep reflection on real experiences (p. 90).

Many researchers have suggested that another reason domestic professional teaching experiences may not be adequately resulting in the development of pre-service teachers' *stories of self* is due to the low quality of experiences offered and as a result of poor supervision (Cheng, Tang, & Cheng, 2012; Cohen, Hoz, & Kaplan, 2013; Dinkelman, 2011; Korthagen, 2010; Le Cornu, 2016; McDonough & Brandenburg, 2012). Le Cornu (2010) and Southgate, Reynolds and Howley (2013) both suggest that this issue is largely due to the fact that initial teacher education institutions are struggling to find enough quality professional experiences for their pre-service teachers. The Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group confirmed this was still the case in 2015 when they published the following statement: "School systems and higher education providers face challenges in ensuring that a sufficient number of professional experience placements of appropriate timing and length are available

for all pre-service teachers". Unfortunately, it appears that the difficulties associated with finding large classes of pre-service teachers' placements has resulted in reduced care in selecting appropriate experiences and supervisors that are likely to promote reflective practice and personal professional growth within pre-service teachers (Korthagen, 2010; Le Cornu, 2016). Instead of exposing students to a variety of settings and to teachers with diverse teaching styles who will challenge pre-service teachers' understandings, too often placement is focused on simply finding a placement (Le Cornu & Ewing, 2008).

While reflective practice has been shown to be promoted through independence and freedom (Ewing, Le Cornu, & Groundwater-Smith, 2014; Ussher, 2010;) research has demonstrated that pre-service teachers often adopt a passive role in their teaching experiences and view them as a test to be passed (Dobbins, 1996; Ewing, 2007; Ewing, Le Cornu, & Groundwater-Smith, 2014). The pre-service teachers in the Grudnoff study, for example, described domestic professional teaching experiences in terms of "being watched" and having to prove themselves "in a really short time" (Grudnoff, 2011, p. 227). It is unfortunate that pre-service teachers can become overly concerned with the evaluation normally completed by their school supervisor and as a result never allow themselves to truly experience anything (Cornbleth, 2010; DeLuca & Klinger, 2010; Franco, 2014; Jordan, 2013). Mentor teachers are normally entrusted with the "power to reward and punish via grades and reference letters" and as a result it is easy for pre-service teachers to feel pressure to "adopt the institutional habitus" of their mentors regardless of whether they agree or disagree with their practices privately (Cornbleth, 2010, p. 282). As a result, pre-service teachers appear to be engaged in limited reflection, and consequently develop few connections between their beliefs and practices (Ewing, 2007; Marble, 2012). As Ditchburn (2015) explains:

> A heavy reliance on the feedback and assessment provided by mentor teachers and university supervisors that characterise a hierarchical, clinical model of supervision does not encourage pre-service teachers themselves to theorise about their practice, engage in pedagogical risk taking, or to assimilate critical reflective practices as a considered and natural part of their work. (p. 94)

Domestic professional experiences also appear to engage pre-service teachers in limited reflection on the relationship between their personal and professional identities, as currently there appears to be a lack of real-life experience (Grudnoff, 2011). A number of beginning

teachers recognised that their preparation was too idealist and never truly allowed them to experience the challenges they later faced as beginning teachers (Ewing & Smith, 2003). While pre-service teachers can benefit from being involved in vicarious experiences, where skilled performance is modelled to them, observing teaching without the opportunity to practise the task for oneself is not enough to result in real learning (Hoy & Burke Spero, 2005). Unfortunately, the authentic teaching contexts required for pre-service teachers to experience confusion and attempt to find a solution by deliberately examining their existing beliefs and practises are not always provided and as a result pre-service teachers are not always given the opportunity to develop a strong sense of self-efficacy (Ussher, 2010). It is suggested that domestic professional teaching experiences may be a false representation of what teaching is really like and therefore ill-prepare pre-service teachers for their profession (Coffey & Lavery, 2015; Ewing & Smith, 2003; Hoy & Burke Spero, 2005; Ussher, 2010). Rather than feeling free to "be inquisitive, to interact, reflect, theorise and practice as they learn teaching," pre-service teachers can often end up feeling trapped to simply copy the practices of those more experienced and subsequently never develop confidence in who they are in relation to what they believe (Ussher, 2010, p. 104).

There appears to be improvements needed in the type of experiences offered to pre-service teachers. Currently the traditional domestic professional experiences appear to lack the challenge, diversity, freedom, inclusivity and autonomy required to initiate the real and deep reflection required if authentic learning is to take place (Cruickshank & Westbrook, 2013; Ditchburn, 2015; Doppen & An, 2014; Ewing, Le Cornu, & Groundwater-Smith, 2014; Grudnoff, 2011). These limitations may lead pre-service teachers to doubt or disregard their professional determination, and separate who they are and what they believe from what they do (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Franco, 2014; Khan et al., 2014; Palmer, 2007). This is a major concern to those involved in the preparation of quality pre-service teachers and has resulted in many exploring alternative experiences that are more likely to engage their learners in reflective practice (Cheng, Tang, & Cheng, 2012; Chinnappan et al., 2013; Hou, 2015; Korthagen, 2010; Le Cornu, 2016).

Service learning experiences, where learning and addressing community needs are emphasised equally, have been used by some initial teacher educators in an attempt to promote reflection by challenging pre-service teachers' assumptions about schooling (Bates, 2009; Coffey & Lavery, 2015; Lawrence & Butler, 2010). Others have experimented with the

idea of increasing the connections between tertiary faculty and pre-service teachers during their practical experiences through the organisation of regular site-based seminars aimed at reducing the gap between theory and practice (Cheng, Tang, & Cheng, 2012; Freese, 2006; Johnston & Wetherill, 2002). Le Cornu (2010), Britton and Anderson (2010) and Fox and Wilson (2015) all advocate the importance of enhancing reflective thinking by increasing the networking that occurs between pre-service teachers by using peer mentoring and peer learning more. The most recent focus on improving reflection within pre-service teachers has been on implementing collaborative approaches within professional experiences (Dang, 2013; Hou, 2015; Le Cornu, 2016; Orland-Barak & Hasin, 2010; Williams, 2014). These collaborative strategies, often referred to as learning circles (Ewing, Le Cornu, & Groundwater-Smith, 2014), communities of practice (Sim, 2006) or learning communities (Le Cornu, 2016), highlight the importance of learning experiences that are "participatory, proactive, communal, collaborative and given over to the construction of meanings rather than receiving them" (Bruner, 1996, p. 84). Some have begun to consider alternative professional experiences set outside of the domestic context as having real potential in increasing reflective practice and developing connected *stories of self* (Cushner & Chang, 2015; Doppen & An, 2014; Marble, 2012; Marx & Moss, 2011).

Overseas professional teaching experiences in developing countries may well be a powerful tool to be included in a pre-service teacher's preparation program to facilitate the development of *stories of self,* as, according to Cruickshank and Westbrook (2013), and McKenzie and Fitzsimmons (2010), they appear to mirror the type of experience known to engage pre-service teachers in reflection. The benefit of overseas teaching experiences in adequately preparing teachers to develop *stories of self* is discussed in the following section.

Potential of Overseas Professional Experiences

According to the research conducted by Young and colleagues (2015), the number of students being involved through university programs on overseas learning experiences continues to increase rapidly worldwide. In 2010, 3.6 million tertiary students took part in an overseas program, representing a 78 percent increase in comparison to the previous decade (UNESCO, 2012). Pre-service teachers are included within the cohort of learners involved in overseas professional experiences (Cushner & Chang, 2015). While Stachowski et al., (2015) highlight that involving pre-service teachers in overseas professional experiences is

overwhelmingly positive, Cruickshank and Westbrook (2013) demonstrate that overseas teaching experiences appear to be rapidly disappearing from Australian teacher education programs. This may well be related to the specific AITSL standards that require all pre-service teachers to complete a majority of their experiences in domestic settings (AITSL, 2014), or the fact that there is limited understanding at present in relation to the power of overseas professional experiences (Chinnappan et al., 2013).

In 2010, only two of the nine New South Wales universities given the responsibility of preparing teacher graduates responded in the positive when asked if they offered opportunities for their pre-service teachers to gain overseas teaching experience (Cruickshank & Westbrook, 2013). It appears that few universities in New South Wales are offering overseas teaching opportunities to pre-service teachers due mainly to the assumption that overseas experiences are too different from the Australian context to allow the pre-service teachers involved to meet the required accreditation standards (Alfaro & Quezada, 2010; Quezada, 2004). There are some who suggest that while overseas teaching experiences occur in a foreign context it is precisely the difference that allows pre-service teachers to be adequately prepared (Cruickshank & Westbrook, 2013; Doppen & An, 2014; Marble, 2012; Marx & Moss, 2011). The limited research relating to overseas professional teaching experiences and initial teacher education is reviewed, and recommendations to assist teacher educators to make informed decisions are provided, in the following sections.

Overseas professional experiences

There are a variety of different types of overseas professional teaching experiences discussed in research literature including: Short Term (2-3 weeks); Long Term (8-16 weeks); one-way exchanges; bilateral exchanges, multilateral exchanges (Cwick & Benton, 2009) and cultural immersion and language programs (Charles et al., 2014; Whitacre, 2015). While the importance of these programs is not doubted, the experiences focussed on in this literature review primarily feature pre-service teachers involved in an overseas professional experience, hereafter referred to as OSPEX (Chinnappan et al., 2013).

In light of the importance of professional teaching experiences (Brown et al., 2015) and the current challenges being faced within domestic professional teaching experiences in Australia (Boud et al., 2013; Mills, 2013), many teacher educators highlight OSPEXs as holding value

in the preparation of quality pre-service teachers (Armstrong, 2008; Cushner & Chang, 2015; Cwick and Benton, 2009; Doppen & An, 2014; Pence & Macgillivray, 2008). Chinnappan et al. (2013) suggest that "one of the ways to enhance both the quality and range of experiences for pre-service teachers involves the inclusion of classroom experiences gained in overseas contexts" (p. 38).

While this literature review has revealed that many of the current issues in pre-service teacher preparation can be linked to an inadequate development of pre-service teachers' *stories of self*, Doppen and An (2014) and Cruickshank and Westbrook (2013) demonstrated this to be the very component most impacted by OSPEXs. OSPEXs appear to be an effective avenue for schools and colleges in the preparation of teachers (Cwick & Benton, 2009), as professional experiences in international destinations have been found to result in personal and professional growth greater than one might expect in a traditional domestic student teaching placement (Shonia & Stachowski, 2014; Spooner-Lane, Tangen & Campbell, 2009; Stachowski et al., 2008). OSPEXs have been reported as having the "potential to launch emerging educators on a trajectory of powerful transformation that informs their teaching practice, interpersonal relations, and worldview" (Stachowski et al., 2015, p. 35). This personal growth has been shown to be important, lasting and real even two decades after the learners returned from their structured overseas professional teaching experience (Shonia & Stachowski, 2014). These results are unsurprising, as the type of experiences pre-service teachers participate in overseas appear to mirror the type of experiences research suggests are essential if *stories of self* are to be developed. The strongest example of this is that overseas professional teaching experiences appear to successfully promote reflective practice (Stachowski et al., 2015).

Outcomes of involvement in overseas professional experiences

Increased Reflection

As has already been discussed, reflective practice is an essential ingredient in the development of *stories of self* (Young et al., 2015), which appear to be a critical component in the preparation of quality pre-service teachers (Akkermann & Meijer, 2011). While the initiation of reflective practice appears to be a significant issue in current pre-service teacher preparation (Franco, 2014), an investigation into OSPEX appears to hold much value as these

experiences appear to foster the type of reflective thought that has been shown to transform pre-service teachers (Olmedo & Harbon, 2010; Pence & Macgillivray, 2008; Robertson & Webber, 2000; Sangster & Green, 2012). Many teacher educators argue that OSPEXs are a powerful professional development opportunity and should be nurtured and supported because students engage in deep reflection as they are forced to make sense of alternative perspectives (Chinnappan et al., 2013; Cruickshank & Westbrook, 2013; Hinze & Fitzsimmons, 2013; Olmedo & Harbon, 2010; Pence & Macgillivray, 2008; Robertson & Webber, 2000; Sangster & Green, 2012). OSPEXs appear to be the type of experiences that foster deep reflection, and transform those involved by allowing them to reconstruct their assumptions and beliefs and develop a new awareness of teaching, themselves and those around them (Pence & Macgillivray, 2008; Wong, 2013).

OSPEXs immerse the pre-service teachers involved in very different environments than those experienced in domestic professional teaching. Typical differences include but are not limited to the learning environment; classroom management techniques; teaching strategies; and socio-cultural demands (Chinnappan et al., 2013; Pence & Macguillirvray, 2008; Lee, 2011; Sahin, 2008). Pre-service teachers on OSPEXs have also been shown to be challenged by the place and culture in which they find themselves, and as a result, are forced to "wrestle with complex thoughts, emotions, and behaviors" (Mahon, 2010, p. 9). The concept of generating reflective thinking by immersing a learner outside their comfort zone is not new and was proposed by Festinger (1957) when he stated that "situations which conflict strongly with our expectations challenge us to generate new thinking" (p. 267). Current research continues to highlight the importance of immersing pre-service teachers in environments that promote inner conflict and cause the learners to question their once taken for granted beliefs and unsubstantiated assumptions (Armstrong, 2008; Cruickshank & Westbrook, 2013, Doppen & An, 2014; Wong, 2013). Further,

> … the learning that took place for these pre-service teachers completing their experiences outside of the regular practicum environment was that their attention was drawn to aspects of teaching that had previously been less visible to them. In immersing themselves in an alternate experience, the familiar became strange and previously implicit pedagogical knowledge and practices became evident and questionable. (Walton & Rusznyak, 2013, p. 112)

One reason why OSPEXs have been associated with increased reflection is that they have been known to promote culture shock and cognitive dissonance within the participants involved (McKenzie & Fitzsimmons, 2010). Unlike domestic teaching experiences that commonly place pre-service teachers in "positions of power and a shared majority culture," participants involved in OSPEXs are often confronted with difference and placed in the role of a minority member (Cruickshank & Westbrook, 2013, p. 65). As a result, they often find their own beliefs and practices challenged by both the similarities and differences between the culture of their hosts and their homes (Cushner, 2004; Wong, 2013). The confusion that often results from being immersed in an environment where a person's beliefs no longer adequately explain their new experiences is often referred to as culture shock (Cushner, 2004). Culture shock has been described as "the process of initial adjustment to an unfamiliar environment" (Pedersen, 1995, p. 1). It is common within this initial adjustment period for pre-service teachers to hold conflicting views that have resulted from pre-service teachers being involved in experiences that have challenged their existing beliefs (Cruickshank & Westbrook, 2013). This state of being is referred to as experiencing cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957) and as a result the accompanying discomfort is what motivates a learner to engage in an adequate level of reflection aimed at resolving the conflict (Chinnipan, et al., 2013; Scoffman & Barnes, 2009).

As learners naturally attempt to maintain wholeness (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Palmer, 2007; Van Manen, 1990), they are uncomfortable with conflicting beliefs and may seek to make sense out of what they believe through reflective practice (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011). This goal of this reflection is to enable learners to move beyond the confusion by searching for further information to corroborate or nullify the suggested belief the new experience has presented (Boud et al., 2013). As a result, either their old beliefs become strengthened and substantiated, or they develop new beliefs to explain better what they have experienced (Chitpin & Simon, 2009). Regardless of the consequence, reflection that appears to be fostered in an OSPEX results in personal and professional growth (Chinnipan et al., 2013; McKenzie & Fitzsimmons, 2010, Wong, 2013).

While some researchers claim that the overseas context is too different to allow the learners to meet required professional standards in a local context, there are others who have discovered, in light of how reflection takes place, that "it is precisely the difference" that enables the personal and professional growth to occur (Cruickshank & Westbrook, 2013, p.

55). By being placed in an environment with such diverse practices, learners are forced to examine their own practices and beliefs from a new perspective (Armstrong, 2008; Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Quezada, 2004). By making the "familiar strange" participants taking part in OSPEXs have been shown to move beyond the beliefs that they once took for granted, "reevaluate their own lives" and "alter the ways in which they viewed the world" (Stachowski et al., 2015, p. 40). The following comment sums up the process:

> [Personal and professional growth] occurred in a teaching context totally different to those the participants had experienced in Australia and they occurred precisely because of this reason. In diverse contexts where pre-service teachers could not rely on shared understandings and beliefs and where they were the minority not the majority, they were forced to question all areas of their teaching knowledge, skills and beliefs. (Cruickshank & Westbrook, 2013, p. 65)

It has been suggested that in many ways OSPEXs closely reflect the experiences of a first-year graduate teacher, as in both situations individuals are exposed to significant challenges and high levels of responsibility (Walters, Garii & Walters, 2009). This may help to explain why Cruickshank and Westbrook (2013) discovered that pre-service teachers on OSPEXs developed growth in "autonomy, self-reflection and confidence" that they did not expect to develop in Australia until they were assigned their own classroom after graduation (2015, p. 65). Cushner (2007) explained that it was "precisely the difficult experiences encountered" on an overseas professional teaching experience that facilitated the required growth within pre-service teachers (p. 32). This helps to explain why pre-service teachers rated their OSPEX learning as more valuable than the learning that took place in a domestic setting in a number of key areas (Cruickshank & Westbrook, 2013). This is unsurprising given the fact that OSPEXs appear to be an environment that fosters high levels of reflective practice (Wong, 2013). Much of the research literature that deals with OSPEX is focused on the positive learning outcomes that have been found to result (Batey & Lupi, 2012; Doppen & An, 2014; Landerholm & Chacko, 2013; Thomas, 2012). What should be of utmost interest to those involved with the preparation of teachers is that the positive outcomes of OSPEXs appear to hold much value in helping to combat the current issues in pre-service teacher preparation. The first of these, a need to design experiences that foster reflective practice, has already been discussed. The following sections discuss other positive learning outcomes commonly associated with OSPEXs including: increased cultural competence, increased

flexibility, increased self-efficacy, increased commitment, and the development of connected *stories of self*.

Increased cultural competence

There is now broad consensus that placing pre-service teachers in a range of settings, including culturally diverse communities, is an effective avenue to develop the intercultural understandings required to be successful in Australia's multicultural classrooms (Chinnappan et al., 2013; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Ramsey, 2000). While there is still much research needed (Kanarowski & Johnston, 2014) the dominant theme within OSPEX research literature is in relation to the growth of pre-service teachers' cultural competence (Batey & Lupi, 2012; Doppen & An, 2014; Landerholm & Chacko, 2013; Marx & Moss, 2011; Sharma, Rahatza & Phillion, 2013; Thomas, 2012; Zhao, Meyers, & Meyers, 2009). This growth has been shown to extend beyond cross-cultural knowledge and impact a pre-service teachers' *stories of self* in profound ways, including increased empathy, flexibility of thought and adaptability of practice (Karaman & Tochon, 2010; Stachowski et al., 2015) as a result of being positioned as an outsider (Lee, 2009; Stachowski et al., 2015). The fact that a link between OSPEX and increased cultural competence has been highlighted should be of real interest to current teacher educators who appear to be struggling to initiate the same positive outcomes through university classes and domestic professional teaching experiences alone (Mills, 2013).

Researchers have suggested that cultural competence is increased in OSPEXs because teaching overseas provides an opportunity for pre-service teachers to experience being in the position of an outsider (Lee, 2009; Stachowski et al., 2015). Doppen and An (2014) suggested that pre-service teachers' experience as outsiders enables them to become more attuned to diverse student populations, and more likely to consider different perspectives (Grant & Stuehling, 2015). These findings are consistent with an earlier study conducted by Pettigrew and Tropp (2006), who suggested that the best way to reduce intergroup prejudice is by way of intergroup contact. Not only do the attitudes between the immediate participants involved in the contact become more favourable, but so also the attitudes between the entire out-group, out-group members in other situations, and "even out-groups not involved in the contact" (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, p. 766). These studies suggest that an experience such as an overseas professional teaching experience is likely to have a profound effect on not only

how pre-service teachers approach their future students from diverse backgrounds, but also how they approach all students once thought of as different (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Stachowski et al., 2015). It is likely that this is the case, as it has been shown that international field experiences helped students become "less prone to prejudice students based on cultural background, linguistic differences, or even learning disability" (Willard-Holt, 2001, p. 515). This was confirmed by two later studies which found that pre-service teachers who were involved in an overseas teaching experience reported a reduction of stereotypical perspectives involving people of diversity (Malewski & Phillion, 2009; Pence & Macgillivray, 2008).

Pre-service teachers also appear to return from OSPEXs with a heightened sense of global-mindedness, which is closely linked to establishing increased cultural competence (Cushner & Chang, 2015; Kissock & Richardson 2010; Malewski, Sharma, & Phillion 2012; Ochoa, 2010; Walters et al., 2009). Put simply, people who are globally minded see the world as a village they share with neighbours with whom they are familiar (Kehl & Morris, 2008; McGaha & Linder, 2014). Merrill, Braskamp and Braskamp (2012) suggest that people who are globally minded know the world including the people and cultures beyond their own national boundaries. As was discussed earlier in this literature review when discussing the fact that pre-service teachers appear to be inadequately prepared to teach culturally diverse learners, the world is now a connected place, which requires teachers to be prepared to operate from a global perspective (McGaha & Linder, 2014; Quezada, 2004). Alfaro (2008) highlights the importance of overseas professional teaching experiences in enhancing and increasing the global mindedness of educators, to allow them to enter successfully internationally minded schools and classrooms of the future. Similarly, Cushner (2007) states that when trainee teachers are given the opportunity to gain international classroom experience they are far more likely to understand the concepts of global community and interconnectedness and they seek to instil this transformational way of thinking into their future students. If teachers are truly responsible for "preparing today's students to take their place as global citizens" (Mahon, 2010, p. 7), there appears to be real value in further investigation into OSPEX.

Pre-service teachers involved in OSPEX not only develop intercultural competence and global mindedness while in the host country but also bring these new perspectives back home and incorporate them in their home contexts (Doppen & An, 2014; Mahon, 2007; Zhao *et al*.,

2009). It appears that pre-service teachers are likely to integrate the new concepts they gained from international experiences in their classroom and this includes their increased ability and comfort to interact with diverse groups of people (Stachowski et al., 2015).

This may well be related to the argument that international field experiences such as overseas professional teaching experiences have been found to help students to have more patience and empathy (Faulconer, 2003; Willard-Holt, 2001). Effective multicultural education goes beyond an understanding about different cultures and results in a deep respect and value for others. Pre-service teachers involved in overseas teaching experiences become advocates for the teaching practices that embrace diversity, including empathy for students from other cultures and of different language backgrounds (Bryan & Sprague, 1997). Participants of overseas experiences have been shown to be more open to cultural diversity, more accepting of difference, and more understanding of people from different ethnic backgrounds (Lee, 2011).

It appears that there is much to learn from OSPEXs in light of the fact that a clear relationship has been shown to exist between a teacher's cultural competence and a student's academic achievement (Banks, 2004; Santoro & Major, 2012; Yeung, 2006).

Increased personal growth

In addition to increased reflection and cultural competence, OSPEXs have also been shown to promote personal growth within pre-service teachers including increased levels of self-efficacy (Pence & Macgillivray, 2008; Walters, Garii, & Walters, 2009), flexibility (Chinnappan, McKenzie, & Fitzsimmons, 2013; Fitzimmons & McKenzie, 2006), commitment (Bryan & Sprague, 1997; Cruickshank & Westbrook, 2013) and collaboration (Le Cornu, 2010). While research at present in this area is very limited (Chinnappan et al., 2013), what is known about OSPEX in relation to increased personal growth is now reviewed.

A majority of the OSPEX research in relation to personal growth focuses on its potential to impact pre-service teachers' self-efficacy (Fitzsimmons & McKenzie, 2006; Pence & Macgillivray, 2008; Thomas & Kearney, 2008). Cushner and Mahon (2002) found that for many pre-service teachers, the overseas professional teaching experience represented the first

time they had solely relied on themselves. In addition to the high level of independence and responsibility, pre-service teachers also appeared to experience significant challenges while overseas including culture shock, dislodgement and immersion in a diverse environment (Chinnappan, McKenzie, & Fitzsimmons, 2013; Fitzsimmons & McKenzie, 2006; McKenzie & Fitzsimmons, 2010). According to Firmin, MacKay and Firmin (2007), pre-service teachers typically experience a bell-shaped phenomenon where they initially experience excitement, followed closely by significant dysphoria, and ending in enjoyment. It appears to be during the dysphoria phase, in which pre-service teachers are provided with the opportunity to overcome difficulties by facing their personal anxieties and testing their own perceived limitations, that the most significant development takes place (Chinnappan, McKenzie, & Fitzsimmons, 2013; Cushner & Mahon, 2002; McKenzie & Fitzsimmons, 2010). Pence and Macgillivray (2008) and Cushner and Mahon (2002) suggest that empowerment and efficacy appear to occur in OSPEXs as a result of pre-service teachers' drawing on inner resources through times of challenge. This personal growth appears significant as according to Bandura (1997), one would expect pre-service teachers having a heightened level of self-efficacy to be optimistic about their abilities even in the face of adversity and as a result be far more likely to attempt challenges with persistence in the future.

Fitzimmons and McKenzie (2006) and Hill, Thomas and Cote (1997) also revealed the increased flexibility and resourcefulness that can result from OSPEXs. Bryan and Sprague (1997, p. 201) suggest that a typical comment from pre-service teacher's involved in overseas teaching experiences is, "We had limited resources overseas. We were forced to be creative!" It appears that when pre-service teachers participate in overseas professional teaching experiences, specifically when in developing countries, they are often without internet, libraries, and technology, including photocopiers and data projectors, and subsequently have to rely more heavily on their own creativity. Cushner and Mahon (2002), Walters, Garii and Walter (2009) and Chinnappan, McKenzie and Fitzsimmons (2013) found that, as a result of having to overcome such challenging teaching environments, pre-service teachers reported increased levels of both adaptability and resourcefulness.

From the research findings of Bryan and Sprague (1997) and Cruickshank and Westbrook (2013) it is suggested that there may be a relationship between having completed an OSPEX and having high levels of commitment to the teaching profession. The study conducted by

Bryan and Sprague, focused on ten teachers involved in an overseas professional teaching experience, and found that this cohort showed increased levels of long-term commitment to the profession of teaching on their return, as demonstrated by greater teaching times and higher rates of further study. While this area needs more investigation, if overseas professional teaching experiences are shown conclusively to increase the commitment of pre-service teachers, then these experiences may be extremely valuable for all initial teacher education institutions to implement to improve teacher retention.

Some researchers also suggest that OSPEXs have successfully developed pre-service teachers' ability to work collaboratively (Le Cornu; 2010; Mule, 2006). It has been shown that experiences that incorporate a learning community approach, as in overseas professional teaching experiences, cause learners not only to take responsibility for their own survival but also to take on responsibility for the wellbeing and learning of their peers (Le Cornu, 2010). "The notion of a learning community contrasts the 'sink and swim' and 'do it yourself' view of student teaching in the typical practicum" (Mule, 2006, p. 216). Rather than sending individual teachers to separate locations, overseas professional teaching experiences often involve groups of pre-service teachers together. This is referred to as 'clustering' and allows for pre-service teachers to support each other in learning communities and for university mentors to be available to support both the pre-service teachers and their supervising teachers (Le Cornu, 2010, p. 197). Pre-service teachers quickly learn the importance of working collaboratively with their team members in overseas professional teaching experiences as it is only by sharing ideas and supporting each other that each teacher is able to overcome the challenges. From a social constructivist viewpoint, where learning occurs by constructing meanings rather than absorbing them from another, involving pre-service teachers in an active, communal and collaborative environment is theoretically sound (Bruner, 1986).

Having now explored the research literature focused on the outcomes of involving pre-service teachers in OSPEXs it appears that the major benefit achieved is an increased level of reflection as a result of challenges, independence and collegiality. As a result, overseas professional teaching experiences appear to have a positive effect on pre-service teachers' cultural competence, global mindedness, flexibility, commitment, and self-efficacy, mainly through the development of *stories of self*. While the emerging research is encouraging in relation to OSPEX, as is summed up effectively in the statement below more research is needed if teacher educators are going to be adequately informed.

> While these programmes [OSPEXs] have been found to be professionally and personally empowering, there still remains a great deal more focused research to be done in order to determine their full efficacy, and the specific elements of teacher pedagogy and identity they help develop. (Chinnappan et al., 2013, p. 37)

Limitations of OSPEX

Involving pre-service teachers in professional experiences in overseas contexts presents a number of challenges. Overseas professional experiences can be disruptive to pre-service teachers social, work and school life and also may be financially demanding (Kabilan, 2013; Lupi, Batey, & Turner, 2012). This may deter many learners, especially the less affluent, from choosing to take part in an overseas professional teaching experience. Mahon and Cushner (2000) found that less than 10% of pre-service teachers participating in OSPEXs were from ethnic minorities or students that lacked economic resources. Even those pre-service teachers that choose to be involved are likely to experience significant challenges while overseas as a result of different communities of practice (Wenger, 1998). In a foreign cultural and geographical context, pre-service teachers are likely to face more complex linguistic, climatic and sociocultural demands and may even be expected at times to teach content outside of their teaching areas (Chinnapan, McKenzie, & Fitzsimmons, 2013; Quezada, 2004; Shonia & Stachowski, 2014). This can add additional stress in a time where pressures are already relatively high as a result of attempting to discover who they are as teachers (Chinnapan, McKenzie, & Fitzsimmons, 2013; Stachowski, Grant, & Stuehling, 2015). In addition to increased pressures pre-service teachers may also receive less feedback from their supervising teachers in an overseas teaching experience. While the pre-service teachers are usually treated very hospitably and kindly by the local classroom teachers, often these teachers "appear reluctant to assume responsibility for their active supervision" and as a result the learners may find themselves somewhat isolated (McKenzie & Fitzsimmons, 2010, p.46). In addition to the challenges experienced by the pre-service teachers involved in the OSPEXs are the challenges experienced by those in charge of organising the experiences as a result of limited research focused on directing the many decisions they are required to make specifically in relation to how best to develop connected *stories of self*.

An insufficient attention to pre-service teachers' *stories of self* is at the core of the current issues currently being faced by those responsible for the preparation of pre-service teachers (Beauchchamp & Thomas, 2009; Cushner & Chang, 2015; Liakopoulou, 2012). OSPEXs appear to be an effective avenue in developing pre-service teachers' *stories of self* as current research indicates that these type of experiences are successful in increasing reflective practice (Cruickshank & Westbrook, 2013) and developing pre-service teachers' cultural competence (Doppen & An, 2014), global-mindedness (Cushner & Chang, 2015), self-efficacy (Pence & Macgillivray, 2008), commitment (Hackett and Lavery, 2010) and adaptability (Armstrong, 2008). While OSPEXs appear to be transformational (McKenzie & Fitzsimmons, 2010; Stachowski et al., 2015), the volume of research is limited at present (Chinnappan et al., 2013; Leask, 2009; Thomas & Kearney, 2008) and is mainly focused on the positive learning outcomes that result (Vande Berg, Paige & Lou, 2012). As a consequence, many assume that transformation is achieved "easily and effortlessly" within OSPEXs when learners are simply taken overseas and exposed to difference (Cushner & Chang, 2015; Vande Berg et al., 2012, p. 3).

The assumptions often made about learning in overseas contexts are summarised as follows: (1) all students learn effectively in an overseas context simply by being exposed to difference; (2) the reports of participants being transformed are significant evidence of the effectiveness of learning overseas; (3) all overseas contexts are assumed to be an effective place to develop learners and therefore the focus becomes on how to get more learners overseas (Vande Berg et al., 2012). These assumptions are clearly misleading, as OSPEXs are not always successful in achieving their claims (Talburt, 2009). While OSPEX research has clearly demonstrated the effectiveness of overseas experiences in increasing cultural competence (Batey & Lupi, 2012; Doppen & An, 2014; Landerholm & Chacko, 2013), some researchers found that exposure to students from different backgrounds did not significantly impact teachers' attitudes and beliefs (Ronfeldt & Reininger, 2012). Cushner and Chang (2015) also found that intercultural competence did not change significantly as a result of an overseas teaching experience. Other students reported that they returned from overseas experiences not having achieved what they had been told and thought they would (Zemack-Bersin, 2008). These results are unsurprising if one believes that the power of OSPEX is not generated solely from being overseas but rather is dependent on the quality of the overseas experience the individual is involved. Stachowski et al. (2015) advise that "[m]ere placement

of student teachers in international contexts does not ensure that meaningful learning and growth will occur" (p. 35).

One reason for the assumption that all overseas experiences are effective is that current research mainly focuses on the positive student learning outcomes associated with overseas teaching experiences (Izadinia, 2013) and rarely engages in a more meaningful discussion involving the essential components required if OSPEXs are to be successful (Chinnappan et al., 2013; Vande Berg et al., 2012). As a result of the limited amount of research that explains the essential components of OSPEX, some claim that those involved in taking their pre-service teachers overseas are doing little more than taking their students on overseas holidays (Gardner, Gross & Steglitz, 2008; Woolf, 2011). This is a legitimate claim that needs to be addressed through research that is focused not only on what is achieved in OSPEXs, but which also explains its theoretical underpinnings.

Chinnappan et al. (2013) concluded their review with the statement that, "there is a paucity of information about the kind of experiences that would be most useful in an OSPEX program" (p. 39). The impact of different settings was highlighted by Doppen and An (2014) as a specific area within OSPEX research that required more investigation. While there has been very limited research published in which impact of sending pre-service teachers to different settings has been investigated specifically, Kabilan (2013) suggested that an OSPEX in a developing country may be very effective because the participants would likely encounter a diversity of challenges. However, Doppen and An (2014) recognised the inadequacy of the generalised claims made that were based on research in relation to the effectiveness of OSPEX when they stated that, "student teachers experience varied levels of professional growth due to different student teaching settings" (p. 61).

In some studies there have been attempts to account for the variety of results achieved in overseas settings by proposing that the duration of the experience is a pivotal factor. However, the results are conflicting (Cwick & Benton, 2009; Lupi & Turner, 2013; Willard-Holt, 2001). Short-term programs (2-3 weeks) have been criticized by Cwick and Benton (2009), who argued that this is a tourist approach to learning in which students are not given enough time to learn about education and culture. Cwick and Benton are advocates of long-term experiences and suggest that these are the only experiences capable of having a significant impact on the appreciation of cultural diversity. Other researchers argue that short-

term experiences are just as transformational and may even be more valuable, as they are less disruptive to life, work and school when compared to longer experiences, and are less financially demanding (Lupi, Batey, & Turner, 2012). Short-term experiences, some as brief as only six days, have also been shown to impact positively pre-service teachers' understanding of other cultures, other people and develop significant personal growth (Lupi & Turner, 2013; Willard-Holt, 2001). Owing to the conflicting evidence, the argument now appears to have moved away from solely focusing on the duration of time a pre-service teacher spends overseas, and is beginning to focus on the quality of the overseas experience in which a pre-service teacher is involved (Stachowski et al., 2015).

While details in relation to what constitutes quality in an OSPEX are very limited, some have identified the importance of reflection in the overseas experience (Cushner & Chang, 2015; Merryfield, 2000; Stachowski et al., 2015). There appears to be some difference of emphasis when discussing how this reflective practice is best supported in an OSPEX context. While Dunn, Dotson, Cross, Kressner and Lundahl (2014) highlight the importance of involving the participants in real and relevant experiences including interactive assignments, discussions and support throughout the experience, Cushner and Chang (2015) stress the importance of the preparation phase and of the interaction between the students and their teacher educators to achieve success.

Stachowski et al., (2008) also argued for the importance of including a community involvement experience when designing quality overseas professional teaching experiences. Successful OSPEXs, according to them, are those in which the participants are involved in a minimum of eight hours of planned extracurricular service. Outcomes from this initiative included connectedness, belonging, broader worldviews, and global-mindedness. They found that pre-service teachers identified community people as frequent and important sources of learning when they were given the opportunity to get out of the classroom and interact with people in the community (Stachowski et al., 2008). These findings are noteworthy considering that some research results suggest that learners in overseas experiences continue to surround themselves with their own peers and culture while overseas, and as a result never develop meaningful relationships with their overseas hosts (Vande Berg et al., 2012). As a result of surrounding themselves with what is familiar, Patterson (2015) suggests that they enter into a cocoon-like existence where they are shielded from being exposed to the local way of life and subsequently rarely reflect on their experiences overseas.

The present lack of research in relation to what constitutes quality in an OSPEX means those desiring to develop *stories of self* in pre-service teachers by creating quality professional teaching experiences appear to remain largely uninformed (Izadinia, 2013). While OSPEXs appear to successfully develop the type of personal and professional growth required to combat the current issues in pre-service teacher preparation (Cruickshank & Westbrook, 2013), little is known about how this occurs and as a result the benefits of OSPEX at present remain distant and non-transferrable to other overseas and domestic professional experience programs (Chinnappan et al., 2013). Regardless of how powerful an OSPEX may be, Kabilan (2013) argues that it is unlikely that all pre-service teachers would be able to benefit from taking part in one because of the financial, social and time implications attached to going overseas. This places added pressure for those involved in OSPEXs to understand fully what is occurring in an overseas context so that they can apply what they have learnt to the improvement of domestic professional experiences. Chinnappan et al. (2013), recommend that

> …additional attention [should] be focused towards understanding how and why overseas pre-service teaching experiences function in developing competent and reflective practitioners in overseas educational settings. In addition to this, exploring how these experiences support the development of transferable skills and understandings that can be folded back into the national domestic sphere. (p. 38)

If teacher educators are to harness the benefits of OSPEXs to allow them to inform quality practice in both overseas and domestic settings, they must first have a clear understanding of the key components that make OSPEXs effective, including how these experiences foster reflective practice and result in new *stories of self* within pre-service teachers.

Recommendation for future research

Based on the evidence presented in this literature review the benefits of OSPEX for pre-service teacher education are clear. What is also clear is that there are significant limitations at present in the knowledge available to those charged with the responsibility of designing professional teaching experiences likely to successfully develop new and connected personal and professional identities within pre-service teachers. This thesis will address the gap that

exists in the literature concerning research related to the development of pre-service teachers' *stories of self* by investigating the impact of an overseas professional teaching experience on a group of pre-service teachers. Findings of this study will provide evidence that goes some way to inform the processes and environments essential in the formation and merging of pre-service teachers personal and professional identities.

CHAPTER 3 - A NEW JOURNEY BEGINS—PATHS CHOSEN

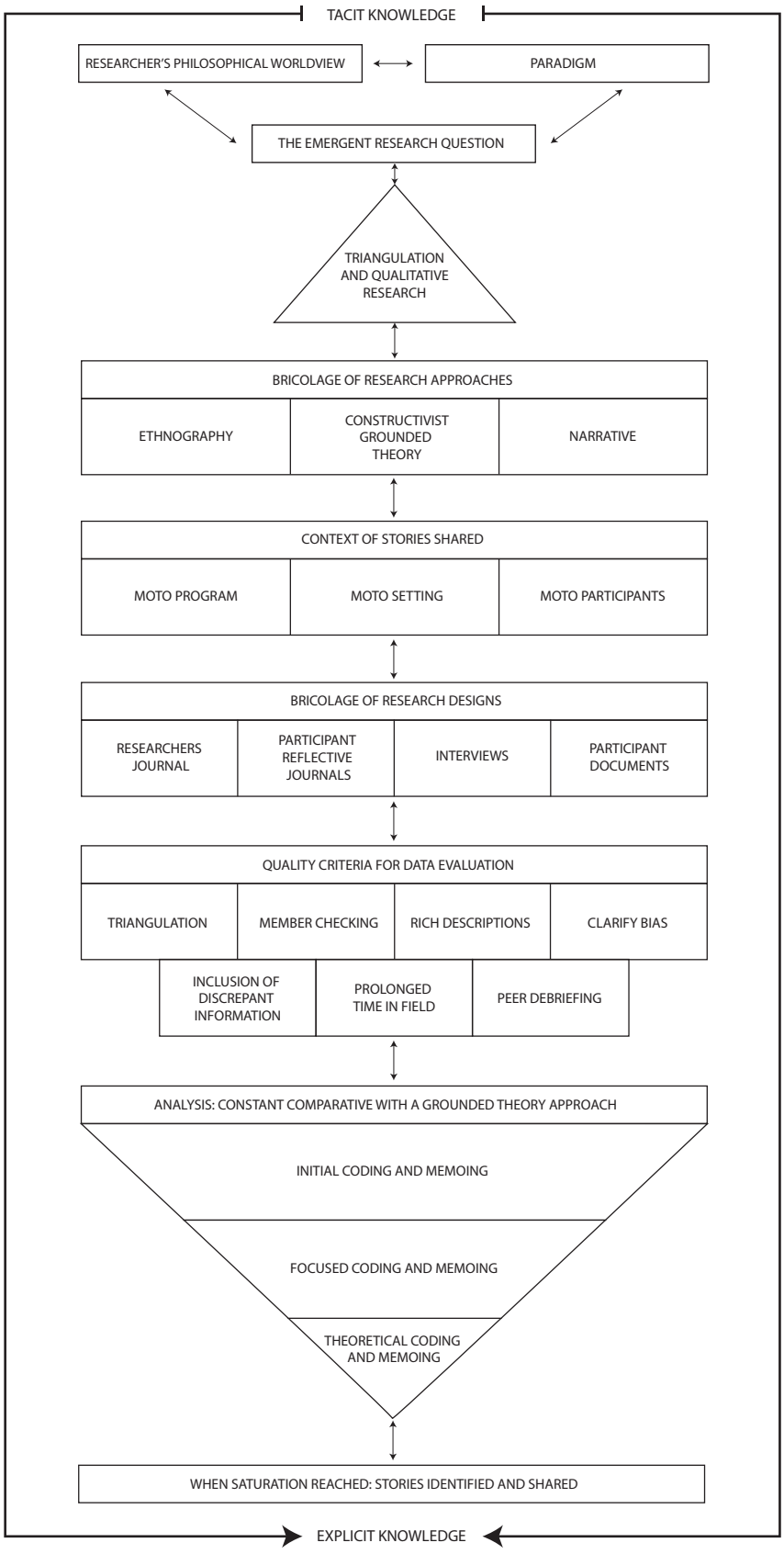
Introduction

The word 'journey' accurately depicts the reality and purpose of this chapter and subsequently features prominently. Journeys require us to choose our own paths and rarely take us directly to our destinations. Journeys allow us to go to places not yet explored and as a result return us with stories not yet told. This chapter outlines the paths I have chosen on this journey towards understanding the stories of pre-service teachers undertaking an overseas professional teaching experience in a developing country. The research question guiding this journey was, "What is the nature of the impact of an overseas professional teaching experience in a developing country on pre-service teachers' *stories of self*?"

As already outlined in Chapter 1, the paradigm of this investigation is best described as a qualitative, social constructivist narrative (Charmaz, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 1999). This investigation includes a 'bricolage' of research designs including my research journal, participants' reflective journals, interviews and participant documentation. In the investigation the data analysis tools of a constructivist grounded theory approach were employed (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2014). It is important to note here that the data collection and analysis were done concurrently and that they were iterative in nature (Charmaz, 2014; Creswell, 2014).

The purpose of this chapter is to ensure that the findings of this study remain sensitive to the stories of the participants by outlining and justifying the methodological processes chosen in this investigation. The diagram below, adapted from Guba and Lincoln (1989), gives structure to this chapter and demonstrates the emergent nature of this investigation (Creswell, 2013; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). While this chapter now explores each section of this diagram and is presented in a linear fashion, the paradigm, understanding and linkages to method were developed cyclically (Creswell, 2014).

Figure 2: Chapter 3 Structure



Researcher's Philosophical Worldview

As a person's beliefs significantly affect the decisions they make (Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Mergler & Spooner-Lane, 2012), in this chapter the initial focus is on the relationship between the researcher's philosophical worldview, the paradigm of the investigation and the emergent research question. By first outlining the researcher's philosophical worldview, it is intended that the reader will be provided with an insight into the methodological processes chosen in this investigation.

As described in the prologue of this thesis, this investigation grew initially from my personal emic wonderings (Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Lichtman, 2013). Like Cruickshank and Westbrook (2013), I believe the research question at the core of this investigation developed from an inner desire to make sense out of my own personal experiences and the observations I had made from the experiences of others. While I initially felt passionate about involving pre-service teachers in OSPEXs, I noticed within myself an inadequacy to justify my beliefs to others. Polyani (1996) suggests that this is common when a person's behaviours are based on tacit or hidden understandings. It was as a result of the needs arising from reflecting on my inner dilemma that I decided to embark on this research journey. While my personal experiences and beliefs were very influential in initially framing my research question, they were also instrumental in choosing the qualitative paradigm, which had a direct effect on my approach to this entire investigation.

As intimated already, all research and the paradigms in which they are located are "guided by a set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 19). A researcher's paradigm can be defined as their "way of knowing" (Kramp, 2004), or the way they view the world based on their theoretical perspectives (Mertens, 2010). The type of paradigm chosen for this investigation was developed initially as a direct result of my emerging belief system (Kervin, Vialle, Herrington & Okely, 2006). These beliefs did not drive my overall approach, but served as the catalyst for making methodologically appropriate choices (Check & Schutt, 2012). The meta-paradigm that I eventually believed best supported this investigation is described as a 'qualitative social constructivist narrative' (Charmaz, 2014; Lincoln, 2014; Vygotsky, 1978). As my investigation aimed to make sense, or construct, it was determined that the most powerful findings would result by immersing myself in the story of another through close

social interaction (Biggs, 1996). As a proponent of the social constructivist paradigm, I believe that individuals develop subjective meanings, which often prove to be complex and diversified (Creswell, 2014). This investigation does not attempt to provide an objective truth, but rather seeks to understand the complexity and variation of authentic 'lived experiences' (Van Manen, 1990) in a natural setting (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). As will soon be explained, I believe participants speak of the reality they are experiencing using stories, and I have, in consequence, also chosen a narrative component in this investigation. What follows is an outline of the iterative process I went through in choosing a qualitative paradigm.

Choice of the Qualitative Paradigm

Initially I began the journey unsuccessfully by basing my own understandings on the beliefs of others. With little time to explore my own personal worldview, I took on the beliefs of my work colleagues. As my colleagues' past experiences and beliefs were based on a scientific approach, I was encouraged to find a validated instrument to use to test the pre-service teachers before and after the experience in order to measure the change in the pre-service teachers that resulted from their experiences. I found and used an instrument referred to as the L.E.Q (Lifestyle Effectiveness Questionnaire) that sought to test by way of an 8-point Likert scale the changes that occurred to people through experiences (Neill, 2008). I used and modified this instrument for the next three years and sought to test factors such as self-efficacy, self-confidence, emotional control, and moral responsibility. My greatest discovery was that it became clear that for my inquiry, a quantitative approach to research would be ineffective in giving me the right voice and in-depth data. While the quantitative research conducted did provide me with much to talk about, the story I pieced together did not even nearly adequately reflect the voice of the participants as seen and heard at the site of the experience.

As suggested by Creswell (2014), relying on a pre-determined instrument proved unsuccessful as the voice it provided me with was contrived and lacked authentic input from the participants. Using quantitative data to capture the experiences of the participants on overseas professional teaching experiences felt like trying to understand how guests at a dinner party enjoyed their meal by studying their plates before and after eating. A qualitative approach would allow me to access information "by actually talking directly to people and

seeing them behave and act within their contexts" (Creswell, 2009, p. 175). As qualitative research is primarily concerned with the study of people in their natural settings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Mertens, 2010), it would effectively position me to collect data, interview participants and observe behaviour, which would provide me with a rich understanding of everyday life experience (Van Manen, 1997).

In initially choosing a quantitative voice, I had wrongly assumed that MOTO experiences would affect each person in the same manner and erroneously thought the purpose of my story was to reduce the main impacts to a few key categories (Mertens, 2010). When listening to the stories of my participants while having a quantitative mindset, it frustrated me when participants appeared to be experiencing different things. All the participants were living in the same conditions, teaching the same type of students, seeing the same sights, yet were being impacted differently. On the same MOTO experience, one participant would speak of their desire to appreciate their possessions at home more, while another would testify of the emptiness of materialism. Despite each participant being immersed in the same new culture, some participants would speak of it with discontentment and cling desperately to things that were familiar to them, while others would speak openly of the beauty of the new culture and their desires to take their new way of life back home with them.

It became obvious very quickly that while the pre-service teachers were on the same MOTO experience, they were experiencing what Creswell (2013) refers to as "multiple realities" (p. 20). The emptiness of initially trying to use quantitative data taught me so much about the research design I needed to use to explore realistically the impact of a MOTO experience. It became clear at this point that constructivism was central to my worldview. I believe that knowledge is actively formed on the foundations of existing knowledge and that participants' stories are their own perceptions of that reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Mertens (2010) advises that, as a consequence of each participant having different prior experiences, cultural and social norms and backgrounds, they are likely to develop subjective meanings for the same experiences. To express accurately the impact of the MOTO experience on pre-service teachers, I decided I must "look for the complexity of views rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories or ideas" (Creswell, 2009, p. 8). A qualitative approach would allow me as the researcher to develop a holistic picture of the problem by reporting the multiple perspectives and complex relationships as experienced by the participants (Creswell, 2014; Stake, 1995). Creswell explains that "[w]hen researchers conduct qualitative research, they

are embracing the idea of multiple realities. When studying individuals, qualitative researchers conduct a study with an intent of reporting these multiple realities" (2013, p. 20).

Through a variety of tools, a qualitative approach to research provides opportunity for the participants' stories to be shared, including the individually constructed meanings they make from their experiences (Creswell, 2009; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Rather than relying on a single data source, as will be explored later in this chapter, qualitative research allows multiple sources of data to be used to create this holistic picture (Cohen et al., 2007). A qualitative approach was chosen to ensure the research remained rich and adequately represented the lived and expressed experiences of the participants (Charmaz, 2014).

The Emergent Research Question

In understanding the importance of exploring the multiple realities (Creswell, 2014; Mertens, 2010), I now had to decide how I could best hear and decipher these voices. Coming from a constructivist worldview, I openly acknowledge the value of the relationship between the participants and the researcher. As all knowledge is a transaction (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) the researcher has much responsibility in representing the participants' views in as unbiased manner as possible. It was important that the methodological approach chosen allowed me as the researcher to remain sensitive to the meanings of the participants and their lived and told experiences (Creswell, 2014). An emergent design, where the research methodology is able to respond to the evolving nature of an investigation, was chosen to allow me to 'see' subjective and often intangible aspects of experience (Mobily, 2007). While this chapter began with what appeared to be a pre-determined question and continues to outline a prepared set of data collection procedures and questions, as the researcher at the site of the experience I continued to question the design I had chosen to ensure it successfully answered the expected evolving nature of this investigation. As a result, the overall design of this investigation and the research question changed on multiple occasions (Creswell, 2013) as it was informed by literature (Lichtman, 2013), data analysis and my own developing insights in light of the stories shared from my participants (Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010). To remain sensitive to the participants' lived and told experiences and emergent insights from the ensuing data analysis, there were times when I needed to adjust the original methodological processes chosen. The excerpt from my research journal, reproduced in Figure 3, demonstrates one instance where this was clearly evident.

While my research question forms the core of this investigation, it is important to note that it also changed on multiple occasions (Creswell, 2014). According to Ary et al., (2012), this should be expected when reflection takes place, as researchers become immersed in literature and an analysis of the data itself (Lichtman, 2013). Figure 4 illustrates some of the changes to the research question that took place as part of the iterative process of this investigation (Creswell, 2014).

Figure 3: Evidence of Emergent Design

Researchers Journal – June 19, 2013
Originally I planned only to interview the participants at set scheduled times. This year a lot of the team have brought Go Pro Cameras with them. After our debriefing session last night, a number of the participants decided independently to find their own place (some on the roof, some outside, some in their rooms) and record their thoughts on camera. At times I feel like some of my focus participants tighten up and can't think as freely as they would like when I am with them. I have decided to encourage this reflective practice.... I moved some of our food out of the storage room and Fonda made a sign and put it on the door that says 'Go Pro Diary Room IN ACTION!' I think this might help me to get to hear the real stories as they happen rather than the participants having to wait until the next structured interview time to unleash their thoughts.

Figure 4: Changing Research Question

Date of Change	Emerging Question	Reasons for Change as demonstrated in Research Journal
15.3.13	What are the impacts of taking pre-service teachers to overseas teaching contexts → Investigating the impact of overseas professional teaching experiences in developing countries on pre-service teachers personal and professional identities	Up till now I have assumed from my own experiences that this investigation will reveal that taking pre-service teachers overseas will positively impact them. It is very important that this investigation remains sensitive to the experiences of my participants. At present my question appears very *a priori* in nature and needs to change. I don't want to assume an impact will occur and want my findings to reflect the actual experience – whatever they might be – of the participants (Researchers Journal, 15.3.2013)
16.5.13	Investigating the impact of overseas professional teaching experiences in developing countries on pre-service teachers personal and professional identities → Investigating the impact of an	I have always thought that I would collect data from all three overseas teaching experiences. While I think it would be interesting to compare and contrast findings from three different countries, in light of what I have read about the importance of in depth research, where the researcher is on site and makes sense of the lived experience, I don't think I can accurately understand more than one site. I have decided

	overseas professional teaching experience in a developing country on pre-service teachers personal and professional identities	today to narrow my focus from three sites to only one. As such my research question must once again be changed. (Researchers Journal, 15.05.2013)
2.7.13	Investigating the impact of an overseas professional teaching experience in a developing country on pre-service teachers' personal and professional identities → What is the nature of the impact of an overseas professional teaching experience in a developing country on pre-service teachers' *stories of self*?	For quite some time I have felt uncomfortable focusing on the term 'personal and professional identities' as the key component of how pre-service teachers are impacted by MOTO experiences. Literature makes it clear that while each of us are multifaceted that in order to be effective we must make sense of ourselves as whole people. It has always concerned me that by using the term 'personal and professional identities' that I am giving the impression that MOTO participants remained disconnected practitioners. The interviews I have already coded speak often of the pre-service teachers' development of personal stories that provide a real foundation for their practices. I think my question will better reflect the real lived experience of the participants if its focus is changed to '*stories of self*' rather than 'personal and professional identities. (Researchers Journal, 2.7.2013)

Having explored the relationship between the researcher's worldview, chosen paradigm and emergent research question, I now provide a structure for the following discussion focused on the research approaches and research designs employed in this investigation by establishing the importance of triangulation in the qualitative research process.

Triangulation and Qualitative Research

All researchers need to make decisions about what records and processes to include when telling stories to ensure the story is told accurately and fulfils its purpose (Patton, 2015). With 21 pre-service teachers taking part in a 37-day experience, many stories were available from which to create a complex and holistic picture for this investigation. The experience of others strongly suggests that in qualitative research, in order for researchers to increase the quality of their findings they should collect and analyse multiple sources of data (Cohen et al., 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Triangulation is the term generally used to describe combining multiple sources of data and research approaches and designs by collecting different data from the same phenomenon (Cohen et al., 2007; Rossman & Rallis, 2012) in order to examine the findings with more confidence (Burns, 1995; Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012).

For this reason, the principle of triangulation was incorporated into this investigation from the beginning in order to provide additional confidence in the findings. The table below demonstrates how triangulation was achieved in this investigation by using multiple sources of data, research approaches and research designs (Rossman & Rallis, 2012).

Table 1: Triangulation using Multiple Sources of Data, Research Approaches and Research Designs

Multiple Sources of Data	Bricolage of Research Approaches	Bricolage of Research Designs
✓ Researcher ✓ Pre-service teachers	✓ Ethnography theory ✓ Constructivist Grounded theory ✓ Narrative theory	✓ Researchers journal ✓ Researchers field notes ✓ Semi-structured interviews ✓ Photographic reflections ✓ Debriefing session discussions

This chapter now demonstrates the range of data used within this investigation by focusing on the bricolage of research approaches employed.

Bricolage of Research Approaches

Patton (2015) provides an extensive list of approaches available to qualitative researchers including ethnography, constructivist grounded theory, narrative inquiry, realism, phenomenology and hermeneutics. As is common in qualitative designs, this investigation chose to employ a 'bricolage' of research approaches. The term 'bricolage' refers to the weaving together of various research approaches and designs including the addition of new techniques if and when they are required throughout the investigation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). As such, the ethnographic, constructivist grounded theory and narrative nature of this investigation is now discussed.

Ethnography

Ethnography is a qualitative design in which the researcher investigates the "shared patterns of behaviors, language, and actions of an intact cultural group, in a natural setting, over a prolonged period of time" (Creswell, 2014, p. 14). Liamputtong (2013) suggests that

ethnographic research aims to understand a specific way of life from the insider point of view and tends to involve the examination of a small number of people.

According to the definitions provided by Creswell (2014) and Liamputtong (2013), this investigation was clearly ethnographic in nature, as it aimed to understand the shared nature of the impact of an overseas teaching experience in Nepal on a group of pre-service teachers by placing the researcher within the experience. This investigation focused specifically on four participants within this group who took part in a 37-day overseas experience. As with most ethnographers, I identified early on in this investigation the value of conducting the research in the natural setting, as it provided me with the participants' stories and also with the contexts in which they took place, which appeared essential to develop a deep understanding of their experiences (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). One of the greatest challenges regularly faced on MOTO experiences is the language barrier that limits communication between pre-service teachers and their students. We have tried to overcome these barriers at times by using translators, however, frustration and confusion inevitably result. Similarly, I knew I could not tell this story as a distant translator. Far too much would be misinterpreted, left out, or even overlooked. To talk of what my pre-service teachers had experienced on their MOTO trip, without experiencing it with them, would be as futile as describing the taste of the food they ate by reading the menu. I had to be on site, experiencing the journey with them. I had to be not only listening to their stories each night, but also with them in their classrooms each day. Developing a shared understanding of this group of pre-service teachers would be far more effective when I lived the experience with them.

Marvasti (2004, p. 36) describes the art of writing about a group of people or cultures while participating in that culture as two "seemingly contradictory activities". Ethnographic research is challenging, as ethnographers are required to observe and write simultaneously, while being involved in the topic of study (Liamputtong, 2013). I too initially struggled with defining my role as an ethnographer. To ensure this story would be told appropriately, I realised that I would have to rely heavily on the participants' views and experiences-perhaps more than I realised. I initially tried to eliminate my voice from that of my participants, thinking that the best way to tell my story was to keep quiet and only listen. In a prior pilot study (Hinze, 2008), recognising the importance of personal reflection, I encouraged all participants to keep a daily journal while not doing so myself. I asked each participant questions regularly in relation to the impacts they were experiencing, yet deliberately

withdrew from any discussions that took place, for fear of polluting the data. I was under the impression that my voice was of no value, and even worse probably damaging, in seeking to understand the impact that the MOTO experiences were having on the pre-service teachers. In similar fashion to the experience detailed by Pinnegar and Daynes (2007), I had many questions in regard to the ownership and authorship of this story. Should my thoughts, my words, my experiences be heard in the story that describes the impact of MOTO experiences on pre-service teachers? Should this story be their story or ours?

After much reflection, I concluded that it was impossible to separate myself as the researcher from the pre-service teachers as participants in this study. I now realise the importance and place of my voice in this study. Similar to that of a curator showing someone through an art gallery (Cole & Knowles, 2001) my voice as the researcher will allow the reader not only to hear the stories of my participants but also to understand the meanings behind what they have shared. By combining my etic description (Lett, 1990) as an outside observer with the emic descriptions (Merriam, 1998) of my participants, the voice that would be negotiated through authentic discussion and triangulation of data would ultimately provide a detailed and complex picture of the shared experience. In order to paint a complex picture of the stories of my participants, it was deemed essential to understand the context, setting and backgrounds of both their stories and themselves as participants.

As costorytellers, we could speak sometimes on our own to express our unique perspectives and other times we could speak together to reinforce a commonality in our experience. Whenever two people attempt to tell the same story, it is likely that a disagreement will occur in relation to their perspectives of what actually happened. I expected disagreements to occur in how our stories would be told yet embraced the complexity and richness that would result when two or more voices are heard (Charmaz, 2014). Incorporating ethnography as one of my approaches allowed me to collect data at the site of the experience, in the natural setting, where I could have "prolonged engagement" (Yin, 2009) and access to their experiences by talking to the participants and observing their behaviour as a participant within the context of the MOTO experience. These conditions in turn would allow me as the researcher to be more sensitive to the participants' shared meanings.

Constructivist grounded theory

A constructivist grounded theory research design was chosen as the underpinning foundation for this investigation. Constructivist grounded theory is an inductive qualitative research method that aims to create a theory from within the data itself (Linhart, 2010) and allows the researcher to remain open-minded as they investigate (Charmaz, 2014). Rather than using the data to test a pre-existing hypothesis or theory, a constructivist grounded theory develops directly out of, or from within, the data (Linhart, 2010; Silverman, 2013). This approach allows researchers to generate theory from the data, rather than forcing data to fit a pre-determined theory (Glaser, 1998; Patton, 2015). To ensure the theory is actually reflecting the data, constructivist grounded theory uses constant comparison analysis, where data collection and analysis are employed concurrently (Linhart, 2008). The aim of constructivist grounded theory research is to construct a theory that explains all the variations presented in the qualitative data and the conditions associated with these variations (Charmaz, 2014). As already outlined in the limitations of this study the small size of the sample of participants chosen in developing the constructivist grounded theory means that transferability of the results to all pre-service teachers is not possible. A broader spectrum of respondents is recommended for future research related to this area.

A constructivist grounded theory approach was chosen in this study because the researcher believed the experiences of the participants could not adequately be explained using the framework of an existing theory (Charmaz, 2014; Creswell, 2012). As no such theory existed to explain the nature of the impact of overseas professional teaching experiences on pre-service teachers' *stories of self*, in this investigation I aimed to develop one directly from the data, as informed by the voices of the participants. As with all constructivist grounded theories, this investigation relied heavily on theoretical sampling, constant comparison of data, and theoretical saturation (Hood, 2007). Specific examples of how this investigation developed a constructivist grounded theory are explored later in this chapter when the quality criteria for data evaluation are discussed.

Narrative inquiry

The third method used in this investigation is referred to as narrative inquiry (Patton, 2015). Narrative research is a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher studies the lives of individuals and asks "one or more individuals to provide stories about their lives" (Creswell,

2009, p. 13). The stories that emerge from the participants are then synthesised by the researcher into a narrative account (Scott & Garner, 2013). The result is a negotiated story combining views from both the participants and the researcher (Creswell, 2014). Stories therefore may be used as both the avenue to research and the medium to write about the research (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). A successful narrative will also invoke a response by the reader who may well incorporate the story told to make sense of their own stories lived (Paley & Eva, 2005).

As described by Reissman (2011, p. 313), this narrative inquiry attempts to recount a discrete set of events with "sequential and temporal ordering" while weaving the contexts and impacts of the phenomenon experienced into a complete story. This narrative inquiry will sieve the participants' stories through a 'constructivist grounded theory' perspective (Charmaz, 2014) to provide an understanding of how their stories, lived and told (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) are impacted as a result of participating in an overseas professional teaching experience in a developing country.

A narrative inquiry was chosen because, from previous experiences and through the data collection process, it was the stories from individuals on MOTO experiences that have revealed the greatest detail about the impact of the experience. This should have been expected, as it is through stories that pre-service teachers construct and speak of their experiences (Bruner, 1986; Connelly & Clandinin, 1994; Polkinghorne, 1995). I first became aware of the power of narrative when one of my MOTO participants shared with me how he had been affected on his first day of teaching in a small school in India. It impressed me so much I recorded it, as is shown below.

Figure 5: Example of a Narrative Account

Researchers Journal of previous MOTO experience to India – June 21, 2008
Josh had walked to school wearing dark glasses feeling very self-conscious about a severely swollen eye he had woken up to, from a bee sting the night before. He felt vulnerable, embarrassed, and dreaded the ridicule he expected from the students he had not yet met. It wasn't long before a few children at the school started to quiz him about why he was wearing dark glasses. With dread, Josh removed his sunglasses slowly to reveal to some students the root of his embarrassment. The response from the children overwhelmed this teacher so much he struggled to tell the rest of the story. With a choked up voice, Josh explained how the students immediately responded by silently closing in around him and hugging him. He described the scene of standing in the playground, with no less than twenty students surrounding him with love.

Stories like these serve as tools in knowing one's self and those by whom we are surrounded, while also having the potential to reveal the collective nature of the experience on pre-service teachers. As pre-service teachers are natural "storytelling organisms" who commonly make sense out of their experiences using stories (Connelly & Clandinin, 1994, p. 4046), there appears to be much value in the stories they share for this investigation. In this investigation I sought to understand the impact of an experience on pre-service teachers' beliefs, and because stories appear to be the channel by which pre-service teachers explain their experiences (Boud et al., 2013), a narrative inquiry was chosen. Riessman (2011) considered narrative approaches to be particularly useful in studying the impact of experiences on 'personal identity,' or as referred to in this study, on pre-service teachers' *stories of self*. As such, I can no longer overlook the stories that I hear and the stories that I see play out before me when investigating the impact of an overseas professional teaching experience on pre-service teacher's *stories of self*.

To allow the reader to understand the narratives told, it is important not only to collect the stories themselves, but to take their context into account. As Creswell points out "[n]arrative researchers situate individual's stories within participants' personal experiences (their jobs, their homes), their culture (racial or ethnic), and their historical contexts (time and place)" (2009, p. 56). Creswell (2014) and Riessman (2011) argue that in narrative research providing a story's context is as important as the stories themselves. The context in which our stories take place allow the reader to clearly interpret the stories we tell (Creswell, 2014; Riessman, 2011). Many of the stories told in this investigation were initially disclosed between participants who had shared common experiences. Many parts of their stories, which serve to make sense out of the story itself, were often omitted with the assumption that their audience already understood the background to the story that was being told. Without this context, it is very difficult to make sense of the meanings expressed in each of the stories (Riessman, 2011). Photographs are commonly used in narrative accounts to assist in providing the reader with the context of the stories shared (Clandinin & Pushor, 2007). To assist the readers to interpret the stories told as part of this study, photographs feature throughout this investigation, especially when sharing the participant's stories included in Chapter 4.

The following sections explain the core contexts of this investigation including the MOTO program, the MOTO setting and the MOTO participants.

Context of Stories Shared

The MOTO program

As mentioned in Chapter 1, MOTO stands for the 'Ministry Of Teaching Overseas' program run out of the School of Education at Avondale. Avondale is a private Christian college and its School of Education is located in the Lake Macquarie District in NSW, Australia. Its motto, 'A greater vision of world needs,' highlights the emphasis it places on preparing its graduates for a life of service in their communities. The School of Education within Avondale has approximately 550 students, most of whom are studying for either primary or secondary teacher degrees.

All pre-service teachers are expected to complete a professional teaching experience in each year of their course. By the end of a four-year degree all primary graduates will have completed 120 days of professional teaching experiences (7 professional experiences in total) and all secondary graduates will have completed 90 days (5 professional experiences in total). All primary and secondary pre-service teachers are provided with the opportunity to complete either their second or third year professional teaching experience (15 days of teaching) in a developing country. Presently, approximately a half of all pre-service primary and secondary teachers choose to become involved in a MOTO experience at some time in their course of study. The MOTO program began in 2007 and, inclusive of this investigation, has now been running for the past seven consecutive years. As is shown in Table 2, a total of 225 pre-service teachers have chosen to become involved in the MOTO program in one of three different locations including; India, Cambodia or Nepal.

Table 2: MOTO Program Participation

Year	*Country*	*Number of Per-Service Teachers Involved*
2007	*India*	*11*
2008	*India*	*17*
2009	*India*	*11*
	Cambodia	*20*
2010	*Cambodia*	*28*
2011	*Cambodia*	*21*
	India	*9*
	Nepal	*18*
2012	*Cambodia*	*15*
	India	*10*
	Nepal	*18*
2013	*Cambodia*	*18*
	India	*9*
	Nepal	*18*

When participants speak of 'MOTO' they may be referring to one or a combination of a number of its components. To help with the interpretation of their stories it is important to initially outline the main components that make up a MOTO experience. While these components are very similar across all three MOTO experiences, the information now provided focuses specifically on the MOTO Nepal experience, the context for this research.

1. Beginning of Experience – While all pre-service teachers were involved in a 37-day experience in Nepal, the MOTO experience extended far beyond the time spent as a team overseas. Students were first invited to be part of the program nine months prior to departure. Each of the participants attended two information sessions at this time. The first session was designed to provide them with adequate knowledge to make an informed decision about whether or not to become involved in the MOTO program. The second session provided all potential participants with the opportunity, after hearing from each of the MOTO leaders, to make a decision on which MOTO experience they wished to become involved. It was after this second session that each of the participants completed an official sign up form, communicating to the School of Education their commitment to be involved. From the information on these forms,

the teams were formed and individual country MOTO meetings began in preparation for the following year's experience. The MOTO Nepal team met for the first time as an individual group in mid-October 2012, just over 8 months prior to when they would later depart. From this point on, the team met regularly together in preparation for their future experience.

2. Pre-Trip Course – Beginning on March 6, 2013, all MOTO Nepal participants took part in a weekly preparation program. This 12-week program, run from 12-1pm on Wednesdays, focused on preparing the participants for a successful experience. The pre-trip course included topics such as: expectations, organization, team building, cultural preparation, teaching strategies appropriate for targeted communities, risk analysis and safety, language immersion and logistics. These meetings also provided participants with the opportunity to begin to develop supportive relationships with each other as a team.

3. Team Social Events – In recognition of the value of a united team, the MOTO Nepal team planned two social events prior to departure, as an opportunity to get to know each other more in a non-formal setting. The first of these socials involved a dinner together and the second involved an 8km Sunday morning hike up a nearby mountain, followed by a team lunch. After completing the MOTO experience and returning to Australia the participants continued to organise regular social gatherings with each other.

4. Planning with family – While planning took place at a team level, participants also planned individually, often with the help of their families and friends. While this investigation focuses on the impact on the individual pre-service teachers, the families also appear to be impacted by the experiences of the individual participants. The families are often highly involved in the preparation process prior to departure. Family members on this MOTO experience supported individual participants in a number of ways including: encouragement and support in initial decision to become involved; help with finances and logistics; supportive emails and phone calls during the experience; and in sharing the many stories told by the participant on their return.

While participants were physically isolated from their family and friends, they often featured heavily in the participants' thoughts and stories.

5. Teaching Experience - This refers to the 15-days of teaching each pre-service teacher was involved in while living in the overseas community. As is typical throughout Nepal, the four schools partnering with MOTO in the Nepali community were in session 6-days a week. The participants taught from Sunday to Friday each week for approximately 6-hours each day. The local Nepali teachers appeared very accepting and grateful for the Avondale pre-service teachers and typically provided them with high levels of autonomy, independence and responsibility. To assist the MOTO participants cope with the demanding environment and heavy teaching loads expected of them, the pre-service teachers were paired together with a teaching partner.

6. Team worship/debriefing sessions – In addition to the teaching responsibilities, all MOTO participants met each morning before school to take part in a short time of (approximately 15-minute) team worship. Generally, these worship sessions were taken by a different team member each day and provided each participant with the opportunity to share what they had learnt about themselves, their life, or for those religious, their God, from their experiences. It was also a time of encouragement and team bonding. Each evening all participants gathered together and for approximately 20-minutes were involved in a team debriefing session. This usually began with a team affirmation session and also provided an avenue for individuals to share their daily highlights and challenges.

7. Service Project - Each participant was encouraged to get involved in their local community, with a focus on service, for at least an hour a day during the 15-days they were involved in teaching. The aim of this component was to connect pre-service teachers individually with the local community and build quality relationships with the local people. Examples of service projects participants involved themselves in included: working in the rice paddies; walking groups of students home after school; playing after school sport and teaching guitar. For this one-hour a day, the pre-service teachers were encouraged to step out of their comfort zone and immerse themselves with the locals. The participants were encouraged to complete this component in pairs.

8. Experiential learning component – At the completion of the 15-days of teaching, all participants had planned to fly to Lukla and complete the 11-day trek to Everest Base Camp, to satisfy the 5-day experiential learning component encouraged in all MOTO experiences. Due to bad weather, which prevented flights in and out of Lukla, a decision was made to fly to Pokhara instead and compete the 7-day Annapurna Base Camp Walk. This walk was spectacular and was completed successfully by all MOTO Nepal participants. The highlight of the walk for most was reaching the Annapurna Base Camp, situated at 4,130 metres in altitude.

MOTO setting

The focus of this investigation took place in the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal (Nepal). Nepal is a small landlocked country in the Himalayan Mountains of South Asia (See Figure 6A and 6B below) with a population of approximately 26.5 million people (Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), 2011). Nepal is divided into 14 zones and 75 districts. Considered to be one of the poorest countries of the world, a majority of its people continue to live in small villages mainly distributed along the border it shares with India. While there are over 125 different ethnic groups within Nepal, with more than 50 languages and dialects (CBS, 2011), Nepali is considered the official language and the one most commonly spoken. While Hinduism accounts for approximately 80% of the Nepal population, Hindu beliefs are often combined with Buddhism, which accounts for another 10% (Bailey, 2015). Despite the fact that education is said to be compulsory for children between the ages of 6 and 11, the literacy rates for Nepali people older than fifteen was estimated in 2015 as still only 63% for males and 53% for females (Bailey, 2015). As has already been highlighted in Chapter 1, and as is shown in Figure 6 C below, the MOTO participants lived and taught in a village called ‘Mahendra Jyoti’ located in Kavrepalanchok District in the Bagmati Zone of central Nepal.

Figure 6: Location of MOTO Experience (Divided into 3 parts A, B & C)



The MOTO participants involved in this teaching experience taught in four schools within the Mahendra Jyoti community, including: Ganesh Bharati School; Shree Panchakanya Primary School; Sundaymai Primary School and Panauti Lower Secondary School. All four of the focus participants in this investigation taught in either Ganesh Bharati School or Shree Panchakanya Primary School. The contexts of these two schools are now outlined.

Ganesh Bharati School was the largest school in Mahendra Jyoti and catered for approximately 220 students from Kindergarten to Year 10. Three of the focus participants in this investigation were involved in teaching within this school and each chose a teaching partner to work with. Liam worked mainly with the Year 7 class and was partnered with Kirsten, Gaea with Year 8 who worked with Anna, and Caiden with Year 9 who was partnered with Joel. While Ganesh Bharati School was the largest school in the village, it was poorly equipped in relation to Australian schools.

The electricity connection to the school was unreliable and the classrooms were very bare and basic. Most classrooms resembled a concrete cell with wooden bench seats and desks each holding three or four students. Wooden window shutters usually remained swung open during class, which allowed airflow and acted as a constant reminder of the incredible beauty of the village in which the school was located. The school was located on a slight hill and looked out onto the rolling hills surrounding the village that were all covered with rice paddies.

Shree Panchakanya Primary School was the smallest school in Mahendra Jyoti with only about 30 students from Kindergarten to Year 5. Fonda, one of the focus participants, and her partner Emma were the only two pre-service teachers assigned to this school. The girls were given the responsibility of a small class of about 8 students, who were in either year four or five. This school, situated in a double story building on the side of the dirt road winding through the village, looked more like a small house then an educational institution as we know them.



Photograph 1: Ganesh Bharati School

The classrooms had dirt floors and corrugated iron roofs, with a single wooden window and door that allowed some light to infiltrate the otherwise dark spaces filled only by a couple of bench desks. The children in this school had limited proficiency in English, however, like most students in Nepal had a strong desire to learn.

Photograph 2: The Year 4/5 class inside Shree Panchakanya Primary School

MOTO participants

Before collecting the data, I needed to make an informed decision in relation to who the focus participants should be in this investigation. As has already been explained, it was important that this study accounted for the multiple perspectives of the population of participants involved. Qualitative research recognises the importance of 'purposeful sampling' (Check & Schutt, 2012) to ensure that the participants are chosen to adequately represent the target population. As I wanted to capture a wide range of perspectives, the 'purposeful sampling' technique that best suited this investigation was deemed to be maximum variation sampling (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Maximum variation sampling aims to understand a phenomenon through the selection of a small number of participants that maximize the diversity of perspectives available (Miles & Huberman, 1994). As a step towards selecting suitable focus participants I took on the advice offered by Roller and Lavrakas (2015) and made a list of the explicit characteristics I wished to adequately represent within my target population. These characteristics included gender, course of study, prior travel experience and age. As is shown in Table 3, this exercise revealed the following specific details in relation to the 21 pre-service teachers making up the entire population of my study.

Table 3: Characteristics of MOTO Nepal Participants

Characteristics		
Gender	12 Female	9 Male
Course of Study	8 Primary Pre-Service Teachers	13 Secondary Pre-Service Teachers
Prior Travel Experience	6 Had not travelled internationally before	15 Had travelled internationally before
Age	20 Participants aged between 19 – 22 years old	1 Participant aged between 23-26 years old

To ensure my focus participants were representative of the entire population I decided to select participants that covered the full array of varying characteristics identified within the total population. To achieve this purpose, I chose to have a mix of genders and also cater for students enrolled in both the Primary and Secondary teacher education courses. I also chose to include a blend of participants who had travelled overseas before and those who had never been outside of Australia. While the age differential was minimal, I made the decision to also select participants representative of the different ages identified.

I next had to determine how many participants I would use to conduct this study. While there are no fixed rules in qualitative research stipulating the ideal number of students to study (Check & Schutt, 2012; Lichtman, 2013), I recognised the importance of making an informed decision. In addition to adequately representing the total population of participants, I also considered: the complexity of my investigation; the homogenous nature of my population, the level of analysis required; and the finite resources available to me (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015). After a thorough consideration of the previous perspectives, while taking into account my past research experience with similar experiences and in talking with those more experienced than myself, I made the decision to select four participants. After carefully explaining the requirements and expectations of being a focus participant, as will be explained later in the chapter in relation to ethical procedures, I gained voluntary consent from each of the purposefully selected participants (Check & Schutt, 2012). The following table shows how the focus participants met the array of characteristics required to adequately represent the total population of participants involved in the experience.

Table 4: Characteristics of Focus Participants

Characteristics / Participant Names	Gender	Age	Course of Study	Travel Experience Overseas
Gaea	Female	20	Secondary Teaching	Extensive
Fonda	Female	19	Primary Teaching	Never
Liam	Male	21	Secondary Teaching	Never
Caiden	Male	23	Secondary Teaching	Moderate

Now that the context and details relating to the selection of participants has been explained, the remainder of this chapter highlights the specific 'bricolage' of research designs used in this investigation.

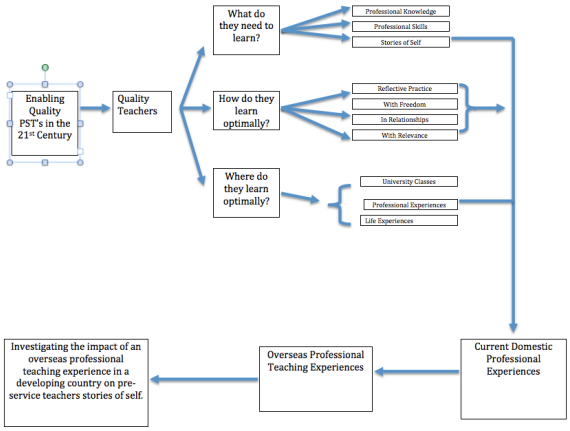
Bricolage of Research Designs - Data Collection Procedures

Researcher's journal

In providing a holistic account of this experience, it was important that multiple views of the story were shared (Creswell, 2014; Stake, 1995). Proponents of qualitative methodology highlight the importance of gathering information that details not only the researched but also the researcher (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Patton (2015) highlights the value of direct observations to allow the researcher to "see first hand what is going on," rather than relying on assumptions (p. 331). I have chosen to include my research journal as one of my data collection tools as it has been demonstrated to be an ideal tool to promote direct observations and reflective practice, in order to transform tacit knowledge into propositional or explicit knowledge (Lichtman, 2013; Niedderer, 2007). This journal formed a pivotal part of my own learning process and as is shown in the table below, was used extensively when constructing this story to: clarify my understandings of research literature and methodology; assist in

making sense of thoughts and experiences; provide contexts to stories told; and help inform the many decisions I was required to make throughout this investigation.

Table 5: Excerpts from Researcher's Journal

Purpose of Researchers Journal	Examples of excerpts from Researcher's Journal
Understanding Research Literature	<u>Excerpt taken from Research Journal - 28.8.2014</u> I am feeling overwhelmed at the moment. The literature surrounding my topic area seems so large and I keep getting lost in it. I think I am beginning to get a grasp of a majority of the major areas of study but I am just not sure how they all should be sequenced to make the most logical reading pathway for my audience. Major issues with present diagram I created is that it appears to have too many components and does not continue to link back to question. I also think my story takes too long at the beginning to feature the role of reflection and experiences in learning. 
Understanding Methodology	<u>Excerpt taken from Research Journal (First Methodology entry - 20.01.2011)</u> What I read on qualitative research today was exciting! One of the main differences of qualitative research is that it is focused on trying to understand rather than prove – I definitely like the sound of that and it makes so much more sense when speaking of exploring the impact of an experience on a person. I am not trying to prove anything in this study! This investigation is about listening to my participants to allow me to form an understanding of their actual experience. I like that! There is much work to be done. The things I keep reading about that I still need to understand better include: • Familiarise myself with the work of Kathy Charmaz on grounded theory • Read as much as I can on Qualitative research including interviews and coding • Read the handbook on qualitative research (Denzen and Lincoln) • Read work by Guba and Lincoln • Familiarise myself with terms including; emergent design, triangulation, emic and etic • Talk to Gwen about grounded theory – apparently she has had some experience in this area
Making sense of experiences	<u>Excerpt from Research Journal (Written during MOTO Experience – 9.05.2013)</u> Sometimes I question the value of these experiences for our teachers. There are so many struggles. Most of them come home exhausted at the end of each day. I feel their frustration as I watch them try to teach a group of Nepali students whose English ability is so low. I anxiously ask them at the end of each day how they went and while they are nearly always positive they always have a multitude of challenges and

	moments to share where they felt like failures. There is no-one in their classrooms to rescue them. There are next to no resources to rely on. Progress is slow and some days it feels like we are accomplishing very little. Some days I even question whether these experiences are worthwhile, but today wasn't one of those days. I delivered the lunches up to the mountain to Sunday Mai school today. They had experienced a tough day with behaviour management yesterday and I was anxious to hear if their day had been any better today. When I arrived their classes were working quietly and I assumed wrongly that today had gone smoothly. Once again they spoke of crazy kids and huge amounts of effort just to teach small concepts. Over lunch they talked constantly of challenges they had endured. Therapeutically they recounted struggles that individual students had tested them with. As I listened to them, one thing became very clear. They spoke about their classrooms, their kids, their problems, their mistakes. They were not sharing these problems with me and hoping I had an answer. They were sharing these problems because they were theirs to share. As a result of no other teachers to rely on they had taken ownership of their classrooms and as a result I believe had begun seeing themselves as teachers. At worst, I think these teachers saw themselves as failing teachers, and in reflection I am happy with that. As a teacher educator I would much prefer someone to describe them-selves as a teacher who had experienced failure than as a student teacher who had experienced success.
Provided context to participants' stories	Excerpt from Research Journal (Context of Village Home – 9.05.2013) I woke up at about 4.30am this morning and came up onto the roof to read and reflect. Mountains covered in rice paddies surround me! There is a small river that flows in the valley about 50m down from where we are living. It drops over a small waterfall creating a noisy rumble. The birds continue to chatter over the sleepy murmur of the cattle. There is nothing artificial here. While we are only an hour from Kathmandu, the mountains provide us with complete protection and solitude. I haven't heard or seen a car since arriving. This place is perfect. For the last hour other teammates have joined me on the roof. There are now 9 of us spread out on the roof. None of them have said a word. Mitch is sitting on the roof precariously as he always is and appears lost and very much at home in the surroundings. Kirsten is reading and constantly stops and looks around. The rest are madly writing in their journals. While this world feels like a different universe, I feel very at home here too.

Participant reflective journals

Creswell (2014) recommends the use of collection instruments that extend beyond observations. Participant reflective journals encourage participants to keep reflective accounts of their experiences, which the researcher reviews and analyses regularly as textual data (Scott & Garner, 2013). The use of participant reflective journals is common in qualitative research as they are believed to be a more reliable source than other retrospective tools, as they reduce the probability of memory error (Patton, 2015). Journaling has been shown to promote reflective practice and as such is commonly used as a qualitative technique in research that focuses on human experiences (Liamputtong, 2013). By encouraging participants to daily reflect on their experiences, by keeping a reflective journal, the participants in this investigation were provided with an avenue to share their voice in this story (Creswell, 2014).

As outlined by Scott and Garner (2013), participant reflective journals can be structured in advance by the researcher or written by the participants with little or no guidance. I chose to include both types of these tasks in the participants' reflective journals. My previous experiences, associated with taking pre-service teachers overseas, and the research literature from others had already provided me with useful knowledge that allowed me to provide pre-determined questions to my participants to focus their reflective writings. The pre-determined questions required the participants to reflect on the experiences and environments they were involved in and the impact each of these had on their personal and professional beliefs. I also wanted my participants to have freedom to write beyond the questions I imposed on them, to ensure that they were able to speak of other significant factors impacting their *stories of self*. These journal expectations were clearly outlined to all MOTO participants in Section C of their MOTO assignment, as shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Participant Journal Expectations

Section C - Daily Journal

Purchase and keep a Journal for the entire overseas experience. This diary will be used to document your entire MOTO experience. Each day you will be expected to spend a minimum of twenty (20) minutes recording the reflections of your day. These reflections should include;

1. Your personal narrative – feel free to write about all of your adventures. I hope that this part of your journal will capture all of your experiences. While you will be very busy overseas, you should plan on documenting your personal story each day for at least 10 minutes. What are you experiencing? What happened each day to you that you never want to forget? What/who has really impacted you? The more you can record under this section the more memories you will have to share in the future!
2. Reflection questions – in addition to your personal narratives, you are expected to answer key reflection questions most days. These questions have been designed to encourage you to reflect on the impact that this experience is having on you throughout your experience. These reflection questions are attached at the back of this assignment. Please stick these questions into your diary and spend at least 10 minutes recording your reflections on each one at the specified time.

Part two of the participant journals was structured using pre-determined reflective questions. These questions were derived from a careful exploration of the research literature and from previous pilot studies (Hinze, 2008; Hinze & Fitzsimmons, 2013) that had served to provide direction on the nature of the impact of overseas professional teaching experiences. A similar set of questions was trialed on the previous cohort of students and was modified as required in consultation with MOTO participants and research colleagues. In total, this investigation

required each of the participants to reflect on 38 different questions over their MOTO experience.

These structured journal reflections commenced three months prior to departure and continued up to 2 months after the participants had returned home post-experience. The questions that directed the participants' structured reflections were divided into 9 key categories. All of these categories are shown in Figure 8 following, including a sample question for each. All 38 questions that each of the pre-service teachers responded to, are shown in Appendix 1.

Figure 8: Sample Participant Journal Reflective Questions

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Pre Take-Off (Complete prior to departure)

What do you think are the key stories (or steps in your life) that were pivotal in you choosing to go on this adventure?

Aeroplane! (Complete while flying)

Draw a flow chart/diagram/picture that describes how you are feeling now. Write a paragraph under this drawing describing what it represents. What are you looking forward to most about this experience? What are you most afraid of?

Beginning (From Touch down in Nepal to beginning of teaching experience)

You have just arrived in a new country! Describe what you have experienced and how it has impacted you.

Commencing Teaching Experience

Week 1 of Teaching

Where are you living, what are you feeling, what are you doing, what are you thinking?

Week 2 of Teaching

Compare this experience to your last teaching experience. What are the main differences? Which do you believe is more conducive to real learning? Reflect and explain.

Week 3 of Teaching

Today you are sending yourself a letter in Australia that you can expect to receive in 3 months time (postage is slow from this country!). In this letter to yourself share what you have learnt about yourself, your world, and the way you want to live your life. What have you learnt from this experience that you never want to forget? Once your letter is complete you will be provided with an envelope. Please write the address you wish this letter to be sent on the outside of the envelope with your name and hand it to your Avondale Supervisor. This letter will be sent to you!

Travel Component (From completion of teaching to end of in-country travel)
How did you notice yourself relating differently to the country and its people at the end of your

teaching experience when compared to when you first arrived in the country?

Return Flight (Complete this reflection question on your final flight into Australia)

How do you believe this MOTO experience has impacted you as a pre-service teacher and as a person? Have you changed? If so how?

Home again (From return to Australia to due date of professional experience folder)

Let's pretend you have been assigned the role of sabotaging next years MOTO experience. Your role is to change the experience to minimise the impact it has on the pre-service teachers. Describe five (5) ideas you would implement to sabotage the experience and list them in order from most detrimental to least detrimental.

Interviews

Interviews are a common method used in qualitative research where the researcher is provided with an opportunity to ask in depth questions (Rossman & Rallis, 2012; Yin, 2015). They can be aimed to explore the "insider perspective," by capturing the participants "own words, thoughts, perceptions, feelings and experiences" (Liamputtong, 2013, p. 52). Interviews can be powerful tools in gaining insight into how participants are making sense of themselves and their world through their own constructions, reconstructions and projections of their lived experiences (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). While a researcher can witness human behaviour through observations, interviews allow the researcher to acquire deep understanding of what the focus participants are thinking and feeling and also help to explain the researcher's observations (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015).

Liamputtong (2013) advises that the success of effective interviewing is closely related to the relationship that exists between the researcher and the participant. To develop this relationship, I was determined to structure my meetings to be like conversations that would naturally foster an "interchange of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest" (Kvale, 1996, p. 2). Participants were interviewed in a setting in which they felt comfortable and the questions asked were not leading or reflective of my own personal viewpoints. Whenever possible, I encouraged the participants' own responses to be explored and used probe questions such as, "Can you tell me more about…" to gain in depth data (Charmaz, 2006, p. 26).

I realised that the questions driving these conversations would need to remain responsive to the participants' experiences. As such, the questions asked were often related to: my observations of them as recorded in my research journal; and their reflections, as shared in

their reflective journals and as revealed in their interview responses (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). I decided that a semi-structured interview design (Patton, 2015) would be most suitable in achieving my goal to conduct an interview that was conversational in nature and responsive to my participants (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015). While I created interview guides (Rossman & Rallis, 2012) for each of my semi-structured interviews, the conversations that took place during my interviews, with each of the focus participants, frequently focused outside of my prepared questions and explored themes highlighted within the interview. As suggested by Corbin and Morse (2003) a semi-structured interview guide was used for all interviews conducted and included a pre-interview phase, a tentative phase, an immersion phase, and a phase of emergence. The interview guide that provided the structure for my first interview, conducted two weeks prior to departure, is included in Appendix 2 as a sample of the process followed in all interviews.

As already briefly highlighted in relation to the emergent nature of this investigation my original intent was to only use semi-structured interviews. This changed when my focus participants requested my permission to record some of their stories and thoughts using a Go-Pro camera early in their MOTO experience. According to them, they felt more comfortable talking their thoughts out rather than always just recording them in their journals. It is not uncommon within qualitative research for the participants' perspectives to inform the methodological design chosen (Roulston, 2010) and as such I encouraged the practice. That night I cleared out one of the storage rooms and set up a permanent camera that could be used whenever the participants desired. The conversations that occurred within this room over the next few weeks proved to be powerful, as they allowed the participants to reflect on experiences immediately without fear of judgment. Many of these unstructured interviews (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015) held much value in this investigation. An excerpt from one of these interviews is provided in Figure 9 to demonstrate the type of stories that were shared as a result of unstructured interviews.

Figure 9: Example of Unstructured Interview Data

Excerpt from one of the many unstructured interviews – Gaea – 24.06.2013

…I just wanna tell a story from today. Mitchell and I were walking home from Panauti and we're about 15 minutes from home and these people were rice planting like on these crazy fields; and so we ran out there and joined them. Yeah, it was just so cool. We honestly— I felt like we were just communicating and laughing the whole time even though we spoke like three words in each other's languages. So after I get past, "How are you?" and, "What is your name?" I've got nothing left. So basically, we started singing, like we had a kind of a little riff-off like on Pitch Perfect and they sang in Nepali, then we sang in Australian back and forth. It was just so cool and then right at the end they were like, "Do you wanna come over for lunch or dinner?" But we're like, "Yeah, let's go to that house." Yeah, it was just so cool. Because in Australia, if you helped someone they would never just invite you home for dinner…

The focus participants were each involved in five semi-structured interviews and a number of unstructured interviews as determined by their own desire. The details for each of the semi-structured and informal interviews are shown in Tables 6 and 7.

Table 6: Semi-structured Interview Details

Participant	Interview One	Interview Two	Interview Three	Interview Four	Interview Five
Gaea	10th June, 2013 (48 minutes)	15th June, 2013 (35 minutes)	25th June, 2013 (55 minutes)	9th July (47 minutes)	14th July (68 minutes)
Fonda	10th June, 2013 (62 minutes)	14th June, 2013 (41 minutes)	25th June, 2013 (65 minutes)	8th July (41 minutes)	14th July (58 minutes)
Liam	10th June, 2013 (52 minutes)	15th June, 2013 (38 minutes)	26th June, 2013 (62 minutes)	8th July (43 minutes)	15th July (64 minutes)
Caiden	10th June, 2013 (58 minutes)	14th June, 2013 (45 minutes)	25th June, 2013 (50 minutes)	9th July (39 minutes)	14th July (56 minutes)

Table 7: Informal Participant Interview Details

Participant	Interview One	Interview Two	Interview Three	Interview Four	Interview Five
Gaea	19th June, 2013 (18 minutes)	24th June, 2013 (11 minutes)	2nd July, 2013 (7 minutes)	5th July, 2013 (15 minutes)	
Fonda	19th June, 2013 (13 minutes)	21st June, 2013 (19 minutes)	24th June, 2013 (16 minutes)	2nd July, 2013 (11 minutes)	
Liam	19th June, 2013 (23 minutes)	24th June, 2013 (16 minutes)	2nd July, 2013 (9 minutes)	7th July, 2013 (17 minutes)	11th July, 2013 (12 minutes)
Caiden	19th June, 2013 (12 minutes)	21st June, 2013 (8 minutes)	24th June, 2013 (15 minutes)	2nd July, 2013 (13 minutes)	5th July, 2013 (18 minutes)

Patton (2015) highlights the importance of the choices made in relation to how an interview is recorded when he states that regardless of the quality of the participants' responses it "all comes to naught if you fail to capture the actual words of the person being interviewed" (p. 471). Typically, qualitative researchers record information stemming from interviews using handwritten notes, audio recorders or video recorders (Creswell, 2014). While handwritten notes can prove useful in making sense of the interview, Scott and Garner (2013) suggest that it can also be an overwhelming task for the researcher and prove distracting for the participant, due to the pure volume of information shared. To record as much detail as possible from the interview, to assist in the analysis phase, I chose to video record both the semi-structured and unstructured interviews that took place within this investigation (Patton, 2015). Check and Schutt (2012) suggest that most researchers have found that recording devices do little to inhibit the interviewees and are often simply ignored. I found this to be true for this investigation. Using a video recording device allowed me as the interviewer to remain attentive to what the participants were sharing during the semi-structured interviews, and also capture the context and expressions of the interviewee. Notes were only taken to aid the interview process and highlight key points shared that I wanted to explore more at a later time in the interview.

After each interview, I personally transcribed each of the video recordings into a word processing document to provide for a thorough analysis and as far as possible limit my

personal bias when interpreting the individual transcripts (Ary et al., 2010). The findings that emerged, from all the data collected, were used to inform my next level of questioning within the interview process (Creswell, 2014). To demonstrate the iterative process, I was involved in within this investigation, I have included an excerpt from my Research Journal that highlights how an analysis of a portion of the participants' reflective journals, influenced the design of the proceeding interview planning.

Figure 10: Emergent Design Demonstrated in Interview Process

Excerpt taken from Research Journal - 20.06.2013

I had a good day today. Last night I asked if I could have another read of the focus participants' journal entries focused on their experiences since the beginning of the teaching experience. They were more than happy for me to have a read and when I got up this morning their journals were all in a pile outside my door. After they went to school, I took their journals and went to the rooftop. Their reflective journals seemed to be really fostering deep reflection. I want to follow up some of the recurring themes with them in our next interview together.

Fonda –Fonda is writing a lot about Separation – "I'm leaving all my life behind to live in another country". She appears to be feeling a little alone at times. Not fitting in. Is this the case? What is making her feel alone? Is this impacting her ability to teach? Why does she feel alone?

Liam – Initially unsure about wanting to be a teacher. Afraid of not being prepared for experience – not being ready for teaching. He promised that a MOTO trip would make him come out as a teacher – I think that is why he came. Is it working? How?

Gaea – she writes about wanting to gain clarity. What does she think is causing this confusion within her? Wants to discover where she is and where she wants to go. She appears to be being impacted by the Nepali kids respect and love of learning. Gaea has an ability to laugh at her mistakes. I would like to know how she receives support to overcome challenges. What is it about Gaea that allows her to have permission to experiment and make mistakes and learn without losing confidence?

Caiden – Hoping this experience will make him more tolerant. Felt unprepared for this experience. Worried he would not be able to teach. Saw a student from last year as becoming more creative and innovative. After initial 2 days in Nepal school he began questioning choice of wanting to be a teacher. Having taught solo on Wednesday his confidence was boosted. He highlighted the difference of physical lives between Australia and Nepal. Questions I want to ask Caiden – What happened on Wednesday? It appears that his has really grown in confidence? Is that right? If so how and why?

Participant documents

Qualitative inquiries commonly involve researchers using documents as a rich source of information in their studies (Check & Schutt, 2012; Liamputtong, 2013). Documents often used include: school work documents (Patton, 2015); photographs (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000); and letters (Patton, 2015). In addition to the participants' reflective journals, each of the pre-service teachers involved in the MOTO experience were required to complete self-reflections on a series of directed reflective questions as part of their mandated professional teaching assignment. Three of these reflective tasks were significant to this investigation's research question and were subsequently chosen as additional sources of data. While the

entire assignment is included in Appendix 3, the three sections of most significance to this investigation (Section F, G & H) are shown in Table 8. All three of these components were submitted by each of the focus participants as text and were analysed using the processes soon to be explained.

Table 8: Documentation Used as Data from Teaching Assignment

Section of Assignment	Specific Details
Section F – Service Initiative	In addition to your teaching responsibilities, each of you are to spend approximately one (1) hour engaged in serving the community you are living in each day. This service activity is completely up to you, but must include interaction with people from the host country and should be completed independently or in pairs. Search out a need in the community you find yourself and then seek to fill this need. Ideas that students have done in the past include: • Reading to children in orphanage at night • Assisting the cooks prepare meals • Teaching children guitar / piano / English • Forming a choir and prepare for a special item • Gardening with locals • Helping children with a cleaning / maintenance project • Playing sport/games after school with children To show evidence of what you have done you will need to do the following 1. Explain the need you identified and explain your service plan – what you intend to do about the need (200 words) 2. Each day you take part in your service activity record the approximate time and duration of your service. Get this sheet signed by your Avondale Supervisor at the conclusion of the service initiative. 3. Write a 500-word summary of your service initiative focusing on the impact you believe this experience has had on you as a person. How did this service initiative change you?
Section G	Select five (5) photographs from your experience that you believe best captures your MOTO experience? Explain why you chose each photo and share the story behind it that means so much to you. How do you think the experience, captured in the photo, has impacted you? Explain.
Section H	In approximately 750 words (2 pages) answer the following question. Let's pretend that time travel is now possible. You are given the opportunity to travel back in time to a week before you signed up to be involved in this MOTO experience and meet your old self. Compare the person you once were to the person you believe you are now. How are you different? What were you impacted by the most? How have you changed from being involved in this experience?

Quality Criteria for Data Evaluation

This inquiry sought to reveal the negotiated understandings (Liamputtong, 2013) of a group of pre-service teachers involved in an overseas professional experience in a developing country. Qualitative research recognises that researchers are each biased by their personal beliefs, paradigms and perspectives, and unless strategies are implemented it is likely that these biases will inevitably influence the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 2013; Patton, 2015). The traditional approach of achieving objectivity is no longer a goal of qualitative research (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). Rather than claiming to remove themselves from the study, qualitative researchers attempt to include themselves in the research, as they acknowledge that the findings of the analysis are developed as a result of a negotiation of understanding between participants and between participants and researcher (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2014).

The purpose of this section is to outline the specific strategies used in this investigation to achieve a high level of quality (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). Narrative researchers do not claim that their results correspond exactly with reality and therefore do not refer to their findings as generalizable truth (Polkinghorne, 1988). Narrative inquirers are not attempting to find a single truth but rather to represent the multiple realities of human experience expressed by the participants' stories. Like Charmaz (2014), I have chosen the term 'humans as constructivists' rather than the more traditional term 'researcher as instrument' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), to describe the strategies that have been employed in this investigation that have involved both myself and my participants in reaching quality findings (Lincoln & Guba, 2013) through a co-constructive process.

As mentioned, multiple strategies were implemented within this investigation to enhance the quality of the study. These strategies were based on the work of Lincoln and Guba (2013), who identified the five essential criteria to be included in an inquiry for it to be considered as a quality investigation (2013, p 70). Table 9 highlights these five criteria, provides a definition for each, and demonstrates the "validity strategies" (Creswell, 2014) to be employed if quality is to be achieved (Lincoln & Guba, 2013, p. 71). Once a definitive list of these validity strategies is identified, discussion then follows to demonstrate my ability as the

researcher to ensure the quality of the findings and help assure the readers of the quality of this investigation.

Table 9: Defining and Demonstrating Quality of Research

Lincoln and Guba's (2013) criteria for the evaluation of quality of research	*Validity Strategies - How has this been achieved within this investigation?*
Fairness is determined by an assessment of the extent to which all competing constructions have been accessed, exposed, deconstructed, and taken into account in shaping the inquiry product	✓ *Triangulation* ✓ *Prolonged engagement* ✓ *Researcher's bias shared* ✓ *Member Checking* ✓ *Peer debriefing conducted* Rich descriptions provided
Ontological Authenticity is determined by an assessment of the extent to which individual constructions, including that of the inquirer, have themselves become more informed and sophisticated, or the extent to which individuals themselves become aware of constructions that they did not realise they held until the inquiry brought them from the tacit to the propositional level.	✓ *Researcher's bias shared* ✓ *Member Checking* ✓ *Triangulation*
Educative Authenticity is determined by an assessment of the extent to which individuals, including the inquirer, have become more understanding of, more sophisticated about, and more tolerant of the constructions of others.	✓ *Triangulation* ✓ *Peer debriefing conducted* ✓ *Prolonged engagement* Member Checking
Catalytic Authenticity is determined by the extent to which action (clarifying the focus at issue, moving to eliminate or ameliorate the problem, sharpening values) is stimulated and facilitated by the inquiry.	✓ *Triangulation* ✓ *Prolonged engagement* ✓ *Researcher's bias shared* ✓ *Member Checking* ✓ *Peer debriefing conducted* Rich descriptions provided
Tactical Authenticity is determined by an assessment of the extent to which individuals are empowered	✓ *Member checking* ✓ *Prolonged engagement* ✓ *Triangulation*

The following sections discuss the methods for assessing the quality of the research employed in this investigation, as recommended by Lincoln and Guba (2013) and Creswell (2014), and the ways in which each contributed to the quality of the study is demonstrated.

Triangulation

As triangulation was defined earlier under the heading 'Triangulation and Qualitative Research' it will not be re-explained here. In listing triangulation as the first of his eight validity strategies, Creswell (2014) identified it as being the most frequently used and easy to use tool to increase the quality of an investigation. This investigation involved participant journals, semi-structured interviews and different forms of documentation, which allowed me

as the researcher to triangulate the different sources when evaluating my findings for consistency and variation (Check & Schutt, 2012; Patton, 2015). The triangulation process was relied on regularly throughout this study to ensure that the data collected appropriately informed the inquiry product (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). An example of this is shown in Table 10, where there was little question of the fairness of the emerging theme of 'belonging,' as a result of triangulation across different members, and through an exploration of the same individual's input using different data sources (Creswell, 2014; Lichtman, 2013).

Table 10: Triangulation as a Tool for Ensuring Quality

Participant Names	Participant Journals	Participant Interviews	Researchers Journal
Gaea	"I think all of us living in the same house made us bond as a group" (20.7.13)	"There are people here that I can bounce my ideas off and just talk to" (24.6.13)	"Today felt really special and I think a part of the reason was that our team has really assimilated with this community. We are no longer intruders but have connected with the schools we have been assigned and have really been made to feel a part of their lives." (3.7.13)
Fonda	"Everyone here has been so great in helping me get to this point, past all my negative thoughts and struggles" (12.7.13)	"I'm surrounded by the most amazing group of people" (7.7.13)	
Liam	"the situation requires us to form professional and friendship bonds with each other" (23.6.13)	"I just realised that I'm the foreigner here and umm I'm being accepted into the group" (26.6.13)	
Caiden	"The community and celebration were just awesome" (24.6.13)	"Real bonding experience" (24.6.13)	

Member checking

Whenever attempting to tell another's story, it is important to ensure the researcher has correctly understood it by regularly inviting feedback from those to whom the stories originally belonged (Creswell, 2014). This process, known as member checking, adds to the quality of stories shared, as the participants are provided with an opportunity to correct misinterpretations or errors in the story being co-constructed and shared (Lichtman, 2013). Member checking was an ongoing procedure in this study, as all focus participants were provided with multiple opportunities to check and comment on the perceived stories emerging from their journals, interviews, and documentation evidence. I continually sought clarification with the participants in relation to my understandings of their stories shared, including: the major findings; the emerging themes; the constructivist grounded theory as it developed; the contexts of the stories being told; and also their final stories as expressed in

Chapter 4 (Creswell, 2014). This process of member checking continued until we, myself as the researcher and all the participants, mutually agreed on the stories being told. Including member checking as one of the strategies greatly enhanced the quality of this investigation. While member checking occurred continually, the major member checking dates that took place with each participant are shown in Table 11.

Table 11: Major Member Checking Dates

Participant Names	Major Findings	Constructivist grounded theory	Contexts of Stories	Chapter 4 Final Story
Gaea	12.6.2013, 31.6.13, 11.7.2013, 10.10.2013	15.5.2014 20.08.2014 16.09.2015	12.6.2013, 31.6.13, 11.7.2013, 10.10.2013	17.08.2015, 19.08.2015
Fonda	11.6.2013, 30.6.13, 11.7.2013, 11.10.2013	19.5.2014 20.08.2014 18.09.2015	11.6.2013, 30.6.13, 11.7.2013, 11.10.2013	23.09.2015, 30.09.2015
Liam	12.6.2013, 30.6.13, 11.7.2013, 12.10.2013	19.5.2014 20.08.2014 16.09.2015	12.6.2013, 30.6.13, 11.7.2013, 12.10.2013	14.10.2015, 26.10.2015, 29.10.2015
Caiden	11.6.2013, 30.6.13, 11.7.2013, 10.10.2013	15.5.2014 22.08.2014 14.09.2015	11.6.2013, 30.6.13, 11.7.2013, 10.10.2013	12.11.2015, 23.11.2015

Rich descriptions

The inclusion of rich descriptions as a component of qualitative inquiries is suggested to add to the depth of investigations as they allow the reader to achieve a greater ability to interpret the findings when they have been provided with the opportunity to share in the experience (Creswell, 2014; Scott & Garner, 2013). Whenever possible, I have attempted to transport the reader to the context in which the study took place by vividly describing the investigations location, cultural and physical setting, social contexts and participants' past experiences. The selection of four participants also allowed the reader to experience the same experience from different perspectives. These rich descriptions, found throughout this inquiry, add to the quality of the story shared. Two of my personal diary entries are included below as examples of the types of rich descriptions that were recorded throughout the overseas professional experience.

Figure 11: Example of Rich Descriptions Recorded

Excerpt taken from Research Journal - 18.06.2013

Yesterday was our first day at school. The plan was to allow the teachers to observe how the schools and classrooms normally run. The day started with a massive ceremony at Ganesh Bharati school. There was a tunnel of children waiting for us when we arrived. Each was holding a flower or a lae and as we walked through they would come out of the line and cover us with flowers. It was amazing! By the time we made it to the school many of the teachers could barely hold all the flowers they had been given. So much time and effort had been invested into welcoming us! It was special for all our team to experience this together. After a military like assembly the school children filed off systematically to their classrooms. I was keen for our teachers to get into the classrooms as quickly as possible to observe each period and meet the teachers involved, however, the school wanted to make us tea. This country runs on a different time system to Australia. I always feel like I am wanting to push things along and it is hard to resist this temptation and just be willing to fit in with their culture. I know I can learn a lot from their way of life. Community and relationships always appear to come first.

Excerpt taken from Research Journal - 26.06.2013

Many of our teachers have learnt Nepali words and use them to ask students to sit, stand, come, and be quiet. Liam requests his students to sit down after entering their classroom with the word 'Bosa'. He knows all his students by name and the class is quiet and organised. The classroom is now more colourful then when he first arrived. There are Australian flags crossing the ceiling, coloured pictures of animals stuck on the wall and flower pots made from cutting plastic drinking bottles lining the front of the classroom, obviously waiting to come to life for a class on plants he is currently teaching. Liam is humble and quiet in everything he does. He always waits until everyone has eaten before eating at our team meal times. He never speaks without a purpose and is always reluctant to stand in the spotlight. He is a hard working capable and knowledgeable teacher who is unique. He appears more confident in the classroom now because he is allowed to be himself.

Clarify bias

An important step in building the quality of this study was to be completely transparent in regards to the personal biases of myself as the researcher. Qualitative researchers typically attempt to place themselves in the investigation by openly sharing their personal beliefs, paradigms and perspectives, as they recognise that it is impossible to completely disconnect who they are from how they interpret (Creswell, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 2013). As I was one of the co-constructors of this narrative, I deemed it important to clarify my potential biases early in the study (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). As suggested by Creswell (2014), I chose to openly share my gender, culture, past experiences and beliefs with my audience, as an integral part of this study. By including my personal background in the prologue of this thesis, it was hoped that the reader may be placed in a stronger position to understand this investigation, by considering how my biases may have influenced the way I had interpreted and approached this study (Scott & Garner, 2013).

Inclusion of discrepant information

This study is not the story of those participants whose voices were the loudest or which harmonised the best. In light of the complexity of real life, Creswell (2014) suggests that an investigation's account should aim to incorporate a range of perspectives, irrespective of whether the arguments presented are in alignment or contrary to the overall emerging themes. Taking on the suggestions of Patton (2015), this study attempted to deal openly with the complexities that emerged when information surfaced that did not lead the reader towards a single conclusion. This investigation has attempted to provide a stage for those solitary voices that spoke in contrary to the major themes that emerged. By attempting to present all perspectives, this investigation aimed to place the reader in a strong position to make their own decisions about the overall plausibility of the negative cases that appear to deviate from the dominant patterns (Liamputtong, 2013; Patton, 2015). This story finds its plot in a real life experience and as such discusses a dichotomy of perspectives at times (Patton, 2015).

Prolonged time in the field

Qualitative researchers are in general agreement that the quality of a study is strengthened when researchers acquire an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon by spending prolonged periods of time in the field (Creswell, 2015; Rossman & Rallis, 2012; Scott & Garner, 2013). Babbie (2014) speaks of the importance of a researcher being in the setting and with the participants for a substantial amount of time in order to provide them with the ability to gain a deep understanding of the real experience under investigation. While I initially considered conducting my research across a variety of MOTO sites, including Cambodia and India, I decided that focusing this investigation in only one location would provide the opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of the context of the study, and develop meaningful and ongoing relationships with the focus participants. In this investigation I was afforded the unique opportunity to share the entire 37-day overseas MOTO experience with each of my participants. We ate most meals together and shared the same house each night. We met every morning together before breakfast and debriefed every evening together after school. While the participants were placed in different schools during the day, all four of the focus participants were placed in schools within 1km of each other, which allowed me to visit each of them frequently. One of the real strengths of this study is the amount of time I as the researcher was able to spend actively involved in the experience and with each of the focus participants.

Peer debriefing

Creswell (2014) and Patton (2015) suggest that inviting a peer debriefer or critical friend to review and ask questions about the study can really strengthen the quality of an investigation. I regularly met with a small team of three people and shared the decisions I was making in relation to my design and analysis to ensure my interpretations were reasonable and that my account would resonate with an external audience (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). This team was chosen with non-vested interest (Guba & Lincoln,1985) and included academics from diverse research backgrounds (Spillett, 2003) who were experienced in the topic, population or design being used (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 1998). Two of these peers were familiar with my paradigm and topic while the third had little knowledge of the area of study or of the chosen design but an extensive knowledge in different types of research. These sessions were normally audio-recorded to ensure valuable feedback was not lost and was adequately reflected upon. While these sessions helped to keep me accountable, they also served useful in providing me with a team of people I could bounce my ideas off (Babbie, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In speaking openly of my ideas and explaining my thoughts and the decisions I had made, I often gained clarity of once suppressed thoughts and emotions. I found that involving this small team of people throughout my investigation really helped add quality to the overall findings and account of this study.

The use of the above explained strategies, in collaboration with each other, have all contributed to the strength of this investigation. This chapter now briefly outlines the ethical procedures that have taken place in this inquiry.

Ethical Procedures

Ethical considerations have featured heavily in all aspects of this qualitative investigation (Creswell, 2014; Patton, 2015). Avondale granted ethical approval for the commencement of this study in March 2013. Procedures used throughout this investigation have been guided by associated protocols.

The four focus participants were provided with detailed information in relation to the purpose and procedures of the inquiry by way of an information session and information letter. The information letter (see Appendix 4) clearly outlined information such as: the purpose of the

project; expectations of them as participants; possible risks or inconveniences; and details in relation to confidentiality and dissemination of results. The focus participants willingly completed a consent form (see Appendix 5) and were reminded throughout the investigation that their involvement was voluntary and they could withdraw from the investigation at any time free from prejudice. While all focus participants were given the option of being assigned a pseudonym, each of the participants chose to be referred to by their given names. All surnames have been omitted to ensure some confidentiality.

Throughout the study, participants were constantly involved in a member checking process that provided them with the opportunity to remove or change any details they felt uncomfortable sharing. All information in this investigation that relates to specific individuals, including journal entries and photographs, have been included in this inquiry with consent from those involved. All information collected or stored using electronic equipment have always been protected within a password protected computer belonging to Avondale and all hard copy records have remained stored in a locked filing cabinet in the Faculty of Education, Business & Science.

Analysis and Reporting Procedures

As already explained, this investigation aimed to develop a constructivist grounded theory to explain the impact of an overseas professional teaching experience, in a developing country, on pre-service teachers' *stories of self*. As such, I chose to use the data analysis tools argued by Charmaz (2014) as being the most methodologically appropriate for constructivist grounded theory investigations. As a proponent of the constructivist grounded theory approach, it was very important for me to ensure that all parts of this theory emerged from the actual experiences of my participants (Glaser, 1998; Patton, 2015). Scott and Garner (2013) highlight the important role that the analysis and reporting procedures play in achieving this goal. It is the intent of this section to demonstrate, using specific examples, how the data analysis and reporting procedures employed within this investigation have consistently been used to ensure the data accurately shaped the developed theory. According to Charmaz (2014), the three major components of data analysis are: initial coding; focused coding and theoretical coding.

Initial coding

The starting point for qualitative data analysis is coding (Creswell, 2014; Liamputtong, 2013). Coding is the process of generating categories of information according to themes (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). For those involved in constructivist grounded theory research, this process begins as soon as the researcher enters the field (Liamputtong, 2013). While the data analysis processes were iterative in nature (Creswell, 2014) they are each explained separately to assist the readers understand each of the key components involved. The first type of coding explored is known as initial coding (Charmaz, 2014).

Initial coding occurs when the researcher reflects on the data received and reads the text line-by-line or incident-by-incident to find the major meanings. For this task to be completed, Charmaz (2014) highlights the value of understanding the importance of transcription, memoing and the use of gerunds. These techniques are now briefly reviewed before an example of how initial coding was implemented in this investigation.

Patton (2015) promotes the practice of transcribing all data into text, as it allows the researcher to gain a rich understanding of what the participants are sharing that may otherwise be lost even by experienced qualitative researchers who rely on fieldwork notes alone. I personally chose to transcribe each of the participants' interviews, reflective journals and documentation myself, including contextual details, as it allowed me to adequately pause, digest and reflect thoroughly on what they had shared (Clarke, 2005; Corbin & Strauss, 2014). A sample of the transcription process is shown in Figure 12. Each of the transcriptions was thorough and included as many details as possible in order to assist with interpretation. While this was a lengthy process, it allowed me to revisit interviews and experiences easily throughout the analysis phases as new themes and research questions arose.

Figure 12: Example of Transcription Process

Excerpt taken from Caiden's Interview – 25.06.2013
Context: Interview taking place on the front veranda of the house we are staying. It is approximately 8pm and Caiden has now been teaching for about 10 days. Researcher: In your journal you mentioned that you have been enjoying teaching over this last week. Has there been a highlight so far from teaching? Caiden: Umm (3 second pause), I reckon just incorporating just even small little props or posters or something like, the other day I whipped up a coke bottle with a balloon on the inside and then a balloon on the outside and as soon as you pull the bottom, it acts as a diaphragm and starts inflating the balloon at the top, sort of like a lung. So they could see like when I breathe in, it inflates. So they could see and they could relate to it rather than saying oh this is actually what happens. They could actually see what happens in the body. (Small pause as Caiden tries to think of another highlight before proceeding). And then the same, we whipped up a Pringles can, chopped off half the top of a bottle and then put it on and we used them as stethoscopes. And just so kids could hear, cause we did the circulatory system today, they could actually hear what our heart was doing. And then when we explained it, like the da doom, da doom (Caiden thumping his chest as he speaks), they actually knew what we were talking about.

Once the data had been transcribed, I read over the data on multiple occasions, which allowed me to develop a "general sense" (Creswell, 2009, p. 185) of the overall meanings of the data and enter into the lived experiences of the MOTO participants (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). As suggested by Saldana (2013), I then began separate my data into discrete parts to examine them. This process, known as line-by-line coding, forced me to slow down and engage in analytical thinking, which helped me create links between the data collected and the emerging conceptual framework (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). I attempted to give each sentence of data a label or code (as is shown in column one of Table 12), to ensure all parts of the data received were adequately considered in the overall analysis (Patton, 2015). These codes were used extensively in analysing the data in this constructivist grounded theory investigation and went beyond mere sorting and sifting and aimed to discover the theoretical meanings of the data (Charmaz, 2014). One technique recommended by Charmaz (2014) to achieve this purpose is to search for gerunds to allow the researcher to "code data as actions" (p.116). By seeing action in each segment of data, researchers tend to avoid applying pre-existing themes to the data before the required analytical work has been completed (Charmaz, 2014). As is shown in column one of Table 12, gerunds were commonly used when coding the data received.

As was suggested by Rossman and Rallis (2012) and shown in column three of Table 12, I also used memo writing extensively throughout my investigation to encourage the level of analytical thinking required. These short notes to myself, and sometimes others (Patton, 2015) often involved the identification of: emerging themes; possible links between different data collected; and questions that needed to be answered to clarify my confusion. It was often these memos' that directed the decisions made in relation to further data collected (Charmaz, 2014).

Table 12: Sample Coding Analysis Table

Initial Codes that emerged	Sample of Transcription of Gaea's (Journal 24th June, 2013)	Memo's written
Feeling support *Connecting to others* *Experimenting* *Experiencing freedom* *Learning quickly from mistakes* *Experiencing reality*	I think a major difference is the support that we have here on MOTO. If I need help planning or finding resources there is always someone keen to help out whereas last prac, my prac teacher didn't offer to help and it felt like I was a burden on her workload. In this MOTO experience I feel like I can try different teaching methods and ideas and if they don't work then I learn pretty quickly not to do it again. If we make mistakes here it's ok but felt when I made mistakes last prac the teacher was judging me and there was less room for mistakes. I think the MOTO trip is more conducive to real learning because there is the freedom to try new things and learn which things work and which things don't. At my last teaching experience, I only taught 2-3 lessons a day and was stressing about those going well, but here we are in the classroom for the whole day.	*Knowing she is supported by team appears very important to Gaea.* *Why doesn't she feel like a burden?* *Why is she free to experiment? Is this connected to her feeling accepted ie belonging?* Gaea appears to enjoy the experience as it reflects real teaching. Is this the case? Is she adapting? How?

Ongoing reflection and memo writing assisted with the complex task of analysis while continuing to develop concepts without becoming overwhelmed (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). A sample of the initial coding that took place is shown in Table 12. A more complete example for this same participant can be found in Appendix 6.

The final codes that emerged as a result of the line-by-line coding processes were not coded in isolation. This investigation incorporated a constant comparative method of data analysis (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Corbin & Strauss, 2014) where I as the researcher continued to compare the data throughout each phase of the investigation (Charmaz, 2014). As such, the initial coding process continually made comparisons between: the same data source for each participant over time; different data sources for the same participants; and also between the data collected from different participants (Boeije, 2002; Cohen et al., 2007). As is expected within this stage of analysis, an extensive list of diversified codes arose (Liamputtong, 2013). Table 13 shows a list of the initial codes that emerged from the focus participants to represent the analysed information from the three main data sources. It is important to note that these codes were provisional and subsequently were revisited often and continued to change throughout the next two phases of coding (Charmaz, 2014).

Table 13: List of Initial Codes Developed from All Data Sources

Participant Documentation	Participant Reflective Journals	Interviews
SECTION F + Letter Home	Living in community	Desiring Fun
	Being Challenged	Desiring own story
Loving Experience	Desiring purpose	Feeling Inexperienced
Making Mistakes	Desiring Clarity	Questioning Life as boring
Desiring to contribute	Desiring to make contribution	Searching for Excitement
Loving people	Questioning ability	Wanting Experience
Experiencing Generosity	Sensing ownership	Feeling Unsure
Desiring Authenticity	Communicating challenges	Experimenting
Living in Community	Belonging to loving community	Desiring to make a contribution
Orientating to Service	Experiencing success	Desiring purpose
Reflecting on own culture	Connecting with last years group	Changing / growing / resilience
Desire to take new way of life home	Feeling scared	Desiring confidence
	Feeling unprepared	Lacking confidence
SECTION G	Feeling overwhelmed	Wanting to grow
	Masking self	Desiring authenticity
Living in Community	Sensing inadequacy	Desiring to be herself
Becoming Immersed	Experimenting	Noticing Fear of failure
Integrating and accepting	Sharing	Feeling unsure of self / doubting
Achieving Success	Anticipating immersion	Gaining Confidence through community
Experiencing Excitement	Exploring / Excitement	Feeling support and love
Experiencing Beauty	Experiencing Beauty	Developing Peer support
Growing in Community	Feeling happy	Reflecting
Experiencing God	Being surprised	Sharing ideas
Developing Ownership	Comparing	Supporting
Enjoying experience	Searching for answers / experiencing confusion	Supporting community
Learning from serving	Forced to be flexible	Helping community

Contributing	Disintegration of large group	Assimilating
Integrating with students	Recognition of isolation from outside world	Connecting with locals
Experimenting	Experiencing freedom	Experiencing Hunger for community
Building Relationships with teachers	Support from team	Noticing Lack of trust / connection
Learning Community	Bonding through challenges	Experiencing time pressures
Developing Mutual Friendship	Equal peer relationships	Feeling unprepared for reality of teaching
Noticing passion of local teachers	Improvising	Experiencing excitement
Loving people	Fun in failure	Immersing →Developing a teacher identity
Developing friendships	Experiencing Failure	Identity formation
	Learning from failure	Growing in professional identity because of peers
	Feeling like minority	Being Challenged
SECTION H	Experiencing Language Challenges	Being challenged by peers
	Noticing difference	Experiencing challenges
Experiencing Generosity	Experiencing Limited Resources	Growing from others
Reflecting / Reflecting	Valuing Education	Immersing in reality of teaching
Experiencing Selflessness / Experiencing Selflessness	Feeling support	Increased responsibility → immersion
Noticing Self centredness/ materialistic	Developing reasons	Experiencing Physical challenge
Experiencing Community way of life	Having fun	Experiencing realness
Developing Connectedness	Connecting to others	Feeling free
Feeling Valued / Appreciated	Breaking relationship barriers	Loving Freedom
Becoming Flexible / Coping	Experiencing love as teacher	Experimenting
Growing in Purpose	Experiencing reality of teaching	Feeling support
Experiencing teaching	Experiencing Realness	Appreciating things
	Strengthening beliefs	Experiencing Failure
	Not feeling like a burden	Feeling horrible
	Freedom to make mistakes	Impact of Judging on experimentation
	Solving problems	Learning from failures
	Comparing is revealing	Learning from mistakes
	Living for others rather than self	Developing reasons
	Seeing faults in owns life and culture	Feeling achievement – learning from success
	Broadening the role of education	Challenges Promote Creativity
	Loving students	Connecting through song
	Noticing learning	Being creative
	Experiencing generosity and hospitality	Teaching Innovatively
	Desiring to be generous	Feeling accepted
	Clarifying the meaning of life	Feeling Sad leaving kids and teachers
	Appreciating food	Basing Beliefs on practice
	Integrating with community	Comparing experience to Australia
	Making connections	Grounding decisions on reflection
	Forming community	Reflecting on practice

Experimenting	Revealing of self
Empathising of others unconnected	Desiring to serve
Struggling	Desiring to love
Coping / enduring disappointment	Experiencing generosity
Feeling ownership of students	Feeling loved
Feeling welcomed	Developing Respect for teachers
Experiencing Physical Challenge	Experiencing Captivity
Becoming familiar	Feeling like a burden
Feeling prejudice	Experiencing importance of relationships
Experiencing Personal learning	Experiencing Community
Desiring to take things home	Developing Team Family
Feeling sad / change in perspective	Experiencing time for community
Connecting with place and people	Increasing in patience
Revealing of Beliefs	Contributing to learning
Discovering Self	Ownership of students
Inspired to be generous and loving	Feeling appreciated
Appreciating difference	Dealing with disappointment
Fellowship / bonding in food	Feeling content
Increasing confidence	Appreciating nature
	Coping
	Accepting challenge because of peers
	Trusting peers
	Feeling scared
	Overcoming fears
	Changing perception of self
	Loving Team Cooperation
	Developing Inquisitiveness

Focused coding

In order to make sense of all the information that emerged from the initial coding process, the next step in analysis is referred to by Charmaz (2014) as focused coding. Put simply, focused coding requires the researcher to make decisions about how the initial codes can be best categorized to highlight what the researcher determines to be most important in their emerging analysis (Charmaz, 2014). After the initial coding process, the researcher collapses the extensive list of codes into core categories. This coding process now no longer compares incidents with other incidents, but rather searches for the properties of a category (Cohen et al., 2007). The category that summarises the constructivist grounded theory and relates to all other categories is commonly referred to as the core category (Charmaz, 2014; Gustavsson, 2007). Writing memos is used extensively in this phase also, as the researcher is required to

explore the relationship between the themes emerging from the narrative texts (Ryan & Bernard, 2000).

As is common within focused coding (Charmaz, 2014; Rossman & Rallis, 2012), I used a colour coded system to trial what I thought to be the most useful of the initial codes and tested each of these core codes against the total of the data collected. Eventually, after much testing, six codes emerged that appeared to accurately represent all data collected. The memos created throughout the analysis process assisted me in making these decisions. Table 14 demonstrates the six focused codes created in this stage of analysis that best synthesised and conceptualized the extensive segments of data developed in the initial coding process. Each of the data that emerged from the initial coding process was colour coded to ensure the focused codes adequately accounted for all of the data collected.

Table 14: List of Focused Codes that Emerged from All Data Sources

Challenged Freedom Belonging Destabilising Questioning Restorying		
Participant Documentation	**Participant Reflective Journals**	**Interviews**
SECTION F + Letter Home	Living in community	Desiring Fun
	Being Challenged	Desiring own story
Loving Experience	Desiring purpose	Feeling Inexperienced
Making Mistakes	Desiring Clarity	Questioning Life as boring
Desiring to contribute	Desiring to make contribution	Searching for Excitement
Loving people	Questioning ability	Wanting Experience
Experiencing Generosity	Sensing ownership	Feeling Unsure
Desiring Authenticity	Communicating challenges	Experimenting
Living in Community	Belonging to loving community	Desiring to make a contribution
Orientating to Service	Experiencing success	Desiring purpose
Reflecting on own culture	Connecting with last years group	Changing / growing / resilience
Desire to take new way of life home	Feeling scared	Desiring confidence
	Feeling unprepared	Lacking confidence
SECTION G	Feeling overwhelmed	Wanting to grow
	Masking self	Desiring authenticity
Living in Community	Sensing inadequacy	Desiring to be herself
Becoming Immersed	Experimenting	Noticing Fear of failure
Integrating and accepting	Sharing	Feeling unsure of self / doubting
Achieving Success	Anticipating immersion	Gaining Confidence through community
Experiencing Excitement	Exploring / Excitement	Feeling support and love
Experiencing Beauty	Experiencing Beauty	Developing Peer support
Growing in Community	Feeling happy	Reflecting
Experiencing God	Being surprised	Sharing ideas
Developing Ownership	Comparing	Supporting
Enjoying experience	Searching for answers / experiencing confusion	Supporting community
Learning from serving	Forced to be flexible	Helping community
Contributing	Disintegration of large group	Assimilating
Integrating with students	Recognition of isolation from outside world	Connecting with locals
Experimenting	Experiencing freedom	Experiencing Hunger for community
Building Relationships with	Support from team	Noticing Lack of trust / connection

teachers		
Learning Community	Bonding through challenges	Experiencing time pressures
Developing Mutual Friendship	Equal peer relationships	Feeling unprepared for reality of teaching
Noticing passion of local teachers	Improvising	Experiencing excitement
Loving people	Fun in failure	Immersing →Developing a teacher identity
Developing friendships	Experiencing Failure	Identity formation
	Learning from failure	Growing in professional identity because of peers
	Feeling like minority	Being Challenged
SECTION H	Experiencing Language Challenges	Being challenged by peers
	Noticing difference	Experiencing challenges
Experiencing Generosity	Experiencing Limited Resources	Growing from others
Reflecting / Reflecting	Valuing Education	Immersing in reality of teaching
Experiencing Selflessness / Experiencing Selflessness	Feeling support	Increased responsibility → immersion
Noticing Self centredness/ materialistic	Developing reasons	Experiencing Physical challenge
Experiencing Community way of life	Having fun	Experiencing realness
Developing Connectedness	Connecting to others	Feeling free
Feeling Valued / Appreciated	Breaking relationship barriers	Loving Freedom
Becoming Flexible / Coping	Experiencing love as teacher	Experimenting
Growing in Purpose	Experiencing reality of teaching	Feeling support
Experiencing teaching	Experiencing Realness	Appreciating things
	Strengthening beliefs	Experiencing Failure
	Not feeling like a burden	Feeling horrible
	Freedom to make mistakes	Impact of Judging on experimentation
	Solving problems	Learning from failures
	Comparing is revealing	Learning from mistakes
	Living for others rather than self	Developing reasons
	Seeing faults in owns life and culture	Feeling achievement – learning from success
	Broadening the role of education	Challenges Promote Creativity
	Loving students	Connecting through song
	Noticing learning	Being creative
	Experiencing generosity and hospitality	Teaching Innovatively
	Desiring to be generous	Feeling accepted
	Clarifying the meaning of life	Feeling Sad leaving kids and teachers
	Appreciating food	Basing Beliefs on practice
	Integrating with community	Comparing experience to Australia
	Making connections	Grounding decisions on reflection
	Forming community	Reflecting on practice
	Experimenting	Revealing of self
	Empathasing of others unconnected	Desiriring to serve
	Struggling	Desiring to love
	Coping / enduring disappointment	Experiencing generosity
	Feeling ownership of students	Feeling loved
	Feeling welcomed	Developing Respect for teachers
	Experiencing Physical Challenge	Experiencing Captivity
	Becoming familiar	Feeling like a burden
	Feeling prejudice	Experiencing importance of relationships
	Experiencing Personal learning	Experiencing Community
	Desiring to take things home	Developing Team Family
	Feeling sad / change in perspective	Experiencing time for community
	Connecting with place and people	Increasing in patience
	Revealing of Beliefs	Contributing to learning
	Discovering Self	Ownership of students
	Inspired to be generous and loving	Feeling appreciated

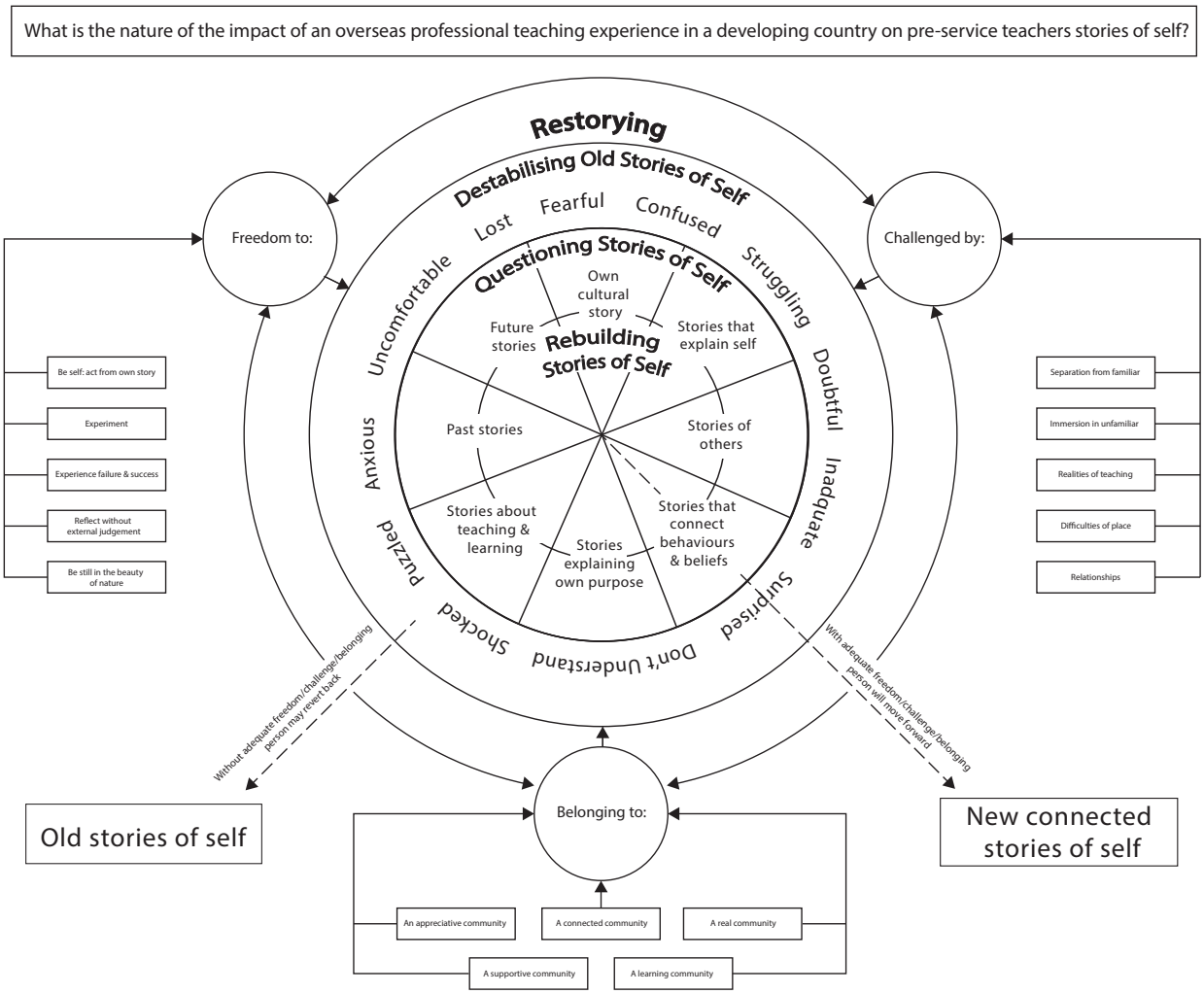
	Appreciating difference	Dealing with disappointment
	Fellowship / bonding in food	Feeling content
	Increasing confidence	Appreciating nature
		Coping
		Accepting challenge because of peers
		Trusting peers
		Feeling scared
		Overcoming fears
		Changing perception of self
		Loving Team Cooperation
		Developing Inquisitiveness

Theoretical coding

While theories were continually created throughout the analysis to gain an understanding of the process, the third level of analysis completed in this investigation aimed to represent the relationship between the focus codes by way of a connected theory (Liamputtong, 2013). Charmaz (2014) refers to this third and final step of data analysis as theoretical coding. The primary goal of theoretical coding is to achieve theoretical saturation where "no new information seems to emerge during coding" that is not explained by the developed theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 136). As is suggested by qualitative researchers (Ryan & Bernard, 2000; Scott & Garner, 2013) a model was used to aid in the understanding of the relationships between the identified themes of the investigation. This model continued to change as it was tested against the data that emerged from the initial and focused coding process. Eventually a theory emerged from the analysis that fully and satisfactorily explained the data received from the investigation. While this theory is explained in detail in Chapter 5, an example is provided in Figure 13 to demonstrate the third and final part of the analysis process.

I was confident that theoretical saturation had been reached as throughout all three phases of the analysis process the coding process continued until no new data emerged (Charmaz, 2014; Liamputtong, 2013). According to Dey (2007) it was fitting for data analysis to stop at this point as, like Charmaz (2006, p.113), I found that "gathering fresh data no longer spark[ed] new theoretical insights, nor reveal[ed] new properties of [my] core theoretical categories."

Figure 13: Example of Model that Emerged from Theoretical Coding



Through generating codes, writing memos, and constructing a grounded theory, I was able to make explicit the understandings that were previously only implicit, and was then able to write out the theory and methodology in full (Cohen et al., 2007). Chapter 4 provides the findings of the application of the methodology thus developed for this investigation.

CHAPTER 4 - FINDINGS: STORIES FROM THE JOURNEY

Introduction

The first three chapters of this investigation provided a comprehensive explanation of the purpose of the study, the place of the research question in the greater research landscape of existing knowledge, and an outline of the research approaches and research designs chosen to best serve the research question. This chapter now crosses the threshold (Campbell, 2008) from what was previously unknown to new possibilities (Clandinin, Pushor, & Orr, 2007) by unlocking and sharing the stories of the four focus participants: Gaea, Fonda, Liam and Caiden. The stories of their experiences serve as windows into their lives, to allow others the opportunity to develop a collective understanding of how the pre-service teachers' beliefs, referred to in this investigation as *stories of self*, have been impacted.

Stories can be used as both the avenue to research and the medium to write about the research (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). As this study is a Narrative Inquiry (Clandinin, 2007), this chapter is written in a narrative form in the hope that when read, it may invoke a response by the reader who may well incorporate these stories told to make sense out of their own lived experiences (Clandinin, 2007; Paley & Eva, 2005). To provide a holistic account of these experiences, multiple voices from a variety of sources have been used. The experiences of the four focus participants were demonstrated and supported through: the researcher's journal (Rossman & Rallis, 2012); the participants' reflective journals (Creswell, 2014), semi-structured interviews (Mishler, 1986), and participant documentation (Patton, 2015). Ongoing member checking and triangulation across the different sources were used to ensure that the negotiated stories, included in this chapter, were interpreted accurately (Charmaz, 2014).

All four of the stories that feature in this chapter first introduce the reader to the background of the participants and how they came to take part in the MOTO experience. Their stories are then told within the context of three main themes that emerged through the analysis phase including: 'Living in Community,' 'Learning through Freedom,' and 'Experiencing a New Reality'. After each participant's story a micro interpretive summary is included for the purpose of making sense of all of the stories and forming specific connections between each

of the focus participants. While each of the stories reveal common themes, each of the participants are unique individuals (Creswell, 2014; Mertens, 2010), and as such, do not explore the same themes in the same depth, and at times highlight different incidents as pivotal in their overall experience.

As is common with narratives, the majority of Chapter 4 is written in the past tense, as it is a story about experiences that have already taken place. At times present tense is used to allow the reader to gain access to the actual phrases used by the participants during their experiences, with the hope that they will be more engaged in the experience itself. Apart from actual quotes, the narratives use third person pronouns, that is, he, she and Gaea, to tell the participants' stories, as a way to distance the narrator from the story and to act as a constant reminder of the interpretation that has taken place. Whenever practically possible the participant's actual words have been included in the story to minimise the interpretation required and provide insight into the lives of the participants. Any changes that have been made to the words of the participants, to assist with the consistency and flow of the story, have been included inside brackets within quotation marks.

While it was not possible to include all of the stories shared by the participants, the researcher and participants have attempted to negotiate a story inclusive of all experiences of most relevance to the research question.

The Story of Gaea

The backstory

Like many of her seventeen-year old friends, Gaea was unsure of what she was meant to do with her life when she finished Year 12 (Gaea's Interview, 10.6.13). In hope of gaining some clarity, she decided to attend the University Career Expo she had heard advertised at the school she had attended in the suburbs of Melbourne. She enthusiastically signed up for the first information session on the schedule – Event Management. After what seemed like the longest hour she had ever endured, she was certain that this was one career she could cross off her list. Gaea loved people and wanted to find a career that allowed her to "make a difference" in the world (Gaea's Interview, 10.6.13). Social work and teaching were two other areas of interest. As a result of the boredom she had just escaped, Gaea entered the next

information session titled 'Teaching' sceptically. She found a seat at the back of the room; half expecting to leave when it became too boring to endure. Despite the presenter's monotonous voice and old-fashioned clothes, Gaea was hooked when he revealed a new course that combined a degree in teaching with skills in social work. "Wow! That's something I really want to do!" she thought to herself (Gaea's Interview, 10.6.13).

After a successful application and interview process, Gaea began studying to become a teacher. She had so much to learn and was initially excited about the career and university she had chosen. However, after only a year of study she "absolutely hated it" (Gaea's Interview, 10.6.13). While she had made a couple of friends, there was no one she would talk to outside of university. Gaea had little connection with the lecturers and other students, and remembers feeling isolated and disconnected in her journey towards becoming a teacher (Gaea's Interview, 10.6.13). While she was desperate for a strong community, she reluctantly "accepted that (her current experience) was what university was like," and she "couldn't really do anything about it" (Gaea's Interview, 10.6.13). It wasn't until Gaea began exchanging stories with a friend at a Youth Summer Camp, who was also in his first year of an education degree, that she began to question the inadequacies of her tertiary learning experience. Her friend's stories were full of amazing adventures, involving community and fun. The following question haunted her:

> How was it possible, when they were studying the same thing, for him to have had the best year of his life, while I have hated my life? (Gaea's Interview, 10.6.13)

Gaea decided she was going to find out! She packed up her life into the back of her Holden Barina, said her farewells to her family and friends and drove the 982km north to Avondale College. Gaea loved her first semester at Avondale and was surrounded by the supportive, fun-loving and connected community she had heard about. She was keen to develop herself as a teacher and saw her first pre-service teaching experience as the ideal place to be "challenged and to grow" (Gaea's Interview, 10.6.13). Unfortunately, despite her best efforts she "didn't enjoy her first teaching experience at all" (Gaea's Interview, 10.6.13). Similar to her prior university experience, she struggled to feel connected. Gaea found it difficult to "build rapport with her supervising teachers," and as a result found it impossible to "talk to them about how [she] was feeling" (Gaea's Interview, 10.6.13). Gaea arrived at the school each day, excited about teaching and making a contribution, yet she returned home most days

feeling as though she had been a "burden on her [supervisors'] workload" (Gaea's Journal, 24.6.13).

Gaea says that in addition to not feeling connected, she constantly felt like her supervising teacher was "judging" her, and learnt quickly that there was little "room for mistakes" (Gaea's Interview, 25.6.13). As a result, she felt her only option was to aim to "impress her supervisor who was watching [her] like a hawk" (Gaea Interview, 25.6.13). Although Gaea successfully emulated many of the practices of her supervising teachers and finished her pre-service session with a good grade, she remembered how unappreciated she felt on her last day:

> On Friday I remember my supervisor teacher was like, Oh, yeah. Look we've had this prac student for a while. She's done really well. Everyone give her an applause. Everyone gave me a round of applause and bam! They went to the next thing. (Gaea's Interview, 5.7.13)

Gaea returned from her 'so-called teaching experience' with little "confidence" in herself as a teacher, and was determined to "choose a better school" next time (Gaea's Interview, 10.6.13).

Decision to teach in Nepal

Gaea's hunger for new and real experiences drove her to sign up for the MOTO experience to Nepal (Gaea's Interview, 10.6.13). In her first interview she spoke of a desire to be released from her "boring life" and venture into unknown places, cultures and responsibilities, and return with a new story of self that would better explain who she was and what she believed (Gaea's Interview, 10.6.13). Prior to boarding the plane from Sydney to Kathmandu she chose the words "grey" and "in-between" to describe how she saw herself as a teacher (Gaea's Interview, 10.6.13). It was obvious from her final interview before take-off that Gaea lacked confidence in who she was, both as a person and teacher, and was desperate to discover her true connected self:

> I feel like I really lack confidence. I don't know, in who I am I guess… I think you can tell when someone is confident within themself and then everyone around them is at ease I think. And, so, I'd like to have that. (Gaea Interview, 10.6.13)

At the time of departure, Gaea still didn't feel "she'd really done that much as a teacher," and longed "to gain confidence" through building a stronger connection between practice and beliefs, or as she described it, "actually knowing what she was doing" (Gaea's Interview, 10.6.13). This disconnect, between acting like a teacher on the one hand, and feeling like a fraud on the other, resulted in personal doubt and apprehension. She spoke of her fear of "stuffing up," of not "making a difference," and of "feeling scared and unprepared" (Gaea's Interview, 10.6.13). Gaea hoped that the experience of teaching in a rural village in Nepal would be different, and that it would allow her to gain real experience that would help her find herself as a teacher (Gaea's Interview, 10.6.13).

The experience begins

Living in community

After leaving Sydney the team touched down in Kuala Lumpur for a 10-hour layover before boarding a final flight to Kathmandu. Gaea shared a "stinky, hot but surprisingly comfortable sleep" in a double bed with one of her girlfriends in the airport hotel (Gaea's Journal, 15.6.13). This "bonding" experience was the first of many to come (Gaea's Journal, 16.6.13). The close friendships with her peers would later be remembered as pivotal in her overall experience.

Photograph 3: Gaea boarding the plane for Kathmandu

Unlike many of her teammates, Gaea somewhat expected the craziness of the sounds, sights and smells of Kathmandu on arrival. Gaea had experienced similar poverty on a previous trip to Cambodia and, as such, was not overly surprised or overwhelmed in what she saw (Gaea's Journal, 15.6.13). Gaea immersed herself in the life of a tourist over the next two days, yet the impressive views of Swayambhunath Temple rated a very distant second to a dirty, dusty trip in the back of a rusty Nepali truck. She relates:

> After dinner we set off to Mahendra Jyoti in the back of the truck. It was probably my favourite part of the trip so far. Standing in the back of the truck, waving at the people as you drove past was such an amazing experience. I was just so happy and I couldn't think of anything else I would rather be doing. It was a different way to see the country but definitely the best. (Gaea's Journal, 16.6.13)

Photograph 4: Gaea in the truck heading to the village

Despite all the things Gaea had seen in Kathmandu, she described this experience as being the highlight of the first few days. For the first time in the trip she sensed she had finally escaped the well-worn touristy paths and was beginning to "experience" rather than observe Nepal (Gaea's Journal, 16.6.13). The locals waving back at her from other passing vehicles appeared welcoming with their never-ending smiles and laughter, and she began to feel accepted into "the Nepalese culture" (Gaea's Journal, 25.6.13).

The sun had disappeared well below the mountains by the time Gaea first arrived in the village that would later be described as her new "home" (Gaea's Journal, 22.6.13). The house, situated in the middle of a thousand rice paddies initially felt mysterious in the darkness. The trucks were unpacked and Gaea carried her bags up the stairs. Her room was small and had barely enough space for the four thin mattresses that had been thrown onto the floor. Surprisingly, the team of 23-teachers with all their supplies somehow managed to squeeze into the six small bedrooms available. After her first of many outdoor showers at the natural spring under the stars, she wrote the following in her journal before going to sleep:

> When we arrived at the guesthouse it was dark so we couldn't really see our surroundings. The guesthouse itself is really beautiful in its own mature, Nepali way. It has a line of fairy lights on the roof that I love and the rooms are perfect for us… I'm sharing a room with Jess, Mikaela and Alyse, which I think will be really great because it will be fun and if I am feeling angry or upset or anything I know I can talk to them. After we settled in a bit, a couple of us girls went to have a shower, which was an experience, a beautiful bonding one. We even created a shower system that involved us standing in a circle then rotating around the nozzle of water. (Gaea's Journal, 16.6.13)

Living in this Nepalese house with her whole team would prove to be an important part of the experience. The house was in the middle of the village, which allowed her to remain "immersed in the village life" (Gaea's Journal, 20.7.13). Throughout this experience, there were many times that she required support from her peers. This house became a safe place where she could share her questions, doubts, triumphs and memories. While the actual dwelling was reasonably cramped and basic, Gaea described how she would feel about being placed in a hotel if given the opportunity: "Staying in a hotel during the teaching experience would take away from the experience. I think all of us living in the same house made us bond as a group" (Gaea's Journal, 20.7.13).

These bonds, later described as "family vibes," (Gaea's Interview, 9.7.13) provided Gaea with much confidence to face the unknown and take on challenges that otherwise may have been avoided. In her journal, Gaea described the importance of the support she received from her peers by comparing her team to a flying gaggle of geese: "We call ourselves 'team geese' because geese fly in groups and they take turns up the front of the pack for wind resistance" (Gaea's Journal, 10.7.13).

An important part of this support group was Gaea's teaching partner, Anna. While Gaea and Anna took responsibility for planning and teaching their own lessons, they shared the same classroom and supported each other when issues arose. Unlike her previous teaching experience, where she felt as though she was constantly being "judged," Anna's presence in Gaea's lessons reduced her "fear" and filled her with "confidence" (Gaea's Interview 25.6.13). Gaea spoke openly about how she felt about teaching and having Anna with her in her lessons in an interview:

> I am scared [about teaching], but then I know that we have, like, a really supportive group, and so I don't feel scared in that sense… when I'm going through something that I need help with, I know Anna will always be there and vice versa. I think there will be definitely times where I stuff up a lot of things, but then I know that because of the people that we're with, and because of my teaching partner, I know that we'll help each other. (Gaea Interview, 10.6.2013)

Many of the challenges faced by Gaea in the classroom were common to the group. Every night, usually just before dinner, the team met together in a circle on the roof of the house to reflect on their day's experiences. Gaea felt as though "she was able to trust" her peers and felt comfortable to "ask for help" (Gaea Interview, 10.6.13). As a result of this mutual trust and openness, these debriefing sessions were powerful. Participants openly shared their personal successes and failures. More often than not what had been shared in a semi-formal setting spilled over into the discussions between individuals over dinner. Gaea found "sharing meals together and… com[ing] together as a group and discuss[ing] our days" as invaluable in making sense of her experiences (Gaea's Journal, 29.7.13). Unlike her previous teaching experience, Gaea always felt supported if she needed "help planning or finding resources" (Gaea's Journal, 24.6.13). Her bedroom during the evenings was often filled with people frantically planning lessons and creating resources. In one of her interviews Gaea spoke of the camaraderie she experienced between herself, her peers and Jason, her lecturer, and compared it against the isolation she had felt in her previous professional teaching experience in Australia. She wrote:

> There are people here that I can bounce my ideas off and just talk to and even ask, like Jason, or something, if I do have a question about what I want to teach; but whereas in my last teaching experience, no one really cared. (Gaea Interview, 24.6.13)



Photograph 5: A typical night in Gaea's bedroom preparing for lessons

This feeling of community, of taking on challenges collectively, was not confined within the walls of the house or shared only among her teaching peers. Gaea also became a part of the school and local community she was serving. From the very moment she arrived at the school, Gaea suspected that this experience was going to be very different. As she walked the dirt road to the Ganesh Bharati School for the first time, Gaea was more than a little nervous about how she would cope teaching children she had not yet met. Lining both sides of the last 200-metres of the path were hundreds of children and their Nepali teachers. Many of the children "handed [her] bunches of flowers that they had picked" and crafted from the hillside mountains (Gaea's Journal, 17.6.13). Like royalty, Gaea walked through the throng of people all the way to the school assembly area. Eleven days later she reflected on this experience and drew a picture of the wreaths and flowers she had been given on that day with the caption, "The warmest of welcomes" (Gaea's Journal, 28.6.13). By the time she reached the school she was covered in flowers and surrounded by children who were obviously very excited to have her in their school. This was a special experience for Gaea as it immediately made her feel like she had been invited "with open arms" into the school community (Gaea's Journal, 6.7.13).

Despite the enormity of the welcome she received, it took time for her to build trust for the Nepali people and really feel a part of their culture. Everything felt "strange" when she first arrived and she was unsure how to make sense of how inviting and friendly the locals were (Gaea's Journal, 10.7.13). Initially Gaea "was quite tentative when talking to locals and thought most people were out to trick [her] or steal [her] belongings" (Gaea's Journal, 10.7.13). Her journal after the first day of teaching in Nepal highlighted the struggles she encountered with a foreign culture that refused to listen, form mixed groups or get involved (Gaea's Journal, 17.6.13). On her first day of teaching she observed a Nepali teacher take a lesson on the negative impacts of foreigners. He started off by writing the heading, "What problems do tourists cause in our country?" Immediately "everyone looked at [her]" and it felt "funny" for Gaea to be seen by others as part of the minority (Gaea's Journal, 17.6.13).

As Gaea and Anna walked home after their first day of teaching, they noticed an old lady weeding her cornfield. They dropped off their things at home, changed their clothes, and returned to help. Gaea was a little unsure of how their visit would be received. However, the lady who "didn't speak a word of English… wasn't yelling or anything," so Gaea assumed she was doing something right (Gaea's Journal,17.6.13). A 6 year old girl joined them and she began translating for her grandmother simple phrases like, "don't pick that, it bean" (Gaea's Journal, 17.6.13). This encounter was the first of many with the local community and it didn't take long for Gaea to realise that it "didn't matter what you chose to do with them, the locals just loved being in [her] company" (Overall Summary, Section F).

For the remaining three weeks, Gaea spent the majority of her time after school immersed in the community with the locals. She was "initiated into the rice club" (Gaea Interview, 24.6.13) when the local women insisted she ate their food, and share their drink and wear a red mark on her forehead like them. She was also invited to a local festival with the expectation of being an observer and returned home three hours later all "covered in red powder" from being overwhelmingly welcomed into being made "a part" of it (Gaea's Journal, 23.6.13). Despite the language gap, Gaea "experienced the wonderful love that came from the people in the Mahendra Jyoti village" and it changed her (Overall Summary, Section H). Gaea was no longer an intruder in an "unfamiliar" or "foreign" place but had been accepted by the people and as a result began to feel "engrossed into their culture" (Overall Summary, Section G).

The teachers in the school also embraced Gaea into their community. Gaea loved "drinking chai [tea] with them at the local shop" before, during and after school (Gaea's Interview, 2.7.13). One afternoon, while walking one of her students home, Gaea "bumped into Mana," one of her supervising teachers and was quickly and enthusiastically "invited into her house" for tea (Letter to self, 14.7.13). Gaea was overwhelmed at how generous and accepting Mana was to her on that visit and contrasted it against her past experience with her supervising teachers in Australia. "That would never happen back home. If you saw a teacher at the shops you would run away" (Letter to self, 14.7.13). This experience made Gaea reflect on the type of person and teacher she wanted to become: "I really want to be more like Mana when I'm a teacher and be someone who welcomes people for cups of tea rather than a teacher people avoid when they see them outside of school" (Gaea's Journal, 27.6.13).

Photograph 6: Gaea and her teaching partner Anna with the local Nepali teachers

Gaea thought very highly of the Nepali teachers she worked with, and believed the "school was lucky to have them" (Gaea's Interview, 2.7.13). While Gaea learnt much from them, it was their humility and willingness to learn from her that surprised Gaea the most. One of the main reasons Gaea had decided to take part in a MOTO experience was because of the promised opportunity to make a significant contribution. In her first interview, prior to departing Australia, Gaea spoke of an inner desire to "actually do something to help," and "to make a difference" (Gaea's Interview, 10.6.13). In her previous teaching experience in Australia she believed she had been assigned to a school with "plenty of teachers" and felt as though "they didn't really need prac teachers coming into their classrooms" (Gaea's Interview, 10.6.13). In Nepal, Gaea felt really "appreciated and valued" as a "real" teacher

(Gaea's Interview, 25.6.13). The local teachers were excited to have her in their school and regularly praised her for the creativity of her teaching methods. Gaea felt excited about the fact that the teachers actually appeared to be learning ideas about teaching from her. Gaea spoke of her excitement in relation to this mutual relationship that had developed in an interview:

> And they're asking us what they could do and they're just sometimes commenting on classes like, "That was a really good method… And so, that was really beautiful to see that they actually - like looked up to how we taught and actually wanted to see our ideas and how they could use them in their classrooms. So, that was really cool. (Gaea Interview, 5.7.13)

After initially struggling to communicate and manage her class, Gaea also developed strong relationships with her Year 8 students. One of her regularly disruptive boys, Pratap, captured her heart when he drew a picture of her to demonstrate the meaning of joy. In an interview, Gaea summed up her thoughts on what she had learnt about teaching: "It's all just about people, and bonding with people" (2.7.13). During one of these bonding sessions, Anna and Gaea spent the whole afternoon with a group of their Year 8 girls, putting on makeup and laughing. At the end of their time together, Gaea returned to her room and wrote the following in her journal: "They're actually just kids! It [the make-up party] made me realise that they are the same as girls in Australia, girls that love makeup and dancing and talking about boys… these people are my people" (Gaea's Interview, 5.7.13).

Gaea initially felt sceptical of the Nepali people, however, she now identified with them and felt closely connected. In viewing the world differently her concept of the purpose of education also shifted.

> Being a quality teacher doesn't mean filling the students minds up with all the content you know, but teaching them to be global citizens who have compassion for each other and the world they live in. I definitely think that this trip helped me to see what a quality teacher is, and helped me in becoming one. (Gaea's Journal, 26.6.13)

Photograph 7: Gaea and Anna at a 'make-up party' with some of their Year 8 girls

Learning through freedom

Gaea spoke of the trip to the school in the back of the truck a number of times throughout her teaching experience. It became a symbol of the "freedom" she experienced in Nepal that allowed her to question, experiment, and grow in relation to who she was as a person and as a teacher, and what she believed about herself, others, and the world in which she lived (Gaea's Journal, 20.7.13). "Finding herself" was one of her personal goals she hoped to achieve by getting involved in the MOTO experience (Gaea's Interview, 10.6.13). In an interview, she spoke of her desire to find herself by revealing the frustration she felt for some of her acquaintances, who claimed to belong to a religious group but didn't really understand what they believed. She stated adamantly, "I don't want to be like that!" (Gaea's Interview, 10.6.13). Before teaching in Nepal, she still didn't feel like she'd "really done that much as a teacher," and as a result of not "actually knowing what [she] was doing" lacked any real "confidence" in the classroom (Gaea's Interview, 10.6.13).

Gaea described the atmosphere of her first teaching experience in Australia as "intense" (Gaea's Interview, 25.6.13). She revealed in her interview that she constantly felt as though each of her mistakes was being judged (Gaea's Interview, 25.6.13). As a result, she never felt free to "go out on a limb" and try new things, but rather felt trapped to "impress her supervisor that [was] watching [her] like a hawk" (Gaea's Interview, 25.6.13). Rather than

experimenting with her own ideas, Gaea felt compelled to "stick with what she knew would work," as demonstrated to her by her supervisor (Gaea Interview, 25.6.13). Gaea learnt little from attempting to replicate the practices of another, and, as is shown in the quote below, recognised that learning would be more effective when attached to a real experience:

> I feel like growth only comes out of experimenting. If I just try to do the exact same thing ... then I will never grow. You can teach me everything you know, but unless I apply it myself, I'm not really learning anything. So I think what I really need is to get more and more experience. (Gaea Interview, 2.7.13)

It didn't take long for Gaea to begin having real teaching experiences in Nepal. After watching only one lesson, the Nepali teacher scheduled for the second class didn't show up, so Gaea took that as her cue to begin teaching. After lunch she had a similar experience, where she arrived at class expecting to observe, only to discover that she was in charge. In the last period of the day, the English teacher arrived at class and asked Gaea if she would like to run a spelling contest for her. After agreeing, the supervising teacher promptly, "left her on her own" (Gaea's Journal, 17.6.13). Over the next three weeks Gaea would be immersed in "real teaching" experiences with limited supervision (Gaea's Journal, 20.7.13). The supervising teachers entrusted her with much responsibility, and while they were very supportive, offered little assistance in identifying issues or in solving problems. Gaea and Anna found themselves in a real classroom, often on their own, and their survival would depend on how quickly they could learn.

Gaea made plenty of mistakes while teaching and openly shared many of them with her peers during debriefing sessions. She didn't feel any "pressure" to "please [her] prac supervisor" and consequently felt as though "there was a lot more room for failure" (Gaea's Interview, 25.6.13). Her journal recorded the time she unsuccessfully tried to get the boys to dance, the time her Mathematics lesson "fell apart" and the time she was so glad when the final bell of the day rang and she was able to escape the class she had allowed to become "psycho" (Gaea's Journal, 24.6.13). While enduring each of these "failures felt horrible" and she questioned whether it "was ever going to get better," it caused her to stop and ask herself what had gone wrong so she could try something different the next lesson (Gaea's Interview, 25.6.13).

Photograph 8: Gaea teaching her children in her classroom

Gaea outlined how learning took place for her in an interview conducted shortly after losing control of a class while taking them outside to plant sunflower seeds:

> And I feel like it's experiencing failure and then reflecting on, like, Okay, why did it go so wrong? That's when things start getting epic, because that's just the learning process. Like improving on my practice. So I've learnt from my mistakes, and so, I'm able to teach them more effectively and that is definitely the way. (Gaea's Interview, 25.6.13)

After yet another challenging lesson, involving a rowdy class of Year 8 boys, Gaea, in the absence of a supervising teacher, demonstrated her resolve by stating, "We have to overcome! I've got an idea for tomorrow, so we'll see if that works" (Gaea's Interview, 19.6.13). Experimentation became her new teacher. With every additional failure, Gaea identified a possible solution and experimented to see if it would work. After a couple of weeks of experimentation, Gaea became more confident as a teacher as she "start[ed] to learn procedures that work[ed]" (Gaea's Journal, 20.7.13). One area that Gaea felt as though she had grown in through this process was in relation to Behaviour Management, as the comment explains:

> Something I've learnt is to not embarrass them in front of their peers. That is actually the biggest thing, and I'm really keen to try this out in Australia now that I've learnt it here. But, yeah, just take them outside and talk to them like a normal person. After I've done that every

> time, they've been really good after that. So, yeah, I definitely think I'm growing in leaps and bounds in my behaviour management. Yeah, it's so good. (Gaea's Interview, 25.6.13)

Gaea often laughed as she shared her failures with her peers and concluded many of her stories with the phrase, "You live and you learn" (Gaea's Interview, 9.7.13). Unlike her previous teaching experience, where mistakes were feared, Gaea began to associate making mistakes as an important part of learning. In an interview she stated, "I just reckon the freedom here is amazing… you do so much more here" (Gaea Interview, 25.6.13). In her journal she described the freedom she had experienced and how it had impacted her beliefs about learning:

> I don't think we could learn if we didn't experiment... I think the MOTO trip is more conducive to real learning because there is the freedom to try new things and learn which things work and which things don't. I have learnt from my mistakes and that is what is so great about this trip – it gives you the freedom to develop as a teacher and learn methods that work or don't work in your classroom, all from trial and error. (Gaea's Journal, 20.7.13)

Gaea also experienced success in the classroom, and like the failures there was a high level of ownership. Gaea and Anna came up with the idea of getting the students to draw a picture each day to represent a new word. After days of patiently persisting with one student who repeatedly drew a picture of a shed, regardless of the word provided to him, Gaea sceptically tried again with the word 'gentle'. Five minutes later, when Gaea checked his page, she excitedly discovered that instead of a shed he had drawn "like a million little ducks on his page" (Gaea's Interview, 24.6.13). It was a small victory but this time Sandip had "grasped the concept," after all, "what is more gentle then ducklings?" and it felt "really good" (Gaea's Interview, 24.6.13). Teaching became exciting as Gaea discovered things that worked for her through a series of experiments. In an attempt to get the boys in her class more engaged, Gaea experimented with a game that proved to be very successful. She commented, "I wonder what'll happen if we throw a ball onto a target on the wall, then make them write sentences? Whoah! It works!" (Gaea's Interview, 2.7.13).

While Gaea highlighted "freedom" as pivotal in her ability to learn, she was not isolated from the support of the Nepali teachers (Gaea's Interview, 25.6.13). Gaea felt accepted into the school community and, as a result, she felt comfortable to ask for support and ideas. During

one lesson where she was struggling to get the students to follow her instructions, she stopped a teacher walking past her window and "asked him if he could help" her (Gaea's Journal, 15.6.13). The teacher did an "amazing" job and because Gaea and Anna had already wrestled with the problem on their own they were far more receptive to learn from the expert and now had a much better idea of "how to run it next time" (Gaea's Journal, 15.6.13).

Gaea also received a lot of support and help from her teaching partner Anna. Gaea found it reassuring to have someone like Anna, who she could "trust" and who would "always be there," to share her experiences with if she needed help (Gaea Interview, 10.6.13). While she shared most of her classes with Anna, she did not see Anna as the expert, but rather saw Anna and her as tackling their problems together (Gaea's Interview, 25.6.13). They were equals in the classroom and without an expert they both maintained their own "freedom to learn," rather than receive knowledge from another (Gaea's Interview, 25.6.13).

Photograph 9: Gaea and Anna with their Year 8 class in their final week

In Nepal, the teachers provided Gaea with the freedom to solve her own problems through experimentation and as a result Gaea stated that it "definitely made me understand what I believe and why" (Gaea's Journal, 25.7.13). Gaea's beliefs became "stronger" as she "discovered more about [her]self, [her] teaching style" and the people she was surrounded by (Gaea's Journal, 13.7.13). As a result, Gaea recorded a simple yet powerful statement in her Journal, "I became more confident as a teacher" (Gaea's Journal, 29.7.13).

Experiencing a new reality

Gaea stepped into what initially felt like a new world, where people looked her in the eyes, and said, "Namaste" [hello] to her as they passed (Overall Summary, Section H). Community was "such a big part of life" in the village she lived and initially it felt "weird" (Overall Summary, Section H). While she quickly noticed how "little the people in the village had," what she couldn't make sense of in relation to her previous experiences was how "willing" they were to "give what they had" away (Overall Summary, Section H). Gaea was constantly surprised at how giving the Nepali people were with what little possessions they had. She wrote:

> Anna and I went to visit someone's house and he got us an apple and washed it for us and cut it up…it was so beautiful because apples are really rare here and yet they're willing to offer it to us and they don't really have anything themselves. (Gaea's Interview, 25.6.13)

The Nepali people were also very generous with their time. Gaea noticed how willing the local women were to "sit and drink chai tea" with her on her way home from school (Overall Summary, Section G). She loved "singing and laughing" with the locals as they planted rice together and enjoyed "chatting" with some of the older men in the village who spoke English about "life in Nepal" (Gaea's Interview, 24.6.13). All of her interactions with the locals made her question her previous beliefs and way of life:

> Last week I was in the staff room and I asked if there was anywhere I could get tea from. One of the teachers took me to the little shop and bought me a cup of tea and sat and drank with me. It just made my day and it's really sad that people don't do that in Australia. We are always so focused on what we can do for ourselves. (Gaea's Journal, 26.6.13)

Gaea recognised that while Australia had "more things in a money and material sense," that it was "lacking" in comparison to what she had experienced in Nepal (Gaea's Journal, 6.7.13). She now saw her old way of life as "selfish" and realised that like many of the people she interacted with in Australia, she had "forgotten how to be generous and giving" (Overall Summary, Section H). In a letter she wrote to herself as part of a reflective exercise, Gaea detailed this new perspective and displayed a determination to change as a result of her newfound beliefs, as follows:

> Everyone is so selfish and focused on how they can help themselves and it's so rare to see neighbours helping each other out [Speaking of back in Australia]. The fact that it rarely happens where we live made me question why it doesn't happen more often and determined to make it happen more often. (Gaea's Letter Home, 12.7.13)

In this same letter, Gaea sternly rebuked her future self when she wrote, "Don't ever become one of those people who say one thing then act another" (Letter to Self, 12.7.13). Gaea became determined for her life to be different as a result of what she had experienced in Nepal. Gaea recognised that for her to be an authentic person, or teacher, her beliefs must direct her actions.

Gaea was also challenged in relation to her beliefs about service. Every day after school each of the pre-service teachers were encouraged to spend 1-hour of their afternoon helping out in the community. Initially Gaea thought of this as a "chore" and an "inconvenience" and "reluctantly" got involved (Overall Summary, Section F). However, once she started to get involved her initial negative associations with service were challenged when she discovered that serving become something she really "enjoyed" and even started "looking forward" to (Overall Summary, Section F). As a result, her old story of self, which explained her purpose of life in relation to serving others, was changed: "I loved the time I had helping out the community and was excited to see what each days service would be. I really want to bring that attitude back home and implement it in my home life" (Overall Summary, Section F).

Once again, Gaea was eager to find ways to connect what she now believed with how she wanted to live her life. In an interview she revealed that in light of what she now believed "she wanted to start offering to do more things around the house" when she got home, like doing "the dishes every night" (Overall Summary, Section F). While she laughed, as those words left her lips, Gaea had clearly become more adamant about living a life of service. Gaea identified an empty house opposite her parents' home in Melbourne and decided that when the new tenants arrived, she was going to "get the oven started, bake some cookies, and take them over" (Overall Summary, Section F). After arriving back in Australia, Gaea reflected on how she had changed in relation to service, and stated, "I think since the service experience in Nepal, I have been more motivated to help out in my community back in Australia" (Overall Summary, Section F).

Photograph 10: Gaea and Anna participating in community service

Gaea was also challenged by the workload and responsibility of being a teacher on her MOTO experience. Prior to Nepal, Gaea's previous teaching experience was limited to a three-week teaching placement in Australia, that consisted of mainly observations (Gaea's Interview, 10.6.13). Gaea connected this lack of experience to why she was initially feeling "scared and unprepared" about her teaching responsibilities in Nepal (Gaea's Interview, 10.6.13). She felt as though she had been overly sheltered in the past and as a result questioned whether she was a "Shitty" teacher (Gaea's Journal, 8.3.13). She had heard from previous participants that MOTO would "throw her" into the deep end (Gaea's Interview, 10.6.13). This was one of the major reasons she had initially been attracted to the program and had subsequently signed up. She recognised early on that for her to experience growth she would need to be pushed beyond where she felt comfortable.

Gaea didn't have to wait long to be pushed outside of this comfort zone. On arrival at the school she was immediately taken to her "small and bare" classroom (Gaea's Journal, 17.6.13). Unlike her previous experience, where she "didn't have to teach in [her] whole first week," by the time period two began she found herself standing at the front in charge of what now appeared to be "her" classroom (Gaea's Interview, 24.6.13). For the remainder of the

three weeks she was immersed in the realities of teaching. Gaea spoke of how much more real this experience felt in an interview:

> I think this is definitely more real… I'm learning so much more about what it's really going to be like to be a teacher here, because you actually do teach full time and you're in the classroom all day, and I remember on my last prac, I was like, "Crap I'm so stressed because I've got three lessons to teach today." And now we go in and smash out like eight lessons. (Gaea's Interview, 24.6.13)

Gaea looked back on "being thrown into this whole teacher role" as being pivotal in the power of her experience (Gaea's Interview, 24.6.13). She was daily expected to take responsibility for teaching 18 children. She was constantly solving problems and dealing with issues and had a high level of ownership and responsibility. In the process of acting like a real teacher she became more and more "confident" in the role (Gaea's Journal, 29.7.13).

A heavy workload was not the only challenge that revealed the realities of teaching. Gaea was required to teach the same group of students for the entire placement. While Gaea was amazed at how respectful the Nepali children were, she initially struggled with how to manage their behaviour. As she was responsible for teaching the same group of students for an extended period of time she found that problems not adequately dealt with "escalated" (Gaea's Journal, 25.6.13). In the past she had only had to teach one isolated period at a time and had subsequently escaped the consequences of not successfully establishing herself as the teacher. After about six days of teaching, Gaea realised that she needed to exert more control in "her classroom" as it was evident that she was "not going to be rescued" (Gaea's Interview, 25.6.13). She began to "stand up" for herself and implemented classroom practices that worked for her. As a result of being immersed in the role of a teacher she began to gain control and feel like a teacher (Gaea's Interview, 25.6.13).

Despite all of the challenges already discussed, Gaea was also required to teach a variety of subjects outside her area of expertise, with very limited resources. Her school, classroom, and place of residence were very basic. She had no access to internet, photocopiers, projectors or libraries. As a result, Gaea became more resourceful as she learnt to think of "creative ideas on the spot" (Gaea's Interview, 24.6.13). The school itself was also unpredictable. On multiple occasions, according to her journal, she arrived at the classroom with the expectation

of observing a lesson only to discover that she was required to teach. In order to cope with the unpredictability, Gaea believed she learnt to "adapt, remain flexible and think on her feet" (Gaea's Journal, 3.7.13).

By the end of the first week, Gaea was exhausted and unsure how she was going to make it. At the conclusion of her first week her journal reflects how she was feeling: "The biggest thing for me is having enough energy to get through the last 2 periods of the day. On Fridays, school finishes at 1:30pm, which felt like heaven because I was so drained" (Gaea's Journal, 21.6.13).

Gaea adjusted quickly to the life of a teacher and the longer she taught the more comfortable she became in her ability to teach. Initially, Gaea anxiously counted down the number of days left, but by the end of her experience she was actually disappointed that she couldn't continue her teaching responsibilities and stated, "I just want to keep going to school" (Gaea's Interview, 5.7.13). As a result of frequently being required to act in the role of a teacher, Gaea began to feel comfortable seeing herself as one. She wrote:

> You feel like you're doing it so much here; disciplining them; instructing them, leading them. You spend so many more hours here being a teacher. That's what makes you feel like a teacher. So, I definitely feel more like a teacher here… On my first prac, I was definitely a student teacher. There's like no comparison. (Gaea Interview, 25.6.13)

Over the three weeks Gaea was teaching, she became very attached to the community she lived in, the school she taught in and most importantly the people she lived and worked with. In her journal Gaea described how sad she was leaving the "familiar streets" and having to say goodbye to a place and people that had "felt so much like home" (Gaea's Journal, 3.7.13). In describing her connection to her students, Gaea described herself as a "proud parent" who now had "lots of kids" (Gaea's Journal, 6.7.13).

On Gaea's last day of teaching, all the Nepali teachers prepared and served a lunch to the Australian teachers. Gaea was overwhelmed at their act of service as she felt as though she should have been the one "serving them" (Gaea's Journal, 6.7.13). The teachers then conducted a farewell ceremony and Gaea was called to the front of the school where she received "a certificate, a little hat, a tika (red mark on her forehead) and a little pouch of

coins" (Gaea's Journal, 3.7.13). Gaea was overwhelmed, as she had "never felt that much appreciation ever" (Gaea's Interview, 5.7.13).

Photograph 11: Gaea at her farewell ceremony

After the ceremony, Gaea was walked back to her house in the village, surrounded by a group of her Year 8 girls. They didn't want to let Gaea go and were "holding hands and sobbing" (Gaea's Interview, 5.7.13). Gaea found it really sad saying goodbye and reluctantly left her "new home" feeling very much "a part of the culture" (Gaea's Interview, 5.7.13). She was going to "miss the kids… and the teachers" and had a strong desire to return (Gaea's Interview, 2.7.13). "I definitely want to come back here. I want to come back" (Gaea's Interview, 5.7.13). Gaea left the village with a newly discovered appreciation of the importance of people and relationships:

> So, the more you travel and the more you experience new countries and stuff, the more you realise it's not actually about the things in the place or the features of the place or like the beauty of the place. It's really the people, the community and really getting to know them and forming relationships. (Gaea's Interview, 2.7.13)

Micro interpretive summary

Gaea appeared to begin the MOTO experience in Nepal with little confidence as a teacher. This is unsurprising in light of the research of Cherubini (2009) who highlighted low levels of teacher efficacy within pre-service teachers. Unfortunately, Gaea's first teaching experience seemed to lack the necessary freedom and belonging and resulted in her attempting to replicate the practices of an expert rather than engage in any real learning. Without the freedom to experiment, she initially seemed unable to explain her classroom practices. A disconnect appeared to remain between her actions as a teacher and her beliefs as a person. This disconnect, referred to commonly in teacher education research as the 'theory practice gap' (Allen & Wright, 2014), is a real concern, as quality teaching in the 21st century is known to be reliant on teachers who "know how theory informs their practice" (Rodriguez-Valls, 2014, p. 294). Like other pre-service teachers before her (Korthagen, 2010), Gaea seemed unable to connect what she did in relation to who she was, and as a result she described herself as a teacher using the words "grey" and "in-between". As a result of this disconnect, she appeared to lack confidence and experienced self-doubt and fear.

Similarly, to existing research into OSPEXs (Cushner & Chang, 2015; Doppen & An, 2014), it appears that Gaea was impacted significantly as a result of her experiences in an overseas context. Her beliefs were challenged when she encountered new experiences that destabilised her existing understandings. Like Boud et al., (2013), Gaea's story suggests that it is only by destabilising a pre-service teachers existing *stories of self* that is likely to result in real transformation. This destabilisation process appears to have often left Gaea feeling confused, surprised and uncomfortable. Without an expert willing to provide answers, Gaea was afforded the opportunity to reflect extensively on experiences that contrasted with her previous understandings. As a result of this reflection Gaea appeared to have a natural desire to regain congruence between her new experiences and old beliefs, and consequently, attempted to restory her beliefs. Once new beliefs were established, Gaea appeared to naturally seek alignment between her beliefs and actions by altering or making plans to change her practices. With a closer connection between her beliefs and actions, Gaea appears to have developed significantly in her confidence in the classroom.

Developing new *stories of self* is not something that appeared to occur in Gaea in isolation from community. Similarly to the research of Riedinger (2015), Gaea's story strongly argues

the importance of placing pre-service teachers in real and supportive social contexts in developing *stories of self*. Her connectedness with her peers, lecturer, school, class and village community all seemed to influence the stories she created to explain who she was and what she believed. Making sense of her new experiences was often achieved through interaction and consultation with others she trusted. The process of becoming a teacher seemed to be influenced by what those around her thought of her. Dolloff (2007) refers to the importance of pre-service teachers being given the opportunity to share their stories with others and for their stories to be accepted within the stories of others as the legitimation process. Gaea's story of self in relation to her identity as a teacher appeared impacted greatly by the fact that the local teachers valued her, appreciated her, and even learnt from her as a teacher. Their belief in her appeared to assist the development of her own confidence in herself. Learning appeared to be most effective for Gaea when it was bi- or multi-directional. Gaea appeared to learn little when information was being passed down from an expert and much when embedded in a learning community.

As concluded in the research of Stachowski et al., (2008), high levels of belonging appeared to foster an environment where Gaea felt comfortable to be open, honest and free to be herself. Unlike her previous teaching experience, teaching in Nepal seemed to allow her the opportunity to take ownership and responsibility for her own learning. This appears significant as, according to Danielowich (2012), learning is likely to be significant when pre-service teachers are provided with the opportunity to experiment independently with the possibility of making mistakes. Gaea appeared to thrive in an environment where she no longer had to fear mistakes and was afforded the opportunity to reflect and learn through reflective practice. Teaching seemed to become exciting for Gaea as she discovered things that worked for her through a series of experiments. It was through these experiments that Gaea appeared to question her existing beliefs and consequently strengthen or alter her *stories of self*.

Gaea seems to have found her teaching experience in Nepal more conducive to real learning as it appeared to closely reflect the workload, challenges, and need to be flexible and creative of that of an actual classroom. McGrath (2009) highlights the importance of authentic learning experiences within teacher education; pre-service teachers are more likely to learn when immersed in environments where they will encounter realistic challenges that they cannot successfully navigate without further learning. Gaea spoke of real and diverse

experiences that forced her to question her once taken for granted beliefs in relation to herself as a person and teacher. As a result of belonging to a community where she was challenged and provided with freedom to experiment, Gaea appears to have demonstrated significant growth in relation to her stories that explained who she was and what she believed. The major stories impacted from this experience included: her past stories; her stories of others; her stories that connected behaviours to beliefs; her stories connecting herself to the world; her stories explaining her purpose; and her stories connecting herself as a person to herself as a teacher.

The Story of Fonda

The backstory

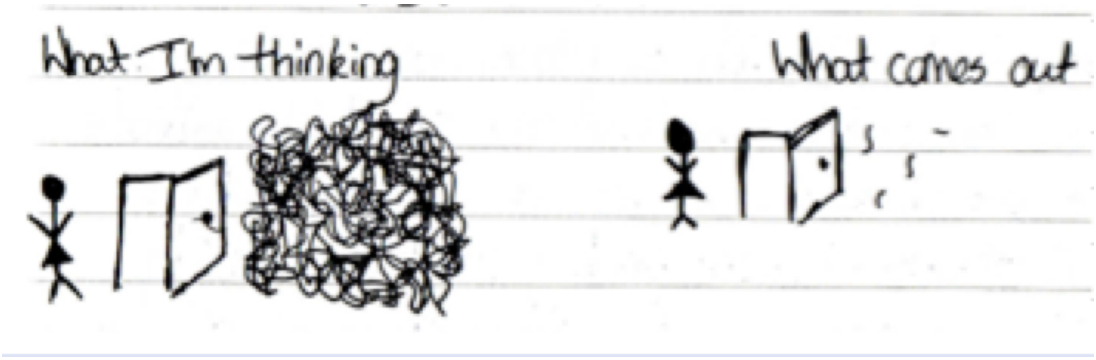
Fonda described herself as someone who was "always changing her mind and her hair colour" (Fonda's Journal, 17.3.13). She went through the majority of her school life very unsure of her goals once she finished Year 12, and remembered thinking to herself, "I don't know what I want to do!" (Fonda's Interview, 10.6.13). She first considered Primary Teaching as a career when she was asked to babysit for some of her friends, and discovered the "joy and happiness" she felt "from being around kids" (Fonda's Interview, 10.6.13). Fonda was later inspired by the "attitude" and "positivity" of one of her English teachers, who made a substantial impact in her life, and demonstrated to her firsthand, that "what teachers do is important" (Fonda's Interview, 10.6.13). It was about half way through Year 12, that Fonda reflected on how much she "adored" kids and recognised her own desire to be an "important person in a child's life," and as a result, made the decision to become a primary teacher (Fonda's Interview, 10.6.13).

In 2012, Fonda enrolled in a Bachelor of Education (Primary) course at Avondale College. She chose to complete her first two professional teaching experiences in local and familiar schools, both within 8km of her home (Fonda's Interview, 10.6.13). While she remembered receiving "a really great mark," she spoke of her strong desire to "become more confident and positive about [her]self, and [her] abilities as a teacher" (Fonda's Journal, 10.3.13). She still felt like she was "pretending to be a teacher" (Fonda's Interview, 10.6.13). While her first two experiences had taught her much about what teachers do, she still didn't feel right as a "person" (Fonda's Journal, 17.3.13).

Fonda was unsure of her own story, and often contradicted herself when she attempted to share it with others. On one occasion, she described herself as being "very outgoing" and having "a lot of friends," that were really happy to be around her because of "how generous she was" (Fonda's Interview, 10.6.13). Shortly after, she spoke of being a "horrible person" that she "didn't like," who didn't have many "close friends," (Fonda's Interview, 10.6.13) and of her fears of ending up with "nobody in [her] life" (Fonda's Interview, 24.6.13). She explained the confusion she experienced as a result of not understanding her own story, in her first interview, thus:

> Most of the time I can't take my own advice that I give people, which is probably not one of the best things… Sometimes after giving advice I'll just be thinking, where did that come from? I don't know what part of me this has come from. (Fonda's Interview, 10.6.13)

Fonda drew a picture of chaos, titled, "What I'm thinking," next to another picture void of chaos, titled, "What comes out," to demonstrate the confusion she experienced as a result of a disconnect between her thoughts and what she was able to share with others (Fonda's Journal, 14.6.13). Fonda stated that as a result of not being able to explain her thoughts she often tended "to close off from people" (Fonda's Journal, 14.6.13).



Photograph 12: Fonda's Drawing in Journal

Fonda was desperate to get rid of "all the negative thoughts in [her] head," and become a person with "a whole new outlook on everything" (Fonda's Interview, 10.6.13). One of her strongest negative thoughts was in relation to her own beliefs about herself. Fonda lacked confidence in the person she was, and likened her life to that of a "roller coaster" (Fonda's Interview, 10.6.13). While she would experience some high points, where she would start to

believe in her own ability, she would often experience "lows" where her "negative thoughts" would constantly remind her that "things were too hard [for her] and [she] couldn't do anything" (Fonda' Journal, 11.7.13).

She described herself as "a bit of a princess" who could "get really angry if she didn't get [her] own way" (Fonda's Interview, 12.7.13). Fonda hated her bad "attitude," and found "it hard to bond with people" (Fonda's Journal, 2.7.13). As a result, she was unsure of what her friends and some significant members of her family thought of her, and consequently "doubt[ed] [her]self" as a person and as a "pre-service teacher" (Fonda's Interview, 14.6.13). She was at a stage in her life where she had "had enough," and was "kinda over everything" and wanted to escape her own confusion (Fonda's Interview, 10.6.13).

Decision to teach in Nepal

Fonda remembered hearing about MOTO from some of her friends, and became curious to find out what it was all about. She attended one of the information sessions and became very interested when one of her lecturers, Phil, claimed that the MOTO program had often "changed people" (Fonda's Interview, 10.6.13). Fonda liked the idea of changing, and hoped that she would "come back from Nepal" different, and feeling like "a teacher" (Fonda's Interview, 10.6.13). Fonda didn't like so many things about the person she was, and saw the MOTO experience as an opportunity to find herself by "leaving home to experience something new" (Fonda's Journal, 10.3.13). She was very excited about opening "the next chapter of [her] life," and believed leaving behind the "things [she was] used to" was an important step in allowing her to "re-evaluate" herself (Fonda's Journal, 11.6.13).

One thing she seemed very reluctant to leave behind was the expectations and beliefs of her family and friends. Prior to departure, Fonda spoke often of her desire to "make everyone proud" of her (Fonda's Interview, 10.6.13). She wore a necklace "bearing 5 charms," to remind her of her Nan, who had passed away when she was in Year 12, and her friends she was leaving behind (Fonda's Interview, 10.6.13). From her journal entries, prior to departure, it appeared that a major reason she was eager to conquer the MOTO experience was to prove herself to her "family and especially [her] Nan" (Fonda's Interview 16.6.13).

The MOTO team had planned to fly to Lukla and complete the Everest Base camp walk as part of their experience. Fonda identified this challenge as an ideal opportunity to prove herself, and appeared just as excited in the stories and photos she hoped to return with, as in the experience itself. She wrote:

> To be able to say I made it to Mt Everest would be just as amazing as the trek itself…I would like to think I am going to make it there and to be able to have a picture to say, look I'm here. (Fonda's Journal, 14.6.13)

Before even departing for Nepal, Fonda had developed a story of self she was anxious to tell when she returned. As the central character in this story, she was equipped "with things in life that other people didn't," and was to venture into a disadvantaged land and save people "who basically had nothing," and return home the hero, having "changed children's lives" (Fonda Journal, 13.6.13). The themes of this story featured heavily in her journal and interviews, and were seen as a way that she could return home feeling "better about [her] self, and more positive towards things" (Fonda's Interview, 10.3.13). In her interview, she explained:

> We're going over there with everything that we have here… to give them a taste of what Australia is like… and teaching kids who basically probably only have a pencil and a piece of paper, and we're going to be in that classroom and we're going to explode everything that we've got into those children for three weeks. I think the whole idea of coming back here knowing that I've been able to do that is going to be a really, really positive and good thing for me! (Fonda's Interview, 10.3.13)

Would Fonda return from her first overseas experience with her pre-determined story of self, or would she return with a new story, that truly helped to explain who she was in light of her actual experiences?

The experience begins

Growing in community

Prior to departing for Nepal, Fonda had lived all of her life close to where she was born, in a suburb on the foreshore of Lake Macquarie, New South Wales (Fonda's Journal, 17, 3, 13).

While her family "had owned a caravan" and had travelled together to places as far away as "The Twelve Apostles," Fonda had "never been on a plane before," and consequently had "never experienced being in a completely different environment" (Fonda's Interview, 10.6.13). This experience was a "really big thing" for Fonda, and despite the fact that she felt "freaked out," she was determined to "leave home and the things [she was] used to, and experience something new" (Fonda's Journal, 21.3.13). She was worried about separating herself from the people and places that were familiar to her, however, believed that not being "able to see or talk to anyone for 5 weeks might be a good thing" for her (Fonda's Journal, 11.6.13).

Fonda struggled to even "talk properly" when she spoke about how she felt leaving Australia for the first time (Fonda's Interview, 14,6,13). She remembered first becoming "upset" when she went through customs, as "everything was new for [her] and [she] didn't know what to do" (Fonda's Journal, 14.6.13). She recalled feeling "very alone" and "scared" at Sydney airport when she went to the bathroom and lost contact with her friends (Letter Home, 12.7.13). Being at the airport definitely made it all feel real, and after eating breakfast at "Maccas," [McDonalds] she realised it would be "a fair few weeks" before she returned home (Letter Home, 12.7.13). In an attempt to remain connected to her normal life, she "sent so many [text] messages to friends" as she was waiting to board the plane (Fonda's Journal, 14.6.13). After her flight was announced she began to walk to where her plane was waiting on the runway feeling "anxious and upset" (Letter Home, 12.7.13). Fonda knew she would soon be "leaving all [her] friends and family behind" and she felt "completely overwhelmed" (Fonda's Interview, 14.6.13). She ended up bursting into tears when one of her peers asked, "Where's Fonda?" and everyone looked at her (Fonda's Interview, 14.6.13). She explained her feelings thus:

> As soon as he said that I just started crying because I was like, oh my God this is my first time in a plane… I'm leaving everything that I have ever known, and everyone that I love behind… I left my Mum and couldn't even see if she was upset or not… every time I go to type something to her, I just break down because I know she is so far away from me. (Fonda's Interview, 14.6.13)

Fonda had a window seat and sat down apprehensively while she waited for take-off. Her anxiety grew when the captain announced that there would be a delay due to technical issues.

It didn't take long for her negative thoughts to re-surface, "Trust the first time I go in a plane for something bad to happen!" (Fonda's Journal, 14.6.13). As she sat waiting for the issue to be resolved, "a part of [her] wanted to be up in the air" and to begin "the next chapter of [her] life," while another part wished the plane would never take-off so she could "go home right away" (Fonda's Journal, 14.6.13). Fonda recorded her first of many countdowns to her return in her journal while still on the runway in Sydney. "I just want the next 5 weeks to go quickly so I can talk to everyone again" (Fonda's Journal, 14.6.13).

Photograph 13: Fonda boarding a plane for the first time

After about an hour of waiting, which she filled with more text "messaging," the plane took off and Fonda "got in the air" (Fonda's Interview, 14.6.13). She looked out her "window and saw the edge of Australia and knew [she] was really leaving" (Fonda's Journal, 14.6.13). In an attempt to record the "too many thoughts going through her mind," Fonda had already "written 6 pages" in her journal by the time she arrived in Kathmandu, and was a little concerned she might "run out of pages" (Fonda's Journal, 14.6.13). She had a strong desire "to make it" but was unsure if her "body and mind [were] going to let [her]" (Fonda's Interview, 10.6.13). In her last journal entry before getting off the plane in Kathmandu, Fonda wrote of the "turbulence" she had experienced and overcome on her first flight (Fonda's Journal Entry, 15.6.13). Her journal over the next 5 weeks would continue to be used to document the inner turbulence she would experience from living in "a completely different world" (Fonda's Interview, 14.6.13).

Fonda was initially unsure of the Nepali people, and after landing became nervous that they might try to steal her bags (Fonda's Journal, 15.6.13). The first bus trip from the airport to Kathmandu was really "overwhelming" for Fonda as she struggled to make sense out of a place that was "nothing like what [she] expected" (Fonda's Interview, 14.6.13). The thing that "shocked [Fonda] the most was the poverty" (Fonda's Interview, 14.6.13). There was "rubbish in the streets" and hundreds of "poor stray dogs," and it "broke [her] heart" (Fonda's Interview, 14.6.13). It was a "dirty and polluted" place and she struggled to cope with the number of "children coming up to [her] and asking for money" (Fonda's interview, 14.6.13). The solution to poverty quickly became more complicated than she had first imagined, as she related:

> Jess and I were standing outside a shop and this boy would not leave us alone. He was putting fingers up to his mouth, because he wanted food, and Jess ended up giving him $1…and he didn't even come back with a smile on his face…. On the trek up to the Temple, there was a little boy who was just tapping on my leg trying to get me to give him something, and I didn't have anything and it just breaks your heart because you can't do anything for these people, like no amount of money is going to help them and that is pretty much the reality of it… seeing how people are living here compared to what we have come from, is just really overwhelming for me. (Fonda's Interview, 14.6.13)

Fonda referred to the Nepali people as "strangers" when she first arrived and was "nervous" about how she would cope "being in their environment" for such a long time (Fonda's Interview, 14.6.13). She had her "first Dahl Baht food experience" (Nepali food) in Kathmandu, which she wasn't a "fan" of, and went to sleep on a foreign mattress that was "hard and pretty uncomfortable" (Letter Home, 12.7.13). Her trip to the village the next day was delayed because of a local protest. Fonda referred to these protestors as a "mob" she managed to escape from, by "going up an alleyway" (Fonda's Journal, 16.6.13).

Photograph 14: Fonda with her team on their first day in Kathmandu

By that afternoon the protest had finished and the team were allowed to board the truck for the village. Fonda stood up in the back of the truck and excitedly held onto a piece of rope to keep her balance. She was surrounded by all of her team and they "sung" most of the way together as they "dodged the low electrical wires and waved at the local people" (Fonda's Journal, 16.6.13). Fonda described this trip, through the busy Nepali streets to the village, as "the most exhilarating experience [she'd] ever had" (Fonda's Journal, 16.6.13). She had never seen "so many rice paddies" as she did that afternoon, and by the time she arrived in the village the sun had set and the "fireflies" welcomed her to the place she would, in just over a week, start to think of as her new "home" (Fonda's Interview, 26.6.13).

Fonda was amazed at the beauty of the place when the sun rose the next morning: "No words can describe this place and what you see. Photos don't even do it justice. This place is absolutely amazing and I couldn't have picked a better place to come for my first overseas trip" (Fonda's Journal, 19.6.13).

The truck trip out had been a "bonding" experience and she now felt more comfortable just "chilling" with a couple of the girls (Fonda's Journal, 19.6.13). She still felt "homesick"

though, and just wanted to be "held tight" and "feel safe again" (Fonda's Journal, 19.6.13). While she "couldn't have come to Nepal with a better group of people," and mostly felt "really supported," she really missed her "family and friends" from Australia and longed for [her] "experience of a lifetime" to "go faster" (Fonda's Journal, 19.6.13). After about a week of being in Nepal, she created a 37-day countdown to what would become one of her major goals throughout her time in Nepal, expressed in her journal as, "HOME! HOME!" (Fonda's Journal, 26.6.13). While Fonda was physically a "long way from [her] family and friends," she struggled to stop thinking about them. She wanted their "support" when she was feeling "low" and "really missed" and wanted "to share [her] stories and experiences" with them when she was feeling on a "high" (Fonda's Journal, 24.6.13).



Photograph 15: The 37-day countdown Fonda created in her journal

She wrote:

> I am homesick and stuff but I am trying not to think about it too much because that's not the reason I am here. I didn't come overseas to miss people. I didn't come overseas to cry every day because I want to go home. Of course everyone wants to go home, I have basically been away for a week in a completely different country. (Fonda's Interview, 21.6.13)

Fonda especially missed her family and friends in Australia when she felt distant from her team in Nepal. It was "probably" on day five of her overseas trip that she felt the most "alone" (Fonda's Journal, 19.6.13). While Fonda's "first day of teaching" had gone "really well," she "disagreed a lot" with Emma, her teaching partner, throughout their second day. She returned to her empty room feeling very discouraged and alone. She wrote in her journal:

> I just miss having the close support from all my friends. All that really happens here is people bitch and talk about one another. I do it too but only because I'm getting really frustrated. I feel like I don't fit in here anymore. I've been in the room alone for a while now, because everyone goes off and does things with other people. I actually want to cry right now because I'm finding it hard to blend with other people. (Fonda's Journal, 19.6.13)

At that point in her experience she still felt like an "intruder" who "wanted to be part of things" but didn't feel comfortable to speak up and say, "oh yea I'll come" (Fonda's Interview, 25.6.13). She later described this experience as just "one of her rough days," (Fonda's Interview, 25.6.13) and while it was not the last of her "mini breakdowns," the more time she spent with her group the more "comfortable" she became (Fonda's Journal, 21.6.13).

A few days later Fonda went on a hike up a mountain "she didn't think she was going to make," to visit a local village school called Sundai Mai (Fonda's Interview, 23.6.13). With the help of one of her peers, who walked "with [her] the whole time," she reached the summit and felt "exhilarated" (Fonda's Interview, 24.6.13). While Fonda was pleased she had made it, what confronted her more than the steepness of the mountains she climbed, were the words of affirmation her friend shared with her as they journeyed together:

> The thing that stood out for me the whole time we were walking was she said she was proud of me, and no-one has ever really said that they're proud of me, like not even, I think my parents may have said it once or twice, probably my Mum more than my Dad, but nobody really actually said it to me. I think that was something that just really did have an impact on me because for somebody to say that they're proud of what I've achieved, umm it just gives you a great feeling inside. (Fonda's Interview, 24.6.13)

Fonda continued to feel more accepted the longer she lived in Nepal. In the past she had "tended to shut people out a lot," as she didn't think anyone could "help" her (Fonda's

Interview, 12.7.13). In Nepal, her normal life of "watching TV" and always being on "Facebook" was replaced with a real community that allowed her to "talk more and get to know more people and understand their stories… and open up and tell them more about" her own story (Fonda's Interview, 25.6.13). As a result, she began to feel as though she wasn't being "judged by anyone," and began to "become [her] own person" (Fonda's Interview, 25.6.13). Fonda had changed during her three weeks in the village and attributed much of her success in getting "past [her] negative thoughts and struggles" to the people that surrounded her (Fonda's Journal, 12.7.13). In her interview, she explained:

> Right now, I don't think I've ever been happier. I'm surrounded by the most amazing group of people. They have made this trip so much fun and being so far from home and family seems like nothing because this is my new family. I was freaked out about leaving the country for the first time, and yeah I've cried and wanted to go home and give up, but these incredible people have been so supportive and pulled me through, and I am so grateful for each and every one of them… They make the distance from here to home seem smaller, and time is definitely going faster…There's a few people who I can just talk a whole lot to, and share things about my life, and feel comfortable telling them more about me, because I can connect with them. (Fonda's Interview, 7.7.13)

Fonda arrived in Nepal with a group of people she referred to as "strangers" feeling very much like a "tourist," and returned to Australia with the same group of people she described as being her "massive family" (Overall Summary, Section G). The "close relationships" that were formed helped Fonda and her team to "support each other through the whole experience," and Fonda found that it helped her "grow more as a person" (Fonda's Journal, 7.7.13).

One of the things that "impacted" [Fonda] the most," while living and teaching in the village, was having the kids "love on her" so much (Overall Summary, Section F). This love was shown through a never-ending supply of "flowers and hugs," and it just made her "so happy" (Overall Summary, Section F). Of the 1200 photos that Fonda took in Nepal, she stated that her favourite of them all "was the one taken with all the children" at the front of her school (Overall Summary, Section G). She loved the photo so much because it reminded her of the "connection and bond" she made with the kids on "her first time overseas and first time teaching in a new country and environment" (Overall Summary, Section G).

Photograph 16: Fonda's favourite photo of her Nepal experience

Fonda got so much "positive energy" from "being around the kids every day" (Overall Summary, Section G). One afternoon while Fonda and Emma were walking some of their girls' home it started raining really heavily. They "unzipped their jackets," and like mother hens, lifted their "wings above the kids to keep them dry" (Fonda's Interview, 19.6.13). The kids "huddled in," and Fonda felt so good to know that she was so "close to the kids" after only "a couple of days" (Fonda's Interview, 19.6.13).

Saying goodbye to the children, at the end of each school day, was a lengthy and touching process. The children "fought to get hold" of her arm and kept saying, "Miss Bye," over and over again (Fonda's Journal, 19.6.13). Fonda loved "being their teacher" (Overall Summary, Section G). As she walked away from the school the children would stand on the dirt road and watch her leave. Their voices calling, "Miss, Miss," could be heard well into the distance, and she couldn't help but turn around "every five steps," and watch them waving at her "from halfway up the hill" (Fonda's Journal, 19.6.13). Feeling loved and being accepted by her peers and the children "was just the best thing" (Overall Summary, Section F).

Photograph 17: Fonda playing a game with her class

Learning through freedom

When Fonda hunched over to enter the red and blue door of her classroom for the first time, she knew it was going to be a "different type of teaching experience" (Fonda's Journal, 19.6.13). The classroom was "really small," and apart from "the planks of timber" the students were using as desks, it was completely "bare and empty" (Fonda's Journal, 19.6.13). The corrugated iron roof was exposed and so low that Fonda had to bend down when standing on the dirt floor, at the front of the classroom, to avoid hitting her head. Thankfully there were only "10 children" in her class, however, they "didn't speak English" and would "push and hit each other whenever they want[ed]" (Fonda's Journal, 19.6.13).

Her expectation, in light of her first two teaching experiences in Australia, was that she would spend the first day observing "lessons to get an idea of how to teach the kids" (Fonda's Journal, 17.6.13). Her supervising teacher was at the back of the classroom when she arrived, and after waiting quite a while for her to begin teaching, Fonda began to realise that the local teacher had no intention of taking control. Fonda "wanted the teacher to take the lessons," but every time Fonda asked her "she just said okay and then kept standing there" (Fonda's

Journal, 17.6.13). So "eventually" Fonda and Emma "just decided to teach the kids," and "ended up teaching from about 11am – 3pm with only one break" (Fonda's Journal, 19.6.13).

Fonda struggled to survive her first week of teaching. After her first day she felt "nervous" going to school again as she was "worried" she wouldn't "get through to" the children (Fonda's Journal, 18.6.13). She initially described the kids as, "ferals" who would just "laugh at [her] and start smiling" when she would "raise her voice" in an attempt to "discipline them" (Fonda's Interview, 21.6.13). She had "little fun" early on, and by the end of the first week she experienced "the worst day" she could have imagined, and stated that she'd "had enough of them" (Fonda's Interview, 21.6.13).

Although her first week of teaching was challenging, she showed little evidence of reflective practice and experimentation in relation to the stories that explained her beliefs (Fonda's Journal 17-21.6.13). Fonda explained much through the replication of stories that had been told to her. She stated that she thought teaching was the "right career path for her" as her mum had told her "twice" that it was, and so she thought she would "definitely go off that" (Fonda's Interview, 12.7.13). She also mirrored her purpose of education off a friend of hers who had wanted to become a famous singer to "change people's lives" and prevent "girls from committing suicide" (Fonda's Interview, 21.6.13). She was reluctant to question these inherited stories, and set out to make "a change in the lives" of the children she interacted with (Fonda's Journal, 23.6.13). She quickly found evidence in the "happy faces" of the children that "truly [made her] believe [she was] making a difference" (Fonda's Journal, 27.6.13). She was desperate to "feel after 3 weeks" that she had "seen a change," and to know that she was "part of that change" (Fonda's Journal, 28.6.13). It wasn't until after she had finished teaching that she first allowed herself to question her purpose, as inherited from others, when she wrote, "I wonder if I've actually made a difference?" (Letter Home, 12.7.13).

Another belief Fonda had inherited, and appeared reluctant to question, was that she had come to Nepal as a person with "much," to give to people "less fortunate" (Overall Summary, Section H). For much of her experience Fonda replicated the beliefs she had brought with her, and continued to see Nepali people as "poor" and "lacking" as they lived "in small houses all crammed up," and as such concluded that they had "very little" (Fonda's Journal, 26.6.13). Every day she lived in a Nepali village was seen as "another chance to change their

lives" (Fonda's Journal, 26.6.13). Rather than question her own way of life, Fonda often commented that being exposed to difference made her "appreciate what [she had] back home" more (Letter Home, 12.7.13). On day 21 of her overseas experience, she demonstrated for the first time, since being overseas, that she had begun to learn from the Nepali people and their way of life and question how she had previously lived her own life:

> The way I live my life back home, is a lot different to how I'm living here in Nepal. I realise now that the way I live back home needs to change because I feel I would have a more positive life and a better outlook on the world. (Fonda's Journal, 4.7.13)

It also took time for Fonda to begin to feel comfortable enough to really experiment in the classroom. After the first week of teaching she commented on the freedom she felt in the classroom, thus: "Not having a supervising teacher gives you the freedom to teach in like your own way knowing that they're not just going to be sitting there writing notes on basically everything that you do" (Fonda's Interview, 21.6.13).

A few days after commenting on this freedom, and after her bonding weekend away with her team to Bhaktapur [an ancient town] and her successful mountain climb to Sundai Mai school, Fonda commented on how "cool" it was to begin to be her "own self," and to know she wasn't "being judged by anyone" (Fonda's Interview, 25.6.13). It was at this point that Fonda began to show evidence of some experimentation, and as a result began to discover "more about who [she] want[ed] to be as a teacher" (Fonda's Journal, 26.6.13). She moved beyond the "techniques" she had replicated from Australia, "that just didn't work," and started "to think about new ways to teach kids" (Fonda's Interview, 25.6.13). In an attempt to instruct children, she had earlier become frustrated at, because they didn't "speak any English," (Fonda's Journal, 19.6.13) she tried leaving parts of sentences blank and discovered she could get them to write independently (Fonda's Journal, 25.6.13). She later experimented with "moving the disruptive and rude students," and "taking away the pencils" from students who refused to listen, which "seemed to be effective" (Fonda's Journal, 2.7.13). As a result of the little experimentation Fonda did get involved with, she commented that she had learnt "a lot about being a good teacher and what not to do from this experience" (Letter home, 12.7.13).

It really wasn't until near the end of her teaching session that Fonda really felt comfortable to be "her own person," and "let her true identity lead the way" without fear of "being judged" (Fonda's Journal, 2.7.13). She spoke about how liberating this was for her, immediately after in her journal:

> Being in a new country with a whole new culture gives me the chance to try new things and experience this world. I wouldn't change this experience for anything because I've begun to learn a lot about me, to be a better and more open person. (Fonda's Journal, 2.7.13)

While Fonda was from a "non-religious background," she chose to share what she had learnt with her team in a group worship three days later. The title of her talk was, "It's kind of fun to do the impossible" (Fonda's Journal, 6.7.13). She spoke of the importance of making "peace with her past," and how she discovered in Nepal that she didn't "exist to impress the world," and how she was no longer wanting to "compare [her] self with others" (Fonda's Journal, 6.7.13). She now realised that, "no-one," other than herself, was responsible for "her own happiness," and challenged her team to believe in themselves and "do the impossible" (Fonda's Journal, 6.7.13). She concluded the talk by sharing that, she now felt "alive" as she realised she "existed to live her own life in ways" that would make her happy (Fonda's Journal, 6.7.13). The next day she drew a picture of herself in her journal, looking at a mountain range, with the caption "Time to Conquer" (Fonda's Journal, 7.7.13).

Experiencing a new reality

From the moment Fonda landed in Nepal and exited the airport, she described Nepal as being "so different," and "like a completely different world" (Fonda's Interview, 14.6.13). In addition to the poverty, Fonda was challenged by her new lifestyle and teaching responsibilities. For much of her experience Fonda slept in a room with "other girls," on a "rock hard" mattress, in a house where the "electricity could go off at any time," in a "small village" with "so many insects and bugs" (Fonda's Journal, 20.6.13). Fonda found it really "confronting being in a place where everything [was] so different and nothing like back home" (Fonda's Journal, 20.6.13).

In order to cope initially, Fonda surrounded herself with the familiar. She hung on to her "friends and family" in Australia that she "missed so much," and regularly counted down the remaining days left until she could be "re-united with them" (Fonda's Journal, 21.6.13). She struggled to remain immersed in the environment and time of the place she found herself, and spoke instead of each day she "survived," and spent much of her day imagining the future when her current experience would end (Fonda Journal, 20.6.13). Shopping was another way that Fonda escaped the challenges associated with the new reality she found herself. She wrote: "I bought 2 pairs of pants, 3 head bands for myself, then some key-rings and bracelets for my friends. I'm feeling a bit better now" (Fonda's Journal, 28.6.13).

Fonda commented that her teaching experience in Nepal was also "very different" to her first two teaching experiences in Australia. Unlike Australia, where she only had to teach "8 lessons a week," in Nepal she was teaching "4 or 5 [lessons] a day" (Fonda's Interview, 12.7.13). She learnt quickly about "the pressure teachers are under every day," and while it was "tough," she said that it resulted in her "adapting" (Fonda's Journal, 22.7.13). As a result, she started to "understand what quality teaching" was and slowly began to see these "characteristics" be developed in who she was as a teacher (Letter Home, 12.7.13).

Photograph 18: Fonda and her teaching partner Emma

While Fonda experienced some "really, really confronting" things in Nepal, such as when she attended an animal sacrifice and witnessed "goats… get their heads cut off," she initially reflected little on her own beliefs, and quickly dismissed what she had experienced in light of

the fact that it "was part of a different culture," and as such she would probably "never understand" (Fonda's Journal, 30.6.13).

As her sense of belonging in Nepal increased, Fonda appeared to be less dismissive of beliefs that confronted her. Fonda struggled to make sense of the obvious "happiness of the children," despite their circumstances (Fonda's Journal, 2.7.13). A photo of her students squinting happily into the sun highlighted to Fonda the contentedness within the Nepali children. She described them as follows: "They were the cutest kids, and so fun to be around, and I just love this photo because they're all smiling even though the sun is right in their eyes" (Overall Summary, Section G).

Fonda began to become less dismissive of her new experiences, in relation to the happiness of the children, and began to question her own beliefs in relation to what she had experienced:

> They can live their lives with so little and then we are always worrying about where's my phone, where's my computer and all this kind of stuff … and it's really opened my eyes to think I don't need as much stuff as I have… (Fonda's Interview, 25.6.13)

In her second week of teaching, Fonda walked Runjeta, one of her students, up the hill to her home and was overwhelmed with "how little" her family had (Fonda's Interview, 25.6.13). Runjeta would not allow Fonda to leave until she accepted the cucumber she had presented to her as a gift. Fonda felt shocked at the time, and reflected much on how giving the people were in comparison to how she lived her own life. From that point on, Fonda became "inspired to do more," and spoke of her desire to "help more back home," "volunteer," "donate clothes," and "do soup kitchens" (Fonda's Journal, 12.7.13). The love and generosity Fonda had seen in others made her question the very way she lived her life, and resulted in her identifying practices in her own life she wanted to change, so she could be a better person. In a letter home, she wrote:

> When I get home, I hope to live a more positive life, because I've seen how it is to live in another world. I take a lot for granted, and now I'll treat the people close to me better than I have. They deserve a great friend, and I want to be a better friend to them. (Letter Home, 12.7.13)

Saying her final goodbyes, to the children she had taught, was really hard. Some of the girls walked her to her house and "started crying," which started Fonda "crying" because she knew she was "leaving them" (Fonda's Journal, 3.7.13). She grabbed her stuff and jumped into the back of one of the same trucks that had brought her, 3 weeks earlier, to this place that now felt like "home" (Fonda's Journal, 3.7.13). It didn't take long for the trucks to start up and drive along the road in front of the school where she had "sung and danced" with her kids every day (Overall Summary, Section G). As she drove past her school, she looked back and saw "all the kids on the side of the road just waving, and heaps of them were crying," and it was "really, really upsetting" (Fonda's Interview, 3.7.13). Shortly after leaving, Fonda found comfort in the thought that one day she "might come back" to this place (Fonda's Journal, 4.7.13).

Fonda left the village realising, "how much she had taken for granted" previously, and felt far "more appreciation" of what she had "back home" (Fonda's Journal, 2.7.13). She stated that, despite the hardships, she "wouldn't have changed" her experience in the village "for anything," as it had enabled her to see the world from the perspective of the [Nepali] people" (Fonda's Journal 26.6.13). Fonda only had one more challenge to conquer, however it was "probably the biggest one" that had haunted her ever since she signed up for the MOTO experience (Overall Summary, Section G). She referred to this final challenge in her Journal when she wrote, "Annapurna Base camp here we come" (Fonda's Journal, 7.7.13).

Fonda had walked very little prior to signing up for the MOTO Nepal experience, and remembered feeling "overwhelmed" after only completing a 6km training trek, in which she ascended 153 metres in altitude (Fonda's Journal, 13.4.13). Fonda realised that for her to successfully reach Annapurna Base Camp that she would have to walk for 8-consecutive days and climb to an altitude of 4130 metres. Fonda was really "afraid" and "doubted" her ability (Fonda's Journal, 14.6.13). Prior to arriving in Nepal, Fonda had really struggled with "negative thoughts," (Fonda's Interview, 10.6.13) and had seen the trek as an opportunity to overcome her "so many doubts," and prove to herself and her family and friends of what she was really capable (Fonda's Journal, 8.7.13).

Fonda and her team were taken in trucks from Pokhara to the beginning of the trek. After a quick team photo, Fonda began the arduous first ascent up what appeared to be a never-

ending rock staircase. Within the first 10-minutes of the walk, Fonda "fell over" and hit her head, and once again became unsure whether this challenge was just "too much" for her (Fonda's Journal, 8.7.13) While she "made it through the first day," she wrote in her journal that night of an ongoing conflict between, what she desperately wanted to achieve, and what her mind would let her accomplish, as follows:

> In my mind what I am saying to myself, I actually said it out loud too, I was like, come on Fonda, you can do this, like you know you want to get there, like you've just got to do it! Let's have really positive thoughts Fonda. You've made it 3 weeks in an overseas, 3rd world country. 3 weeks away from family, and you have done so well so far. This is the next part of the adventure for you, and the next chapter in this story you're creating… Only 7 days left on this trek. You got through today and you kept positive. At the beginning you had so much doubt and now look where you are, 1 day in going to Annapurna. You can do this. I know you can. STAY POSITIVE! (Fonda's Journal, 8.7.13)

Day two was "really tough," and Fonda "struggled" not to "give up" as she "didn't think she would make it" (Fonda's Journal, 9.7.13). While she kept "saying in her mind" that she had to make it, she "had so much doubt" as she didn't think what she was doing "was good enough" (Fonda's Journal, 9.7.13). She knew that the next day hike was even tougher, and after speaking with Jason, the trip leader, she knew that the reality of her making it to Annapurna Base Camp was beginning to look doubtful. Fonda went to her room after dinner and "got really upset," and it was at this point that she knew she "had to make it" (Fonda's Journal, 9.7.13). The last thing she wrote in her journal that night was, "I need to get there for myself" (Fonda's Journal, 9.7.13).

Fonda began to believe in herself, during day three, and by the end of day four Fonda was feeling really "positive and happy" about how she was going (Fonda's Journal, 11.7.13). She kept a tally of the number of suspension bridges she had crossed in her journal. She wrote about how these suspension bridges would, "freak" her out, but stated that, "once you're over them, you feel pretty incredible" (Fonda's Journal, 11.7.13).

Photograph 19: Fonda continuing to climb towards Annapurna Base Camp

This comment appeared to extend beyond crossing a literal bridge as she went on to describe the changes she had noticed in herself as a result of overcoming challenges, thus:

> I have definitely noticed myself approaching challenges differently now to how I would normally. On day two I just looked at the hill I had to climb, and doubted myself. After that day, and getting up the stairs on day 3, I thought to myself that I could actually get through this. I was on such a high and knew I could probably make it to Base Camp. After today, I know I can get there. Before this trip, I would always think things were too hard for me and I couldn't do anything. But now that this trip is almost over, I feel as if going home I will set myself challenges and overcome any that may come my way. I feel as if I can do anything now. (Fonda's Journal, 11.7.13)

The next day Fonda "officially made it to Annapurna Base Camp!" (Fonda's Journal, 12.7.13). She felt "so overwhelmed" that when she tried to explain how she was feeling she "just broke down" (Fonda's Journal, 12.7.13). She had battled "pain, altitude, asthma and doubt," and "kept powering on" until she saw the sign, that said, "Annapurna Base Camp" (Fonda's Journal, 12.7.13). She described the experience as follows:

> I saw the sign for the base camp, and people from my team were standing waiting for me. I felt so good at that point when I heard the cheering. I knew I had walked all the way up to

> over 4000m above sea level. 2 days ago I was ready to quit because I didn't think I would make it. Jason hugged me and said he was proud, I just wondered how my family and friends would react when they found out. I could only think they would be really proud. I've made it 4 weeks in another country and have gotten to Annapurna Base Camp, and I didn't have to quit. I know if my Nan was here and I could tell her, she would be so happy and proud. It was part of the charms I have for her that got me through this, but also my determination and dedication to getting to this point. The support of others is a big thing for me too. Everyone here has been so great in helping me get to this point, past all my negative thoughts and struggles, they all knew I could do it. I just had to believe in myself. But now being at this place I have more confidence and faith in myself that I can conquer anything that life throws at me. This MOTO experience has been so incredible! (Fonda's Journal, 12.7.13)

Photograph 20: Fonda and team celebrating at Annapurna Base Camp

Three days later Fonda successfully completed the 8-day trek and decided it was time for her next adventure. Rather than go shopping in Pokhara, she took a truck up another mountain and "ran off the edge of a cliff," and went "paragliding" (Fonda's Journal, 16.7.13). She had "found an adventurous part" of herself that she never "knew existed" (Overall Summary, Section H). Her pilot was a Nepali man called "Maan," and she "trusted him with [her] life" (Fonda's Journal, 16.7.13). She let out an "excited scream" as she ran off the edge of the mountain (Fonda's Journal, 16.7.13). It was a "freaking amazing" way to end an "unforgettable" journey (Fonda's Journal, 16.7.13).



Photograph 21: Fonda paragliding over Pokhara

Micro interpretive summary

Like Gaea, Fonda appeared to begin the MOTO experience with little confidence in herself as a person, and in her ability to understand and explain her own beliefs. Fonda had completed her first two professional teaching placements, and lived all of her life, in local and familiar settings near her home. These familiar contexts, as already suggested by Patterson (2015), seemed to inadequately equip her with stories to connect her experiences and beliefs. In the absence of her own understandings, Fonda appeared to closely hold onto the beliefs she had inherited from others, even in relation to her own value and ability. As such, she spoke often of her desire to extinguish her negative thought patterns, and appeared desperate to prove herself to her family and friends, from whom her beliefs appeared to have originated.

While Fonda was impacted significantly as a result of her experiences in Nepal, unlike much of the OSPEX research, that typically focuses on the positive learning outcomes that result (Vande Berg et al., 2012), Fonda seemed reluctant initially to allow herself the freedom to question her existing beliefs. While Gaea appeared to reflect quickly on her own beliefs, in light of conflicting experiences, Fonda seemed reluctant to relinquish the stories that she had inherited from others until well into her overseas experience. Rather than allow herself to be challenged by a new way of life (Mills, 2013), Fonda initially appeared to revert back to her old *stories of self*, and subsequently dismissed and/or avoided her new experiences by

classifying them as inferior to her old way of life. As such, Fonda demonstrated that all experiences do not result in reflection and it is only through reflection that meaningful learning takes place, as previously argued by Garraway and Volbrecht (2011). This seemed to allow her to avoid any further conflict in her beliefs, and as a result she appeared to initially question and restory very little. Fonda didn't appear to feel comfortable to truly question who she was and what she believed, until her third week in Nepal, and this seemed to be related to the development of belonging (Young et al., 2015).

Once Fonda allowed herself to question her beliefs and engage in real reflection (Franco, 2014), especially in relation to her own ability as revealed to her by successfully reaching Annapurna Base Camp, she, like Gaea, appeared to have a natural desire to regain congruence between her new experiences and old beliefs (Izadina, 2013). Once new beliefs were restoried, Fonda appeared to naturally seek alignment between her beliefs and actions by altering or making plans to change her practices. With a closer connection between her beliefs and actions, Fonda appears to have really grown in confidence and no longer seemed as worried about what other people thought of her.

While Fonda physically separated herself from her home, she appeared to really struggle initially to detach herself mentally from her friends and family in Australia, and consequently seemed to remain a divided person (Palmer, 1997) living in two places. While she seemed to feel accepted quickly by the children she taught, it took time for her to feel truly connected with her peers. Unlike Gaea, Fonda spoke little of her growing relationships with the Nepali teachers and the village community. Instead, Fonda appeared to be holding onto the belonging she hoped to receive from her family and friends on her return. Similarly to Gaea, Fonda was impacted greatly by her interactions with the people by which she was surrounded, and their beliefs. These findings are very similar to those of Akkerman and Meijer (2011) who also found that pre-service teachers' *stories of self* are developed in relationship to those with whom they are surrounded. The words of affirmation Fonda received from others appeared to have power in breaking down her negative inherited beliefs in relation to herself. Fonda appeared to grow in her sense of belonging the longer she lived in Nepal and by the time she began the trek she felt like she was part of a large and supportive family. She seemed to grow most significantly from this point onwards, as she appeared to feel more comfortable questioning her old beliefs, when she felt safe and

accepted in a real community. Unsurprisingly, in relation to the research of Riedinger (2015), Fonda appeared to learn little during the time she struggled to find belonging in a community.

Unlike Gaea, Fonda did not seem to experience high levels of belonging initially, and as such appeared to hide her true self as a result of fear of judgement. This makes sense in relation to the research conducted by Knowles (1980) that found learning to be most effective when situated within informal and non-threatening environments. While Fonda appeared to enjoy the freedom of not having a supervisor, she seemed to experiment less during her teaching experience in Nepal when compared to Gaea. Unlike Gaea, Fonda seemed guarded with respect to sharing her failures with those around her, especially during the first two weeks of teaching. In alignment with the research findings of Avalos and De Los Rios (2013), Fonda started to thrive once she developed close relationships with people whom she felt supported and comfortable. It was at this point that Fonda appeared to start questioning the beliefs she had taken for granted about herself for so long. She seemed shocked initially in the thought that she could possibly be someone other than who she thought she had been, and subsequently began restorying herself into a more capable, adventurous and positive person and teacher.

Like Gaea, Fonda seems to have grown significantly when she allowed herself to be immersed in, and challenged by what she referred to as a different world. Similarly, to the findings of Foote (2015), it appeared to be only after experiencing separation, from the familiar, that Fonda allowed herself to become destabilized, as a result of no longer trusting her inherited beliefs she had once relied on to explain her world. Once she was in a position in which she felt comfortable, through belonging, she became less dismissive of her new experiences and began to see her world and herself from a new perspective. She appeared to move beyond the beliefs provided to her by others, and began restorying her beliefs for herself to explain her lived experiences. The major stories impacted from this experience included: her past stories; her prediction of future stories; her stories of others; her stories that connected behaviours to beliefs; her stories connecting herself to the world; her stories explaining her purpose and her stories connecting herself as a person to herself as a teacher.

The Story of Liam

The backstory

After introducing himself, Liam quickly began describing his three biggest passions. He spoke of his "love [for] classical music," his "love [of] playing the guitar," and his love of good "real football," as epitomised by his favourite team "Liverpool" (Liam's Interview, 10.6.13). During high school, Liam always "envisioned" he would end up working in a "practical science-maths field of work," and consequently, at the end of high school, he decided to begin studying engineering (Liam's Interview, 10.6.13).

Liam was accepted into an engineering degree in a large university in New South Wales, but didn't "enjoy the experience" there (Liam's Interview, 10.6.13). While he had gone to school close by, and knew some people on campus, he rarely saw them and felt as though he "didn't really have any connections" (Liam's Interview, 10.6.13). In addition to the fact that his classes were "huge," and it took him "half an hour to walk across the campus," he found that his teachers took "very little interest" in him as a person (Liam's Interview, 10.6.13). He decided to have a break from University, and made plans to enlist in the Navy as part of a gap year program. It ended up becoming a "confusing sort of year" where "doors seemed to be closing" and nothing went "to plan" (Liam's Interview, 10.6.13). It was about this time that Liam's Mum encouraged him to "pursue his passions," and become a high school music teacher. He initially struggled with the idea, as he had never considered himself as someone who had "one of those loud, 'fill the room' personalities", however, after more reflection, he decided he would try out studying Secondary Teaching in the things he loved, "Music, Visuals Arts and Maths" (Liam's Interview, 10.6.13).

Liam enrolled in a Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Teaching course, with a specialisation in Music, and a double minor in Visual Arts and Mathematics, at Avondale. As a first year student, Liam lived with his family in a nearby suburb, however, when his family moved to Bathurst a year later, they drove him to the Avondale Campus, and helped him get settled into the dormitories. It felt "new and exciting" initially, however, when he woke up the next morning in a different bed and small space, he felt somewhat "isolated and alone, in a place far away" from his family and home (Liam's Journal, 14.6.13).

Liam really struggled to see himself "as a teacher," and was nervously excited about discovering whether he could do it on his first professional teaching experience (Liam's Journal, 10.6.13). Unfortunately, Liam had a horrible first teaching experience as a result of two "really difficult supervisors," who made him feel like "a waste of their time" (Liam's Journal, 26.6.13). One of his supervisors wanted him to be "a Broadway performer in [his] lessons," and he continually struggled to "fit the shoes" of either of his supervising teachers (Liam's Interview, 19.6.13). Liam felt his first teaching experience was "a load of rubbish," (Liam's interview, 26.6.13) as it focused little on learning, and much on attempting to run "the classroom exactly as his supervisors normally would" (Liam Journal, 25.6.13). Liam returned to Avondale with little "confidence" in himself as a teacher, and felt "dread" when he thought of his next placement (Liam's Interview, 26.6.13).

Liam completed his second professional teaching experience a year later. This time his supervisors "were very supportive," however, he found it really "confusing" having two supervisors each trying to "mould" him into "two different" types of teachers in "multiple classroom settings with conflicting information" (Liam's Journal, 25.6.13). Once again, as a result of always attempting to "please the supervising teacher to achieve the grade," he found himself growing little in relation to "finding himself as a teacher" (Liam's Journal, 25.6.13).

While he loved "sharing his passion" with young people and "helping kids understand concepts," Liam returned to Avondale "questioning [his] future in teaching" (Liam's Journal, 10.6.13). Unfortunately, Liam still really "lack[ed] confidence" as a teacher, and he noticed it impacting his ability to teach (Liam's Interview, 26.6.13). He was tired of always trying to "conform to the practices" of a so-called expert, and felt frustrated when he always had to listen when his supervisors explained, "how they would have done it" (Liam's Journal 2.7.13). Although Liam was already about half way through his teaching course, he still saw himself as a "student" (Liam's Interview, 10.6.13). He was desperate to feel more "like a teacher," and hoped his next experience would allow him to "just get in there and do it" (Liam's Interview, 10.6.13).

Decision to teach in Nepal

Liam wasn't "looking for a holiday" or an "opportunity to travel" when he decided to get involved in a MOTO experience (Liam's Interview, 19.6.13). What attracted Liam, more than

anything else, was a statement that one of his lecturers made in the MOTO information session he attended. He described this experience thus in his interview:

> I went to the information lecture, and one thing that really impressed upon me was when Phil said, "You will become a teacher". That was why I chose MOTO. I guess teaching doesn't always come naturally to me, and I just thought, if this is what I'm training to be, [becoming a teacher] it would be a good thing… I'd like to come back and just be so much more confident and knowledgeable about how to teach in any classroom. I'd love to come back like Phil said, I'd love to come back a teacher. (Liam's Interview, 10.6.13)

Liam "struggled with confidence" (Liam's interview, 26.6.13) and he hoped that the MOTO experience would help him "grow in confidence as a teacher" so he could be "more of a professional" (Liam's Interview, 10.6.13). Liam felt as though his course had "set him up for an academic career" and he hoped MOTO could help him make sense of the theory for himself, and allow him to become prepared for a "teaching career" (Liam's interview, 26.6.13). Rather than follow the practices of another, he wanted to have the ability to "adapt" to changing environments, and "capture attention and engage a classroom" in his own way (Liam's Interview, 10.6.13). He knew that a MOTO experience would be different, and "more challenging," but hoped that the "pressure" of being in a "real classroom" without having to always try to "please" a supervisor "sitting at the back of the classroom," would "change" him "into a teacher" (Liam's Interview, 10.6.13).

Liam had dreamed for some time of one day doing "something a bit more service-orientated and adventurous" and teaching overseas, and recognised if he wanted to "keep that option open" that he "better gain some experience teaching in a different culture" (Liam's Journal, 10.6.13). Liam had lived all of his life in NSW, and had only ever ventured as far away as "Queensland and the ACT" (Liam's Interview, 10.6.13). Having "never been overseas before," Liam was unsure of "what to expect," but was "looking forward to the experience of travelling, and getting out there and seeing something new" (Liam's interview, 10.6.13). While he was still feeling "a bit fearful about the start of the teaching," he was excited about seeing a new world, and "doing something completely different" (Liam's Interview, 10.6.13).

The experience begins

Living in community

After boarding the plane, Liam sat in his seat, next to Fonda, and waited for over an hour for the ground crew to fix the technical issues preventing take-off. At 12.40 pm the plane "finally" took off, and Liam peered over Fonda and through a "small pane of glass" and watched the city "shrink below" (Liam's Journal, 14.6.13). The experience didn't "feel quite real," and what he saw through the window felt somewhat like looking at a "photograph," or "watching TV" (Liam's Journal, 14.6.13). As he looked out the window, he was reminded of his first night after moving into the dormitories at Avondale when he had felt "somewhat isolated and alone in a place far away from family and home" (Liam's Journal, 14.6.13).

Photograph 22: Liam boarding his first international flight

The first stop on his journey to Nepal was in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. During the 8-hour flight, Liam had not slept, and was beginning to get a headache (Liam Journal, 14.6.13). Just before touchdown he reflected on his fears in relation to, "not knowing where to begin in the classroom," and of "not being ready" (Liam's Journal, 14.6.13). He had seen little outside during the flight, due to the "endless clouds," and was looking forward to getting off the plane and "being immersed in a new place" (Liam's Journal, 14.6.13).

Liam disembarked from the plane at about 7.30 pm, and was most shocked by how "western" everything was (Liam's Journal, 15.6.13). Apart from the "humid" temperature, and the "car horns" honking constantly, Liam felt like he was walking "on the streets of the Gold coast at night in summer" (Liam's Journal, 15.6.13). He commented on the familiarity of the fast food stores, the "Western Cuisine's," and the "American chocolates" filling the local stores (Liam's Journal, 15.6.13). He reached the hotel, and was given the key to the room he was sharing with one of his MOTO teammates called Mitch. When they opened the door, a single queen size bed stared back at them mockingly. While they "had done Maths together," Liam laughed as he described the feeling of sharing this bed with Mitch, on his first night overseas:

> Yeah, I'm glad the bed was a decent size, although the room was pretty tight hey. Umm, the only thing I felt awkward about was umm, I don't know, I was just lying on top of the bed, and just the idea of pulling up the sheets with Mitch next to me just, I don't know, it seemed really weird. (Liam's Interview, 15.6.13)

This was the first of many adventures that Liam and Mitch would share over the next 5 weeks, and they laughed as they told the story to the rest of their team on their final flight to Kathmandu, early the next morning. Before even landing, Liam noticed that Kathmandu was very different, and was shocked by how "green" it was (Liam's Journal, 17.6.13). A bus was waiting to drive Liam to the terminal when he walked down the stairs of the plane, and onto the runway. The local Nepali passengers "pushed their way past" him, and "crowded the bus" (Liam's Journal, 17.6.13). Liam made sense of the "decaying white buildings, all multiple stories high, with the same black rectangular windows," by comparing it to "every picture" he'd even seen of the "endless houses in Brazilian cities" (Liam's Journal, 17.6.13). As Liam walked past the custom officers, who were all "holding long tan rifles," and stood next to the baggage conveyor belt, covered with "packaged meat," he felt like he had now arrived "somewhere different" (Liam's Overall Summary, Section H).

After retrieving all of his bags from the carousel, "his guitar hadn't come through" and he thought, as a result of everything he had heard about the "craziness" of Nepal, that "surely it had been stolen" (Liam's Journal, 17.6.13). Within minutes, he was re-united with his missing guitar, and he later questioned his initial thoughts of Nepali people. Two weeks after, he wrote in his journal:

> I just assumed that it had been stolen. I had the realisation that yes, we are in a poor country, and we need to be careful with belongings, but the Nepali people are not all thieves. I guess the experience increased my faith in the good of people. (Liam's Journal, 2.7.13)

Liam experienced things in Kathmandu that "shocked" and "surprised" him (Liam's Journal, 18.6.13). He wrote about the "poverty," "the crumbling buildings," and the number of "dogs everywhere" (Liam's Overall Summary, Section H). He noticed the people had "foreign lifestyles and cultures" to what he was accustomed, and was "surprised" by the way the business men used "bartering," and followed customers in an attempt "to intimidate" (Liam's Journal, 18.6.13). Liam noticed the "dirtiness" and "crowdedness" of Kathmandu, and while it felt "strange" not being allowed to "drink out of the tap," he appeared "so happy," and had not really experienced "culture shock" as he thought he once might (Liam's Interview, 15.6.13). When asked about why he appeared so happy he responded by saying, "I guess it's the new experience, overwhelming me, coming out in happiness." (Liam's Interview, 15.6.13).

Photograph 23: Liam (far left) on his way to the village

He later reflected on what he believed had occurred in these first few days in Nepal: "Having not travelled extensively before, I had to leave behind my learned notions of normality, and adapt to this new culture and way of life. Within days I was bartering and exploring the city like an experienced tourist" (Liam's Overall Summary, Section H).

Kathmandu city seemed "pretty western," in many ways, including all the "posters and advertising" that "littered the street" in the tourist hub he was staying, and Liam was keen to "get out and see the village" (Liam's Interview, 15.6.13). He jumped into a truck, and travelled "rather unconventionally" standing in the back (Liam's Overall Summary, Section H). It was nighttime when he arrived, and his team somehow managed to "squeeze" themselves into the five bedrooms available (Liam's Overall Summary, Section H). Liam shared a room "on the second floor" with "three other guys," and had "little floor space" left, once the "bedding was laid down" (Liam's Overall Summary, Section H).

Liam was in his third year of teaching, and had not shared many classes with his teammates, who were mostly second year students, and consequently didn't initially "know a lot of them real well" (Liam's Interview, 15.6.13). It didn't take long for Liam to "build relationships" with his team, as they were "together for so much of the trip" (Overall Summary, Section H). Every afternoon, Liam would join a group of the boys, and "walk down a short mud track to a local spring" for a shower (Liam's Journal, 19.6.13). Within days of ongoing group bonding, Liam and his team "shared shoes and possessions" with each other, and the once foreign "village residence," was transformed into a "sort of home" (Liam's Journal, 23.6.13). Living in such a close community was highlighted as one of the major factors impacting his overall experience (Liam's Overall Summary, Section H). He wrote:

> The Nepal MOTO trip was a time of teamwork and relationship building, as we were together for so much of our trip, whether cramped together in tiny rooms in our houses, or moving around in large groups, always eating, sleeping, showering and living together. I actually really enjoyed this component of our trip: I loved that I could hang out in a bedroom, talking and reflecting and collaborating with 3 other guys, and sometimes plenty of visitors. I loved that we were able to hang out, and explore together. (Overall Summary, Section G)

One person Liam did a lot of exploring with in Nepal was Mitch. They both really enjoyed running, and shared some epic "adventures" together running into the mountains surrounding

the village (Liam's Journal, 12.7.13). Through their "many jogs" and random adventures, their "relationship strengthened," and they "became a team" (Overall Summary, Section G). Liam spoke of how relationships like this "helped" him conquer the "strangeness and craziness of a foreign city, and a foreign culture" (Overall Summary, Section G). He felt really comfortable sharing his thoughts with the people around him, and commented that the community he was in was "definitely a great environment to "express [him]self" (Liam's Interview, 15.6.13). By living in such a close community he was "forced" to become "more outgoing" and "involved," and "have more confidence" (Liam's Interview, 26.6.13).

The "friendship bonds" also really helped him with his confidence in the classroom (Liam's Overall Summary, Section H). He found "teaching alongside" Kirsten to be an "invaluable experience" (Liam's Overall Summary, Section H). While they "planned and taught" their lessons separately, it gave Liam confidence having Kirsten in the classroom acting in the role of a "teacher's aid," to help with "management, encouragement and clarifying instructions" (Liam's Overall Summary, Section H). At nights he commonly worked collaboratively with his peers while planning his lessons, and wrote about how much he enjoyed the support regularly in his journal:

> After our first week we have adopted a second home, a place of familiarity and assurance here in the village where we teach. A place where we find rest and community and share our experiences… I do enjoy living here. It feels very much like a holiday home. I am rooming with Joel, Caiden and Liam in a small room. The room is a mess with clothes and equipment lying all over the floor as we often use the room for group planning and other teaching related activities. These rooms are bedrooms, living spaces, work spaces, and sometimes even foster games, music and massage sessions. They are tight and we are all compressed together. Though at times I feel there is no time or space to be alone… the situation requires us to form professional and friendship bonds with each other. We are a team. (Liam's Journal, 23.6.13)

Liam showed little evidence of dwelling on the family and friends he had left in Australia. While he expected to "miss" his family, (Liam's Interview, 10.6.13) Liam was "distracted" by all the "exciting things developing" in Nepal, (Liam's Journal, 27.6.13) and appeared very "content" immersed in his "new home" (Liam' Journal, 23.6.13).



Photograph 24: Liam and his teammates in their village home

There was only one occasion, throughout the whole experience, that Liam spoke of being discouraged; when he stated that he was ready "to go home right now" (Liam's Journal, 27.6.13). Liam's "bad mood" had resulted when one of the teachers at his school, had mentioned that one of his peers had been "criticising him" (Liam's Journal, 27.6.13). This initially "really annoyed" Liam, and made him feel "undermined" and "interfered with" (Liam's Journal, 27.6.13). The incident appeared to temporarily reduce his "confidence," and made him feel "a bit pissed off" and "discouraged" (Liam's Interview, 26.6.13). Liam later resolved the conflict, when he suspected that "some joke or context" had been "lost in translation," as the person who had supposedly been critical of him, had always been "nothing but supportive and encouraging" (Liam's Journal, 27.6.13). Unsurprisingly, his confidence and happiness were restored quickly later on that night, when once again, he felt a strong sense of "community with members of the group," while lesson planning and "just talking with Alyse, Jess, Caiden, Joel, and Gaea (Liam's Journal, 27.6.13).

Liam also felt a strong sense of belonging with the Nepali people. When he first arrived in Nepal, he had sensed a "familiarity" with the local people he "had not expected" (Liam's Journal, 2.7.13). The first time Liam reflected on the belonging he felt, in a place he expected to feel more isolated, was on his second day overseas. Liam had climbed the hundreds of stairs leading up to the Monkey Temple overlooking the city, and after "split[ting] away from the group" had met a "local man named Lanm" (Liam's Journal, 2.7.13). They shared their "backgrounds" with each other, and the man described the memories of his childhood

growing up in the once "beautiful" Kathmandu (Liam's Journal, 2.7.13). Liam reflected back on this conversation, as the first time he questioned his taken for granted understandings, in relation to what Nepali people were like:

> Lanm had a high level of English, but I was still speaking to a Nepali man. The conversation as we looked out over the city brought me some sense of calm and comfort, and it confirmed for me what I have felt throughout this trip in my conversations and experiences; that is, a sense of familiarity with people of very foreign lifestyles and cultures. People have different lifestyles and experiences, but independent of race and culture, people are people, and I had not expected this level of relationship with the Nepali people. (Liam's Journal, 2.7.13)

Liam experienced this same sense of familiarity with the people in the village. He had expected his experience in the village to be "totally foreign," and was surprised with the content of the conversation he shared with "a group of locals," after they stopped him on his way home from school to ask him why he wasn't "wearing any shoes" (Liam's Journal, 19.6.13). They spoke together about the same "football players and teams" that Liam was very familiar, of the "UEFA championships," of "cricket" and even of "Justin Bieber" (Liam's Journal, 19.6.13). Liam was surprised with how many people "had some English skills," and even more shocked with how much he "shared" in common with them (Liam's Journal, 19.6.13). After reflection, Liam concluded that, "despite differences in location and culture, these people are exactly the same type of humanity as we are" (Liam's Journal, 24.6.13).

It was through relationships that Liam's preconceived notions of the world were challenged. It was his Year 7 class who taught him the most. The more time he spent with them, the more he "noticed" that they were the "complete opposite" of being "completely foreign" (Liam's Journal, 24.6.13). After he "developed relationships" with the students, and "learned their names," he discovered that Nepali Children and Australian children were very similar (Liam's Journal, 24.6.13):

> The students are exactly how I would expect Australian Year 7 students to be: quite loud, chirpy, energetic, sometimes they have short attention spans, and they are always looking to have fun. They joke around, just like Australian kids. I have come to believe that the people

> here in Nepal are much less the foreign experience, than other aspects of the trip. (Liam's Journal, 24.6.13)

The relationships Liam developed with his "kids," his "class and with the community were really something" special (Liam's Interview, 7.7.13). He was always the first to leave the house in the mornings, to get to school early to "teach some of the boys guitar," and would often remain late after school playing "football" (Liam's Interview 26.6.13). This "community" and "village" now felt like Liam's new "home" (Liam Interview, 7.7.13). A place he could be "[him]self" (Liam's Interview, 2.7.13), without fear of being "criticised" or judged (Liam's Journal, 27.6.13), and a place he could "experiment" and ultimately "grow" (Liam Interview, 7.7.13).

Learning through freedom

Once the opening ceremony had finished, Liam and his teaching partner Kirsten, walked excitedly to the Year 7 classroom. They were keen to see the kids they would later be teaching, and meet their supervisor. Like tourists, they "stood at the back of the room" and took "a couple of photos," while they waited for their supervising teacher to arrive (Liam's Journal, 19.6.13). Liam's relief when "the teacher eventually came" was quickly replaced with anxiety, when "the teacher motioned" for him "to teach" (Liam's Journal, 19.6.13). Liam tried to explain that he "wanted to watch him teach," however, the teacher was "quietly insistent," and placed an opened "population textbook," written in Nepali, in Liam's hands (Liam's Journal, 19.6.13). With the help of his teaching partner, Liam was given the responsibility of teaching that class "for the rest of the day" (Liam's Journal, 19.6.13).

Photograph 25: Liam teaching his Year 7 class on his very first day in the school

Liam's teaching experience in Nepal was so different to his first two teaching experiences in Australia (Liam's Interview, 24.6.13). His Australian experiences had felt "less natural," as his supervisor was "constantly watching" him (Liam's Interview, 10.6.13). He never felt like he "could try stuff," and experimented little, as he didn't feel like it was the right "place to fail" (Liam's Interview, 10.6.13). Liam sensed he was very "different" to his Australian supervisors, and knew he needed to find his "own teaching style," however, he learnt quickly he had to "conform" to their way of teaching (Liam's Interview, 24.6.13). Liam felt really "restricted" when his Australian supervisors always provided him with their solutions for problems, rather than allowing him to discover the answers that were appropriate for who he wanted to be (Liam's Interview, 24.6.13). He explained in his interview:

> When you're in pracs at home everything is to please the teacher. It takes away your power to be yourself, and to teach the way you want to teach in the classroom. You've got to conform to the way they teach the lesson, and they'll tell you all the time: this is the way to teach; this is what works; this is how to manage the class… I'm a different teacher [to them] so I should be doing something different. You go there wanting to grow as a teacher, but the teachers always want you to do things their way. (Liam's Interview, 24.6.13)

In Nepal, Liam and Kirsten were "thrown into the deep end" together, and had to develop "classroom routines," in their "own manner" (Liam's Overall Summary, Section H). In the absence of having someone "directing" him, in relation to what they wanted him "to do all the time (Liams Interview, 10.6.13), Liam "took control" and "constructed things on [his] own," and really enjoyed it (Liam's Interview 19.6.13). Liam commented that the "freedom" he experienced felt "strange" initially, but resulted in a high level of "ownership" (Liam's Journal, 2.7.13). He stated that the thing that helped him the most was being given "no help, no resources, and no knowledge of how the classroom [was meant to] operate" (Liam's Journal, 2.7.13). It was in being "given nothing" that he found his "own personality in the classroom," and "developed confidence to actually teach a lesson properly," and "find" himself" as a teacher (Liam's Interview, 26.6.13).

Liam felt a lot freer "to be [him]self in the classroom" in Nepal, and as a result he found the experience to be "very experimental" (Liam's Interview, 2.7.13). He developed his classroom knowledge "of how to teach from scratch," by testing "what worked and what didn't" (Liam's Interview, 19.6.13). He kept trying new and "creative things" in the classroom "to

see if they worked" (Liam's Interview, 2.7.13). Liam's experimentation included: using "physical demonstrations" in science to teach cell division (Liam's Interview, 2.7.13); "throwing around a soccer ball" to engage students in answering questions (Liam's Interview, 19.6.13); creating number lines to teach the concept of negatives; and "using animals as algebraic terms, like dogs and cats and bunny rabbits" to simplify learning (Liam's Interview, 19.6.13).

Liam also experimented with his "personality in the classroom," as he felt free to be "funny," "silly," "strict" and "super-focused" (Liam's Journal, 2.7.13). He discovered that in no longer being "constrained by the practices" of a supervising teacher, he was able to become his own person, and as a result developed a "better relationship in the classroom with the kids" (Liam's Interview, 19.6.13). In being allowed to "be [him]self" in the classroom, Liam found he could "understand the students," and they seemed to understand him better too, and he really loved the "interaction" they shared as a result (Liam's Interview, 2.7.13).

Liam learnt much from his failures and "successes" (Liam's Interview, 26.6.13). He experienced some "difficult days at school," where he struggled to "control" the kids who "weren't listening," and "were just all over the place" and were "constantly laughing back" at him (Liam's Interview, 24.6.13). Liam felt as though he was "constantly having little failures," and it was the times when "things were just not working," that forced him to stop and reflect on how he could "adjust," in order to "find ways around" the problems encountered (Liam's Interview, 26.6.13). Liam reflected much on how to better control his class after his "difficult days," and talked openly about his thoughts in his interviews (Liam's Interview, 24.6.13), as follows:

> I think I need to expand my range of strategies for gaining attention and for disciplining [students], because sometimes it's not very creative and not very effective. I think in some instances, I need to not jump on students and maybe not be more lenient, but tackle things from a different angle you know, not just stand up the front and bark orders type of thing. Yeah, maybe use time more efficiently in disciplining students and gaining attention and everything. I have realised, through this prac also, I need to move around in the classroom a bit more, to monitor and to be more aware. (Liam's Interview, 24.6.13)

Some of Liam's greatest successes occurred in his music classes. Music was a subject his students had "never done before," and as Liam had never studied it himself in senior school, he had to be "experimental" with "everything" (Liam's Interview, 2.7.13). He tried "singing songs together," and "clapping intervals," and by "constantly re-evaluating," he ended up having "an amazing experience" (Liam's Overall Summary, Section H). His class had "so much ability and potential," and he was excited when all of his class passed the final test, considering it was their "first encounter with really any type of music theory or practice" (Liam's Journal, 6.7.13). Liam also learnt so much, and in relation to discovering things that worked, he spoke of "becoming more of a teacher" rather "than a teacher in theory" (Liam's Interview, 26.6.13)

In addition to gaining confidence as a teacher, Liam really began to "love being in the classroom" (Liam's Interview, 26.6.13). He "love[d] [his] kids" and felt as though he had "developed a pretty good relationship" with each of them, and for the first time got a "lot of joy out of teaching" (Liam's Interview, 26.6.13). Unlike his previous experiences, he felt "a lot more free" and was less "worried" about everything, and "enjoyed life" more (Liam's Interview, 24.6.13). Liam believed that the freedom he had experienced as a teacher in Nepal enabled him to "find his voice in the classroom" (Liam's Interview, 24.6.13). He now saw himself as someone who could "manage the class quite efficiently most of the time" (Liam's Interview, 24.6.13). He believed that it was "the freedom to be [him]self in the classroom" that was most responsible for how his "personal identity" had now been linked to his "professional identity" (Liam's Interview, 2.7.13).

Experiencing a new reality

While Liam felt more comfortable in Nepal than he had expected, there were times when what he experienced was "unique and demanding" and required him to "adapt and re-evaluate all aspects of [his] life: teaching, living, relationships and health" (Liam's Overall Summary, Section H).

The teaching experience was "challenging" (Liam's Interview, 24.6.13). The school was "isolated," financially "deprived" and had very few "resources" (Liam's Overall Summary, Section H). Liam was teaching unfamiliar subjects, to a large class "at the same time," in English, for "most of the day" (Liam Interview, 24.6.13). He found the first week especially

"draining," because unlike "teaching in Australia," he was responsible for the same group of students for each subject "every single day" (Liam's Interview, 2.7.13). Liam had come to Nepal to experience "something different" and embraced each of the challenges that confronted him (Liam's Interview, 10.6.13). In "order to excel," he had to "adapt [his] ways of thinking and functioning" (Liam's Overall Summary, Section H). He was forced to "develop group teaching strategies," and learnt quickly of the "unpredictability of students and schools," and subsequently developed the "ability to adapt when lessons and circumstances [didn't] go to plan" (Liam's Journal, 27.6.13). He felt as though he had "grown" from overcoming the teaching challenges in Nepal, as revealed in his interview:

> I think I have been able to develop an ability to adapt in the classroom a lot more. I now have some kind of presence in the classroom. It just feels like I've been able to take ownership of the classroom a lot more in this experience, and I feel I've been able to think on my feet a lot more. I'm actually teaching my own class you know. Yeah, I think I've grown up. I've just been getting a lot more enjoyment out of the whole teaching experience this time around, and I've always umm maybe not dreaded so much as not looked forward to practicums, but this one, I'm just really enjoying the whole experience. (Liam's Interview, 26.6.13)

The place he lived while teaching also provided some obvious challenges. There were two toilets in the house he shared with his team. The girls primarily used the "pleasant [western style] toilet" on the second floor, which meant the boys were left with the "squat toilet" on the ground floor (Liam's Journal, 19.6.13). Liam described negotiating the often "wet and dirty" floors as "an experience," and initially "tried to eat less" to avoid having to "use it" (Liam's Journal, 19.6.13). His living conditions during a hike he took at the close of the teaching session were even less glamorous. One night he woke up to the sound of some "scratching noises," and after turning on the light, discovered that instead of sharing his room with Mitch, a "large black dog" was on the mat next to him (Liam's Overall Summary, Section G). After unsuccessfully trying to push it outside with his feet, Liam decided it was useless and instead just moved all of his belongings, and let the dog "sleep on the mat" (Liam's Overall Summary, Section G). Liam realised at that point, that the "living conditions in Nepal" had forced him to "lose some [of his] inhibitions," and that his "attitude had become more relaxed," and he was less "worried about things" (Overall Summary, Section G).



Photograph 26: The house that Liam and his teammates shared in the village

While living in community was one of the things Liam loved most about Nepal, he sometimes found it difficult living constantly in an environment surrounded by people. At times he felt "slightly dead inside," as a result of not "getting any time" on his own (Liam's Overall Summary, Section G). While the challenge of "constantly" being with people "forced" him to "get to know people more," it also allowed him the opportunity to develop an understanding of who he was and how he functioned best (Liam's Interview, 2.7.13). Liam realised that "he needed time to break away from the group," and ended up often getting up early, at 4.30 or 5am, to go for jogs or just "go and read or pray" (Liam's Overall Summary, Section G). He found that it was often the times that he was away from the group, or in smaller groups, when he would have those "special foreign experiences" (Liam's Overall Summary, Section G).

His peers also challenged him, when their ideas conflicted with the beliefs he had inherited from others. One evening, during the group debriefing session, Mitch publicly gave Liam "a compliment" in relation to "what a great teacher" he thought he was (Liam's Interview, 26.6.13). Liam was obviously shocked by the affirmation he had received, and attempted to make sense out of the dilemma collaboratively when he stated in front of his peers, "Mitch,

you do know in my last two pracs, my supervisors only awarded me two Passes? [The lowest possible grade without failing]" (Liam's Interview, 26.6.13). Liam later resolved this conflict, when he too developed a positive belief in his own ability, and disregarded the opinions of his past supervisors when defining his own value as a teacher.

Liam was also challenged by the relationships he experienced with the Nepali people. While Liam felt very comfortable with the Nepali people, initially his pre-conceived expectations of them did not match his actual experiences. One day he "foolishly left [his] camera" in the Year 7 classroom, and before he even realised that it was missing, Neesha, "one of the students ran" up to him and said "Sir! Sir!" holding the camera (Liam's Journal, 2.7.13). That was a "pretty special moment" for Liam, which prompted him to "re-evaluate" his views of Nepali people (Liam's Interview, 24.6.13). He thought back to his earlier incident, with his missing guitar, and felt shocked that he had ever thought of them as "thieves" (Liam's Interview, 24.6.13).

Liam was overwhelmed with the love and generosity he experienced from the Nepali people. From the first moment he arrived at the school, he was "honoured by the staff and students" when he was "covered in flowers and thoroughly loved" (Liam's Journal 19.6.13). Throughout his three weeks in the village he was regularly given "flowers, vegetables and cucumbers" as gifts and was "adorned with necklaces" (Liam's Journal, 6.7.13). Liam recognised how little money the people in the village had, and wore the necklaces, even after leaving the school, as a constant reminder of their "love" and generosity (Liam's Interview, 7.7.13).

Liam was also surprised at how kind even the young children appeared to be. After school one day he was walking down the steep dirt steps, holding the hands of some kids who were "balancing numerous bags and belongings," when he slipped and landed on his "backside" (Liam's Journal, 6.7.13). As he got up a "tiny child" ran over and started "patting [him] down" (Liam's Journal, 6.7.13). The love and care this child took in his own wellbeing was "unexpected" and it was "such a great moment" for Liam (Liam's Journal, 6.7.13). The love and generosity Liam experienced, not only impacted his "sense of responsibility for [his] students wellbeing and progress" in Nepal, but also inspired him with a desire to "work and teach in a more service orientated role in the future" (Overall Summary, Section H).

Liam had "never travelled before," and commented that the MOTO trip overseas was the first time he had experienced feeling like a "foreigner" (Liam's Interview, 26.6.13). He had expected to come as the teacher and have "an impact on them," however, he found that the people in Nepal had made an "impact on [him]" (Liam's Interview, 26.6.13). They "accepted [him] into the group," and made him "feel comfortable" (Liam's Interview, 26.6.13). As the "foreigner" in a new place he felt "no expectations," and believed that this may have helped him in the process of reconfiguring who he was, and what he believed to allow him "to be more [him]self" (Liam's Interview, 26.6.13).

Liam was living so much "in the moment," that before he knew it, it was time for him to "actually leave" the "community" and "village" that had become his "home" (Liam Interview, 7.7.13). As a "kind of defence mechanism," to make the "loss" more bearable, Liam had deliberately not "reflected" much on leaving, and felt really "emotional after the [final] ceremony" (Liam's Interview, 7.7.13). It "struck" him then how much he was going to "miss" his class and the "other kids" he had "played guitar with" (Liam's Interview, 7.7.13). After the final concert Liam prolonged his final goodbyes.

> We were sitting after the concert for about half an hour … and a small number of my students stayed close by the whole time, holding my hands, talking with me, putting flowers on me, and always, constantly smiling and laughing. If I got up [to leave], I was pulled back to my seat. (Liam's Journal, 6.7.13)

After giving a guitar as a present to Prashant and Manish, two of his "good friends" he had been teaching guitar to, Liam left the village once again in the back of a truck, and waved this time to a group of people that "really meant something" to him (Liam's Interview, 7.7.13). Liam sat on his bed in his hotel room in Kathmandu that night, reading the letters he had received from the kids in his class, that he had agreed he wouldn't open until he got back to Australia. He "missed" them already, and hoped he would have time after the trek to "visit the village one last time" (Liam's Journal, 10.7.13).

The team was due to "meet in the foyer" of the hotel at 6.00am to start the trek, so Liam and Mitch woke up at 4.00am to fit in another adventurous run through Kathmandu. It was so early when they left the hotel grounds that they had to negotiate their way over a "high padlocked gate with long spikes," which had been designed to keep them safe inside (Liam's

Overall Summary, Section H). Mitch helped Liam "get over" the fence without "impaling" himself and they ran together in the "darkness and heavy rain" through the mysterious streets, frequently side stepping "rubbish," "curious animals" and the plethora of potholes filling with water (Liam's Overall Summary, Section H). They ran all the way to the top of the Monkey Temple and "took in the sights of the city in darkness" and listened to the "sounds of the prayer music" (Liam's Overall Summary, Section H).

Liam and Mitch experienced "such a feeling of excitement and pride" in "conquering such a gruelling challenge," and returned back to the hotel with a far better understanding of their "bearings" (Liam's Overall Summary, Section H). Liam spoke of this experience as one of his highlights in Nepal, and there appeared to be themes present within this experience which were useful in helping to explain the power of his overseas teaching experience. In Nepal, with the "help" of his friends and a "supportive" community, he was able to move beyond the "restrictions" and "boundaries" imposed on him, (Liam's Interview, 26.6.13) and "experience freedom" (Liam's Journal, 2.7.13) and consequently return filled with "confidence" to actually teach (Liam's Interview, 26.6.13).

Liam flew to Pokhara the next day with his team, and began the eight-day trek to Annapurna Base Camp. It wasn't as physically demanding as he expected, and when allowed, he took his bags off the Sherpa and carried his own pack. It felt more "real", and made the "trekking" feel "more fulfilling" (Liam's Journal, 10.7.13). Throughout the whole MOTO experience Liam "wanted as much of a challenge as [he] could get," and wanted the experience to be "as real as possible" (Liam's Interview, 7.7.13). Mitch shared the same desire, and successfully challenged himself to walk the entire eight-day trek barefoot.

Liam "loved" every day of the hike, and was amazed at the beauty of the "rainforests" and the "waterfalls" and the enormity of the "mountains disappearing into the clouds" (Liam's Journal, 10.7.13). On the final ascent, Liam walked quickly with one of the Sherpas, called "Luk," and was the first person to reach Annapurna Base Camp (Liam's Journal, 12.7.13). Liam woke up at 5am the next morning, a little disappointed that the fog was still hiding the surrounding mountains.



Photograph 27: Liam's friend Mitch conquering Annapurna Base Camp barefoot

After breakfast, as the team were preparing inside for their descent, they were "called outside one last time" (Liam's Journal, 12.7.13). Liam vividly described what he saw in his journal:

> At 7:30am, when we were resigned to start the day of trekking, we were called outside one more time. The fog had cleared completely! The sky was a blanket dark blue, and the sun shone down so incredibly that I even felt hot standing in the open. I was standing next to a small pond encompassing one large boulder, next to a cliff, overlooking a glacier. Smooth slopes of green grass, made vibrant by the sunshine, surrounded the pond. I just couldn't believe all of the colours that were coming out – the dark blue sky, the green grass, the dazzling white of the mountains – all reflected perfectly in the still pond. The clear skies allowed us to see Machhapuchchhre, Annapurna 1 and South Annapurna, as well as all the surrounding hills. To me, it felt as if we were on a tiny platform of earth, completely surrounded by huge mountains, leaving us very small. I don't think the trip could have turned out any better. (Liam's Journal, 12.7.13)

As Liam took in the beauty of the place, he realised his first overseas experience was coming to an end, and began reflecting on his experience. The first thing that came to "mind" was his renewed "confidence" (Liam's Journal, 12.7.13). He had developed confidence in his own ability as a teacher, and now believed he "could do it" (Liam's Interview, 26.6.13). As a result of a "real" and "challenging" experience, Liam now understood how to "manage the

classroom," build "relationships with the students," and most importantly, "be [him]self" (Liam's Interview 24.6.13). Liam believed his "personal identity" was now "linked" to his "professional identity" (Liam's Interview, 2.7.13). Liam had really "grown" as both a person and a teacher, and described the impact of the experience most concisely when he said; "my eyes have been opened" (Liam's Interview, 12.7.13) and I have "found my voice" (Liam's Interview 24.6.13). He found a "lot more enjoyment out of the whole teaching experience" now (Liam's Interview, 26.6.13), and wished he could just return to the village and "keep teaching" (Liam's Interview, 2.7.13).



Photograph 28: Annapurna Base Camp as described by Liam

Liam completed his next teaching experience in Australia, only days after returning from Nepal, and this time was awarded a High Distinction by his supervisor. The MOTO experience had inspired him to return to Nepal to see the "towns and villages" once more, and maybe this time do the "Everest Base Camp trek and maybe more" (Liam's Journal, 10.6.13). He had seen "pictures and footage" of "Everest Expeditions" and while that was not "much to go by," Liam was sure of one thing "I want to do more – to learn, experience and see more" (Liam's Journal, 10.7.13).

Micro interpretive summary

Like Gaea and Fonda, Liam appeared to begin the MOTO experience with little confidence in who he was as a teacher. This is once again unsurprising in light of the research conducted by

Cherubini (2009), who highlighted concerning low levels of teacher efficacy commonly amongst pre-service teachers. Unfortunately, Liam's first two domestic professional teaching experiences had not provided him with the freedom and/or belonging to be himself, and instead he had felt forced to conform to the practices of others, as mirrored to him by people he described as being very different to himself. As a result of attempting to replicate techniques from others, his learning seemed to lack significance, as while he had developed skills and techniques, he had not successfully connected these practices to his own beliefs and understandings. Without adequately being able to explain his practices, in light of his own real experiences, Liam, like Gaea and Fonda, experienced fear and uncertainty in relation to teaching, and struggled to see himself as a teacher.

Like Gaea, Fonda and current OSPEX research (Cushner & Chang, 2015; Doppen & An, 2014), Liam appeared to be significantly impacted as a result of his experiences in Nepal. While it was his first overseas trip, he didn't seem to struggle, like Fonda, to live in the moment, and he seemed to allow himself to question his learned notions of normality once he was challenged by experiences that could not be explained by his taken for granted beliefs (Harrison & Lee, 2011). While Liam at times appeared shocked, surprised, and confused, during the times he discovered that his past stories no longer adequately explained his new experiences, as suggested by Foote (2015), he seemed to embrace the challenge of creating new stories to better explain who he was and what he believed. It appeared to be through the development of these stories, that Liam found his own voice that allowed him to explain his actions in direct relation to his beliefs. This closer relationship between Liam as a person and Liam as a teacher appears to have significantly impacted Liam's confidence as a person and as a teacher.

Similarly, to the findings of previous researchers (Harlow & Cobb, 2014; Kagle, 2014) the story of Liam suggests that developing new *stories of self* appears to be fostered in an environment with high levels of belonging. When Liam felt connected to his peers, school, class and village communities he appeared far more comfortable to explore the unfamiliar, and allow his preconceived notions and beliefs to be challenged. It was only during the times where his belonging was questioned that Liam, like Fonda, appeared to show signs of withdrawing himself from the challenges of his new experiences and reverting back to his old *stories of self*. Like Gaea, sharing experiences with people he trusted, appeared really important in the legitimation process (Dolloff, 2007) that assisted with rebuilding new and

connected *stories of self*. It was through relationships (Cattley, 2007; Riedinger, 2015) that Liam appeared to find the confidence to immerse himself in foreign experiences, and it was also through relationships that allowed him to express himself and learn through sharing his beliefs with others.

Similar to Fonda and Gaea, Liam appeared to learn little of significance in relation to becoming a teacher, when others attempted to pass on understanding to him. Blackbourn et al., (2011), and Marble (2012) would be unsurprised by this finding given the fact that they both argued strongly that learning that attempts to bypass a learner's confusion by transmitting formulated knowledge, is likely to be ineffective. While Liam found it confronting, he learnt most when he was "thrown in the deep end" and immersed in a real and challenging experience. As suggested by Boud et al., (2013), like Gaea, Liam appeared to thrive in an environment where he no longer had to fear mistakes, and learnt most when engaged in a series of experiments. Through reflecting on his failures and successes, Liam, like Gaea and Fonda, developed knowledge on his own that made sense of his practices in light of his beliefs and experiences. It was through this process that Liam found wholeness (Palmer, 1997) as a teacher, with connected beliefs, and subsequently began to enjoy teaching.

Like Gaea and Fonda, Liam was challenged by the realities and demands of teaching in Nepal, and through experiencing difference found himself re-evaluating all aspects of his life. While the workload and unpredictability of Nepal were challenging, Liam appeared to grow as he adapted by becoming more creative, resourceful and relaxed. Liam also learnt a lot about himself as a person, as he was challenged by the beliefs of others that conflicted with his own. As a result of belonging to a community where he was challenged and provided with freedom to experiment, Liam appeared to undergo significant growth in relation to his stories that explained who he was and what he believed. The major stories impacted from this experience included: his past stories; his stories of others; his stories that connected behaviours to beliefs; his stories connecting himself to the world; his stories about himself as a teacher in relation to himself as a person, and his stories that explained the possibilities of his future.

The Story of Caiden

The backstory

During high school Caiden spent little time thinking about his future. While "electrical engineering" had initially interested him, after completing a week's work experience in the area in Year 10, he didn't find it to be "as exciting" as he had previously thought, and subsequently dismissed the idea (Caiden's Interview, 10.6.13). Caiden was not overly concerned with not knowing what he wanted to do, and filled his life with playing "soccer, AFL, and tennis" (Caiden's Interview, 10.6.13). At the end of Year 12 he was still unsure of what he was meant to do, but decided to pursue a career as an electrician, as he had always "loved wires and pulling things apart" (Caiden's Interview, 10.6.13).

After talking to different people in the industry, Caiden decided to complete an electrical pre-apprenticeship. Once completed, he was still unable to find an electrical apprenticeship and spent the next 18 months working in commercial flooring. After being out of school for two years, Caiden was still unsure what he "was meant to do," and felt as though "doors were closing" in relation to him becoming an electrician (Caiden's Interview, 10.6.13). His Mum had once suggested that she thought he would make a good teacher, and because of his admiration for her, he started seriously reconsidering his plans. He describes his Mum's influence thus:

> What I love about my mum is probably absolutely everything. She is like the strongest person out of anyone I know. She has pretty much raised me and my two younger brothers on her own, and has experienced some really tough times… she has always just been super grounded, super level headed and just been able to always come out on top… It was my Mum that first suggested me doing teaching, and reminded me that I came from a family of teachers. (Caiden's Interview, 10.6.13)

Caiden reflected on the little teaching experience he had been involved. He had enjoyed the times he had helped his brothers with their homework, and had found it rewarding when he had seen them "click and get it" (Caiden's Interview, 10.6.13). He recognised in himself a "love of sport," and was naturally attracted towards the sciences, due to his "logical mind," and decided he would begin studying to become a Secondary Teacher, with a major in Health

& Physical Education, and a minor in Chemistry (Caiden's Interview, 10.6.13). After successfully completing a Special Tertiary Admissions Test, Caiden was accepted into an initial secondary teacher education course in NSW, and packed his things into his Mum's white Toyota Camry and drove the 976 km, on his own, from Montmorency Victoria, to Avondale. While he felt sad leaving his family and friends in Melbourne, he was excited about the possibilities of the "new people" he would meet, and the "new experiences" he would have (Caiden's Interview, 10.6.13).

While Caiden initially struggled adjusting back into the "life of a student," he thought the "social life was awesome" (Caiden's Interview, 10.6.13). He loved meeting so many new people, and really enjoyed just "hanging out with all the boys" in the dormitories on campus where he lived. His first semester was not easy, including a subject in Chemistry and another in Mathematics; however, he successfully passed everything and was assigned to complete his first professional teaching experience in a secondary school back in Melbourne. He felt "really nervous" about completing his first placement, as he "didn't know enough," and was very unsure about how he would handle "being a teacher" (Caiden's Interview, 10.6.13).

Although Caiden was pleased with his first professional teaching experience, he struggled to feel comfortable in the role of a teacher and "cared a little too much what the students" thought of him (Caiden's Journal, 19.7.13). This made "behaviour management" and "giving homework" difficult, and while he never lost complete control, he did find that some of the students took advantage of him (Caiden's Journal, 19.7.13). Caiden found his supervisors "really nice and easy going," and appreciated how "supportive and understanding" they were (Caiden's Interview, 10.6.13). Through no fault of his supervisors, he still didn't feel completely free to be himself and experiment:

> My supervisors were all really nice and easy going. They really understood that I was a new teacher, and gave me good feedback and encouragement. I actually think they probably didn't care too much what I did in the classroom, but in my own head I just didn't feel like it was ok to make mistakes. I was teaching in their classroom, and I was teaching their kids, and I think I put pressure on myself not to stuff it up. As a pre-service teacher you come into someone else's classroom for a couple of weeks, and you just don't want to disrupt their routines and what they have been working on. I ended up just trying to keep things as consistent as possible. (Caiden's Interview, 10.6.13)

Caiden returned to Avondale still feeling "more like a student" than a teacher (Caiden's Interview, 10.6.13). He described a quality teacher as someone with the ability to "adapt to different situations, classes, personality types and even different learning types" (Caiden's Interview, 10.6.13). After his first professional teaching experience, he still "did not feel" like a quality teacher but "hoped" that "one-day" he would (Caiden's Interview, 10.6.13).

Decision to teach in Nepal

Caiden first considered getting involved in a MOTO experience after hearing some of his friends share their stories about how much they "loved the country, loved the culture, and loved teaching the kids" (Caiden's Journal, 6.6.13). He had also noticed changes in some of his "good mates," that had recently returned from a MOTO experience, and spoke particularly about his friend Sam (Caiden's Journal, 6.6.13):

> I know a few people that went on the MOTO Nepal trip last year, and my good friend Sam comes to mind. I was never sure how he was at teaching, but now when I ask for his advice, he knows what he's talking about. He now has the ability to understand the class dynamics and hypothesise what will happen in the classroom. He also seems better at coming up with creative ideas and activities. (Caiden's Journal, 6.6.13)

Caiden still didn't feel very "comfortable up the front" of the classroom, and spoke of his desire to be pushed out of his "comfort zone and to do something difficult" (Caiden's Interview, 10.6.13). He hoped that by being challenged, he would return as "a better teacher," and feel "more comfortable up the front," and "more comfortable teaching things [he had never] taught before" (Caiden's Interview, 10.6.13). Caiden really wanted to develop the ability to cope in any situation, regardless of the circumstances, and be able to "settle down and just think clearly" (Caiden's Interview, 10.6.13).

Caiden recognised in himself a tendency at times to be somewhat intolerant of certain types of people. He wanted to become a "more tolerant person," and thought it might be good for him to spend time with people he didn't know very well, and be involved "teaching a whole new style of student" (Caiden's Journal, 6.6.13). Caiden was also really excited about the idea of doing "something truly awesome and out of the ordinary" (Caiden's Journal, 6.6.13).

As soon as Caiden began thinking he wanted to be involved in the MOTO experience, he excitedly "sent [his Mum] a text," to see what she thought of the idea (Caiden's Journal, 18.7.13). She responded quickly with another text that said, "You have to! There is no way you can pass up an opportunity like that!" (Caiden's Interview, 10.6.13). Caiden described his Mum's "love of travel," and her "support," as being instrumental in his final decision to commit to being involved in the MOTO Nepal experience. While Caiden still felt a little nervous and unsure of his own "teaching ability," he also felt excited about the adventure he was about to embark on. His feelings are evident in the following journal entry: "I'm going to Nepal!! What's not to be excited about? Not everyone gets the chance to go and do their teaching prac in a foreign 3rd world country" (Caiden's Journal, 6.6.13).

The experience begins

Living in community

Although Caiden had already travelled to "five or six different countries," prior to heading to Nepal, he still didn't feel adequately prepared for another overseas experience (Caiden's Interview, 10.6.13). He had been so consumed preparing for and completing his "end of semester exams," that he hadn't even begun "packing until 2am" on the morning of departure (Caiden's Journal, 14.6.13). He walked out of his dormitories at 6am, having had no sleep, and after meeting his team and boarding the bus, he slept most of the way to Sydney airport. He felt "all over the place" as he boarded the plane headed to Kuala Lumpur and "crashed" into a deep sleep soon after he found his seat (Caiden's Journal, 14.6.13).

Caiden had an "interesting" first night in Kuala Lumpur with his MOTO team (Caiden's Interview, 14.6.13). He didn't have many "really close friends" within the team and found some of them somewhat "annoying and frustrating" to be around (Caiden's Journal, 14.6.13). As there were some people on the trip that he wouldn't normally "ever hang out with," Caiden was a little concerned with how the "team dynamics" would work (Caiden's Journal, 14.6.13). It was impossible for him not to grow in community, as he shared a "bed and pretty much everything else," from the very beginning of the experience (Caiden's Interview, 14.6.13).

While it was almost midnight before Caiden had managed to squeeze his luggage into the tiny room he was sharing with his teaching partner, Joel, all the boys started congregating outside their hotel rooms. One of the boys suggested that anyone who "was a man," should do the "dirty dozen" before going to bed (Caiden's Interview, 14.6.13). Within seconds the challenge was accepted by all and the tiled verandah floors, linking the boys' rooms, were filled with activity. The dirty dozen consisted of doing "one push up on the floor, followed by one push up while standing against the wall, followed by two push-ups on the floor and two up against the wall," all the way up to a sequence of twelve push-ups (Caiden's Interview, 24.6.13). That night, each of "the men" managed successfully to complete the dirty dozen, consisting of 156 push-ups (Caiden's Journal, 14.6.13). The boys decided then, that the 'dirty dozen' was to become a part of their daily ritual for the remaining 31 days of their overseas experience. This became a "real bonding experience" for the boys, and "even some of the girls," and regardless of how tired they were at the end of each day, they would coax and encourage each other into not giving up (Caiden's Interview, 24.6.13). In total, "the men" completed 4,836 push-ups during their time overseas, with some of them continuing the ritual even after returning to Australia (Caiden's Overall Summary, Section H). The boys were thrilled that night to be in a new country together and Caiden boarded the plane the next morning for Kathmandu, "a lot more excited" than he had been the day before (Caiden's Journal, 15.6.13).

Caiden described flying into Kathmandu as, "an experience in itself" (Caiden's Journal, 14.6.13). From the air he noticed how "narrow, brown, run-down, and half finished" all the buildings looked, and knew even then, he was about to experience something "completely different" (Caiden's Journal, 14.6.13). He described his first impressions of Nepal in an interview the next day:

> This place feels like chaos. We are only 12 hours away from home, but this place feels like another world. There is just so many different smells, whether it is from dead animals, whether it is from rubbish or from off food. (Caiden's Interview, 14.6.13)

The rules in this "new world" were also obviously different (Caiden's Journal, 15.6.13). Caiden was amazed with the "electrical safety standards," or lack thereof, as he explored the Nepali streets with Joel and Mitch (Caiden's Interview, 15.6.13). There were "hundreds of wires," only "5 metres in the air, all tied in knots and dangling down," with birds "making

nests in them" (Caiden's Interview, 15.6.13). The traffic was also "crazy," and appeared to not follow any "road rules or speed limits" (Caiden's Journal, 18.6.13). Caiden figured that in Nepal, "the ground = the bin," as there was so much rubbish that "paved the streets" (Caiden's Journal, 18.6.13).



Photograph 29: Caiden drives under the Nepali electrical wiring

Caiden was also really shocked by how "much poverty" he saw in Kathmandu. As he walked to the Monkey Temple, he noticed "all the people up the stairs asking for money," and how many "sick and hungry" people there were (Caiden's Interview, 15.6.13). While seeing the poverty was difficult, Caiden spoke of being more impacted when he actually got to meet poverty, in the shape of a small boy called Kivan. Kivan "was a really smart boy" from a village on the outskirts of the city, that offered to be Caiden's unofficial tour guide, when he reached the top of the stairs. They talked together a lot, and the boy explained so much about the Temple and life in Kathmandu. Caiden was impressed with the extent of Kivan's knowledge and in how well he interacted and spoke English. Caiden asked the boy a question about education and discovered that he was unable to "continue school" as a result of not having "enough money" (Caiden's Interview, 15.6.13). Caiden struggled to make sense of the fact that "someone so bright, [and] so keen to learn, with such potential" was unable to continue studying due to lack of money, while there were "kids in Australia that got everything and took it for granted" (Caiden's Interview, 15.6.13). Experiences like this made Caiden see his own lifestyle from a different perspective: "We live so extravagantly

compared to people here. We throw money around like it's nothing, but still claim we are poor, while people here slave away and work their arses off just to buy food to get by" (Caiden's Journal, 18.6.13).

It was on this first day, while standing at the top of the Monkey Temple, that Joel came up with the idea of taking "a picture a day, every day" with Caiden, to "capture one of [their most significant] new experiences" (Overall Summary, Section G). The idea became a reality and was affectionately referred to as, "pic a day" for the remainder of the trip (Overall Summary, Section G). Each of their 31 'selfies' were always taken on a different day and highlighted many of Joel and Caiden's most significant experiences (These photos and their descriptions can be found in Appendix 7). Many of the experiences behind these photos featured in Caiden's story.

The next morning, "Joel bugged" Caiden and Mitch long enough to finally get them out of bed to begin their second day of "exploration" (Caiden's Journal, 16.6.13). It was still reasonably early when they began walking, and all the shops lining the streets were still closed. As they "turned the first corner," there was a "group of men and boys playing cricket" on the road (Caiden's Journal, 16.6.13). One of the boys ran up and placed the cricket bat in Caiden's hand, signaling clearly that they were welcoming him into their game. They had a great time together and Caiden was surprised how "chilled" and "completely fine" they were when Joel accidentally "hit their [only] ball onto the roof" (Caiden's Journal, 16.6.13).

After another day of exploring Kathmandu, Caiden and Joel "jumped into the back of the truck," loaded with "all the bags," and began heading towards the village (Caiden's Journal, 16.6.13). They were waving at all the local people, who appeared to "be loving it", for most of their journey, and after about ninety minutes they finally saw the lights of the house in the village in which they would be staying (Caiden's Journal, 16.6.13). Caiden moved his things into the room he was sharing with Joel, and the two Liam's, and joined the boys on the roof of the house. After completing their dirty dozen session together, all the boys navigated their way along the path through the "middle of the rice paddies," and shared their first shower (Caiden's Journal, 18.6.13). Caiden described it as being less of a shower and more like a big tap where you had to "crouch down to wet yourself, step out, soap up, and then wash yourself off" (Caiden's Journal, 18.6.13). The "moon reflecting" in the river flowing close by, and the

sounds of the "frogs croaking," and the "crickets clicking," made it an "epic" experience for them all (Caiden's Journal, 18.6.13).

Caiden was always surrounded by people in the village, and loved being a part of such a "tight knit group," that he now referred to as his "friends" (Caiden's Journal, 31.7.13). He got along really well with some of the boys in his team and most nights, after working together on their lesson preparations, a group of them would chill out on the open roof of the house and play cards. While these games of 500, [a card game] were a perfect opportunity to "raz each other up," "chill out," and "just talk crap," it was also a time that they often "shared their stories," and talked to each other about their "different experiences" (Caiden's Journal, 27.8.13). Caiden explained the happiness he was experiencing in Nepal by reflecting on a story he had once heard:

> There was once a white man that went into a village, with the hope of learning from the local people. One day he joined the local men on a hunting expedition and despite their best efforts they all returned to the village having caught nothing. They were laughing, mucking around, and teasing each other so much as they walked home that the white man couldn't help but ask them, "Why they were so happy?" when they hadn't caught anything. The village chief thought about the question for a while and then replied, "Yes you are right we didn't catch anything" … but we are happy because we "didn't catch anything together". (Caiden's Overall Summary, Section F)

The belonging he felt from his peers also appeared to provide support and confidence with his teaching. Caiden felt as though his team were "learning" from and "teaching each other in so many ways" (Caiden's Interview, 12.7.13). He lived in a house filled with teachers, all "trying to figure it out together," and they would "bounce ideas of each other," and he noticed it really helped him "grow" (Caiden's Interview, 25.6.13). Caiden found having Joel as a teaching partner particularly helpful, and described him as "a mastermind for good ideas" (Overall Summary, Section G).

Caiden also felt really accepted by the local community. He loved how many "smiles and Namaste's [Hello's]" he would get from the locals as he walked to and from school (Caiden's Journal, 20.6.13). One day after school he walked across the creek from where he was staying and saw a couple of men and a group of ladies working in their rice paddies. They spoke

"zero English," so Caiden used hand gestures to ask them if they wanted help (Overall Summary, Section F). One of the men passed Caiden a "spade and began showing" him how to build the paddy walls (Overall Summary, Section F). Caiden still had "no idea what he was doing," but the locals didn't seem to care, and were just "frothing" on the fact that he was "willing to get involved and do what they were doing" (Overall Summary, Section F). After a while Caiden felt like he was finally getting it, and was rewarded with a big "thumbs up" from the man who had handed him the shovel (Caiden's Overall Summary, Section F). After working for a while, one of the ladies brought around tea for everyone, and Caiden drank his while "watching" his new friends work, no longer "feeling like a tourist" (Overall Summary, Section F). This experience was significant for Caiden and was chosen as the 'pic a day' photo, and was reflected on extensively, even after returning home. He expressed his reflections thus:

> The Nepali people have a completely different mindset. We would work in their rice paddies, and do it wrong a majority of the time, but they didn't care, they would just come behind us and fix it. Just as long as we were working together, they were enjoying themselves, because we were enjoying ourselves. Spending time with each other, and really getting to know each other is something that does get lost in our society… In Australia we don't talk to anyone on the street, we barely talk to strangers, we barely talk to people we know. In Nepal, community is such a massive thing … it feels so much better! I guess it just goes to show that we [in Australia] are a developed, blessed country in some ways, but not in others. (Caiden's Overall Summary, Section F)

Caiden realised the love and acceptance of the Nepali people stretched beyond the borders of the village he was living in when he was invited to attend a local festival in a nearby town, called Panauti. There were "thousands of people paving the streets" by the time Caiden and his team arrived, and they joined the masses of people all squishing together "shoulder to shoulder, all watching and waiting for these two massive carts" to be rammed together (Caiden's Journal, 24.6.13). Caiden was "busting for a toilet," and thankfully, while he was contemplating his options, a "kid from his class" pushed his way through the crowd "to say hello" (Caiden's Journal, 24.6.13). The boy was also a visitor in Panauti, but asked around the crowd and within a minute had found a "random guy" who approached Caiden and motioned for him to follow (Caiden's Journal, 24.6.13). Caiden felt a little suspicious following the man he had never seen before, "through the crowds", and "down a small alley,"

and finally "into a short dark door" (Caiden's Journal, 24.6.13). Caiden realised then that he had been brought into a Nepali home. It took Caiden a while inside the house, as he had to initially wait for the bathroom to become free. After finishing using the bathroom, Caiden left the house through the same small door he had entered from and was shocked to see that the same "random guy" was still "standing outside the house waiting" to take him back to where his friends were (Caiden's Journal, 24.6.13).

Photograph 30: Caiden helping the locals build the rice paddy walls

By the time Caiden was returned to his friends, the festival had already begun and while he wanted to "join in" and be a part of all the fun, he initially just stood "watching from the sidelines," because, as a westerner, he was unsure if it was "culturally acceptable" to get involved (Caiden's Journal, 24.6.13). Before he knew it, some Nepali guys started "rubbing red powder" all over his face and for the next hour or so the locals kept pulling him into the middle of the festival to "dance" and be involved (Caiden's Journal, 24.6.13). He described his experience as follows:

> The community and celebration were just awesome. More than anything they just wanted us to join in and have fun. Everyone in the festival was just pulling us in, making us dance with them, making us pull the carts with them, just throwing powder all over us, and just including us. We were filthy red from head to toe by the time we left and got so many laughs and smiles from the local farmers as we walked home. It was just an awesome experience and I will always remember it. (Caiden's Journal, 24.6.13)

Photograph 31: Caiden and his friends at the end of the Nepali festival

Caiden spoke often of how much he felt "loved and appreciated" by the Nepali people (Caiden's Journal, 4.7.13), and was especially surprised at how strong the bonds were with the kids in his Year 9 class (Caiden's Overall Summary, Section G). Apart from teaching them every day for three weeks, Caiden shared games of football with them "in the mud," and accepted their invitations to join them on walks "into the mountains," and even "home to their villages" (Caiden's Overall Summary, Section G). He had "never been loved like this before," and chose the photo of him and Joel with his class as one his favourite photos of the trip (Caiden's Interview, 9.7.13). The photo was especially special to Caiden, as it was his "first ever class photo" where he featured as one of "the teachers" (Caiden's Overall Summary, Section G).

These children were no longer people from a "foreign third world" (Caiden's Journal, 6.6.13). He now knew "where they sat, who their friends were, what subjects they enjoyed the most and what their weaknesses and strengths were" (Caiden's Overall Summary, Section

G). Caiden had now fallen in love with the village, "fallen in love with the country" and most importantly "fallen in love with the people" (Caiden's Interview, 12.7.13).

Photograph 32: Caiden and Joel with their Year 9 class

Learning through freedom

From what he had heard from his friends, Caiden expected to find himself in his "own classroom with few resources," and with high levels of independence and responsibility while in Nepal (Caiden's Interview, 10.6.13). In his first interview, Caiden said that when he thought about being in a classroom where he would receive little help from a supervisor, he felt "more excited than anything" else (Caiden's Interview, 10.6.13). He liked the idea of not "being constrained," and not having to attempt to teach in a manner that would be pleasing to someone watching and "judging" (Caiden's Interview, 10.6.13). While his classroom supervisors in Australia had been "very supportive," Caiden had still "felt pressure" to be the "type of teacher" that he thought they wanted him to be (Caiden's Interview, 10.6.13). After all, Caiden admitted that while one of the goals of practicums was to get experience, he was also "there to get a good grade" (Caiden's Interview, 10.6.13). As it was his supervisors who were given the responsibility of deciding on that grade, he "felt pressure of being how [his]

supervising teacher [wanted him] to be," and as a result felt reluctant "to try and change" the classroom or be "someone too different" (Caiden's Interview, 10.6.13).

From the very first day, Caiden arrived in the village and walked to school, he knew his experience was going to be "very different" (Caiden's Journal, 20.6.13). The beauty of the mountains, semi-dressed in a blanket of "green rice paddies," allured his eyes as he walked; making it near impossible to avoid the "muddy potholes" that wet season had so quickly created (Caiden's Journal, 20.6.13). There was marijuana growing wild in the village and he was shocked when he saw a plant growing just "outside the window" of his Year 9 classroom (Caiden's Interview, 1.7.13). He described his classroom as being "really small" inside and resembling a "concrete box," where students sat "shoulder to shoulder" on long "wooden benches" (Caiden's Interview, 1.7.13). Caiden noticed that his expectations as a pre-service teacher were also very different in Nepal, and talked about how he felt being predominantly in charge on his own classroom, in one of his interviews:

> The supervising teachers have rarely come in. The science teacher walked past today and stood at the door, saw what we were teaching and then left. Apart from a few people that kind of just poke their head through the window or door and see what we are doing and how we are teaching, Joel and I are pretty much on our own… it's sort of good in a way, cause you can take the class in a direction that you want, rather than just copy what the supervising teacher has done in the past. (Caiden's Interview, 25.6.13)

While Caiden grew to enjoy the freedom of having his own classroom, he initially found the teaching experience in Nepal "super stressful," and was "not sure" how he was going to endure what he expected to be a very "long three weeks" (Caiden's Journal, 19.6.13). Early on in his teaching experience he struggled to teach his class, as they had limited English proficiency and were accustomed to being taught using "rote learning" (Caiden's Journal, 19.6.13). Caiden spoke of having "no idea what [he was] doing," and initially tried to replicate the rote learning practices he had observed by "writing stuff on the board," and getting "them to copy it down" (Caiden's Overall Summary, Section G). Despite being provided with little external feedback, he learnt quickly that he "hated" those types of lessons, as they were even "boring" for him (Caiden's Overall Summary, Section G). Caiden spent the next couple of weeks "trying to figure out" how to best teach a different group of

learners, in a different environment, without relying on the opinions of an expert (Caiden's Overall Summary, Section G).

In his past practice teaching session, Caiden had really "struggled" to associate even "the smallest bit of fun with Science" (Caiden's Interview, 21.6.13). In Nepal, Caiden began to be "more opened minded," and willing to "try new things" (Caiden's Interview, 2.7.13). He referred to himself as a teaching "thesaurus," as he was "constantly thinking of new ways to explain things," in order to successfully get through to his students (Caiden's Interview, 25.6.13). Through experimentation he discovered that the kids were more engaged in lessons when they incorporated "fun, interactive activities or props" (Caiden's Journal, 2.7.13). One night after preparing for a lesson on "The Structure of a Bone," he asked for ideas from his peers about how he could breathe life into his predominantly theoretical planned lesson. One of his friends, half-jokingly, suggested he should bring in a "dead animal," and cut it up (Caiden's Overall Summary, Section G). Caiden liked the idea and asked one of his lecturers, Peter, if he could buy a bone for him from the local Butchers. Peter "rocked up" the next day and said, "this is the best I could do," and pulled "the spine and ribs of a goat or something" out of a white plastic bag (Caiden's Interview, 2.7.13):

> After weeks and many lessons of trying to figure out what to use in class to make it interactive, fun and to help them remember different things, I cut up bones in class with a hacksaw blade! Teaching the lesson was hilarious! When I got Joel to pull that bone out, the kids were up out of their seats, standing on desks so that they could see what was going on. It was just awesome, and felt so good as a teacher for me to do something so completely different to what they were used to. They got to see first hand the red marrow, yellow marrow and spongy bone that we had been talking about in class when learning about the skeletal system. I learnt through that experience to be really visual and more hands on, and to make learning as real as possible. (Caiden's Overall Summary, Section G)

Caiden and Joel continued to experiment with how to make learning fun. They simulated the physiology of a diaphragm using, "two balloons" and an old plastic "coke bottle," and made a working stethoscope out of, a "Pringles tin" and a "water bottle," to help the kids understand the anatomy and physiology of the heart (Caiden's Interview 2.7.13). Caiden discovered that they learnt so much better when he "showed them" rather than "told them" (Caiden's Interview 2.7.13). It felt "awesome" for Caiden to see that the kids were actually "enjoying

learning," and could correctly "answer" the questions asked in relation to what "they had done previously in Science" (Caiden's Interview, 21.6.13).

Photograph 33: Caiden and Joel testing out their homemade stethoscopes

Caiden also experimented with the type of person he was in the classroom. He became a lot better at "thinking on the fly," and "winging it," when his plans were unsuccessful and needed adjustment (Caiden's Interview, 25.6.13). This gave him confidence, as he had the ability to reflect in practice and "think of something to do," when his original plans failed (Caiden's Interview, 25.6.13). Caiden described himself transforming from an "uptight teacher" to someone who felt comfortable to be more himself and "joke around with the students mid-class" (Caiden's Journal, 4.7.13). He noticed that when he allowed himself to relax more, it became easier for him to form "relationships with the class" (Caiden's Overall Summary, Section H). Teaching became a lot less stressful for Caiden and he got to the stage where his class "flowed without too much effort" (Caiden's Journal, 4.7.13). He noticed it was only taking him about "a half or three quarters" as long to prepare lessons, in comparison to the beginning of his time in Nepal (Caiden's Journal, 26.7.13). Caiden's confidence grew to the point that he began volunteering to take some of his peer's lessons, with limited warning, when they were sick (Caiden's Journal, 26.7.13). It was after successfully filling in for a few of his friends' classes that Caiden reflected on his own ability to teach:

> There were a few lessons that I took some of the other teacher's notes, 10 minutes before class, and formulated a lesson. I didn't know the content and just had to wing it. It is a terrible teaching practice, but it was after a few of these situations that it hit me and I felt that I could actually be a teacher. (Caiden's Journal, 19.7.13)

Experiencing a new reality

Caiden described his way of life in Nepal as being "so different" to his life in Australia (Caiden's Interview, 24.6.13). He described his life in Nepal as being "so much better" as it was "very busy" and "routined" and lacked so many of the distractions like "Facebook," "Instagram" and "TV," that had once consumed much of his time "back in Australia" (Caiden's Interview, 24.6.13). He was "absolutely loving" being in a remote place and "having no internet" access and no phone coverage, as it allowed him to "stay focused" in the present, and connect with a real community of people and make the most of the experiences and relationships he was surrounded by (Caiden's Interview, 24.6.13). He "thrived" in his new routine and felt as though "he did so much more," and yet, "had so much more time" (Caiden's Interview, 24.6.13). After three weeks of living purposely, as an active participant, he described his old life as having been a "waste of time," as it had been too "preoccupied" with meaningless "distractions" (Caiden's Interview, 24.6.13). While he still spoke of Australia as a "blessed" place, he now recognised that there were many parts of his old lifestyle that had "hindered" him, and had prevented him from making the most out of his "time" (Caiden's Journal, 27.6.13). He wanted to take his "new mentality" home with him and spoke of his desire to spend more time "with friends," and become more involved "actually doing things," and become "more useful with [his] time" (Caiden's Interview, 24.6.13).

While Caiden had travelled extensively before, the people in Nepal still challenged his previous perspectives. It was while exploring one of the tall temples in Durbar Square that he first really questioned his beliefs in relation to Nepali people. After climbing the stairway to the top of the temple, he began copying some of the local children who were sliding back down. After only descending a few stairs, he felt his "IPhone 5 slip out of [his] pocket," and watched it smack the ground and repeatedly bounce "all the way down the stairs," until it finally came to rest in a puddle at the bottom (Caiden's Journal, 16.6.13). He knew his phone

was worth the "equivalent of over half a years wage" to the local people and when he saw a few boys and a man move quickly towards his phone, his "first thoughts were of them running off with it" (Caiden's Journal, 16.6.13). Caiden had heard a lot about the prevalence of "thieving and pick pocketing" in Nepal from others, and was "hugely impacted" when the man that got to the phone first, "picked it up, wiped it on his clothes and handed it straight back" (Caiden's Interview, 16.6.13). By the end of his time in Nepal, it was obvious that Caiden's views of the Nepali people had been transformed as he described them as being "happy," "selfless" and "more concerned about others" than themselves (Caiden's Journal, 19.7.13).

Caiden was also challenged by the relationships with his students in his class. Unlike his experiences with Australian kids, he found that the Nepali children really "frothed on education," and it made him reflect on how much he had taken his own education for granted (Caiden's Interview, 2.7.13). Caiden noticed how "basic" the houses were that his students lived in, and how "very little" they owned and was amazed at how "welcoming and generous" they were with "everything they" had (Caiden's Journal, 27.6.13). The generosity and happiness of the Nepali people made him question his own purpose in life, that had once been highly concerned with a "want and need for possessions and money" (Caiden's Journal, 27.6.13).

The children held Caiden "in the highest esteem," and were so keen for him to teach them (Caiden's Overall Summary, Section H). It didn't matter what Caiden did in the classroom, or how "dodgy" his drawings on the whiteboard were, as the kids would yell out and say, "how good" everything was (Caiden's Journal 8.7.13). They "really enjoyed learning," and Caiden was amazed at how much they wanted to spend time with him, even when school was over each day (Caiden's Interview, 2.7.13). It caused him to reflect on the nature of the relationships between teachers and students in Australia:

> Back in Australia the students don't want to be your friends. They just see you as the stupid teacher who just wants them to learn stuff. In Nepal, you seem to have more of a relationship with the students and I find that really awesome. (Caiden's Interview, 2.7.13)

While the children were really accepting of him as a teacher and as a person, it took time for Caiden to develop confidence in himself as a teacher. After only one day of observation,

Caiden was thrown "in the deep end," and took on the responsibility of full time teaching (Caiden's Interview, 25.6.13). He found himself "teaching all day" in "subject areas" outside of his areas of expertise, to students who he initially described as "barely" being able to "speak English" (Caiden's Journal, 24.6.13). He was "absolutely hating life" at the beginning, and even began to "second guess [his] career choice as a teacher" (Caiden's Journal, 20.6.13). It was about this time that Joel became "pretty sick," and Caiden knew that unless Joel got better really quickly, he would be on his own in the classroom the next day.

Caiden was "hoping all through the night" that Joel would get better (Caiden's Interview, 19.6.13). In the early morning Joel rolled over and said, "Mate, I can't come," and Caiden said, "that's cool, that's alright, don't worry about it," while thinking to himself, "Oh No! I am going to have to teach the whole day on my own" (Caiden's Interview, 25.6.13). It was "a massive challenge" for Caiden, and after frantically "planning lessons" and "getting ideas" off people, he "pretty much taught all the morning until lunch" by himself (Caiden's Interview, 19.6.13). Caiden reflected on this experience as the turning point in him beginning to feel more confident in the classroom:

> That was a huge step for me, just to be in a class on my own. I started off really worried but overcame it, so I was stoked with that. I hyped it up in my head a tremendous amount. And I guess getting to that end point and saying, well I actually planned a decent lesson, I executed it fairly well and the students seem to have got it. So after that I was like, that really wasn't so hard. Maybe I can do this, and maybe I can get better! (Caiden's Interview, 19.6.13)

From that day onwards his "confidence" in the classroom "changed dramatically" (Caiden's Interview, 25.6.13). Caiden started to enjoy "taking on the roles and responsibilities" of a real teacher "way more," and embraced the challenges of teaching in an "underprivileged" school with few resources (Caiden's Overall Summary, Section H). While he was continually challenged in the classroom, Caiden developed self-belief in his own "ability" as a teacher to "overcome," and as a result, felt a "whole lot better" in the role of a teacher (Caiden's Journal, 19.7.13). In one of his interviews, he reflected on why he thought he had grown so much in confidence:

> Every day we are put into the classroom and are expected to teach. We are always up the front and always teaching, it helps heaps. Compared to last prac, where I had maybe 1 or 2 lessons

> a day, like I would always be nervous before a class, but now I will rock up to class and I will jump straight into it. (Caiden's Interview, 25.6.13)

Caiden noticed himself becoming more willing to "get out there and experience more things" (Caiden's Interview, 2.7.13). After reluctantly agreeing to go on a walk with some of his students up a "massive hill," Caiden was amazed at how "spectacular" the views were of the Kathmandu Valley (Caiden's Interview, 2.7.13). It was one of the "most amazing sights" he had "ever seen," and he struggled to fathom how "ridiculous" it was that he had almost declined the invitation, from his students, to join them on the afterschool adventure (Caiden's Interview, 2.7.13). He recognised that "awesome stories" were made when people allowed themselves to "experience new things," and vowed to return to Australia as someone who said, "Yes to doing things," more (Caiden's Interview, 2.7.13).

One of Caiden's 16-year-old Year 9 students, said something profound on the top of that mountain that day, and it had a "huge impact" on him (Caiden's Letter, 27.6.13). While looking out at the "beauty and magnificence" of the countryside, the boy said, "Nepal may be a very poor country, but in many ways we are rich" (Caiden's Letter, 27.6.13). Caiden reflected then on how simple his life had been in Nepal. While his life had been reduced to "basic food, shelter, and [community with] each other" it had "been amazing" (Caiden's Letter, 27.6.13). He recognised then the inadequacy of his past life, that had been focused on a never ending want for "status, possessions and power," and vowed to live his life differently in the future, as a result of understanding that life's meaning is found in "people and family," rather than "things" (Caiden's Letter, 27.6.1). He promised himself then, that he "never wanted to forget" what he had learnt and experienced in Nepal (Caiden's Letter, 27.6.13).

Caiden described his last day in the village as "pretty rough," as he felt "a lot more upset than [he] ever would have thought" (Caiden's Journal, 3.7.13). Considering he had once longed for all the teaching "to be over," he was surprised how sad he felt as he was forced to say his final goodbyes to the "kids [he] had spent all day, every day, with" for three weeks (Caiden's Journal, 3.7.13). The boys in his class all came over first and as they shook his hand and gave him hugs he realised that he may "potentially never see them again" (Caiden's Journal, 3.7.13). The group of girls in his class stood to the side and called him over by saying, "Sir, Sir" (Caiden's Interview, 9.7.13). As Caiden walked over and said "goodbye," about "three

or four of them just burst into tears" (Caiden's Interview, 9.7.13). Caiden realised then the extent of the "impact" he had made and how strong the "bonds" were between him and his class, and it felt "weird" because he had "never really experienced that before" (Caiden's Interview, 9.7.13). After all his class walked him "all the way home," he finished packing and climbed into the back of one of the trucks, for his final trip through the village. This trip was unlike any other. Over the next kilometre of the journey there were "packs of [his] students on the sides of the road," all waving and saying "Bye Sir, bye Sir" (Caiden's Interview, 9.7.13). Many of them were "still crying," and it "hit [him] real hard" (Caiden's Interview, 9.7.13). He had "never been loved like this before" (Caiden's Interview, 9.7.13).

Caiden loved the trek to Annapurna Base Camp and found it so incredibly majestic, that at times he thought he was walking through a "Lord of the Rings" movie set (Caiden's Journal, 8.7.13). Caiden had learnt "so much about [him]self, and what [he] could do" during the teaching experience (Caiden's Journal, 8.7.13), and continued to enjoy "pushing his limits" and "learning more about [him]self" from the people around him while on the trek (Caiden's Journal, 11.7.13). After once again taking the opportunity to experience a new perspective, Caiden reflected on the power of walking in the shoes of another:

> They [the Sherpas] make hectic journeys every day with two or more of our packs on their backs with a strap across their forehead. I just wanted to give it a bit of a crack to see what they actually go through. Today I got the chance, and carried one of their packs for about 30 minutes up a steep incline and over some river crossings. I respect them so much more now that I have experienced it for myself. (Caiden's Interview, 12.7.13)

Caiden had become addicted to wanting to "experience as much as possible," and really made the most of every opportunity on the hike (Caiden's Interview, 12.7.13). He was often the first person initiating an adventure and as a result got to experience "showering under a waterfall," and "chilling out" in a glacial river (Caiden's Journal, 9.7.13). On day five of the trek, Caiden made it to Base Camp and celebrated "conquering Annapurna" by "posing for a photo," with two of his friends, that not too many other people would have taken in the cold and "mountainous ranges of Nepal" (Caiden's Overall Summary, Section G). While he was really happy that he had made it, he was most excited that "every single one" of his teammates had also completed the challenge (Caiden's Journal, 11.7.13). Caiden reflected that night on how impressed he was that Fonda had completed the trek, and challenged

himself in his own life to "suck it up, stick to it, and get it done," like she had (Caiden's Journal, 11.7.13).

Photograph 34: Caiden carrying one of the Sherpa's packs

While still at Annapurna Base Camp, Caiden reflected on how he had "grown" during his time in Nepal (Caiden's Interview, 12.7.13). The MOTO experience "definitely had way more of an impact" on him than what he had expected (Caiden's Overall Summary, Section H). He spoke of being more "confident tackling challenges," and of feeling more comfortable "adapting" to unknown environments (Caiden's Interview, 12.7.13). He felt sad getting back on the plane after spending "over five weeks" in Nepal (Caiden's Journal, 19.7.13). It had been the "trip of a lifetime," and he returned to Australia feeling "way better about [him]self as a teacher" (Caiden's Journal, 19.7.13). Caiden believed he had also become a "better person," who was more willing to appreciate and interact with people he had once had little time for (Caiden's Journal, 27.8.13). Caiden had "fallen in love with Nepal, its culture, and its people," and proudly wore the Nepali suit he had got tailored in Kathmandu, when he disembarked from the plane in Melbourne (Caiden's Journal, 19.7.13).

Photograph 35: Caiden (centre) wearing traditional Nepali suit

Within minutes of landing, Caiden watched his friend get "kicked" from some "rude Aussies" [Australians], who were angry after his friend had accidentally stepped in front of them to make way for a food trolley (Caiden's Journal, 19.7.13). Caiden saw his home differently now, after having experienced a "new world" in Nepal, and thought to himself, "It's so typical of our culture to have to have everything our own way" (Caiden's Journal, 19.7.13). Caiden hoped he would never "slip back into the person" he had once been (Caiden's Journal, 19.7.13).

Micro interpretive summary

Similar to his OSPEX teammates and the pre-service teachers focused on in current research (Cornbleth, 2010), Caiden felt pressure to replicate the practices and routines already established by his supervising teachers in previous domestic teaching experiences. To avoid making mistakes, Caiden's first teaching experience in Australia, appears to have been focused on acting like a teacher, with little significant learning in relation to forming meaningful connections between his beliefs and practices in the classroom. This same concern is highlighted commonly in research focused on initial teacher education (Allen & Wright, 2014). As a result of this disconnect between theory and practice, Caiden, like Gaea,

Fonda, and Liam, appeared to have little confidence as a teacher, prior to his OSPEX in Nepal, and was unsure of his ability to adapt to new environments.

Like the other focus participants, Caiden appears to have been significantly impacted as a result of his experiences overseas. This appears common within OSPEX research (Cushner & Chang, 2015; Doppen & An, 2014). Unlike a majority of Caiden's other travel experiences, in Nepal, he no longer felt like a tourist. As a result of feeling like an active and accepted member, in what felt like a new world, Caiden was challenged by the experiences he encountered. Similarly, to the research conducted by Boud et al., (2011), and Bramming (2007), the Story of Caiden suggests that the most significant transformation occurred as a result of the experiences that contrasted the pre-service teacher's taken-for-granted beliefs and understandings. Like the other focus participants, the new perspectives Caiden attempted to make sense of, often destabilized his past stories, as they no longer adequately explained his new experiences. As a result of feeling surprised, shocked, and confused, Caiden appears to have endeavoured to restory his beliefs, for the purpose of achieving equilibrium between what he believed and the total of his experiences.

Similar, to the other focus participants, belonging to an accepting, appreciative and learning community, appeared to contribute significantly to Caiden's growth. As previously suggested by Riedinger (2015), there appeared to be a relationship between how challenged Caiden was by his experiences, and the level of belonging he felt to the people he was surrounded by. In Nepal, Caiden felt really accepted by his peers, students and community, and subsequently appeared to be more challenged by them, in comparison to his previous trips overseas. Not only did Caiden appear to take on more challenges, when a supportive community surrounded him, but he also appeared to develop deeper levels of belonging by conquering challenges as a community. A high level of belonging also seemed to be connected to Caiden's willingness to be his true self, and share his thoughts, with those around him. This appeared to allow him to experiment and speak openly about his experiences and his failures and successes. Similarly, to the other focus participants, the high levels of belonging that Caiden experienced appeared to foster an environment where he felt comfortable for his past *stories of self* to be questioned. This often resulted in growth, as demonstrated in Caiden's story when his connection with real Nepali people resulted in a disintegration of once prejudiced beliefs in relation to foreigners. This finding appears quite significant in light of

the research conducted by Mills (2013) that suggested that many pre-service teachers continue to hold negative stereotypes and ethnocentric viewpoints.

Like Gaea, Fonda, and Liam, Caiden appeared to learn little when others attempted to pass on knowledge to him, void of an experience, and much when he was provided with the freedom to be himself and experiment. This finding is unsurprising given the research conducted by Marble (2012) that highlights the ineffectiveness of the learning that occurs when information is transmitted from expert to student. In the same vein as findings of Boud et al., (2013), Caiden appeared to thrive in an environment where he was given the responsibility of figuring it out on his own. Teaching seemed to become more enjoyable for Caiden as he learnt what worked and what didn't from a series of experiments that resulted in both failure and success. It was through these experiments that Caiden appeared to engage in the important practice of questioning his beliefs (Allen, 2009) and consequently strengthen or alter his *stories of self*. Caiden also seemed to find it easier to build relationships with his students when he became less uptight as a result of his classroom practices becoming more closely linked to his beliefs as a person.

Like the other focus participants, Caiden seems to have grown most when he experienced challenges that pushed him outside of his comfort zone. For Caiden, the experiences that challenged him the most took place in a real classroom, when he was expected to take on the workload and responsibilities of an actual teacher. In Nepal, Caiden appeared to have few teaching resources, and consequently appeared to become resourceful, creative, and more flexible. As a result of belonging to a community where he was challenged and provided with freedom to experiment, Caiden appears to have demonstrated significant growth in relation to his stories that connected who he was and what he believed. The major stories impacted from this experience included: his past stories; his stories of others; his stories that connected behaviours to beliefs; his stories connecting himself to the world; his stories explaining his purpose; and his stories connecting himself as a person to himself as a teacher.

CHAPTER 5 – SHARING THE DISCOVERIES

Introduction

Chapter 4 focused on the stories as shared by Gaea, Fonda, Liam and Caiden. The emergent findings of their stories were presented and analysed using a narrative lens, and orienting to a constructivist grounded theory approach. In this chapter, the stories embedded in these narratives are interrogated for commonalities. In a similar way that a curator aims to immerse an audience in a piece of artwork and evoke a response from them (Cole & Knowles, 2001) this chapter seeks to explain what has been learnt through the analysis of the storied understandings shared in relation to the research question that lies at the heart of this investigation:

> *What is the nature of the impact of an overseas professional teaching experience, in a developing country, on pre-service teachers' stories of self?*

As stated in Chapter 1, this question was divided into three research questions.

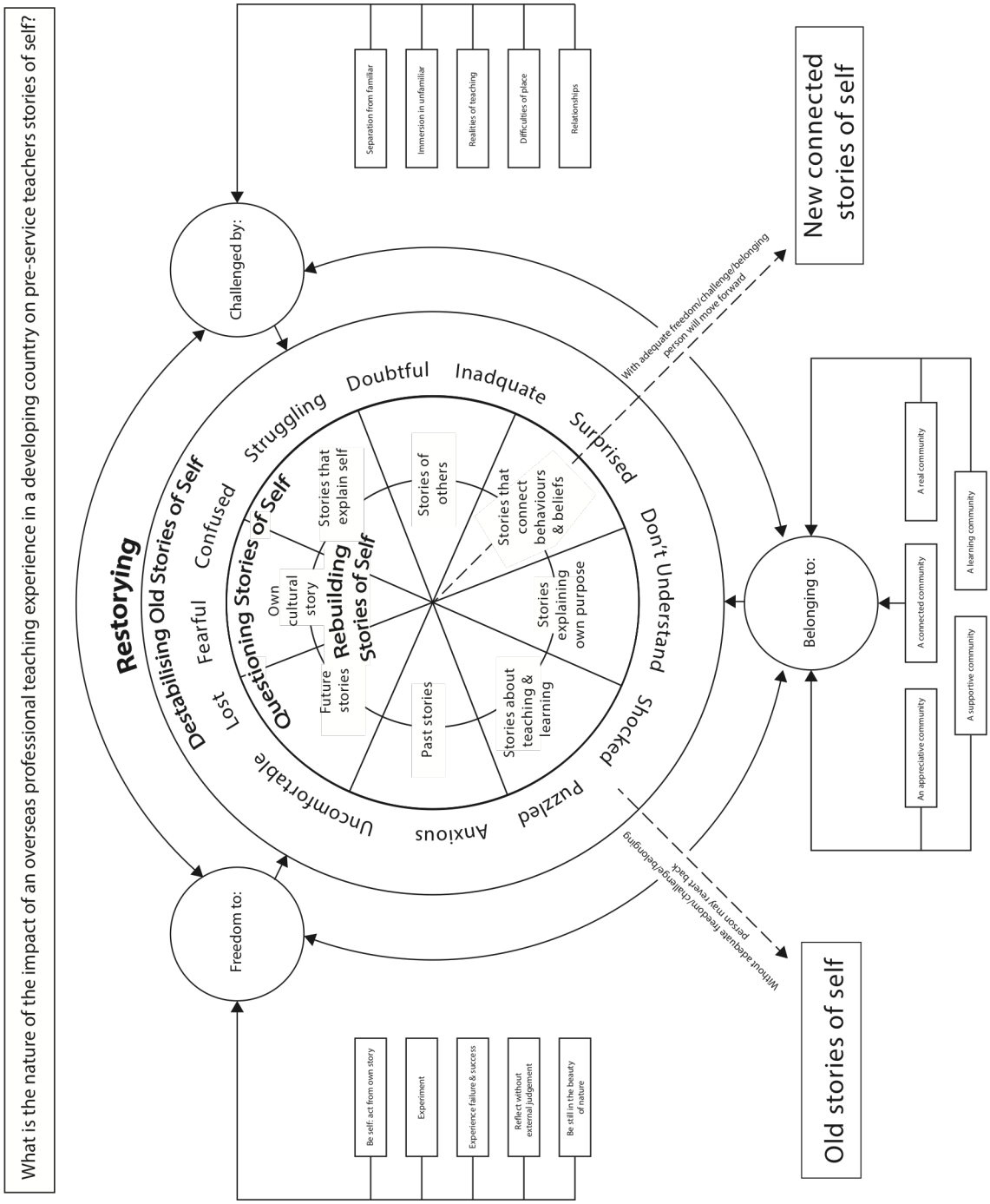
1. *What are the key components that impact pre-service teachers' stories of self on an overseas professional teaching experience in a developing country?*

2. *Do the pre-service teachers' stories of self change, and if so how?*

3. *What is the link, if any, between overseas professional teaching experiences in developing countries and the preparation of quality teachers for the 21st century?*

This chapter now seeks to answer these research questions in order to understand the nature of the personal and professional changes that ensued as a result of involving pre-service teachers in an overseas professional teaching experience. The model depicted in Figure 14 represents the constructivist grounded theory that has emerged from the stories of the participants and will be used to give structure to this chapter and demonstrate connections between the emergent categories (Charmaz, 2014).

Figure 14: Model for impact of an OSPEX on pre-service teachers' stories of self



Put simply, this model explains the potential for pre-service teachers to develop new *stories of self* when involved in overseas professional teaching experiences, in developing countries, as a result of being supported within growth-fostering environments. The model consists of two major components. The first component, illustrated by the three separate small circles, represents the 'growth-fostering environments' found to be essential in supporting pre-service teachers to successfully develop new connected *stories of self*. The second component of this model, shown by way of the three inner circles, represents the destablising, questioning and rebuilding processes pre-service teachers consistently experience in restorying who they are and what they believe. As the term 'restorying' emerged as the core category of this investigation (Charmaz, 2014), it was placed at the centre of this model, and indeed came to frame the entire thesis. This model suggests that when pre-service teachers are adequately supported by way of 'growth-fostering environments' they are likely to develop new and connected *stories of self* that allow them to teach from a whole and undivided self (Palmer, 2007). However, in the absence or imbalance of these 'growth-fostering environments,' this model suggests that pre-service teachers may well revert back to old *stories of self* and subsequently experience little growth.

With the aim of exploring the key components that impact a pre-service teachers' *stories of self,* on an OSPEX in a developing country (Sub-question 1), this chapter initially focuses on the outside of the constructivist grounded theory model by exploring the 'growth-fostering environments' deemed essential if pre-service teachers are to be supported in the development of new connected *stories of self*. Once these three environments, namely challenge, freedom and belonging, have been explained, this chapter next focuses on Sub-question 2, and explores the restorying process pre-service teachers appear to experience in developing new connected *stories of self*. By focusing on the restorying process, this chapter attempts to outline the predominant ways that the pre-service teachers' *stories of self* appear to change as a result of an OSPEX (Sub-question 2). Throughout this chapter all learning outcomes that suggests a link between OSPEX in developing countries and the preparation of quality teachers for the 21st century will be highlighted and discussed as alluded to in Sub-question 3. Strategies for implementing these key learnings in domestic professional teaching experiences will also be presented.

Growth-fostering Environments

As was strongly suggested in the research literature, simply taking pre-service teachers overseas does not ensure that significant learning and growth will occur. While experiences are essential in developing pre-service teachers' *stories of self* (Foote, 2015), as highlighted by Danielowich (2012), in order for experiences to result in pre-service teachers developing connected personal and professional identities they must be purposefully designed to result in deep reflection. Through this investigation three growth-fostering environments were found to be essential in supporting pre-service teachers in experiences likely to result in ongoing reflective practice. It was as a result of this reflection that the pre-service teachers developed new *stories of self*.

The theory developed from within this investigation suggests that those involved in teacher education will be empowered to initiate growth in pre-service teachers when they understand the importance of challenge, freedom and belonging. While these growth-fostering environments are explained individually in the following sections, it is important to note that their success in developing growth is dependent on their inter-relationship and synchronicity. This study suggests that any attempt to initiate growth within pre-service teachers in the absence of any one of these environments is likely to be limited. Beginning with 'Challenge,' this section now attempts to explore each of these growth-fostering environments and the interrelationships that exist between them.

Challenge

As suggested by Foote (2015) and Marble (2012), this investigation found that pre-service teachers were supported in the development of *new connected stories of self* when they were immersed in new and "challenging environments" (Liam's Journal, 12.7.2013). The OSPEX pushed each of the pre-service teachers outside of their "comfort zone" (Gaea's Interview, 12.6.13) and beyond what they were familiar (Gaea's Journal, 10.7.13) and in doing so appeared to place them in a position which resulted in "more room for growth" (Gaea's Interview, 25.6.2013). As reflection and learning has been shown to be initiated when learners are placed in experiences that promote confusion, perplexity and doubt (Boud et al., 2013; Eyers, 2014), it is no wonder that the participants in this study highlighted the importance of being separated from the familiar and immersed in a "new world" (Caiden's Journal, 15.6.13). Pre-service teachers spoke of being separated from their cultures, their

families, their friends (Fonda's Journal, 14.6.13) and their normal routines of life (Caiden's Interview, 24.6.13) and as a result appeared to be freed from their once "taken for granted" beliefs, that had previously remained unexamined (Fonda's Journal, 17.6.13). Flores and Day (2006) suggest that as a result of the time pre-service teachers have already been in schools as students, they enter into initial teacher education with pre-established beliefs about the profession based on the observations of their own teachers. Like Pietsch and Williamson (2005), Eyers (2014) and Lortie (1975) this study suggests that unless pre-service teachers are removed from these familiar environments and exposed to unfamiliar contexts and practices, it is likely that they may not experience the confusion required to encourage deep reflection, and subsequent development of their own beliefs about teaching and themselves as teachers.

It appears from this investigation that effective growth was fostered within pre-service teachers when they were separated from the people, places and types of experiences with which they were familiar. These unfamiliar contexts provided the pre-service teachers with the opportunity to experience confusion and doubt and inner discomfort (Smagorinsky et al., 2004) in many of their existing beliefs. This is similar to the findings of Doppen and An (2014), who highlighted the importance of involving learners in experiences that allow pre-service teachers to become conscious of their taken for granted values and beliefs (Chitpin & Simon, 2009) as a result of being immersed in diverse contexts that prevented them from relying on the beliefs and practices they had inherited from their own teachers (Cruickshank & Westbrook, 2013; Young et al., 2015).

The participants in the study appeared to individually recognise the importance of this separation in relation to their own growth. Caiden spoke of his desire to be pushed out of his "comfort zone and do something difficult" (Caiden's Interview, 10.6.13), and while Fonda feared leaving everything she was familiar with, she too realised that it was something she needed to do to allow growth when she stated, "but it may be good for me" (Fonda's Journal, 11.6.13). As was shown through the participants' stories, one should expect this act of separation to initially cause some discomfort:

> I have to leave everyone that was there and I left my mum…I can't even talk properly… I left my mum at Avondale and I couldn't even see if she was upset or not … and every time I go to

> type something to her I just break down because I know she is so far away from me. (Fonda's Interview, 14.6.13)

The literature suggests that one reason why separating pre-service teachers from those they are familiar with may be significant is that ones' beliefs, or *stories of self*, are negotiated in relationship to those with whom they are surrounded (Avalos & De Los Rios, 2013; Riedinger, 2015). The findings of this investigation support this notion. Being confronted with beliefs that are not in alignment with that of the pre-service teachers appear to result in confusion and doubt and subsequently increased reflection, while similar beliefs or the practice of attempting to provide beliefs ungrounded in actual experiences are likely to decrease reflective practice. Liam believed that he was better able to discover who he was and what he believed when the expectations of others were not already pre-determined or imposed on him:

> I've never travelled before so I haven't literally been a foreigner before… [On this OSPEX] I've been in groups of people that don't know me very well and as a result they've had expectations of me which has allowed me to be more myself. (Liam's Interview, 26.6.13)

While being confronted with different belief structures is more easily achieved in overseas contexts, Australian pre-service teachers completing their professional teaching experiences all in domestic settings should also be encouraged to be separated from the familiar and immersed in the unfamiliar. This may be achieved by encouraging pre-service teachers to complete their required experiences in a variety of culturally diverse communities and discouraged from returning to institutions where they completed their own schooling.

The pre-service teachers in this investigation also appeared to experience significant growth as teachers when they faced what they referred to as 'real teaching' or 'real teaching environments' (Gaea's Journal, 20.7.13). These terms were used to refer to classroom challenges that they perceived closely matched the realities and demands likely to be imposed on them as employed teachers after graduation. While the participants in this investigation spoke of feeling "overwhelmed" and "underprepared" (Fonda's Journal, 14.6.13), when challenged by experiences comparable to real teaching, they appeared to develop significantly as a direct result. They specifically identified the value of experiencing a high teaching load, independence, and being required to become flexible and creative. Immersing

pre-service teachers in experiences similar to practicing teachers appeared essential as it increased reflection; the pre-service teachers were confronted when their existing practices and beliefs proved unsatisfactory. As a result, they were afforded the opportunity to question much of what they did or had believed, and were required to develop and test new beliefs and practices as an avenue to solve their dilemma. As with real teaching, the solutions to these problems were not provided to them, but they solved problems themselves through ongoing reflection, experimentation and discussions with others in safe and supportive social environments.

These findings support the current research argument that pre-service teachers learn most effectively when placed in professional experiences that are problem focused and closely mirror the type of environments they are likely to find themselves in as teachers (Fazil & Amin, 2014; Harlow & Cobb, 2014; Kearsley, 2010). These findings are similar to the research of Khan et al., which suggested that limited opportunities for pre-service teachers to experience the realities of teaching has limited their ability to learn (2014). The results from this investigation suggest that it is unlikely that pre-service teachers will develop adequate beliefs as actual teachers until they are treated as real teachers. Similar to the findings of Harlow and Cobb (2014), this study suggests that pre-service teachers must be given the opportunity to act as real teachers, including the opportunity to overcome the actual challenges they are likely to face as real teachers, for them to develop the confidence in themselves as teachers. As is shown in the quote below, the participants in this investigation suggested that their growth and confidence as teachers was substantially increased when immersed in a real teaching environment:

> Everyday [in this OSPEX] we are put into the classroom and are expected to teach. We are always up the front and always teaching, it helps heaps. Compared to last prac, where I had maybe 1 or 2 lessons a day, like I would always be nervous before a class, but now I will rock up to class and I will jump straight into it. (Caiden's Interview, 25.6.13)

In order for those pre-service teachers completing their professional teaching experiences in domestic contexts to also maximise their personal and professional growth the results of this investigation suggest that those responsible for their placements attempt to closely align their professional teaching experiences with the environments they are likely to find themselves in as employed teachers. Specifically, the experiences organised for pre-service teachers should

attempt to offer more comparable teaching loads sooner in their professional teaching experiences and mirror what is expected of them off actual teachers by including the pre-service teachers in the full range of teaching responsibilities including lesson and unit planning, teacher duties, staff meetings and assessment tasks.

The participants in this study identified many difficulties associated with teaching and living in a developing country. In addition to heavy workloads, they were also required to teach a variety of subjects, often outside of their areas of expertise to learners with limited proficiency of the English language, with limited resources including no access to internet or photocopiers. They recognised these challenges as being comparable to, and even greater than, the types of challenges they were likely to face as actual teachers after graduation. Indeed, they began to see themselves as actual teachers. Similar to Pence and Macgillivray (2008), this investigation suggests that pre-service teachers develop high levels of self-efficacy and persistence as a result of successfully overcoming significant challenges by drawing on their inner resources. Unlike previous investigations, this study suggests that pre-service teachers' confidence appears to grow most significantly when they successfully overcome the challenges of teaching in an environment perceived as more difficult than what they will be expected to teach in as actual classroom practitioners.

In addition to the difficulties of the challenges faced inside the classroom, the participants also seemed to be impacted by the difficulties of the environment in which they lived. The pre-service teachers showered outside under a natural spring, slept on thin mattresses on the floor in somewhat crowded accommodation, and lived and worked like the local Nepali people in many aspects of their lives. An analysis of the participants' experiences suggests that a significant factor that fostered their own growth was the opportunity they were given to encounter personal struggles and live outside their comfort zone. In overcoming physical and social challenges, by drawing on their inner resources, the pre-service teachers also developed higher levels of self-efficacy, persistence and adaptability that appeared transferable to their belief in their ability to overcome challenges as teachers. These findings resonate strongly with that of Foote (2015), who also found that it was by involving learners in challenging experiences that they experienced high levels of growth, as a result of being situated in a cognitive crisis where their existing beliefs about themselves could be questioned. It appears that when pre-service teachers are immersed in environments that challenge who they are and what they are capable of, their beliefs appear to be challenged

and consequently adapted, strengthened or changed. When asked what he would change if he wished to sabotage the effectiveness of the MOTO experience, Caiden suggested removing the difficulties and struggles he encountered as shown below:

> If I were given the chance to sabotage the trip I would do three things:
> 1- Have Internet access – One of the biggest things over there was no internet. It was hard, but it was part of the experience. It made us think of content to teach and different activities to do and ways to teach.
> 2- Teach at a private or international school – The best part of the teaching was having the more under privileged kids.
> 3- Teaching only in our subject fields – One of the biggest struggles for me was being flat out all day. We taught every subject so there were no breaks. (Caiden's Journal, 27.8.13)

From what was learnt in this investigation in relation to the power of overcoming personal difficulties, the findings of this study suggest that pre-service teachers, regardless of what context they choose to complete their professional teaching experiences in, should be exposed to challenging experiences that push them beyond their perceived personal capabilities. While encouraging pre-service teachers to select teaching experiences likely to challenge them personally or professional is highly recommended, it is important to note that these challenges may also be unrelated to teaching. As self-efficacy appears to be transferred across contexts, pre-service teachers would appear to benefit from increased confidence as a result of their involvement in initiatives such as outdoor education programs. The research findings within this study also suggest that initial teacher educators should differentiate the learning experiences provided to pre-service teachers to ensure it adequately challenges each of their learners.

In the absence of a meaningful relationship the pre-service teachers in Australia appeared to be challenged little by their teaching supervisors in relation to what they observed them do or were told by them. They appeared like the subjects studied by Riedinger (2015) to be far more receptive to learn from others when a trusting relationship was first developed. While Kagle (2014) highlighted the importance of the influence of social stimuli on pre-service teachers' ability to learn, this study suggests that the type of relationships pre-service teachers are immersed in is also very important. Nothing challenged the pre-service teachers more

than when they first felt the "love and acceptance" (Fonda's Interview, 24.6.13) of the local Nepali people, including the children they taught. While research suggests that established beliefs within pre-service teachers can be resistant to change (Flores & Day, 2006; Pietsch & Williamson, 2005) this study suggests that growth is fostered not only by challenging experiences but also influenced by the depth of the relationship between the pre-service teachers and those by which they are being challenged. Put simply, pre-service teachers appeared to experience little growth when challenged by the practices of others with whom they had not established meaningful relationships, and challenged much by people with whom they felt a high level of belonging.

This study suggests that those concerned with challenging pre-service teachers in all contexts should focus not only on the type of experiences in which pre-service teachers are immersed, but also on the type of relationship that exist between the participants involved in the experiences. Gaea was challenged greatly by the local people, because of the loving acceptance she felt from them and for them, and grew significantly as a result. Consequently, Gaea came to understand from her own experience how important relationships were in her ability as a teacher to facilitate learning, as expressed in the comment: "This experience taught me how important it is to make positive relationships with your students by taking the time to let them know that you genuinely care about them and are interested in their lives" (Gaea's Overall Summary, Section G). The findings of this study suggest that initial teacher educators will too be more successful in preparing quality pre-service teachers when they understand the importance of establishing positive relationships with their learners. As quality relationships often take time to establish, it is recommended that whenever possible continuity between pre-service teachers and the university personal assigned to them on professional teaching placements be established to improve the learning likely to be initiated.

Freedom

The second growth-fostering environment that emerged in this investigation as essential in supporting pre-service teachers in developing *new connected stories of self* was 'Freedom'. While this study focused on a professional teaching experience in a developing country, the pre-service teachers involved reflected extensively on the inadequacy of past domestic professional teaching experiences. Similar to findings from other research (Ditchburn, 2015; Marble, 2012), the participants suggested that their past teaching experiences had been

confining and restrictive as a result of feeling pressure to maintain the status quo, and replicate the practices of another. Professional teaching experiences that instil pressure on pre-service teachers to replicate the practices of an expert appear to confuse the learner and result in little growth.

> Domestic prac[ticum]s as we hear time and time again are more often about pleasing the supervising teacher to achieve the grade. In my own experience, domestic practicums can be confusing, especially when there is more than one supervising teacher. The supervisors each attempt to mould you, however, they each have different teaching styles and often provide conflicting information. Domestic pracs are not so much about your own teacher training as running the classroom exactly as the supervisor normally would. (Liam's Journal, 25.6.13)

In this study, the participants identified the freedom they experienced in their overseas classroom to be their true self, to articulate what they believed about teaching, and to make decisions based on their own beliefs, without fear of being judged as being powerful in their own development. This provides a possible solution to the quandary noted by Ditchburn (2015), who found that a heavy reliance on the feedback and assessment provided by mentor teachers discouraged pre-service teachers' ability to theorise about their practice, limited their pedagogical risk taking, and reduced their critical reflective practice. While the pre-service teachers in this investigation were given guidance in relation to the content they were expected to teach, they were given a high level of autonomy in relation to who they were in the classroom, including how they chose to teach. They appeared to genuinely engage with this freedom, as it allowed them to be released from the pressures of attempting to replicate the practices of another and rather made decisions based on their own personality and beliefs, as expressed in the comment:

> I have experienced greater freedom in the [OSPEX] classroom without having to conform to the practices of the supervising teacher sitting at the back of the room, surveying the class, and telling me after each lesson how they would have done it. (Liam's Journal, 2.7.13)

While research highlights the value of partnering pre-service teachers with quality supervisors (Korthagen, 2010), this investigation suggests that pre-service teachers flourish when they feel supported to be themselves, and are not required to imitate the practices of an expert. One reason why freedom appears to result in growth is that in the absence of an

expert to copy, pre-service teachers find themselves with unanswered questions, and become engaged in experimentation as the primary avenue in seeking direction, rather than simply following the directions of another. While Kagle (2014) found that a higher state of curiosity was initiated when learners were connected with others, this investigation highlights the importance of relationships that allow pre-service teachers to develop an authentic sense of self as teacher. This study suggests that real learning occurs when pre-service teachers are encouraged to base their practices on their own beliefs, rather than the suggested techniques of another. It is only by being oneself that real experimentation and reflection is likely to occur. In this study, it was found that when pre-service teachers were given independence and responsibility for themselves and not confined to practices as dictated by others, they engaged in experiments that served to develop beliefs related to a number of areas including: teaching methods; classroom management; service orientated living; and finding ones' own teaching style (Gaea's Journal, 2.7.13). While this investigation supports current research that highlights the primary importance of experience in the development of quality pre-service teachers (Boud et al., 2013; Foote, 2015; Rodman, 2010), this study serves to define the essential nature of experiences that place pre-service teachers in environments where they are free to learn through experimentation:

> I feel like growth only comes out of experimenting. If I just try to do the exact same thing ... then I will never grow. You can teach me everything you know, but unless I apply it myself, I'm not really learning anything. So I think what I really need is to get more and more experience. (Gaea Interview, 2.7.13)

While providing freedom to experiment appeared to occur naturally in the overseas contexts of this investigation, Australian initial teacher educators will also benefit from implementing initiatives to increase experimentation in domestic contexts in their pursuit to successfully promote personal and professional growth within pre-service teachers. A major implication of this investigation is to strongly encourage all initial teacher educators to eliminate assigning specific grades based on the success of their performance for professional teaching experiences and move to a satisfactory or non-satisfactory assessment marking criteria. It is expected that this change would reduce the pressure experienced by pre-service teachers to replicate the practices of their supervisors and promote the act of experimenting in practice based on their own theoretical understandings and beliefs.

It is also recommended that government organisations and initial teacher educators implement initiatives to encourage pre-service teachers to engage in their professional teaching experiences early in their education course and consistently throughout to allow the theoretical concepts taught at university to be experimented with for themselves throughout their educational journey. The findings of this investigation suggest that it is concerning that many teacher education institutions are being forced to postpone the commencement of their professional teaching experiences until later on in their course programs due to restrictions imposed on them by government organisations.

Within this investigation there appeared to be little relation between the learning outcomes achieved and the success of the experimentation process. According to Caiden, much was learnt "when things went well" and "just as much if not more" was learnt when things "didn't go to plan" (Caiden Interview, 25.6.13). The pre-service teachers appeared to grow significantly from the experiments they involved themselves in regardless of whether the experiments had a negative or positive outcome. This finding is in alignment with research completed by Wang (2012) in the area of social work, who also found that learners successfully linked their practices to their own beliefs regardless of whether the learners failed or succeeded from the problems they encountered. Within this investigation it appeared that experiments that proved successful confirmed the beliefs that pre-service teachers had suspected, while unsuccessful outcomes demonstrated inadequacies in their current beliefs, which resulted in curiosity and reflective practice. While finding oneself in a predicament without answers can be a painful process, as Hunter et al., (2007) found, this investigation suggests that it is important for classroom supervisors to avoid attempting to rescue the pre-service teacher by providing them with their own beliefs and practices. The most influential factor in developing substantial professional growth within pre-service teachers appeared connected to the level of ownership of the experimentation process. In accordance with Marble (2012), this investigation found that pre-service teachers who executed the plans of others, with limited ownership appeared to experience limited growth, while the pre-service teachers who engaged in their own experiments and consequently had high levels of ownership, appeared to be supported in significant growth. This is exemplified in the following comment:

> We've learnt from our mistakes. I've learnt to fix them and make them better...we wouldn't have learnt much if we just kept in a little zone of non-experimentation anyways. It was a good thing, a really good thing to try new things. (Gaea Interview, 2.7.13)

This study found that when pre-service teachers were provided with freedom to experiment and experience both failure and success they often became engaged in reflective practice. As reflection is promoted when learners experience confusion, perplexity and doubt (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Boud et al., 2013), it is no wonder that pre-service teachers provided with little freedom struggle to be engaged in reflective practice. When expert teachers attempt to provide learners with routines and behaviours, rather than actual experiences and problems to be solved, the required state of confusion is often bi-passed and as a result little learning is initiated (Danielowich, 2012; Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008).

In light of the importance of ensuring pre-service teachers experience freedom to have ownership of both their failures and successes this study suggests that, while supervision of pre-service teachers is necessary, it will be most effective when it aims to be as unobtrusive as possible. The findings of this study suggest that initial teacher education institutions should promote freedom by encouraging mentor teachers to engage in reflective discussions with pre-service teachers rather than complete observational reports. When reports are required it is recommended that these are written collegially with input from both the mentor and pre-service teacher involved. Through education, mentor teachers and the pre-service teacher assigned to them should understand that a successful learning experience for the pre-service teacher is one in which the teacher can clearly articulate the reasons for their successes and failures rather than defined by the outcome of the performance itself.

The physical environment the pre-service teachers were immersed in this study appeared to be significant to their ability to reflect and subsequently grow. While research has previously linked the type of experience pre-service teachers are involved in to their ability to engage in reflective practice (Cruick & Westbrook, 2013), little discussion has previously taken place in relation to the influence of the physical environment in which pre-service teachers are situated. The pre-service teachers involved in this study really appreciated the beautiful natural setting in which they lived and worked, as it appeared to foster their ability to engage in the practice of being still. Participants spoke specifically of the power of being in a place free of the distractive power of Internet, Facebook and the constant task of keeping in touch

with friends via text messaging (Caiden's Interview, 24.6.13). This study suggests that pre-service teachers appear more likely to stop, be still and reflect, when placed in beautiful and natural physical environments free from the busyness imposed on them in less natural physical environments. Reflection appeared to be supported most effectively by providing pre-service teachers with the opportunity to spend time away from technology in outdoor environments to be still and have time to engage in reflective thinking.

It is very difficult to replicate the types of physical environments found in this study to be most effective in the diversity of contexts pre-service teachers are sure to be involved in within an Australian domestic setting. To allow pre-service teachers in domestic contexts to benefit from the findings of this study, it is recommended that they be informed about the power of regularly being immersed in natural physical environments free from the distractions of technology and encouraged whenever possible to immerse themselves in such environments throughout their teaching experiences. Initial teacher educators could support this type of practice by encouraging pre-service teachers to devote 30-minutes of each day of their professional teaching experience to reflective journaling conducted whenever possible within natural physical environment free from technology.

While freedom has been highlighted as the second of the growth-fostering environments essential in supporting the development of pre-service teachers, it is important to note that freedom to be oneself, to experiment, to experience failure and success, and to reflect free from external judgment is not achieved by isolating pre-service teachers from others. In fact, the opposite was found to be true in this investigation. Freedom to be oneself was achieved by placing pre-service teachers in communities of people. This chapter now explores the types of communities found to foster growth within pre-service teachers by focusing on the third essential growth-fostering environment, referred to in this investigation as 'belonging'.

Belonging

While placing pre-service teachers in communities with peers, school supervisors and university mentors have been recognised in the research literature as important in their personal and professional development (Kagle, 2014; Riedinger, 2015), the findings of this study serve to explain the types of communities that effectively support growth. As pre-service teachers develop their *stories of self* through social exchanges, teacher educators

would appear to benefit by understanding the types of relationships that most effectively impact pre-service teachers (Cohen, 2010).

From this study it appears that pre-service teachers are best sustained in their individual growth when they experience high levels of belonging from within a supportive socio-emotional community. These findings are consistent with other research that suggests the essential nature of placing pre-service teachers in real and supportive social contexts (Cattley, 2007; Riedinger, 2015). While the pre-service teachers in this investigation at times acknowledged the skillful practices of those they observed, when speaking of their own development they consistently prioritised how the people they were surrounded by made them feel, rather than what they knew or how proficient they were in the classroom. As is shown in the interview excerpt below, this study suggests a strong relationship between 'freedom to be oneself' and 'feeling supported and accepted':

> [Speaking of when she felt accepted] … you just become your own person and you are able to talk more and get to know more people and understand their stories as well and be able to open up to them and tell them more about yourself. Umm, and it is just really cool to be that, like be your own self and know that you aren't getting judged by anyone. (Fonda's Interview, 25.6.13)

This relationship between freedom and belonging appears significant as it suggests that before pre-service teachers are likely to experience the necessary freedom to be themselves and enact their own beliefs, they must firstly receive support and acceptance from those by whom they are surrounded. In supportive communities, pre-service teachers appear to experience less fear and anxiety in relation to making mistakes, and consequently feel more comfortable to take risks in the classroom.

Not only do pre-service teachers appear to experiment more when placed in supportive socio-emotional communities, but they also appear more likely to reflect on the outcomes of these experiments by openly sharing their failures and successes when they feel supported by those with whom they are sharing the experience. These findings resonate strongly with research completed by Walkington (2005), who found that relationships with high levels of trust increased a learner's ability to learn through experimenting and openly sharing their ideas with others through meaningful and collaborative exchanges. This investigation suggests that

pre-service teachers often make sense of their new experiences through interaction and consultation with others, and this influence appears to be strengthened with trust. In direct contrast to literature that suggests that existing beliefs can be resistant to change (Flores & Day, 2006; Pietsch & Williamson, 2005), this investigation found that when immersed in supportive communities, with high levels of trust, pre-service teachers' beliefs about themselves can be greatly impacted by the beliefs others have of them. As a result of the mutual trust that was established between Mitch and Liam, Liam struggled to dismiss Mitch's beliefs of him being a great teacher (Liam's Interview, 26.6.13). Fonda was also forced to make sense of herself, as someone worthy to be proud of, on her walk up to Sundai Mai School, after she developed a supportive relationship with Mikaela (Fonda's Interview, 24.6.13). What this suggests, is that pre-service teachers will be more likely to be challenged by the beliefs of others, including teacher educators, when supportive and trusting relationship have first been developed.

From the findings of this study it appears that the establishment of supportive communities is essential if pre-service teachers are to successfully develop new connected stories of self. Regardless of whether teaching experiences are organised in an overseas or domestic context the results of this investigation strongly suggest that teacher educators should send pre-service teachers on professional teaching experiences in teams. As the benefits of these supportive environments have been shown to extend beyond the time in school it is recommended that these teams of pre-service teachers consider sharing accommodation, meals and travel during their teaching experiences to enable them to assist each other with reflective practice, lesson preparation and overcoming challenges. Where it is not possible for pre-service teachers to be placed in a team it is recommended that online learning communities be created to provide all individuals with the opportunity to be supported by peers throughout their teaching experience.

The pre-service teachers in this investigation also highlighted the importance of an appreciative community in their own development. As teaching is a social activity that involves interaction between people, literature suggests that becoming a teacher must also take place within a social setting (Izadinia, 2013; Riedinger, 2015). Put simply, the process of becoming a teacher involves the development of a teachers' personal beliefs and these beliefs, referred to in this investigation as *stories of self*, appear to be influenced significantly through validation by others (Dolloff, 2007; Young et al., 2015). Gaea spoke often of the

power of being appreciated as a teacher by others and the impact it had on her development, as is shown in the quote below:

> They [the local teachers in the OSPEX] dedicated half a day to thank us and show us how much they appreciated what we did… And so, that was really beautiful to see that they actually— like looked up to how we taught and actually wanted to see our ideas and how they could use them in their classrooms. So, that was really cool. (Gaea Interview, 5.7.13)

The pre-service teachers' development seemed to be impaired when they perceived that the community members in domestic settings treated them as an inconvenience rather than as professional teachers with the capacity to make a contribution. In Nepal, each of the pre-service teachers were surprised that they were not only welcomed and accepted, but really appreciated for everything they did. Unlike their past professional experiences in Australia, they were shown genuine appreciation for who they were as teachers and the contributions they made. The acknowledgement they received from both students and fellow staff members appeared to assist them in the development of their own beliefs about themselves as teachers. In being appreciated as teachers by others, they appeared to be more accepting of themselves as teachers.

While belonging to an appreciative community appears more easily achieved in overseas contexts, due to the inherent beliefs of the school students and their teachers, the findings of this study suggest that Australian pre-service teachers completing their professional teaching experiences in domestic settings will also benefit significantly when they are welcomed, valued and appreciated as teachers. While it is very difficult to influence the perceptions and attitudes of Australian teachers and their students, the findings of this study suggest that initial teacher educators should communicate the power that appreciation and affirmation has on the pre-service teachers' growth and development as teachers. It is hoped that this knowledge may help to influence the behaviour and attitudes of the mentor teachers and that this change of perception will be transferred to the students they teach.

Similar to findings of Palis and Quros (2014), this investigation found that growth was fostered when learners moved beyond the role of an observer and became engaged as active participants. Fonda stated that as a result of being "accepted," she felt as though she was "a part of who they [Nepali people] were" and consequently "adapted" who she was and what

she believed (Fonda's Interview, 2.7.13). The pre-service teachers appeared to grow little from tourist experiences on weekends, when they observed Nepal and its people from the perspective of an outsider, and learnt much when they were invited to become involved as participants in experiences through meaningful relationships. This was particularly true in relation to how the pre-service teachers appeared to learn most effectively in the classroom. The pre-service teachers in this study emphasised the importance of learning *with* others, rather than *from* others, and highlighted the value of not being connected with another who took on the role of the expert. The results of this investigation suggest that the pre-service teachers in an overseas context appeared to learn very effectively when partnered with a peer and required to take on challenges collectively. It is recommended that those responsible for organising professional teaching experiences within domestic contexts also consider placing pre-service teachers in pairs for their first professional teaching experience to encourage them to become participants early on in their experience and discover learning.

A learning community, defined above as an environment where pre-service teachers learn *with* rather than *from* others, is not achieved by isolating pre-service teachers from experienced others. It is not the depth of a person's experience that appears to restrict their ability to develop growth in pre-service teachers but rather the imbalance of power that often exists when learners are united with another considered more experienced. This makes sense in light of literature that suggests that if reflective practice is to be supported within pre-service teachers who are searching to make sense out of a dilemma, that, at most, alternatives can be suggested rather than solutions provided (Hunter et al., 2007). From this study it appears that classroom supervisors with the ability to foster collaborative relationships will be most effective in providing suggestions to be considered by pre-service teachers rather than solutions to be followed. Regardless of whether experiences are organised in an overseas or domestic setting the findings of this investigation suggest that mentor teachers will be more successful in promoting the development of new connected stories of self within pre-service teachers when they facilitate reflective discussions together.

Belonging to a learning community outside of the classroom environment also emerged within this investigation as significant in the growth of pre-service teachers. As is known from literature, reflection may occur both during and after experiences (Fox, 2011; Mirick & Davis, 2015). As a result of living together in the same house, the pre-service teachers in this study often informally reflected together during the evenings as they worked with each other

in preparing their lessons for the following day. As argued previously by Young et al., (2015) and as shown in the quote below, these learning communities became powerful tools in fostering reflective practice and creative thought:

> Having a teaching partner has helped me learn so much because you can sort of bounce ideas of each other. If I have a class and I don't know how to teach it, Joel will be like, well you could do this, and I would be like 'oh yea'. I have also helped Joel prepare for his lessons. Like he may not know how to teach a lesson and I will say, "well you could do this and this and you could talk about this," and he kind of builds ideas from that. Having other teachers here as well has been great, just sort of bouncing ideas off each other, and then you kind of just grow. (Caiden's Interview, 25.6.13)

Similar to the findings of Riedinger (2015), the participants in this study stressed the importance of the real community in which they were supported. Living in a rural village with limited technology reduced the barriers between the group members and promoted their involvement in real face-to-face interaction. As a result of fewer distractions, the participants spent more time together and bonded tightly together as a team. As a result, they became like a "family" (Fonda's Interview, 7.7.13), and felt comfortable to be real and authentic in who they were and the conversations they shared. As is shown in the quote below, it was this community that supported them in the challenges they encountered and provided them with the confidence to push themselves outside their comfort zone:

> Right now, I don't think I've ever been happier. I'm surrounded by the most amazing group of people. They have made this trip so much fun and being so far from home and family seems like nothing because this is my new family. I was freaked out about leaving the country for the first time and yeah I've cried and wanted to go home and give up, but these incredible people have been so supportive and pulled me through, and I am so grateful for each and every one of them. (Fonda's Interview, 7.7.13)

The participants in this study also highlighted the significance of living in such a tightly connected community in relation to their own growth. This is unsurprising in light of the research conducted in Chile by Avalos and De Los Rios (2013), which found that pre-service teachers negotiate who they are and what they believe through interactions with a variety of people in the school context, including students, teachers, parents and the broader community in which they belong. Unlike their previous teaching experiences in larger and often what felt

like disconnected communities, the pre-service teachers on the OSPEX continued to associate with the locals in the role of teachers once school had concluded. The locals in the village referred to them as teachers when they worked with them in the rice paddies. The children introduced them to their families as teachers when they invited them back to their homes, as shown by the comment:

> You spend so many more hours here being a teacher. That's what makes you feel like a teacher. So, I definitely feel more like a teacher here… On my first prac[ticum], I was definitely a student teacher. There's like no comparison. (Gaea Interview, 25.6.13)

As was alluded to at the beginning of this chapter, the three growth-fostering environments highlighted within this model are interrelated. While freedom, challenge and belonging each appear influential in collectively providing the right type of experience for pre-service teachers to experience growth, this study also suggests there is synchronicity between all three of these components. For example, the participants' freedom to be themselves and experiment without fear of judgment appeared to be directly influenced by the challenges they faced and the level of belonging they experienced from the community in which they were situated. Gaea highlights the connectedness between freedom and belonging when she stated that she experienced "freedom to try new things and experiment" as a result of "facing problems [she] was unsure about" and belonging to a community where "[she] felt appreciated, loved and not judged" and where she "didn't feel like a burden" (Gaea's Journal, 24.6.13).

Similarly, the participants' ability to be challenged was also impacted by the freedom and belonging they experienced in the OSPEX. The participants spoke about how they had accepted challenges due to the support they felt from their team (Fonda's Journal, 7.7.13) and how the challenges encountered on the experience were often closely related to the independence and autonomy of their experience (Caiden's Journal, 19.6.13). Likewise, the participants experienced high levels of belonging within their new community when they embraced the challenges associated with separating themselves from what was once familiar and experienced the freedom of being themselves (Fonda's Journal, 7.7.13). These findings suggest that each of the growth-fostering environments not only collectively contributes to the pre-service teachers' ability to grow but also are closely connected to each other. This finding suggests that professional teaching experiences will be most successful in developing

pre-service teachers' *stories of self* when they adequately incorporate all three of the growth-fostering environments previously outlined.

Restorying Process

This chapter now discusses what was learnt as a result of this investigation about the personal and professional growth pre-service teachers appear to experience as a result of an overseas professional teaching experience in a developing country. This study suggests that when supported within growth-fostering environments pre-service teachers appear to renegotiate who they are by developing connections between: their past and present; their self as people and their self as teacher; and between their beliefs and practices. As already discussed within the growth-fostering environments, this restorying process normally begins when the pre-service teachers' existing *stories of self* are destabilised. With continued support within growth-fostering environments pre-service teachers appear to become involved in questioning their *stories of self* and finally rebuilding their *stories of self*. While this study suggests that all three components of the restorying process are essential in the development of new connected *stories of self*, it does not propose that all pre-service teachers will develop new connected *stories of self* when immersed in an overseas professional teaching experience. From this investigation, it appears that when pre-service teachers are not adequately supported within the growth-fostering environments previously explained, they are unable to truly question and/or rebuild their *stories of self*, and subsequently may revert back to their old *stories of self*. This chapter now focuses on the findings from this investigation where participants reverted to old *stories of self*. The chapter then focuses on the restorying that occurs within pre-service teachers when developing new connected *stories of self*.

Old Stories of Self – explaining limited growth

One of the perceived weaknesses of previous research concerning OSPEX is that it rarely highlighted the difficulties, challenges and failures associated with overseas teaching experiences (Izadinia, 2013), and is predominantly focused on the positive learning outcomes that result (Vande Berg et al., 2012). Consequently, many wrongly assume that transformational growth is simply achieved by taking pre-service teachers overseas (Cushner & Chang, 2015). Similar to those of Doppen and An (2014), the findings of this investigation

appear to refute the assumptions often made that all OSPEX are likely to be transformational, and rather, suggests that pre-service teachers are likely to experience varied levels of growth on OSPEX as related to the quality of the experience, with specific importance placed on the growth-fostering environments previously outlined.

This investigation suggests that pre-service teachers are likely to experience little growth in OSPEX if their experience does not incorporate adequate levels of freedom, challenge and belonging. Fonda struggled with belonging until well into her third week and spoke of "not fitting in," and "always being left out," and "want[ing] to cry" because she found it hard to "blend with other people" (Fonda's Journal, 19.6.13). As a result of limited levels of belonging, Fonda seemed unable to adequately engage in meaningful reflection, when her existing beliefs were challenged, and instead chose to ignore the new experiences that threatened her existing beliefs and revert back to her old *stories of self*. One example of this was demonstrated through her ethnocentric viewpoints where she perceived herself as superior to those she had come to help. These beliefs changed little as is demonstrated through a comparison of her comments expressed both before and during her overseas professional teaching experience. Prior to departure Fonda stated: "I'm going to Nepal to change children's lives" (Fonda's Journal, 13.6.13). Three weeks into the OSPEX Fonda demonstrated a similar ethnocentric viewpoint when she wrote: "Just knowing that this experience is giving me the opportunity to help children less fortunate then me, educate them, and to be able to see a change in them" (Fonda's Journal, 26.6.13).

There were many other *stories of self* that Fonda struggled to change including: her beliefs about her own ability; her beliefs in relation to her personal confidence; and her beliefs about her own value (Fonda's Journal, 26.6.13). It was only when she felt a high level of belonging within a supportive socio-emotional network, expressed in approximately her fourth week overseas, that Fonda appeared to allow herself to question her *stories of self* and rebuild some of her beliefs: "The support of others is a big thing for me too. Everyone here has been so great in helping me get to this point, past all my negative thoughts and struggles" (Fonda's Journal, 12.7.13).

Caiden also initially struggled to question and rebuild his *stories of self* that connected who he was as a person with who he was as a teacher. Caiden really doubted his own ability to "teach the whole day on [his] own" when his teaching partner got sick (Caiden's Interview, 19.6.13). As Caiden had never been provided with the opportunity to "be in a class on [his]

own before" (Caiden's Interview, 19.6.13) it appeared that he had never really developed new connected *stories of self* that positioned himself as a capable teacher. It was only when he was supported in growth-fostering environments and subjected to appropriate challenges that he began to question and rebuild his *stories of self* as demonstrated when he began to believe "maybe I can do this, and maybe I can get better!" (Caiden's Interview, 19.6.13).

Having explained the theory of how a lack or imbalance of growth-fostering environments may result in limited growth, this chapter now focuses on the restorying that appears to occur within pre-service teachers when immersed in growth-fostering environments.

Restorying

The category that summarises the constructivist grounded theory and relates to all other categories in the data is referred to as the core category (Charmaz, 2014; Gustavsson, 2007). In this study, the core category was 'restorying' and was placed at the centre of the theoretical model to demonstrate its primary importance. Restorying in this investigation can be described as the development of new and connected *stories of self* in pre-service teachers that better explain who they are and what they believe. As mentioned previously, the term *stories of self* was adapted from the term 'stories to live by' (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999), and refers to the beliefs the pre-service teachers developed and/or connected to, to make sense of the multifaceted, dynamic and social nature of who they are as people and teachers (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Franco, 2014; Rodgers & Scott, 2008). It appears that pre-service teachers develop a new set of connected beliefs that significantly impact who they are as people and how they relate to others, when involved in a quality overseas professional teaching experience in a developing country. These findings are significant in light of current research that highlights the importance of the beliefs pre-service teachers hold in relation to their ability to teach successfully (Beauchchamp & Thomas, 2009).

Current literature highlights the importance of quality pre-service teacher preparation and emphasises the essential importance of what pre-service teachers know (Monk, 2015), what they can do (Dervent, 2015) and who they are in their ability to successfully teach Australian young people in the 21st century (Berry, 2012; Ewing, Le Cornu, & Groundwater-Smith, 2014; Loughran, 2012). In light of the current issues facing pre-service teacher preparation 'who pre-service teachers are,' referred to in this investigation as pre-service teachers' *stories*

of self, emerged from the literature as the essential component currently inadequately represented in initial teacher education (Mills & Ballantyne, 2010; Rodriguez-Valls, 2014). It appears that at present the professional teaching experiences pre-service teachers are being involved in are having limited success in fostering adequate reflective practice (Franco, 2014; Kissock & Richardson, 2010) and consequently, many initial teacher educators appear to be graduating as fragmented people. As a result of the limited development of pre-service teachers' *stories of self,* there appears to be an inability within pre-service teachers to explain the connection between: their beliefs and practices; who they are as people and who they are as teachers; and what they have experienced in the past to their beliefs and practices in the present (Sutherland et al., 2010). Without these connected *stories of self*, it appears that too many pre-service teachers continue to exit teacher education programs with inherited beliefs that have been shown to be very resistant to change (Flores & Day, 2006; Pietsch & Williamson, 2005). This is a major concern as research suggests that unsubstantiated, disconnected, and inherited beliefs inadequately equip pre-service teachers to remain committed, confident and adaptable in the challenging, ever-changing and person centred profession that is teaching (Franco, 2014).

The power of the findings of this investigation is that overseas professional teaching experiences in developing countries appear to impact pre-service teachers mostly by allowing them to develop their own *stories of self* or beliefs that connect who they are, what they believe, and as a result enable them to clearly articulate the relationship between their behaviours and beliefs. The remainder of this chapter provides more detail concerning the restorying process. The restorying process is portrayed in the model using three concentric circles, which are explored separately. The first component of restorying, represented by the outer circle, is entitled 'Destabilising Existing Stories of Self'.

Destabilising existing Stories of Self

This study found that the first stage in developing new *stories of self* within pre-service teachers occurred when they were confronted by experiences that their past set of beliefs inadequately explained. As a result of the confusion each of the participants in this investigation experienced, they were forced to stop and reflect on their existing beliefs and were challenged to create new *stories of self* to better explain the total of their experiences. This is consistent with existing research that suggests that the first phase of reflection,

essential in the development of a pre-service teachers' *stories of self*, occurs when learners face some form of perplexity, confusion or doubt and are forced to re-examine their existing beliefs (Cruick & Westbrook, 2013). Liam found his interactions with the locals initially confusing as he discovered them to be very similar to Australians, when he had first believed them to be very foreign. He was particularly "surprised" when he discovered his Nepali students to be "exactly how [he] expect[ed] Australian Year 7 students" to be (Liam's Journal, 24.6.13). It was as a result of wrestling with this confusion that Liam gradually developed new *stories of self* that adequately explained his new experiences.

Similarly, Gaea was initially "overwhelmed by the love and generosity" (Gaea's Journal, 24.6.13) she received from the local people. Gaea was confronted by how different the people were and "really wanted to be more like" them (Gaea's Journal, 27.6.13). Gaea experienced doubt and confusion as a result of incongruences between her new experiences and past beliefs, and subsequently altered her beliefs, specifically in relation to service and the type of life she wanted to live.

To summarise, restorying is initiated when pre-service teachers discover that the interpretations they have made in the past to explain their experiences are inadequate or incomplete and consequently enter into a reflective search to renegotiate their beliefs in order to better explain who they are and what they believe.

Similar to the research findings of Boud et al., (2013) this investigation found that pre-service teachers experienced discomfort when their existing beliefs were destabilised and consequently became highly motivated to resolve the conflict between their new experiences and their existing *stories of self*. While growth appears to be stimulated as a result of experiencing confusion, perplexity and doubt, this phase can feel extremely uncomfortable for the learner, who is likely to want to move beyond their confusion as quickly as possible. Fonda demonstrated this well as she had "so many doubts and worries" (Overall Summary - Section G) as a result of her past beliefs that were being challenged by new experiences and was desperate to move beyond her "negative thoughts" (Fonda's Journal, 11.7.13). This study suggests that in resolving the inner conflict or confusion, pre-service teachers may either dismiss their beliefs in light of their new experience, or dismiss their experience/s to enable them to hold onto their existing beliefs.

This investigation highlights the value of experiences that destabilise pre-service teachers existing beliefs. It also emphasises the importance of the requirement to support pre-service teachers adequately if they are to succeed in developing new connected *stories of self*. As demonstrated in the previous section of this chapter, a destabilisation of existing *stories of self* without adequate freedom, challenge and belonging may result in the pre-service teacher holding onto their old *stories of self*. However, this study also suggests that when immersed in growth-fostering environments pre-service teachers can endure the destabilising experiences integral in the restorying process and begin questioning their *stories of self*.

Questioning Stories of Self

While growth appears to be initiated when learners are involved in experiences that challenge their existing beliefs, it is also essential, as part of the restorying process, that pre-service teachers search to resolve their confusion by questioning their *stories of self*. Gaea began questioning her *stories of self* in relation to her purpose as a teacher when she reflected on the value of "filling the students' minds with content" (Gaea's Journal, 26.6.13). Fonda also questioned her *stories of self* in relation to her once limited "confidence and faith" in her own ability when she began to reflect on whether she really could "conquer anything that life" presented to her (Fonda's Journal, 12.7.13). Caiden also questioned his existing beliefs about how he had lived "so extravagantly compared to people in Nepal," (Caiden's Journal, 18.6.13) while Liam continued to query whether he really was "a great teacher" (Liam's Interview 26.6.13). Other researchers have identified this same process as essential in learning, commonly referring to it as engaging in reflective practice (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Franco, 2014; Harrison & Lee, 2011).

Attempts to resolve their confusion by questioning their *stories of self* appeared to be a complex process for the participants in this investigation, as each of their stories appeared connected. As such, even a slight alteration in one belief appeared to destabilise other beliefs that in turn would each need to be reconciled. As a result of being challenged by the generosity and love of the Nepali people, Caiden recognised the inadequacy of attempting to find purpose in the accumulation of things (Caiden's Letter, 27.6.13). As a result, Caiden was forced to question his own cultural story, his past stories, and his stories that explained his own purpose. This in turn impacted his future stories and how he intended to live his life and also how he saw teaching and learning. While research suggests that at present the key

environments relied upon in the preparation of pre-service teachers, namely university classes and domestic experiences, do not appear well designed to foster critical reflection (Allen, 2009; Franco, 2014; Kissock & Richardson, 2010), this investigation highlighted quality overseas professional teaching experiences as an effective reflective tool as a result of high levels of freedom, belonging and challenge. These findings support those of Olmedo and Haron (2010) and Sangster and Green (2012), who also found that OSPEX appeared to foster the type of reflective practice capable of transforming pre-service teachers.

Rebuilding Stories of Self

While destabilising and questioning pre-service teachers' *stories of self* are essential in the restorying process, developing new connected *stories of self* also is dependent on a rebuilding process. The specific *stories of self* that appear to have been impacted mostly by the aforementioned rebuilding include: stories of others; stories that connect behaviours and beliefs; stories explaining own purpose; stories about teaching and learning; past stories; future stories; own cultural story; and stories that explain self.

It is important to note that these stories were not fragmented as they appear in this model and in the following discussion. More often than not, these stories were intertwined and intricately connected and influenced by one another. The model has attempted to label the major categories of stories impacted, by an OSPEX, under individual headings only as a tool to make sense of the following:

Stories of others

One of the major areas of rebuilding that took place, as a result of the OSPEX, was in regards to the stories pre-service teachers held in relation to others once considered foreign. Initially, the focus participants appeared very sceptical and at times mistrusting of the culturally diverse people with whom they came into contact. Analysis of the stories shared suggests that the participants underwent a transformative process that resulted in the development of familiarity for people they had initially thought of as foreign and even potentially dangerous (Liam's Journal, 2.7.13). Originally, due to limited contact with people of diversity, many of the participants in this study had developed few connections between self and others. The distinctiveness and separation of self in relation to others was reduced when pre-service teachers were given an opportunity to build connections with people of diversity. As is shown

in one of Liam's journal reflections, his views of others changed from unfamiliar distrust to familiarity and connectedness:

> I just assumed that it had been stolen [speaking of his assumptions when his guitar took longer to be delivered than expected at the beginning of the overseas experience]. I had the realisation that yes, we are in a poor country, and we need to be careful with belongings, but the Nepali people are not all thieves…. it confirmed for me what I have felt throughout this trip in my conversations and experiences; that is, a sense of familiarity with people of very foreign lifestyles and cultures. People have different lifestyles and experiences, but independent of race and culture, people are people, and I had not expected this level of relationship with the Nepali people. (Liam's Journal, 2.7.13)

These findings are consistent with earlier studies that have found that international intergroup contact is the best way to reduce intergroup prejudice (Malewski & Phillion, 2009; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). As a result of a real life encounter with people from a different culture, the Australian pre-service teachers appeared to develop connectedness and loving acceptance for the people of the culture in which they were immersed. Through ongoing relationships, they quickly lost sight of their cultural differences and came to the realisation that they were in fact very similar. The once foreign place was now referred to as home, and the once foreign people grew into family. One of the MOTO participants described in an interview how she had changed in relation to her perspectives of others: "They're actually just kids! It [the make-up party] made me realise that they are the same as girls in Australia, girls that love makeup and dancing and talking about boys… these people are my people" (Gaea's Interview, 5.7.13).

From this study it appears that the pre-service teachers' attitudes towards people with different cultural backgrounds from their own became more favourable as a result of their OSPEX. While identifying oneself with a minority group, once considered foreign, may initially appear somewhat inconsequential, research suggests that it is likely that the new beliefs in relation to one culture are likely to have a profound effect on not only how pre-service teachers approach their future students from diverse backgrounds, but also how they approach all students once thought of as different (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Stachowski et al., 2015). Research suggests that it is likely that these new perspectives will extend to the entire out-group, out-group members in other situations, and even out-group members not

involved in the contact (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). The fact that this OSPEX was successful in breaking down barriers between pre-service teachers and people of a different cultural background should be of interest to current teacher educators who appear to be struggling to initiate the same positive outcomes through domestic professional teaching experiences (Mills, 2013).

Stories that connect behaviours and beliefs

In addition to developing connections between self and others, this investigation suggests that pre-service teachers involved in OSPEXs also develop connections between their behaviours and beliefs. Prior to completing the MOTO experience, the pre-service teachers in this investigation all spoke of having little confidence in their ability to teach and linked this to their inability to explain who they were as teachers in relation to who they were, what they had experienced, and what they believed as people. Gaea used the words "grey" and "in-between" to describe how she felt as a teacher without her own stories to adequately explain what she believed in relation to her classroom practices (Gaea's Interview, 10.6.13). Liam too "struggled with confidence" (Liam's Interview, 26.6.13) and was desperate to grow into someone who felt like a teacher, with the ability to know "how to teach in any classroom" (Liam's Interview, 10.6.13). It appears from this study that the pre-service teachers had previously lacked confidence as teachers owing to a dichotomy between their personal and professional identities.

Unlike their past domestic teaching experiences, the pre-service teachers in this study appeared to develop stories to explain their behaviours, when placed in an overseas context. This investigation suggests that a merging between self as person and self as teacher resulted when the pre-service teachers were engaged in ongoing introspection due to the growth-fostering environments in which they were immersed. As a result of examining their own thoughts and feelings, rather than attempting to replicate the practices of an expert, the partitions between self as person and self as teachers began to dissolve, which allowed the pre-service teacher to discover wholeness.

Gaea described the merging of self as person and self as teacher as "actually knowing what she was doing" (Gaea's Interview, 10.6.13) and believed it allowed her to "adapt, remain flexible and think on her feet" (Gaea's Journal, 3.7.13). The development of connected

beliefs, that adequately explain one's practice in light of one's past experience, is a significant outcome considering the fact that one of the major issues currently facing those involved in pre-service teacher preparation is the widely acknowledged gap that continues to exist between theory and practice (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Beauchchamp & Thomas, 2009; Meijer et al., 2011). Research suggests that many pre-service teachers engage in professional teaching experiences that do not encourage them to develop stories to explain their practices in the classroom. Rather, they tend to attempt to copy the techniques they have observed without questioning or understanding why (Kissock & Richardson, 2010). This is concerning in light of the argument that suggests that quality teaching in the 21st century is reliant on teachers who "know how theory informs their practice" (Rodriguez-Valls, 2014, p. 294).

Stories explaining own purpose

The "new world" (Caiden's Journal, 15.6.13), in which each of the pre-service teachers lived, made a significant impact on their beliefs in relation to their own purpose. As a result of living with people with few possessions and much happiness, old beliefs connecting materialism and happiness were examined and proved misleading. As shown in the passage below, the pre-service teachers discovered that a life focused on self, including "status, possessions and power," (Caiden's Letter, 27.6.13) was inferior to a life focused on others:

> Everyone is so selfish and focused on how they can help themselves and it's so rare to see neighbours helping each other out [Speaking of back in Australia]. The fact that it rarely happens where we live made me question why it doesn't happen more often and [made me more] determined to make it happen more often. (Gaea's Letter Home, 12.7.13)

The participants in this study found communal living very fulfilling, and began to question and renegotiate their past beliefs, which entailed putting themselves and the accumulation of things at the core of their life's purpose. Caiden's purpose, which had previously focused on a "want and need for possessions and money" (Caiden's journal, 27.6.13), was found to be inadequate in light of his new experiences, and was restoried to centre around the importance of "people and family" (Caiden's Letter, 27.6.13). Gaea too restoried her purpose to center on "people, … community and really getting to know them and forming relationships" (Gaea's Interview, 2.7.13). As a result of experiencing the joy of serving others, this study found that the participants developed a greater desire to find ways to serve others and build quality

relationships with others as a result of their OSPEX experience. While little research has already linked OSPEX to an increased desire within pre-service teachers to serve others, these findings appear to resonate strongly with that of Hackett and Lavery (2010), who found pre-service teachers involved in OSPEX developed increased levels of long-term commitment to the profession of teaching. The development of beliefs that are more other-focused in pre-service teachers appears significant in light of the importance of a teacher's ability to develop quality relationships with their students (Cushner & Chang, 2015).

Stories about teaching and learning

The pre-service teachers in this study appeared to rebuild many of their beliefs that related to teaching and learning. As mentioned in the previous sections, the pre-service teachers developed beliefs that highlighted the essential nature of a teacher's ability to develop quality relationships. As stated by Gaea, teaching "is all about people, and bonding with people" (Gaea's Interview, 2.7.13). This finding is similar to that of Doppan and An (2014), who found that OSPEX impacted the pre-service teachers' capacity to interact with all different types of people.

The pre-service teachers' goals for teaching also appeared impacted within this investigation. Gaea spoke about how she no longer saw teaching as the act of filling learners' minds but rather aimed to develop "global citizens [with] compassion for each other and the world they live in" (Gaea's Journal, 26.6.13). These findings are unsurprising in light of research conducted by Stachowski et al., (2015) who discovered that OSPEX not only changed the pre-service teachers involved, but also directly impacted their desire to integrate the new concepts they gained from their international experience in their own classrooms. It appears that when connections are made within pre-service teachers, in relation to teaching and learning, they have a natural desire to develop similar connections within their learners.

Similar to the finding of Stachowski et al. (2015), the importance of providing learners with freedom to experiment and the opportunity to make mistakes was one concept that pre-service teachers appeared eager to integrate into their own classrooms, having personally encountered it in their OSPEX. Through personal experimentation, the participants appeared to associate making mistakes as an important part of learning and subsequently developed the desire to provide their own learners with environments where they too felt safe to

independently explore, experience the power of making mistakes, and engage in individualised learning (Caiden Interview, 10.6.13; Gaea's Interview, 25.6.13). The participants also appeared to learn much about how to engage young people. According to Caiden, "I learnt through that experience to be really visual and more hands on, and to make learning as real as possible" (Caiden's Documentation, Section F).

Past Stories

This investigation found that new beliefs were not passively provided to pre-service teachers, but rather, individually and actively constructed by each of them in direct relation to their specific backgrounds, beliefs and experiences (Liakopoulou, 2012). These findings align strongly with the research literature that emphasises the significance of pre-service teachers' previous stories and experiences when attempting to influence their future *stories of self* (Cook, 2009; Daly, 2009; Izadinia, 2013). As pre-service teachers' past, present and future stories appeared closely connected in this investigation, they were often required to make alterations to their past understandings in the process of developing new beliefs. As shown in the comment below, it was only possible for Fonda to develop new positive stories that explained who she was and of what she was capable, when she was first able to overcome her self-doubt that had so long imprisoned her.

> Before this trip I would always think things were too hard and I couldn't do anything. But now that this trip is almost over, I feel as if going home I will set myself challenges and overcome any that may come my way. Keeping a positive mind and thinking about the goals we have for this trip, I feel as if I can do anything now. (Fonda's Journal, 11.7.13)

As new *stories of self* do not appear to be developed in isolation to past *stories of self*, these findings once again highlight the futility of any attempt to equip pre-service teachers with skills and techniques ungrounded in their attitudes and beliefs (Khan et al., 2014; Murray et al., 2008). New beliefs or *stories of self* are negotiated in relationship to existing beliefs and as such must be developed by the individual learner. In light of these findings, it appears that teacher educators can assist pre-service teachers develop new and connected *stories of self* by supporting them within the growth-fostering environments already explored.

Future Stories

This investigation also found that future stories were significantly impacted when pre-service teachers present beliefs were influenced through growth-fostering environments. When developing new beliefs, to better explain their present and past experiences, pre-service teachers also appeared to quickly adjust their plans for the future to align with their present beliefs. All the participants in this study quickly re-storied their futures once their present beliefs were changed. Gaea made plans to "serve others more," when she returned to Australia as a result of recognising the value and joy found in service (Gaea's Journal, 12.7.13). Caiden also planned to live a different life when he returned as a result of his "new mentality" and made plans to prioritise relationships more and be more purposeful with his time (Caiden's interview, 24.6.13). Fonda, too, re-storied her future as a result of her new found confidence in herself and became determined to "live a more positive life," by treating "the people close to [her] better" and taking on more challenges (Fonda's Letter Home, 12.7.13). This study suggests that pre-service teachers have an innate desire to develop congruence between their past experiences, present beliefs and future plans. Finding wholeness in one's past, present and future appears to be supported within growth-fostering environments. As such, the dangerous divide that continues to exist in pre-service teachers between their personal and professional identities (Meijer et al., 2011) appears to reflect poorly on the quality of the current professional teaching experiences in which pre-service teachers are being involved. This study suggests that pre-service teachers are only likely to make connections between their past experiences, their present beliefs and practices, and their future plans through quality but disruptive experiences that allow them to restory who they are by being placed in growth-fostering environments.

Own cultural story

Another set of beliefs that were significantly impacted within this investigation was the pre-service teacher's own cultural stories. It appears that each of the participants had inherited beliefs from their own socio-cultural environments that, in the absence of an alternative existence, had remained relatively unexamined and disconnected. As suggested by Foote (2015), it was only when the pre-service teachers were immersed in a new environment that juxtaposed their once perceived normal realities, that they appeared to be given the opportunity to reflect on their taken-for-granted perspectives. Initially, the participants appeared to view their own cultural story as superior and referred to the Nepali people and

their way of life as foreign, strange, and even weird (Caiden's Journal, 18.6.13). This changed significantly throughout their experience and as a result of being supported in growth-fostering environments the pre-service teachers came to question and re-story their own cultural beliefs. As is shown below, Caiden concluded that in many ways the Australian way of life had much to learn from the people of Nepal:

> In Australia we don't talk to anyone on the street, we barely talk to strangers, we barely talk to people we know. In Nepal, community is such a massive thing … it feels so much better! I guess it just goes to show that we [in Australia] are a developed, blessed country in some ways, but not in others. (Caiden's Overall Summary, Section F)

Similar to Malewski and Phillion (2009), this investigation found that as a result of a real life encounter with another culture, the pre-service teachers experienced a reduction in stereotypical perspectives that had once held their own culture and way of life as somewhat superior to others about which little was known. This allowed the pre-service teachers involved to become more willing to consider different perspectives as argued previously by others (Doppen & An, 2014; Stachowski et al., 2015).

Stories that explain self

One of the most significant stories of those rebuilt by the participants in this study was associated with their beliefs about themselves as people and as teachers. All of the participants in this study grew significantly in confidence as teachers when they experienced this merging of self as person and self as teacher as a result of being immersed in growth-fostering environments. Gaea described this transformation when she stated that, "I definitely feel more like a teacher here" (Gaea Interview, 25.6.13). This is not an unexpected finding given previous research that has linked OSPEX to increased self-efficacy (Cushner & Mahon, 2012). Prior to the OSPEX explored in this investigation, the participants spoke of a strong desire to "grow in confidence as a teacher and to be able to adapt in the classroom" (Liam's Interview, 10.6.13). These two factors appear linked, as research suggests an inability to adapt in the classroom is indicative of learners who have not developed their own beliefs and subsequently are attempting to base their actions on the practices of others (Franco, 2014; Darling-Hammond et al., 2005). One would expect teachers whose practice is not based on their own developed beliefs to lack confidence, as they are unable to make informed

decisions when environments change (Rodman, 2010). The participants in this study appeared to develop confidence when their professional practices became more closely connected to their personal beliefs.

This chapter firstly outlined the growth-fostering environments found to positively impact pre-service teachers' *stories of self* on an OSPEX. It then reviewed the restorying process that pre-service teachers appeared to experience when immersed in growth-fostering environments and concluded by exploring the specific *stories of self* that were found to be most significantly influenced. These findings appear valuable in light of the research of others that suggests that teacher educators will be in a better position to design programs capable of impacting a pre-service teachers' beliefs when they are provided with a clearer understanding of how *stories of self* are developed (Beauchamp, 2009; Izadinia, 2013). This investigation found that when immersed in growth-fostering environments pre-service teachers developed *stories of self* that: connected themselves to others; connected themselves personally and professionally, connected their purpose and practice; connected their past, present and futures; and connected their personal beliefs to their professional practices. These connections are of utmost importance, as they allow a pre-service teacher to become a whole person with the ability to practice the art of teaching from an integrated and undivided self (Palmer, 1997).

The final chapter of this thesis is focused on the implications of the findings of this investigation on the successful preparation of pre-service teachers, and also aims to provide recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 6 – CONCLUSIONS FROM THE JOURNEY

Introduction

The previous chapter outlined an interpretive synthesis of the learning outcomes that occurred in this study, as a result of an analysis of the stories of the participants. The focus of this chapter now moves beyond explaining the findings, interpreted within a constructivist grounded theory paradigm (Charmaz, 2014), and seeks to discuss their implications in relation to the research question at the core of this investigation, and offers recommendations for future practice:

In Chapter 2, this thesis examined the research literature pertaining to the research question:

> *What is the nature of the impact of an overseas professional teaching experience, in a developing country, on pre-service teachers' stories of self?*

Strong evidence was found to suggest that the development of *stories of self* are of paramount importance in the successful preparation of all pre-service teachers in the 21st century. The research project embodied in this thesis presented key findings related to *stories of self*. Firstly, this study demonstrated that overseas professional teaching experiences appear to positively impact the development of *stories of self* within pre-service teachers. *Stories of self,* that were shown to be developed within this study, included: stories of others, stories that connect behaviours and beliefs; stories about teaching and learning; and stories that better explain self. While this study strongly supports the potential of OSPEX in developing pre-service teachers' *stories of self*, the key findings from this investigation clearly demonstrate that there must be intentionality in the design and implementation of these experiences. From this investigation, three core elements emerged as being essential in the development of pre-service teachers' *stories of self*. These elements relate to experiences that engage pre-service teachers in environments with appropriate levels of challenge, freedom and belonging.

This chapter highlights the implications of the key findings to the various stakeholders involved. Finally, in light of what was discovered in this research journey, this chapter

concludes by highlighting the major recommendations for future research, for the ongoing development of pre-service teachers' *stories of self* to be supported.

Implications of This Study

This investigation highlighted the importance of quality initial teacher education and strongly suggested that the development of pre-service teachers' *stories of self* should be considered an essential component of their preparation to ensure they remain relevant, adaptable, and relational in the 21st century. While professional teaching experiences have been identified as of primary importance in the development of these *stories of self*, this investigation argues that for experiences to be successful, they must be designed to result in ongoing reflective practice. This study clearly identifies the types of experiences that have been shown to successfully engage pre-service teachers in this type of reflection in an overseas context by highlighting the importance of appropriate levels of challenge, freedom and belonging. These findings have significant implications for those concerned with quality pre-service teacher preparation including government accrediting agencies, universities, teacher educators, school and pre-service teachers.

Government accrediting agencies

While the importance of professional teaching experiences in the preparation of pre-service teachers already appears well established, the findings within this investigation suggest that more emphasis should be placed on the characteristics of experiences in which pre-service teachers can be involved. While Australian classrooms are becoming more culturally diverse (Mills, 2013), it appears that pre-service teachers are not being well prepared to understand, relate to and teach the culturally diverse students sure to be in their classrooms (Chinnappan et al., 2013; Santoro & Major, 2012). Although government agencies have recognised that a lack of cultural competence within pre-service teachers compromises their ability to offer a quality education to young Australians, and have subsequently mandated the inclusion of multicultural education in teacher education programs (AITSL, 2014), teaching cultural competence through the transmission of knowledge alone appears to be largely ineffective (Mills & Ballantyne, 2010).

This investigation found that involving pre-service teachers in teaching experiences in culturally diverse contexts succeeded in allowing them to develop real relationships with

others once thought of as different. As a result of these real life encounters, their beliefs were challenged and ethnocentric barriers were broken. This study suggests that government agencies should consider more than the number of days completed when evaluating the quality of a teaching experience, and begin to promote the inclusion of teaching experiences in environments where pre-service teachers are likely to be challenged by diverse people, places, and experiences. This study advises that these professional teaching experiences are likely to have a greater benefit when scheduled early in a pre-service teacher's course and continually throughout.

This study proposes that government agencies could promote the placement of pre-service teachers in culturally diverse contexts by encouraging the practice of giving credit for professional teaching experiences completed in overseas and culturally diverse contexts. Government agencies should also consider providing financial support, possibly through expanding the access and availability of student loans, to assist pre-service teachers to become involved teaching in culturally diverse locations, as these experiences typically cost more than local domestic experiences. This study proposes that in order to foster the development of pre-service teachers' *stories of self* that government agencies should strongly encourage all pre-service teachers to complete at least one professional teaching experience in a diverse cultural context.

Universities

At present there appears to be a rapid decline in the number of Australian universities involving their pre-service teachers in overseas professional teaching experiences (Cruickshank & Westbrook, 2013). This investigation suggests that this may be an ill-advised direction given the fact that these experiences appear to be ideal environments in the development of pre-service teachers' *stories of self*. While there appears to be pressure on directors of professional teaching experiences at present to select professional experiences that are easily organised, resourced and supervised, this investigation suggests that unless pre-service teachers are separated from what is familiar to them and immersed in unfamiliar contexts it is likely that they will experience little growth in relation to their *stories of self*. This study recommends that directors of OSPEX should continue to work with their administrators to design and conduct professional teaching experiences in diverse contexts including overseas destinations.

This study refutes the assumptions often made by universities that *stories of self* are created simply by placing pre-service teachers in overseas contexts. Similar to the findings of Garraway and Volbrecht (2011), this investigation highlights the importance of experiences that result in ongoing critical reflection. Rather than suggest that all OSPEXs are likely to result in quality learning, this study argues that quality overseas professional teaching experiences are likely to result in quality learning if certain conditions are taken into account. Through the findings of this investigation, quality OSPEXs are defined as those that support the pre-service teachers involved in appropriate levels of challenge, freedom and belonging. This investigation suggests that the same growth-fostering environments found to be effective in overseas contexts are also essential in domestic professional teaching experiences if pre-service teachers are likely to successfully develop *stories of self*. In light of these findings, the implications for teacher educators involved in designing the experiences offered to pre-service teachers in both domestic and overseas contexts are now considered.

Teacher Educators

In demonstrating the essential role of belonging in promoting authentic reflection, this investigation highlighted the importance of not only the type of experiences pre-service teachers are involved in, but also the people with whom they are sharing the experience. The findings from this study suggest that teacher educators should widen their focus from 'What is being taught?' to 'How supported and connected do pre-service teachers feel within their learning experience?' As reflection occurs within connected, supportive and learning communities, teacher educators wishing to promote learning will need to implement strategies within their programs aimed to specifically develop real and trusting relationships, where their students will feel safe to be themselves. Intentional team building initiatives, such as weekend retreats and outdoor educational experiences, once seen as peripheral to the core business of teacher education programs may well have profound impacts on pre-service teachers' ability to experience the freedom to be themselves and take on challenges they may have otherwise avoided. Teacher educators within large universities may also consider developing 'families of learners' within large cohorts of pre-service teachers to foster the development of ongoing relationships. These groups would intentionally attempt to cluster the same groups of students together in tutorials and professional teaching experiences so that

they have support from people they trust when encountering the challenges required for them to develop as reflective practitioners.

The findings of this investigation suggest that pre-service teachers experienced the required levels of belonging, essential in supporting them in the realities of teaching, as a result of completing their professional teaching experience in teams. While it is common within OSPEX for teacher educators to send a group of students to the same school overseas to take on collective challenges, this study suggests that teacher educators should also consider sending teams of pre-service teachers to domestic school settings. Sharing challenges, as a part of a team, appeared to immerse pre-service teachers in a learning community with perceived equals, where they could solve complex problems together. When placed in teams, the pre-service teachers appeared comfortable engaging in authentic reflections and were able to provide guidance to each other without being perceived as providing solutions. As much of the reflections and support took place during the evenings, this study also recommends that teacher educators consider locating shared accommodation for these teams of students, so that they can continue to support each other and engage in reflections throughout the entire experience.

Partnering pre-service teachers with a teaching buddy of their choice was also found to be advantageous within this investigation. Reflections appeared to be fostered in pairs, as pre-service teachers appeared to naturally engage in reflective dialogue after experiencing failure and success. Rather than seeking an answer from an expert, taking on teaching challenges with a partner they trusted appeared to allow pre-service teachers to reflect on possible solutions together. Even when provided with advice from a peer, it appeared to be taken as a suggestion rather than a solution, which allowed them to continue to question their own beliefs and understandings. It appears that rather than sending pre-service teachers into schools as isolated individuals, teacher educators should consider sending pre-service teachers into schools with an assigned teaching partner, especially early on in their teaching experience to assist with reflective practice. When it is not possible to send pre-service teachers to schools in teams or with an assigned teaching partner, this study recommends that teacher educators could consider developing on-line teams and teaching buddies as opportunities for pre-service teachers to support each other throughout their experience particularly with ongoing reflection.

Similar to Foote (2015), this investigation found that pre-service teachers developed significant *stories of self* when challenged by experiences that closely mirrored the realities of teaching. This finding also places much responsibility on the teacher educators within universities who design the professional experience requirements. While it is typical for pre-service teachers to be protected from the realities of teaching (Robinson, 2011), including their teaching workload, extra curricula activities and administrative tasks, until they graduate, this investigation suggests that pre-service teachers would benefit from being immersed in these challenges at an earlier stage and for a longer period of time within their initial teacher education. Rather than reduce the workload, it is recommended that pre-service teachers should be immersed in the realities of teaching sooner with increased support. Rather than expect an individual pre-service teacher to complete the equivalence of a half-time load, this investigation proposes that pre-services would develop more effectively if they were expected to fulfil the actual responsibility of a real teacher as outlined in the Australian Professional Teacher Standards with the support of a teaching partner. As the level of challenge required to initiate reflective thought is likely to be different for each pre-service teacher, this study recommends that teacher educators should attempt to differentiate the professional teaching experiences pre-service teachers are involved in. This personalised approach to designing the professional teaching experience may include modifying components of the experience including the teaching workload and overall responsibilities expected of them.

This investigation, similar to the research of Marble (2012), found that the development of *stories of self* is supported through professional teaching experiences that provide pre-service teachers with freedom to be themselves, experiment and learn through reflection. At present, the professional teaching experiences many pre-service teachers are involved in appear to be too focused on achieving a positive grade, without adequate attention on the reflection and learning taking place. This pressure to achieve a good result appears to be reducing the learning that takes place and encouraging pre-service teachers to copy the proven techniques of others rather than experiment due to fear of making mistakes. As a person's idea of who s/he is appears to become more rigid with external pressure (Knowles, 1980; Rogers, 1969), this study advises teacher educators to carefully re-examine the impact that their assessment processes, chosen language and power differential is having on pre-service teachers' willingness to experiment, experience failure and success, and reflect honestly without fear of judgment. Pre-service teachers should be encouraged to celebrate both their successes and

failures by focusing more on the reflection that results from the experimentation that took place, rather than on their ability to effectively model the established techniques demonstrated to them by an expert. This study suggests that universities that continue to assign specific grades to professional teaching experiences, with the aim of communicating proficiency early in a pre-service teachers' development, could seek alternative assessment procedures to support pre-service teachers with the freedom to develop their own beliefs by reducing external pressure. One suggestion is to engage the pre-service teachers in the assessment process by involving them in partnership with their supervisor teachers in a co-construction of the final grade assigned. Changing the nomenclature used from 'school supervisor' to 'teacher mentor' may also help reduce the perceived barriers between the two types of teachers and assist university students begin to see themselves as teachers capable of making a real contribution in the classrooms assigned to them.

Schools

This study highlights the environments shown to be most successful in the development of *stories of self*, and therefore has immediate implications for school communities largely responsible for creating the required environments. This investigation strongly suggests that if schools are to offer experiences with adequate levels of challenge, freedom and belonging, then education needs to be provided to supervising teachers. These education sessions would be best focused on teaching the school communities how best to design these environments to facilitate quality learning. Implications of the findings of this investigation suggests that this education should be a compulsory pre-requisite to all school supervisors prior to allocating them a pre-service teacher to mentor. As these education sessions have the potential to increase the workloads of those involved and likely decrease the willingness of experienced teachers to act as mentors, it is recommended that these education sessions be accepted as credit towards the already mandated hours of professional development expected of practicing teachers.

This investigation also demonstrated the importance of establishing positive relationships between the pre-service teacher and the school community in which they are placed. Schools that openly accept pre-service teachers into their communities and treat them as teachers, rather than teachers in training, appear to support the pre-service teachers to develop and validate their *stories of self* as teachers. Schools wishing to instil high levels of belonging

within the pre-service teachers assigned to them should: show appreciation for the pre-service teachers' contributions; demonstrate a willingness to accept them into their classrooms; introduce them to their work mates and students as colleagues; and demonstrate a willingness to learn from them.

The findings of this study also suggest that schools can play an important role in allowing pre-service teachers to be themselves in the classrooms in which they find themselves. While enacting the practices of an expert may prove successful initially, it is unlikely that these types of experiences will develop connected practitioners who can adequately explain what they do in relation to who they are and what they believe. Supervisors should avoid the temptation of providing pre-service teachers with proven techniques and place more emphasis on assisting them to identify their own beliefs based on their background, personality and experiences. The findings of this investigation suggest that a school supervisor's primary role is to resist providing answers and instead act as co-learners (Bullough & Gitlin, 1995) with the pre-service teachers and together engage in ongoing and frequent reflective discussions. It is through these reflective discussions that school supervisors can ensure that the pre-service teachers are continually involved in reflective practice and have reasons for everything they do.

Experimentation was determined in this study to be an important tool by which pre-service teachers developed their *stories of self*. Supervisors of pre-service teachers should expect this process to take significant amounts of time, as rather than inherit their beliefs from others, experimentation allows pre-service teachers to test their own developed theories and construct their own understandings. To encourage pre-service teachers to engage in ongoing experimentation and reflective practice, school communities involved in their education, should be less concerned in pre-service teachers avoiding mistakes and more concerned with developing their ability to engage in deep reflection and problem solving. The development of positive relationships between the school supervisor and the pre-service teacher was shown in this study as the most effective way to promote this type of learning environment.

Pre-service teachers

This study also has a number of implications for pre-service teachers. Most importantly, pre-service teachers should be encouraged to select teaching experiences that will challenge them

with unfamiliar environments. This would involve experiences that are likely to immerse them in environments and with students and teacher mentors that are different to what they are accustomed. Pre-service teachers should be encouraged not to return to the institution that they completed their own schooling but rather to select a wide variety of school settings when choosing their professional teaching experiences. This study recommends that pre-service teachers choose to complete at least one of their professional teaching experiences with culturally diverse students, who are likely to challenge their pre-conceived beliefs about students often perceived as foreign and/or different. If possible, this study recommends that pre-service teachers consider participating in an overseas professional teaching experience where their habits, routines, and unquestioned beliefs are likely to be challenged and questioned.

Pre-service teachers should also challenge themselves to proactively become involved with as many of the responsibilities of real teaching as possible during their teaching experience. This study suggests that it is only by taking on the realities of teaching that pre-service teachers are likely to develop self-efficacy in the role as teachers. While taking on the realities of teaching is likely to feel overwhelming, pre-service teachers should aim to push themselves beyond what they feel comfortable doing.

To support pre-service teachers to cope with the suggested high level of challenge they should be encouraged to stay connected within supportive relationships. As pre-service teachers appear to develop *stories of self* with equals, more effectively than experts, this study highlights the importance that pre-service teachers remain connected with peers throughout their experience. Whenever possible, pre-service teachers should aim to complete their professional teaching experiences in schools together, so that they can support each other in the preparation for teaching and in the reflection process afterwards.

As has been demonstrated through the implications of this study, this investigation has made a significant contribution to the body of knowledge surrounding initial teacher education, by presenting a theory that identifies the characteristics of growth-fostering environments found to be of most significance in developing pre-service teachers' *stories of self*. However, as with any research, the findings associated with this investigation have introduced new questions that will require further research. These recommendations for future research are now discussed.

Recommendations for Future Research

As this investigation was founded on data from a single overseas professional teaching experience, using one cohort of pre-service teachers as participants, more research is needed to determine if the findings of this study are able to be generalised to other contexts. Additional studies could compare these findings in different developing countries. It would also prove useful to compare and contrast the nature of the impact of overseas professional teaching experiences on pre-service teachers' *stories of self* in developing countries as to experiences that take place in overseas contexts similar to the country of origin.

While overseas professional experiences, specifically in developing countries, appear to be ideal environments for the creation of the core elements required to foster the development of pre-service teachers' *stories of self*, a potential impediment to utilising them on a large scale is the financial, resource and time intensiveness required for both pre-service teachers and the institutions involved in their preparation. One question that arises from this investigation is, "Could these same positive outcomes be achieved in domestic settings that offer a similar diversity of experience?" Types of experiences that may be worth exploring include rural and disadvantaged communities in Australian contexts.

Despite the findings of this investigation, it is realistic to assume that a majority of Australian pre-service teachers will continue to complete a majority of their professional teaching experiences in local and familiar teaching environments. As this investigation has highlighted these present environments to be less than ideal in supporting pre-service teachers in the development of their own *stories of self*, more research is required to determine how domestic experiences can be changed to better support their development. This study recommends that further research be conducted across universities in Australia to determine the effectiveness of different models of field experience within pre-service teacher education to inform best practice. This investigation has suggested that to be successful, domestic experiences must also provide pre-service teachers with environments that support challenge, freedom and belonging. Further research is required to determine the present inadequacies, and identify the major changes required to facilitate future improvement.

As the development of *stories of self* appear essential in the development of Australian pre-service teachers, it is likely that those preparing to become teachers in other countries may also benefit from experiences that provide opportunity for them to develop new *stories of self* through experiences that support their development. Further study is needed to determine if the same core elements identified in this investigation are comparable to pre-service teachers outside of the Australian context. It would be interesting to replicate the study for pre-service teachers from developing countries, by investigating the nature of the impact of an overseas professional teaching experience to a country like Australia on their development of *stories of self*.

While involving pre-service teachers in developing countries appears beneficial to the pre-service teachers involved, at present little research has focused on the impact of these experiences on the host communities involved. More research is required to determine the effectiveness of overseas professional teaching experiences, from the perspective of the school students, the teachers, the schools and the international communities affected. If these investigations determine these experiences to be of value for the host communities, additional research will be required to improve the partnership between initial teacher education institutions and internationals school communities, to ensure the ongoing benefit for both.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of an overseas professional teaching experience in a developing country on pre-service teachers' *stories of self*. This investigation developed a constructivist grounded theory that illustrates and informs the principles and processes involved in pre-service teachers developing new connected *stories of self.* While this study strongly supports the potential of OSPEX in developing pre-service teachers' *stories of self*, the key findings from this investigation clearly demonstrate that there must be intentionality in the design and implementation of all professional teaching experiences regardless of the context in which they situated. The results of this study suggest that professional teaching experiences that successfully incorporate challenge, freedom and belonging can provide a growth-fostering environment in which pre-service teachers are supported in renegotiating their *stories of self*, through a destabilising, questioning and rebuilding process. It is expected that an understanding of the findings of this investigation will help teacher educators design learning experiences more likely to better prepare pre-service teachers in the 21st century.

The results of the study suggest that overseas professional teaching experiences that successfully incorporate challenge, freedom and belonging can provide a growth-fostering environment in which pre-service teachers are supported in renegotiating their *stories of self*, through a destabilising, questioning and rebuilding process.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Participant Journal Reflective Questions

Pre Take-Off (Complete prior to departure)

P1. What do you think are the key stories (or steps in your life) that were pivotal in you choosing to go on this adventure?
P2. What are the main reasons you chose to complete a MOTO experience?
P3. What do you hope to get out of this experience?
P4. What excites you about this adventure? What concerns you?
P5. How would you describe yourself to others? Include your age, travel experiences, family information, beliefs etc.
P6. How do you think this MOTO experience may impact who you are and what you believe as a person, and as a teacher?
P7. Do you know of anyone who has been involved in a MOTO experience in previous years? From your interaction with them do you believe this experience impacted them as a person? Explain.

Aeroplane! (Complete while flying)

A1. Draw a flow chart/diagram/picture that describes how you are feeling now. Write a paragraph under this drawing describing what it represents. What are you looking forward to most about this experience? What are you most afraid of?

Beginning (From Touch down in Nepal to beginning of teaching experience)

B1. You have just arrived in a new country! Describe what you have experienced and how it has impacted you.
B2. Draw a flow chart/diagram that demonstrates how you have felt in this new world. Write a paragraph to explain your drawing.
B3. Have you experienced culture shock? What shocked you the most about this new world?
B4. Have any of your existing beliefs been challenged from what you have seen and experienced so far? Explain.

Commencing Teaching Experience

Week 1 of Teaching

C1. Where are you living, what are you feeling, what are you doing, what are you thinking?
C2. You will have now seen the schools and met the children you will be teaching. How are the schools/children different to your previous experiences and how has that impacted you?
C3. Explain the challenges you have you encountered this week. How did you move beyond these challenges? Feel free to comment on the areas below that you can relate to:
    a. Physical Challenges
    b. Emotional Challenges
    c. Social Challenges
    d. Cultural Challenges
    e. Teaching Challenges
    f. Any Other Challenges
C4. Wow… by the time you get to reflect on this question you will have been living in a developing country for about a week. To share this experience with someone who has never had this opportunity, write a description on what this experience is really like.
C5. Has anything you experienced so far caused you to stop and examine any of your beliefs about anything? Have any of your beliefs changed as a result of what you have experienced? Explain.

Week 2 of Teaching

C6. Compare this experience to your last teaching experience. What are the main differences? Which do you believe is more conducive to real learning? Reflect and explain.
C7. You have been immersed in a very different country and culture, surrounded by people who I imagine are very different to you. What impact has this interaction with these people had on you? Do you see yourself, others, or your world any differently as a result?
C8. In your opinion what is a quality teacher? Has this experience helped in making you into a quality teacher? Reflect and explain.
C9. Recount three stories that have impacted you the most from your MOTO experience so far. After each story, explain any new beliefs you have created to make sense of these experiences.
C10. Using a double page of your diary draw a flow chart/diagram that demonstrates how you have been impacted by this MOTO experience so far. This flow chart/diagram should include all key factors that contributed to this experience and how these impacted you.

Week 3 of Teaching

C11. (Write this on a separate piece of paper NOT in your diary!) Today you are sending yourself a letter in Australia that you can expect to receive in 3 months time (postage is slow from this country!). In this letter to yourself share what you have learnt about yourself, your world, and the way you want to live your life. What have you learnt from this experience that you never want to forget? Once your letter is complete you will be provided with an envelope. Please write the address you wish this letter to be sent on the outside of the envelope with your name and hand it to your Avondale Supervisor. This letter will be sent to you!
C12. What have you experimented with so far in relation to teaching? What have you experimented with so far in relation to who you are and how you live your life? What have you learnt from these experiments?
C13. From your perspective how have your peers been challenged? What impact do you think this experience has had on them?
C14. The first step in any real reflection is when you allow yourself to experience confusion, perplexity, hesitation, puzzlement and or doubt – this has been referred to as a forked road when you are forced to stop and pause and examine your existing beliefs before moving forward. Have you experienced any forked road situations during this experience? What beliefs were you forced to pause and examine? How do you believe you changed in the process?
C15. Congratulations you have made it to the end of your teaching section. Share your top three highlights of the teaching experience.

Travel Component (From completion of teaching to end of in-country travel)

T1. You have been asked to write a book about the adventure you are about to have. If your book was based on how you are feeling now what would the title of the book be? Draw a picture that will appear in this book to describe how you are feeling, as you are about to embark on the next part of your MOTO experience. In a paragraph describe your picture and what it reveals about how you are feeling.
T2. How did you noticed yourself relating differently to the country and its people at the end of your teaching experience when compared to when you first arrived in the country?
T3. How do you expect this experience will impact the way you will respond to future challenges? Have you already noticed yourself approaching challenges differently? Explain.
T4. Let's pretend you are now 48 and your 20 year old son/daughter comes to you contemplating whether he/she should sign up for a MOTO experience at Avondale. What would your response be? Explain why.
T5. What conflicts (internal or external) do you anticipate will surface when you return to Australia as a result of the experiences you have had and the changes in who you now are? What new beliefs are you taking back to Australia that you expect may not fit in with how you once lived your life?

Return Flight (Complete this reflection question on your final flight into Australia)

R1. How do you believe this MOTO experience has impacted you as a pre-service teacher and as a person? Have you changed? If so how?

Home again (From return to Australia to due date of professional experience folder)

H1. Did you experience return culture shock? What shocked you the most about Australia after your MOTO experience?
H2. Describe any changes in how you see yourself, others, or your world since returning to Australia.
H3. What beliefs or experiences have you been confronted with since returning to Australia that you had never really paused and examined before your MOTO experience?
H4. Let's pretend you have been assigned the role of sabotaging next years MOTO experience. Your role is to change the experience to minimise the impact it has on the pre-service teachers. Describe five (5) ideas you would implement to sabotage the experience and list them in order from most detrimental to least detrimental.
H5. What positive changes have occurred in your life since your MOTO experience?

Appendix 2: Sample Semi-structured Interview Guide – 30.5.13

Pre-Interview Phase

1. Select an interview setting where participant will feel comfortable (Lichtman, 2013). I chose Lecture Theatre One as classes were closed and students were familiar with room having completed many of pedagogy units in this room.
2. Begin using lower order questions that make participant feel comfortable (Lichtman, 2013). Suggestion of questions include: Are you glad the semester is now over? Are you excited about heading overseas? What are you looking forward to the most?
3. Highlight the aim of the study and remind the participant of the consent form they have already signed in relation to data collection procedures, confidentiality and their ability to withdraw at any time (Check & Schutt, 2012; Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Creswell, 2014; Lichtman, 2013).

The Tentative Phase

1. Remember to gradually introduce the participant into the interview process and focus initially in the interview on developing trust (Corbin & Morse, 2003).
2. Take the pressure off the participant by reminding them that I am not after pre-conceived answers. Tell them "I do not have a story I am hoping to tell but rather I am hoping to gain a better understanding of your experience".

The Immersion Phase

While the following question guided my first semi-structured interviews the questions were not covered in a linear fashion and at times questions were skipped over due to the information that was shared by the individual participants (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2010).

1. Tell me the story about why you wanted to take part in the MOTO experience and how you came to be involved?
2. Tell me the story about when you first shared your desire to do the MOTO trip with your family?
3. How do your family and friends feel about your decision to go on this MOTO experience? Explain their contributions in your decision to be involved in this experience.
4. What are you looking forward to most about this experience?
5. What are the things you are most concerned about in relation to this MOTO experience?
6. How would you describe yourself to others? (Include your age, travel experiences, family information, beliefs etc.)
7. How would you describe how you feel about your life and yourself?
8. Are you the person you want to be? How would you compare the person you hope to be and the person you see yourself as now?
9. What impact do you think the MOTO trip to Nepal will have on you?
10. You are now in your second/third year of teacher training. Do you see yourself as a teacher? Do you feel more like a student or teacher?
11. How have your previous teaching experiences contributed to these beliefs about yourself?
12. Do you know of anyone who has been involved in a MOTO experience in previous years? From your interaction with them how do you believe this experience has impacted them?
13. Is there anything else you think I should know to understand the impact that this experience may have on you?
14. Is there anything you would like to ask me?

The Phase of Emergence

Interviews often engage participants in discussions where may feel vulnerable as a result of sharing details about themselves they may not have shared with many others before (Check & Schutt, 2012;

Corbin & Morse, 2003; Roller & Lavrakas, 2015). Rather than end the interview in a clinical fashion I decided to always chat informally with each of the participants after the recording had finished to ensure they felt happy with how the interview had progressed (Booth & Booth, 1994). Guidelines I used in this interview in the phase of emergence included:

1. How did you feel that interview went?
2. Affirm the participant in relation to my appreciation of their willingness to share their thoughts with me.
3. Remind the participant that they will have an opportunity to remove anything shared they do not feel comfortable being shared at a later stage
4. Thank the participant for their time and who they are.

Appendix 3: OSPEX Teaching Assignment

Purpose of Professional Experience

Professional Experience allows students the chance to spend time in an authentic classroom environment and practice the art of teaching. This professional experience will take place in a classroom setting in a lower developed country. It is intended that pre-service teachers in this experience be given opportunity to clarify their notions regarding teaching by becoming immersed in the role of a teacher, and by becoming personally involved in teaching tasks.

During professional experience, skill acquisition is enhanced through guided self-reflection, group debriefing sessions, and feedback from supervising teachers. Students are required to fulfil specific criteria such as observing regular teachers/peers as they practise, writing reflection journals, and teaching a specified number of lessons.

General notes for students

Pre-service teachers will spend the full fifteen-days in the school and be involved in a range of teacher related activities. They will be required to make up any days they miss in order to receive a grade for this assignment.

Pre-service teachers should assist the school community whenever possible with both organisational and teaching tasks. It is important that the pre-service teachers involve themselves as teachers and take on all responsibilities required in this role.

An Avondale lecturer in consultation with host school teachers will act as your supervisor/s. They will fill in the Professional Experience Report Form and give it to you to return to us. Should they wish to send a confidential report then they will advise you.

Professional Experience requirements

The Professional Experience assignment is worth 50% of the unit grade for your core pedagogy unit.

During the fifteen days of professional experience you will:

a. Spend the full fifteen (15) days in school, or school related activities.
b. Closely observe five (5) lessons taught by your supervising teacher(s) or peer(s).
c. Teach at least a 50% load for at least ten (10) school days.
d. Complete the special assignments and tasks included in this assignment guide.
e. Be involved in one (1) hour of service related activities per day of the teaching experience.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE FOLDER:

You are required to complete a professional experience folder:

Section A - Title page

This page should contain the following information:

i. Your name and Year of Course
ii. Name and Country of School
iii. Name of the Avondale Supervisor
iv. Name of your peer teachers
v. Subjects and class levels taught
vi. Dates of the experience

Section B – Preparation for teaching experience

From our past experience with teaching in developing countries it is likely you will be given much responsibility from the moment you first enter the school you will be teaching in. To help you cope with this responsibility it is important that you prepare thoroughly before beginning your experience. While we understand you will not be 100% sure what you are required to teach until you arrive we do want you to do as much preparation as possible before you depart on your experience. To help you with this challenge you are required before you leave to demonstrate to your Avondale supervisor that you are adequately prepared for teaching the grade you have been assigned for 15 days. Preparation should include;

- A draft timetable of when you will be teaching
- A draft plan for each subject you are responsible for showing the scope and sequence
- All the supporting material you are taking with you to teach the content that appears in your scope and sequence
- Your assessment plan for each subject
- A list of resources you are taking
- A list of resources you are relying on getting in country

(This part of your assignment is due on Monday June 10)

Section C - Daily Journal

Purchase and keep a Journal for the entire overseas experience. This diary will document your entire MOTO experience. Each day you will be expected to spend a minimum of twenty (20) minutes recording the reflections of your day. These reflections should include:

1. Your personal narrative – feel free to write about all of your adventures. I hope that this part of your journal will capture all of your experiences. While you will be very busy overseas you should plan on documenting your personal story each day for at least 10 minutes. What are you experiencing? What happened each day to you that you never want to forget? What/who has really impacted you? The more you can record under this section the more memories you will have to share in the future!
2. Reflection questions – in addition to your personal narratives you are expected to answer key reflection questions most days. These questions have been designed to encourage you to reflect on the impact that this experience is having on you throughout your experience. These reflection questions are attached at the back of this assignment. Please stick these questions into your diary and spend at least 10 minutes recording your reflections on each one at the specified time.

While your lecturer at College will be required to check this Journal to ensure your reflections have been consistently recorded we will not read any sections you wish to be kept private. You may choose to record your personal narratives and reflection questions together or separately. Please ensure you keep up to date with your Daily Journal. Your supervisor will periodically check your progress. You can just attach this Daily Journal to your Professional Experience Folder. You should now be writing in your diary every day. You will continue writing in your diary once you return to Australia.

Section D - Teaching of Lessons

You are required to write a lesson plan for every lesson you teach. You will need to take hard copies of lesson plans with you from Australia as photocopiers will not be available for you in the host school. Avondale lecturers will expect these lesson plans to be hand written due to technology limitations. While the lesson plans may be briefer due to the number of classes being taught they will still need to demonstrate that you have adequately planned for each lesson you teach. While supervisors will often have limited input into your lessons we do encourage you to share your ideas for your lessons with either a peer teacher or host supervisor whenever possible. Don't forget to write your own personal evaluations for each lesson. NB – Primary Teachers should include at least one lesson using an object lesson and one lesson using cooperative learning.

Section E - Observation Assignment

Observe five (5) lessons taught by either your host supervisor or peer teachers. Comment on such areas as:

- How is this teaching environment different to Australia?
- What challenges did this teacher encounter and how did they deal/solve them?
- What innovative teaching ideas were demonstrated?
- What have you learnt from observing this lesson?
- What ideas or beliefs have been stimulated as you observed this lesson?
- What questions were raised while observing this lesson that you are still unsure about?
- How do you believe you will need to change in order to be successful in this teaching experience?

Section F – Service Initiative

In addition to your teaching responsibilities each of you are to spend approximately one (1) hour engaged in serving the community you are living in each day. This service activity is completely up to you but must include interaction with people from the host country. Search out a need in the community you find yourself and then seek to fill this need.

Ideas that students have done in the past include:

- Reading to children in orphanage at night
- Assisting the cooks prepare meals
- Teaching children guitar / piano / english
- Forming a choir and prepare for a special item
- Gardening with locals
- Helping children with a cleaning / maintenance project
- Playing sport/games after school with children

To show evidence of what you have done you will need to do the following

1. Explain the need you identified and explain your service plan – what you intend to do about the need (200 words)

2. Each day you take part in your service activity record the approximate time and duration of your service. Get this sheet signed by your Avondale Supervisor at the conclusion of the service initiative.

3. Write a 500 word summary of your service initiative focusing on the impact you believe this experience has had on you as a person. How did this service initiative change you?

Section G – Photo Stories

Select five (5) photographs from your experience that you believe best captures your MOTO experience? Explain why you chose each photo and share the story behind it that means so much to you. How do you think this experience captured in the photo has impacted you? Explain.

Section H – Overall Summary

In approximately 750 words (2 pages) answer the following question.

Let's pretend that time travel is now possible. You are given the opportunity to travel back in time to a week before you signed up to be involved in this MOTO experience and meet your old self. Compare the person you once were to the person you believe you are now. How are you different? What were you impacted by the most? How have you changed from being involved in this experience?

Appendix 4: Participant Information Letter

RESEARCH TITLE:
Investigating the impact of an overseas professional teaching experience, in a developing country, on pre-service teachers' personal identity.

RESEARCHER'S NAME:
Principal Investigator: Jason Hinze

You are invited to participate in a research project that investigates the impact of an overseas professional teaching experience in a developing country on pre-service teachers' personal identity. Jason Hinze who is a staff member in the School of Education at Avondale College will conduct this research.

PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT
This research project stems from the premise that quality teacher education should focus on the importance of who a teacher is. This study seeks to investigate the impact of an overseas professional teaching experience on who a teacher is by focusing on the impact that these experiences have on pre-service teachers' personal identity.

PARTICIPATION CRITERIA
Participants for this study will be:

- Eight focus participants selected from a team of pre-service teachers involved in a professional teaching experience in Nepal.
- An informative group. This group will include all willing pre-service teachers involved in professional teaching experiences in Cambodia, India and Nepal.
- Family members of the eight focus participants selected from a team of pre-service teachers involved in a professional teaching experience in Nepal.

WHAT PARTICIPATION INVOLVES
You have been asked to participate in this study as one of the eight focus participants. As a focus participant in this study you will be asked to share your experiences by:

- Writing a daily journal. This may be an audio/video diary if you choose. You will be given the opportunity to share the parts of this journal that you feel comfortable sharing.
- Participating in debriefing session discussions. Each night your group will share their daily experiences as a team. These discussions may be recorded using an audio or video recording device.
- Providing photographs. Each participant will be given the opportunity to share his or her experiences through photography. Fellow team members including your trip leader may capture you in their photographs.
- Participating in four individual thirty-minute interviews. Three of these interviews will take place while overseas and the fourth will take place once you have returned from the overseas professional teaching experience. These interviews may be recorded using an audio or video device.
- Participate in a single interview of thirty-minutes with a selection of your family members post experience. This interview will focus on the impacts they have

noticed this experience having on your personal identity. This interview may be recorded using an audio or video device.

POSSIBLE RISKS OR INCONVENIENCES

This research project attempts to collect data using the normal processes employed on a normal overseas professional teaching experience. As a result, the experiences of those who agree to take part in the research will be very similar to those that don't. All participants of overseas professional teaching experiences will be expected to journal daily and be involved in debriefing session discussions. We believe the only inconvenience for those that choose to be a part of this research study will be the time involved to take part in the interviews.

BENEFITS

As a result of your involvement in this research project we expect you to learn more from the experiences you encounter on your overseas professional teaching experience. Your involvement in both journaling, debriefing sessions discussions and semi-structured interviews will greatly assist your ability to reflect on your experiences and this increased reflection is likely to result in increased learning. A further benefit to you is the opportunity to contribute to a body of knowledge that could influence the future of overseas professional teaching experiences in developing countries. By agreeing to take part in this research project you will be provided with all findings from this study. These findings may prove useful to you as future teachers interested in running similar programs for your students.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND DISCLOSURE INFORMATION

Data collected from you during this research project will remain confidential. Reports will not identify individual pre-service teachers or their family members by name. Pseudonyms will be used at all times to protect participants. Data will be kept secure within a locked cabinet of the Principal Investigator at Avondale College and stored for five years after completion of this study.

DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS

The data collected will be presented in the form of a PhD thesis. Each participant will be sent a summary of the final results. The findings may be used for scholarly journals and professional conferences. Confidentiality of individual participants, schools and organisations will be assured by the use of pseudonym names. In any publication, information will be provided in such a way that individual participants cannot be identified. As a participant in this study you will have the opportunity to endorse all data that relates to you before it is shared in any form.

FREEDOM OF CONSENT

Your participation in this study is voluntary and there is no payment to subjects for their participation. Please note that you are free to choose not to take part in this research and you may withdraw at any time without penalty without providing a reason.

Any questions about the above information can be obtained by contacting
Jason Hinze at Avondale College, PO Box19, Cooranbong, NSW, 2265
Phone: 49 802186 or email Jason.hinze@avondale.edu.au

This research project has been approved by the Avondale College Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). Avondale College requires that all participants are informed that if they have any complaint concerning the manner in which a research project is conducted it may be given to the researcher, or if an independent person is preferred, to the College's HREC Secretary, Avondale College, PO Box19, Cooranbong, NSW, 2265 or phone (02) 4980 2121 or fax (02) 4980 2117 or email: research.ethics@avondale.edu.au

CONSENT FORM
Following you will find two copies of the consent form. If you agree to participate in this project, please sign both copies of the consent form.

Please retain one copy for your records and return the other **Consent Form** to the School of Education office by **Friday, April 19**, **2013.**

Please note that you can withdraw at any time. All information will be held in strict confidence and will only be accessed by the researcher.

Thank you,

Jason Hinze

Appendix 5: Participant Consent Form

RESEARCH TITLE: Investigating the impact of an overseas professional teaching experience, in a developing country, on pre-service teachers' personal identity.

RESEARCHER: Jason Hinze

I, _____ agree to participate in the above research project and give my consent freely.

I have read and understood the information provided in the Information Letter for Focus Participants.

I understand that the project will be conducted as described in the information Letter for Focus Participants, a copy of which has been given to me to keep.

I understand I can withdraw from the project at any time without penalty and do not have to give any reason for withdrawing.

The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction.

I consent to participate in journaling, daily debriefing discussions, and interviews at which time the researcher may record using an audio or video device or take written notes of my responses.

Name: _____

Signature: _____Date: _____

Appendix 6: Gaea's Coding Analysis Table 24.6,13 – 30.6.13

Initial Codes that emerged	Transcription of Gaea's Journal	Memo's written
Surviving reality Making progress Feeling supported Connecting to others Experimenting Experiencing freedom Learning quickly from mistakes Experiencing reality	**24th June 2013** Today started off really well but by the last period the kids had gotten psycho so getting out after the last period was quite a relief I'm not gonna lie. Today I taught gentleness and everyone was drawing pictures of patting cats and holding hands. Normally Sandip draws a shed everyday but today I looked at his book and he had drawn about 20 ducklings on the page. It was so cute because he didn't draw another shed. I think a major difference is the support that we have here on MOTO. If I need help planning or finding resources there is always someone keen to help out whereas last prac, my prac teacher didn't offer to help and it felt like I was a burden on her workload. In this MOTO experience I feel like I can try different teaching methods and ideas and if they don't work then I learn pretty quickly not to do it again. If we make mistakes here it's ok but felt when I made mistakes last prac the teacher was judging me and there was less room for mistakes. I think the MOTO trip is more conducive to real learning because there is the freedom to try new things and learn which things work and which things don't. At my last teaching experience, I only taught 2-3 lessons a day and was stressing about those going well, but here we are in the classroom for the whole day.	Why does Gaea feel like Sandip is developing? Knowing she is supported by team appears very important to Gaea. Why doesn't she feel like a burden? Why is she free to experiment? Is this connected to her feeling accepted ie belonging? Gaea appears to enjoy the experience as it reflects real teaching. Is this the case? Is she adapting? How?
Developing control Facing dilemma Developing connections Experiencing beauty Sharing and connecting with locals Experiencing purpose Participating in experiences	**25th June 2013** Today we had a pretty good day teaching, the kids weren't as ratty as yesterday so things ran pretty smoothly. Except that we tried to give them a test which was the outline of the human body which they had to label. The kids kept talking to each other and copying off each others work so it was hard trying to stop them from cheating. After school Anna got invited to a boy in year 9 named Arbin's house. We all think he loves her so I got to go with her for security and I wanted to visit his house too. It only took about 10minutes from school up a hill when we arrived at his house you could see the valley and it looked so beautiful from his house. Waking up every morning to that view would be pretty special. Arbin's dad spoke English pretty well so we just chatted to him for a while about life in Nepal and he asked up about Australia. It was so cool sitting out at a locals house looking out over the valley and it made me think that volunteering or doing a mission trip is really the best way to go travelling. If I was planning a trip to Nepal as a tourist, I would never have done any of the things I have done on this trip like going to a festival or visiting a locals house. I feel like this trip gives us more opportunity to experience the Nepalese culture.	Faces real problems in classroom Beauty of place appears to be a recurring theme. Is the place a significant part of impact? Being a participant rather than an observer appears significant. How has this contributed to impact?
Making plans together Predicitng success Experiencing failure Facing challenges & Disappointment	**June 26, 2013** Today Anna and I thought we would teach our class Soduku. Before I started the lesson, I was really excited because I really enjoy soduku and Anna teaches them university level maths normally so I thought that Soduku would be a breeze for them. Unfortunately they didn't understand and the class seemed like a massive fail because only 2 people got how to do the puzzle by the end of the lesson. I just found it really challenging because I had written out a soduku puzzle for each student and had this pre conceived idea that the class would ace it, so much so I asked Blair	Working in partners appears to provide confidence. What helps Gaea transition from disappointment to reflection without

	to download some harder levels. I guess I was disappointed in myself because I hadn't planned to do anything else in case it failed. I think I will try and do Soduku again with the class but start off with a much easier puzzle.	giving up?
Making new plans	C7 Through interactions with these people I have been impacted because they are so hard working yet never seem to complain. Yesterday I made an effort to leave home 15 minute earlier so I could drink tea with the teachers at the little shop by the school. When I got there I started talking to one of the teachers and she told me she wakes up at 5am every morning and works at home cooking and cleaning before coming in to school. That really hit me because I thought I was making a big effort leaving 15 minutes early but this lady has to work at home for hours before coming in to school to teach. I think the generosity of the people here has made me think of how selfish I can be and how being generous is such a beautiful thing. Last week I was in the staff room and I asked if there was anywhere I could get tea from, and one of the teachers took me to the little shop and bought me a cup of tea and sat and drank with me. It just made my day and it's really sad that people don't do that in Australia, we are always so focused on what we can do for ourselves.	Have has Gaea been impacted because of relationships?
Comparing self to others		
Desiring more contact with locals		What process did she go through when challenged?
Reflecting on stories of others		
Self challenged by relationships with locals		
Reflecting on generosity of others and own self centredness		How did Gaea deal with old stories that she now has begun to question?
Identifying passion as part of quality teaching	C8 in my opinion, a quality teacher is one who definitely has a passion for what they do rather than teach for a pay packet. I think a quality teacher needs to understand the impact they are having on their students because in some students lives the teachers are seen more than their own parents. Being a quality teacher doesn't mean filling the students minds up with all the content you know, but teaching them to be global citizens who have compassion for each other and the world they live in. I Definitely think that this trip helped me to see what a quality teacher is and helped me in becoming one. I think my teaching has become less about giving them a stack of information to remember but more about showing them valuable morals and love through actions. I think the saying "actions speak louder than words" speaks so true here and should transfer into our teaching back home as well. As a student, I could tell which teachers only cared about the content and not about the students and I guess that's what I have learnt since being here, that teaching is putting students first because they will be released into the world and I would rather them be community focused citizens than academic murderers.	What was experienced that caused this shift in her teaching purpose?
Reflecting on importance of teachers		
Gaining more clarity		
Teaching seen less about information and more about relationships		Why is teaching seen less about providing information?
Reflecting on own goals as teacher		Was this change impacted by her own learning experiences?
	June 27, 2013	
Enjoying teaching	Today was a really good day of teaching. I feel like the kids are well into our routine and remembering what we teach them. Their English has improved too. At the start of the trip, they wouldn't really talk to us in English and they struggled to communicate sometimes, but now I feel like I can have normal conversations with some of them.	
Seeing progress		
Noticing improvements in students		
Spending time with local students	C9 Today after school, we agreed to walk some of the kids home who lived about half an hour from school. When we arrived to their little village, we bumped into a teacher from our school named Mana. She welcomed us into her home and made us all a cup of Chia tea which was deliciously sweet and warmed my soul. I think her generosity and hospitality is what impacted me the most because it made me realise that it would never happen back home. If you ran into a teacher back home, people would try and get away as soon as possible and you wouldn't get offered tea. I really want to be more like Mana when I'm a teacher and be someone who welcomes people for cups of tea rather than a teacher people avoid when they see them outside of school.	How did feeling accepted by local teaching impact own learning?
Feeling accepted by teachers		
Comparing with home		
Desiring to learn from new people she has encountered		It appears that Gaea has been challenged by relationships with locals.
Being impacted	The second story that has impacted me is when we did the English target game and the students had to put the word 'love' into a sentence. Ajana wrote 'love is life' and I wasn't expecting it because most of the students wrote 'I love Australia' or I love my boyfriend/girlfriend'. I just thought it was so beautiful because she is only 13 and she knows the meaning of life.	
Being surprised		
Experiencing satisfaction from	My final story is today we learnt about caring in our morals class	Does Gaea resonate with this meaning of life? How has her

students Experiencing success Making a contribution	and we decided to get the students to write cards to their parents for the arts class afterwards. To be honest, I didn't have very high expectations because their grammer and sentence structures aren't the best, but the lesson went so well. All the kids, even the boys got into the letter writing, and although some didn't really make sense (e.g. Thank you for cooking me), they were all really special. I think it really impacted me because they wouldn't usually get the chance to make something at school that they can take home and be proud of. **June 28, 2013** Today we finished school early and left to Thamel at 3pm. We got to ride in the utes on the way into Kathmandu which was cool. And then the most exciting thing ever happened. We went to OR2K for dinner! Everyone was so excited we ate so much which made me feel like a glutton. Everyone was in such good spirits after a good feed. We stayed at the Hotel Horizon again and the warm shower was much appreciated.	beliefs about her own purpose changed? Does Gaea feel like she has made more of a contribution on this OSPEX? Why or why not?
Enjoying travel Appreciating special food Feeling positive Appreciating shower Choosing to be with local Nepali people Enjoying local community Appreciating fruit Exploring village Experiencing Nepal	**June 29, 2013** Today we got to choose whether we wanted to go to church in Bunipur or see a hindu temple where people came to make animal sacrifices. Most of the group went to the temple but Anna, Annali, Blaire, Mitch L and I went to church. It was really lovely to be able to go to church with Nepali people. After the service, we got invited to lunch at an Australian couples house named Dave and Cindy and we all ate some hearty soup and buns together. Also there was fruit salad for dessert which was amazing because we haven't eaten any fruit since being here, so it was definitely noteworthy because it had mangoes, papayas and grapes. After lunch we went for a stroll around the rice fields of Buniper to a little village and ended up at a tiny tea shop. It was less a shop and more a lady's room with her bed and tea making facilities. We sipped on some buffalo milk chia (which tasted exactly the same to me) then walked back to the church to get picked up by Argin and the others in the ute.	Developing relationships appears more important to Gaea than seeing local attractions. Is this true?
Working together Assimilating in as locals Experiencing ownership of class Experincing bad tea Living and thinking as community Appreciating	**June 30, 2016** School went well today, we made paper lantern in craft and then got Caiden to help up act out the Prodical Son for our morals class. After school Anna and I walked to Panauti (we jumped on the back of the bus for the last 5 minutes which was handy). We went to the internet café to print off photos of our class to give them. Rajan the Panauti school principle / internet café owner made us tea and it tasted like toilet water. This was the first cup of tea I haven't enjoyed in Nepal so it had to be recorded. Lucky Blair was there to drink mine so I didn't to. After the internet café, Blair and Anna went looking for pringles to find for Joel and Caiden. We couldn't find any and we were in a rush to get back home, but Blair took us into a little shop to try a drink called splice. It was a delicious mangoey refreshment and I was only 35 rupees which about 40c.	What factors helped Gaea feel like she had ownership of her class? How important was this to her own learning? How does community on this prac compare to previous experiences? What are the major differences?

Appendix 7: Caiden's 'Pic-a-day' Photos and Descriptions

Day 1 – First day in Nepal at Monkey Temple

Day 2 – Exploring local temple in Kathmandu

Day 3 – On their way to the first day of teaching

Day 4 – Showering outside at the natural spring with a local audience

Day 5 – Game of soccer after school in the mud

Day 6 – Finding the marijuana plants that grew naturally on the side of the roads

Day 7 – Having Nepali tea overlooking the old town of Bhaktapur

Day 8 – The view from the local school called Sundaymai

Day 9 – Welcomed into the local fertility festival in Panauti

Day 10 – Planning together for next days' lesson on respiration

Day 11 – Being invited to help build rice paddies with local villagers

Day 12 – Picking tomatoes to cook for dinner

Day 13 – Cuddling a local's goat on the way home from school

Day 14 – Travelling through Thamel in Kathmandu in ute

Day 15 – Watching religious animal sacrifices at Dakshinkali Temple

Day 16 – Walking a group of their students home to their village in the mountains

Day 17 – The bone they got from the local butcher to help teach their class

Day 18 – Outside their Year 9 classroom

Day 19 – Photo with the local village ducklings

Day 20 – Last day of teaching with their Year 9 class in the background

Day 21 – Shopping in Thamel

Day 22 – Flights to Everest delayed

Day 23 – Writing in Journal

Day 24 – Swimming in Pokhara lake

Day 25 – First day of hiking towards Annapurna Base Camp

Day 26 – The waterfall they swam in on day two of hike

Day 27 – Walking in rain

Day 28 – Playing cards with friends

Day 29 – Walking past a glacier

Day 30 – Reaching Annapurna Base Camp

Day 31 – The view of Annapurna Base Camp in the morning

Day 32 – Bump on head from fall

Day 33 – Finishing the Annapurna trek

Day 34 – Putting on Nepali Suits

Day 35 – Heading back to Australia