2013

Mapping the epistemological journeys of five preservice teachers: the reconstruction of knowledge of challenging behaviour during professional experience

Samantha Elizabeth McMahon

University of Wollongong
UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

COPYRIGHT WARNING

You may print or download ONE copy of this document for the purpose of your own research or study. The University does not authorise you to copy, communicate or otherwise make available electronically to any other person any copyright material contained on this site. You are reminded of the following:

Copyright owners are entitled to take legal action against persons who infringe their copyright. A reproduction of material that is protected by copyright may be a copyright infringement. A court may impose penalties and award damages in relation to offences and infringements relating to copyright material. Higher penalties may apply, and higher damages may be awarded, for offences and infringements involving the conversion of material into digital or electronic form.
Mapping the epistemological journeys of five preservice teachers:

The reconstruction of knowledge of challenging behaviour during Professional Experience

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree

Doctor of Philosophy

From

University of Wollongong

By

Samantha Elizabeth McMahon
BTeach (Primary), BEd Hons (Primary)

Faculty of Education
2013
I, Samantha E. McMahon, declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Department of Education, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Samantha E. McMahon

13 January 2013
Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my mum, Frances Morris-Clarke and my dad, Kevin McMahon. Two very different thinkers who taught me how to thunk 😊
Abstract

This thesis investigates how preservice teachers understand ‘challenging behaviour’ and how this knowledge informs their teaching practice. Challenging behaviour is problematised as a knowledge referent and the epistemic tensions that preservice teachers experience in coming to ‘know’ about challenging behaviour are explored. This is an in-depth, qualitative study that focuses on the experiences, knowledge and knowledge-change of five final-year preservice primary teachers before, during and after their final Professional Experience (PEx). Data was gathered via interviews, focus groups, concept maps, document analysis and classroom observations. Foucault’s theories of knowledge comprised the theoretical framework of the study and discourse analysis was used for data analysis.

Major conclusions reached were threefold. Firstly, this study embraced the ambiguity and complexity of ‘challenging behaviour’ by avoiding the definition debate and instead identifying and positing three discourses of challenging behaviour. This approach was found helpful in understanding preservice teachers’ knowledge of the topic. Secondly, it was found that the preservice teachers’ knowledge of challenging behaviour was, at best, ‘confused’ insofar as it was rarely discursively consistent. Thirdly, the types of epistemic processes through which the preservice teachers reconstructed their discursively inconsistent knowledge were theorised as either ‘matching’ or ‘squishing’ (via oscillations and/or negotiations). These epistemic processes were cast as problematic. Both ‘matching’ and ‘squishing’ demonstrated potential to maintain epistemic equilibrium and so limit possibilities for knowledge expansion and reflective practice. Moreover, in the case of ‘squishing’, this epistemic process was found to generate confusions, which were at times unsupportive of pedagogical decision-making.
Two major implications of the research concern teacher education. Firstly, because the preservice teachers’ confusions, pedagogical distress and quandaries around challenging behaviour seemed to stem from discursively inconsistent knowledge, there is a call for teacher education programs to more clearly delineate multiple knowledges of challenging behaviour. Secondly, the preservice teachers’ epistemology was characterised by an overwhelming propensity to perceive a theory/practice divide in their professional knowledge. However, for these preservice teachers, there was not such a polarity to be bridged regarding challenging behaviour. Recasting the theory/practice problem in terms of knowledge showed the preservice teachers were doing a good deal of complex epistemological work ‘in the middle’ of theory and practice. Theory was not considered irrelevant, it was mobilised to make specific pedagogical decisions during practicum. However, understandings of these ‘practical theories’ were fraught with the incoherence and confusions associated with the epistemic practice of ‘squishing’. Thus, although the preservice teachers’ knowledge indicated they were ‘working in the middle’ of theory and practice, they were not doing so with great accuracy or effectiveness. It then is necessary to offer preservice teachers more comprehensive tools to work with and understand ‘knowledge’, rather than ‘theory/practice’.
# Table of Contents

## PART I – DISCERNING PROJECTIONS

1. **Introduction to Thesis** ................................................................. 21  
   1.1. Defining the research focus .................................................. 23  
   1.1.1. Research questions ....................................................... 23  
   1.2. Setting out the research problem ........................................ 24  
   1.2.1. Personal inspiration for the study .................................... 24  
   1.2.2. Why study preservice teacher knowledge of challenging behaviour? ...... 26  
   1.3. Overview of the research design and approach .......................... 30  
   1.3.1. Positioning myself as a researcher in a qualitative and post-structural research design .......................................................... 33  
   1.3.2. Research participants and setting ..................................... 34  
   1.3.3. Methods of data collection and analysis .............................. 36  
   1.3.4. Analytic framework ...................................................... 37  
   1.3.5. Ethical considerations ................................................... 38  
   1.4. Organisation of thesis ......................................................... 39  
   1.5. Chapter summary .................................................................. 45  

2. **Theoretical Framework** ............................................................. 49  
   2.1. Epistemology in education – a surprisingly messy problematic ...... 49  
   2.2. What are Foucault’s theories of knowledge? ............................. 57  
   2.2.1. Knowledge as archevised .................................................... 59  
   2.2.2. Knowledge as dynamic ..................................................... 61  
   2.3. Knowledge as archevised AND dynamic – a useful construct ........ 68  
   2.4. Wherefore art thou archive? ................................................... 69  
   2.5. Positing three discourses (knowledges) in the archive of challenging behaviour 72  
   2.5.1. The formation of objects – three construals of ‘the child with challenging behaviour’ ............................................................................................................. 74  
   2.5.2. The formation of enunciative modalities & the formation of strategies...... 78  
   2.6. Naming three discourses of challenging behaviour ..................... 84  
   2.7. Chapter Summary .................................................................. 88  

## PART II – MAKING THE MAP

3. **Collecting Cartographic Information – Three discourses of challenging behaviour in the (map)making** ......................................................... 93  
   3.1. Building an archive of challenging behaviour ............................. 93  
   3.2. Challenging behaviour – an emerging concept .......................... 98  
   3.3. Ecosocio discourse of challenging behaviour ............................. 99  
   3.4. Biomedical discourse of challenging behaviour ....................... 103  
   3.5. Biopsychosocial discourse of challenging behaviour .................. 108  
   3.5.1. ... and psychology ......................................................... 113  
   3.5.2. ... and special education needs (SEN) ................................. 115  
   3.6. Chapter Summary .................................................................. 122
4. Rendering detail on the map: Challenging behaviour in contemporary education contexts ................................................................. 127
  4.1. Challenging Behaviour in Educational Policy Contexts ................................................................. 129
     4.1.1. It is mandatory ... or is it? ........................................................................................................ 129
     4.1.2. It is vaguely and variously defined ......................................................................................... 133
     4.1.3. ’Challenging behaviour’ and the DEC ................................................................................ 140
  4.2. University-constructed knowledge of challenging behaviour ...................................................... 146
     4.2.1. University texts featuring the term ’challenging behaviour’ ............................................ 154
     4.2.2. Challenging behaviour in Curriculum and Pedagogy coursework contexts .................. 156
     4.2.3. Challenging behaviour in ’Special Education Needs’ coursework contexts ................... 158
     4.2.4. An overview of the university document review ................................................................. 165
  4.3. Challenging behaviour in participating schools’ policies ............................................................. 166
  4.4. Chapter summary ............................................................................................................................ 172

PART III - PLOTTING THE JOURNEYS

5. Knowing challenging behaviour before final PEx: A problem of theory and practice ....................... 179
  5.1. Accessing preservice teachers’ dynamic knowledge of challenging behaviour: Using concept maps with interviews and focus group. .......................................................... 179
  5.2. Sourcing knowledge - A perceived theory/practice divide underscores the knowledge re-construction process .................................................................................................. 185
     5.2.1. ’Life, the universe and everything’ – the importance of non-university knowledge sources .......................................................................................................................... 187
     5.2.2. Constructing knowledge by ’seeing’ practice – a valuing of ’non-theoretical, apprenticed knowledge’ ........................................................................................................... 194
     5.2.3. Knowing through university studies – a case of ’love practice/hate theory’ .................... 198
  5.3. Chapter summary ............................................................................................................................ 213

6. Plotting pre-PEx epistemic journeys ................................................................................................. 217
  6.1. Conditions of possibility for epistemic squishing – a collision of two interconnected factors ................................................................................................................................. 219
  6.2. Match or squish? Undetected contradictions in the preservice teachers’ ’biopsychosocial’ knowledge .......................................................................................................................... 222
     6.2.1. Matching .................................................................................................................................. 223
     6.2.2. Epistemic ’squishing via oscillations’ ..................................................................................... 226
     6.2.3. Epistemic ’squishing via negotiations’ .................................................................................... 239
  6.3. Chapter summary ............................................................................................................................ 243

7. The process of describing knowledge change .................................................................................... 249
  7.1. Concept map comparisons .............................................................................................................. 250
  7.1.2. Classroom observations ............................................................................................................ 251
  7.1.3. Analysis of preservice teacher assignment work .................................................................. 255
  7.1.4. Overview of ’how’ PEx influenced preservice teacher knowledge ...................................... 256
  7.2. An overview of epistemic journeys ............................................................................................... 257
  7.3. Chapter Summary ............................................................................................................................ 263

8. Mapping Three Epistemological Journeys Through PEx ................................................................ 267
  8.1. ELLA ............................................................................................................................................... 268
     8.1.1. Describing little, if any, knowledge change ........................................................................... 268
     8.1.2. In the context of low or no epistemic dissonance ............................................................... 270
PART IV - THE POWER AND LIMITATIONS OF MAPS

9. Conclusion

9.1. Resources for re-constructing knowledge of challenging behaviour

9.2. Epistemic practices for re-constructing knowledge of challenging behaviour

9.3. Knowing challenging behaviour: The effects of 'squishing' on preservice teachers’ knowledge and pedagogy

9.4. A problem of ‘theory and practice’ reconsidered

9.5. Closing thoughts

10. References

11. Appendices
List of Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 1.1 PHASES OF DATA COLLECTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 2.1 GRIDS OF SPECIFICATION FOR THREE DISCOURSE OBJECTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 2.2 ENUNCIATIVE MODALITIES OF THREE DISCOURSES - WHO IS SPEAKING?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 2.3 'FIELDS OF REGULARITY' (FOUCAULT 1972) WITHIN THE DISCIPLINE OF EDUCATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 2.4 POSSIBLE TEACHER SUBJECT POSITIONS FOR THREE DISCOURSES OF CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 2.5 NAMING THREE DISCOURSES OF CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 3.1 COMPARABLE DEFINITIONS OF EBD AND CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 3.2 DEFINITIONS OF CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 4.1 TARGETED PROFESSIONAL TEACHING STANDARDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 4.2 TEXTS REVIEWED THAT FEATURED THE TERM CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR, BY SUBJECT OUTLINE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 4.3 WORDS, OTHER THAN 'CHALLENGING', USED IN UNIVERSITY TEXTS TO DESCRIBE STUDENT BEHAVIOUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 4.4 WORDS USED TO DESCRIBE UNWANTED STUDENT BEHAVIOURS IN LOCAL SCHOOL POLICY DOCUMENTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 6.1 THREE POSTED DISCOURSES OF CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 8.1 COMPARISON OF SOME AXIOMS OF BEHAVIOURISM AND GLASSER’S CHOICE THEORY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Overview of data collection methods in relation to research foci ..................................................36
Figure 3.1 Grid of analysis: Continuums of traditionality accross posited discourses of challenging behaviour ..........................................................................................................................96
Figure 7.1 Building knowledge of challenging behaviour pre-PEx .................................................................259
Figure 7.2 Re-building knowledge of challenging behaviour during PEx .......................................................260
Figure 9.1 Types of knowledge contradictions resultant from squishing ......................................................356
Figure 9.2 Effects of squishing on preservice teacher knowledge ...............................................................357
Figure 9.3 Effects of squishing on preservice teacher knowledge and pedagogy ........................................358
‘AITSL’ is the acronym for the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. The importance of AITSL to this study is that it is the institution that writes and regulates the **Australian Professional Standards for Teachers**.

This study focuses on challenging behaviour as it is experienced and responded to in the primary school setting. As such, the term ‘child’ will refer to children who are typically between five and twelve years of age.

‘Core subjects’ are subjects designed to present the core concepts of a profession. As such, core subjects are mandated by the University and must be successfully completed for a student to be eligible to graduate from his/her course of study.

‘Elective subjects’ are subjects additional to the core subjects offered. These subjects are to afford students further study in Key Learning Area and professional development subjects of their choice.

‘ESL’ is the acronym used in the school and policy contexts of this study to describe students for who use English as a Second Language.

‘IEP’ is the acronym for Individual Education Plan. IEPs are created for students who are identified as requiring learning support beyond the standard classroom program, or deemed ‘at risk’ of failing to achieve the educational outcomes mandated by the board of studies.
In NSW, ‘IM / IO / IS’ classes are support classes for children with intellectual disabilities, they can be offered within ‘mainstream’ or ‘special school’ contexts. ‘IM’ is the name given to classes for students with mild intellectual disabilities, ‘IO’ is the name given to classes for students with moderate intellectual disabilities, ‘IS’ is the name given to classes for students with severe intellectual disabilities. In this context, mild, moderate and severe disabilities are measureable by intelligence quotient scores.

A ‘mentor teacher’ is the term used to describe an in-service teacher who supervises a preservice teacher during their professional experience (or PEx).

‘NSWDEC’ is the acronym for the NSW Department of Education and Communities. NSWDEC is responsible for the administration of public primary and secondary schools and colleges of Technical And Further Education (TAFE). The NSW DEC was, up until April 2011, the ‘NSWDET’ (NSW Department of Education and Training).

‘NSWIT’ is the acronym for the New South Wales Institute of Teachers. At the time of data collection for this study NSWIT was responsible for accrediting teacher education coursework and teachers in NSW.

A ‘preservice teacher’ (PST) is an individual currently studying to become a teacher. For the purpose of this study a preservice teacher is defined as an individual in his/her final year of study to qualify as a teacher of primary education.

Professional Experience (PEx) is the name given to the mandatory supervised practice teaching in schools undertaken to attain the award of Bachelor of Education (Primary).
‘PS’ is the acronym for Public School. In NSW, the context of this study, Public School is the name given to state-funded primary (that is, Kindergarten to Year 6) schools.

‘SES’ is the abbreviation for Socio-Economic Status.

In the context of this study, ‘undergraduate studies’ refers to lectures, tutorials, assignments and school-based learning experienced by individuals studying for the award of the Bachelor of Education (Primary), at the participating university.
Acknowledgements

This thesis simply would not ‘be’ were it not for the academic support offered by my supervisors and colleagues. In my humble opinion, I have the best supervisors on the planet. Associate Professor Valerie Harwood and Professor Jan Wright have supervised this PhD project with great intelligence, patience and humour. Thank you both so much for sustaining a genuine interest in my study, for always being generous with your time and expertise and continually offering comprehensive and inspiring feedback. But most of all, thank you for asking those questions … you know, the hard ones! Your questions often made my brain hurt but they have made this thesis!

The Text Analysis and Reading Group (aka ‘TARG’) meets monthly to discuss a text, or one of us will ask for thoughts on a piece writing we are working on. Thank you TARG-ers (Jonnell, Rosie, Sharon, Nici, Cath, Stine, Malin, Jan and Valerie)! Your feedback, ideas and questions about my thesis over the last few years have been valuable contributions to the final product. More importantly, your wonderful friendship (and all the caffeine we have consumed together) has kept me sane, motivated and in good humour throughout ‘the PhD journey’ … So, thank you 😊

Many thanks also to Dr Sarah Hamylton, Lecturer at University of Wollongong’s School of Earth and Environmental Sciences, for her consult regarding the ‘mapping’ metaphors used throughout the thesis. Sarah pointed me to some excellent readings. Any mistakes I’ve made are entirely my own.

I am most grateful for the financial support afforded by the Australian Postgraduate Award (APA) stipend. Funding from the Faculty of Education and the Interdisciplinary Educational Research Institute at University of Wollongong was also much appreciated.
Last, but by no means least, I’d like to thank my family, friends and study-buddies for their emotional support. My office buddies have been no end of motivational support, thank you Jess, Phil, Alex, Jen, Lisa, Narumi, Jonnell, Kyle, Kay and Heather. Also, a big ‘thank you’ to my family for your love and support. I love my crazy family. Thank you Josh for enabling and supporting my study ‘addiction’ for the last seven years.

For reasons still unbeknownst to me, I decided soon after giving birth to my first child to do a PhD. So, I am in great debt to family and friends who ‘bought’ me study time over the last four years by caring for Zac and Toby. Thank you so much Rhonda, Darryl, Pauline, Kevin, Nana-in-the-aeroplane, Aunty Rosalie, Uncle David, Uncle Ben, Aunty Kim, Aunty Julie, Max, Marcine, Ashley, Shawn, Valerie and Sarah. Thank you too to all the team at Kids Uni North for being such great educators and carers for my little people, I know you do a fantastic job because Zac loves going to ‘uni’. Last, but definitely not least, a very special thanks goes to my mum (Frances) and step-dad (Bill) who housed, fed, loved and looked after me for a three-week ‘writing retreat’ which afforded me the luxury of being able to finish a full draft of my thesis before the birth of my second child, Toby.
PART I: Discerning Projections
Introduction to thesis
1. **Introduction to Thesis**

Defining challenging behaviour … has always been an unsatisfactory enterprise.

(Visser & Cole 2003, p. 10)

The mandatory components of teacher education … include knowledge of … *students with challenging behaviour*.

(NSW Institute of Teachers 2006, p. 3, emphasis added)

The juxtaposition of these two quotes becomes even more problematic when one contemplates their origins. The first quote featured in *A study of children and young people who present challenging behaviour* (Visser & Cole 2003), a literature review commissioned by the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted), in the United Kingdom. Ofsted commissioned the literature review as a part of its report *Managing Challenging Behaviour* and stated that the purpose of the literature review was to ‘determine the range of characteristics and definitions of challenging behaviour used by academic researchers and practitioners’ (Ofsted 2005, online). That Ofsted perceived an ambiguity in definitions of challenging behaviour is noteworthy. That the educationists commissioned to conduct the literature review deemed their task an ‘unsatisfactory enterprise’ is important. The fractious discourses on, and multidisciplinary nature of, ‘challenging behaviour’ necessitated an 87-page literature review for discussing its complexity and various uses in academia and practice.

By contrast, the second quote positions challenging behaviour as a defined and mandated domain of teacher knowledge. This second excerpt is from the New South Wales Institute of Teachers’ *Professional Teaching Standards [PTS]* (NSWIT 2006). The *PTS* is the document that governed preservice teacher education and teacher accreditation in New South Wales, Australia at the time of data collection for this study. In this quote, content on ‘students with challenging behaviour’ is listed as a mandatory
component of teacher education. Within the PTS, two of the three ‘domains’ also include standards that directly deal with ‘challenging behaviour’, thus moving the focus from components of teacher education to mandating knowledge and skills for accredited, practicing teachers. When positioning this second quote next to the first, the question arises: Is it reasonable to mandate knowledge of a term so innately complex that it avoids definition?

That a vague and elusive concept such as ‘challenging behaviour’ is mandated as teacher knowledge is a paradox. That this paradox is rarely scrutinised by educators and teacher educators is alarming. Perhaps most concerning is that an extensive review of literature and educational documents indicates that, in the last decade, the complexity of ‘challenging behaviour’ seems to have been relegated to the realm of the ‘common sense’ of every teacher (see Chapters 3 and 4). What this study hopes to achieve is to problematise ‘challenging behaviour’ as a taken-for-granted construct in contemporary educational contexts and illustrate the epistemic tensions preservice teachers experience in coming to ‘know’ about it. The types of epistemic tensions found in this study are neatly described in the well-known quote by Michael Stipe (singer and lyricist of R.E.M. fame) ‘sometimes I'm confused by what I think is really obvious’ (Thinkexist.com Quotations Online 2012).

To facilitate achieving this objective of critiquing the ‘really obvious’, the work of Michel Foucault will frame the problem setting, data collection and analysis of this research project. I aim to illustrate how mobilizing Foucault’s theorization of knowledge offers a means for understanding how preservice teachers understand ‘challenging behaviour’. Finally, in mapping out how preservice teachers understand challenging behaviour, recommendations for improvements to teacher education will be made. As a point of departure, this first chapter is an attempt to outline the research problem, methodology and the organization of the thesis document.
1.1. **Defining the research focus**

Rather than offer an intricate discussion of background to the research project that eventually generates the research questions, I wish to make the direction of the study transparent from the outset of this introductory chapter. Then subsequent sections of this chapter will effectively reverse-engineer my reasoning for positing these questions and describe the methods used to investigate them.

1.1.1. **Research questions**

This research project is an epistemological study that explores how preservice teachers re-construct their knowledge of challenging behaviour on their final professional experience. The research was framed by three main research questions.

- How do preservice teachers re-construct their knowledge of children’s challenging behaviour in their final ‘professional experience’ (PEx)?
- What discursive resources do they draw on to do this?
- With what effects for their knowledge and teaching practice?

In order to answer these questions it was necessary to gather information both on the PEx context and the participating preservice teachers’ knowledge. This generated the following sub-questions.

**PEx context**
- How do ‘schools’ and ‘teacher education’ construct knowledge/s about children with challenging behaviour?
- What role, if any, does PEx have in influencing preservice teachers’ knowledge of teaching children with challenging behaviours?

**Teacher knowledge**
- What epistemic processes do preservice teachers engage in when re-constructing knowledge of challenging behaviour?
- What ‘sources of knowledge’ do preservice teachers value as contributing to their understandings of challenging classroom behaviours?
1.2. Setting out the research problem

This section of the introductory chapter contemplates the conditions of possibility\textsuperscript{1} for forming the research questions that guided this project. To this end, an effort is made to describe my personal motivations as a researcher, argue the importance of teachers’ knowledge of challenging behaviour, conceptualise the role of the PEx context in knowledge construction, and point to gaps in the literature on this topic.

1.2.1. Personal inspiration for the study

On various PEx throughout my undergraduate degree in Primary Teaching I observed and taught in several public schools and classrooms. My initial research interest (one that sustained my Honours thesis) was teacher knowledge of ADHD as it related to pedagogy. It struck me that children with the same behaviour disorder diagnosis could be treated very differently to each other and that these variations occurred from classroom to classroom, teacher to teacher. I observed three very different teacher responses to an ADHD diagnosis – these three teachers were two mentor teachers, and myself (a preservice teacher). In contrast to my inexperience, both mentor teachers were very experienced, well-respected teachers within their respective schools, both were popular with their students and both expertly ‘knew their content and how to teach it’. All three of us conceptualized ADHD and teaching children diagnosed with ADHD very differently. This factor seemed to result in vastly different schooling experiences for children diagnosed with ADHD – some of those experiences being more inclusive than others. These contrasting PEx experiences led me to question – in what ways, if

\textsuperscript{1} My usage of the phrase ‘conditions of possibility’ in this thesis is not the same as Foucault’s. Foucault used ‘conditions of possibility’ as synonymous with ‘the historical a priori’ (O’Farrell 2005). My usage is much less vast. I am not concerned with rules governing entire systems of knowledge at particular moments in history, rather I use the phrase as a colloquialism to mean ‘that which is necessary to make [it] possible’. In this sense, I am following usage of the term similar to Maria Tamboukou’s (2008, 2010) usage.
any, can the differences in classroom practice stem from differences in teachers’ ‘knowledge’ of ADHD? My honours thesis began to explore this, particularly in terms of preservice teachers’ conceptions of ‘labelling’ (McMahon 2012). But, perhaps predictably, that study generated more questions than answers: questions primarily centred around relationships between different knowledges of behaviour and inclusive and reflective teaching practice.

My research focus expanded from ‘ADHD’ to ‘challenging behaviour’. This was because, in February 2005, the NSW Institute of Teachers published its Professional Teaching Standards. This document mandated knowledge of and effective strategies for teaching ‘children with challenging behaviour’ (NSWIT 2006, p. 6) – a mandate later reinforced in the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (Educational Services Australia 2011b). For me, especially considering my learning about Foucault’s theorisation of discourse through my honours research, this raised several questions. Firstly, what is challenging behaviour and why has it, as a mandated professional knowledge, surfaced here and now? Moreover, was it simply a case of that which is challenging for one teacher may or may not be challenging for another? This, in turn, raised an ethical concern for me: that children may be labelled ‘challenging’ at the whim of individual teachers. Secondly, if the definition is so subjective how does one uphold it as an authoritative benchmark or standard for teacher knowledge and pedagogy? Thirdly, as the Professional Teaching Standards inferred that certain teaching strategies exist for children who behave in particular (in this case challenging) ways, are we then gently edging away from principles of inclusive education that hold that ‘good teaching benefits all students’? I found these questions unsettling. However, what I found most alarming was that such questions didn’t seem to surface elsewhere; my preservice teacher peers and teacher educators seemed, for the most part, unperturbed and willing to take up a ‘commonsense’ approach to the meaning of the term ‘challenging behaviour’. 
In this way, I became motivated to research ‘challenging behaviour’ as a discourse object and knowledge referent for preservice teachers: to question and problematise this newly mandated professional knowledge, to investigate how the concept features in the participants’ knowledge-base, and to make recommendations as to how teacher educators may better facilitate constructing knowledge of ‘challenging behaviour’.

Having briefly explicated my personal interests in the research topic, the next section reviews the literature so as to connect my personal research interests to ‘gaps’ in the literature.

1.2.2. Why study preservice teacher knowledge of challenging behaviour?

There are few unifying concerns in the literature on challenging behaviour insofar as there is little consensus on exactly what challenging behaviour is, why it might be troubling and where it comes from. But, the ‘teacher’ was a recurring object of discussion. The literature on behaviour variously implicates the teacher in the detection, diagnosis and treatment of challenging and disorderly behaviours. However, critical analysis of educators’ (and more specifically, preservice teachers’) knowledge of and attitudes towards behaviour, and especially disorderly behaviour, accounts for only a small portion of literature on the subject.

What makes preservice teachers’ knowledge of behaviour contentious is that there are potentially many ways to understand the behaviours that teachers find challenging. Indeed there is literature to suggest that views of inclusion and behaviour are ‘very subjective’ (Grieve 2009). As Qureshi explains,

On an every day basis the term challenging behaviour is socially defined. Different people, or groups of people, will have different ideas about what is meant by challenging

(Qureshi 1992, p. 23)
As a ‘group of people’ little is known about what preservice teachers know of, or mean by, ‘challenging behaviour’. Most studies on teacher understandings of challenging behaviours tend to focus on in-service teachers’ perceptions of what is challenging (e.g. Axup & Gersh 2008; Beaman, Wheldall & Kemp 2007; Carter, Clayton & Stephenson 2006; Ford 2007; Grieve 2009) and causal attributions for challenging behaviour (e.g. Mavropoulou & Padeliadu 2002; Miller 1995; Poulou & Norwich 2000). By ‘causal attribution’ I am referring to studies drawing on a particular tenet from the discipline of psychology:

Attributions are inferences about the causes of events and behaviour. Individuals make attributions to understand their social world. Attributions can be classified as internal or external. Internal attributions ascribe behaviour to personal dispositions and traits, whereas external attributions locate the cause of behaviour in the environment.

(Weiten 2001, p. 664)

Whilst teachers’ construals of challenging behaviour are attended to in detail in Section 2.5.1 and 3.5, the literature on teachers’ causal attribution of challenging behaviour provides a useful rationale for my research. This is because, how a teacher understands behaviour will impact on how s/he responds to challenging and disorderly behaviour in a classroom setting (Ford 2007; Grieve 2009; Hughes & Cooper 2007; Kos, Richdale & Hay 2006; Mavropoulou & Padeliadu 2002; Quinn & Wigal 2004). Furthermore, different teacher-responses may result in varied educational and diagnostic experiences for children presenting with challenging or disorderly behaviours (e.g., Alban-Metcalf, Cheng-Lai & Ma 2002; Kauffman & Wong 1991, Jordan et al. 1993, Podell & Soodak, 1993, all cited in Mavropoulou & Padeliadu 2002; Miller 1995; Poulou & Norwich 2000), thus significantly impacting the child’s life experience. Considering this, and within the context of an increasing rate of behaviour disorder diagnoses (Harwood 2006), it is necessary to investigate from what sources and by what means preservice teachers create their knowledge of challenging behaviour and how this, in turn, may impact on their teaching practices.
With this close established relationship between causal attribution and teaching practices, one aim of the study, therefore, is to consider the preservice teachers’ conceptions of challenging behaviour. Broadly speaking, behaviour may be conceptualised as externally or internally (within a person’s psychology and/or biology) located, or some combination of these. Whilst the notion of a combination of causes seems a balanced, almost commonsense, knowledge claim, it also presents a difficult theoretic middle ground to engage with. As, Murphy (1994, p. 53) explains: ‘for those working with children or adults with challenging behaviours, the most difficult task may be to develop an integrated view of how biological, operant and ecological factors interact’. This problematic has become a focus of this research. I will show how the preservice teachers faced this ‘really obvious’ knowledge-construction task with varying epistemological processes, degrees of success and with varied effects.

Contention surrounding causal attribution of behaviour is foundational to this study’s approach. This study aims to embrace the ambiguity and complexity of ‘challenging behaviour’ by avoiding the definitional debate and instead identifying and positing three discourses of challenging behaviour (see Section 2.5). These posited discourses being, in the first instance, broadly delineated by causal attributions. This move away from attempting to pinpoint the singular to outlining multiple knowledges of challenging behaviour and what this means in contemporary educational contexts is new. However, I contend that it facilitates investigation as to how preservice teachers take-up, negotiate or resist different knowledges (or discourses) in their knowledge re-construction processes.

Whilst studies of teachers’ causal attribution for, and attitudes and beliefs to teaching children with, challenging behaviour exist (see pages 29-30, above) – it was reasonably difficult to find literature that examined how preservice teachers arrive at these understandings and what teacher education programs can/not do to impact these knowledge outcomes. Detailed discussion of debates on preservice teacher epistemology is attended to in Chapter 2. However, for the purpose of overall problem-
setting it is worth considering some of the critique levelled at teacher education especially in terms of its capacity to impact preservice teachers’ pre-existing knowledge and beliefs (e.g. Joram 2007; Reid 2011). Questions abound in the literature as to the university’s capacity to: interrupt preservice teachers’ propensity to value the practical and specific over general, theoretical principals of teaching (Joram 2007; White 2000); close the ‘gap’ between theory and practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle 2007; Darling-Hammond 2006a,b, 2010; Gutierrez & Vossoughi 2010; Reid 2011); adequately present multiple perspectives (Kincheloe 2004; Valli & Tom 1988; White 2000); and teach professional, ‘practice’ knowledge (Green 2010a, 2010b).

Beyond a critique of the effectiveness of teacher education programs in impacting teacher knowledge, generally, there is ‘a dearth of research’ investigating the role of the university in developing preservice teachers’ knowledge of challenging behaviour (Billingsley, Fall & Williams 2006, cited in Ford 2007, p. 123). This is one rationale for investigating the undergraduate preservice teacher education program in this study. My Honours study of 150 preservice teachers indicated that for over a third of questionnaire respondents their undergraduate coursework was not the ‘main source’ of their understanding of ADHD (McMahon 2007). In my Honours thesis I particularly considered preservice teacher knowledge of ADHD; however, the participants also commonly expressed feeling dissatisfied with, and unsupported by, ‘behaviour’ content in undergraduate coursework, more generally. This finding was in keeping with other literature indicating that teachers view their teacher preparation programs as inadequately preparing them to work with students with challenging behaviour (e.g. Ford 2007). So then, the question arose: if not from their undergraduate studies from what sources do preservice teachers re-construct their knowledge of behaviour?

Whilst it was not always perceived as a ‘main source’ of understanding of ADHD, for the preservice teachers in my Honours study, the two most commonly acknowledged contributors to their knowledge of ADHD were the ‘university’ and ‘school’ (McMahon 2007). Subsequently, as the site where these two institutions as knowledge sources
come together, the professional experience [PEx] became the key site of interest for this study. Moreover, PEx is an appropriate context for studying preservice teachers’ knowledge of challenging behaviour as it is commonly held that ‘behaviour management’ is best learned ‘within the framework of professional experience’ (Ramsey 2000, p. 81), yet little seems to be known about how such knowledge construction takes place.

1.3. Overview of the research design and approach

The study utilised a qualitative study design and drew on a post-structural framework. The rationales for each of these methodological decisions are inextricably linked and so are presented together in this subsection.

I considered a critical post-structural approach to be the most appropriate approach to the research problem. This was because, as I will discuss in Chapter 2, behaviour may be understood from several and (sometimes) mutually exclusive perspectives. This necessitated adoption of an approach capable of supporting multiple understandings of a given concept. Working within the post-structural paradigm accommodated the possibility of questioning ‘the idea of transparent or universal truth’ (Ropers-Huilman 1999, p. 23), thus allowing for the existence of multiple ways of understanding the ‘realities’ of preservice teachers’ experiences of classroom behaviour. More specifically, Laws (1999) points to the utility of a poststructural approach in opening up different possibilities for considering and responding to disorderly behaviour in school contexts. Within the post-structural approach, generally, the work of Michel Foucault was identified as an appropriate theoretical framework for the study.

Whilst Chapter 2 is entirely dedicated to explicating the theoretical framework supporting this research project, a brief overview is offered here. Foucault offers a theorization of knowledge as ever and always related to discourse, and a neat corollary of these notions is implied in the research questions. Foucault’s theorization of
power/knowledge and its relationship to discourse comprise the theoretical framework underpinning data analysis. Whilst the following chapter thoroughly explores this, it will suffice here to attend to ‘discourse’ and ‘power/knowledge’ separately. A brief explanation of each, in turn, follows so as to outline the respective theory’s utility of supporting the research project.

Foucault’s earlier works offer tools for examining the relationships within and between discourses. In this sense, Foucault first posits knowledge as archevised, suprapersonal, and occurring at the level of discourse; thus, knowledge is analysed in terms of its relationship to itself. Such analytics allow the researcher to describe how certain ways of knowing something come to dominate, displace, resist, exclude or facilitate alternative ways of knowing the same thing. Of specific interest is how a discursive formation functions to limit the ‘sayable and repeatable’ (Kendall & Wickham 1999), how a discursive formation comes to be valued and what status it is accorded in particular circumstances, by certain groups of people. Such discourse analysis was an appropriate theoretical framework for this study because definitions and understandings of behaviour are multiple and contentious. Therefore, it was necessary to consider how different discourses form around the notion of challenging behaviour. This task of identifying and mapping out the limits of different discourses on challenging behaviour is the first task of the thesis and is attended to at the end of Chapter 2 and throughout Chapters 3 and 4.

Sketching-out the shape and form of different discourses of challenging behaviour is an appropriate starting point for this thesis as it posits ‘that which may be known’ about challenging behaviour. However, considered alone this process does not attend to the personal knowledge re-construction processes of individual participants at the core of this research project’s interest. This is where deploying Foucault’s later theorisations of knowledge became useful. In Foucault’s later works he expands his earlier conception of knowledge as archevised and offers resources to more thoroughly contemplate the individual in a dynamic knowledge construction process. Thus, his focus expands from
considering the relationship between ‘knowledge and itself’ to the relationship between ‘knowledge and the self’. Notably framing knowledge as ‘dynamic’ (Rouse 2003) and utterly involving the ‘self’ are Foucault’s theorisations of power/knowledge, subjectification and objectification. These theories, more fully explicated in Chapter 2, allow for consideration of how and why participants respond to and participate in particular discourses of behaviour, rather than others. Consideration that is undertaken in analysis Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 of this thesis.

As examining relationships within and between discourses was considered paramount to answering the research questions, the analytic framework constituted a type of Foucauldian discourse analysis (described further in Section 2.3). Qualitative research methods generate data appropriate to Foucauldian discourse analysis (Harwood 2006). The justification for such use of qualitative methods is closely linked with Foucault’s (1972) definition of discourse as comprising statements and the use of data collection methods appropriate for capturing participants’ statements. Foucault’s usage of the term ‘statements’ can be interpreted to include, but is not limited to, verbal utterances or writings in the form of words and sentences.

Educational researchers have undertaken Foucauldian discourse analysis using qualitative data collection techniques. These studies have sought to analyse educators’ written inscriptions on questionnaires and verbal utterances during interviews on topics of critical literacy (Johnson, 2002), primary students’ health (Evans, Evans and Rich, 2003), preservice teachers’ construction of subjectivities around sport and physical education (Garrett and Wrench, 2007; Welch & Wright 2011), and co-principalship of schools (Court, 2004). Following the example of these studies, I employ a qualitative approach, utilising concept-mapping, interviews, focus group, classroom observations and document analysis to capture participants’ statements describing how they reconstruct their knowledge of ‘challenging behaviour’ during PE.
1.3.1. Positioning myself as a researcher in a qualitative and post-structural research design

As I took on this PhD project immediately following completion of my undergraduate degrees, I am only ‘just-removed’ from my own experiences as a preservice teacher. Thus, this study adopts a qualitative methodology that seeks to value the researcher’s experiential knowledge of the topic. Drawing on Foucault, Allan (1996) advocates the researcher being immersed in the world of research especially when the world being researched is a social institution (in this case, to some extent, the University and School). This is because insider-researchers ‘constitute a privileged point of observation, diversified, concentrated, put in order, and carried through to the highest point of their efficacy’ (Foucault 1982, p. 222, cited in Allan 1996, p. 231).

The epistemology of the post-structural paradigm troubles ‘the self-evidence of the meaning made by a knowing subject through the right use of reason’ (St. Pierre 1997, p. 279). So then, it is important that I reveal my pre-suppositions and beliefs on the research topic. There are three personal beliefs that inform my standpoint as researcher for this project. Firstly, I assume that ‘behaviour’ is an ill-defined and contentious phenomenon that may be understood from multiple perspectives and agree with Linda Ware’s assertion that:

Regardless of the origin of critique, when unexamined attitudes, beliefs and assumptions … are challenged multiple perspectives prove more useful than any one field’s perspectives. This is particularly important for teacher educators who seek to interrupt contradictory subtexts in pedagogy and practice.

(Ware 2001, p. 109)

So then, it is only logical that I am troubled that findings from my previous research demonstrate that final-year preservice primary teachers subscribe to one particular way of knowing behaviour (the biopsychosocial model) (McMahon 2007, 2012). My second assumption is that such singular acceptance of behaviour has the potential to restrict scope for reflective practice and the possibilities for arriving at alternative understandings of, and pedagogies for, children presenting with ‘challenging
behaviours’. Thirdly, I believe that teacher-reports of students’ behaviour may considerably affect children’s schooling experience and potentially their diagnosis of behavioural disorder, and therefore their life experiences and identity. Because of this, I believe it is important that teachers critically and reflexively acknowledge their position in, and contribution to, discourses of challenging and disorderly behaviours. Finally, I assume a critical stance toward my undergraduate studies and PEx in terms of some of the things ‘said and done’ concerning children diagnosed with behaviour disorders and/or displaying challenging behaviours.

1.3.2. Research participants and setting

Fourth-year preservice teachers (who are enrolled in the Bachelor of Education [Primary] degree, at a large, Australian University, in 2010) and their PEx mentor teachers were purposefully selected as the participants for this study. Preservice teachers were chosen as participants, in part because of calls for further research. For example, Disability Studies researchers have raised concern over the role of teacher education in constructing and perpetuating deficit discourses of behaviour (Rice 2005, 2006; Smith 2006), and how this in turn, impacts on preservice teachers’ knowledge, attitudes and teaching practice. Preservice teachers’ knowledge of and pedagogical responses to classroom behaviour (particularly disorderly behaviour) is of interest in academic literature (e.g. Kos et al. 2006). The study also builds on my previous research with preservice teachers, addressing questions raised by findings of my Honours study.

The preservice teachers who participated in this study were of special interest because they had (at the time of data collection) experienced more of their undergraduate studies than their first, second and third year counterparts, thus they were better situated to comment on their undergraduate / PEx experiences as a whole. The PEx mentor teachers were included as participants to contribute to an understanding of how schools and the ‘preservice teacher/mentor’ relationship contributed to knowledge of classroom behaviour.
Participants were recruited in two phases. In Phase 1, twelve weeks prior to the fourth-year PEx, preservice teachers were approached during a lecture in a compulsory Curriculum and Pedagogy subject. At this lecture PST Participant Information Sheets were distributed and preservice teachers who were interested in participating were invited to email me with any questions and/or expressions of interest. Resulting from this process five preservice teachers (all female) were recruited to the study. Five weeks later, in Phase 2, once details of the final PEx placements were decided, the schools and mentor teachers, to which the PST participants were assigned, were invited to join the study. These invitations were, in the first instance, made via a letter to the principal of each school. These letters were followed-up by telephone conversations with the invited principals and mentor teachers. Of the five preservice teachers who expressed interest in participating, all of their mentor teachers (one male and four females) were recruited to the study. Thus, there were ten participants in total (five preservice teachers and five mentor teachers). The participants completed their PEx at five government primary schools, across five local government areas. Three of the schools were located in the greater Sydney Metropolitan Area and two in regional NSW. A description of each participant, their mentor and a profile of their host school and PEx class is offered in full in Chapter 8.

The participants engaged with the research process across a number of sites. The mentor teachers’ interviews and classroom observations took place at the school where they worked. My observation of the preservice teachers’ classrooms took place at these same schools. However, most other data collection (with the exception of the concept-mapping activities, see Sections 5.1 and 7.1.1) occurred at meeting rooms at the University. The concept maps were independently created by the preservice teacher in a setting of their choice.
1.3.3. **Methods of data collection and analysis**

The data collection procedures were very much driven by the research site/s. In the original Honours study (McMahon 2007), the two most commonly acknowledged contributors to the participants’ knowledge of ADHD were the ‘university’ and ‘school’. Thus, the PEx is a *contextual* point of interest as it is a site that serves as a nexus between discourses of classroom behaviour experienced both in schools and through university coursework. This contextual point of interest informs the first main research question: ‘How do preservice teachers re-construct their knowledge of children’s challenging behaviour in their final professional experience (PEx)?’. In order to answer the main research questions (and considering the headings for my sub-questions, see Section 1.1.1) data on preservice teacher knowledge and the context of the PEx needed to be collected. Figure 1.1 demonstrates the relationship between data collection methods and the research questions’ focus on context and preservice teacher knowledge and pedagogy.

**Figure 1.1 Overview of data collection methods in relation to research foci**

![Diagram showing the relationship between data collection methods and research foci]

An overview of three phases of data collection is included at Table 1.1.
Table 1.1 Phases of data collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Pre-PEx</th>
<th>PEx*</th>
<th>Post-PEx</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concept mapping</td>
<td>PST</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>PST, Mentor</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus group</td>
<td>PST</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom observations</td>
<td>PST, Mentor</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document analysis</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School &amp; Department policies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and procedures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University PEx Handbook</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Bachelor of Education’ document</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp; related texts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW Institute of Teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Professional Teaching Standards’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDPD401 and EDPD402 Assignments</td>
<td>PST</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* PEx was scheduled for a five-week block beginning 26 July 2010. Alternatively, participants who completed an Honours program had their PEx scheduled for a five-week block beginning 18 October 2010. As my participants were a mix of honours students and coursework students, this meant that there were two complete pre-, during- and post- PEx data collection cycles.

Further detail on data collection and analysis is offered throughout the analysis chapters. Rather than offer a traditional ‘methodology’ chapter, I have integrated discussion of the data gathering and analyses that support the discussions throughout the analyses chapters (chapters 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8). This approach was selected so as to best contextualise the methodologies employed.

1.3.4. Analytic framework

Data was analysed using discourse analysis: an approach to qualitative analysis that, in this instance, is informed by Foucault’s work. Such analysis allowed me to consider how intricate connections between power and knowledge mobilised the preservice teachers to position themselves in relation to particular discourse(s) of classroom behaviour. This approach takes its cue from studies that have examined the interplay

---

2 For a complete and detailed timeline of the data collection process please see Appendix A
and competition of varied discourses that occur within university coursework contexts and related new-graduate workspaces of nurses (e.g. Bourgeois 2006) and lawyers (e.g. James 2004).

From a data analysis perspective, a Foucauldian analytic process offers opportunities for looking beyond ‘what’ to ‘why’ questions. It provides a means of considering how and why some conceptions, and not others, are prevalent in the data. Because it considers relationships between discourses, Foucauldian discourse analysis also offers a technique for interfacing the empirical data with concepts presented in the literature, educational policy and University undergraduate coursework content. Further detail on the ‘mechanics’ of how I specifically undertook Foucauldian discourse analysis is made available in Chapter 2 and throughout the thesis (see sections 3.1, 5.1 and 7.1).

1.3.5. Ethical considerations

Before undertaking any research, ethics approval from the Human Ethics Committee at the University of Wollongong and the NSW Department of Education and Communities (via the State Education Research Approval Process [SERAP]) was obtained. All research activities were carried-out in compliance with the respective guidelines. As this was a multi-site study involving a number of state primary schools it was important to acknowledge ethical considerations pertaining to inter-school relationships and ‘competition’. I undertook not to rank, credit or discredit any participating school or mentor teacher’s approach to issues of classroom behaviour and not to compare or assess certain approaches to issues of classroom behaviour as more or less valuable than others. I confirmed for both ethics committees that the sole focus of this study was preservice teachers’ re-construction of knowledge and pedagogical responses to classroom behaviour on their final PEx.

Sensitive to the time-constraints and workload faced by participants on PEx, I designed the research so as not to increase the preservice teachers’ workload during this time. As
mandated by their university coursework program, the preservice teachers had to enrol in *Professional Development 4* (successful completion of final PEx and related assignment work was required to pass this core subject). Mandatory enrolment in *Professional Development 4* meant that participation in the classroom observations during final PEx and document review of their assignment work posed no ‘extra’ work for the preservice teachers. Any participatory activities beyond the requirements of *Professional Development 4*, such as pre- and post- PEx concept mapping and interviews, and the focus group were scheduled before and after PEx.

Participation in this study was entirely voluntary. All participants were provided with *Participant Information Sheets* and *Consent Forms*. Signed consent forms were secured prior to participation in the focus group interview, individual interviews, classroom observations, concept mapping activities and use of assessment tasks. The participants were able to withdraw from the study at any time. To satisfy their study requirements, the preservice teacher participants needed to continue to teach on their PEx and complete assignments for *Professional Development 4*, however participants could have withdrawn from the study by requesting their data not be analysed for the purposes of this study or subsequent publications. No participants requested to withdraw from the study; all participants were retained for the duration of the research project.

In all raw and reported data care was taken to remove identifying details of participants, the participating school, and names of students in each participants’ class. In publishing findings from the study pseudonyms are used to refer to all participants, their PEx schools, colleagues and students.

### 1.4. *Organisation of thesis*

Throughout this thesis I use mapping metaphors to describe a particular theoretical framing of ‘knowledge’ and to theorise the preservice teachers’ knowledge re-construction processes. Indeed, considered in its entirety, this thesis may be construed
as a cartographic effort, of sorts. I ‘map’ five preservice teachers’ epistemological journeys through PEx. From the outset, however, it is vital to acknowledge that I am not portraying my mapping exercise as akin to the ‘science’ of cartography. As Brian Harley, a key scholar in the philosophy of cartographic history and the meaning of maps, stated, ‘the map is never neutral’ (Harley 2001, p. 168). I deploy Harley’s critical approach to cartography, considering maps (and particularly the map I’m about to create) as culturally constructed texts that ‘work in society as a form of power-knowledge’ (Harley 2001, p. 164). This is a thesis in four parts; each part represents a process in the mapping of the preservice teachers’ epistemology.

**PART I: Discerning projections**

One foundational challenge for a cartographer is to decide how best to minimise the inevitable distortions resultant from attempting to represent a three-dimensional, spherical world on a two-dimensional, flat page via use of projections. Similarly, epistemological studies are innately complex and by attempting to impose order, analysis and representation on ‘knowledge’, the researcher is bound to result in an imperfect and distorted image. Thus, before any mapping of preservice teachers’ knowledge may commence it is necessary to make decisions about cartographic projections – to contemplate how best to frame and address questions about ‘challenging behaviour’ and preservice teachers’ ‘knowledge’, and to acknowledge the scope and limitations of these decisions.

Part I of this thesis comprises two chapters (Chapters 1 and 2) dedicated to outlining the problem setting, method and theoretical framework underpinning the study. Chapter 1 (this chapter) was dedicated to generating a brief overview of the what, why and how of the research project. Chapter 2 explicates the theoretical framework of the study. It undertakes the task of outlining a Foucauldian understanding of knowledge as at once archevised and dynamic; furthermore, it argues the utility of such understandings in investigating the research questions. Beyond the task of describing the Foucauldian
conceptions of knowledge employed, three discourses of ‘challenging behaviour’ will be posited. The theoretical framework chapter is positioned ‘up-front’ as a means of developing a language for discussing data analysis throughout the thesis.

PART II: Making the Map

Part II is concerned with map creation and particularly is concerned with portraying the landscape of ‘that which may be known’ about challenging behaviour, it comprises Chapters 3 and 4. This couplet of analysis chapters undertakes the task of building a detailed archive of challenging behaviour thus rendering the map against which participants’ knowledge re-construction journeys may be plotted.

Chapter 3 is dedicated to constructing a ‘spatial data matrix’. This involves gathering and tabulating cartographic information of ‘what’ entities are to be mapped. In the case of this thesis, this meant locating and selecting texts via literature and document review that featured statements on ‘challenging behaviour’. Then, each text was allocated coordinates such as which discipline it came from, and which discourse it belonged to; thus, defining its place on the ‘map’. Whilst I did this using paragraphs and subheadings, rather than a grid, the effect was essentially similar – I amassed a collection of discursive points of reference for constructing the map of ‘that which may be known’ (or the archive) of challenging behaviour. Chapter 3 explores ‘challenging behaviour’ as an internationally emerging concept and examines the historical contexts, across several disciplines, for the emergence of the three discourses of challenging behaviour posited in Chapter 2.

Harley drew on Foucault’s theorisation of power-knowledge to argue that the ‘internal power’ of cartography is concerned with the ‘political effects of what cartographers do when they make maps … The key to internal power is cartographic process …. [for example] the way elements of landscapes are formed into hierarchies’ (Harley 2001, p. 165-6). In Chapter 4, I exercise such power by elevating the importance of the
‘contemporary educational context’ as an element of the landscape to be mapped. I do this by rendering it in far greater detail than the rest of the map (as outlined in Chapter 3). Such intense focus seemed necessary given the study’s intent to understand preservice teachers’ knowledge of challenging behaviour. Chapter 4 focuses on the meanings and usages afforded ‘challenging behaviour’ within the contemporary educational contexts of this study, from the development of the NSWIT to present-day. This is achieved via a review of literature and primary documents sourced from the: NSW parliament, NSW government (NSWDEC), accrediting bodies (NSWIT and AITSL), and the participating university and primary schools.

Overall, Part II maps the ‘archevised’ element of knowledge on challenging behaviour. In doing so: problematises the ‘really obvious’ meaning and usage of the term ‘challenging behaviour’; and highlights the complexity inherent in the term’s definition and usage within and across disciplines, over time. Part II of this thesis is designed to bring into sharp relief the remarkable strangeness of the term’s concurrent meaning-shift and seemingly unquestioned-uptake in contemporary educational contexts.

**PART III: Plotting the Journeys**

Having mapped ‘that which may be known’, or archival knowledge, of challenging behaviour (in Part II), attention turns to how the preservice teachers journey through this discursive terrain. In Part III the dynamic aspects of knowledge are brought into consideration. Part III begins to consider how the preservice teachers position themselves in relation to the discourses of challenging behaviour found in the archive. The question of which discursive landscapes the preservice teachers take-up, reject, negotiate and traverse in forming their personal understandings of challenging behaviour is considered. This question is addressed across four analysis chapters. Chapters 5 and 6 work together to consider the epistemic journeys undertaken by the preservice teachers in constructing their pre-PEx knowledge of challenging behaviour. Then Chapter 7 and 8 collaboratively portray the epistemic journeys impacting
knowledge re-construction during PEx. A more detailed explanation of each of these pairings of chapters is now offered.

Chapters 5 and 6 begin to map the preservice teacher participants’ dynamic knowledge of challenging behaviour against the discourses identified in the archive (in Chapters 2, 3 and 4). Chapter 5 examines pre-PEx concept map and interview data to consider the preservice teachers’ knowledge resources and illustrate their propensity to perceive a theory/practice divide. Importantly, Chapter 5 illustrates that the preservice teachers tend to value practical and apprenticed knowledge of challenging behaviour over ‘theory’. Chapter 6 discursively maps the preservice teachers’ apprenticed knowledge and compares this to university-based understandings of behaviour (as mapped out in Section 4.2). It is the relationship between these two knowledges, the apprenticed versus university knowledge of challenging behaviour, and the tensions and points of agreement between them that become important points of reference. These points of reference are used to plot the preservice teachers’ epistemic journeys across the challenging behaviour archive. They characterise epistemic processes that I have termed ‘matching’ and ‘squishing’, used by the participants to dis/engage with university coursework so as to arrive at their pre-PEx understandings of challenging behaviour.

Considered together, Chapters 7 and 8 work to describe how the preservice teachers re-construct their knowledge of challenging behaviour during PEx. However, the sequencing of these paired chapters requires some explanation. Chapter 7 undertakes two tasks. It considers what constitutes discernable ‘knowledge change’ between pre- and post-PEx and how such knowledge change occurred (and especially how the posited epistemic processes differed in pre- and post-PEx knowledge re-construction). Then, Chapter 8 works to substantiate arguments made in Chapter 7. To this end, Chapter 8 offers detailed analyses of pre- and post-PEx concept maps and interviews to locate the preservice teachers’ knowledge change (if any) on the topic of challenging behaviour. Finally, it discursively maps PEx data (classroom observations, mentor interviews, school and PEx documents) and post-PEx data (concept maps, interviews,
focus group and university assignments) to better understand ‘how’ this knowledge change occurred.

**PART IV: The Power and Limitations of Maps**

‘While the map is never the reality … it helps to create a different reality’ (Harley 2001, p. 168). Having denounced intentions of scientifically and neutrally mapping a singular ‘reality’ of challenging behaviour from the outset, the intent of the cartographic exercise undertaken in this thesis is to help ‘create a different reality’ for ‘challenging behaviour’ as a knowledge referent. I hope to render challenging behaviour as complex, vague and subjective rather than ‘really obvious’ and ‘commonsense’, to highlight how different ‘ways of knowing’ challenging behaviour offer certain possibilities for pedagogy and teacher subjectivities, and to illustrate the ‘problem’ of how preservice teachers currently come to understand challenging behaviour. These intentions were always and ever constrained by the cartographic processes I chose to deploy: the projections I discerned to use, the spatial data matrix I compiled and my deliberate focus on certain elements of the map over others.

Whilst most of this thesis works to construct a ‘map’ of that which may be known of challenging behaviour and ‘plotting the preservice teachers’ epistemic journeys’ through this discursive space, this final chapter offers a chance to deconstruct the map I’ve made and identify the work that it does. This deconstruction process posits the question, ‘how could this map may be used in teacher education coursework planning, design and future research?’ Part IV comprises the final chapter of this thesis (Chapter 9), it offers a summary of the thesis organized by the main research questions, discusses the implications of this research project and makes recommendations for future research.
1.5. Chapter summary

This introductory chapter has offered an overview of the conception and implementation of the study and the way forward for this thesis. It clearly identified the research focus of how preservice teachers re-construct their knowledge of challenging behaviour during their final internship (PEx), and the resources they draw on to achieve this. The multiple and contentious possibilities for understanding ‘challenging behaviour’ coupled with its ‘taken for granted common sense’ status was the epistemological problem presented for consideration. A post-structural approach drawing on the theoretical resources afforded by Foucault was outlined as supportive of investigating how individuals may re-construct knowledge of such a problematic and ambiguous concept.

The project, I maintain, utilised a study design supportive of this research foci, problem setting and theoretical framework. Data collection took place at the participating university and five NSW public schools (three in the greater Metropolitan Area of Sydney, and two in regional NSW). Data was collected, pre-, during- and post-PEx via concept mapping, interviews, focus group, classroom observations and document review. All data collected was subjected to a dual-layered analysis; the first iteration of analysis involved inductive, thematic content analysis, the second mapped statements in the data against various identifiable discourses of challenging behaviour.

In summary, this chapter has worked to: describe the research problem and questions, make transparent the project’s design and method, and explicate how the findings of the study have been presented and structured in this thesis. The following chapter describes the theoretical framework and its treatment of ‘knowledge’, and particularly knowledge of ‘challenging behaviour’.
Theoretical framework
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study attends, primarily, to preservice teachers’ knowledge of challenging behaviour, not their knowledge of the content they must teach. With this in mind, it is important to explore the working definition of ‘knowledge’ that frames, sustains and propels this project. I use the term ‘explore’ with the intent of acknowledging the impossibility of finitude in matters epistemological. I make no assertion that the construals of knowledge employed in this study are rigid, the only, or indeed the correct means of ‘knowing knowledge’. Instead, this chapter attempts to make transparent an understanding of epistemology that, although inevitably imperfect, is useful for considering how the participating preservice teachers’ knowledge regarding challenging behaviour changed over the course of their final professional experience (PEx). To this end I will first consider epistemology in education and preservice teacher education by way of problematising both its underrepresentation in teacher preparation coursework and its dangerously ‘mainstreamed’ meanings and applications in the discipline of education. Then, having identified the limitations of the treatment of epistemology in education generally, and of preservice teachers’ knowledge specifically, I will move to propose adoption of Foucault’s theories of knowledge as an alternative framework for analysing the knowledge and knowledge change of participants in this study. Finally, because Foucault’s theorisation of knowledge is, at least in part, connected to ‘discourse’, three discourses of challenging behaviour will be posited in an effort to background analyses of literature and data in ensuing chapters.

2.1. Epistemology in education – a surprisingly messy problematic

For a discipline highly concerned with knowledge processes and products, education’s consideration of epistemology, I argue, leaves room for both speculation and development. As a point of departure for this argument, I will first consider ‘epistemology’ as it is, or is not, coupled with preservice teacher education.
Epistemology is a broad and highly debated field, yet these debates seem to occur beside, rather than within, contemporary teacher education coursework. Whilst the nature of epistemology is strongly contended in studies of curriculum theory (Carr 2007) and in literature on educational philosophy and theory (e.g. Barrie 2007; Lang 2011; MacKenzie 1998), there is a scarcity of epistemological scholarship in teacher education coursework. Strong connections have been made between students’ epistemological belief and learning and ensuing calls for students’ epistemological beliefs to be ‘brought out into the open’ (Schommer 1994, p. 315) and ‘ways of knowing’ to be explicitly taught in teacher education (Lyons 1990).

Epistemology remains underrepresented in preservice teacher preparation coursework, especially in the context of this study. One reason for this may be that epistemology is cast as a ‘philosophically laden topic’ (Schommer 1994, p. 315) and so is often taught within the confines of ‘philosophy of education’ coursework. McCann and Yaxley (1992) identify epistemology studies as a focus of ‘philosophy of education’ subjects and point to the demise of such coursework offerings in teacher preparation programs. Lankshear (2005) offers historical comment on the demise of ‘philosophy of education’ content from Australasian teacher education coursework since the late 1980s:

As is well known, following amalgamation with Colleges of Education, and the transformation of many university departments and schools of Education from centres of academic educational inquiry into Faculties of Teacher Education, spaces for philosophical inquiry into educational issues as a bona fide teaching and learning focus rapidly diminished. Philosophy of Education was widely consigned to playing bit parts within programs that seemed to become increasingly ‘functionalist’ by the day, in accordance with state and federal government policy directives.

(Lankshear 2005, p. 304)

In this quote Lankshear points to the role of ‘state and federal government policy directives’ in impacting representations of philosophy of education coursework in teacher preparation programs. Indeed, in the context of this study, neither ‘epistemology’ nor ‘philosophy of education’ content is mandated by the regulatory
body for accreditation of teacher education courses in Australia (Education Services Australia 2011a).

Perhaps predictably then, the undergraduate program undertaken by participants (in the current study) did not feature a ‘philosophy of education’ elective. For these preservice teachers, explicit discussion of ‘epistemology’ in their four years of undergraduate studies was confined to: a compulsory research methods course (where the onus was simply to learn the definitional and applicable difference between ‘epistemology’ and ‘ontology’); and a compulsory ‘sociology of education’ subject, that paid credence to multiple discourses and ensuing ‘ways of knowing’. So then, whilst knowledge is, arguably, an integral part of teaching and learning, epistemological studies in teacher preparation contexts seems disproportionately underrepresented.

That ‘epistemology’ is relatively untroubled and untouched in preservice teacher education due to historical and political pressures to ‘functionalise’ teacher preparation (Lankshear 2005) seems a one-dimensional construal of the problem. Is it also possible that treatment of knowledge in education, as a wider discipline, has become ‘mainstreamed’ (Lang 2011) and - in the absence of diverse theorisations and understandings of knowledge - studying epistemology in teacher preparation courses appears almost unnecessary. A bold claim but one I now move to support.

Siegell [2008] observes that in contrast to the “mainstream philosophical world,” where epistemological research has been “booming”, it has “waned in the philosophy of education community”.

(Lang 2011, p. 80)

In his critique, Lang contends that propositional rationalism dominates education’s treatment of epistemology and that Kantian epistemology ‘takes pride of place’ (Lang 2011, p. 81) in educational construals of knowledge:
Mainstream epistemology [in the discipline of education] employs a reductive formula to determine the validity of knowledge claims, commonly represented in philosophy by the rubric, “$S$ knows ‘that $p$,’” wherein $S$ represents an undifferentiated rationally autonomous individual/knower, interchangeable with all other knowers; and “$p$” represents a knowable proposition.

(Lang 2011, p. 82)

Such preoccupation with generic demonstrations and pursuits of the known (Bonnett 2009) has been typified as the approach to knowledge most frequently adopted in education. Knowledge in educational contexts is traditionally held as a collection of true propositions or beliefs (Reid 1996) to be learned, to fill one’s mind with, and to impart to the minds of others. The very existence and popular uptake of outcomes-based education is testimony to this (Forster 1995). In this context, teacher knowledge is often presented in the literature (e.g. Buss 2010; Darling-Hammond 2006; Haverback & Parault 2008; Henderson & Rodrigues 2008; Mathews & Seaman 2007; MCEETYA 2008, cited in Norton 2010; Osana, Lacroix, Tucker & Desrosiers 2006; Sperandeo-Mineo, Fazio & Tarantino 2005; Wineburg 2006) and teaching board documents (e.g. Educational Services Australia 2011b; NSWIT 2006) as synonymous with ‘content knowledge’, or the ability to accurately recall and communicate the propositional knowledge that comprises the content of syllabi.

However, this ‘brain as computer, knowledge as inert data’ metaphor (Davis & Sumara 1997) is limiting as a theoretical framework for understanding knowledge and knowledge change. As Bereiter (2002, p.24) neatly summarises:

The idea of knowledge as the contents of a mental filing cabinet is, I believe, the most stultifying conception in educational thought. But it has been shared by all the major combatants in the educational debates of this century. There are traditionalists who want to make sure the filing cabinet is filled and with the right things; there are child-centered and ‘constructivist’ educators who insist that the contents of the filing cabinet should be the result of the child’s own inquiries; and there are the thinking skills enthusiasts who want to ignore the mental filing cabinet (whose contents they believe to be rapidly obsolescent) and to focus on developing skills in accessing various external filing cabinets and applying their contents. There is merit in all these positions, but they appear unreconcilable.
So then, there is a call for further considering the role of ‘knowledge’ in education, and educators, as something beyond what may be stored in the proverbial mind-as-container. But, Bereiter notes, this call to beyond is also fraught with the task of overcoming contradictory conceptions of knowledge and mind:

Those of a sociocultural turn of mind may have no difficulty with the idea of knowledge existing at a suprapersonal level, but they have trouble linking this up to children’s learning of their times tables. A viable theory of mind for 21st century education, it seems to me, must be able to negotiate effectively between individual learning on one hand and knowledge conceived of as a product or as a cultural good on the other. Folk theory of mind, constrained by its container metaphor, simply can’t do the job.

(Bereiter 2002, pp. 19-20)

Soon, I will make a case for deploying Foucault’s theorisation of knowledge as the theoretical framework for this study that meets Bereiter’s (2002) challenge of synthesising and theorising the relationship between personal and suprapersonal knowledges in educational contexts. Before justifying my theoretical framework in this way, existing literature on teacher and preservice teacher epistemology will be briefly reviewed and an argument will be made as to why I do not hasten to faithfully follow or replicate their theoretical approach.

Scholarly moves away from discussing ‘knowledge’ in education and teacher and preservice teacher knowledge as a set of propositional truths, or a ‘thing’ to be stored in mental filing cabinet, may be found in diverse abundance. The diversity of recurring themes in this literature is interesting. These themes include: counter-claims to mainstream epistemological assumptions that teacher knowledge is more than and/or different to propositional knowledge (Barrie 2007; Bonnett 2009; Carr 2007; Ernest 1999; Gore 2001; Joram 2007; Valli & Tom 1988); contributions from educational psychology that reconceptualise teacher epistemology in terms of ‘teacher thinking’ and cognition (Clarke & Lampert 1986; Davis & Sumara 1997; Schommer 1994); and advocates for multiple perspectives (Adams 2011; Kincheloe 2004; Valli & Tom 1988;
White 2000), multiple knowledges (Lang 2011) and combinations of epistemological beliefs (Schommer 1994) in teachers.

Whilst the recurring themes in this body of literature proved relatively easy to summarise, the diversity amongst the subjects of study, theoretical frameworks deployed and epistemological models proposed is complex. Firstly, the varied and very specifically defined subjects or areas of study made comparison between them difficult. These areas of study included the: dimensions of epistemology, generally (Schommer 1994); relationship between gender and knowledge in tertiary education (Hastrup 2003); nature of knowledge (Bonnett 2009), knowledge forms (Ernest 1999; MacKenzie 1998), knowledge domains (Kinclhoe 2004) and knowledge bases (Gore 2001; Valli & Tom 1988) in various fields of education: role of practical versus theoretical knowledge in education (Carr 2007); types, taxonomies or ‘domains’ of teacher knowledge (Barrie 2007); personal epistemological beliefs of teachers (Joram 2007; Chitpin 2011), preservice teachers (Joram 2007; Many, Howard & Hodge 2002; Schommer 1994; White 2000), teacher educators (Joram 2007) and students (Lyons 1990); and the relationships between teacher and student epistemologies (Lyons 1990). These studies make distinctions between knowledge forms, domains, and personal epistemologies and relationships therein. By focusing more on knowledge’s expansive relationship to discourse and self, Foucault’s theorisation of knowledge renders labouring over such finely tuned boundaries and such particular topics of knowledge (as listed above) rather unnecessary. This point will become self-evident in the following section (section 2.2 and 2.3)

When theoretical frameworks were explicated, considered as a collection they represent a smorgasbord of scholarly thought. Merleau Ponty’s work on perception and corporeity was utilised by Bonnett (2009), Davis and Sumara (1997) and Hastrup (2003). Hirst’s theorisation of the difference between propositional and practical knowledge underscored Boulton and Panizzon’s (1998) study of knowledge in science education. Schommer’s epistemology theories underpinned Many et al.’s (2002) study of
preservice primary teachers’ epistemology. Stevick and Gross (2010) deployed Michael Apple’s work on the politics of knowledge in their discussion of knowledge in Holocaust education. Epistemological realism fuelled Moore’s (2000) argument ‘for knowledge’ in the reconstruction of the curriculum debate. Karl Popper’s critical rationalism framed Chitpin’s (2011) essay on teacher knowledge. Lang (2011) drew on feminist theorists – Donna Haraway, Lorraine Code and Maureen Ford – to make a case for ‘situated knowledges’ as an alternative to mainstream epistemology in education. Davis and Sumara (1997) used complexity theory to consider the location of knowledge as resting in interactions between people, rather than in their minds. I maintain that none of these theoretical frameworks offered a suitable theoretical tool for the purpose of my study. This is because, considered independently, none of these theories answer Bereiter’s call to reconsider knowledge in educational contexts as at once personal and suprapersonal, they tended to consider one or the other, but not both. This is where Foucault’s theorisation of knowledge offers useful theoretical tools for this project.

I contend that a useful framework for considering the relationship between discourse and knowledge and one that meets Bereiter’s (2002) call to theorise knowledge as concurrently ‘individual learning’ and a ‘product or cultural good’ is offered by the work of Michel Foucault. However, I only found two articles that mobilised Foucault’s framing of ‘knowledge’ in educational research. Firstly, Jennifer Gore (2001) drew on Foucault to propose a new framework for understanding knowledge bases in teacher education (generally). Secondly, I found only one example in the literature of a study deploying Foucault’s theorisation of knowledge to study preservice teacher epistemology (Welch & Wright 2011)\(^3\). Welch and Wright (2011) deployed Foucault’s theorisation of knowledge/power, to consider preservice teachers’ knowledge of health and its dependent relationship with discourse. In this sense, Foucault’s work offered a theoretical framework that generated an exceptional example of educational epistemological research that co-considered personal knowledge construction processes

\(^3\) More often, Foucauldian theory was used to consider knowledge construction in terms of preservice teacher identity (eg. Salter 1998; Walshaw 2009), which is conceptually different to studies of knowledge and epistemology, generally.
and suprapersonal knowledges (in terms of multiple ‘discourses’ of health). However, my use of Foucault’s work on knowledge does not directly mirror Welch and Wright’s (2011) treatment of the topic. Foucault’s work on ‘knowledge’ is diverse, complex and at times contradictory and so open to a variety of interpretations. It is the purpose of this chapter, to tease out how I have made sense of this complexity and how I intend to apply a Foucauldian understanding of ‘knowledge’ to this study. My purpose here is not to propose how Foucault ‘ought’ to be interpreted, instead it is merely to clarify my own interpretations of his work on ‘knowledge’ for the reader.

Foucault’s theories of knowledge are interesting insofar as he repositioned his standpoint on knowledge at two identifiable moments in his life’s work. I contend that this repositioning is what makes it possible to consider Foucault’s work in response to Bereiter’s (2002) challenge of deploying a singular theoretical framework to synthesise conceptions of ‘suprapersonal’ and ‘individual’ knowledge; concepts that otherwise seem incompatible and intent on haunting epistemological debates in the field of education. Whilst Foucault did not use the terms ‘suprapersonal’ and/or ‘individual’ to describe knowledge, I argue that two ‘moments’ in his life’s work functioned to articulate distinctions and relationships between such two notions of knowledge. Originally, Foucault focused on theorising knowledge as something anterior to the thinking human mind, an archive comprising products of discourse. In this sense, and at first glance, Foucault’s early work on knowledge relates directly to notions of ‘suprapersonal’ knowledge (Bereiter 2002); that is, those conceptions of knowledge that avoid the ‘mind as container’ metaphor. Later, Foucault’s approach to knowledge broadened to include consideration of knowledge’s ‘dynamic’ (Rouse 2003), interior relationship with power, the subject and the discourse object. As such, Foucault’s later theorisation of knowledge thoroughly involved the individual. It follows then that such treatment of knowledge relates easily to Bereiter’s (2002) notion of ‘individual’ knowledge.
My argument thus far has established a certain set of parallels between Bereiter’s problematisation of and Foucault’s theorisation of knowledge. I have highlighted how two very different thinkers have been inclined to understand knowledge as either suprapersonal/archevised or individual/dynamic. Despite such parallels, Bereiter’s and Foucault’s work on knowledge is far from identical and their differences variously situate them as useful to this study. On the one hand, Bereiter succinctly sets out the problem and identifies the present need for concurrently considering suprapersonal and individual knowledge in epistemological debate, in the field of Education. On the other hand, I suggest that Foucault’s theorisation of knowledge is of utility in synthesising such archevised and dynamic knowledges. Far from allowing assertions of the existence of an individual/dynamic knowledge to supersede, or be mutually exclusive to, earlier construals of suprapersonal/archevised knowledge (and without Foucault directly naming them as such), I posit that Foucault’s later work considered the ever oscillating and generative relationship between the two knowledge types. Ultimately, it is this capacity to consider the relationship between the two knowledge types that is of greatest utility to this study of preservice teachers’ knowledge and knowledge change regarding children’s challenging behaviour. This is my reasoning for adopting Foucault’s, and not Bereiter’s work as theoretical framework for my study.

2.2. What are Foucault’s theories of knowledge?

The study of knowledge was fundamental to Foucault’s work and the contribution of his work on ‘knowledge’ to the academe has attracted various comments; for example, Foucault’s work is positioned as instrumental to the centring of ‘knowledge’ as a focus of critical scholarship (Popkewitz & Brennan 1997). Irrespective of others’ comment regarding his contributions to the study of knowledge, Foucault himself (more than once) defined knowledge at the core of his project. He states,

What archaeology tries to describe is not the specific structure of science, but the very different domain of knowledge. Moreover, although it is concerned with knowledge in its relation to epistemological figures in the sciences, it may also
question knowledge in a different direction and describe it in a different set of relations.

(Foucault 1972, p. 213)

My objective for more than twenty-five years has been to sketch out a history of the different ways in our culture that humans develop knowledge about themselves: economics, biology, psychiatry, medicine and penology. The main point is not to accept this knowledge at face value but to analyze these so-called sciences as very specific 'truth games' related to specific techniques that human beings use to understand themselves.

(Foucault 1997a, p. 224)

Yet even in these statements there are tensions and contradictions about what knowledge is and how it may be talked about. The first quote, from Foucault’s earlier work, describes knowledge that is something that may be mapped according to its development and its relationships to itself. The second excerpt, from one of his later works, outlines the task of recognising knowledge as something related to ‘techniques that human beings use’, and so looks at the relationship between knowledge and the self.

So far I have hinted at ‘two moments’ in Foucault’s life work that offer different theorisations of knowledge. Because of their complex interrelatedness, I have resisted labelling these moments as unique entities. However, now, for the sake of easy reading/writing, I need to revise this and explicate the labels I intend to use throughout this thesis.

Typically, and despite its being held as generally unnecessary to do so (Nicholls 2009; White 2009), Foucault’s oeuvre is divided into dual movements of archaeology and genealogy. However, Foucault, himself indicates the interconnectedness of archaeology and genealogy:
No, no, no, … no, no, I never stopped doing archaeology. I never stopped doing genealogy. Genealogy defines the target and the finality of the work and archaeology indicates the field with which I deal to make a genealogy.

(cited in Mahon 1992, p. 212)

But if not along lines of archaeology/genealogy how may the ‘two moments’ of Foucault’s work be defined? Garry Gutting (2003) notes that instead of considering Foucault’s work in terms of archaeology, genealogy and ethics, that is, along a methodological axis, one may interpret his work along a topical axis – especially in discussions of epistemology.

The topical axis of interpretation, which views him [Foucault] as starting with the study of knowledge, coming to see the inextricable connection of knowledge to power, and finally subordinating both to a primary concern with the self shows how to read Foucault as contributing to … epistemology.

(Gutting 2003, p. 6)

Such nuanced differences in methodological and topical interpretive axes and the latter’s relatedness to studies of epistemology are duly noted. Henceforth, whilst occasional methodological interpretation is unavoidable, a topical interpretation dominates the language describing Foucault’s treatment of knowledge used throughout the remainder of this thesis. Hereafter, Foucault’s initial ‘study of knowledge’ (Gutting 2003, p. 6) is labelled ‘archevised’ (Kendall & Wickham 1999), and his ‘coming to see the inextricable connection of knowledge to power and finally subordinating both to a primary concern with the self’ (Gutting 2003, p. 6) is labelled ‘dynamic’ (Rouse 2003) knowledge.

2.2.1. Knowledge as archevised

In his ‘Archeologies’ Foucault analysed the discourses of: psychiatry in Madness and Civilization (1967); general grammar, natural history, and analysis of wealth in The Order of Things (2001); and medicine in The Birth of the Clinic (1973). Archaeology of
Knowledge (1972, p. 16), touted by Foucault as his attempt to give ‘greater coherence’ to the methods ‘sketched out’ in his first two archaeologies, closely describes the purpose and processes particular to his archaeological analyses. This work is central to explicating my theoretical framework and construals of knowledge as archevised.

Considering Foucault’s (1972, p. 213) statement that archaeology ‘tries to describe … the very different domain of knowledge’ and having established that ‘discourse’ was a central construct of Foucault’s archaeologies, it is important to understand how this construct rendered knowledge as anterior to the human mind. According to Foucault,

Discourse is constituted by a group of sequences of signs, in so far as they are statements, that is, in so far as they can be assigned particular modalities of existence … discourse can be defined as the group of statements that belong to a single system of formation.

(1972, p. 121)

Construed in this way as a ‘group of statements that belong to a single system of formation’, Foucault located discourse (and it follows, knowledge) outside of human minds. He suggested that discourse has an existence and form of its own. Kendall and Wickham (1999) explicate this succinctly by describing Foucault’s conception of discourse as having no inside or outside and functioning to set the limits of the ‘sayable and repeatable’. Foucault (2001) more explicitly indicated his intention to consider knowledge as existing outside of the human mind. He states in The Order of Things,

… as soon as he thinks, [Man] merely unveils himself to his own eyes in the form of a being who is already, in a necessary subjacent density, in an irreducible anteriority, a living being, an instrument of production, a vehicle for words which exist before him.

(Foucault 2001, p. 341)

Considering this, it is easy to agree with Kendall and Wickham’s (1999) interpretation that Foucault dealt with knowledge as ‘stratified, archevised and rigidly segmented’ (p. 51) and something that, circulating at the suprapersonal level of discourse that ‘goes on
without us [humans]’ (p. 36). However, I contend this is an oversimplified interpretation and, considered alone, one of limited utility to this study of preservice teachers’ knowledge change. Rather, the notion of archevised knowledge becomes useful to this study when considered in tandem with interpretations of Foucault’s theorisation of knowledge as dynamic.

2.2.2. Knowledge as dynamic

Jennifer Gore (2001) argued for knowledge in education to be considered as ‘dynamic and problematic rather than static and questionable’ (p. 129). This perceived need for dynamic knowledge in education is one to which Foucault’s theoretical responses may adequately respond. Joseph Rouse (2003) made a compelling argument that, although Foucault never explicitly identified it as such, Foucault theorised knowledge as ‘dynamic’. This sub-section draws heavily on Rouse’s work to describe this central tenet of ‘dynamic knowledge’. In delineating Foucault’s treatment of knowledge as archevised and dynamic, an important task lies in identifying both similarities and differences between the two approaches. The previous sub-section set out to describe that which is unique to his early treatment of knowledge; that is, ‘knowledge as archevised’. This sub-section sets out to: identify continuities of dynamical aspects of knowledge across both key moments in his life’s work and highlight the peculiarities of theorising knowledge as dynamic.

The ‘leap’ from the notion of knowledge as archevised and suprapersonal to later construals of knowledge as dynamic and thoroughly involving the individual is not perhaps as dramatic as it may, at first, seem. In one sense, there is no great disconnect between Foucault’s conceptions of archevised and dynamic knowledges, one is simply an expansion of the other. Rouse (2003) argues that dynamic understandings of knowledge were subtly embedded in Foucault’s earlier works. Consider, for example, the distinctions Foucault (1972) made between ‘savoir’ and ‘connaissance’ in *Archaeology of Knowledge.*
When talking of ‘savoir’ and ‘connaissance’, Foucault was mobilising subtleties of the French language that do not have exact equivalencies in English (where both terms translate to ‘knowledge’). Whilst different translators of Foucault’s work offer mildly differing explanations of the use of these terms, of greatest utility in understanding Rouse’s argument (above) is, perhaps, directly deferring to Foucault. Foucault explains his use of these terms,

*By connaissance* I mean the relation of the subject to the object and the formal rules that govern it. *Savoir* refers to the conditions that are necessary in a particular period for this or that type of object to be given to *connaissance* and for this or that enunciation to be formulated.

(Foucault 1972, p. 15)

In relating the subject (that is, the person) to the discourse object, Foucault’s initial explanation of *connaissance* ties this type of knowledge to the individual and his/her relationship to that which is spoken of or interacted with. *Savoir*, on the other hand, infers knowledge as definable by historically situated conditions of possibility and so portrays this type of knowledge as a set or formation of limits as to what one may know (*connaissance*) of a discourse object and subsequently what one may say about it. Importantly, whilst taking pains to distinguish these two types of knowledge Foucault places them in direct relationship with each other. Later, Foucault clarified this explanation, by reconceptualising ‘*connaissance*’ as synonymous with ‘learning’,

*For the moment, one can indicate in a very general way the directions in which it will need to advance, involving the distinction between knowledge [savoir] and learning [connaissance]; the difference between the will to knowledge [savoir] and the will to truth [verite]; the position of the subject, or subjects with respect to that will.  

(Foucault 1997b, p. 12)

Here, Foucault makes clear that *connaissance* is an individualised process of learning that knowledge (*savoir*), which is external to, and independent of, oneself. In
recognising and defining this knowledge doublet, this distinction and firm relationship between learning (connaisance) and knowledge (savoir), Foucault offers a theoretical construct that answers Bereiter’s (2002) call for consideration of the coexistence of, and interplay between, ‘knowledge as mind’ and ‘knowledge as suprapersonal’ in contemporary educational thought.

From the outset then, Foucault’s treatment of knowledge as archevised and dynamic is less contradictory than it may at first appear. Foucault’s construals of knowledge as archevised did not preclude or exclude his later conceptions of knowledge as dynamic. On the contrary, there is a thread of continuity between the two, which shows Foucault’s project of knowledge has always been, at least in part, dynamic. Archeved knowledge has been shown to directly relate to dynamic knowledge insofar as the first may be understood as a foundation for developing the second.

Having considered the conceptual overlap between archeved and dynamic knowledge, I turn now to outline the elements of Foucault’s treatment of knowledge that are exclusively dynamic. Whilst Foucault’s archeved treatment of knowledge ‘sought to think the conditions of possibility of knowledge solely in reference to the discursive level, independently of any specific positions for the subject’ (Han 2003, p. 202), that which is peculiar to Foucault’s dynamic theorisation of knowledge is its focus on and involvement of the self. Maria Tamboukou discusses this element of Foucault’s work from a methodological interpretive axis, but her comment on Foucault’s genealogies’ neatly dovetails my discussion of dynamic knowledge:

Foucault’s genealogies pose the question of which kinds of practices tied to which kinds of external conditions determine the different knowledges in which we ourselves figure.  

(Tamboukou 1999, p. 202)

That we, as selves, are portrayed as ‘figuring’ in Foucault’s later conceptions of knowledge speaks to the significant role and inclusion of the individual in such
theorisations. Expressly framing knowledge as ‘dynamic’ and thoroughly involving the self are Foucault’s theorisations of power-knowledge, and the subject. Each of these I now briefly explain, in turn.

At face value, ‘power-knowledge’ may seem to be paying credence to the traditional maxim ‘knowledge is power’. Such interpretations would be far from reasonable and/or correct. If anything, Foucault reversed this traditional belief (Popkewitz & Brennan 1997). Foucault invented the concept of ‘power-knowledge’ to consider these two relations correlative (Kelly 2009), not as synonyms. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1995) sets out to explain such conceptual correlations:

> Power produces knowledge … [and] power and knowledge directly imply one another … There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations

*(Foucault 1995, p. 27)*

To appreciate the positing of such a close relationship between power and knowledge and how this links to interpretations of Foucault’s later work on knowledge as dynamic, each element of the power-knowledge couplet, and their respective relationships to the self, may first be considered independently.

Foucault conceptualised power as non-hierarchical, networked, distributed and productive. His conception of power as a series of ‘actions upon other actions’ (Foucault 1982) speaks to a non-linear, and indeed, dynamic construal of power. Given this notion of ‘power as dynamic’, Foucault’s consideration of the close and generative relationship between power and knowledge infers dynamical qualities on knowledge (Rouse 2003).
Thus far, I have made an argument that Foucault’s conceptual coupling of power-knowledge makes for a uniquely dynamic understanding of knowledge. However, I am yet to substantiate my earlier assertions that power-knowledge works to make knowledge dynamic by thoroughly involving the individual. Before stating my case, it is important to acknowledge arguments to the contrary. The case may be convincingly made that, in his publications *Discipline & Punish* and *The Will to Knowledge*, Foucault characterised power as anti-subjectivist; that is, it has having a dynamic of its own and existing externally to the individual (e.g. Kelly 2009; Kendall & Wickham 1999). Under this interpretation, power does not involve the individual, at all. However, I adopt a reading of Foucault’s work contrary to this, one that construes power as a construct thoroughly involving the individual. My interpretation is thus, closely aligned with Popkewitz and Brennan’s 1997 interpretation of Foucault’s work:

Foucault … looks for power in how people effect knowledge to intervene in social affairs. Foucault’s concept of power gives attention to its productive dimensions, such as how power works through individual actions to vision and re-vision our ‘selves’ as acting, thinking, feeling persons

(Popkewitz & Brennan 1997, p. 302)

This idea of power working ‘through individual actions’ (Popkewitz & Brennan 1997, p. 302), to me, seems more reasonably aligned with Foucault’s discussion of power,

It [the exercise of power] is a total structure of actions brought to bear upon possible actions; it incites, it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult; in the extreme it constrains or forbids absolutely; it is nevertheless always a way of acting upon an acting subject or acting subjects by virtue of their acting or being capable of action. A set of actions upon other actions.

(Foucault 1982, p. 789)

The above quote is from Foucault’s (1982) essay, *The Subject and Power*. That power is necessarily considered adjacent to the subject and his/her actions does not lend itself to the power-as-suprapersonal interpretation offered by Kelly (2009) and Kendall and Wickham (1999). Furthermore, and consistent with my interpretations of Foucault’s
work, it has been suggested that subject-centred interpretations of ‘power-knowledge’ are useful in understanding knowledge in teacher education contexts:

… knowledge can be seen not so much to develop (or impose) a set of formalized and universal concepts; but as something to be constructed and problematized within the dynamics of power (Foucault, 1991b, 1991c). Approaching knowledge in such a way in teaching and teacher education can enable people (teachers and students) to adopt alternative positions within different ‘regimes of truth,’ and, ultimately, within their ‘sphere of influence,’ choose whether to legitimize, resist or transform the status quo.

(Sicilia-Camacho & Fernandez-Balboa 2009, pp. 450-1)

That the above quote frames power-knowledge as a construct allowing people to actively ‘adopt’ knowledge positions is of great import to this study of teachers’ uptake of knowledge regarding children with challenging behaviour. Foucault theorised such positioning ‘choices’ in his discussion of the ‘subject’. Clare O’Farrell explains:

To define it at the most general level, the ‘subject’ is a philosophical category which describes an entity which is able to choose courses of action. One must also distinguish between the subject and the individual, for example Foucault (1982b: 331) notes that he is interested in a form of power that ‘transforms individuals into subjects’. Here he is using the word subject in two senses: in the sense of being controlled by others, and also in the sense of being attached to an identity through awareness and knowledge of self.

(O’Farrell 2005, p. 110)

O’Farrell’s explanation articulates a difference between notions of ‘the individual’ and ‘the subject’. This is a point worth labouring further. Until this juncture I have been arguing that Foucault’s later work on knowledge, his ‘dynamic’ treatment of knowledge, thoroughly involves the individual – and I have been using the word ‘individual’ in its most colloquial sense. What is far more useful to this study is to consider less the ‘individual’ and more the ‘subject’, or perhaps more importantly the subject positions that the individual may take on, especially through their navigation and negotiation of competing discourses of challenging behaviour. O’Farrell further differentiates Foucault’s treatment of the individual and subject in the following quote:
The subject is a form, not a thing and this form is not constant even when attached to the same individual. Foucault notes differences for example, between the political subject who votes and the sexual subject of desire. In both cases, he says, one has a different (even if overlapping) relationship to oneself. And neither is the self an isolated entity.

(O’Farrell 2005, p. 113)

My detour into Foucault’s theorisation of ‘the subject’ is important, especially because of the interrelatedness of knowledge, power and subject in his work. Han (2003) hones this argument regarding the interrelatedness of the formation of subjects and objects of discourse (or knowledge). She contends that, in Foucauldian terms, processes of subjectification and objectification are mutually dependent because ‘an entity or epistemological domain can only appear as an object to be known if it is discovered through a specific positioning of the subject of knowledge’ (p. 177). In this way, the subject is thoroughly connected to knowledge.

To summarise, I have argued that Foucault’s later work construed knowledge as dynamic. That knowledge may be considered dynamic was evidenced via Foucault’s co-consideration of knowledge with a type of networked, distributed and productive (and so dynamic) power. That Foucault’s dynamic treatment of knowledge thoroughly involved the subject has been considered by examining the relationship of the subject to each element of the power-knowledge couplet independently: that is, a case was made for the inextricable link between both ‘power and subject’ and ‘knowledge and subject’. I round off my argument by deferring to Rouse’s comment on the involvement of the individual in power and knowledge, and thus the power-knowledge doublet. As Rouse (2003, p. 106) states: “Both knowing subjects and truths known are the product of relations of power and knowledge”. In this way the subject’s involvement in power-knowledge is both crystallised and complete.
2.3. **Knowledge as archevised AND dynamic – a useful construct**

Having outlined Foucault’s theories of knowledge the question remains: How does Foucault’s theorisation of knowledge map against notions of ‘knowledge re-construction’ inherent in the research question, and analysis of ‘knowledge change’ emergent from the data? Key to my portrayals of preservice teacher knowledge and knowledge change is the perpetual interplay of archevised and dynamic knowledges.

A dynamic understanding of knowledge is inherent in the main research question: How do preservice teachers re-construct their knowledge of children’s challenging behaviour in their final ‘professional experience? The notion of constructing and re-constructing a personal knowledge base very much involves the individual in perpetual and dynamic relationship with knowledge, but which knowledge and from where does the knowledge come? This is where archevised knowledge comes into play. The archive variously posits that which can be known whilst simultaneously pointing to the sources of knowledge. Discourses of challenging behaviour in the archive are the knowledges that the preservice teachers variously and dynamically position themselves around.

Working from the assumption that several discourses circulate in the archive regarding ‘challenging behaviour’ and that participants’ knowledge, talk and writing is ever and always a reflection or refraction of discourse, an important task is mapping individuals knowledge of challenging behaviour against those circulating discourses. This process will go someway to answering the main research question, as it should yield clues as to how the teachers position themselves in relation to multiple discourses of challenging behaviour in the archive. This, in turn, will allow for analysis and comment as to: which discourses are taken up by preservice teachers in their knowledge of challenging behaviours and which are not; whether the preservice teachers’ knowledge of challenging behaviour is in alignment or contrast with the discourses presented in university coursework; and how PEx impacts what discourses are taken up by preservice teachers, that is – are they different discourses before and after PEx?
2.4. Wherefore art thou archive?

My intent is to deploy a Foucauldian conception of knowledge as at once archeved and dynamic as a means of analysing preservice teachers’ knowledge and knowledge change regarding ‘challenging behaviour’. This framework concurrently considers both an archive of discourses (and it follows, knowledge) and how an individual may position themselves in relation to this archive. This positioning work of individuals is relational, dynamic and often in a state of flux. So, in order to map the participants’ positioning movements and subsequent changes in their knowledge and subject position(s), the critical reference point of ‘the archive’ must, at least metaphorically, be static. To borrow a cartographic metaphor, the critical reference point of the archive, the map itself, needs to ‘stay still’ if one is to effectively plot and come to understand the participants’ individual journeys through its terrain. In reality, the notion of a static archive of discourses, considering current, vast and perpetually changing conduits of texts (such as the internet and print/broadcast media etc.), is absurd. As it is an impossible task to represent such vastness and perpetual change in the archive, and so as to facilitate reasonable analysis of the data, a temporary ‘archival stasis’ must be achieved. Thus, although I conceive knowledge as both archeved and dynamic, and so draw on both the archaeological and genealogical moments of Foucault’s work, my initial task is an archaeological one; that is, to stem the archive.

An artificial state of stability is created in ‘the archive’ by deploying two devices; that is, by constructing an archive of challenging behaviour and positing the existence of three distinguishable discourses within that archive. These two tasks are undertaken at different junctures in the thesis and not in the order described above. The task of building the archive of challenging behaviour is undertaken in the next two chapters (Chapter 3 and 4), where a review of academic literature and relevant primary sources

---

4 The scale of the archive I’m constructing is, when compared with the expansive archives analysed by Foucault, somewhat of a miniaturisation. However, I adopt the word ‘archive’ in this thesis as a noun to describe the collection of hundreds of texts (including literature, legislation, policy documents, preservice teacher education readings etc.) reviewed.
(documents) is used to describe and problematise the concept of ‘challenging behaviour’. By comparison this chapter sets to work on the other device, the task of positing the three discourses of challenging behaviour that may be found in the archive.

At first glance the sequencing of these tasks in the structure of the thesis may appear strange; surely one must see what comprises the archive before one begins to form modes of classification for its contents. Whilst it is the case that the three discourses to be posited arose inductively from my reading and constructing of the archive, a rationale for positing the three discourses first is now offered. Firstly, the work of positing the three discourses is purely theoretical and relies on the theoretical resources afforded by Foucault, thus it makes sense to undertake this in the theoretical framework chapter. Secondly, positing the three discourses sets up a language for the support of subsequent chapters. In sketching out and naming three discourses of challenging behaviour it becomes possible to consistently describe and theme both the types of statements revealed in the process of building the archive (in Chapters 3 and 4), and the positioning work indicated in the statements of the participants (in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8).

Before proceeding further in the task of ‘positing three discourses of behaviour’, I need to differentiate my use of the word ‘discourse’ from Foucault’s deployment of the term. Foucault’s theorisation of ‘discourse’ and ‘discursive formations’ is often described as synonymous to ‘discipline’ or ‘field’:

‘What disciplines, forms of knowledge or discourses (in Foucault’s sense) had enabled this way of thinking?’
(McHoul & Grace 1993, p. 14, original emphasis)

‘Discourse as the means through which the field ‘speaks of itself to itself’
(Danaher, Schirato & Webb 2000, p. 33)

The discursive formation is roughly equivalent to a scientific discipline.
(O’Farrell 2005, p. 134)
Such consistent interpretation of ‘discourse and/or discursive formation as discipline’ is reasonable. Throughout his archaeological moment Foucault studies ‘discourses’ of psychiatry, general grammar, natural history, economics, and medicine. Notably, all of the ‘discourses’ listed here may also be identified as ‘disciplines’.

This ‘discourse as discipline’ approach was unhelpful to an analysis of discourses and knowledge of ‘behaviour’ because the archive on the topic is multi-disciplinary. Medicine, the psych sciences, education, public health, government administration and sociology were all disciplines found to have generated statements about ‘challenging behaviour’. Selections of these statements, considered collectively, constructed the ‘archive’ for this thesis (see Chapter 3). In forming an archive of challenging behaviour, it quickly became apparent that none of the above-listed disciplines independently contributed an, even vaguely, cohesive set of statements. Each discipline’s contribution was ‘incohesive’ insofar as there was vast dissent within disciplines regarding statements about ‘behaviour’ generally, and ‘challenging behaviour’, specifically. This is not to say that, in the multidisciplinary archive (as a whole) certain ‘limits of the sayable and repeatable’ (Kendall & Wickham 1999) about challenging behaviour did not present themselves. On the topic of behaviour, there seemed to be discursive regularities (Foucault 1972) both across and within disciplines. So, abandoning the popular interpretation of ‘discourse as discipline’, I followed Foucault’s fundamental task of describing and bounding a series of statements characterized by ‘specificity, singularity, and heterogeneity’ (Angermüller 2005). That is not to say that I contend all ‘emerging themes’ in datasets may be construed as discourses or discursive formations. Rather, I suggest that the specific and heterogeneous discursive regularities detected in the archive of challenging behaviour are traceable using Foucault’s technical definition of discourse and his rules for discursive formation; thus, they are more than ‘emerging themes’. Having defended my use of the term ‘discourse’, and for ease of reading and writing, I call each set of ‘discursive regularities’ that I have identified, a ‘discourse’ (at least for the duration of this thesis).
Identifying distinct discourses in the archive is an important task of this chapter because it negates the need to pin-down a singular definition of challenging behaviour against which to measure the preservice teachers’ knowledge. Rather, positing discursive limits for talking about challenging behaviour offers a means of framing and mapping interdisciplinary, complex and multiple ways of knowing challenging behaviour. Considering multiple ways of knowing in terms of the limits set by different discourses is helpful to this project’s intent to study participants’ knowledge and knowledge change using Foucauldian analytics. This is because Foucault, at least in part, identified knowledge as circulating at the discursive level. Positing three mutually exclusive discourses of challenging behaviour generates unique opportunities, in later chapters, for Foucauldian analyses of the preservice teachers’ knowledge and knowledge change in terms of identifying contradictions inherent in their knowledge and their subsequent contradictory subject positions.

2.5. **Positing three discourses (knowledges) in the archive of challenging behaviour**

This section posits that three, broadly bounded and mutually exclusive discourses appear in the archive of challenging behaviour. Whilst studiously avoiding ‘defining’ challenging behaviour itself, positing three discourses of ‘challenging behaviour’ offers a structure for analysing the preservice teachers’ knowledge of a concept laden with multitudinous meanings. If one takes a Foucauldian approach and considers the ‘conditions of possibility’ for talking about challenging behaviour, pinning-down a definition for it ceases to be an issue. Instead, one begins to focus on describing that which variously limits the ‘sayable and repeatable’ about challenging behaviour and the functions of identifiable discourses. From an archaeological perspective, to respond to the questions of *how* and *why* these discourses emerged it is necessary to consider their ‘conditions of existence’ (Foucault, 1972, p. 42). In the *Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault explains:

> Whenever one can describe, between a number of statements, such a system of dispersion, whenever, between objects, types of statement, concepts of thematic
choices, one can define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functionings, transformations), we will say … that we are dealing with a discourse formation … The conditions to which the elements of this division (objects, mode of statement, concepts, thematic choices) are subjected we shall call the rules of formation. The rules of formation are conditions of existence (but also of coexistence, maintenance, modification and disappearance) in a given discursive formation.

(1972, pp. 41-2, original emphasis)

In this section, it is my intent to use Foucault’s ‘rules of formation’ to consider the discursive regularities in the data that I am naming as three discourses of challenging behaviour. Foucault’s (1972) rules of formation include: the formation of objects; the formation of enunciative modalities; the formation of concepts; and the formation of strategies. Not all of these rules of formation will be addressed when positing the three discourses in the archive of challenging behaviour. I maintain this is reasonable because, Foucault qualified that:

In the various discursive domains that I have tried to sketch out … the problem was to describe the discursive formation … according to its own characteristics: it was necessary therefore to describe each time the rules for formation of objects, modalities of statement, concepts and theoretical choices. But it turned out that the difficult point of the analysis, and the one that demanded the greatest attention, was not the same in each case

(1972, p. 72)

Following this logic I have restricted this positing of discourses to consider the rules of formation that best applied to the data collected. Three rules of discursive formation will be considered, but not with equal weight. For each discourse, both the formation of objects and then the formation of enunciative modalities are briefly considered. However, the focus ‘rule of formation’ for this positing of three discourses, is the rule for the formation of strategies. The most distinguishing feature of the three discourses posited here are their strategies. According to Foucault (1972): ‘a discursive formation will be individualised if one can define the system of formation of the different strategies that are deployed in it’ (p. 76). To express this colloquially, a discursive formation is individualised once you specify ‘the work it does’ or ‘what impact it has’. I
contend that each of the three discourses of challenging behaviour posited do remarkably unique work.

2.5.1. The formation of objects – three construals of ‘the child with challenging behaviour’

Foucault (1972) described discourse as the ‘practices that systematically form the object of which they speak’ (p. 72). A key objective for discourse analysis then is to attempt to identify the rules that inform the formation of discourse-objects and to question ‘what has ruled their existence as objects of discourse?’ (Foucault 1972, p. 45). In addressing this question, Foucault described discourse-objects according to their ‘surfaces of emergence’ (p. 45), ‘authorities of delimitation’ (p. 46), and ‘grids of specification’ (p. 46). Since the discourse-object at the centre of this analysis is the ‘child with challenging behaviour’, the task is then to examine each of these aspects.

The first aspect under consideration here regarding the formation of the discourse object ‘child with challenging behaviour’ is the ‘authorities of delimitation’ (Foucault 1972, p. 46) that function to legitimatise knowledge. In this case, authorities of delimitation are those authorities that inform knowledge of challenging behaviour. The document review (in Chapters 3 and 4) will closely consider the role of the University, school, state government and educational policy in forming knowledge of challenging behaviour. The University, school, government and educational policy, then, may be considered as fulfilling the function of Foucault’s (1972) authorities of delimitation. Having identified these authorities in relation to this discourse-object, the question must be posed: in what ways do the University, school and media delimit knowledge of challenging behaviour? This is a question that is more fully attended to in Chapter 3. Needless to say, Chapter 3 will show that biologically based understandings of behaviour (including biomedical and biopsychosocial discourses of challenging behaviour identified in this chapter) are the sanctioned ‘truths’ of behaviour most easily available to the preservice teachers.
‘Grids of specification’ (Foucault 1972, p. 46) are employed to define the features of discourse-objects, and this is done in relation to, and/or in comparison with, other discourse-objects (Foucault 1972). In terms of the ‘child with challenging behaviour’ discourse-object, a grid of specification may be assembled based on the points in the data that function to differentiate the ‘challenging child’ – both in relation to the ‘ideal student’ and across subtle but varied perceptions of the ‘challenge’ itself. Before demarcating one discourse-object from the other it is important to consider the existence of each. The first step taken in order to accommodate this is considering a definition of the ‘ideal student’ discourse-object, then this definition will be compared and contrasted to several variations of the ‘challenging child’ discourse object portrayed in the data.

The first task is dichotomising the ‘challenging child’ and the ‘ideal student’ discourse objects. The ideal student has, according to Foucault, been a ‘thing’ to be seen and to be spoken of since antiquity. In his lectures on The Hermeneutics of the Subject at the College de France in 1981-2, Foucault (2005) takes examples from Greek and Roman Antiquity to illustrate the work one does on oneself to become a ‘good student’. This work is described along lines of achieving and sustaining silence, physical immobility and attention. In analyzing texts from Plutarch and Seneca, Foucault noted that ‘talkativeness or chattering … [is] the first vice we must cure ourselves of when we begin to learn’ (Foucault 2005, p. 341), thus a silent student has ever and always, it seems, been construed as a ‘good student’. Although his comment is on the learning of philosophy in Antiquity, Foucault makes the case that ‘education in silence’ and restricting children's freedom of speech carried through to 'modern Europe', at least up until 1940. In addition to silence, the good student may be observed as adopting a certain posture of stillness ‘to allow for maximum listening without any interference or fidgeting … A number of texts refer to the bad moral and intellectual quality of the person who is always fidgeting and making unseemly gestures’ (Foucault 2005, p. 343-4). Finally, Foucault makes the case that model students ‘pay attention’ to both the core of their studies and their learning.
Whilst I am not asserting that the ‘good student’ of antiquity, that Foucault (2005) describes, is the same discourse object of the ‘ideal student’ in contemporary educational contexts, recent literature suggests that similar construals prevail. This is particularly the case if one focuses on literature regarding the dichotomy of the ideal versus the challenging student, where the ‘challenging student’ is cast as the non-ideal student. For example, recent studies have found that the challenging behaviours identified by primary school teachers were: ‘inattention’ (Ford 2007; Grieve 2009), being off task (Carter et al. 2006), and ‘work avoidance’ (Axup & Gersch 2008; Lord Elton 1989), that is, lacking attention to the task at hand; ‘verbal’ behaviour (Axup & Gersch 2008) and talking out of turn (Beaman et al. 2007; Carter et al. 2006; Grieve 2009; Lord Elton 1989), that is, not observing conventions of silence in educational contexts; and being out of their seats (Axup & Gersch 2008; Carter et al. 2006), that is, unwanted physical mobility during seatwork, with seatwork – as Adams (2006) and Graham (2006a,b) point out – being highly valued in contemporary educational contexts.

Further testimony to the notion of ‘challenging students’ being constructed along lines of non-compliance with age-old ideals of silence, physical constraint and attention are evidenced in the increasing rates of diagnoses for behavioural disorders in school-aged children. In contemporary educational contexts, teachers and schools have played an integral role in the diagnostic apparatus for behaviour disorders (Harwood 2006), including those disorders characterized by attention deficits, impulsivity (such as blurtting out answers) and fidgeting etc. (APA 2005). So then, the ‘ideal student’ is seen as a discourse object in opposition with the ‘challenging student’, in both historical and contemporary texts.

Recently, ‘children with challenging behaviour’ appears as a discourse object – a thing to be spoken of. This discourse object is explicitly featured in teaching standards (NSWIT 2006) as something to be talked about and something that is framed as
different to the ‘ideal student’. Accredited teachers must have specific knowledge of and strategies for teaching ‘children with challenging behaviour’ (NSWIT 2006, p. 6).

However, this simple dichotomy of ideal student/student with challenging behaviour is only part of the analysis. My building and reading of the archive of challenging behaviour revealed distinct fractures in the collective discourse object ‘children with challenging behaviours’. Fractures resulting in contradictory yet specific ways in which children with challenging behaviour were talked about, by different speakers, at different points in time. There was discernable discursive regularity around three different ‘types’, if you like, of children with challenging behaviour. The different ways one can talk about a child with challenging behaviour formed three distinct discourse objects, whose specificity hinged on the speakers’ causal attribution of the challenge itself. This generated a triple taxonomy of discourse objects – with one specific to each of the three discourses to be posited in this chapter (see table 2.1).

Table 2.1 Grids of specification for three discourse objects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse object</th>
<th>Three discourses of challenging behaviour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The in-actively challenging child</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The speakers’ causal attribution of the ‘challenge’ they perceive from the child is critical to demarcating the three discourses of challenging behaviour posited in this chapter. Firstly, the challenge could be construed as one that was innately part of the child’s biology and so the child was not responsible for behaving in challenging ways, this is the ‘in-actively challenging child’. Secondly, the challenge could be seen as constructed by the child to willfully serve his or her own purposes, whether those purposes be to fulfill a psychological function, to gain or resist power, or otherwise – this is the ‘pro-actively challenging child’. Finally, the challenge could be seen as mostly reactive to environmental and structural ‘supports’ or lack thereof surrounding the child – this is the ‘re-actively challenging child’. Table 2.1 summarises the first
point of differentiation between the three posited discourses, that is, each speaks of a different discourse object, a child that is challenging in a specific way.

2.5.2. The formation of enunciative modalities & the formation of strategies

Referring to discourse analysis, Foucault (1972) states that one rule of formation for the researcher to uncover is the formation of enunciative modalities. The formation of enunciative modalities consists of rules of formation that may define a discourse by: ‘who is speaking’ (p. 55); ‘the institutional sites from which [they] make their discourse’ (p. 56); and ‘the positions of the subject … in relation to various domains or groups of objects’ (pp. 57 – 8).

I have previously discussed the delimiting effect of the resources from which preservice teachers make their ‘child with challenging behaviour’ discourse (namely the University, the school and the education department/government). This section will focus on ‘who is speaking’, how they are qualified to do so, and the position of the teacher subject in relation to the various permeations of the ‘challenging child’ discourse-object. What makes this task difficult is the interdisciplinary nature of the archive. Identifying ‘who is speaking’ and ‘the institutional sites from which they make their discourse’ is difficult considering the lack of discursive regularity within disciplines and a variety of institutional sites for each of these disciplines – the laboratory, the clinic, the government, the school. A mapping of which disciplines (featured in the document review, Chapter 3) talk about the three identified discourse objects demonstrates this complexity (see Table 2.2).
Table 2.2 Enunciative modalities of three discourses - Who is speaking?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse objects</th>
<th>The in-actively challenging child</th>
<th>The pro-actively challenging child</th>
<th>The re-actively challenging child</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who is speaking?</td>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>Clinical psychology</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(by discipline)</td>
<td>Psychiatry</td>
<td>Developmental psychology</td>
<td>Ecological psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neuropsychology</td>
<td>Educational psychology</td>
<td>Critical psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One can note from Table 2.2 that I cannot easily answer the question: Who is speaking of each discourse object? Indeed, it is not the project of this thesis to attempt to do so. Of peculiar interest to this study is how the preservice teacher participants speak of the discourse objects. To make sense of this one needs to question how it is possible for the Education discipline to be mapped against all three discourses. To justify this disciplinary mapping, Table 2.3 identifies which parts of the educational literature identified in the document review chapter (particularly in the university and school document review sections, see Chapter 3) draw on each of the different discourses.

In my review of the undergraduate texts for university coursework on knowledge of and pedagogy for ‘students with challenging behaviour’ (see Chapter 3), each of the three discourse objects tended to appear with reasonable consistency in certain pools of educational literature. For example, texts regarding inclusive education, reflective practice, Aboriginal education and sociology of education tended to consistently speak of the re-actively challenging child. I discerned these texts as working to: foreground how culture and ‘environments shape, define and create (views of) behaviour that are so often misread as correlates of ‘embodied impairment’’ (Goodley 2001, p. 214); and trouble administrative, institutional and relational constructions (Goodley 2001) of challenging behaviour. In their statements regarding the ‘re-actively challenging’ child, these texts primarily responsibilised the teacher to create, critique and facilitate an environment and curriculum that was structured to support children; that is, to minimize
the schooling structures and experiences that may evoke a re-active challenge from the child.

Behaviour management and special education needs (SEN) texts, on the other hand, tended to focus less on the teacher and the structures surrounding the child and more on (and within) the child; they variously spoke of both the in- and pro-actively challenging child (the latter far more so than the former). My interpretation of SEN texts as focused ‘within the individual’ is in keeping with Goodley’s (2007) assertion that statementing of children as having special education needs deploys an apparatus of psy-complex practitioners and pedagogies ‘that conceptualise children in terms of their associated conditions’ (p. 319, emphasis added). In both SEN and behaviour management texts, regardless of whether specific ‘conditions’ were discussed, the pro-actively challenging child was the commonly featured discourse object. The pro-actively challenging child was discussed via notions of faculty and self-control; the challenging behaviour was construed as a pro-active attempt for the child to fulfill a psychological need (that is, the behaviour functionally served the individual child). Collectively, these texts tended to posit that behaviour was learnable and thus used behaviourist and functional behaviour theories to posit the best ways to manage the pro-actively challenging child (and explicitly teach them more appropriate behaviours). Occasionally, these texts spoke of the in-actively challenging child. Firstly, the in-actively challenging child was spoken of insofar as certain behaviour was attributed to gender, and so biological differences. For example boys, in particular, were framed as innately (and in-actively) presenting with more challenging behaviour than girls. Also, these texts occasionally spoke of the in-actively challenging child as the child with undiagnosed and unremedied biological dysfunction; for example, the child with undiagnosed ADHD ‘can’t help’ his/her poor classroom behaviour.

By contemplating each of these discourse objects as they appear in pedagogical discourses that deal with ‘challenging behaviour’, I hope to illustrate how notions of behaviour management, SEN, inclusive education, Aboriginal Education and reflective
practice function as a ‘field of regularity for various positions of subjectivity’ (Foucault 1972, p. 60) for the participants in this study. Put colloquially, ‘fields of regularity’ could be taken to mean ‘common contexts’. In their analysis of Foucault’s work on subjectivity, Danaher et al. (2000) highlight the importance of context in terms of its delimiting effect on the possible subject positions from which one may choose. They explain that subjects, “are products of discourse and power relations, and take on different characteristics according to the range of subject positions that are possible in our socio-historical context” (Danaher et al. 2000, p. 118).

Table 2.3 ‘Fields of regularity’ (Foucault 1972) within the discipline of education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse objects</th>
<th>Three discourses of challenging behaviour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who is speaking? (by discipline)</td>
<td>The in-actively challenging child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>Clinical psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychiatry</td>
<td>Developmental psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuropsychology</td>
<td>Educational psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Government</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So then, my task is to describe how each set of those pedagogical discourses (behaviour management, SEN, inclusive education, Aboriginal Education and reflective practice) in education literature, as they are classified in Table 2.3, function as ‘fields of regularity’ and make possible certain ‘teacher’ subject positions possible. I hope to show how particular clusters of pedagogical discourses generate different possible subject positions for teachers, in relation to each permeation of the challenging child discourse object.

Teachers who speak of the ‘in-actively challenging child’ discourse object position themselves as a ‘non-expert’ regarding children with challenging behaviour. The
teacher who talks of the in-actively challenging child can only see him/herself as a non-expert because the challenge is biologically innate and so irreparable by means of teaching. This typically discernable in statements of teacher helplessness and/or compassion for the child’s condition rather than action plans for teaching more appropriate behaviours.

Teachers who speak of the ‘pro-actively challenging child’ discourse object position themselves along a continuum of management expertise, taking up different subject positions of ‘teacher as manager’: Do they have the ‘behaviour management’ knowledge and experience to successfully carry out functional behaviour assessments, identify reinforcers, design and employ token economies, promote positive feedback, discriminate appropriate use of extinction strategies, explicitly teach target behaviours etc?

Finally, the teachers who speak of the ‘re-actively challenging child’ discourse object position themselves along a continuum of possible subject positions as ‘teacher as supporter’. That is, they first and foremost question if the physical environment, classroom routine, relationships, lesson design, timing, pacing, content and resources are supportive, if lessons are engaging for individuals, if teachers are culturally sensitive to their students’ lives and constantly reflecting on curriculum and pedagogy.
Table 2.4 Possible teacher subject positions for three discourses of challenging behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse objects</th>
<th>Three discourses of challenging behaviour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who is speaking?</td>
<td>The in-actively challenging child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(by discipline)</td>
<td>The pro-actively challenging child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>The re-actively challenging child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychiatry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuropsychology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>Clinical psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychiatry</td>
<td>Developmental psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuropsychology</td>
<td>Educational psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education Needs (SEN)</td>
<td>Inclusive Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour management</td>
<td>Reflective Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>Educational psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecological psychology</td>
<td>Critical psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical psychology</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible teacher subject positions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-expert</td>
<td>Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The important point here is that each of these possible teacher subject positions delimits possibilities for pedagogy. Is the teacher who believes the cause of behaviour to be biological and consequently sees herself as a non-expert on challenging behaviour likely to to engage in reflective practice as a strategy for ameliorating the challenging behaviours? Is the teacher-supporter who speaks of the re-actively challenging child likely to research and closely follow diagnosis-contingent pedagogies? Is the teacher-manager likely to feel helpless and accept the child’s challenging behaviour as a biological inevitability?

Here then, we have three discourse objects, spoken of in multidisciplinary ways but each with very different manifestations in educational literature and each generating its own continuum of possible teacher subject positions. Moreover, each discourse impacts differently on pedagogical decision-making. In summary, each discourse does very different work. In identifying the different work that these discourses do in educational contexts I have (inadvertently) addressed Foucault’s rule of formation of strategies by considering ‘the function of the discourse in the field of non-discursive practices’ (Foucault 1972, p. 75), that field of non-discursive practices being the field of
pedagogy, where each discourse functions to delimit possibilities for pedagogical decision making.

2.6. Naming three discourses of challenging behaviour

What has not yet been justified is how I will label these three discourses that each have unique discourse objects and each work to produce different effects in pedagogy. The naming of these discourses is reflective of the causal attribution ascribed to challenging behaviour and is laid out in the Table 2.5.

Table 2.5 Naming three discourses of challenging behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse objects</th>
<th>Three discourses of challenging behaviour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The in-actively challenging child</td>
<td>Biomedical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The pro-actively challenging child</td>
<td>Biopsychosocial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The re-actively challenging child</td>
<td>Ecosocio</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who is speaking? (by discipline)</th>
<th>Medicine</th>
<th>Psychiatry</th>
<th>Neuropsychology</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Government</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bhaviour causal attribution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biomedical</td>
<td>Clinical psychology</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biopsychosocial</td>
<td>Developmental psychology</td>
<td>Ecological psychology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecosocio</td>
<td>Educational psychology</td>
<td>Critical psychology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Government</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education literature</th>
<th>Special Education Needs (SEN)</th>
<th>Inclusive Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour management</td>
<td>Reflective Practice</td>
<td>Sociology of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aboriginal Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible teacher subject positions</th>
<th>Non-expert</th>
<th>Manager</th>
<th>Supporter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Labelling the first two discourses of challenging behaviour draws on Engel’s (1977) biopsychosocial theory as a construct for demarcating biomedical and biopsychosocial discourses of challenging behaviour. Engle’s theorisation of these understandings rests in variations of their causal attribution of behaviour. In explaining the biomedical perspective, he contends:

The dominant model of disease today is biomedical, with molecular biology its basic scientific discipline … [it] demands that behavioural aberrations be explained on the basis of disordered somatic (biochemical or neurophysiological) processes.

(Engel 1977, p. 130)

Given this definition, it appeared reasonable to adopt Engel’s work and to name the discourse in the archive of challenging behaviour that attributed the cause of challenging behaviour entirely within the child ‘biomedical’. However, precise etiology for behavioural ab/normalities is, as yet, largely inferred. This etiological uncertainty allows scope for understanding behaviour from other perspectives; two of those perspectives are broadly represented in the remaining two discourses posited in this chapter.

Moving from left to right across the causal attribution continuum represented in Table 2.5 consideration is now given to the naming of the ‘biopsychosocial’ discourse in the archive of challenging behaviour. As the name suggests, the biopsychosocial discourse sits in the middle of the continuum of causal attribution for behaviour that spans from ‘within child’ to ‘socially located’. In this way, the biopsychosocial discourse provides a theoretic middle ground for understanding challenging behaviour. Whilst the word ‘biopsychosocial’ is used here to name a discourse of challenging behaviour, it is important to note that it was originally the name of a single theory. Engel (1977) originally presented biopsychosocial theory both in defence of biomedical attacks on the psychiatric definition of mental illness and as a call for a more holistic model of patient care. So then, it is not surprising that the psychological factors contributing to the
biopsychosocial understandings of behaviour are what distinctly differentiate this discourse from the biomedical and ecosocio discourses posited here.

Arguably, the biopsychosocial discourse for understanding behaviour functions as an ideal quasi-marriage of medicine and psychology. The point of conceptual overlap in the marriage of these disciplines is essentially a biological one. The biological premise of the biomedical discourse, that is, that the problem is within the child, is accepted in the biopsychosocial discourse. However, this biological point of agreement is also a point of schism. Critiquing the medicine/psychology conceptual overlap, Graham (2006a) illustrates how the discipline of psychology deploys unique ‘theorisation of agency, reason and control with an effect towards perceptions of responsibility and culpability’ (Graham 2006a, p. 12) that divides the biomedical and biopsychosocial discourses. For example, the biomedical discourse holds behaviour is symptomatic of biological dys/function and it follows that a person, or their environment, is not to be blamed or held entirely responsible for their behaviour. By contrast, on the topic of responsibility, the biopsychosocial discourse utilises the psychological concept of ‘faculty’ to position the individual as capable of learning self-control (Graham 2006a). Thus, unlike the biomedical perspective, the biopsychosocial perspective holds that learning from teachers, peers, home-life and psychotherapy can positively impact on dys/functional behaviours. So then, the central defining tenet of the biopsychosocial discourse of challenging behaviour (as identified here) rests on the distinctly psychological tenet that, although biology is a factor, ultimately, behaviour can be learned.

I contend that, beyond the limits of the biomedical and biopsychosocial discourses a third discourse of challenging behaviour exists in the archive. This discourse is characterised by the understanding that behaviour is socially located and it is the social structures, physical environment, artefacts and relationships surrounding an individual that most significantly shape and prompt their behaviour. That is not to say that the individual is seen as non-agentic. Rather, in this discourse, there is a subtle move away
from emphasising the individual as the ‘causal’ site of behaviour – biology is de-centred as a concern and psychology’s theorisation of the individual’s agency, self-control and responsibility to ‘learn’ desirable behaviours is tempered. At least partly, this discursive move seems supported by particular conceptions of the adult/child relationship. The causes of behaviour are located primarily ‘around’ rather than ‘within’ the child and this responsibilised adults, namely teachers, for constructing an environment most conducive to the child behaving appropriately. Understanding behaviour in this way significantly impacts on possibilities for talking about and responding to individuals with challenging behaviour.

A justification for devising the name ‘ecosocio’ for this discourse will, perhaps, become self-evident once the three discourses posited are considered in terms of the disciplines that deploy them. Table 2.5 maps out the uptake of these discourses by disciplines in the archive of challenging behaviour. Although sometimes colloquially deployed in commercial ‘branding’ contexts to infer a product or services co-consideration of environment, economy and society, I use the name ‘ecosocio’ as a blend of the names of several disciplines that deploy this unique knowledge of challenging behaviour: ‘ecological’ (from ‘ecological psychology’) and ‘sociology’. It is a term used to portray the cross-disciplinary utility of this discourse.

Considering Table 2.5 one begins to perhaps understand why I resisted the idea of naming discourses of behaviour simply according to the disciplines that offer statements on the topic. The disciplines of medicine, psychology, sociology and education etc did not offer the unique ‘discursive regularities’ on ‘challenging behaviour’ that traditional conceptions of ‘discourse as discipline’ warrant. This is all well and good. However, at this point, my re-casting of discourses of challenging behaviour according to causal attribution rather than discipline may seem some form of academic exercise akin to the proverbial ‘rearrangement of the deck chairs on the titanic’. What is to be gained by all this? The answer to that question relies on a vertical assessment of Table 2.5. Reading down the columns, each discourse/knowledge of challenging behaviour works to
generate and delimit certain conditions of possibility for pedagogy and teacher subjectivities. Each discourse gives rise to different possibilities for talking about children with challenging behaviour in educational contexts, each maps against specific pedagogic discourses and gives rise to unique possible subject positions for the teacher. In short each does different, yet definable work. To be gained from this exercise is a framework for identifying the formation of strategies for each discourse – strategies that may be both identified in the archive constructed on challenging behaviour, and later, be seen at work in the data collected from the participants.

Linking the ‘names’ of these three discourses to their fundamental point of difference, I suggest that attribution of causes of challenging behaviour could be grouped accordingly as: strictly biological (that is to say, biomedical); a combination of biology, psychology and social factors (biopsychosocial); or, socially located (ecosocio). Positing three discourses of challenging behaviour in this way is not tantamount to offering three definitions – the categories offered are far too broad and overarching for that. The broadness of the discourses works, arguably, to encompass ‘the mess’ of definitions found in the archive. Offering these three discourses of challenging behaviour works to unravel some conditions of possibility as to how it may be talked about, who may do the talking and to what effect. It also offers a language for exploring the archive and data presented throughout the rest of this thesis.

2.7. Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed ‘knowledge’, the keystone concept of this study. It set out to problematise epistemology as a ‘messy’ construct in teacher education by demonstrating that it is often undervalued and uniquely theorised (insofar as there were rarely similarities between theoretical frameworks of studies in the literature I reviewed). Ultimately, the epistemological problem for education was presented through Bereiter’s (2000) work. His framing of the epistemological problem for education was twofold: firstly, he pointed to the inadequacy of ‘mind as container’
metaphors; and secondly, he lamented that moving beyond such metaphors via concurrent consideration of suprapersonal and individual knowledges was rare. Foucault’s theorisation of knowledge, which I read as at once archevised and dynamic, was then explicated as an appropriate and previously under-explored theoretic resource to address this problem.

In attending to knowledge as at once ‘archevised’ and ‘dynamic’, this theoretical framework necessitated building an archive of challenging behaviour and then discerning how the preservice teachers dynamically position themselves in relation to the various discourses within that archive. This chapter began the task of building an archive of challenging behaviour by mobilising Foucault’s (1972) rules of discursive formation to discern the three discourses of challenging behaviour within it: that is, the biomedical, biopsychosocial and ecosocio discourses. The following two chapters (Chapters 3 and 4) map literature and documents against these discourses. The effects of this will be twofold. Firstly, it will offer examples that substantiate my argument that the three posited discourses are plausible and appropriate constructs for discussing knowledge of challenging behaviour. Secondly, it will build an archive against which the participants’ knowledge may later be compared, contrasted and mapped.
PART II: Making the map
Collecting cartographic information

Three discourses of challenging behaviour in the (map)making
3. Collecting Cartographic Information — Three Discourses of Challenging Behaviour in the (Map)Making

That a vague and elusive concept such as ‘challenging behaviour’ is mandated teacher knowledge is a paradox. That this paradox is rarely scrutinised by educators and teacher educators is alarming. This chapter undertakes the task of beginning to problematise ‘challenging behaviour’ by illustrating its complexity, rather than pursuing the ‘unsatisfactory enterprise’ (Visser & Cole 2003, p. 10) of pinning down its definition.

One step toward illustrating the term’s complexity is to build an archive of challenging behaviour. The literature and documents reviewed, as a collective, are what I refer to as the archive of challenging behaviour for this project. Texts in the archive were mappable to the three discourses of challenging behaviour posited in Chapter 2 (the biomedical, biopsychosocial and ecosocio discourses) and so analysis of the archive is structured by these subheadings. However, before presenting any analysis of archieved knowledge of challenging behaviour, Section 3.1 (and footnotes throughout) describes the methodology employed in building the archive.

3.1. Building an archive of challenging behaviour

In conceptualising knowledge as concurrently archieved and dynamic (see Chapter 2) the obvious question arises: ‘what archive?’ To respond to this foundational question, it is necessary to trace out an archive of that to be known; to disentangle and delineate an archive of challenging behaviour. As for the issue of ‘how’ the challenging behaviour archive is to be constructed, the methodology employed was an extensive analysis of ‘challenging behaviour’ literature and primary documents including educational policy, teacher-education coursework texts, and school policy texts. Whilst archives may comprise more than written documents, a focus on documents was appropriate to the educational context of the study:
Educational practices, however informal and local, are made possible by texts. It is important for educators to recall, however, as Ong (1958) showed, that the ways in which texts are used in contemporary education settings, both formal and informal, are not accidental. They have histories, and those histories have histories of victories and defeats – certain ways of organizing education, of thinking about what knowledge and learning are, and of conceiving the nature of learners’ development and expertise – all of these that we now recognise have come to predominate because of their, potentially temporary, defeats of other contesting ideas and practices.

(Freebody 2003, p. 179)

This assertion of Freebody’s, that knowledge is multiple and that some knowledge holds more purchase than others at different times, is key to the Foucauldian understanding of knowledge that underscores this study. That Freebody proposed document analysis as a means of unravelling such knowledges and their perceived status is also in keeping with notions of archeved knowledge (outlined in Chapter 2).

Document analysis took place in all phases of data collection and was a useful means of gathering data that describes the context of the study. As Freebody (2003, p. 180) reminds us: ‘education, in its formal, mandated embodiments, is regulated by and through texts’. The texts analysed included, academic literature, government documents, educational policy, university subject outlines and recommended readings, the PEx handbook, NSW Institute of Teachers and Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) professional teaching standards and school/Department policies. These texts provided an opportunity to analyse formal/written knowledges that were available as resources for preservice teachers’ meaning making about challenging behaviour. In terms of discourse analysis this type of data provided a description of macro-texts that frame locally produced micro-texts (that is, participants’ statements) (e.g. Court 2004; Evans, Evans & Rich 2003).

The concept of ‘challenging behaviour’ has moved within and between various discourses over time. Such movement supported shifts and permeations in the term’s
meaning. Interestingly, many of these shifts and permeations seemed to have occurred in recent years and within contemporary educational contexts – this will be attended to fully in Chapter 4.

Notwithstanding some variances, until the time of the development of the Professional Teaching Standards (NSWIT 2006) there was some continuity of meaning between various discourses of challenging behaviour. This continuity was characterised by the use of ‘challenging behaviour’ as a term directly related to people diagnosed with intellectual or developmental disabilities. This inextricable link between challenging behaviour and people with intellectual disabilities is what I have called the ‘traditional’ conception of challenging behaviour. Conversely, use of the term to describe the behaviour of people not diagnosed with intellectual or developmental disabilities I have called ‘non-traditional’ conceptions of challenging behaviour.

At this point it is important to preface that some of the ensuing discussion talks of conceptions of challenging behaviour in a traditional/non-traditional binary. Whilst this is a useful tool for analysing the lineage of the concept and attending to changes in its usage and meaning over time, it is not on its own sufficient to the task at hand. Instead, this 'traditionality binary' is simply one axis in the grid of analysis when considering the archive of challenging behaviour. The other axis maps statements against the different discourses of challenging behaviour (see Figure 3.1).
Figure 3.1 illustrates the ‘non-discourse-specific’ nature of traditional and non-traditional conceptions of challenging behaviour. Simply put, traditional conceptions of behaviour may be spoken within any of the three posited discourses of challenging behaviour; the same is true for non-traditional conceptions of challenging behaviour.

The posited discourses (biomedical, biopsychosocial and ecosocio [see Sections 2.5 and 2.6]) are considered in this chapter (and next) in order to map limits of discursive regularities in the archive concerning particular discourse objects, whilst the traditional/non-traditional couplet is deployed to consider broad changes to the term’s definition and usage over time. The traditionality axis and posited discourses,
considered together, offer a two-dimensional analysis of the archive content. Whilst this chapter is structured primarily around the posited discourses, mapping of statements in the archive against the traditionality axis is integrated throughout.

In contemplating its lineage, ‘challenging behaviour’ is considered here as both a ‘specific term’ and a ‘concept’. This impacts the construction of the archive in two ways. The former has a delimiting effect insofar as analysis of statements in the archive on challenging behaviour is constrained to examples of the term’s explicit use. The latter considers ‘concepts’ to facilitate a Foucauldian analysis of the term’s lineage. Foucault’s (1972) rules for the formation of concepts acknowledge the problematic of the emergence of concepts in some disciplines. Foucault explains:

… the set of concepts that emerges does not obey … rigorous conditions; their history is not the stone-by-stone construction of an edifice. Should this dispersion be left in its apparent disorder? … Could a law not be found that would account for the successive or simultaneous emergence of disparate concepts? … Rather than wishing to replace concepts in a virtual deductive edifice, one would have to describe the organization of the field of statements where they appeared and circulated.

(Foucault 1972, p. 56)

This chapter attempts to describe the ‘organisation of the field[s] of statements’ in which the term ‘challenging behaviour’ appeared and circulated, over time. This process should highlight, not so much the disparity of definitions afforded the term (although this will become apparent) but the variety of contrasting contexts for its use. In tracing the continuity, discontinuity and alteration to the term’s contextual usage and meaning over time it is possible to identify two devices that commonly impact this change process. Firstly, there are many examples of ‘transfer[ring] a type of statement from one field of application to another’ (Foucault 1972, p. 59, original emphasis). By this, I mean that disciplines (or fields of statements) often ‘borrowed’ the term challenging behaviour from other disciplines and this borrowing process impacted or changed the term’s meaning and usage. For example, educational policy documents ‘borrow’ definitions of challenging behaviour from government health departments. Secondly,
there seems a recurrent ‘rewriting’ (Foucault 1972, p. 56) of challenging behaviour in this archive - where the term’s definitions are specifically rewritten to best align with the author’s, or discipline’s, purpose. For example, in its Professional Teaching Standards and university coursework accreditation guidelines the NSWIT (2006) rewrote ‘challenging behaviour’ by designating its meaning to be interchangeable with ‘behaviour management’ (see Chapter 4 for details). This process of change in the usage and meaning of the term ‘challenging behaviour’ via conceptual transferral and rewriting within and across disciplines over time is evidenced in the remaining of these next two chapters.

Whether or not such analyses clarify or consolidate the term’s intended meaning and usage, specifically in the context of the participants’ knowledge re-construction, is far less certain. By the end of these two chapters, the task of offering a clear understanding of the term ‘challenging behaviour’ as it applies to the discipline of education will remain elusive. Instead, what I hope to achieve is to problematise and outline the complexity and depth of a term that has recently been relegated, in contemporary educational contexts, to the realms of ‘taken for granted common sense’.

3.2. Challenging behaviour – an emerging concept

Clarity in the field of challenging behaviour is sometimes elusive.

(Cullen, in Emerson, McGill & Mansell 1994, p. 6)

This is reminiscent of the opening quotes to this thesis and is most fitting for the start of this section as it clearly states a perceived ambiguity around the notion of challenging behaviour. Indeed, one of the few commonalities I’ve found between discussions of challenging behaviour is the claim that it is a term that remains ill defined (Emerson et al. 1994; Lowe et al. 2007; Visser & Cole 2003).
Pinning down a ‘first appearance’ date for the term ‘challenging behaviour’ is difficult. For the most part, the literature reviewed revealed the concept ‘challenging behaviour’ as emergent in the 1980s and gaining purchase in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s. The exception to this was one text, which inferred that ‘challenging behaviour’ had been a focus in academic studies of intellectual disability since the mid-seventies (Taylor, O’Rielly & Lancioni 1996). Debates of chronology aside, that ‘challenging behaviour’ first appeared in the context of academic studies of ‘disabilities’, and ‘intellectual disabilities’ particularly, seems accurate. An increased interest in disability research in the 1980s was, perhaps, spearheaded by the International Year of Disabled Persons in 1981, which foregrounded the rights of people with a disability (Foreman 2005). Internationally, a response from governments in terms of attempts to improve disability support services and anti-discrimination legislation ensued. This was a time characterised by development of anti-discrimination legislation designed to protect people with disabilities. In the context of this study, this included the *NSW 1982 Anti-Discrimination (Amendment) Act* and later, the *Australian 1992 Disability Discrimination Act*.

Whilst such historical context is interesting, at this juncture I will desist in offering a chronological recount of the term’s development. Instead, I turn to outline the concurrent development of three discursive possibilities for understanding ‘challenging behaviour’.

### 3.3. **Ecosocio discourse of challenging behaviour**

Deployment of the ecosocio discourse of challenging behaviour was prolific at the term’s inception. As established in Section 3.2, the term ‘challenging behaviour’ first appeared in the context of studies of, and the rise of government legislation and support services for, people with disabilities (particularly intellectual disabilities), at a time where rights for people with disabilities was a topic of international significance. These concerns may be classified as ecosocio insofar as they primarily consider social, legal
and structural ‘supports’ for intellectually disabled people presenting with challenging behaviour. This focus of supporting, rather than managing, the challenging individual is also characteristic of the subjective positions afforded by the ecosocio discourse.

Whilst the appearance of challenging behaviour may be attributed to the 1980s, literature as to its definition came to the fore in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Here, the usage of ‘challenging behaviour’ as a term was justified as having the dual purpose of differentiating, yet not discriminating against, certain people with intellectual disabilities. To explicate this dual purpose the ensuing discussion will examine two early definitions and rationales for the use of the term ‘challenging behaviour’ when discussing people with disabilities.

Firstly, the purpose of differentiating related to the term’s utility in specifically describing a small subset of people with intellectual disabilities who may exhibit challenging behaviour. The argument was made that most people with learning disabilities can be classified as having behaviour problems and a category was needed to statistically articulate acute behaviour problems within this demographic, in order that funding may be secured to support them:

Most examples of operational definitions [of challenging behaviour] come from a tradition of work on ‘behaviour problems’ or ‘behaviour disturbance’. As will be outlined, definitions of ‘problem’ in these studies cast a wide net in terms of identification, to the extent that it is not unusual to find over half the population of people with learning disabilities identified as showing behaviour problems. From its inception the use of the term ‘challenging behaviour’ has been intended to focus attention on a much smaller group of individuals …

(Qureshi 1992, p. 24)

Qureshi’s discussion of the ‘history’ of challenging behaviour (above) offers a summary of the differentiating function of the term ‘challenging behaviour’ in the field associated with disability and public health. *Here we see a term endowed with a most specific meaning.* It was a term reserved for description of people with ‘learning disabilities’
whose behaviour was deemed acutely problematic to carers and health professionals. In this original usage, ‘challenging behaviour’ was specifically classified within a triad of aggressive, self-injurious and/or destructive behaviours (Emerson et al. 1997). This perception that ‘challenging behaviour’ was an attempt to be specific, and to separate from more general discussions of ‘problem’ and ‘disruptive’ behaviour (Qureshi 1992, p. 24) was mildly contradicted by some clinical psychologists, at the time. In their review of the literature, Visser and Cole (2003) highlight a definition of ‘challenging behaviour’ taken up by psychologists:

We have adopted the term challenging behaviour as a general label for those classes of behaviour which have previously been called problem behaviours, disruptive behaviours or behaviour disorders. The term emphasises that the behaviours constitute a challenge to other people to find effective ways of responding to them; the problem lies in the interaction between the person, their behaviour and their social environment.


Contrary and contemporary to Qureshi’s attempt to specify, McBride and Felch (1992, cited in Visser & Cole 2003) expand the definition of challenging behaviour. Qureshi (1992) portrays ‘challenging behaviour’ as a specific subset of the broader terms ‘disruptive’ and ‘problem’ behaviour in public health service provision, whereas McBrien and Felce (1992, cited in Visser & Cole 2003) portray ‘challenging behaviour’ as synonymous to – and not more intense or specific than – ‘problem’ and ‘disruptive’ behaviours. In this way, and by extending descriptions of challenging behaviour to also include presentations of behaviour disorders, the term ‘challenging behaviour’ was effectively broadened, not narrowed.

What McBrien and Felch’s (1992, cited in Visser & Cole 2003) and Qureshi’s (1992) work had in common was describing ‘challenging behaviour’ as having a function aside from differentiation. This second function was portrayed as a concerted effort for avoiding within-person deficit and discriminatory descriptions of people with disabilities who display ‘challenging behaviours’. McBrien and Felce (1992, cited in
Visser & Cole 2003, p. 20) achieve this by locating the behavioural challenge ‘in the interaction between the person, their behaviour and their social environment’. Likewise, Qureshi advocates for ‘challenging behaviour’ as a description of behaviour that locates the challenging elsewhere than ‘within-the-person-with-a-disability’:

… [the use of the term ‘challenging behaviour’ was taken up] more generally to emphasise that there should be a shift in perspective among service providers away from seeing problems as inherent qualities of people, and towards a focus on services and the ways in which they might respond to behaviour which poses a challenge to the achievement of an ordinary life for people with learning disabilities (Blunden and Allen, 1987).

(Qureshi 1992, p. 24)

This shift ‘away from seeing problems inherent in the individual’ (Qureshi 1992, p. 24) and instead focusing on social structures surrounding the individual indicated that traditional conceptions of challenging behaviour drew on the ecosocio discourse. Although the focus is not yet on ‘children’ with challenging behaviour, here we see the emergence of the ‘re-actively challenging’ individual as a discourse object to be spoken of.

This second function of the term ‘challenging behaviour’, its non-discriminatory function, is attributed to work of academics across disciplines of public health and psychology in the late 1980s and early 1990s; academics who worked within the context of increased awareness and advocacy for the rights of people with disabilities. Origins of the term ‘challenging behaviour’, were also sometimes attributed to flagship disability advocacy organisations such as:

The Association for Severe Handicaps (TASH) [in the USA] where it had been introduced in order to transfer the demands for change from the individual with severe behaviour problems to the organisation around them. The challenge was to carers, services and professionals to find more effective ways of understanding the origins and meaning of a person’s behaviour and to find creative ways of responding to this challenge

(Banks and Bush 2007, p. 13)
In this quote, there is a distinct move away from responsibilising the individual for their behaviour, instead first considering social structures of the organisation and responsibilising carers and professionals to respond in appropriate and supportive ways. This is a distinctly ecosocio tenet. In all of these examples, the traditional relationship between ‘challenging behaviour’ and ‘disability’ is sustained. At this early stage of the term’s history we have already seen a divergence of definitions and functions of the term ‘challenging behaviour’ within a singular discourse, the ecosocio discourse. Moreover, statements in this discourse were shown to be sayable and repeatable across disciplines, with comment from government/public health, psychology and community advocacy groups. This discourse was at its most influential, it would appear, in the 1980s and early 1990s. Since then, ecosocio understandings of challenging behaviour seem to have been largely displaced by biopsychosocial (and to a lesser extent biomedical) discourses. Chapter 4 will demonstrate that ecosocio understandings of challenging behaviours have become incredibly marginalised in contemporary educational contexts. What follows is a description of ‘challenging behaviours’ definitions along both biomedical and biopsychosocial ‘branches’ of its discursive lineage.

### 3.4. Biomedical discourse of challenging behaviour

The in-actively challenging child is the object at the centre of the biomedical discourse. The child is construed as ‘in-actively’ challenging as the challenge is one that is understood as beyond the willpower of the child. Instead the challenge was construed as innately part of the child’s biology and so the child was not responsible for behaving in challenging ways. The biomedical discourse of challenging behaviour is important to this study as evidence of this manifest in two segments of the archive: educational policy and media. Both segments potentially influence knowledge of behaviour in contemporary schooling cultures.
Whilst the term ‘challenging behaviour’ emerged in ecosocio rationales, government actions to develop legislation and support services for people with disabilities also made counter-discursive moves. This was achieved by medicalising the coupling of disability and challenging behaviour by firmly asserting organic causes for both in legislation and policy. In this sense, ‘government’ and ‘public service’ disciplines were the dominant contributors to the development of biomedical understandings of challenging behaviour and the ‘in-actively challenging’ individual (object of the ecosocio discourse).

In terms of government support services, in the United Kingdom, ‘learning disabilities and seriously challenging behaviour teams’ were formed in the mid 1980s (Emerson, et al. 1994). This is the earliest instance I could find of a government service bearing the term ‘challenging behaviour’ in its title; its usage in this example is consistent with traditional conceptions of challenging behaviour being coupled with intellectual disability. Since then, definitions and conceptions of challenging behaviour have experienced both continuity and change in the context of government services and legislation.

In Australia, a search of the LawLex database (2 August 2011) showed that, there is no mention of ‘challenging behaviour’ in commonwealth legislation but the term featured in NSW state legislation. So then, this section of the literature review focuses on NSW government services. This focus seems doubly appropriate considering that NSW forms part of the geopolitical context of this study. Today, in NSW, challenging behaviour spans the responsibility of health, community services and education portfolios in the NSW state parliament. These departments deploy traditional and non/traditional conceptions of the term ‘challenging behaviour’, but often do so within the limits of the biomedical discourse.

In public service sectors traditional coupling of disability and challenging behaviour has, for the most part, persisted over time. For example, the current NSW Government
Department of Family and Community Services [FACS] (Ageing, Disability and Homecare) offers services to people with ‘challenging behaviours’ under the auspice of ‘Behavioural Support Services’, which also service public schools (Ageing Disability & Homecare 2011). Interestingly, (unlike in Section 3.2) this traditional coupling is framed in biomedical ways, where behaviour is inherently linked to ‘disability’ and ‘disability’ is defined as organic. For example, although the NSW Government Department of Family and Community Services (Aging, Disability and Homecare) is an agency whose core business is welfare, they are also responsible for administering the Disability Services Act 1993 – and Part I, Section 5 of that Act frames disability in terms of medical parameters insofar as it is defined as something: ‘a) that is attributable to an intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, physical or like impairment or to a combination of such impairments’. Notably, there is no mention of ‘behaviour’ in the Act’s definition of the target group and the disabilities that may characterise them.

Several government departments provide services for students with challenging behaviour in NSW public schools and this impacts the meaning afforded the term in DEC documentation. The document review (see Chapter 4) indicates that the NSW government education policies ‘transfer’ (Foucault 1972, see also Section 3.1) or adopt biomedical concepts of challenging behaviour from different areas of government, particularly FACS and departments of health. In addition to the FACS (Ageing, Disability and Homecare) ‘Behavioural Support Services’, the organisational structure of the NSW Department of Education and Training includes a ‘Challenging Behaviour Team’ (NSWDET 2000). This ‘Challenging Behaviour Team’ comprises itinerant teachers who offer advice for schools and teachers in managing children with intellectual disabilities presenting with challenging behaviour. Both these government services, by virtue of being ‘outsourced’ insofar as they are services external to the normal operation of classrooms, position teachers as non-experts regarding ‘challenging behaviour’. This is consistent with the continuum of possible teacher subject positions afforded by the biomedical discourse (see Section 2.5 and 2.6), which is frequently mobilised by government services. In these two examples, where challenging behaviour
is taken-up in contemporary government services, the traditional coupling of ‘challenging behaviour’ and ‘disability’ persists. At face value, this would suggest an element of consistency for this particular meaning of challenging behaviour in government service contexts over time. However, uptake of the coupling of ‘challenging behaviour’ and ‘disabilities’ across contemporary government services is far from homogenous.

Diverse meanings are inferred on the traditional ‘challenging behaviour’ / ‘disability’ couplet throughout NSW government services documentation. For example, the NSW Department of Health write of challenging behaviour in a document *Working with people with challenging behaviours in aged care* (Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Office 2006). In this document ‘challenging behaviour’ is not articulated with disability so much as other medical concerns:

> In this document, ‘people with challenging behaviour’ refers to people whose behaviour causes stress or distress to the person with the behaviour or any number of other people interacting with them including other residents, care staff, family and friends. Challenging behaviours are associated with a decline in their cognitive capacity, generally due to dementia and/or psychiatric conditions such as schizophrenia, bipolar affective disorder, anxiety disorders and agitated depressive states.

> (Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Office 2006, p. 1)

Whilst environment and ‘other people’ are considered in terms of the effects of challenging behaviour, the causal attribution for challenging behaviour in the above excerpt rest solely on the individual’s ‘cognitive capacity’, organic causes such as dementia and possible psychiatric diagnoses. This has the effect of locating the behaviour solely within the individual. Such discounting of environmental and social influences, along with no recognition of the individual’s capacity to remedy their behaviour by learning to behave differently, places this statement squarely in the biomedical discourse of behaviour. This relationship between aged care and challenging behaviour reflects an extensive body of literature on the topic (e.g. Bird, Llewellyn-Jones & Korten 2009; Davison et al. 2007; Nazarko 2011; Osborne, Simpson & Stokes...
2010) and on challenging behaviour in patients, generally (e.g. Farrell & Salmon 2009). That this quote appears in NSW Department of Health publications then, is not surprising. The point I’m making here is that, considered together, the assemblage of statements featured in this sub-section demonstrates diversity in non/traditional usage of the term ‘challenging behaviour’. Concurrently, it represents consistent deployment of the biomedical discourse via talk of the in-actively challenging individual when ‘challenging behaviour’ appears in texts authored by various disciplines (such as medicine, neuropsychology, and education) in contemporary NSW government services.

The biomedical discourse was omnipresent in the Australian newsprint media reviewed for this study. To illustrate this, below is a discussion of articles from Sydney metropolitan broadsheet and tabloid newspapers, over the duration of the participants’ teacher preparation degree (i.e. January 2007 to December 2010). Media reports frequently popularise academic studies that address the biological ‘causes and cures’ of behaviour (particularly, behavioural disorders such as ADHD). For example one article boasts the sensational title: ‘Biology to blame for ADHD’ (The Daily Telegraph 2007). These articles tended to cite clinicians and scientists who lay claim to expertise by attributing ADHD to certain biological dysfunction such as genetic causes (Kamper 2007; Switzer 2007) and somatics of ‘the brain’. In the newsprint media reviewed, experts attribute ‘the brain’ as responsible for ADHD-like behaviours in various ways: they discuss the roles of the cerebellum (Devine 2007), the ‘reward/motivation pathways’ (Conville 2009), development delays (Hawkes 2007; Switzer 2007), dopamine production and nurobiological disorder (Christopher 2007). Further credence was given to somatics of ‘the brain’ being responsible for disorderly behaviours

---

5 The media articles reviewed were drawn from the dataset of another study, with permission from the chief investigators (Valerie Harwood, Sandra Jones and Andrew Bonney). The study investigated the medicalisation of child behaviour in Australian newsprint media and the dataset comprised a suite of 453 newspaper articles (focusing on ADHD), published in Australia during the years 1999 to 2009 (inclusive). Examples from this dataset are restricted here to 180 articles from Australia’s National Newspaper and Sydney metropolitan newspapers (sampled bi-annually) over duration of the participants’ pre-service teacher preparation – as these seem the most likely to relate to knowledge construction at the time of data collection.
(particularly ADHD) via editorial that promoted advances in scientific tests and scans (such as the EEG and MRI) for diagnostic purposes (Christopher 2007; The Daily Telegraph 2007; Masters 2007b; Taylor & Fife-Yeomans 2007; Sunday Telegraph 2007; Switzer 2007). Other, non-behaviour-disorder yet somatic explanations of disorderly behaviour were offered in the newsprint media reviewed. For example, lack of sleep (Corby 2007; Francombe 2009), brain damage (Masters 2007a), diet (Hall 2007; Sikora 2009), and ‘leaky gut’ (Masters 2007a; Suskind 2007) were also featured as organic causes for aberrant and unwanted behaviours.

Interestingly, while biomedical explanations of behaviour abound in the print media reviewed, use of the exact term ‘challenging behaviour’ was relatively rare. A separate search of the Factiva Database for the term ‘challenging behaviour’ yielded only 230 hits, and of these only four articles were from national or Sydney metropolitan publications and discussed children’s behaviour in NSW educational contexts. In these four articles the context for usage focused on poor teacher retention rates (AAP 2009), teaching students with Autism (Labi 2009) and disabilities (ABCNews 2009), and securing Department of Community Services funding (Overington 2009). In all these usages, the term ‘challenging behaviour’ was presented as a colloquialism that was self-evidenced by the reader’s ‘common sense’. I contend this is the case as no definitions were offered and no medical or scientific ‘experts’ passed comment on the term.

### 3.5. Biopsychosocial discourse of challenging behaviour

The biopsychosocial discourse of behaviour is by far the most prevalent of the three posited discourses within contemporary educational contexts (see Chapter 4), and comprises statements from various disciplines, such as government, psychology and education. The ‘pro-actively’ challenging individual (and child) is the object at the centre of the biopsychosocial discourse. This individual is cast as presenting challenging behaviour so as to willfully serve his or her own purposes, whether those purposes be to fulfill a psychological function, to gain or resist power, or otherwise.
However, such individuals are also framed as capable of learning desired behaviours regardless of biological dysfunction. Because the onus is on the individual to learn appropriate behaviour, the focus becomes how best to manage the challenging behaviour and/or teach desirable behaviours. Thus, the biopsychosocial discourse affords a continuum of possible teacher subject positions of ‘teacher as manager’.

Although government rhetoric regarding development of support services for people with disabilities and challenging behaviour was, in the first instance, ecosocio (see section 3.2 & 3.3), the process of effecting such changes evoked a return to the focus on the challenging individual, rather than the structures surrounding them. This return to the individual was at times biomedical (see section 3.4) but more frequently supported by biopsychosocial knowledge.

This conceptual centring of the individual via the biopsychosocial discourse of challenging behaviour is evidenced in a shift in focus of prevalence studies in the mid-1990s. Early attempts to define and measure prevalence of challenging behaviour did so with the intent of bettering government services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. In their review of the literature, Emerson et al. (1997) show how early, accepted definitions of challenging behaviour in prevalence studies generally focused on one or more elements of a triad of ‘self-injurious’, ‘destructive’ and ‘aggressive’ behaviours that were frequent and placed the disabled person and/or others in danger of physical harm (Griffin et al. 1987, Harris 1983, Kiernan and Kiernan 1994, Murphy et al. 1993, Oliver 1987, Rojan 1986, all cited in Emerson et al. 1997). The focus of many of these earlier studies was defining prevalence of these behaviours by study-specific typographies and within specific demographics, not national populations generally.

Whilst study-specific typographies for ‘self-injurious’, ‘destructive’ and ‘aggressive’ behaviours varied between studies, they had one feature in common insofar as they
attempted to describe and measure discrete events such as hitting, scratching biting, pinching others or self. These discrete measurable events turned attention to the individual. This turn to the individual was not biopsychosocial as the survey instruments did not focus on the pro-actively challenging individual: the ‘intent’ behind these discrete events was not yet of interest. Rather, in these early surveys, measuring challenging behaviour was assumed to be inherent in the organic intellectual disability and so presented as an in-active challenge. This changed, and biopsychosocial preoccupations of intellectually disabled persons wilfully exerting challenging behaviours became a focus of these prevalence studies.

From the mid-1990s the emergence of a fourth category of challenging behaviour entered prevalence studies: the category of ‘other challenging behaviours’ (see Emerson et al. 1997; Emerson et al. 2001). Introduction of this category was a significant development of the biopsychosocial discourse as it saw the emergence of the ‘pro-actively challenging’ discourse object. ‘Other’ challenging behaviours acknowledged the relational and socially constructed meaning of ‘challenging behaviour’ insofar as it moved away from describing the challenging behaviour itself to consider the pro-actively challenging intent behind the behaviour and the carers’/workers’ management of and response to this. For example, in the HARC project – an attempt by the government to measure national prevalence rates in England – the category ‘other’ challenging behaviours included typographies ‘generalised non-compliance’, ‘repetitive pestering’, and ‘overactivity’. Such ‘other’ typographies inferred the disabled person’s intent to actively challenge carers and could only be assessed against subjective (rather than discrete) criteria; that is, according to the individual carers’/workers’ tolerance and expectations. Perhaps not surprisingly, the HARC study found that:

the most common forms of challenging behaviours which created serious problems of management for carers … were ‘other’ forms of challenging behaviour [most commonly ‘generalised non-compliance’] (shown by 9% - 12% of all people screened in 1988 and 1995), aggression (7%), destructive behaviour (4% - 5%) and self injury (4%).

(Emerson et al. 1997, p. 26)
The development of the peculiarly biopsychosocial category ‘other’ challenging behaviours generated greater scope for defining the pro-actively challenging individual, as a discourse object. It effectively placed responsibility for the behaviour within the individual with the intellectual disability and had the effect of validating the subjective, personal experiences, tolerances, opinions and emotional responses of the individual carer/worker.

This expanded biopsychosocial definition of challenging behaviour (one that included the typology of ‘other’) has persisted over time and featured in recent prevalence studies. A decade after the HARC project, this definition was deployed by a Welsh prevalence study (Lowe et al. 2007) and yielded comparable results. Lowe et al. (2007) used mildly modified measures to those used in the HARC project (Emerson et al. 1997) to investigate the prevalence of challenging behaviour in Wales. Like the HARC project, Lowe et al. (2007) found that: ‘the most prevalent general form was other difficult/disruptive behaviour, with non-compliance being the most prevalent topography’ (p. 625). Additionally, Kelly, Carey and McCarthy (2004), in their national study of the prevalence of challenging behaviour in Ireland’s Special Schools, measured the usual typologies but also included ‘non-compliance’, ‘disruptive, nuisance or threatening behaviour’, ‘absconding’, and a new type ‘passive challenging behaviour’. Passive challenging behaviour was a measure ‘derived from consultation with service providers in the area of special education’ (Kelly et al. 2004, p. 29), and described the child who pro-actively challenged by ‘glaring, refusing to respond, averting gaze, isolating themselves, [and] withdrawal.’ (Kelly et al. 2004, p. 30). So then, we see continuity within prevalence studies designed to inform provision of government services for people with disabilities focusing primarily on the pro-actively challenging features of behaviour: that is, refusal to comply, intent to agitate, and active withdrawal from the institution’s behavioural expectations.

Another contribution of the biopsychosocial discourse (as deployed by the discipline of ‘government’) is its framing of non-disabled children and young people as pro-actively
challenging discourse objects. It is within the limits of the biopsychosocial discourse, and its contention that the pro-actively challenging individual may be managed and learn appropriate behaviour that departure from the traditional disability/challenging behaviour couplet is made possible. For example, the NSW government’s Community Services portfolio (previously DoCS) considers ‘challenging behaviour’ in its care and protection of young people under the age of 18 in “voluntary out-of-home care” (Children and Young Persons Legislation Amendment Regulation 2011, p1). This context is the only one where ‘challenging behaviour’ is a term explicitly featured in legislation governing the public service involved; that is, Children and Young Persons Legislation Amendment Regulation 2011). In this regulation the only mention of ‘challenging behaviour’ is to differentiate between services governed by the Act and those service providers whose purpose is to ‘address the challenging behaviour of children and young people’ (Schedule 1, clause 17B). In the absence of a specific definition, the context of this statement infers that ‘challenging behaviour’ is something that any child or young person may present and not something specifically related to children and young people diagnosed with intellectual disabilities.

Divorced from ‘disability’ in this way, this particular statement carries non-traditional meanings of challenging behaviour. This is consistent with the term’s usage in welfare literature on the topic (e.g. Bellamy & Cowling 2008). Furthermore that the Regulation frames challenging behaviour as something that can and should be ‘addressed’ is in keeping with the tenet that behaviour can be learned and the ‘manager’ subject position afforded by the biopsychosocial discourse.

3.5.1. ... and psychology

As stated earlier, psychologists were vocal in the initial debates over conceptualisations of ‘challenging behaviour’ in the late 1980s / early 1990s as a construct for avoiding within-person deficit discourses of behaviour (see Section 3.2). Concurrently, the discipline of psychology, at least in part, drew from tenets of the biopsychosocial
discourse to perpetuate deficit discourses of behaviour; that is, it re/placed challenging
behaviour ‘within’ the individual child’s biology and psychology. For example, psych
literature focused on the identification of a collection of risk factors associated with the
development of challenging behaviour in children. In their review of this literature,
Lamar and Gatfield (2005) note that, considered together, these studies addressed the
intersection of personal, home and school-based risk factors. However, I would point
out that some of these ‘risk factors’ were described as either within child (e.g. genetics
and temperament) or were social factors that the child was cast as responsible for (e.g.
making friends with ‘at risk’ people at school). Responsibilising the child for their
‘susceptibility for future maladjustment’ (Lamar & Gatfield 2005, p. 52) in this way, the
within-child deficit discourses of challenging behaviour persisted within the discipline
of psychology. Such moves to portray the individual as pro-actively challenging in their
choice of friendships with ‘at risk’ people fall directly within the biopsychosocial
discourse.

Psych-based literature also focused on studying the intersections of intellectually
disabled individuals with challenging behaviour and other psychiatric diagnoses (e.g.
Grey, Pollard, McClean, MacAuley & Hastings 2010; Riches, Parmenter, Weise &
Stancilffe 2006). Finally, like their government disciplinary counterparts, psychology
literature also studied prevalence of challenging behaviours and the impact of
challenging behaviours on ‘placements’ in community settings, such as supported
accommodation and long day care centres (e.g. MacDonald & Hume 2010; McGill &
Mansell 1995). However, their focus on prevalence studies in psych-based literature
was not so much concerned with prevalence amongst the population generally, but
within demographics of people with specific disabilities. These studies included those
of the Smith-Magenis Syndrome (e.g. Sloneem, Oliver, Udwin & Woodcock 2011) and
Autism Spectrum Disorder (e.g. Jang, Dixon, Tarbox and Granpeesheh 2011; Matson,
Neal, Fodstad & Hess 2010). This focus on the individual and their psychological
dys/function as it relates to challenging behaviour placed this body of literature as
participating in and contributing to the biopsychosocial discourse.
Apart from this work on ‘risk factors’ and prevalence/comorbidity studies, there appears to be a gap in the psych-based literature on challenging behaviour during the 1990s. In their review of the literature from 1994 to 2003, Visser and Cole (2003, p. 9) note that ‘[r]eference [of challenging behaviour] is rarely made to British academic psychological journals’ during this period. This is curious because, whereas early studies on prevalence had focused on forms of challenging behaviour, a taxonomic shift is detectable in the mid-1990s. Rather than continuing with classifying challenging behaviour according to its form and typographies (i.e. aggressive, self injurious, destructive and ‘other’ challenging behaviours) challenging behaviour came, in some contexts, to be discussed in terms of its perceived functional characteristics (e.g. ext/internalizing or non/socially motivated) (Sigafoos, Einfeld & Parmenter 2001). Whilst it may not have been prolifically written about within psychology journals, this shift in taxonomies is indicative of a shift of meanings of challenging behaviour across disciplines. Further it is a taxonomic shift that impacted the field of education and educational psychology as the mid 1990s saw a push for functional assessments of challenging behaviour to be taken up at the school site (e.g. Taylor et al. 1996).

Interestingly, recent psych-based literature discerns ‘functional behaviour’ not as a taxonomic shift, but rather a return to the term’s ecosocio ‘original meaning’ and non-discriminatory function (see for example, Banks and Bush 2007). However I contend that what Banks and Bush achieve is more aligned with what Foucault (1972) would term a ‘re-writing’ of the original meaning (rather than a return to it). Indeed, in their writing, Banks and Bush (2007, p. 7) express intent to ‘revise and develop the interpretation of the term challenging behaviour’.

Banks and Bush (2007) contend the ‘original’, or traditional, conception of challenging behaviour, which I earlier identified as largely belonging to the ecosocio discourse, has become ‘distorted’ and ‘misused’ over time. This process of distortion, they claim, has been exacerbated by studies focused on the characteristics of the behaviour rather than its function (as per the prevalence studies outlined discussed in this chapter). With this
perceivably erroneous re-focus to the behaviour itself (rather than the challenge it presents) ‘[t]he attribution for responsibility for the behaviour and therefore for its change has unfortunately gravitated away from carers, services and professionals back to the individual’ (Banks & Bush 2007, p. 13). Banks and Bush (2007) re-assert that the ‘challenge’ doesn’t rest within the individual but rather the individual’s relationship with their carers and their environment. They even go so far as to posit that, regardless of the behaviour’s characteristics, the behaviour is only to be deemed ‘challenging’ if the response evoked in the carers is non-supportive, ‘punitive or restrictive’ (Banks & Bush 2007, p. 9). This is an understanding of challenging behaviour that works to thoroughly responsibilise carers and workers to understand and support people with disabilities presenting with challenging behaviour, and in doing so ameliorate the unwanted behaviour. Paradoxically, Banks and Bush’s critique of the returned focus on the individual inadvertently encompasses their own approach and so becomes a ‘re-write’ rather than a ‘return’ to the original concept. Whilst their responsibilisation of the carers and institutions to be supportive draws on the ecosocio discourse, the taxonomic shift to considering behaviour as functional and learnable draws parts of this argument into biopsychosocial understandings of behaviour. In other words, the individual who presents with challenging behaviour in order to fulfil a psychological need is, albeit with emancipatory intent, rewritten as the ‘pro-actively challenging’ individual specific to the biopsychosocial discourse.

3.5.2. … and special education needs (SEN)

Special Education Needs literature addressed challenging behaviour in relation to both segregated settings (such as special education classes and schools) and inclusive education. Prevalence studies of Special Education Needs segregated settings may be strongly framed as belonging to the biopsychosocial discourse on several fronts. Take, for example, the Kelly et al. (2004) study of the prevalence of Challenging Behaviour in Special Schools in Ireland. Rather than simply measuring prevalence, this study focuses on the principal’s perceptions of the ‘manageability’ (Kelly et al. 2004, p. 63) of various types of challenging behaviour. Such a focus strongly positions the ‘teacher as manager’
and behaviour as learnable (despite organic causes of disability or disorder). Further evidence of these biopsychosocial tenets are found in calls for Positive Behaviour for Success and Functional Analysis to become school-wide interventions for challenging behaviour (coupled with more accessible educational and clinical psychology services for schools). This imperative for schools, and especially teachers, to ‘manage’ students’ pro-actively challenging behaviour is typical of the literature reviewed for Special Education Needs university coursework (see Section 3.5.2 and Section 4.2.3).

The push by psychologists in the mid-1990s for functional behaviour assessment at the school site was not coincidental. Rather, it aligned with the genesis of the ‘inclusive education’ movement. The emergence of ‘inclusive education’ may be traced to the UNESCO (1994) Salamanca Statement, which advocated inclusion of children with special education needs in ‘mainstream’ schools. Inclusion of students with disabilities in general schools generated a plethora of literature on the implications of this for pedagogy. Indeed, some authors (e.g. Larmar & Gatfield 2005) frame ‘challenging behaviour’ as an issue in general classrooms solely pursuant to the advent of including children with learning and behaviour difficulties in mainstream schools. Whilst few others overtly make this claim it is important to note that, by discussing challenging behaviour in terms of inclusion, the traditional meanings of challenging behaviour and its relationship with disability were sustained throughout literature on special education needs (e.g. Anderson, Klassen & Georgiou 2007; Ford 2007; Forlin, Keen & Barrett 2008; Sigafoos et al. 2001; Taylor et al. 1996).

The traditional conception of ‘challenging behaviour’ in the Special Education Needs (SEN) literature is echoed in the SEN educational services operating in the context of this PhD study. In NSW there are currently operational ‘challenging behaviour teams’ (NSWDET 2000). Whilst other behaviour support teams exist within NSW Department of Education and Communities the ‘challenging behaviour team’ is specifically for the support of schools whose students have learning disabilities and challenging behaviour. SEN researchers also occasionally adopt clinical approaches to challenging behaviour;
for example, Heyvaert, Maes and Onghena’s (2010) meta-analysis of intervention and treatment effects of people with intellectual disabilities and challenging behaviour.

Such uptakes of a traditional conception of ‘challenging behaviour’ as coupled with ‘disability’ are by no means all-pervasive; indeed, the field of Special Education Needs has also contributed to moves away from traditional conceptions of ‘challenging behaviour’. For example, instead of being coupled with ‘disability’ in the 2000s some SEN studies co-considered ‘challenging behaviour’ and ‘emotional and behavioural difficulties’ (EBD).

Visser and Cole (2003) in their review of the literature, ‘A study of children and young people who present challenging behaviour’, note that ‘challenging behaviour’ and ‘EBD’ both elude definition and yet unavoidably overlap in special education needs contexts; for example, the title for Section 5 of their report includes the description ‘pupils with serious EBD/Challenging behaviour’. Whilst it seems entirely arbitrary to compare definitions of two ‘non-definables’, the distinction between the two does appear blurred when undertaking this odd task. Table 3.1 offers such a comparison by comparing Visser and Cole’s (2003) definition of EBD and Sigafoos et al.’s (2001) definition of challenging behaviour.
Table 3.1 Comparable definitions of EBD and Challenging Behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties</th>
<th>Challenging Behaviour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Circular 23/89 (DES, 1989b; see also Cooper, Smith and Upton, 1994, p. 20) described EBD as ‘children who set up barriers between themselves and their learning environment through inappropriate, aggressive, bizarre or withdrawn behaviour [they have] developed a range of strategies for dealing with day-to-day experiences that are inappropriate and impede normal personal and social development, and make it difficult for them to learn’.</td>
<td>1. Aggression (e.g., hitting, kicking, pulling hair, biting others). 2. Self-injury (e.g., head banging, face slapping, biting self, scratching self, rumination and vomiting, hand mouthing). 3. Extreme tantrums, which may involve lengthy episodes of screaming and crying often accompanied by aggression and self-injury. 4. Noncompliance to reasonable requests. 5. Disruption and property destruction (e.g., ripping books, throwing household objects/toys, turning over furniture). 6. Stereotyped movement disorders (e.g., body rocking, hand flapping, head weaving). 7. Other inappropriate or bizarre behaviours (e.g., hyperactive, withdrawn, lethargy, preservative speech, intolerance to change, ritualistic behaviours).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Visser & Cole 2003, p. 11) (Source: Sigafoos et al. 2001, p. 38)

Indeed the similarities between the two definitions are striking, with at least four descriptors being common to both: ‘aggression’, ‘inappropriate’, ‘bizarre’ and ‘withdrawn’ behaviours. In its recent history and particularly in SEN contexts, ‘challenging behaviour’ (an already hard to define term) and ‘EBD’ (another hard to define term) have been closely considered together, sometimes interchangeably (e.g. Visser & Cole 2003; Westwood & Graham 2003). The complexity of understanding ‘challenging behaviour’ in contemporary educational contexts thickens. It is this occasional interchangeability of the terms in SEN contexts that infers use of the biopsychosocial discourse for understanding challenging behaviour. The ‘pro-actively challenging child’ is the discourse object featured in this pair of synonyms: for example, one of these term’s definitions describes children who wilfully ‘set up barriers’ (Visser & Cole 2003, p.11).
The ambiguity of what ‘challenging behaviour’ is seems restricted to debate in the SEN literature. In terms of SEN and inclusive education practices, teachers and schools appear to have little problem identifying that which they deem challenging behaviour; further, they typically seek to give it various medicalised labels. As Graham and Harwood (2011, p. 135) point out: ‘research has shown that it can be difficult for schools to negotiate away from the pressure to categorise or diagnose such students [with diverse abilities], particularly those with challenging behaviour’. The pressures of which they speak are education systems driven by funding models that allocate SEN resources according to medical diagnoses (Harwood 2006; Prosser, Reid, Shute & Atkinson 2002). Thus, diagnostic labels are seen as lobbying tools to secure the best support and funding for students (Prosser et al. 2002). To this end, several authors critique teachers’ influential role in the diagnostic apparatus for behaviour disorders (Harwood 2006; McMahon 2012).

Teachers’ skill in knowing that which they deem challenging behaviour (regardless of academic debate as to its definition) is further indicated in Carter et al.’s (2006) study of the prevalence of challenging behaviour in Catholic primary schools, in a single diocese, in Australia. This study is worth mentioning here for two reasons. Firstly, it is one of the few empirical studies by educationists that offers a definition of challenging behaviour, which is remarkably different from its traditional conceptions. Secondly, this study is illustrative of teachers’ understandings of challenging behaviour insofar as it moved to allow teachers flexibility in identifying challenging behaviour in their classrooms, by using a functional rather than a classification approach in the study. The researchers allowed teachers participating in the study to:

focus and directly report upon the presenting behaviours, instead of using reported behaviours to formally categorise or diagnose students. This is a more practical approach as teachers can accurately report the nature of problem behaviour and the impact it has on their classrooms.

(Carter et al. 2006, p. 190).
Using this approach Carter et al. (2006) developed and a functional definition of seriously challenging behaviours, see Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Definitions of challenging behaviour (Carter et al. 2006, 9193)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Commentary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students with severe challenging behaviour are defined as those currently enrolled in the school, or those that have been enrolled in the past 18 months, who exhibit severe behaviour disturbance that persists for a prolonged period despite extraordinary efforts. Such students should meet all of the following criteria:</td>
<td>The operational specification that the behaviour must persist for more than 6 months rules out temporary behaviour problems related to transient situational stress. As the survey was conducted in the second half-year, all students in the system could be detected with the exception of those that were enrolled less than 6 months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Presenting behaviour is more than a temporary expected response to stressful events in the environment and continues for more than 6 months.</td>
<td>Originally, this criterion was conceptualised as only including students receiving multiple referrals to support outside the school. However, it is possible with younger students that internal support structures (e.g., executive) may be accessed initially. That is, it was considered inappropriate to exclude students who have not been in the system sufficiently long to receive multiple or outside referral. Further, access to outside support may be more problematic in the primary school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The student has been referred outside the classroom for support in regard to challenging behaviour (e.g., to school executive, counsellor, special education support teacher, psychologist, behavioural support specialist).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The presenting behaviour is unresponsive to competent general education classroom management</td>
<td>It is important to distinguish between difficult students who would be responsive to the behaviour management of a competent classroom teacher and those who present with challenging behaviour that is not responsive to such general classroom management strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The student has been withdrawn from class on multiple occasions because of presenting behaviour or is considered at high risk of being withdrawn on multiple occasions. 'Withdrawal' may include removal from class or removal from school.</td>
<td>This group may include students who have recently started school and, whilst demonstrating severe behaviour problems, may not have been in the school system for a sufficiently long period to 'have been withdrawn on multiple occasions'. In addition, particularly with younger students, school culture in relation to pastoral care responsibilities may be such that formal 'suspension' is not considered despite ongoing extreme challenging behaviour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The behaviour exhibited severely adversely affects the student's educational performance and/or places the learning of other students at substantial risk.</td>
<td>This was included as a specific criterion as behaviour that does not impact on either the student's learning, or the learning of others, could not reasonably be considered severe challenging behaviour.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Focusing on the challenging function of any given ‘presented behaviour’ in this way was a significant move away from traditional conceptions of challenging behaviour. This was non-traditional on two fronts: firstly, in that challenging behaviour is divorced from ‘disability’ and used to describe student behaviour generally; and secondly, that it avoided typologies describing specific behaviours. This particular non-traditional construal of challenging behaviour rests in the biopsychosocial discourse insofar as: it solely focuses on the individual, with no analysis of the contribution to behaviour from educative systems and structures surrounding the child; and it comments regarding the individual’s ‘responsiveness’ to competent classroom management infers behaviourists assumptions that individuals may learn appropriate behaviour, under the right conditions.

Using these study-specific definitional guidelines, the teachers participating in Carter et al.’s (2006) study identified the following behaviours as challenging:

The data revealed that the most frequent of the challenging behaviours identified (e.g., off task, out of seat, talking out of turn, hindering other students) were often relatively minor, but, as reported by other researchers, are very disruptive to teaching and learning when they occur at high frequency (Beaman & Wheldall, 1997; Wheldall, 1991).

(Carter et al. 2006, p. 204 – 5)

This study’s findings suggest that these teachers deploy an understanding of challenging behaviour that is more grounded in general classroom management concerns than traditional conceptions of challenging behaviour as the ‘aggressive, destructive and self-injurious’ behaviours of people with intellectual disabilities. Further, it speaks to biopsychosocial understandings of behaviour, because it frames the challenging child as ‘pro-actively challenging’. For example, the act of hindering was not framed as a passive one. Also, ‘being out of seat’ and ‘talking out of turn’ infer an individual’s lack of self-control – a psychological notion unique to biopsychosocial theorisation of behaviour (see section 2.5). Finally, students who were ‘off task’ were framed as pro-actively challenging students as they are wilfully refusing to work. The argument that
this particular statement belongs to the biopsychosocial discourse is strengthened by discounting it as belonging to the ecosocio discourse. For example, ‘off task’ behaviour may have been, alternatively, described as ‘disengaged’ behaviour, which would have been a statement belonging to the ecoscio discourse because it positions the child as in-actively challenging, or responding to an unsupportive social structure, and the onus is placed on the teacher to alter that structure by providing engaging curriculum. So then, the teachers’ working knowledge of challenging behaviours seemed to, in practical terms, be reasonably unambiguous, relate to general behaviour management concerns, and, in this case, are portrayed as largely biopsychosocial.

3.6. **Chapter Summary**

This chapter began to analyse archieved knowledge of challenging behaviour. It illustrated that the discursive limits of the three posited discourses of challenging behaviour (Chapter 2) are both plausible and of utility in interpreting the literature, legislation and policy on the topic. In mapping out these discourses it became apparent that ‘challenging behaviour’ has enjoyed a rich history of varied and interdisciplinary meanings. Moreover it was established that there is an absence of clear and easily accessible definitions, and/or explicit use of the term in literature, legislation and policy. Indeed ‘challenging behaviour’ was rendered as a construct far from self-explanatory.

This chapter described a concurrent continuity and discontinuity of meanings of challenging behaviour across disciplines over time that ultimately resulted in a despecification of the term’s meaning. On the one hand, there have been sustained meanings honouring the original coupling of ‘challenging behaviour’ and ‘disability’ in government services and studies of psychology and SEN. On the other hand, government services and the fields of psychology and SEN have each, in turn, contributed to moves away from traditional conceptions of ‘challenging behaviour’. Psychology included ‘behaviour disorders’ and offered new taxonomies to definitions of challenging behaviour. Government services extended traditional definitions to
encompass behaviour of homeless children and youth, aged people and those clinically noted as psychologically unstable. Finally, SEN conflated ‘challenging behaviour’ with the equally ill-defined term EBD and used the term to consider general classroom management concerns.

It was within such a maze of complexity in ‘knowledge’ of challenging behaviour that the NSWIT declared it a ‘mandatory content area’ for preservice teacher education. Whilst not framing the NSWIT as solely responsible for this despecification and change in meaning of the term ‘challenging behaviour’, the next chapter will explore how this mandate may be considered as evidence of a ‘shift’ in the term’s usage in educational contexts (in NSW and, later, Australia). To this end, the following chapter will consider ‘challenging behaviour’ in contemporary educational contexts via review of educational policy, teacher education undergraduate coursework and locally produced school policy documents. This process will add detail to the archive mapped out thus far.
Rendering detail on the map

Challenging behaviour in contemporary education contexts
… not all [teachers] views are explicitly stated; they are often to be inferred from the structures and systems in place in the different sectors of education. How a teacher constructs both a problem and its solution depends on traditions of practice in that situation (Clough and Corbett 2000).

(Grieve 2009, p. 177)

Whilst a description of the discursive lineage of ‘challenging behaviour’ (see Chapter 3) is important, the above quote stresses the need to explore the meaning and function of ‘challenging behaviour’ in the context of this study. In this quote, educational contexts are seen as directly, if somewhat covertly, influencing teacher knowledge. For this reason, the construals of ‘challenging behaviour’ in contemporary educational context become the focus of this chapter. The case will be made that of all the ‘disciplines’ and ‘times’ that have influenced the shape and function of ‘challenging behaviour’ as a knowledge referent and an object of discourse, contemporary education contexts are of greatest interest.

Contemporary educational contexts for this study are defined by geopolitical factors. The geographical context of this study is New South Wales, Australia. Contemporary schooling contexts, in this study then, rest upon: Australian and New South Wales legislation; the New South Wales Department of Education and Communities; and the professional teaching standards set out by the New South Wales Institute of Teachers (see NSWIT 2006) and the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (see Educational Services Australia 2011b). Through interplay of these legal systems and policy apparatus, ‘challenging behaviour’ came to be a mandated knowledge for teachers and teacher educators in New South Wales, and more recently, throughout Australia.
Tracing this emergence of ‘challenging behaviour’ as mandated teacher knowledge will simultaneously frame any uptake of this knowledge as peculiar, primarily because of the nature of the knowledge. Knowledge of ‘challenging behaviour’, although mandated in NSW educational contexts, is seemingly characterised by its lack of definition, its almost deliberate vagueness. I will contend that such vagueness and complexity surrounding understandings of challenging behaviour has served as a condition of possibility for significant shifts in the term’s meaning. What is surprising is that a great divergence or schism of meaning can be shown to have occurred almost silently, but to great effect. The schism referred to here is essentially the conceptual cleaving of ‘challenging behaviour’ from ‘intellectual and developmental disabilities’, within contemporary educational contexts. In essence, this chapter will illustrate how ‘challenging behaviour’ was popularly relocated from a specialised concern within the field of ‘Special Education Needs’ to a common-sense conflation with ‘behaviour management’ more generally. Finally, I will contemplate how this ‘deliberate vagueness’ facilitates silences in contemporary educational contexts around this notion of challenging behaviour. A review of NSWDET, NSWIT and AITSL documentation will reveal that ‘challenging behaviour’ is a concept commonly referred to within education but not at the interface of ‘education’ and the policy and guidelines that govern it – at that juncture it is a term surprisingly absent.

In Archaeology of Knowledge Foucault (1972) notes that knowledge can be found in institutions’ documentation and regulations. So then, it is to institutional documentation and regulations that this chapter turns. This section of the document review focused on three groups of documents. First, in Section 4.1 a pattern of divergence of the terms meaning in contemporary educational policy will be explored. 6 Second, Section 4.2 of this chapter addresses the question: What conceptions of challenging behaviour are

---

6 The purpose of policy documents was to try to illustrate how policy makers and designers of teaching standards/teacher education requirements talk about challenging ‘behaviour’ and teacher ‘knowledge’. As most of these were electronic texts, I used computer ‘search’ functions to purposively search for the terms ‘challenging behav/iour/iour’ and ‘knowledge/s’. I cut and pasted references including these words into a word document and then themed these using NVivo.
reflected and constructed in teacher education, particularly in the undergraduate coursework that the participants engaged with? Finally, in Section 4.3, the context of PEx is considered via examination of participating schools’ policies and procedures.

4.1. Challenging Behaviour in Educational Policy Contexts

4.1.1. It is mandatory … or is it?

The mandatory components of teacher education … include knowledge of … students with challenging behaviour.

(NSW Institute of Teachers 2006, p. 3, emphasis added)

Although it features at the outset of this thesis, revisiting this quote in the context of this discussion is important. This quote came from the document that set the standards for accreditation of teacher education coursework and teachers in the state of NSW and has been flagged as working ‘towards increased inclusion of students with special needs’ (Dempsey 2007, p. 77). In 2011 a national framework superseded this. However, the NSWIT Professional Teaching Standards is analysed here because (i) it was the document that governed the preservice teachers participating the university program they were enrolled in at the time of data collection and (ii) this state authored document was, arguably, influential to the development of the national standards.  

As seen above, this document clearly publishes ‘knowledge of … students with challenging behaviour’ as a mandatory component of teacher education in NSW. Whilst I may appear to be labouring the point, the choice of words proclaiming such a mandate

---

7 The New South Wales Institute of Teachers, and the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership websites (and linked pdf documents) were reviewed in their entirety to support the document review for this Chapter. The NSWIT and AITSL websites were small enough to text search each webpage and hyperlinked document on the site. Because the researcher did not ‘select’ certain webpages and/or disregard others there is no ‘summary’ of the NSWIT & AITSL document review methodology offered in the appendices (as there is for the NSWDEC and University document reviews, where review parameters were designed by the researcher).
is key to the argument explored in this sub-section. I will argue that the NSW government did not mandate ‘challenging behaviour’ content in teacher education, they mandated ‘behaviour management’ content in teacher education. To substantiate this claim, the case is made below that the NSWIT re-wrote and re-defined ‘challenging behaviour’. Challenging behaviour was re-written as divorced from its traditional relationship with ‘disability’ and aligned, instead, with ‘behaviour management’. This was a considerable shift in meaning insofar as its effect was remarkable despecification. No longer was ‘challenging behaviour’ a specific term for describing the aggressive, destructive, self-injurious and ‘other’ behaviours of students with an intellectual or developmental disability. Instead, it was re-written into educational policy as a catchall description for behaviour, from any child, that individual teachers might warrant ‘challenging’.

Whether or not this was done with intent is not a point to postulate, what is important here is that this rewriting occurred within the context of the Institute’s purpose for impacting the discursive practices of teaching professionals:

The Framework of Professional Teaching Standards … provides a common language for the profession to discuss its work within and outside its membership.

(Institute’s Submission 58, cited in NSW Legislative Council 2005, p. 16)

Here, the NSWIT’s intent to impact teachers’ talk about their professional endeavours and experiences is clear. With this in mind, what follows is an attempt to describe a transition of meanings for the term ‘challenging behaviour’ as well as the antecedents to such transitions and the ‘new’ meanings’ unequivocal uptake in subsequent teaching standards, namely the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST)* set forth by AITSL (Educational Services Australia 2011b). In doing so, I hope to highlight the strangeness of such a meaning shift and the curiosity surrounding its seemingly largely unquestioned uptake in the field of education, in Australia.
A mysterious mandate ...

In the lead-up to the 2003 NSW government’s ‘mandate’ in question, the problem was framed entirely in terms of ‘behaviour management’ and not ‘challenging behaviour’. One of the significant events preceding the mandate was that in 1999, the then Minister for Education and Training, Hon John Aquilina MP, commissioned a review of teacher education in New South Wales. ‘Behaviour management’ was a key focus of the review, which was conducted by Gregor Ramsey. No mention of the term ‘challenging behaviour’ appeared in his report. Ramsey’s recommendations for policy direction included that, on matters of ‘behaviour management’, initial teacher education should: give priority to content on interpersonal relationships; provide learning experiences for behaviour management primarily via professional experience placements; and ‘provide courses for teachers in behaviour management, including behaviour disordered students’ (Ramsey 2000, p. 81). Key to the recommendations Ramsey (2000) made was that the NSW Government establish an Institute of Teachers to ‘enhance the level of professionalism of teachers and teaching’ (p. 215). The recommendation to establish an institute of teachers was one that the NSW government promptly set about actioning, forming a taskforce to review teacher education and an Interim Committee for a NSW Institute of Teachers.

In May 2003 a Hansard Transcript discussing the introduction of the NSW Institute of Teachers Act recorded that Dr. Andrew Refshauge, member of the legislative assembly, and soon-to-be Minister for Education with the re-election of the Carr Government, stated the following:

The [interim] committee [for a NSW Institute of teachers] is advocating the establishment of graduate teacher standards, which clearly set out what the profession believes beginning teachers should know, should understand and should be able to do. It is proposed that, to be endorsed, university courses will have to demonstrate that new teachers graduate with the necessary knowledge and abilities: for example, a knowledge of syllabus content, an ability to manage a classroom, and an ability to communicate clearly with students and their parents. Further, it would be mandatory that teacher education courses equip graduates for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, for teaching students with
special education needs, for teaching students from a non-English-speaking background, for behaviour management, and for literacy education.

(NSW Legislative Assembly, Debates, 2003, p. 867, emphasis added)

‘It would be mandatory’ for teachers to know and understand ‘behaviour management’ was a means of speaking of a future event (the Institute was not yet formed). Here, again, ‘behaviour management’, not ‘challenging behaviour’, is indicated as the content area to be mandated. But this is not the mandate itself.

The actual mandate of content areas of teacher education was not traceable in an online search of legislation and regulations (via the LawLex database), in Hansard Transcripts or in the NSW Government Gazettes of 2003/4. However, discussion of the mandate abounds and there is some consensus that the 2003 mandate refers to behaviour management and not challenging behaviour:

In 2003, for example, the Government made it mandatory to ensure that literacy, behaviour management, information and communications technology, Aboriginal education and teaching students from a non-English speaking background were part of our university pre-service teacher education programs.

(Dr Brock, cited in Standing Committee on Social Issues [transcript], 2005, p. 18, emphasis added)

The standards include content areas mandated by the Government including behaviour management, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, literacy education, information technology and teaching students from non-English speaking backgrounds. This content was mandated by the NSW Government following its re-election in 2003.

(NSWIT 2005, p. 7, emphasis added)

That the 2003 mandate refers to ‘behaviour management’ and not ‘challenging behaviour’ is plausible given that ‘behaviour management’ was the focus of the government in the four years preceding it. What is important here is that the NSWIT Annual report concedes that it was ‘behaviour management’ content that was mandated.
... with clear implications

With the passing of the *NSW Institute of Teachers Act 2004*, the institute was formed and responsibilised with chartering *Professional Teaching Standards* and accrediting teacher education courses and their graduands. Thus, the NSWIT *Professional Teaching Standards (PTS)* became foundational to the design and delivery of initial teacher education in NSW. The Act sets out that:

> The professional teaching standards may deal with, and make provision for or with respect to, the following matters: the skills, qualifications, experience and knowledge required for teaching at each level of accreditation.

(Institute of Teachers Act 2004 [NSW], s.20)

When setting out the ‘knowledge required’ of teachers, the *PTS* mandate knowledge of ‘challenging behaviour’ in two of the three dimensions characteristic of its framework: the dimensions of ‘professional knowledge’ (via standards 2.1.5, 2.2.5, 2.3.5, 2.4.5, 2.1.6, 2.2.6, 2.3.6, 2.4.6) and ‘professional practice’ (via standard 5.4.5). Additionally, the introduction to the *PTS* identifies ‘challenging behaviour’ as a ‘mandatory component of teacher education’ (NSWIT 2006, p. 3).

Whilst the mandate itself may remain a mystery its effects seem clear. A professional institute was formed and standards were created, at least in part, to ensure that teachers know about ‘children with challenging behaviour’. The question remains: How and why did this mandated knowledge morph from ‘behaviour management’ to ‘challenging behaviour’?

### 4.1.2. It is vaguely and variously defined

A systematic review of each web-page and its related attachments on the NSWIT website revealed that ‘challenging behaviour’ featured in only three documents: the *PTS* and two documents designed to advise on matters of coursework mandates for universities seeking accreditation for their teacher education programs. Only only three
mentions and a lack of a coherent definition of ‘challenging behaviour’ throughout the entire NSWIT website seemed a rather non-rigorous under-representation for a term elevated to the status of ‘mandated content area for teacher education’ (NSWIT 2006, p. 3).

First appearance. The appearance of ‘challenging behaviour’ in the PTS is outlined in the previous subsection, my point here is that it is not a term that is defined in the PTS. To be fair, the PTS, generally, avoids definition of terms used (there is no glossary offered) and ‘challenging behaviour’ is no exception to the rule. The second document was NSWIT Initial Teacher Education Document 6: Professional Experience – April 2009 (NSWIT 2009), one in a series of documents designed to offer advice to universities, in terms of attaining NSWIT accreditation for their teacher education programs. In this document (Document 6) ‘challenging behaviour’ was referred to simply within a list of ‘mandatory content areas’ of teacher education, consistent with those stated in the PTS:

Whilst each professional experience would have its particular focus or expected outcomes, pre-service teachers ultimately would be expected to have had opportunity to develop required knowledge, understanding and/or skills prior to and in conjunction with particular and relevant experiences, including as a minimum, the following:

…

knowledge of curriculum, teaching and assessment approaches required to address the needs of all students and in particular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students with special education needs, students from a non-English speaking background, and students with challenging behaviours.

(NSWIT 2009, p. 2 – 3)

Again, beyond being listed with all the ‘mandatory content areas’ for teacher education, no definition is offered here. The third, and final document, offers a definition but does not defend this definition in relation to assertions made by the rest of the document. Like the previous document discussed (i.e. Document 6, see above), the NSWIT Initial
Teacher Education Document 4: Mandatory Areas of Study – January 2008 (NSWIT 2008) belongs to the same suite of documents that were designed as a guide to securing accreditation for university teacher preparation programs. Within Document 4, challenging behaviour is afforded the following definition:

Teachers need to understand and respond to a range of challenging student behaviour (such as disruptive, bullying, disengaged and undermining behaviours).

(NSWIT 2008, p. 5)

Finally, it would appear, NSWIT had offered a definition of challenging behaviour. Albeit a definition that appeared within a paragraph of a text possibly most teachers would have no need to search for and/or read and one that relies entirely on the individual teacher’s perception of, and tolerances for, various types of behaviour (thus, effectively maintaining the term’s ambiguity). Moreover, this points to a shift in the meaning of ‘challenging behaviour’ in contemporary educational contexts.

Document 4, as its title espouses, outlines ‘mandatory areas of study’ for teacher education. A shift in the meaning of ‘challenging behaviour’ may be detected because (NSWIT 2008, p. 5) of the position of the term and its definition within the document; it falls under the sub-heading ‘Classroom and Behaviour Management’. This, at first glance, may not appear strange but it becomes so upon closer analysis.

Firstly, ‘classroom and behaviour management’ is not named in the PTS as a mandatory content area, ‘challenging behaviour’ is. This is odd because, in Document 4, all the other subheadings match the list of ‘mandated content areas’ featured in the PTS (that is, Literacy, Aboriginal Education, … Students from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds, Special Education Needs … and Information and Communication Technologies). It is striking that the mandated content area ‘challenging behaviour’ (as it is identified in other NSWIT documents, including the PTS) is renamed here as ‘behaviour management’. At the very least, it seems an attempt to avoid the term and
deny its status of mandatory teacher knowledge. At worst, it is an overt conflation of the terms ‘challenging behaviour’ and ‘behaviour management’. These seem unlikely synonyms, especially if one considers that ‘behaviour management’ (as a term in general educational contexts) is entirely different to traditional definitions of the term ‘challenging behaviour’, especially in SEN contexts (see Section 3.5.2). Up until this point, the concepts had differed in terms of the types behaviours and types of children they refer to: whilst traditional definitions of ‘challenging behaviour’ specifically related to people diagnosed with learning and developmental disabilities, all school-aged students fall under the auspice of ‘behaviour management’. Here, we see this distinction blurred. Furthermore, examples of challenging behaviour offered in Document 4 such as ‘disruptive, bullying, disengaged and undermining behaviours’ (NSWIT 2008, p. 5) bear little resemblance to traditional definitions of ‘challenging behaviour’ (see section 3.2), which include aggressive, self injurious and destructive behaviours. So then, contemporary educational contexts work to induce change in teachers’ knowledge of ‘challenging behaviour’, by promoting a broader ‘common sense’, ‘self-explanatory’ usage of the term.

Secondly, one begins to notice the tenuous, and perhaps contradictory, relationship of ‘challenging behaviour’ with another of the mandated content areas, ‘special education needs’. The ‘special education needs’ mandatory content area outlined in Document 4 deals with behaviour in terms of ‘behaviour disorders’ and, interestingly, does not connect behaviour directly with disability. Such an absence of ‘challenging behaviour’ in the special education needs context is striking because, traditionally the concept of ‘challenging behaviour’ was one utterly connected with developmental and learning disabilities and one that commonly featured in analyses of inclusive education (see Sections 3.2 and 3.5).

Divorcing ‘challenging behaviour’ from ‘Special Education Needs’ and offering it new definitions raises several epistemological questions. Are these knowledge areas separated on the issue of non-compliant behaviour because the knowledges are mutually
exclusive? Or, are they separated because one needs a way of describing non-conforming behaviours that fall outside the officially ‘disorderly’ and/or ‘disabled’? Regardless, this overlap is distinctive, yet not discussed. It is here that a schism from traditional definitions of challenging behaviour may be detected. Here may be seen a rewriting of its definition by an educational institution with the authority to do so. Here, the NSWIT, the accrediting body for teacher education and teachers, re-writes a term, a concept and a knowledge of ‘challenging behaviour’ by distinctly and inexplicably divorcing its traditional affiliation with students with disabilities and special education needs. Challenging behaviour begins to ‘officially’ transform, lose its specificity in describing children diagnosed with learning disabilities and broaden to become a catchall concept for any behaviours deemed ‘unwanted’ and ‘challenging’ by individual teachers.

The ‘transformed’ meaning of ‘challenging behaviour’ – that is, the separation of challenging behaviour from ‘disability’ and realignment to ‘behaviour management’ and teachers’ commonsense – appears to have gained some purchase in the field of education. Literature on behaviour demonstrates evidence of such despecification by using ‘challenging behaviour’ synonymously with subjective terms such as ‘difficult behaviour’ (e.g. Beaman et al. 2007) and ‘problem behaviour’ (e.g. de Jong 2005). Also. This uptake is also evidenced by the fact that in 2011, six years after the emergence of this transformed conceptualisation of ‘challenging behaviour’, the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) (Educational Services Australia 2011b) inscribed continuity to this meaning.

AITSL’s uptake of ‘challenging behaviour’ as it features in the NSWIT Professional Teaching Standards (that is, as a mandatory area of teacher education separate from disability and special education needs) was not coincidental. The NSWIT intentionally lobbied for its mandatory content areas of preservice teaching education to be incorporated in the new APST (NSW Government 2011). Such lobbying by NSWIT was successful insofar as the term ‘challenging behaviour’ both features in AITSL’s
national standards framework and sustains the meaning inferred on the term in the NSWIT PTS (NSWIT 2006). In the inaugural Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (Educational Services Australia 2011b), with one exception, the word ‘behaviour’ only appears when coupled with the word ‘challenging’; that is, in standard 4.3, ‘Manage challenging behaviour’ (Educational Services Australia 2011b, p. 14). Interestingly, whilst in the NSWIT PTS the marriage between ‘challenging behaviour’ and ‘behaviour management’ was largely inferred, in the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers such meaning is crystallised:

4.3 Manage challenging behaviour

Demonstrate knowledge of practical approaches to manage challenging behaviour. (Graduate)

Manage challenging behaviour by establishing and negotiating clear expectations with students and address discipline issues promptly, fairly and respectfully. (Proficient)

Develop and share with colleagues a flexible repertoire of behaviour management strategies using expert knowledge and workplace experience. (Highly Accomplished)

Lead and implement behaviour management initiatives to assist colleagues to broaden their range of strategies. (Lead)

(Educational Services Australia 2011b, p. 14)

The above excerpt shows Standard 4.3 and its indicators as they relate to various stages in teacher accreditation: graduate teacher; proficient teacher; highly accomplished teacher; and lead teacher. In this standard, ‘challenging behaviour’ is clearly aligned with discipline and behaviour management, generally. Furthermore, in the case of the indicators for the highly accomplished and lead teachers, ‘challenging behaviour’, by virtue of not being directly included in the indicator, is used as directly synonymous with behaviour management – a synonym problematised earlier this in this sub-section.

Continuity of meaning for ‘challenging behaviour’ from the NSWIT PTS to the AITSL APST is also evidenced when considering the placement of the term within the
respective standards’ framework. In the AITSL APST, as it was in the NSWIT PTS, the placement of ‘challenging behaviour’ is indicative of its, now sustained, divorce from disability and special education needs. In the APST, concerns relating to disability and special education needs are attended to in Element 1, ‘know students and how they learn’, and not in Element 4, ‘Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments’, which is where all mention of ‘challenging behaviour’ resides. Furthermore, unlike the NSWIT PTS, the AITSL APST does offer a glossary of terms. Perhaps unsurprisingly, challenging behaviour is not defined in this glossary. AITSL’s exclusion of ‘challenging behaviour’ from the glossary supporting the APST may be interpreted as another case of a governing educational institution having: i) positioned the meaning of ‘challenging behaviour’ as self-evident; and ii) despecified the meaning of ‘challenging behaviour’ by relocating it as a commonsense interpretation of individual teachers and/or preservice teacher course-work designers.

That a concept central to the mandated knowledge of teachers eludes definition by statewide (and later nationwide) governing educational institutions is noteworthy and that such avoidance seems to have facilitated a functional definition-change is impressive.

4.1.3. ‘Challenging behaviour’ and the DEC

The Melbourne Declaration and the New South Wales Department of Education and Communities documents have been included in this review of challenging behaviour

8 Disabilities Studies researchers may find this disconcerting as such conceptual organisation does little to interrupt educators’ “struggle to ‘know’ their students on the basis of labels and conditions” (Goodley 2007, p328).

9 The most recent (i.e. 2009) decennial declaration made by all State, Territory and Commonwealth Education Ministers regarding setting and attaining educational goals for all young Australians.

10 Total results on DEC internet search (I did not have access to the DEC intranet) for ‘challenging behaviour’ returned 714 documents and webpages. However, after viewing the first 100 documents in this search result it became clear that not all of the 714 ‘hits’ would be relevant. This sample of 100 documents was parsed down to 16 documents deemed ‘relevant’ to this projects document review. This parsing process was achieved by discarding: 28 documents ‘hit’ more than once (double-ups); ten TAFE and two Secondary School specific documents; 44 documents that did not contain the exact phrase
in contemporary educational policy. A search of the DEC website yielded little of utility in terms of arriving at a working definition of ‘challenging behaviour’ in contemporary educational contexts. But, unlike the NSWIT website, which only mentioned it thrice, the NSWDEC website yielded several documents and webpages that featured the term ‘challenging behaviour’. On the DET website ‘challenging behaviour’ featured in: NSW government reports; NSWDET annual reports, ‘action plans’, departmental guidelines and practice notes; research documents; and a brochure. However, only one source offered any definition:

Behaviour support services are provided by the Department of Human Services (Ageing, Disability and Home Care) with the understanding that the definition of ‘challenging behaviour’ is behaviour which challenges the support system around an individual.

(NSWDET 1990, p. 102)

The above is the definition of challenging behaviour featured in the NSWDET guidelines for the management of students’ violent behaviour in schools. What is pertinent here is that the definition is not offered by the NSWDEC, it is ‘conceptually transferred’ (Foucault 1972, see also Section 3.1) from a NSW government department that deals with the welfare of people with disabilities, and in this case offers behaviour support services for children with challenging behaviour in NSWDET schools. This is a prime example of the interrelationship between the disciplines of health and education when it comes to the issue of challenging behaviour. That the NSWDET documentation uses other government departments’ definitions of challenging behaviour is testament to both: a lack of definition of ‘challenging behaviour’ within the NSWDET; and a medicalisation of behaviour inherent in departmental policy and procedure (by virtue

‘challenging behaviour’ and had only ‘challenging’ and/or ‘behaviour’ (the DET search engine was only capable of ‘and’ search strings and did not allow use of inverted commas to isolate specific terms or phrases). That only 16 useful documents were found in the first 100 of the search results suggested that reading further down the list would likely be fruitless. Whilst the 16 documents reviewed may not be all the documents on ‘challenging behaviour’ it is plausible to contend they are representative of the ways in which challenging behaviours are talked about on the website. To view a summary of the DEC document review please see Appendix B.

11 Although the NSW Government Department of Family and Community Services (Aging, Disability and Homecare) is an agency who’s core business is welfare, they are also responsible for administering
of outsourcing support for behaviour to external departments concerned with ‘health’ and welfare of people with disabilities). Unlike most definitions of challenging behaviour, this one avoids specifying typologies or offering examples of how challenging behaviour may present. Instead, it sustains the ‘challenge’ as something perceived in relation to ‘the support system around’ the individual.

Traditional coupling of challenging behaviour and disability is seen in further NSWDET documentation. Contemporary to the Ramsay report and development of the NSWIT, the DEC also problematised teacher knowledge and skills in responding to children with challenging behaviour. Particularly, the then NSWDET (now NSWDEC) identified teacher deficits as a barrier to achieving the outcomes identified in their 2004-2006 Disability Action Plan. Under Section 3 of that document, which is titled ‘Participation’, the outcome discussed is: ‘Students staff and customers with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to take advantage of the range of education, training and employment opportunities provided by the Department and its funded organisations’ (NSWDET 2004a, p. 32). In the list of identified barriers to this outcome, barrier number eight states: ‘some teachers may not have the necessary training and skills to adequately support students with disabilities who have challenging behaviour’ (NSWDET 2004a, p. 35). Here, the knowledge and skill deficit, unlike that framed by the Institute of Teachers, has less to do with general behaviour management and more to do with teaching children with disabilities. Here, traditional conceptions of challenging behaviour persist insofar as it remains coupled with disability.

In the remaining documents located on the DET website that mention, yet avoid defining, ‘challenging behaviour’, the term is afforded various uses and inferred...
meanings. My discussion of these various uses and meanings will first focus on whether, or not, traditional conceptions of challenging behaviour were sustained, before turning to a more nuanced discussion of the terms uses in the documents reviewed.

Traditional conceptions of challenging behaviour featured in the DET documents over time and persist in current documents (this set of documents will be collectively called ‘Suite A’). Conversely, non-traditional conceptions of challenging behaviour featured in some of the DET documents reviewed (this set of documents will be collectively called ‘Suite B’). Documents belonging to ‘Suite A’ sustained the original relationship of ‘challenging behaviour’ and ‘disability’ (DET 1990, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2004a, 2007b, 2010a, no date; NSWDPC 2011; NSW Government 2011). Conversely, ‘Suite B’ documents featured the term ‘challenging behaviour’ only in the broader context of ‘behaviour management’ (DET 2004b, 2007a, 2009, 2010b, 2010c; Knight 2010), and not ‘disability’ specifically. The chronology of publication dates here is worth discussing further.

The publication dates of DET documents corroborate a point of departure from traditional conceptions of challenging behaviour. Indeed, these publication dates seemed to support arguments made thus far in this chapter, namely that – whilst, to some extent, traditional conceptions of behaviour hold true over time – there was a concurrent and notable move away from traditional conceptions of challenging behaviour in the field of education, in Australia, in the mid-2000s. Symptoms of this change in the term’s meaning were detectable across several educational sites, in the mid-2000s. Firstly, the mid-2000s saw the rise of the NSWIT and its Professional Teaching Standards and my review of NSWIT documents revealed ‘challenging behaviour’ as recast and redeployed so to divorce it from ‘disability’ and re-marry it to ‘behaviour management’ (see Section 3.4.2). Secondly, in my review of the DET documents, the documents comprising ‘Suite B’ (NSWDET 2004b, 2007a, 2009, 2010b, 2010c; Knight 2010) concerned themselves with ‘challenging behaviour’ within the broader concern of ‘behaviour management’. The documents in Suite B are
contemporary to the NSWIT insofar as they were published at the time of the inception of the NSWIT, and after (that is, 2004 to present). Conversely, prior to 2004, the date of the launch of the NSWIT, DET documentation focused solely on people with intellectual disabilities when mobilising the term ‘challenging behaviour’.

It would seem then that, in the mid-2000s, the DET’s use of the term ‘challenging behaviour’ diverted from a specific description of children with intellectual disabilities frequently engaging in self-injurious, aggressive and destructive behaviours to posit a description of any and all behaviours that teachers find challenging to manage. Furthermore, this ‘diversion’ is consistent with the NSWIT’s deployment of the term. I am not responsibilising the NSWIT for this shift in the DEC’s usage of the term, or vice versa; however, in combination, a review of NSWIT and DEC documents suggests that a certain uptake of ‘challenging behaviour’, uniquely conceptualised as divorced from ‘disabilities’ and remarried to commonplace ‘behaviour management’ concerns, has permeated more than one governing educational institution in NSW since the mid-2000s.

That is not to say that the DET only use ‘challenging behaviour’ within the posited traditional/non-traditional binary. From the mid-2000s, diverse meanings of the term were indicated and/or perhaps exacerbated by a lack of definition of the term in departmental policy and procedures. Beyond contradictory uptake of both couplings with ‘disability’ and commonplace ‘behaviour management’ concerns, there was a grey-area usage that pertained to extreme issues in behaviour management. For example, this grey-area usage featured in documents related to specialist behaviour units and schools (NSWDET 2004b, 2009, 2010c). In these documents, which describe students both with and without disabilities and so move away from the traditional coupling with disability, ‘challenging behaviour’ is portrayed as something frequent, extreme and completely extraordinary that warrants specialist treatment. As such, these documents frame challenging behaviour as something that any teacher would find challenging, thus also
distancing the terms usage from more subjective, commonplace ‘behaviour management’ concerns.

Scholarly analysis of the NSWDEC’s consideration of ‘challenging behaviour’ is relatively rare. Linda Graham’s analysis of inclusive education in NSWDEC schools is (so far as I could find) the only direct critique of ‘this huge, demanding, watchful bureaucracy[s]’ (Graham & Spandagou 2011) policy regarding, and response to, challenging behaviour. Graham and Spandagou problematise the NSWDEC’s treatment of challenging behaviour and highlight the importance of individual school context and individual teacher’s perception as hugely impacting what is construed as ‘challenging’:

… it seems there are deep systemic problems relating not only to the measurement and reporting of student behaviour in NSW (Gonczi and Riordan 2002), but in the wildly divergent perceptions of it, as well as the political and industrial gains that derive from exaggerating it.

(Graham & Spandagou 2011, p. 233)

Graham and Sweller’s statistical review of the NSWDEC Inclusive Education policies and practices critiqued the Department’s systemic response to challenging behaviour. Their article claims that, despite pervasive rhetoric of inclusive education, students with very challenging behaviour are increasingly excluded in NSWDEC schools. Such exclusion is described as increased enrolment rates in segregated educational settings for children with challenging behaviour such as support classes, behaviour units and schools (despite an overall decrease in the total student population):

these statistics shine a light on what we call the ‘canaries in the coalmine’ – increasing numbers of children who are being diagnosed with social, emotional or behavioural disorders and subsequently directed towards ‘special’ programmes conducted in settings archived from the daily life and business of ‘regular schooling’. Therefore, while New South Wales may have made some improvement in the participation stakes for students with mild intellectual impairment and physical disability, we would argue that they have not done as well in preventing exclusion – particularly with respect to students who go on to develop very challenging behaviour.

(Graham & Sweller 2011, p. 950)
In this excerpt, Graham & Sweller frame ‘challenging behaviour’ as a non-normative disability insofar as the term refers to those behaviours included in formal emotional or behavioural disorder diagnoses (Graham & Sweller 2011). Yet, across her articles that comment on the NSWDEC’s consideration of challenging behaviour Graham and colleagues use the term ‘challenging behaviour’ in contrasting ways. Firstly, they use it in a list for describing students with diverse abilities; that is, ‘students with learning difficulties, disabilities and/or challenging behaviour (Graham & Spandagou 2011, p. 225). In this first sense, the ‘and/or’ conjunction casts challenging behaviour as something that people with, or without disability might present. Secondly, in two of her articles (Graham & Harwood, 2011; Graham & Jahnukainen 2011), there is deployment of the more recent NSWDEC and NSWIT meaning of ‘challenging behaviour’ as ‘extreme behaviour management concerns’ and ‘that which teachers find challenging’. My point here is that, whilst these scholars bring important issues to light in terms of the inequitable schooling experiences of children deemed to have ‘challenging behaviour’, they seem to adopt, rather than critique, the Department’s varied (and so ambiguous) use of the term.

In summary, the term ‘challenging behaviour’ leads somewhat of a double-existence in contemporary educational policy and procedures in NSW, Australia. On the one hand, ‘challenging behaviour’ is a mandated (if somewhat vague) knowledge embedded in the context of this study by virtue of national and state professional teaching standards; further, it is a term shown to circulate within regulatory bodies of education in NSW. It appears as a term aired frequently within education, and between educators. On the other hand, ‘challenging behaviour’ is somewhat of an ‘elephant in the room’ for educational policy-makers. For example, the term ‘challenging behaviour’ does not feature (at all) in any of the six NSWDET policies and procedures explicitly related to student behaviour.\(^{12}\) Departmental policy and procedures seemed unlikely spaces for

\(^{12}\) These six policies and procedures were the: Student Discipline in Government Schools Policy (NSWDET 2006a); Schools Anti-bullying Plan (DEC 2011); Student discipline in government schools – support materials (2006b); Suspension and expulsion of school students procedures (NSWDET 2011b);
silence on a term perceived so crucial to education. Here is seen, perhaps, an example of the knowledge/practice divide – ‘challenging behaviour’ is compulsory professional knowledge but is absent from the policy and procedures that govern professional practice. There is a detectable disconnect between: the popular, if somewhat ambiguous, uptake of ‘challenging behaviour’ knowledge within education; and the absence of ‘challenging behaviour’ knowledge from the policy documents that govern education (with the exception of the NSWIT and AITSL professional teaching standards – both which feature ‘challenging behaviour’ but do not define it).

4.2. University-constructed knowledge of challenging behaviour

The NSW Institute of Teachers’ requirements for approval of initial teacher education programs include demonstration of the NSW Graduate Teacher Standards and several mandatory areas of study including special education and managing challenging behaviours.

The Institute is currently completing a four year schedule of assessing over 150 initial teacher education programs offered by NSW teacher education institutions.

This assessment has confirmed that all programs assessed include a unit of special education study. This unit of special education study addresses aspects of the special education mandatory area and those Graduate Teacher Standards that relate to students with special education needs and/or challenging behaviour. In many cases, program content designed to address aspects of the special education mandatory area and Graduate Teacher Standards relating to students with special education needs and/or challenging behaviour is integrated across units other than the special education unit. (NSW Government 2011, p. 30)

This quote is important for two reasons. Firstly, it shows that in teacher education contexts the ‘divide’ generated by distinguishing between ‘special education needs’ and ‘challenging behaviour’ in the NSWIT Professional Teaching Standards is not...
necessarily honoured. Instead, the ‘and/or’ conjunctions in this quote demonstrate that teacher educators in NSW effectively re-connect the divide between special education needs and challenging behaviour by commonly addressing the two compulsory subject areas within a singular compulsory unit of their program. Concurrently, the NSWIT audit of teacher education courses also identified that the relevant mandatory content areas were often ‘integrated across units other than the special education unit’ (NSW Government 2011, p. 30). Both were found to be the case in this PhD study. The ‘Bachelor of Education (Primary)’ program in which the pre-service teacher participants were enrolled covered the mandatory content areas via compulsory ‘Special Education Needs’ and ‘Behaviour Management’ courses, as well as integrating the compulsory content areas across other courses in the program. This section of the chapter reviews the university coursework in this program in order to identify the possible university-based knowledge of challenging behaviour that the preservice teacher participants may have encountered in their undergraduate studies.

Undergraduate coursework documents were reviewed for mentions of challenging behaviour. Overall, 73 unique texts were reviewed (including textbooks, book-chapters, journal articles and policy documents). Deciding what documents were included in, or excluded from, this part of the document analysis was a complex process. University subjects (and, subsequently, their respective required and recommended readings) were selected for review based on whether they addressed the NSW Professional Teaching Standards 2.1.5, 2.1.6 and 5.1.5 (see Table 4.1). This initial selection of subjects for review was relatively straightforward because the subject outlines explicitly identified the teaching standards they addressed.
Table 4.1 Targeted professional teaching standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>Teachers know their students and how they learn</td>
<td>2.1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of specific strategies for teaching: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Students with Special Education Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Students with challenging behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments through the use of classroom management skills</td>
<td>Demonstrate knowledge of practical approaches to managing student behaviour and their applications in the classroom.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These standards were focused on because 2.1.5 and 2.1.6 are the teaching standards that explicitly mention ‘challenging behaviour’ (NSWIT 2006, p. 6). Standard 5.1.5, whilst not explicitly mentioning challenging behaviour, is the first in a progression to standard 5.4.5, which does explicitly mention ‘challenging behaviour’ (NSWIT 2006, p. 8). From this process 20 subjects in the Bachelor of Education schedule were identified. Following informal interviews with subject coordinators of the 20 identified subjects, eleven subjects were discarded from the review for one of two reasons: either the subject was an elective that did not run due to low enrolments; or the standard was included in the subject outline for one of the other criteria in standards 2.1.5 and 2.1.6 (i.e. the coursework related to teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students with Special Education Needs or Non-English Speaking Background students, but not ‘students with challenging behaviours’). The remaining nine subjects (comprising six compulsory and three elective subjects) that addressed NSW Institute of Teachers’ teaching standards about challenging behaviour were included in the document review.
All subject outlines were provided electronically and were uploaded directly to QSR NVivo, as were any recommended readings that were accessible online (such as some journal articles). For all readings that were not entire books, that is journal articles, book chapters, policy documents and websites – the whole listed text was read and analysed. For the readings that were listed as an entire book, the table of contents and index were scanned for the key words ‘challenging behav/ior/iour’ and ‘behav/ior/iour’ and the listed pages read closely. Relevant excerpts from these readings were copy-typed into word documents, referenced, uploaded into NVivo and coded with the rest of the dataset. Where the recommended readings included entire journal titles (rather than specific journal articles – these were not included as the task would become overly onerous). Appendix C lists these subjects and the related compulsory and recommended readings that were reviewed.

The nine subject outlines reviewed (Appendix C) listed a total of 89 required and recommended readings. I was unable to locate four readings listed in the subject outlines (See Appendix C). Of the remaining 85 university texts listed, twelve texts appeared twice in the list; this meant that the number of unique texts reviewed was 73 (i.e. 85-12). Forty-nine (49) of the 73 unique texts addressed the topic of student ‘behaviour’, 25 did not. However, only ten of these 49 unique texts with content on student behaviour featured the term ‘challenging behaviour’ (see Table 4.2).
### Table 4.2 Texts reviewed that featured the term challenging behaviour, by subject outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Core</th>
<th>Elective</th>
<th>Texts featuring the term ‘challenging behaviour’</th>
<th>Number of texts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum and Pedagogy 3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Major texts</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lovat, Toomey, Clement, Crotty and Nielsen (2009)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Recommended texts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NSWIT (2006)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Groundwater-Smith, Ewing and Le Cornu (2007)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum and Pedagogy 4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Major texts</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lovat et al. (2009)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Recommended texts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NSWIT (2006)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Groundwater-Smith et al. (2007)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education Needs</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Major text</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Foreman (2008)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Recommended texts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ashman and Elkins (2005)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sleishman (2005)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Symonds (2006)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEN Programming</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Major text</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Foreman (2008)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology of children with</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Recommended texts</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education Needs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Allen and Cowdery (2009)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hilton and Ringlaben (1998)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-totals</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less double-ups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Foreman (2008)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Groundwater-Smith et al. (2007)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lovat et al. (2009)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NSWIT (2006)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total unique texts featuring the term</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>challenging behaviour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.2 indicates an apparent disconnect between the teaching standards’ mandate to know ‘challenging behaviour’, the subject coordinators’ belief that their subject attends to these standards and the actual texts on offer for the students to read. It seems that this ‘thing’ we must all know about in order to be professional teachers is very rarely explicitly written of in undergraduate coursework texts. However, more than half (49/74) the texts listed spoke of classroom behaviour in some way. It is just that the words ‘challenging behaviour’ were not prominent in these discussions. It was far more common for these texts to discuss behaviour in terms of how to prevent/minimise/remedy ‘inappropriate’ or ‘problem’ behaviours. A list of words, other than ‘challenging’ used in university texts to describe negative student behaviours are listed at table 4.3 (for a full reference list of reviewed coursework texts, see Appendix C).

Table 4.3 Words, other than 'challenging', used in university texts to describe student behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terms used (in number of unique texts)</th>
<th>Chapter author</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aberrant (2)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Allday and Pakurar (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Huntington</td>
<td>Hilton and Ringlaben (1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At risk (6)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Allen and Cowdery (2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Dempsey and Arthur-Kelly (2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Groundwater-Smith et al. (2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Hardman et al. (2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Lovat et al. (2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Synott (2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad (1)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>McLeod and Reynolds (2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daring (1)</td>
<td>Houghton and Carrol</td>
<td>Ashman and Elkins (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delinquent (2)</td>
<td>Houghton and Carrol</td>
<td>Ashman and Elkins (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Vaughn, Bos and Schumm (2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult (2)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Konza, Grainger and Bradshaw (2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Temple and Lynnes (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disrespectful (1)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Rand and Shelton-Colengelo (1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disruptive (8)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Allday and Pakurar (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Houghton and Carrol</td>
<td>Ashman and Elkins (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms used (in number of unique texts)</td>
<td>Chapter author</td>
<td>Text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreman</td>
<td>Foreman (2008)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>Rand and Shelton-Colengelo (1999)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>Sleishman (2005)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inappropriate (14)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Allday and Pakurar (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conway</td>
<td>Ashman and Elkins (2005)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sigafoos and Arthur</td>
<td>Ashman and Elkins (2005)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>Brady (2003)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>Brent, Gough and Robinson (2001)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>Dempsey and Arthur-Kelly (2007)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Foreman (2008)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>Groundwater-Smith et al. (2007)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>Hardman et al. (2004)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>McLeod and Reynolds (2003)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>Lavoie (2005)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>Lovat et al. (2009)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>Rand and Shelton-Colengelo (1999)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>Sleishman (2005)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>Vaughn, Bos and Schumm (2000)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gang-based (1)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Synott (2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maladaptive (2)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Hardman et al. (2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>Taylor (2003)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mischievous (1)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Whitton et al. (2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misbehaviour (3)</td>
<td>Foreman</td>
<td>Foreman (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>Rand and Shelton-Colengelo (1999)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative (2)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Lovat et al. (2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-conforming/compliant (2)</td>
<td>Elkins</td>
<td>Ashman and Elkins (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor (2)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Australian College of Educators (2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>Brent et al. (2001)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem (14)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Allday and Pakurar (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>Allen and Cowdery (2009)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conway</td>
<td>Ashman and Elkins (2005)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gavidia-Payne and Jobling</td>
<td>Ashman and Elkins (2005)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms used (in number of unique texts)</td>
<td>Chapter author</td>
<td>Text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sigafoos and Arthur</td>
<td>Ashman and Elkins (2005)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>Brady (2003)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>Carnellor (2004)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conway</td>
<td>Foreman (2008)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>Foreman (2008)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>Hardman et al. (2004)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huntington</td>
<td>Hilton and Ringlaben (1998)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheeler</td>
<td>Hilton and Ringlaben (1998)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>Lovat et al. (2009)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>Rand and Shelton-Colengelo (1999)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>Riley-Mundine (2007)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>Taylor (2003)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>Temple and Lynnes (2008)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>Tomlinson (1999a)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special behavioural needs (1)</td>
<td>Conway</td>
<td>Ashman and Elkins (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe behaviour disability (1)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Temple and Lynnes (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unacceptable (6)</td>
<td>Conway</td>
<td>Ashman and Elkins (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>Brady (2003)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreman</td>
<td>Foreman (2008)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>Groundwater-Smith et al. (2007)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheeler</td>
<td>Hilton and Ringlaben (1998)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>Whitton et al. (2004)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undesirable (1)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Lovat et al. (2009)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The purpose of this table is to demonstrate that, although ‘challenging behaviour’ is the focus of this document review, it is by no means the only, or the most prevalent, description of unwanted classroom behaviours. My overall impression of the university texts reviewed is that ‘inappropriate’ and ‘problem’ behaviour are the two terms most commonly linked to discussions of student behaviour and its management within university undergraduate required and recommended readings. Inappropriate behaviour and problem behaviour both appeared in 14 unique texts whilst challenging behaviour appeared in ten. This may appear relatively comparable but what is not easily communicated in these numbers is that (with the exception of one), the texts featuring the term ‘challenging behaviour’ only mentioned it a few times. By contrast, the terms
‘inappropriate’ and ‘problem’ were consistently and prolifically deployed by the texts that featured them.

4.2.1. University texts featuring the term ‘challenging behaviour’

‘Challenge’, ‘challenged’ and ‘challenging’ were words that commonly appeared throughout the university documents reviewed when discussing how a teacher might, for example, feel about student behaviour. However, use of the exact term ‘challenging behaviour’ was reasonably rare; it featured in only ten unique texts (the NSWIT Professional Teaching Standards was one of these unique texts, as it was extensively reviewed in Section 4.1, so this section will consider the remaining nine texts). When ‘challenging behaviour’ was explicitly mentioned there was not, necessarily, consistency of meaning conferred on the term within university subjects, within and between texts, or even by a given author.

Interestingly, as evidenced in Table 4.2, no texts from the ‘Behaviour Management’ core subject reviewed explicitly featured the term ‘challenging behaviour’. The subjects that prescribed readings on challenging behaviour were: the core subjects ‘Curriculum and Pedagogy 3’, ‘Curriculum and Pedagogy 4’, ‘Special Education Needs’; and the electives, ‘SEN Programming’ and ‘Psychology of children with Special Education Needs’. This list of coursework subjects can be broadly categorised into two educational disciplines: ‘curriculum and pedagogy’ and ‘special education needs’.

---

13 It was reasonably difficult to ascertain the popularity of the reviewed texts, in terms of their use in other teacher education courses. I searched editors’ and authors’ biography pages on university websites and searched publishers’ websites, I also Googled for ‘best-selling’ textbook listings. The national library listed university libraries that stocked the books, but this was no indication as to whether it was in the general collection of the library or used as a textbook for particular courses.
4.2.2. Challenging behaviour in Curriculum and Pedagogy coursework contexts

As a discipline, ‘curriculum and pedagogy’ consistently drew on non-traditional conceptions of challenging behaviour. Curriculum and pedagogy texts did not engage in traditional couplings of ‘challenging behaviour’ and ‘intellectual disability’, instead consistently framing ‘challenging behaviour’ as a concern for general classroom management. To explicate this, a review of the major text (i.e. Lovat et al. 2009) and recommended readings (specifically, Groundwater-Smith et al. 2007) for the subjects ‘Curriculum and Pedagogy 3 & 4’ is briefly offered here. The remaining recommended reading for these subjects featuring the term challenging behaviour was the NSWIT Professional Teaching Standards [2006], which has already been extensively reviewed in Section 4.1.

Lovat et al. (2009) – major text for the core subjects ‘Curriculum and Pedagogy 3 & 4’


It [the restorative justice program] provides schools with strategies to manage students’ challenging behaviour and interpersonal conflict. Instead of zero tolerance and authoritarian punishment, restorative justice practices provide high levels of both control and support to encourage appropriate behaviour, and place responsibility on students themselves, using a collaborative response to wrongdoing. The philosophy underlying these practices holds that human beings are happier, more productive, and more likely to make positive changes in their behaviour when those in positions of authority do things with them, rather than to them or for them.

(Lovat et al. 2009, p. 78, original emphasis)

Lovat et al. (2009), in the above quote, uses ‘challenging behaviour’ as the baseline, blanket description for behaviours that require management via restorative justice measures. Here, ‘challenging behaviour’ is a catchall description for matters of general behaviour management and discipline; it is not used in its traditional sense. This is
different to discussions of restorative justice programs in schools in one of the special
educataion needs textbooks reviewed (i.e. Sleishman 2005), which relied on the term
‘inappropriate’ behaviour unless the behaviour was severe enough to warrant the term
‘challenging behaviour’. Because the premise of restorative justice is that all behaviour
rests in personal choice – this excerpt can be mapped to the biopsychosocial discourse.

Later the authors identify ‘challenging’ as a word teachers use to describe a boy who
resists/avoids doing written work: ‘This was a significant improvement in this student’s
academic diligence, as he was considered “difficult” and “challenging” by a number of
teachers before the unit [of work on the value “respect”] started’ (Lovat et al. 2009, p.
113). Here the term ‘challenging’ is seen as part of teachers’ nomenclature – but, again,
in the context of behaviour management, generally – not disability specifically. That
Lovat et al. (2009) discuss this individual’s challenging behaviour in terms of before
intervention/after intervention is also testimony to the biopsychosocial notion that
behaviour is learnable; and furthermore, that challenging behaviour may be ameliorated
by explicitly teaching positive behaviours, in this case ‘respect’.

Groundwater-Smith, Ewing and le Cornu (2007) – recommended text for the university
core subjects ‘Curriculum & Pedagogy 3 & 4’

The Groundwater-Smith et al. (2007) textbook is unique insofar as it explicitly offers a
definition of challenging behaviour and one that is not directly tied to traditional
conceptions of the term.

Challenging classroom behaviour is highly inappropriate or excessive behaviour
that threatens the safe and positive classroom learning environment or playground
activities. The teacher and students are placed in a tense situation. These kinds of
distractions can be very time-consuming, cause the teacher a great deal of anxiety
and impede the learning of other students.

(Groundwater-Smith et al. 2007, p. 258)
Whereas other texts reviewed have inferred it (e.g. Conway 2005; Sleishman 2005), this text explicitly states that challenging behaviour refers to the high-end behaviours of concern to general classroom management. The timing of this definition is interesting as it is a textbook for teacher education courses that was released one year after the first publication of the NSWIT Professional Teaching Standards. Whilst I’m not claiming a causal relationship between these two documents the timing is worthy of comment.

Later in the text, a study is cited where teachers attribute their personal ‘burn out’ to challenging classroom behaviour comprising ‘student disrespect, inattentiveness and poor social skills’ – again, general classroom management concerns that do not feature in traditional definitions of challenging behaviour. Finally, by way of summarizing Chris Eves’ study from 2001, the textbook offers a list of practical steps a teacher may follow when faced with challenging behaviour in the classroom:

- considering classroom context to ensure that negotiated rules are in place and are followed consistently
- ensuring that rewards for positive behaviour are provided along with consequences for inappropriate behaviour
- developing an assessment summary of any students who are exhibiting challenging behaviour to enable the teacher to focus on their needs, strengths and areas needing development
- designing a behaviour support plan for the students
- implementing a structured program of social skills for the whole class

(Groundwater-Smith et al. 2007, pp. 258 – 9)

This quote frames challenging behaviour as synonymous with ‘beyond inappropriate behaviour’; this consistent with the term’s usage in other university texts (e.g. Sleishman 2005; Conway 2005). In the above quote, this meaning is discernable through separate treatment of the two concepts: ‘inappropriate behaviour’ is managed by simple behaviourist principles and ‘challenging behaviour’ is cast as warranting much closer, individual assessment and programming. This textbook also offers an
example of a behaviourist token economy (although a unique implementation of one) as an example of whole-class management plans suited to addressing challenging behaviour.

In summary, this textbook consistently framed ‘challenging behaviour’ as a concern for general classroom management. However, the authors’ unique move to specify a definition, rather than leaving it to the reader’s ‘commonsense’ understanding of behaviour management seemed to support a very different sort of discussion on classroom management. Different insofar as it drew on multiple discourses to generate debate on the topic. Whilst biopsychosocial understandings underscored explicit references to ‘challenging behaviour’ (as it did, for example, in the summary of Chris Eve’s study in the quote above), it was not the only discursive resource deployed. Ecosocio conceptions of behaviour in classrooms matched, if not outweighed, the biopsychosocial notions of challenging behaviour represented: the child was not always responsibilised for their behaviour, schooling structures and systems were called into question; relationships, interaction and communication were highlighted; and notions of management as teacher power and control were heavily critiqued. This is one of the few university texts reviewed where ‘challenging behaviour’ was treated as an issue of contention and not a ‘really obvious’ knowledge referent. By drawing on multiple discourses and offering an explicit definition (even one open to subjective assessment of what constitutes ‘inappropriate’, ‘excessive’ and ‘tense’) debate on the topic was both possible and evident.

4.2.3. Challenging behaviour in ‘Special Education Needs’ coursework contexts

By contrast to Curriculum and Pedagogy subjects, the texts prescribed by the ‘Special Education Needs’ discipline drew on a combination of traditional and non-traditional conceptions of challenging behaviour. Sometimes it was a concept coupled with intellectual disability, at other times it was not, and occasionally it was presented as
both. To explicate this I will discuss the ‘major text’ (Foreman 2008) for two SEN subjects (one core, one elective) and a sample of the recommended readings. Ashman and Elkins (2005) was selected as the sample text from the six recommended readings reviewed for SEN core and elective subjects (the remaining five recommended readings listed in Table 4.2 are referenced, but only in Section 4.2.4 which summarises the document review). Reasoning for this sampling was threefold. Firstly, the Ashman & Elkins text was felt to be representative of the six recommended readings insofar as none of the other texts introduced new or different points of analysis. Secondly, it was recommended as part of the core SEN subject (and so was a recommended reading for all the preservice teachers, regardless of electives studied). Finally, of the recommended readings from the core SEN subject, it was the text that had the most mentions of ‘challenging behaviour’.

Foreman (2008) – major text for core and elective university subject Special Education Needs

Phil Foreman (2008) is the editor of the textbook, Inclusion in Action, which comprises chapters authored by various experts in the field. The chapter on behaviour is authored by Robert Conway and, in this chapter, challenging behaviour appears as a term four times: sometimes specifically in the context of students with additional needs but once inferring challenging behaviours can belong to all students. To highlight this disparity, consider the following excerpts:

Without such [early childhood] interventions, the behaviours [of people with a dual developmental and behavioural disability] can lead to more serious and stigmatising challenging behaviours that may ultimately result in exclusion from community settings.

(Conway 2008, p. 208)

There are a number of strategies recommended to support the management of challenging behaviours in classroom [sic], whether they are for students with additional needs or not (Babkie 2006; Ferko 2005).

(Conway 2008, pp. 223–4)
The first excerpt clearly aligns itself with traditional notions of challenging behaviour as related directly to people with developmental disabilities. The ‘stigmatising challenging behaviours’ discussed in this chapter included non-compliance, aggression, destructiveness, tantrums, self-injury and self-stimulation – all behaviours that feature in traditional conceptions of challenging behaviour. Furthermore, this first excerpt aligns with traditional conceptions of challenging behaviour that present themselves in contemporary government health services (see Section 3.3.2 above), particularly insofar as the behaviour is construed as challenging because it impedes the individual’s access to community settings. By contrast, the second excerpt clearly expands to include strategies for challenging behaviour as applicable to students with and without additional needs – thus inferring that students without a developmental disability can present with challenging behaviour. This is very much in keeping with the inclusive education message of the textbook that: ‘there is no mystical set of strategies that operate in managing behaviours of students with additional needs. The strategies are the same as for all students’ (Conway 2008, p. 213). However, this does muddy the definitional waters for ‘challenging behaviour’ for the reader: is it a term to specifically confer on individuals with developmental disability who present with non-compliant, aggressive, destructive, self-injurious behaviours … or not?

In discussing behaviour ‘interventions’, the first quote draws on psychological conceptions of behaviour as learnable and functional and encourages teachers to assess and respond to behaviour in these terms. To facilitate this, Conway advocates functional behaviour analysis. Also discussion of behavioural reinforcers, extinction, token economies and response costs indicate a behaviourist approach to these interventions. This treatment of challenging behaviour may be mapped against the three discourses of challenging behaviour posited in Chapter 2. That is to say, functional behaviour analysis, behaviour interventions and behaviourist approaches are all consistent with the biopsychosocial perspective that behaviour can, and should, be learned by the individual. But to say the entire chapter draws on the biopsychosocial discourse would be misrepresentative of the text.
The first half of the chapter drew mostly on the ecosocio discourse. In this part of the text the onus was on the teacher to first and foremost assess how they support student behaviour before: looking to the student for reasons or deficits that might explain the behaviour; and/or responsibilising the student for learning more appropriate behaviours. Conway (2008) encourages teachers to achieve this via reflective practice and subsequent: modification of curriculum and teaching methods (i.e. variety, interest, not too much unsupported individual work); redesign of resources, the physical environment and timetabling; formation of positive interactions for students; and consideration of engagement as a means to reducing behaviour issues So then, this first section of the chapter that deals with classroom behaviour, generally, draws more on the ecosocio discourse of challenging behaviour insofar as its focus is not so much the altering of children themselves as it is about altering the environmental, social and pedagogical structures surrounding them to be more supportive of positive behaviour. The point here is that behaviour, generally, is discussed from an ecosocio perspective, but challenging behaviour is specifically discussed in biopsychosocial terms.

*Ashman and Elkins (2005) – Recommended reading for the university subject ‘Special Education Needs’*

Conway also wrote a chapter in Ashman and Elkin’s (2005) textbook, *Educating Children With Diverse Abilities*. In a discussion of a three-tiered approach to school discipline policies Conway refers to challenging behaviour:

> Tertiary level of support are targeted and highly specialised strategies for those few students (1-7%) who engage in serious challenging behaviours and who do not respond to the first or second level of support. The remainder either conforms to the discipline system (first level) or is managed within the discipline procedures of the school (second level)

(Conway 2005, p. 154)

In this case ‘challenging behaviour’ is used generally as a descriptor for rare, and one must assume extreme, behaviour management issues (and not a term specifically related to disability). This is the only mention of the term challenging behaviour in this chapter.
This singular usage highlights ‘challenging behaviour’ as markedly different from the more common descriptions of negative student behaviours used throughout the chapter; for example, ‘behaviour problems’ and ‘inappropriate behaviour’. Here, Conway infers ‘challenging behaviour’ as something different to and more severe than ‘inappropriate’ or ‘problem’ behaviours, generally.

Challenging behaviour, in this context, is considered in terms of not fitting school structures; further, it is spoken of in the context of disciplinary systems and procedures. Because the premise of disciplinary systems is that behaviour may be modified/learned, this excerpt may be identified as drawing on the biopsychosocial discourse of challenging behaviour. It is not biomedical as it does not explicitly or otherwise infer the child’s pathology is faulty and it is not ecosocio insofar as it is not questioning how the discipline systems and procedures may be affecting the children’s challenging behaviour. Like his chapter in the Foreman (2008) text, this is not to say that the entire chapter draws on the biopsychosocial discourse of behaviour. On the contrary, the ecosocio discourse of behaviour permeates the chapter as a vehicle for critiquing teachers’ role in the behaviour disorder diagnostic apparatus - but as before, challenging behaviour is a term specifically couched in the biopsychosocial discourse. The biopsychosocial discourse also permeates this chapter’s discussions of functional behaviour assessments and diagnosis-specific strategies for ‘meeting the behavioural needs of students with [ADHD ASD and Aspergers Syndrome]’ (Conway 2005, p. 169).

Two other chapters of the Ashman and Elkins text variously mention ‘challenging behaviour’. Houghton and Carroll’s chapter, ‘Children and adolescents at risk’, links challenging behaviour with delinquency: ‘Because they [female at-risk adolescents] are more covert in their delinquent behaviour than males, management of their challenging behaviour can be more difficult’ (Houghton & Carrol 2005, pp. 219 – 20). Because ‘at risk’ discourses are in constant relationship with developmental psychology trajectories, and because developmental psychology, as a discipline, is built around psychological
tenets of self-control and faculty and learned behaviours, this mention of challenging behaviour can be mapped against the biopsychosocial discourse. Also, the mention of challenging behaviour as something first and foremost to be managed aligns with the possible teacher subject position for the biopsychosocial discourse; that is, ‘teacher as manager’ (see Section 2.5.2).

Finally, Sigafoos and Arthur’s chapter ‘Educating students with high support needs’ includes a sub-heading on challenging behaviour. This chapter talks of challenging behaviour in traditional ways; that is, it is coupled with people with disabilities and is defined as frequent and severe tantrums, aggression, stereotyped movements and other behaviours typically featured in traditional definitions of challenging behaviour. This chapter also offers an educationally contextualised definition of challenging behaviour: ‘Challenging behaviours cause harm and damage and interfere with teaching and learning’ (Sigafoos & Arthur 2005, p. 442). Sigafoos and Arthur (2005) construe challenging behaviour as a clinical concern urging that ‘[a]ssessment and treatment is a major educational priority for children with challenging behaviour’ (p. 443) and advocate functional assessment for redressing challenging behaviours in the classroom. Discussions of functional assessment, again, focus on the pro-actively challenging child discourse object; the child who is actively presenting challenging behaviours so as to fulfil a personal, psychological need/function. That understanding the function of the challenging behaviour and then working to teach alternate/target behaviours is the focus of the text indicates a biopsychosocial discourse of challenging behaviour at work.

In summary, three chapters in the Ashman and Elkin’s (2005) text deploy the term ‘challenging behaviour’ differently: once as a general descriptor of severe non-compliance with school-wide discipline policies; once in relation with delinquency; and once in traditional conceptions of challenging behaviour as it relates to people with developmental disabilities. Despite its traditional and non-traditional usages and regardless of how else ‘behaviour’, generally, was discussed, all of these explicit
statements about challenging behaviour in the Ashman and Elkins text draw on the biopsychosocial discourse of challenging behaviour.

4.2.4. An overview of the university document review


I maintain that the definitional deviations outweighed their compliant counterparts. Deviations from traditional conceptions were largely inferred and rarely explicit, they were also varied. Such definitions included educationally recontextualised definitions that posited challenging behaviour as: synonymous with ‘problem’ and/or ‘inappropriate’ behaviour and characteristic of general classroom management concerns (Allen & Cowdery 2009; Lovat et al. 2009); synonymous with ‘severe and/or frequent inappropriate or problem behaviours’ (Allen & Cowdery 2009; Conway 2005; Groundwater-Smith et al. 2007; Sleishman 2005); and a barrier to student safety, engagement and learning (Allen & Cowdery 2009; Groundwater-Smith et al. 2007; Sigafoos & Arthur 2005).

Despite varied deployment of traditional or non-traditional conceptions of challenging behaviour, both the ‘Curriculum and Pedagogy’ and ‘Special Education Needs’ disciplines shared similar discursive resources and mappings. This was the case insofar as all the texts’ explicit treatment of the term ‘challenging behaviour’ could be identified as belonging to the biopsychosocial discourse. Across the ten texts reviewed, there were three exceptions to this rule. These exceptions occurred when particular authors in both disciplines concurrently gave credence to ecosocio understandings of
challenging behaviour. These were, for curriculum and pedagogy, Groundwater-Smith et al. (2007); and for special education needs, Conway (2005, 2008) and Wheeler (1998). Interestingly, although represented elsewhere throughout the university document review, the biomedical discourse did not feature explicit statements and discussions of ‘challenging behaviour’.

Regardless of the many shades of grey surrounding the term’s definitional status, construals of challenging behaviour in the university texts reviewed were (with very few exceptions) biopsychosocial. Most of the university texts reviewed positioned challenging behaviour as something that could be ameliorated through behavioural analysis, interventions (Lovat et al. 2009) and modifications via functional assessments and behaviourist approaches (Allen & Cowdery 2009; Ashman & Elkins 2005; Foreman 2008; Groundwater-Smith et al. 2007; Hardman et al. 2004; Hilton & Ringlaben 1998).

Through presenting this particular selection of texts to their preservice teachers, the university constructed knowledge of the pro-actively challenging child (see Section 2.5.1) via the biopsychosocial discourse. Perhaps this is unsurprising. The biopsychosocial discourse is important to the discipline of education because it positions the school as a site where treatment of challenging behaviour via educational and behaviour modification interventions might occur. This is not to say that biomedical and ecosocio discourses of behaviour were absent from university texts – both these discourses were deployed to discuss behaviour, generally. However, the results of this document review suggest that the university explicitly discusses ‘challenging behaviour’ via curriculum and pedagogy and special education needs subjects and almost exclusively via the biopsychosocial discourse. This argument underpins my theorization of preservice teachers’ epistemic processes in re-constructing their knowledge of challenging behaviour (see Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8).
4.3. **Challenging behaviour in participating schools’ policies**

Each school\(^{14}\) provided me with the school-devised policy document/s that they identified as speaking to issues of student behaviour. The primary schools felt it sufficient to provide their Student Welfare and/or Discipline Policies, whichever they felt covered all I needed to know about the school’s policies on behaviour. These policies were all handed to me in paper format. Analysis involved using coloured highlighters for manual highlighting of emerging themes, then copy-typing and referencing relevant excerpts into word documents that were then included in the QSR NVivo dataset.

Before delving into the peculiarities of each school’s policy on student behaviour, I will first overview the commonalities between them. Common to policies on student behaviour, across several school sites, were: conceptual frameworks for managing student behaviour, and delegation of certain school spaces for school-wide discipline procedures. Three of the school’s policies explicitly stated the theoretical frameworks deployed. The first two (Elvyndale and Westside Public Schools) nominated the Positive Behaviour for Success (PBS) framework. That two of the five schools adopted the PBS framework is, perhaps, to be expected given its ‘growing adoption … statewide in NSW, Australia’ (O’Neil & Stephenson 2010, p. 65).

School-wide PBS is a triadic behaviour support model that is designed to promote appropriate student behaviour in school settings (Bambara & Kern, 2005). The model has three tiers of intervention; universal or primary, which includes whole school policies and procedures to promote appropriate behaviour, secondary interventions which can include targeted interventions such as small group social skills instruction for students for whom universal interventions have been unsuccessful, and tertiary level interventions which involve conducting a FBA to inform individualised support for the most challenging student behaviours where

---

\(^{14}\) The policy documents of Mountain View PS were not made available to me. The mentor teacher could not access the documents on the school server as they were under revision and the school stated that it preferred to offer me the updated version of their Welfare Policy, once it was finalised. At the end of the observation period (24 August 2010) the revisions to the policy were still not finalised and the School Principal offered to email me a copy when it became available. I followed this up in November 2010, July 2011 and January 2012 – but none of these subsequent requests were fruitful.
universal and secondary tier interventions have been unsuccessful (Sugai et al., 2000).

(O’Neil & Stephenson 2010, p. 66)

That interventions, explicit instruction and functional behaviour assessment are characteristic of the PBS model indicates that this model clearly aligns itself with the biopsychosocial discourse of behaviour.

Alternatively, Watersedge Public School clearly identified and explicated a Restorative Practice approach as its framework for student discipline policies. The remaining school, Bordertown PS, used documentation that appeared entirely school-based insofar as it did not reference a specific model or theory as framing their policies on student behaviour.

There were also notable similarities and differences in how the policies framed school spaces for use in the disciplinary process, especially spaces used for school-wide behaviour management issues, such as detention. Three schools allocated a singular classroom for school-wide behaviour management purposes: ‘the reflection room’ (Westside PS); ‘the planning room’ or ‘Nura Gurung’ (Aboriginal for ‘meeting place for children’) (Elvyndale PS); and ‘the behaviour modification room’ (Bordertown PS). Watersedge PS did not have such an allocated, specific space.

Although there were variances in theoretical frameworks, there was remarkable consistency in how the school policy documents described unwanted student behaviour. The words ‘unacceptable behaviour’, ‘inappropriate behaviour’ and ‘misbehaviour’ were used to the exclusion of all other descriptors (see Table 4.4). This is a much more tightly bound and consistent list of descriptors of unwanted student behaviour than those found in the university document review (see Table 4.3). Interestingly, like their
NSWDEC parent policies, the school-based behaviour policies did not explicitly mention ‘challenging behaviour’, at all.

Table 4.4 Words used to describe unwanted student behaviours in local school policy documents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Featured in policy</th>
<th>School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unacceptable</td>
<td>Discipline Policy</td>
<td>Westside PS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Welfare Policy</td>
<td>Watersedge PS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Welfare Policy</td>
<td>Elvyndale PS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discipline Policy</td>
<td>Bordertown PS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inappropriate</td>
<td>Discipline Policy</td>
<td>Westside PS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Welfare Policy</td>
<td>Elvyndale PS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discipline Policy</td>
<td>Bordertown PS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Welfare Policy</td>
<td>Watersedge PS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misbehaviour</td>
<td>Discipline Policy</td>
<td>Westside PS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Welfare Policy</td>
<td>Elvyndale PS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Welfare Policy</td>
<td>Watersedge PS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From this it would seem that, at a policy level, schools do very little to construct knowledge of children with ‘challenging behaviour’. The term did not feature in these documents. Whilst this means I cannot comment on the school-based understandings of ‘challenging behaviour’ specifically, analysis of their policy documents supports comment as to the schools’ discursive positioning on the topic of behaviour, more generally.

The schools’ policies on behaviour can be assessed as belonging entirely to the biopsychosocial discourse of behaviour. Such homogeneity is noteworthy considering Foucault’s theorisation of institutions as ‘authorities of delimitation’ (see Section 2.5.1). Homogenous presentation of behaviour content indicates an absence of debate and/or diverse perspectives on student behaviour in policy documents. This, in turn, may be considered in terms of how schools may unilaterally impact, or in Foucauldian terms ‘delimit’ (Foucault 1972, see also section 2.5.1), preservice teachers’ understandings of challenging behaviour in PEx contexts.
I argue that school documentation delimits knowledge of challenging behaviour by drawing solely on the biopsychosocial discourse. This is supported by four findings from the analysis of school-authored policy documents. First, the individual student was thoroughly responsibilised for behavioural concerns. Indeed, all school policies reviewed discussed rights and responsibilities of students. Beyond this, children were responsibilised for their behaviour because it was cast as something belonging to them, personally. For example, Westside PS located behavioural problems squarely within the child with the turn of phrase: ‘those [children] with behaviour problems’ (Student Welfare, Good Discipline & Effective Learning cited in Westside PS Discipline Policy, p. 11, emphasis added). Second, the individual with behavioural problems was cast as capable of exercising self-control. On the first page of Westside PS disciplinary policy, teachers and parents listed values that underpinned all school activities and one of these values was ‘being self-controlled’. Third, unwanted behaviours were portrayed as attempts for the individual to self-serve their psychological needs – in this way, behaviour is viewed as functional and unwanted behaviours as the product of the pro-actively challenging child (see Section 2.5). Two examples of this appear in the policies of Elvyndale and Watersedge Public Schools. The Elvyndale PS forms for referral to the in-school ‘behaviour support team’ and their student interview schedule focus on ‘triggers’ and ‘motivations’ for behaviour – the motivations on the tick lists are thoroughly individualised and include personal concerns such as attention seeking, avoidance, and obtaining items, power and revenge. Watersedge (Welfare Policy, p. 21) likewise posits behaviour as functional and serving the individual child’s purposes: ‘Teachers are aware that all behaviour has a purpose’. Finally, personal behavioural deficits were framed as able to be ameliorated by teaching/learning appropriate behaviour. For example, by linking behaviour management to content in the PDHPE Syllabus, Elvyndale and Watersedge public schools positioned themselves as responsible for explicitly teaching children on matters of social welfare, including appropriate behaviours.
Further evidence of the biopsychosocial tenet that individuals can/should learn appropriate behaviour is evidenced in talk of ‘interventions’ (Watersedge PS Welfare Policy, p. 22) and ‘behaviour modification’ programs organised by the school:

Should a child continue with minor infractions in the classroom then the teacher in consultation with the grade co-ordinator may implement a behaviour modification program to reinforce appropriate behaviour.

(Westside PS Discipline Policy, p. 16)

Children whose behaviour is consistently unacceptable are removed from the playground and spend time in the Behaviour Modification Room, discussing their actions and learning strategies to help them and others, to play more happily, positively and safely.

(Bordertown PS, no page number)

[for students whose behaviour is of ongoing concern] teacher to establish a program of behaviour modification.

(Watersedge PS Welfare Policy, p. 21)

Whilst teachers are framed as responsible for modification of unwanted behaviours, the individual student is cast as thoroughly responsibilised for learning, or re-learning expected behaviours and exercising self-control.

This biopsychosocial notion of the responsibility of the individual student occasionally augmented to concerns of culpability. Another commonality across some of the policy documents was the use of metaphor, specifically criminal/legalistic metaphors in framing child behaviour. These metaphors were characterised by language that designated particular students as criminals and teachers as judiciary. The Westside PS discipline policy (pp 14 – 7), for example, speaks of ‘minor’ and ‘serious’ ‘infractions’ and ‘infringements’ of school rules and discipline policies and consequences for these (as to which level the child will be placed) being ‘deliberated’ by the discipline committee. The Elvyndale PS Student Welfare Policy has a flowchart titled ‘Referral Process for Playground Offenses’. Finally, notions of ‘prohibition’ infuse the Watersedge PS welfare policy – although, perhaps this is less surprising than the other
school’s metaphors considering ‘Restorative Practice’s’ direct relationship to ‘restorative justice’ (a movement originally based in the Juvenile Justice system).

Thus far, this section has focused on commonalities between the schools’ policies on behaviour their: theoretical frameworks, use of school space for discipline purposes, terminology for describing of unwanted student behaviour, and their overwhelmingly consistent reflections of and contributions to the biopsychosocial discourse of behaviour. Before concluding this chapter it is important to also note these policies’ points of difference – they are, after all generated by different schools and so different schooling cultures, leadership teams and environments.

Prima facie, the Watersedge PS booklet typified the marketing focus of this high SES school – it was the only policy that was handed to me as a finished, professionally printed, A4 folded, saddle stitched booklet with a colour-printed cover. All other policies were printed out, black and white loose-leaf, by each mentor teacher. Appearances aside other distinctions could be made between each school’s approach.

Westside PS was the only policy that prominently featured voices of the student body. They achieved this by showcasing lists of things the students reportedly liked and wished to improve about the school (Westside PS Discipline Policy, p. 1). Westside also offered the only example in policy of the acceptability of students questioning teacher implementation of discipline and school rules:

Obedience to requests from staff and others in positions of authority is expected of all students at all times. If for any reason a student believes such a request is inappropriate, the student should first comply with the request and then ask for a time with the teacher to discuss the matter further.

(Westside PS Disciplinary Policy p. 6)
Acknowledging student voices in these ways suggests a high value being placed on students in the running of the school.

Watersedge and Bordertown public schools’ policies also featured points of difference. Watersedge PS was the only participating school to adopt a Restorative Practice approach and the only school that had no school rules per se – simply rights and responsibilities. It is also the only participating school whose discipline system was not based on some variation of a ‘levels system’. Bordertown PS had a unique Peer Mediation Program, where:

senior students are trained in Peer Mediation each year and work daily in the playground to assist with low level conflict to prevent its escalation into something more serious.

(Bordertown PS, Enhancing Self Esteem Policy & Procedures, p. 1)

These senior students wore day-glow orange vests on the playground (field notes, 28 June 2010) so peers who require mediation assistance could easily identify them.

In summary, although there were significant points of difference across schools’ behaviour policies, each school deployed biopsychosocial notions of the pro-actively challenging child who can be taught more appropriate behaviour. Equally pertinent, like their departmental counterparts, these locally produced school policy documents were remarkably silent on the specific topic of ‘challenging behaviour’.

4.4. Chapter summary

This chapter expands upon the archive of ‘challenging behaviour’, set out in Chapter 3. It has mapped out and problematised the various ways in which the terms ‘challenging behaviour’ has appeared in contemporary educational contexts. Analysis of NSWIT and DEC policies, school policies, university subject outlines and related recommended
readings has layered context specific detail on the discursive lineage of the term ‘challenging behaviour’ introduced in Chapter 3. This ‘detail’ pointed to a double paradox: lack of definitions (but multiple and varied usages) rendered the term ‘challenging behaviour’ a vague (but mandated) knowledge referent in contemporary educational contexts.

Overall, a pattern of divergence of the terms meaning in contemporary educational contexts was established. Its gradual separation from ‘disability’ and union to ‘behaviour management’ was discussed. However, in both usages an imperative for teachers to ‘manage’ the pro-actively challenging child was sustained. In this sense, and regardless of whether traditional or non-traditional conceptions were deployed, the policy, university and school documents reviewed were almost exclusively mappable to the biopsychosocial discourse.

Chapters 3 and 4 have collaboratively worked to portray archevised knowledge of challenging behaviour. Discernable in the archive are three discourses of challenging behaviour (the biomedical, biopsychosocial and ecosocio discourses). This archive now becomes the discursive map against which the participants’ personal and dynamic knowledge of challenging behaviour may be foregrounded, compared and contrasted … and upon which their epistemic journeys will be plotted.
PART III: Plotting the journeys
Knowing challenging behaviour before final PEx

A problem of theory and practice
5. **KNOWING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR BEFORE FINAL PEx: A PROBLEM OF THEORY AND PRACTICE**

Before describing the preservice teachers’ pre-PEx knowledge of challenging behaviour (in Chapter 6), this chapter considers the resources and processes they value in developing their professional knowledge. I will argue that, from the outset, epistemic tensions in the preservice teachers’ knowledge of challenging behaviour rests in their perception of a knowledge/practice divide, where theory is comparatively undervalued in the knowledge re-construction process. Deploying and expanding upon Dan Lortie’s (1975) theory of apprenticeships of observation, I draw on interview and focus group data to illustrate how the preservice teachers engage in knowledge re-construction. Section 5.2.1 demonstrates the value they place on both their existing knowledge of challenging behaviour (prior to their undergraduate studies) and that which they have observed in their previous professional experiences. Section 5.2.2 focuses on how the preservice teachers especially value ‘knowing through seeing’ as a knowledge re-construction process. Finally, Section 5.2.3 describes their assessment of how their university studies impact their knowledge of challenging behaviour. Before turning to the empirical material to build this case, I will describe how I gathered data on the preservice teachers’ knowledge (Section 5.1).

### 5.1. Accessing preservice teachers’ dynamic knowledge of challenging behaviour: Using concept maps with interviews and focus group.

The development of … constructed and reconstructed knowledge can be represented graphically using concept maps.

(Kinchin, Hay & Adams 2000, p. 45)
Thus, concept mapping as a data collection method is appropriate for the purpose of this study; that is, to better understand how preservice teachers re-construct their knowledge of classroom behaviour on their final PEx. Reasoning for inclusion of concept mapping as a data collection method is twofold. Firstly, concept maps are appropriate for educational research. Research has focused on the use of concept maps to ‘encourage, support and assess conceptual understanding’ (Mintzes, Wandersee & Novak 1998, 2000, Novak 1998, Novak & Gowin 1984, all cited in Andrews, Tressler & Mintzes 2008, p. 521), and improve teachers’ professional knowledge (Leou & Chen 2004) and reflective practice (Leou & Liu 2004). Secondly, Kinchin et al. (2000) argue that concept maps have methodological utility in highlighting the effect of particular learning experiences on an individual’s knowledge, especially when the knowledge base being evaluated is complex. Given the complex nature of ‘challenging behaviour’ as a knowledge referent (as outlined in Chapters 3 and 4), this makes concept mapping as a data collection method doubly appropriate.

Prior to their pre-PEx interviews, the preservice teachers were asked (in their own time and at a location of their choosing) to construct a concept map that illustrated their knowledge of classroom behaviours, including challenging behaviours. The pre-PEx concept maps are available at Appendix D. At the outset of the study, I met briefly with each preservice teacher participant and gave her an information sheet on concept mapping (see Appendix E). The information sheet comprised URLs for three websites that explained various methodologies for concept mapping. I also gave informal verbal instructions for each participant to use whatever method and media that they believed most easily and best represented what they knew. My concern was not that they produced similar, or easily comparable concept maps. This was because, rather than conventional qualitative analysis of concept maps, the intention was a Foucauldian analysis, which would consider each map on its own terms, rather than in direct comparison to each other or a ‘master’ map. To justify this intention I turn to a brief discussion of both qualitative and Foucauldian concept map analytics.
Although concept maps are often used to gather quantitative data that measures how accurately a person understands a concept, there is scope for qualitative analysis (Kinchin et al. 2000). The quantitative style of concept map analysis considers number, structure and ‘validity’ of conceptual links made, often in comparison with an expert or ‘master’ map (Kinchin et al. 2000). As Chapter 3 and 4 demonstrate, there is no clear ‘master map’ on the topic of challenging behaviour as it is a contentious and variously defined concept. Therefore, a move away from a quantitative concept map analysis concerned with measuring an individual’s in/correct understandings of defined knowledge sets is appropriate for this study. In moving away from questions of validity, the qualitative method has potential to recognise the significance of individual perspectives and contexts (Kinchin et al. 2000) – which satisfies this study’s focus on dynamically re-constructed knowledge.

While Kinchin et al. (2000) use concept maps qualitatively, the context of this study renders sole adoption of their approach unhelpful. Kinchin et al. (2000) discuss qualitative analysis of concept maps in terms of their utility in the formative assessment and facilitation of learning specific scientific concepts. This indicates that their project is underscored by pursuit of a set, scientific ‘truth’. Given the archive of challenging behaviour does not represent a set, scientific ‘truth’ these assumptions could raise questions for the analysis task at hand. The purpose of analysing the preservice teachers’ concept maps is to better understand what, amongst all the possible ways of understanding challenging behaviour, do the participants know, how have they come to know this and how do they value, deploy and develop this knowledge in classroom settings? Given this, a Foucauldian analysis capable of supporting considerations of multiple discourses, knowledges and truths, affords a much richer picture of the participants’ knowledge as complex and multidimensional.

Indeed, as a data-source for Foucauldian discourse analysis the concept map offers exciting possibilities. As Foucault (1972, p. 66) explains:
what properly belongs to a discursive formation and what makes it possible to
delimit the group of concepts, disparate as they might be, that are specific to it, is
the way in which these different elements are related to one another … it is this
group of relations that constitutes a system of conceptual formation.

The focus in this quote is the relationships between concepts. Relations between
concepts, as identified in the concept maps, helped to illustrate preservice teachers’
participation in identifiable discursive formations around the topic of ‘behaviour’.
Indeed, the graphic representation of the relationships between concepts offered by
concept maps (Andrews et al. 2008; Lawless, Smee & O’Shea 1998; Leou & Liu 2004;
Walshe 2008) provides interesting points of analysis.

Foucault’s focus on the relationships between concepts guided analysis of how the
preservice teachers wrote (and spoke) about that which they knew. This analysis
comprised two phases. Phase one involved a thematic content analysis of the concept
maps so as to compare and contrast ‘what’ the preservice teachers knew about
challenging behaviour. The focus of phase two of the analysis was: Where on the
concept map, and graphically in relation to what other concepts, did each theme feature?
Based on Foucault’s theory that discursive formations feature specific systems of
conceptual formation, this analytical focus on conceptual relationships rendered an
image of ‘how’ the preservice teachers’ knowledge related to specific discourses of
challenging behaviour. It is the findings from this second process that inform the
discussions of the next chapter (Chapter 6).

The study design offered the participants an opportunity to ‘explain’ their concept maps
in an interview. This coupling of methodologies is worth explicating. Both pre- and
post-PEx preservice teacher interviews were designed to: generate discussion about the
respective concept maps; and explore participants’ knowledge of classroom behaviours
and reasoning behind their pedagogical responses to classroom behaviour in PEx. Court
(2004) suggests that it is the depth and detail of participants’ responses during
interviews that educational researchers value in collecting data for Foucauldian
discourse analysis. She states that the detailed data stemming from interview texts work to:

open up for us ‘a window in/on to the complicated workings of discourse’ (Armstrong, 1997, p.80). As researchers, we can document individual stories of experiences as evidence for analysis of discursively shaped power/knowledge intersections.

(Court 2004, p. 592)

Whilst the concept maps were included in this research design as an attempt to capture a graphic representation of patterns in the preservice teachers’ knowledge, generally, the interviews served to gather descriptions of the unique, personal responses to and participation in various discourses of challenging behaviour as part of the knowledge reconstruction process for preservice teachers.

Initially, the rationale for interviews being coupled with the concept maps was to capture the participants’ reasoning behind the concept map construction and to explore how they came to those understandings. However, the co-deployment of these two methodologies generated a richness of material that was not anticipated, the interviews didn’t simply ‘explain’ the concept maps, they indicated participants’ knowledge beyond what was represented in the concept maps.

The inclusion of preservice teacher interviews in the research design to allow participants the chance to explicate a personally constructed text (such as their concept maps) was both a strength and weakness of the research design. White (2000) identifies such dilemmas in her study of preservice teacher epistemology. She argues that the methodological utility for using interviews when studying preservice teacher knowledge, as opposed to their constructed texts, is the opportunity for 'probing' questioning. However, White (2000) also contends that this may result in the methodological tension of the preservice teachers adjusting their knowledge 'en route' during the interview (i.e. changing their response to the question as they speak). The
resolution to such tensions, White (2000) proposes, is to limit analysis to the participants’ final version of an answer. However, my study design minimised the problem by: embracing Foucault’s ‘dynamic’ (Rouse 2003) conceptions of personal knowledge as part of its theoretical framework; and allowing multiple opportunities for triangulation of representations of the preservice teachers’ knowledge across various data sources. Combined these strategies worked to highlight contradictions as they arose.

Another forum for capturing the preservice teachers’ statements for comparison with their concept maps was the focus group interview. A focus group comprising the preservice teacher participants (except Merrin, who was unable to attend due to unforeseen circumstances) took place in November 2010, after both the July/August and October/November rotations of PEx were completed. As a data collection method, the focus group provided the opportunity for the participants to discuss the research questions, and my interpretations of data collected throughout the research process. This was generative as the dynamics of the focus group context permitted exploration of ‘the nature and effects of ongoing social discourse in ways that are not possible through individual interviews or observations’ (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis 2005, p. 903–4). Also, the use of focus groups was appropriate for research of ‘how individuals form a schema or perspective of a problem’ (Mertens 2005, p. 245). In this way, the use of focus groups aligned with the purpose of the study, enabling me to consider how preservice teachers re-construct their knowledge of the contentious issue of challenging behaviour. The focus group data was used as source of triangulation for both pre- and post- PEx concept maps – as a means of considering how preservice teachers re-construct their knowledge of the contentious issue of challenging behaviour.

All interviews and the focus group conducted ran for approximately one hour (each) and were audio-recorded, with the express consent of participants. These audio-recordings
were transcribed into word documents, which were uploaded to QSR NVivo™ for coding and analysis.\footnote{The exception to this rule was an interview with one mentor teacher (Katherine), where the computer ‘crashed’ mid-interview and some audio data was lost.}

5.2. **Sourcing knowledge - A perceived theory/practice divide underscores the knowledge re-construction process**

Regardless of which epistemic journeys the preservice teachers undertook in re-constructing their knowledge of challenging behaviour, there were commonalities in the resources they drew on to construct their knowledge. The preservice teachers’ pre-PEx interview and focus group transcripts were analysed in terms of what they said about the sources of information they identified and how these were valued.

The preservice teachers perceived a clear theory/practice divide in educational knowledge generally, particularly in terms of understanding behaviour. Moreover, they valued practice knowledge, as opposed to theoretical knowledge in their knowledge re-construction processes. This is, perhaps, not surprising given that the challenge of bridging the ‘gap’ between theory and practice for preservice teachers is a strong focus in the teacher education literature (Darling-Hammond 2006a, 2006b, 2010; Gutierrez & Vossoughi 2010; Reid 2011). Indeed, Bill Green (2010a) has gone so far as to cast teacher education as an ‘(im)possible project’. In this paper, his Radford Address to the AARE Conference in 2010, Green draws on the history of teacher education and philosophy and to contemplate the nature of ‘thinking practice’ (which he conceptualises as the interrelation of phronesis, aporia and praxis) and whether it is in fact teachable. He calls for theoretic due diligence in reconceptualising and addressing ‘practice’ in teacher education. What this research project brings to the literature is an in-depth qualitative analysis of the preservice teachers’ perspective on how a perceived theory/practice divide impacts their knowledge and knowledge re/construction processes.
Here, I make the case that a perceived theory/practice divide underpinned the preservice teachers’ knowledge re-construction (in this case, regarding ‘challenging behaviour’). This notion of learning ‘teaching’ via informal and non-university, practical sources is not new. In Dan Lortie’s (1975) book, *Schoolteacher: A sociological study*, a part of the induction process to teaching was identified as non-technical, non-theoretical learning via an ‘apprenticeship of observation’. Lortie insists that teachers develop ideas about teaching as a student, in their years of compulsory, general schooling: ‘there are ways in which being a student is like serving an apprenticeship in teaching’ (Lortie 1975, p. 61). In this way, students develop firm ideas about teaching by watching and experiencing their teachers teach. Whilst Lortie (1975) problematises whether this ‘apprenticeship of observation’ is useful for developing professional knowledge (and this is also attended to in this chapter), the concept is a useful one to deploy here, and to expand upon.

There is plenty of data from this study to support the argument that the preservice teachers formed some of their professional knowledge of challenging behaviour through their apprenticeships of observation (in the traditional, Lortian sense); that is, from observing and experiencing their teachers teach. However, in my analysis I mobilise an expanded notion of ‘apprenticed knowledge’ of teaching. The preservice teachers’ apprenticed knowledge reportedly stemmed from more information sources than simply their years as a student in compulsory schooling. In addition to their own schooling experiences, the data show that these preservice teachers developed apprenticed knowledge of teaching from life experiences and observing family, media and previous PEx mentors (in Section 5.2.1). Particularly, and in contrast to Lortie (1975) who focused on apprenticeship of observation via students’ imaginings and empathy, this data highlights the importance of ‘seeing’ as a mode for acquiring apprenticed knowledge (in Section 5.2.2).

Section 5.2.3 closely examines the preservice teachers’ recollections and assessment of: their university learning (via coursework and PEx), the role of ‘assignments’ in the preservice teachers’ knowledge re-construction, and the persistent conception of a
theory/practice divide in professional knowledge. In comparing and contrasting their apprenticed and university-based understandings and how they come to value each, an argument is made that the preservice teachers both disregard theory and highly value apprenticed knowledge.

5.2.1. ‘Life, the universe and everything’ – the importance of non-university knowledge sources

Discussions of a theory/practice divide do not explicitly appear in the empirical data beyond the preservice teachers’ inscriptions and talk about their university-based knowledge. The first hint of theory’s diminished value in the preservice teachers’ knowledge of challenging behaviour can be located in their insistence as to the importance of non-university (and so seemingly non-theoretical) sources of knowledge. These valued, non-university knowledge sources included ‘life experiences’, ‘family’ and ‘media’.

One of the most frequently discussed sources of knowledge was ‘life experiences’ or ‘personal experiences’. Occasionally this was qualified by examples and recounts of particular lived experiences, especially of their own compulsory schooling experiences. For example:

I think because of what they—the kids are allowed to do at home, they can back chat their parents so they come into the class and they, again, like push the boundaries with the teacher and they can be a bit more, I guess, cheekier. Like, obviously different schools are different but, um, even, like, I think in—when I was in primary school no-one swore and, like, now we getting prac students going out to schools and the principals saying, “you know, you might get told to F-off today by the students”, and this—this is happening. So, like, like when I was at school that just—it was not, like, we didn’t even know those words I don’t think. So [laughs], um, you know, that’s—there is a definite change, its definite change. Yep.

(Merrin, pre-PEx interview)
Here, Merrin recounts a personal experience that informs her apprenticed knowledge of behaviour, specifically her understanding of ‘behaviour in children changing over time’ (Merrin, concept map). What was interesting was, for Anne and Charly, such apprenticeships of observation moved beyond informing knowledge of behaviour to sustaining current pedagogical philosophy and practice. Anne for example in the following quote directly links her experiences of schooling to her current pedagogical knowledge:

… like with my learning difficulties, I had dyslexia so the way that they tested it was through eye sight and um, eye, eye, um, recognition of different um, letter formation, letters and words and things so it was a bit more of a formalised testing for it all [than for behaviour disorders]. And then there’s more strategies of helping them. So, when I read with kids, I know the strategies that I used to have in place with um, different coloured papers or, like a ruler to read and things. So, um in my classrooms, I guess I know those strategies personally of how to assist the k-, even if they’re not diagnosed ... But then … with Aspergers and things like that, I guess, it’s the same kind of principle, I wouldn’t want to definitely diagnose them but early intervention of different ways to help them. Like just knowing them, like I said to you before, like the triggers and things.

(Anne, pre-PEx interview)

This excerpt is taken from the context of Anne talking about her experience of having dyslexia as a child that went undiagnosed until high school and how her schooling experience was so much better once her Learning Disability (LD) was known to her teachers, who then had strategies to help her. In this instance we see how this apprenticeship of observation led Anne to know what not to do (i.e. fail to recognize LD in students) and how best to teach children with dyslexia ‘even if they’re not diagnosed’. Anne then fluidly transfers this knowledge to talk about the utility of knowing her students ‘in [her] classroom’ so as to intervene in their challenging behaviours, with or without diagnoses.

Development of Charly’s apprenticed knowledge of teaching also directly involved observing what her teachers did and desiring to emulate this in her teaching practice:
So, um, I think, personally, that um, like with all, like, any behaviour at school … the foundation of everything … is dependent on relationship between the teacher and the student and the peers. And I know that I’ve been in classes like through my schooling history … I remember one class in particular where we have [sic] a really good relationship with a teacher. Like, she knew all of us sort of, she had a relationship with each one of us and she sort of set it up that what happened in the classroom stayed in the classroom. We all had like, it was like, freedom of speech, no one could judge anyone, it was very much a safe environment … I think that it’s um important for the teacher to set up good relationships with each and every student. And I think that helps a lot of managing … challenging behaviours.

(Charly, pre-PEx interview)

This quote is a pertinent example of the effect of apprenticeships of observation on the preservice teachers’ knowledge. It indicates how observing the actions of her Year 12 English teacher impacted on Charly’s current understanding of what ‘helps a lot of managing … challenging behaviours’; that is, developing positive relationships with students. Such direct impacts of apprenticeships of observation on professional knowledge are problematised by Lortie who maintains:

They [the participant teachers] place events which precede their formal preparation for teaching within a continuous, rather than discontinuous framework. … They talk about assessments they made as youngsters as currently viable, as stable judgements of quality.

(Lortie 1975, p. 65)

This notion of apprenticed knowledge being an ‘ally of continuity rather than change’ (Lortie 1975, p. 67) is one that will sustain upcoming arguments regarding the epistemic practices of the preservice teachers. For now, I return to the task of describing how the resources used by the preservice teachers to form their apprenticed knowledge of challenging behaviour.

Thus far I have considered how ‘life experience’ might be understood as a traditional ‘apprenticeship of observation’ in terms of personal experiences of schooling impacting knowledge of challenging behaviour and pedagogy. But other conceptions of ‘life
experience’ also impacted the preservice teachers’ apprenticed knowledge. Whilst we saw how Merrin, Anne and Charly gave specific examples of ‘life experiences’ that impacted their knowledge, more often than not ‘life experience’ was offered as a blanket descriptor of a knowledge source:

But, I started off with ‘what are challenging behaviours?’ [name of branch in concept map] and I don’t think I really have a [pause] proper definition of what they are. And I don’t know, I think I looked it up and I couldn’t find one either. Um, but I figured, from my experience that, like, it’s different for every child, like, one child’s challenging behaviours is, kind of you know, might not be another child’s and that, I suppose, it depends on the child and how easy it is to manage.

(Charly, pre-PEx interview, emphasis added)

Um, I think a lot of the time these disorders or the behaviour diagnosis are linked with challenging behaviours in people’s minds. They just kind of put a blanket over it where, ‘this kid with ADHD is going to be challenging’, um, cause that’s just what they [pause] in their experiences perhaps, … I mean there’s probably a reason why… this kind of relationship between the terms ['challenging behaviour' and 'behaviour disorder'], has come about um [pause] and I think, it’s probably more likely [pause] that you will have, you’ll find a challenge-challenging behaviour within [pause] err, one of those children [with a behaviour disorder diagnosis]. Just from my own personal experiences.

(Monique, pre-PEx interview, emphasis added)

This lack of description lent the term a paradoxical appearance in the participants’ interviews. As in the above quotes, the term was often deployed, seemingly ‘off the cuff’; thus, inferring that the interviewer shared and knew the same ‘life experience’ as the interviewee. In this sense ‘life experience’ was cast an authoritative and unquestionable source of knowledge akin to ‘common sense’. Alternatively, the terms ‘life/personal experience’ were deployed during, or as a final punctuation to, moments in the pre-PEx interview texts where participants appeared hesitant to describe their sources of knowledge. In this sense, ‘life experience’ was used as a sort of ‘cop out’, an avoidance of too finely pinpointing a knowledge source. Consider, for example, the following excerpt from Ella’s interview text:

S: … where do you think all this stuff’s coming from? … You talked about ‘level of work’ coming from [an undergraduate subject] but what about
the other stuff [pointing to the ‘why/problematic behaviour’ spoke of concept map] ‘family background, socio-economic’, the ‘rules’ and ‘stuff from home’?

E: [pause] Um.
S: Where, yeah, where do you think that comes from?
E: It would’ve, I think just from uni. And just generally [pause] speaking. … I think just generally [pause] I don’t know, it’s hard. I don’t know.
S: It’s a tricky thing to put your finger on?
E: Yep. I don’t, I’m not sure, just, that’s just what I, yeah. I can’t put my finger on that one.
S: That’s okay.
E: I think it’s uni, bit of uni and it’s just generally what I think.
…
E: [pause] I think, just again, life experiences.

(Ella, pre-PEx interview)

Aside from specific, or generic, references to ‘life experiences’ as a source of knowledge, Ella positioned family as important to constructing her apprenticed knowledge. On several occasions Ella talked of her father, also a teacher, offering information on classroom management issues. For example: ‘But my Step-dad always taught, cause obviously he’s a teacher of adults in his profession and I’m trying to become a teacher and so he just, tells me things every now and then… and I don’t know, we just talk about it sometimes’ (Ella, pre-PEx interview). Anne also attributes her knowledge about ‘discipline’ to her family, and in particular her mum: ‘it’s kind of how I was brought up as well’ (Anne, pre-PEx interview). Monique talks of the value of learning about challenging behaviour from listening to family stories about parenting via ‘talking with aunts and uncles who have young kids’ (Monique, focus group).
The print, broadcast and electronic media were credited as sources of the preservice teachers’ knowledge of challenging behaviour. Anne and Ella both mentioned various media when responding to the pre-PEx interview question, ‘where do you get those ideas [represented in the concept map] from?’ Anne described ‘little articles’ in Sunday magazines and Ella reported she ‘g[o]t a lot’ from watching Super Nanny:

I know it’s a stupid thing and people think I’m an idiot, but I swear to God it [Super Nanny] is one of the most valuable things that I’ve ever watched as to children’s behaviour because it does work. She’s amazing, I watch her all the time.

(Ella, focus group, original emphasis)

Whilst Ella and Anne explicitly acknowledged the media as a source of knowledge, Merrin embedded her media-based understandings in explanations of her concept map inscription regarding ‘drugs/medication affect behaviour’ (Merrin, pre-PEx concept map):

I haven’t really worked with enough kids, but I think the ones that are severely, sort of off the planet, like the ones that you see on TV that are bashing things, I think that they do need to be medicated.

(Merrin, pre-PEx interview)

Apart from reading Sunday magazines and watching television, electronic media was acknowledged as a valuable knowledge source. For example, Ella talked about how she consulted Google™ to complete her concept map by adding the ‘definition boxes’ to summarise each of the main branches of her concept map:

E: I did my Concept Map and … I thought well, I don’t know, it doesn’t really link, I just, it just didn’t feel finished. … so I kind of just Googled™ behaviour ‘cause I was, just, I don’t know, I suppose to kind of um [pause] find some research, that made … what I’d written down, make sense [laugh].

…
E: Oh, well, I just Googled™ um ‘behaviour’, and then I went to um definitions and these, were – I read a whole page of definitions and these were the three that I, liked and thought related [best].

(Ella, pre-PEx interview)

This quote is included here because it explicitly describes a knowledge construction process involving electronic media, but what is striking is the sequencing inherent in this process. Here, Ella describes fitting her personal knowledge to a purposefully selected, more formal knowledge of behaviour so as to ‘finish’ her concept map. This sequencing is important. Firstly, it adds credence to, what Lortie (1975) describes as, teachers’ propensity for self-socialisation via ‘screening’ of, and being ‘highly selective’ about, the professional knowledge they adopt. I would further argue this sequencing is also typical of what I have called the ‘epistemic squishing’ that occurs in the preservice teachers’ description of their university-based knowledge. ‘Epistemic squishing’ is the term I will use throughout the thesis to refer to the preservice teachers’ propensity to seek and/or value formalisations of their informal knowledge bases, rather than allow formal knowledge to impact their personal knowledge. In other words, this sequencing effectively works to subordinate formal (or, if you like, theoretical) knowledge and elevate the value of personal, apprenticed knowledge. This is a key argument that will be expanded upon in Section 6.2.

This sub-section considered how non-university knowledge sources such as life experience, family and media were valued by the preservice teachers in re-constructing their knowledge of challenging behaviour. Further, this was positioned as an indicator of a perceived theory/practice divide via a specific valuing of ‘non-theory’ in the knowledge re-construction process. Key points raised in this section that work to develop that overarching argument include: indications of a propensity to ‘fit’ personal knowledge into formal knowledge (rather than vice versa); and explicit acknowledgement of the importance of lived ‘experience’ and ‘seeing’ in developing an apprenticed knowledge of challenging behaviour. This notion of ‘seeing’ (Merrin, pre-PEx interview) and ‘watching’ (Ella, pre-PEx interview) as a means of attaining
information - in these instances connected to viewing broadcast media - recurs more broadly in discussions of other information sources.

5.2.2. Constructing knowledge by ‘seeing’ practice – a valuing of ‘non-theoretical, apprenticed knowledge’

This section describes another, potentially non-theoretical, source of knowledge intensely valued by the preservice teachers. That is, ‘constructing knowledge through seeing practice’. ‘Constructing knowledge through seeing practice’ could not be included in earlier discussions of non-university knowledge sources (Section 5.2.1) because it spans both university and non-university contexts.

Whilst the preservice teachers often, but ambiguously, credited ‘life experiences’ as informing their knowledge of challenging behaviour (Section 5.2.1), all of the preservice teachers were much clearer as to the value of what they visually observed about children with challenging behaviour. I contend that they valued the act of ‘seeing’ challenging behaviour (and others’ prevention of/responses to this) as an important factor in their knowledge construction process, both before and during their teacher preparation program. Participants recounted things they saw as teenagers in their homes, schools and competition sport teams as informing what they know about children with challenging behaviour, and how to teach them. After leaving school, the participants credited what they saw in their workplaces and during their PEx as significantly informing their knowledge of teaching children with challenging behaviour. These resources for ‘constructing knowledge through seeing practice’ are located both within and without of participants’ personal, compulsory schooling experiences; this sustains my argument for mobilizing an expanded, non-traditional notion of apprenticed knowledge.

The preservice teachers’ recollections of their teenage years framed the family home and competitive sports team as valuable resources for ‘constructing knowledge through
seeing practice’. The participants described seeing parenting practices in their family homes as informing their knowledge of, and pedagogy for, children with challenging behaviour. For example, Ella talks of watching her mother parent her younger sister:

I think [my knowledge] it’s also from Mum, I’d say too. … ‘cause I was thirteen when my youngest sister was born. Um, so just **watching** the way, Mum is with my sister as well. So I’d say I get it [my knowledge] from Mum too and just media.

(Ella, pre-PEx interview, emphasis added)

Whilst media as a viewable source of knowledge has been previously discussed, this express notion of knowing about challenging behaviour in classrooms from ‘watching’ parenting practice is interesting. It parallels pedagogical knowledge of behaviour with mothercraft.

Pedagogical knowledge of students’ challenging behaviour was also attributed to observations of teenage sports teams. As part of her response to the interview prompt, ‘Any other main sources of knowledge?’ Monique recalled:

I remember seeing a, a guy do, when I was, one of the sports I was doing. He would do something, he was like 16 at the time, he would do something, then the first thing he would do is look at everyone really eagerly to see what, how they’re responding. I remember just **watching** him, thinking, [pause] ‘I know what you’re doing’ … I was just laughing at him … But yeah, it’s the same with kids on prac. When, I’m doing the observing before I’m actually doing the teaching for example, I like to observe their children um, and **seeing** when they do something they often [pause] would do something and they’ll sneak a look around to see who else is laughing too. Um, and I think that’s, yeah informing their behaviour.

(Monique, pre-PEx interview, emphasis added)

Here Monique credits her ‘watching’ of a teenage team-mate’s attention seeking behaviour as a ‘main source of knowledge’ regarding challenging behaviour. Like Anne’s transfer of knowledge from her apprenticeship of observation (experiencing teaching strategies for her dyslexia) to her knowledge of pedagogy for children with
behaviour disorders (see Section 5.2.1), Monique takes apprenticed understandings from watching her team-mate’s attention seeking behaviour and relates it directly to behavioural traits she ‘sees’ children display in the classroom, during PEx. This idea of variously apprenticed knowledge being directly transferrable and useful to teaching practice recurs in the dataset.

Interestingly, apprenticeships of observation are not specific to their primary and secondary schooling years. As adults, the preservice teachers noted the importance of visual observation as informing their knowledge in paid work and PEx contexts. When asked, ‘have you got any sources of knowledge that have helped you come to this [understanding of challenging behaviour] more than others?’, Merrin talked of the importance of ‘seeing’ in her paid work as a teacher’s aide in a special education setting:

I guess, probably, experience working in the special needs school … but it’s not like a real classroom because these kids are—they are there ‘cause it’s more of an early intervention centre. … There’s some signs up on how to deal with Aspergers kids, and each room had a—has a sign up, like, ‘don’t’—like, say this, say this’ and I have seen that before and I think that connected with what I have learned at uni. … And just, I guess, yeah the physical school and just watching them in act—watching the other teachers in action, and seeing what works and … sort of, what doesn’t.

(Merrin, pre-PEx interview, emphasis added)

That the observations don’t take place in a ‘real classroom’ does not mean that the knowledge gained is perceived as irrelevant. Indeed viewing posters, ‘the physical school’ and ‘watching teachers … and seeing what works and what doesn’t’ was the first source of knowledge on behaviour recalled and discussed by Merrin in her interview.

Paradoxically, whilst the ‘apprenticeship of observation’ is problematised by teacher educators (e.g. Buchmann 1991; Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden 2007;
Grossman 1991; Haston & Leon-Guerrero 2008; Labaree 2000; Laframboise & Shae 2009; Martin & Russell 2009; Reid 2011; Slekar 1998; Tomlinson 1999b), observation is innately part of most practicum programs. The scope for learning by observing teachers and students during PEx was described as a valuable knowledge construction process by the preservice teachers in this study:

I guess so, like all of this [pointing to the ‘management strategies’ spoke of her concept map] like the rewards, and the incentives and warnings and … Yeah and that I’ve also seen on PEx as well.

(Merrin, pre-PEx interview)

I mean, a lot of the times, teachers will say to you, ‘hey, this is your bad kid’… Um, yeah. ‘This is the kid’, I know, ‘here’s this kid, he’s got Autism’ um, ‘he won’t ever do anything that you ask him’ or ‘he’s um, ODD’ or whatever. Um, and that in a way I guess, informs, you know, what you think about the disorder as well, but then I’m also um, [pause] like then, it’s also good to see how the teacher responds to that child. Like a lot of the times the teacher will say, ‘okay, this is the naughty kid’, but then she’s also got in place, like five different things to help support this child, um. … Um, but there’s, that also, like that informs what I think as well, because um, it’s good I think my experience, just to see [pause] what they do with that kid because that’s kind of taken into my own repertoire of [pause] how you perceive behaviours and how you deal with them if you come across them later. So that, I guess, influences how I [pause] perceive behaviours in … classrooms.

(Monique, pre-PEx interview, emphasis added)

That this excerpt from Monique’s pre-PEx interview talks of a dissonance between what is said and done (and so ‘seeable’) in teaching is important to my argument. Overall, the preservice teachers spoke of PEx as a space in which they may ‘see’ practical tips, tricks and strategies that experienced teachers employ to manage students’ challenging behaviour. But, beyond building such a ‘repertoire’ (Monique) of behaviour management strategies, in the quote above Monique specifically mentions the impact of these visual observations on her perceptions (or understandings/knowledge) of challenging behaviours.
As was evident in their accounts of life experience, family and media (Section 5.2.1), constructing knowledge through ‘seeing’ was another, more concrete demonstration of the preservice teachers’ esteem for ‘practice’, and ‘apprenticed’ knowledge. The very act of ‘looking’ was shown to ‘provide substantial authority’ (Harwood 2012, p. 704) to the pre-service teachers’ apprenticed knowledge.

5.2.3. Knowing through university studies – a case of ‘love practice/hate theory’

The preservice teachers’ perception of a theory/practice divide as informing their knowledge of challenging behaviour is most evident in their discussions of their university studies. If the undergraduate teacher preparation experience may be divided into ‘coursework’ (theory) and ‘PEx’ (practice) then so too may the preservice teachers’ opinions of the respective value of each to personal knowledge construction processes.

Coursework (with the exception of completing certain types of assignments) was either not valued as a knowledge source, or valued only for reinforcing personal, existing knowledge. One task of this sub-section is to examine what the preservice teachers construed as ‘theory’ and how they valued that theory as informing their knowledge of challenging behaviour. Also, the participants’ assessments of the value of coursework and ‘assignments’, as opposed to the practical advice of lecturers, teachers and PEx experiences will be compared and contrasted. This will illustrate the preservice teachers’ understanding of a theory/practice divide and their epistemic disposition to seek singular practical ‘answers’ to complex pedagogical problems.

To complement this analysis, the mentor teacher interviews will be used to consider in-service teachers’ perceptions of: disparities between theory and practice, and the role of the ‘assignment’ in developing preservice teachers’ knowledge; and how teacher preparation courses treat of the topic of challenging behaviour. This dual analysis, of both pre- and in-service teachers’ comments on teacher preparation courses, has an
interesting effect. What emerges from this are some thought-provoking comments on the in/effectiveness of current teacher education models in terms of impacting preservice teacher knowledge.

Preservice teachers’ comment on theory

The concept maps included reference to theoretical knowledge of behaviour, which was attributed to university studies. One construal of theoretical knowledge was via the naming of ‘theorists’, usually educational psychology theorists. Behavioural theorists featured on the concept maps included: ‘Glasser’ (Monique, Anne and Merrin), ‘Vygotsky’ (Monique and Merrin), ‘Piaget’ (Ella and Merrin), ‘Skinner’ (Ella and Merrin) and ‘Canter’ (Merrin). All theorists featured in the concept maps were also in the university texts reviewed in Section 4.2. However, a focus on Glasser’s Choice Theory was evident across the preservice teachers’ interview texts. Whilst the concept maps indicated certain clarity in the preservice teachers’ knowledge (insofar as they listed very particular theorists of behaviour), their discussions of this demonstrated some confusion. Largely (except for instances of ‘squishing by negotiation’ discussed in ensuing chapters), such confusion was cursory and inconsequential as the interview was not a ‘test’ of recalled knowledge from their undergraduate studies.

Confusion was more evident when the preservice teachers spoke of ‘theory’ generally (as opposed to educational psychology ‘theorists’, specifically). In these discussions they cast ‘theory’ as a type of university-based knowledge that is blurred, ‘meshed’ (Ella) and inextricably embedded with their personal teaching philosophies (Anne). For example, the preservice teachers seemed to find it difficult to articulate what parts of their knowledge of challenging behaviour were attributable to university studies:

Um, like I can’t sit here and think, yeah I learned that, that was in the textbook … do you know what I mean? Like, but it’s, I’ve, you know, I’ve read things of, you know, with all the stuff we’ve done at uni, I think it’s just everything that sort of [trails off].

(Charly, pre-PEx interview)
I’m just trying to think whether it came in with um, the Behaviour Management [subject] that we had. … I think, I can’t remember though. It kind of meshes. The [laugh] subjects that you do.

(Ella, pre-PEx interview, emphasis added)

Later, when asked during the focus group if there was anything about behaviour that was learned from university that had been not learned anywhere else:

E: No, not that I remember.
M: If I have, that’s irrelevant in a way because … if it has no practical application I’m not going to remember.
C: If I’ve learned something at uni and it’s not come up anywhere else since, then I’ve forgotten.

(Ella, Monique & Charly, focus group)

This apparent inability to distinguish what they learned about challenging behaviour from ‘university’ as opposed to other knowledge sources could be for any reason (and this reasoning is not necessarily captured in the pre-PEx empirical material). For example, one reason may be it is because it’s a daunting question – to be asked to reflect back on an entire degree. Or, it might be that they lack a language to discuss their learning, or they have not previously been required or requested to think across coursework subjects (rather than within them). That ‘university knowledge’ appears in their concept maps as defined lists of theorists but in their interviews as something ‘meshed’ beyond description is worth noting. Whilst the reasoning for this remains elusive, what seems clear is that, overall, the preservice teachers demonstrated a propensity to disregard theoretically based university knowledge.

Comment as regarding the value ascribed to their university studies generally hinged on such disregard for ‘theory’. At best their university studies were credited with encouraging them to articulate and formalise that which they already knew. For example, Ella framed the theoretical knowledge she acquired at university as
confirming ‘what I do anyway’ (Ella, pre-PEx interview). Likewise, Monique in her answer to the question ‘which of these sources of knowledge do you find most valuable?’ states:

I think university’s pretty big because while I’ve had these understandings of behaviour, it’s kind of got me to articulate it and [pause] realise that hey, ‘I guess I knew this’ but it’s kind of bought [sic] it to the front of my mind … now I know why I think these things and what this means in the bigger picture. And it has given me like the bit, bit of theory behind it

(Monique, pre-PEx interview)

That theory is ‘behind’ her understandings rather than ‘within it’, again hints at a conceptual separation of theory from practice. This theory/practice divide was a conceptual frame deployed by the participants that dismissed the role of the university in forming their knowledge of behaviour. Anne discusses this when she talks about her concept map’s listing of ‘culture’ as a part of ‘knowing [her] students’ (Anne, pre-PEx concept map):

A: Culture is just um, I don’t know, it’s just one of these ones I think, [small laugh] the, the university is always maybe pushing and that it’s just knowing um, like, every day. Like you might not have a m-multicultural class I guess, and just knowing that different things are happening and I don’t know, yeah, just all the different aspects of it, so.

S: So you think uni pushes it? What sorts of things are they pushing do you think?

A: Umm, well, it’s just, I feel like there’s, like you know, the social capital, the culture capital and all these kind of terms that you put into your essays and they talk about at lectures and culture’s just a big one, I guess that they put in to, um, be, PC, like polit-politically correct and yeah, the tutorials and lectures and things and I guess it’s just a um, a thing that I always just put in everywhere, so. So, I know more to say about backgrounds than I do of culture.

S: Okay, so you don’t buy into the habitus kind of stuff and the [Anne shakes her head] no?

A: No, and it would kind of be like, Glasser’s the only one that’s kind of linked in to theory and practical linking together. Like all of this would have come through the four years, but I don’t link to, like a person’s um,
theories, of what I’ve studied and link it into this type of flowchart. I don’t, I don’t go like, Vygotsky said this and this is how I think it. I just take the idea and it’s in my philosophy now.

(Anne, pre-PEx interview)

That Anne has linked only one theorist’s work [Glasser’s] as relevant to the practicalities of teaching is an interesting assessment of her four years of undergraduate study. What is more fascinating is her categorization of theorists as being either: agreeable to her existing knowledge and so imperceptibly absorbed into her teaching ‘philosophy’; or, not in agreement with her existing knowledge and so used solely for satisfying coursework requirements, such as assignments. This necessity to demonstrate satisfactory theoretical knowledge for assignments before discarding it is also evident in Merrin’s interview text:

Um, some things, I think that we’ve learned are obviously totally irrelev—not irrelevant but it’s gone in one ear and out the—you know you’ve done your assignment you never have to think about it again.

(Merrin, pre-PEx interview)

Importantly, Merrin’s and Anne’s comments on assignments are another indicator of the preservice teachers’ apprenticed knowledge acting as the benchmark against which university knowledge is valued as ‘obviously’ irre/relavent. Their apprenticed knowledge offers them comprehensive ideas of what teaching involves and this becomes the benchmark against which coursework ‘relevance’ is measured. This, arguably, works at diminishing the possibility of the university being valued as a site for possible knowledge growth or change.

The participants’ propensity to value the practical over ‘theory’ and university-based knowledge was likewise evident in the focus group data. The following focus group excerpt captures participants’ initial response to being asked to rank, in order of importance, the sources of information they had identified and discussed in the focus group (thus far). The sources of information under consideration in this ranking activity
were focus group defined and included ‘PEx and schools’, ‘the university’, ‘observing others’ and ‘stories from family and teacher colleagues’.

Int: So. Which [of the identified sources of information], would you say, would be the most valuable to you?

C: Colleagues and schools

Int: Okay, which next?

[long pause]

Int: What comes after that?

A: I don’t know. Did we put colleagues down?

E: Yep, so colleagues and schools are all up the top.

[General murmurs of agreement]

M: … I think the uni was helpful to give you—

C&M: [together] ‘a base’—

M: -- understanding. I don’t think any of the things that the colleagues or whatever would be saying would make as much sense without it.

I: Okay, if you had to rank those remaining ones: ‘informal observations’ and ‘---

E: I don’t. I think it’s just they’re all valuable and they all go together. I don’t think that I could rank any of them. … because you pull different things from different areas. So, you pull something from colleagues and then

A: It sparks what you remember from university.

E: Yeah and.

A: And then I’ll go ‘oh! That’s from uni’ and I might actually go back to lecture notes and find it.

E: Yeah. Or Google it. I don’t think I’d go back to my notes!

[Laughter]

(Interviewer, Charly, Ella, Anne & Monique, focus group, original emphases)
Here the practical knowledge sources of ‘[teacher] colleagues’ and ‘schools’ take an undisputed first place in their ranking of knowledge sources. The first mention of university in this excerpt is also interesting. Here, the university is viewed as helpful in developing a ‘base understanding’ (Charly & Monique, focus group). This vague description of ‘base understanding’ is consistent with descriptions of this same knowledge as ‘meshed’, and defying description. Moreover, this somehow valuable but indescribable ‘base’ was immediately subordinated to the knowledge that can be garnered from ‘things that colleagues’ say (Monique, focus group). Whilst this demonstrates a propensity for valuing of practice knowledge over ‘theory’, Ella and Anne then go on to defend the value of university studies and demonstrate an intuitive ability to link practice to theory. They identify information from teacher colleagues, the most valuable knowledge source, as directly related to that learned at university.

Interestingly, whilst making connections from practice to theory was cast as something the preservice teachers ‘might’ (Anne, focus group) do, making the link from theory to practice seems to continue to both elude them and sustain perceptions of a theory practice divide. As Ella’s comment suggests:

I don’t, I don’t know, like you know there’s theory and like they say it’s completely different in practice. So I think, that a lot of theory based knowledge from uni about particular behaviours and behaviour management and theories of behaviour and all that kind of stuff, but a lot of [pause] the learning, you know, creating ways of [pause] managing behaviour has come from my experience of … not necessarily from uni.

(Ella, pre-PEx interview)

Whilst ‘experience’ is seen in this quote to trump university once more as a valued source of knowledge, that is not the main point of interest here. What is striking is the phrase: ‘like, you know, there’s theory and like they say it’s completely different in practice’ (Ella, pre-PEx interview, emphasis added). This begs the question, who are ‘they’ and from what seemingly unquestionable authority do they speak? From the
empirical material gathered for this project, I contend that ‘they’ may be experienced, inservice teachers.

**Construals of a theory/practice divide from the field**

There was only one mentor teacher who did not emphasise a theory/practice divide: Sonya stated that ‘prac … brings it [professional knowledge] home a bit more’ (Sonya, interview\(^\text{16}\)). The remaining four mentor teachers perceived a theory/practice divide in professional knowledge, the limitations of university coursework and subsequently the virtues of practicum in developing teaching knowledge.

Um, [the preservice teachers’ knowledge of challenging behaviour is] very theoretical. It’s very um, text book orientated, unless they’re a parent themselves, they’re pretty clueless … When I went to … college, we did lots of mini-pracs … and we’d go in there [to schools], like once a fortnight or whatever and have small groups … And then we’d have a Teaching and Learning centre and they’d ‘truck in’ these kids with problems and you’d have one to one with this child once a week for a whole term … and you got [pause] a clue … teaching is a practical job, so I think the emphasis should come back to; what I had … I think they’ve [the universities have] gone … too far over to ‘theoretical land’.

(Beth, interview)

I think [preservice teachers’ knowledge of classroom behaviour] that’s the main [knowledge] area where they’re lacking … They learn about it I’m sure and they do know there’s … challenging behaviour in the room, but I really think its experience in the room [pause] that they need. Reading … books doesn’t really help you when you’re in the room dealing with it. Because every child is different, and what they say in the textbooks does not necessarily work, in the classroom.

(Kathryn, interview)

I think their [the preservice teachers’] knowledge is generally pretty good … [they] know Glasser would say this and Piaget’s Theory Development would say this but the actual practical approach … that’s what they are lacking … standing up in front of 30 plus children and dealing with the [behaviour management and welfare] issues that come up every day … no amount of theory or research or text books can prepare you for it unless you actually do it.

(Jeremy, interview)

\(^{16}\) Each mentor teacher participated in only one formal interview.
When I was at uni, it was sort of more, vast and you got the um, you know the different schools of thought and different … philosophies … and they didn’t really talk about management as … an issue. … and um, I remember going out and walking into my first classroom, Year 1, and thinking, ‘oh, my goodness, what am I going to do with these kids’ … they were quite challenging.

(Kay, interview)

The mentor teachers variously offered their assessments of perceived weaknesses in teacher preparation programs. What is pertinent is that their recommendations regarding ‘how’ to close the theory/practice gap in teacher education were relatively consistent. All the mentor teachers’ recommendations for narrowing the theory/practice divide centred on the structure of professional experience programs and honing the preservice teachers’ classroom observation skills. Unsurprisingly, in terms of practicum, the overarching opinion evident in the above excerpts was that ‘more is always better’. Specifically, the mentor teachers called for frequent (as in weekly or fortnightly) mini-pracs and demonstration lessons (Kathryn & Beth, interviews) throughout the degree, but especially in place of ‘block pracs’ in first and second year (Beth, interview). However, they also placed the caveat of structuring these mini-PEx programs so as to assist rather than burden schools and teaching loads (Beth, interview). Whilst the preservice teachers articulated the value of ‘knowing through seeing’, their mentors recommended increased opportunities for this in teacher preparation programs:

I think they have a lot of theory and they have a lot of good intentions, and they’ve written essays on it but they don’t know it in practice and that comes back to the observation. They have to be prepared to observe the children and observe the interaction of the teacher with the children before they can just think they can just get in there and do it.

(Beth, interview)

And I think they need to get out in to the schools more, maybe not prac teaching, but just observe.

(Kathryn, interview)

The teachers’ perceptions of and recommendations for teacher education were extensive and most interesting. Whilst I plan for these to inform a journal article post-PhD, I was unable to attend to them in any substantial way at this juncture. This is because the focus of this chapter (and thesis) is the preservice teachers’ epistemology, not teacher education and inservice teacher knowledge.
Jeremy also discussed the importance of preservice teachers’ observation skills in bridging the theory/practice divide. Beyond the requirement to observe teachers and classrooms, Jeremy discussed the importance of offering the opportunity for preservice teachers to observe their own teaching. He suggested video recording some of their lessons and having them analyse these for a reflection assignment, where bridging theory and practice would be the focal point for assessment (Jeremy, interview). This notion of negotiating the theory/practice divide through reflective practice was also acknowledged by some of the preservice teachers.

Rare negotiations of the perceived theory/practice divide

Participants’ perception of a theory versus practice divide was not absolute or non-negotiable. One example of the nuanced epistemological work the preservice teachers engage in at the nexus of theory and practice was Anne and Charly’s discussions of the possibility of theory in reflective practice. These two preservice teachers noted how theory, whilst difficult to use in practice, could be of excellent value in reflecting on practice:

I always found PEx quite hard to, um put in to practice all the things I learn at uni. Um … a lot of the time, I just go by kind of instinct and not refer back to, all my theory based things … and um, it’s not until reflection when I look back at my program and go, ‘ooh, why didn’t I look at that. … I was even remembering the other day I was going through um, lecture slides and um, there was this whole thing on um, classroom management … and I just went, ‘oh, that would have been perfect for my last prac’ … Um, but, yeah, and it wasn’t until reflection that I went, ‘oh, that would’ve been perfect’ … Like if somehow I had made the connection when I was doing my programming that that was there and it would have been really helpful, but.

(Anne, pre-PEx interview)

What were they? ‘Fun’, ‘love and belonging’, ‘power’, ‘choice and freedom’ and ‘survival’ [pointing to each finger on one hand]. That’s how I remember them. And it makes sense. Like, not—like, I find that easy to reflect on why, like if I use that as a way to reflect on—if I’ve had an experience on prac or that with challenging behaviours and I’m trying to think ‘what can I do?’ or ‘why is it happening’. That, sort of, is one way that I used to think about [it].

(Charly, pre-PEx interview)
Apart from Anne’s comment about PEx as a site where, ‘I just go by kind of instinct and not refer back to, all my theory based things’, both of these quotes demonstrate a perceived place for university knowledge ‘in’ classroom practice; namely, in the space of reflection.

Reflection is a space, construed here as occurring post-practice, that permits ‘connections’ (Anne, pre-PEx interview) to be made between university coursework and practice and it offers opportunities to ‘reflect on why’ certain challenging behaviours may be occurring. Anne and Charly’s assertion that theory can exist within the space of reflective practice, closely relates to Gutierrez and Vossoughi’s (2010, p. 104) contention that: ‘highlighting the fundamentally mediated nature of reflection can complicate the taken-for-granted split between theory and practice – a disconnect commonly lamented in the context of teacher education’.

Valuing university contributions to their practical knowledge of challenging behaviour

The preservice teachers’ comment on the theoretical component of their university studies of behaviour was, for the most part, quite vague and generalised. Furthermore, the value given to such theoretical knowledge was minimal. That is not to say that they perceived their university studies as entirely worthless in constructing their knowledge of challenging behaviour; just that they only perceived university knowledge to be of value when it was ‘practical’. Again, we see participants constructing their knowledge around a foundational perception of a theory/practice divide. The preservice teachers tended to value university studies either when practical ‘tips and tricks’ for teaching students with challenging behaviour were offered (mostly via ‘behaviour management’ and Curriculum and Pedagogy/‘PEx’ subjects), or as an ‘answer’ to a knowledge problem reached via completion of an assignment. Each of these ways of valuing university studies as part of the knowledge construction process will now be attended to, in turn.
Both Anne and Charly recalled the NSWDET Certificate in Teaching Students with Learning Difficulties as of great value in constructing their knowledge of challenging behaviour. However, only Charly offered an explanation as to why she thought this:

Um, I don’t think there was ever like a, you know, ‘if this happens, you should do this’. I don’t think there was ever like a specific way you should react or whatever. Um, I remember [pause] oh, I also did an elective, like a summer course thing, where I had Lecturer X and she just like, probably crossed over into a few behaviour things as well. But um, I remember, she was saying, um, that she had, had a child with [pause] O.D.D. I think it was, and she just said like, ways of, responding to them so, and I actually used this on my second prac, um, where she said like rather than say, you know, … ‘go and do this’ or you know, like and really giving them a direct thing, and that sort of thing, [pause] um, she, you know, like ‘pick up the paper thanks’ or something like that where, it’s like, not asking them, ‘could you please pick up the paper?’ where they could say, ‘no’, but it’s like, ‘pick up the paper, thanks’, like it’s kind of like, in the middle of a direct and a question sort of thing and then I remember she was also saying like, you know, ‘give them, give them time’, so like, you know, like, yet saying that, you know, ‘thanks’, whatever, walk away, just expect them to do it, rather than, you know, sit there and watch them and make sure that they’re picking it up right there, like. And I used that in my second prac.

(Charly, pre-PEx interview)

This is a telling interview excerpt. First, it shows a difference between Charly’s ability to talk about knowledge and the act of knowing. She renounces the possibility that her university studies offered ‘if/then’ pedagogical solutions to behavioural problems associated with particular diagnoses, then immediately recalls, in word-for-word detail, the usefulness of a lecturer’s advice on specific speech patterns appropriate for teaching children diagnosed with O.D.D. Also interesting is the nature of the knowledge recalled. When asked to reflect on her university studies overall, Charly was very vague: ‘all the stuff we’ve done at uni, I think it’s just everything that sort of [trails off]’ (Charly, pre-PEx interview). Whereas the above interview excerpt tells a very different story. Far from being vague, the specificity of this story and its connection to Charly’s teaching practice seems to rest – not necessarily in a particular way of knowing behaviour (although this could be mapped as biopsychosocial) but – on the nature of the content taught by lecturers. Charly valued content comprised of specific ‘how to’ instructions
(drawn from the successful teaching experiences of the instructor), which contributed to her repertoire of classroom management practices. In the following quote, Merrin also indicates the value of such practical knowledge in her pre-PEx interview.

Um, well I did [a NSWDET Certificate] over summer. That was in my first year. … So, it’s unspecified credit. … Um, and then, in third year, we did classroom management, which was very similar to [the NSWDET Certificate]. The same teacher ran them. And there were, sort of, the same PowerPoints. But, I—I really liked it. Like, those were all my sort of, favourite subjects. Like I just also remember doing, like in that subject, you do, have you heard of the SPAT and Neale test on kids? Like, that was sort of one section we did on those. Yep, and then um did power cards. Do you know what they are? I think Aspergers, or Autistic kids you have a power card, like it’s one card. Say if the kid really likes Thomas the Tank Engine and also the kid, um, I don’t know, has trouble going to the toilet by himself, so on the card it would say ‘Thomas the tank engine always goes to the toilet’ and you turn the card over and it would be ‘Thomas the tank engine will ask to go to the toilet’, or something. So, you relate the kid’s problem to [pause] [something] they like.

(Merrin, pre-PEx interview)

In this excerpt, Merrin recalls her ‘favourite subjects’ as ones that expanded her practical know-how regarding implementation of: literacy diagnostic assessment tools (such as the Sutherland Phonological Awareness Test, and Neale Test); and ‘power cards’, used to assist behaviour modification of children with a particular diagnoses (in this case, Aspergers or Autism). Again, we see the preservice teachers framing diagnosis-contingent pedagogies as highly valued university-constructed knowledge of behaviour. Thus, they demonstrate a preference for biopsychosocial understandings of behaviour.

Aside from valuing their university studies for offering very specific, new knowledge about practical strategies for teaching children with particular medical diagnoses – the preservice teachers seemed to value university knowledge via completion of assignments. Antithetically to Anne and Merrin’s construals of theory-based assignments as ‘hoops’ to jump through on the way to qualifying as a teacher (see subheading ‘Preservice teachers comment on theory’, this chapter), assignments
perceived as related to practice functioned as a powerful tool for recalling university-developed knowledge of challenging behaviour. Anne spoke to the general impact of assignments’ on her knowledge:

I don’t really feel that [part of the concept map has] kind of come from any university ideas, but then at the same time, I like to have lots of conversations with my tutors so it may have come through something like that over an assignment I had to do.

(Anne, pre-PEx interview)

Whilst Anne attributes assignments as part of her knowledge construction generally, it seemed more common for participants to use certain types of assignments as a vehicle for recalling specific university coursework. The assignments of greatest value were those concerned with ‘practical’ approaches to behaviour (such as ‘behaviour management’ and ‘curriculum and pedagogy’ subjects) and not assignments for subjects associated with ‘theory’, (such as foundational education subjects like educational psychology, sociology, or compulsory Key Learning Area subjects). For example, recollections of the behaviour management subject centred on assignments:

S: Okay, um, [pause] so you’ve got here, [quoting the concept map] ‘task of the teacher to engage students to reward in a variety of ways’, why do you think?

A: Because in the management, cause it was under the Classroom Management, a lot of it was um, looking at ways to well, manage the classroom … and so, I’m a, we had to do a um, an assignment on different ways of um, having positive enforce-reinforcement in the classroom and like the ones with the traffic lights, its … you know, consequences, building and building until it like, removal or something.

(Anne, pre-PEx interview)

Um, I probably would still have, a type of incentive thing, but um I just remember I did one subject and we did…like it was a group assignment. We gave kids, if they were doing something right, we’d give them a little um raffle ticket. They’d get the raffle ticket, put their name on it and stick it in a jar, at the end we’d pick out their name, they got a prize. See, I’d do something like that for the end of the week. Like, once your name’s in the jar you can’t pull it out. … Um, I’d like to do something like that.
(Merrin, pre-PEx interview)

The classroom management one [subject], [pause] from what I remember, [laugh] it might not, like I don’t know, maybe I just remember, a small percentage of it. But from what I remember, that was like, I remember we did an assignment on like er, um, like we had to make a behaviour management tool and it was, you know, basically, it was like, positive behaviour management like a reward system, or we had to come up with something like that to use in a classroom. Um, so that was, and then we did, like we did learn about the, the five needs and like different theories and things like that, I don’t remember all the theories [trails off, inaudible]-- um, but I remember we did learn that sort of stuff as well.

(Charly, pre-PEx interview)

The Behaviour Management subject, but I can’t recall. I more remember the individual behaviour plans [assignment], and we looked at, yeah, we looked at um [pause] case studies and we had to create individual learning plans for those students, I don’t think it was really based on theory, I mean in that way. As in theorists.

(Ella, pre-PEx interview)

Beyond the coursework subject ‘classroom management’, other assignments were cited as informing knowledge represented in pre-PEx concept maps. For example, to explicate her statement in the concept map, ‘student behaviour changed over time towards teachers/elders’, Merrin recalled she had to interview her parents regarding their schooling to inform an assignment regarding the history of schooling (for a Curriculum and Pedagogy subject). Anne also recalled an assignment on the nature/nurture debate in first year; she claimed that the content of the assignment and respective lectures had ‘just always stuck’ with her (Anne, pre-PEx interview).

One mentor teacher, Beth, offered a different explanation for the effectiveness of ‘assignments’ in facilitating the development of the preservice teachers’ knowledge of behaviour:

Um, I think from my experience, they get so consumed by the assignment, um, that they draw all the information in for the assignment and then that becomes the information on that topic – their work. … like, their then assignment becomes the definitive work about what they know about that and that’s what they draw on. …
and because they’re students and they’re studying then their whole headspace and their whole [pause] tunnel vision of, ‘quick I need to get this assignment done’ it, that becomes the answer then, ‘oh, here’s my assignment on special needs, I’ll take that with me [teaching]’.

(Beth, interview, original emphasis)

In this quote Beth construes the assignment is integral to preservice teachers’ knowledge construction because they deem it the ultimate, definitive ‘answer’ to an academically posed question. Further she seems to be suggesting that arriving at such a final ‘answer’ negatively impacts preservice teacher knowledge insofar as it effectively limits possibilities for further research, debate and learning during practice.

5.3. Chapter summary

In describing the types of resources the preservice teachers use to construct their knowledge and the value they ascribe to these, this chapter has gone part-way to considering the main research questions: How do preservice teachers re-construct their knowledge of children’s challenging behaviour in their final ‘professional experience’ (PEx)? And what resources do they draw on to do this?

In this chapter I have made a series of interlinking arguments. Firstly, when discriminating as to what resources informed their knowledge of challenging behaviour a large portion of the preservice teachers’ decisions rested on whether the knowledge was perceived as practical or theoretical. Secondly, some practical knowledge sources were highly valued in the knowledge re-construction process. These practical, apprenticed knowledge sources included: non-university sources of knowledge (such as life experience, family and media); ‘seeing’ challenging behaviour at school, home, work and PEx; and university coursework that offered practical ‘tips and tricks’. This practical, apprenticed knowledge was felt by the preservice teachers to rival and eclipse knowledge presented via university coursework. Thirdly, the preservice teachers largely cast university coursework content as ‘theory’, ‘background information’ and as
affirming and articulating their practical, existing knowledge, rather than expanding upon or changing it.

But why? Why does university coursework seemingly fail at interrupting the preservice teachers’ existing, apprenticed, practical knowledge of challenging behaviour? This is a question attended to in the following chapters. Chapter 6 will consider how such an overarching propensity to value practical, apprenticed knowledge and de-value ‘theory’ or formal knowledge manifested in very particular epistemic processes that supported the re-construction of the preservice teachers’ pre-PEx knowledge of challenging behaviours.
Plotting pre-PEx epistemic journeys
This chapter concentrates less on knowledge resources and more on how preservice teachers re-construct their knowledge of children’s challenging behaviour in their final ‘professional experience’ (PEx). Before considering questions of knowledge change throughout PEx (attended to in Chapters 7 and 8), this chapter draws on concept map and interview data to portray the participants’ dynamic, pre-PEx knowledge of challenging behaviour (and the knowledge re-construction processes they engage with). In discussing dynamic knowledge, this chapter begins to consider the preservice teachers’ discursive positioning moves. In focus is how the preservice teachers’ statements related to various discourses of challenging behaviour in the archive.

In my earlier discussion of archevised knowledge (in Chapter 2) I described three discourses of challenging behaviour (summarised in Table 6.1); moreover, I contended that the preservice teachers’ dynamic knowledge could be mapped in relation to these discourses. I argued a statement could be mapped to these discourses by identifying the discourse object and teacher subject position featured in the statement. I restate the posited discourses here (Table 6.1) as a reference point for the language I will mobilise, in this and ensuing analysis chapters, to discuss how the preservice teachers ‘moved’ (or journeyed) through the archive of challenging behaviour. I will discursively map their statements to indicate which of the three posited discourses, and respective subject positions, they variously adopted, negotiated and resisted.
Table 6.1 Three posited discourses of challenging behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse objects</th>
<th>Biomedical</th>
<th>Biopsychosocial</th>
<th>Ecosocio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The in-actively challenging child</td>
<td>The pro-actively challenging child</td>
<td>The re-actively challenging child</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is speaking? (by discipline)</td>
<td>Medicine, Psychiatry, Neuropsychology, Education, Government</td>
<td>Clinical psychology, Developmental psychology, Educational psychology, Education, Government</td>
<td>Sociology, Ecological psychology, Critical psychology, Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education literature</td>
<td>Special Education Needs (SEN), Behaviour management</td>
<td>Inclusive Education, Reflective Practice, Sociology of Education, Aboriginal Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible teacher subject positions</td>
<td>Non-expert, Manager</td>
<td>Supporter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is interesting when analysing the preservice teachers’ dynamic interactions with archevised knowledge is the differences that may be identified between their overt and covert discursive positioning practices. Statements that complicated or contradicted the participants’ overt knowledge claims indicated these covert discursive position moves. These sorts of statements become the analytic foci because, I will argue, they point to certain epistemic processes and their effects. In this sense, by focusing only on that which is incongruent to their overt discursive positioning claims, this and the ensuing analysis chapters are not an attempt to holistically represent what the preservice teacher participants know about challenging behaviour before, during and after PEx. Instead, a very small portion of what they know is focused on to develop an argument about how
they came to know it and what understanding this might mean for teacher education. Before describing the participants’ pre-PEx knowledge, I move to contextualise epistemic ‘squishing’ practices by presenting arguments as to its conditions of possibility.

6.1. **Conditions of possibility for epistemic squishing – a collision of two interconnected factors**

Conditions of possibility for the epistemological practice of ‘squishing’ rested, I maintain, in a collision of two interconnected factors. First, the preservice teachers demonstrated a propensity to value their own, practical, apprenticed knowledge over theoretical knowledge (see Chapter 5). The second factor, I maintain, is hinged on the pervasiveness of the biopsychosocial discourse of challenging behaviour in university coursework (established in Chapter 4). In this chapter I will contend that the biopsychosocial discourse, on its own, is insufficient for disrupting, challenging or expanding the preservice teachers’ existing and apprenticeship-acquired knowledge. Instead, it functions as a malleable theoretic middle ground that the preservice teachers can mainipulate (via squishing) in order to sustain their apprenticed knowledge.

Two possible outcomes arose from this collision. On the one hand, the preservice teachers found their existing, apprenticed knowledge matched the biopsychosocial knowledge they were presented with. On the other hand, they used the breadth they (mis)interpreted as inherent in the theoretic middle ground to manipulate, or ‘squish’, their existing, often contradictory and confused knowledge of behaviour under the biopsychosocial discursive umbrella.

**A dangerous theoretic middle ground**

Considering the pervasiveness of biopsychosocial discourse in contemporary educational contexts (see Chapter 4), it is perhaps unsurprising to note that in the pre-
PEx concept maps and interview texts, all participants drew on the biopsychosocial discourse to construct the bulk of their knowledge of challenging behaviour. Their uptake of biopsychosocial discourse is overwhelming, but rarely total. Undetected by the preservice teachers were the occasional statements in their written and spoken accounts of their pre-PEx knowledge of challenging behaviour that were entirely inconsistent with the biopsychosocial limits of the sayable and repeatable.

I contend that the key problem, and the one that seems to allow epistemic squishing practices and resultant undetected contradictory knowledges to occur, is not the biopsychosocial discourse itself. The biopsychosocial discourse has very clear discursive limits set by very clear axioms, and characterised by internally consistent continuums of possible teacher subject positions and pedagogies. The problem is when the biopsychosocial discourse seemingly stands alone (as it does, for example, in university coursework and school policy documents, see Sections 4.2 and 4.3 respectively). I argue that, in these contexts where the biopsychosocial discourse is the dominant knowledge-resource, the preservice teachers misconstrued its discursive limits as ‘limitless’ because they could not easily compare it to its discursive counterparts (the biomedical and ecosocio discourses). ‘Limitless discourse’ is an inaccurate and juxtapositional notion that is unhelpful to knowledge re-construction: the theoretic middle ground (seductive though it may be for preservice teachers with no other theoretical resources at their disposal) can’t accommodate knowledge beyond its own discursive limits. Paradoxically, whilst ‘limitless discourse’ is a notion unhelpful to knowledge re-construction, it renders knowledge re-construction via epistemic squishing practices entirely possible.

18 By ‘undetected’ I do not assume to make comment on the participants’ mental state or capacity for self-reflection. I simply need a word to differentiate two types of knowledge ‘contradictions’ encountered in the data. In some cases participants were able to explicitly discuss contradictions in their knowledge and the results of this. In other cases, the data clearly indicated contradictory knowledge claims insofar as these were pinpointed in the transcripts etc, but the preservice teacher did not explicitly discuss this and/or its implications, rather she would move quite fluidly between the two, or more, understandings. It is this second type of knowledge contradiction I refer to as ‘undetected’ contradictions.
Discerning epistemic ‘squishing’ in the empirical material

The epistemic ‘squishing’ process and the ensuing tensions and undetected contradictions in the preservice teachers’ knowledge may be explained by: (i) establishing that the prevailing discourse of challenging behaviour in university coursework is, indeed, the biopsychosocial discourse (as per Section 4.2); (ii) analysing concept maps and interviews to demonstrate how the participants all overtly aligned their knowledge with the biopsychosocial discourse; and (iii) locating evidence in the empirical data to support the theorisation of epistemic squishing.

Evidence of epistemic squishing may be located in the preservice teachers’ covert discursive positioning moves; that is, when their knowledge of challenging behaviour is discursively at odds with the discourse with which they overtly identify. Such covert or inadvertent positioning moves are discernable in the data as contradictory and confused knowledge. These contradictions and confusions occurred when preservice teachers explained their understandings of behaviour in biopsychosocial terms but then occasionally their statements contradicted this by appearing ‘discursively multiple’ or ‘incoherent’.

Discursively multiple knowledge comprised statements, or knowledge claims, that concurrently align with more than one discourse (e.g. biomedical and ecosocio discourses). Incoherent knowledge manifested in the data as statements that represented paradoxical knowledge claims, or indicated a modified, inaccurate or incomplete uptake of a discourse (most often the discourse they overtly align their knowledge with). In order to analyse the preservice teachers’ covert, or inadvertent, discursive position moves and related epistemic squishing practices, contradictions in the preservice teachers’ knowledge of behaviour and related subject positions become the focus of analysis.
6.2. **Match or squish? Undetected contradictions in the preservice teachers’ ‘biopsychosocial’ knowledge**

My argument is that, throughout their university studies, the preservice teachers have actively manipulated the pervasive (biopsychosocial) theoretic middleground in order to sustain the knowledge of challenging behaviour they value most; their practical and apprenticed knowledge. In working to sustain their existing, apprenticed knowledge the preservice teachers found it either matched university knowledge or did not.

Only one participant’s pre-PEx concept map and interview text demonstrated epistemic consistency on the topic of challenging behaviour. I will contend that this is because her apprenticed knowledge neatly matched the biopsychosocial understandings presented through university studies. Analysis of the remaining pre-PEx empirical material revealed discursive contradictions, I contend, that were the result of epistemic squishing.

If a preservice teacher’s apprenticed knowledge was internally, discursively inconsistent and/or different to the discursive position of the knowledge base encountered (e.g. university studies) an epistemic ‘squishing’ process occurred. ‘Squishing’ is, simply put, the act of overtly positioning one’s knowledge as, overall, aligned with a singular and coherent discourse (or knowledge) of challenging behaviour, whilst covertly, or inadvertently, demonstrating discursively multiple and/or incoherent knowledge. Put differently, ‘squishing’ is inappropriately and erroneously identifying one’s discursively multiple and/or incoherent knowledge under the ‘label’ of a singular and coherent discourse. In this sense, ‘squishing’ may be construed as an inappropriate or misrepresentative knowledge claim.

That a participant’s discursively multiple and/or incoherent knowledge is discernable within the dataset is convincing of what has happened, that is, ‘squishing’. How this squishing has happened was via dynamic and covert discursive positioning moves that I
have theorised as processes of ‘oscillation’ and/or ‘negotiation’. When the ‘squished’ knowledge manifested in the data as ‘discursively multiple’, I proposed that squishing had occurred via the epistemic process of ‘oscillating’ between biopsychosocial, biomedical and ecosocio discourses. When the ‘squished’ knowledge manifested in the data as incoherent, I argued that squishing had occurred via the epistemic process of ‘negotiation’. The ensuing subsections will expand upon each in turn.

That these covert discursive positioning moves of ‘squishing’ (via oscillation and/or negotiations) resulted in undetected contradictions in the preservice teachers’ pre-PEx knowledge is important. It is important because it anticipates some of the confusions, pedagogical distress and quandaries the preservice teachers faced when they encountered challenging behaviour during their final PEx (the focus of Chapter 5).

### 6.2.1. Matching

Each of the three posited discourses in and of themselves offers epistemic rest\(^{19}\) via their internal consistency. This is because each set of discursive limits sets out an internally consistent continuum of possible teacher subject positions and related pedagogical responses (see section 2.5). I contend that an epistemic ‘matching’ process occurred when the knowledge of the preservice teacher was (a) discursively consistent and/or (b) mirrored the discursive positioning of the knowledge base encountered (e.g. university studies). In this case, little or no knowledge change occurred for the preservice teacher and any knowledge change that eventuated was discursively consistent with their existing, apprenticed knowledge.

For the participants whose existing, apprenticed knowledge comprised little that contradicted the almost singular promotion of biopsychosocial knowledge in university coursework, there was an epistemic match from the outset. The only participant for

---

\(^{19}\) ‘Epistemic rest’ is a term I’ve used to describe the opposite of ‘epistemic dissonance’. It is not, in any way, intended to frame the knower as lazy or unmotivated.
whom this seemed the case, pre-PEx, was Ella. Ella framed the knowledge she acquired at university as confirming ‘what I do anyway’ (Ella, pre-PEx interview). Another indicator of epistemic matching between Ella’s apprenticed and university knowledges can be made by noting complete lack of discursive contradiction in the knowledge presented in her pre-PEx concept map and interview.

All of Ella’s pre-PEx statements regarding challenging behaviour could be mapped against the biopsychosocial discourse. This claim can be considered, in part, against an analysis of Ella’s concept map (Appendix D). One half of Ella’s concept map, the branches about ‘theories’ and ‘management’, clearly and consistently align with Behaviourism and particularly, operant conditioning. One of the central axioms of Behaviourism is that behaviour is learnable; thus, it theorises the effective teaching and learning of desired behaviours. That behaviour can and should be learned by the individual is also a main tenet of the biopsychosocial discourse. So then, for the purpose of this analysis, statements related to Behaviourism were assessed as ‘sayable and repeatable’ within the biopsychosocial discourse. Another of Ella’s biopsychosocial understandings is reflected in her concept map. Underscoring the branch of the concept map that attended to the ‘why’, ‘what’ and ‘when’ of problematic behaviour was the statement: ‘manner of acting or controlling yourself’. Here, Ella clearly deploys the theorisation of faculty and self-control that is central to the biopsychosocial discourse.

Ella’s interview texts did not offer any contradictions to the biopsychocial understandings reflected in her concept map. What was most striking about the internal consistency of Ella’s biopsychosocial understandings of behaviour was that she was the only participant whose knowledge clearly adhered to the maxim that one may learn appropriate behaviour, regardless of being diagnosed with a behaviour disorder. Moreover, she consistently demonstrated uptake of the biopsychosocial subject position of ‘teacher as manager’:

E: I think they’re all behaviours that can be managed. So I think, um, a challenging behaviour can be managed and so can um, a behaviour
disorder diagnosis … oh, I think the disorder one managed by the
teacher, as in you know, if someone doesn’t like change, you know,
making sure that you are warning this child before [long pause] …
before it happens. So, you’re just not going, ‘oh, we’re going outside
now’ and then going outside when the child’s not used to going outside
at that time, during that day. You know, so I think a kid, all behaviours
can be managed [pause] in some way and I think by the teacher in
regards to, the disorder.

…

S: So, like, do you then think, um, if behaviour can be managed, if a kid has
a behaviour disorder, do you think they can manage themselves, do you
think they’re capable of doing that?

E: To an extent, yeah, everyone can. …. I think they just need to know how
to, as well. …. Not in all cases though. That’s hard, that question’s hard.
Not, not in every case can a [pause] behaviour be managed, by both,
external and internal influences [pause]. … I don’t know, I don’t like that
question. … It’s a contradictory question, yes and no.

(Ella, pre-PEx interview)

Ella’s consistent deployment of theis premise, that all behaviour can be managed and
learned, in her understanding of disordered and non-disordered behaviour alike is true to
an exclusive uptake of biopsychosocial knowledge of behaviour. This is in stark
contrast to the other participants, who all expressed uncertainty, pre-PEx, as to exactly
‘how much’ a child diagnosed with a behaviour disorder is able to personally control
and/or learn behaviour, and so be managed (examples to be offered in Section 6.2).
Ella’s confusion, evident in the above excerpt, does not seem to lie in whether or not all
behaviour can be managed, or controlled, but instead on whether the locus of that
control is ‘external’ and/or ‘internal’. Interestingly, she believes that the teacher can
manage the child with a behaviour disorder but only ‘to an extent’ can the child learn to
manage his/herself. What is interesting is that although her account of biology’s
relationship to behaviour takes a singular discursive position, questioning of the obvious
assumptions inherent in that discourse, namely the medicine/psychology overlap leads
to some distress and uncertainty, ‘I don’t know, I don’t like that question … It’s a
contradictory question, yes and no’ (Ella, pre-PEx interview).
Here we see a preservice teacher whose existing, apprenticed knowledge matched the biopsychosocial notions of challenging behaviour presented in university coursework. This afforded her the epistemic rest to be gained from lack of contradictory knowledge and a clear set of possible pedagogic subject positions and responses to draw on. I contend that this clarity of pedagogical knowledge is not singularly inherent in the biopsychosocial discourse’s offerings – rather in any epistemic match. For example, if a preservice teacher’s existing, apprenticed knowledge was consistently ecosocio and that was the pervasive discourse encountered at university – epistemic matching and rest would occur. The following sections discuss instances where this didn’t happen, where there was not always an epistemic match between the preservice teachers’ existing, apprenticed and university knowledges.

**6.2.2. Epistemic ‘squishing via oscillations’**

When ‘squished’ knowledge manifested in the data as contradictory and discursively multiple (that is, drawing on more than one discourse simultaneously), I propose that squishing had occurred via the epistemic process of ‘oscillating’. The epistemic practice of squishing by oscillating between discourses, whilst identifying mainly with one, had dual indicators in the pre-PEx empirical material. First, conflicting statements (from one individual) and related contradictory subject positions could be mapped against different discourses of behaviour. Second, the knowledge contradictions and confusions, and the pedagogical distresses and quandaries stemming from this were traceable to the value placed on certain existing, apprenticed knowledge, which was discursively at odds with their pervasive biopsychosocial understandings. In other words, when the preservice teachers’ existing, apprenticed knowledge did not discursively match the biopsychosocial knowledge of behaviour (pervasively presented in their university studies), they ‘squished’ that apprenticed knowledge into biopsychosocial terms, until it seemed to mostly comply. This epistemic practice of ‘squishing via oscillation’, then, may be conceptualised as an effort to maintain a sort of knowledge equilibrium, to match unmatchable knowledges. I contend that the preservice teachers do this to sustain, rather than have interrupted, their existing,
apprenticed ‘practice knowledge’ of teaching children with challenging behaviour. Three examples explicating this are offered below.

Charly’s oscillating understandings of behaviour

Data collected pre-PEx showed that Charly’s knowledge of behaviour was not without contradictions. Charly overtly and overarchingly identified her knowledge as biopsychosocial in her concept map (Appendix D). The first section of the pre-PEx concept map she discussed represented behaviour as occurring ‘from an early age’ and as something that is ‘genetic’ and ‘learned’. Such mentions of behaviour as both nature (biology) and nurture (learned behaviours) demonstrate clear alignment of her knowledge of challenging behaviour with the biopsychosocial discourse. In terms of upholding the theorisation of behavioural choice, control and responsibility central to the biopsychosocial discourse, Charly’s concept map described challenging behaviours as ‘goal directed’ and related to ‘needs’. To further this, her discussion of her university-based knowledge in her interview was supported by references to Glasser’s Choice Theory. Social aspects of behaviour attended to under the auspice of the biopsychosocial discourse also appeared in her concept map via a focus on ‘relationships’, and ‘home’ and ‘school’ contexts.

Despite uptake of this theoretical middle-ground in understanding behaviour, as indicated in her pre-PEx concept map, Charly’s interview texts demonstrated uncertainty as to the relationship and coexistence of biological, psychological and social understandings of behaviour. This uncertainty manifested in repeated assertions throughout her pre-PEx interview that behaviour was ‘mostly social’. This suggests that Charly perceived that the biopsychosocial discourse accommodates a continuum of possible knowledges of behaviour – and she situated her knowledge at the ‘social’ end of this continuum. Whilst this may seem, at face value, a reasonable theorisation of a ‘mostly social’ knowledge of behaviour, the biopsychosocial discourse was not exclusively drawn from to support this understanding. Charly’s narratives were multiply
discursive insofar as they occasionally sat outside the biopsychosocial discourse of behaviour, instead drawing on biomedical and ecosocio discourses. What is interesting is how Charly was covertly, or inadvertently, oscillating between contradictory discourses to explain the single phenomena of ‘challenging behaviour’. Yet, she seemed unable to articulate this, instead the oscillating epistemic process allowed her to ‘squish’ her knowledge (as represented by the pre-PEx concept map) into the pervasive biopsychosocial standpoint that behaviour is biological and learned/social. I will now turn to Charly’s pre-PEx interview narratives to illustrate this point.

To begin, let us consider Charly’s biopsychosocial (but ‘mostly social’) understanding of behaviour reflected in a recount of her observations from a previous PEx that features a child medicated for ADHD:

I mean, there’s so many diagnoses and you know, I question whether or not all of them are legitimate, or whether it’s just another label because it’s easier. I don’t know … on my last prac there was a little boy who, I think that they might have diagnosed him with ADHD … Anyway, and they were doing this medication trial and I mean, like, we could notice a difference, but I think—it’s almost … like the placebo effect. … Like, I question whether the medication that they give kids actually does everything that they say. … in my experience, from what I do know or have seen, um that some kids, if they’ve been told that they have a particular behaviour disorder then I think sometimes that’s sort of like—that’s their explanation. Like, you know ‘I can’t help it, I’ve got ADD’…? … I don’t know! I don’t know enough about it. I don’t think I know enough about the whole behaviour disorder side of things to know how much they can control it.

(Charly, pre-PEx interview, emphasis added)

Arguably, this narrative is sayable and repeatable within the biopsychosocial discourse of behaviour as it pays credence to both biology (the existence of somatic dysfunction that presents as behaviour disorders) and psychology (the notion that children diagnosed with behaviour disorders can exercise faculty and self-control to ameliorate their behaviour). What is striking in this narrative is the uncertainty of the speaker. Here, ‘knowing’ that behaviour is a combination of biology, psychology and social factors
generated confusion. This confusion would, I contend, be avoided by a more singular uptake of the biopsychosocial discourse.

The epistemic tension in this narrative is evident, I suggest, because her existing, apprenticed knowledge (that is her ‘experience’ of what she knows through what she’s ‘seen’) consists of statements peculiar to a discourse that is contradictory and mutually exclusive to her, mostly biopsychosocial understandings. Whilst the first part of the narrative (that is, regarding debates about over-diagnoses and in/effectiveness of medication) are fully accommodated by the biopsychosocial discourse, notions of diagnosed children being unable to learn to control their behaviour are not. The statement ‘I can’t help it, I’ve got ADHD’ is arguably only sayable within the discursive limits of the biomedical discourse as it holds with the central biomedical premise that behaviour occurs due to somatic dys/function; thus, the person (and/or their environment) cannot be held accountable for their behaviour.

For Charly, the powerful, apprenticed knowledge of children drawing on the biomedical discourse to testify ‘I can’t help it’ is at epistemic odds with the singular biopsychosocial knowledge of behaviour presented in her undergraduate coursework, (which holds that they can). But, with no other discursive or theoretic resources seemingly at her disposal Charly ‘squished’ her discursively multiple take on challenging behaviour under the biopsychosocial conceptual umbrella. This ‘squishing’ is evidenced by the effect of generating uncertainty as to the scope for psychological considerations of faculty and self-control, in terms of ‘how much’ the diagnosed child can control their behaviour’. This question of ‘how much’ is one that the biopsychosocial discourse, alone, cannot generate or answer as its premise sits outside the maxim that all behaviour can be learned and managed regardless of biological dys/function. Such confusions made for some interesting pedagogical quandaries for Charly on her PEx.
Whilst the previous example demonstrated the capacity of the biopsychosocial discourse to serve as a covert springboard for oscillating to biomedical understandings, there are also examples of Charly oscillating to the ecosocio discourse. For example, covert discursive positionings that aligned with the ecosocio discourse may be mapped in the following narrative. In her pre-PEx interview Charly drew on existing, apprenticed ecosocio knowledge of her brother’s schooling experience to support her disagreement with her last PEx school’s behaviourist (and so by association biopsychosocial) discipline policy of ‘three strikes and you’re out’:

My brother was one of these kids that, like, every teacher hates [laughs] ... he used to go [through the disciplinary] process multiple times daily. And then he’d get to the point where he was getting suspended all the time, whatever … And it’s sad but there’s, like, he’s just, there wasn’t anything about school that made him want to be there and suspending him was probably the best—like, that’s what he wanted. … So, there’s some kids they don’t want to be in classrooms so, yes. Like I think the same thing, you know, you’ve gotta do it when you—when you’ve got a kid that just keeps going and going and going. Like, I don’t have an answer on what else you could do, but at the same time, if it’s a kid that doesn’t want to be in the classroom and they’re continually getting sent out then you’re sort of doing what they want to do. … I don’t have an answer for it. … But I can see that it’s not balanced.

(Charly, pre-PEx interview)

Charly’s knowledge, as represented by this narrative, could potentially be classified as biopsychosocial (she quite obviously understands the behaviourist concept of negative reinforcement), but she does not use the words ‘negative reinforcement’ to explain this understanding. Instead, Charly draws on a different discourse to explain this knowledge, the ecosocio discourse. In identifying ‘there wasn’t anything about school that made him want to be there’, Charly deploys interpretations of her brother’s repeated suspensions from school that are repeatable and sayable within the ecosocio discourse of behaviour. This narrative may be classified as ecosocio because Charly describes schooling structures that didn’t ‘fit’ her brother, she does not cast her brother as ‘deficit’ by way of biological anomaly and/or and in need of learning how to behave (tenets which would feature in biomedical or biopsychosocial discourses). It is important to note here that Charly critiques exclusionary classroom disciplinary practices (steeped in
behaviourist rationales), further distancing herself from biopsychosocial explanations of behaviour.

Charly’s discursively multiple knowledge, that is her concurrent overt biopsychosocial and covert ecosocio discursive positions allowed her the standpoint of seeing exclusionary discipline practices as ‘not balanced’ but also placed her in a pedagogical quandary to which she acknowledged she doesn’t ‘have an answer’. For Charly, the indecision appears to lie in whether, or not, the effort of engaging a student in the classroom whose unwanted behaviour keeps ‘going and going and going’ outweighs her concern that excluding the child is actually giving him or her the avoidance strategy they may seek. This potential for the biopsychosocial discourse to accommodate knowledge that was ‘squished via oscillations’, and subsequently generate pedagogical quandaries and be unsupportive of decision making during PEx is key to the arguments set forth in Chapter 5.

So then, we see Charly’s biopsychosocial, but ‘mostly social’ pre-PEx understanding of behaviour as reflections and refractions of, and oscillations between three different discourses of behaviour. The contradictions inherent in oscillating between biopsychosocial, biomedical and ecosocio discourses of behaviour seemed largely undetected by Charly. In the very least these complex and contradictory knowledge claims evident in her narratives were not actively or consciously represented in her pre-PEx concept map. Instead, the concept map overall defined behaviour as occurring ‘from an early age’ and as something that is ‘genetic’ and ‘learned’ – the combination of which is a singularly biopsychosocial notion. This offers an illustration of one possible effect of epistemic ‘squishing via oscillations’ on preservice teacher knowledge; that is, undetected contradictions and confusions in their knowledge of challenging behaviour.
Monique’s oscillating understandings of behaviour

A very different overview of Monique’s knowledge of challenging behaviour could be generated depending on whether one considers her pre-PEx concept map or interview. Considered alone, her concept map (Appendix D) indicates a discursive position that is pervasively biopsychosocial because it consistently presents knowledge concerned with the ‘individual[’s]’ (Monique, pre-PEx concept map) psychology, choices, self-control, relationships and social contexts. For example, on the matter of individual choice and self-control, four, separate branches in the design of Monique’s pre-PEx concept map dealt with axioms of Glasser’s Choice Theory (interestingly she did not make conceptual links between these; the only conceptual anchor being the central concept, ‘behaviour’). One branch was an explicit mention, ‘William Glasser – [behave] to satisfy 5 [sic] basic needs’, the remaining branches were implicit, disconnected mentions declaring that behaviour is ‘usually chosen’, ‘encompasses everything we do’ and ‘[we] can only control our own behaviour or inform that of others’ (Monique’s pre-PEx concept map). Other educational psychologists were also featured (such as Vygotsky), as were related foci on learning behaviour via ‘social interactions’.

Like Charly, Monique conceptualised the biopsychosocial discourse as occurring along some sort of continuum, positioning herself towards more social explanations of behaviour. Two important factors indicate this. Firstly, although an important element of the biopsychosocial discourse, biology was not featured in Monique’s concept map. Secondly, Monique began her interview with the following explanation of her concept map, ‘I’m very much a social [pause] behaviour kind of person’ (Monique, pre-PEx interview).

Considering both the concept map and interview text together revealed important contradictions and discursively multiple knowledge. At the end of her interview, I questioned Monique regarding the wording in her concept map that behaviour is ‘usually chosen’ and asked her to expand on this implied idea of involuntary or unchosen behaviour. Her response was surprising. Monique outlined biomedical caveats
to her, otherwise, biopsychosocial knowledge of behaviour. She explained that people with certain biological traits – be they chromosomal (as in the difference between male and female) or symptomatic of somatic dysfunction (as in behavioural disorders) - ‘can’t help the way they behave’ (Monique, pre-PEx interview). Closer analysis of Monique’s pre-PEx interview text showed scope for such covert discursively oscillating manoeuvres to effectively ‘squish’ biomedical conceptions into her biopsychosocial knowledge of challenging behaviour.

People with Learning Difficulties, they can’t help the way they behave. Or like, say people with ADHD um, like if they’ve got the hyperactive and they can’t [pause] sit still. They say that’s biological [pause] hyperactivity I guess …So you need to accept that that’s something, like a part of them that, it’s not something that you’re going to be able to inform on that sort of thing. That you need to, not necessarily work around, but, take into consideration, um ‘okay, well, he has to be there fidgeting’ okay well, that’s something I’ve seen in a classroom um, she would give him something to play with his hands, he had a ‘squiggly ball’ and he would play with that like, ‘okay, as long as you’re playing with that’, um ‘as long as you’re still listening that’s fine’, that’s still an acceptable behaviour in the classroom context.

(Monique, pre-PEx interview, emphasis added)

To acknowledge biological impacts on behaviour would have been within the auspice of biopsychosocial discourse. Instead, drawing on her apprenticed knowledge of what she ‘saw’ on her last PEx, that a child ‘has to be there fidgeting’ (emphasis added), Monique asserts that the impact of biology displaces or supersedes the individual’s faculty, self-control and ability to learn (or be taught) desired behaviour, ‘they can’t help the way they behave … it’s not something that you’re going to be able to inform’ (Monique, pre-PEx interview). This assertion aligns solely with the biomedical discourse of behaviour.

To concurrently position her knowledge as drawing on both biopsychosocial and biomedical discourses without being able to explicitly represent this in her concept map strongly suggests undetected discursively multiple knowledge and uptake of contradictory subject positions. On the one hand (via her deployment of axioms of
Glasser’s theories of behaviour in her concept map) she positioned herself as the teacher responsible for informing and managing the behavioural choices of her students, on the other hand her existing, apprenticed knowledge framed certain biologically-based behaviours (such as hyperactivity) as set and beyond educative intervention, rendering herself the non-expert. Interestingly, unlike Charly’s constant, uncertain refrains of ‘I don’t know’, Monique did not seem to detect these paradoxical understandings within her interview as problematic or confusing. Perhaps this is because the particular biomedical apprenticed knowledge she was drawing on relieved the need to ‘teach’ appropriate behaviour to the child with ADHD. Instead, what she saw exemplified a case of shifting teacher expectations to render aberrant behaviour tolerable under certain circumstances. For example, it is okay to fidget if you’re fidgeting with a teacher-approved-fidgeting-toy, such as the squiggly ball. Despite these contradictory subjectivities seeming to cause her little angst in pre-PEx interview narratives, several pedagogical quandaries faced during her PEx highlighted her epistemic practice of ‘squishing via oscillation’ as resulting in real confusion about practice.

Anne’s oscillating understandings of behaviour

Like Charly, Anne’s concept map and interview overall conceived behaviour as the product of ‘nature and nurture’ (Anne, concept map). This idea that behaviour is both inherently individually biological and learned is within the limits of the biopsychosocial discourse. Another indicator of this theorisation is her placement of behaviour disorders in her concept map design. Anne’s map (Appendix D), uniquely to all pre-PEx concept maps, imbued biological ‘disorders’ with pedagogical considerations from the outset, framing the disordered individual as a student within a classroom environment. Anne wrote, ‘Disorders – behaviour difficulties – are a part of the student not the whole’ and the connecting arrow relates directly to the next heading ‘my classroom’, a section of the concept map that deals with broad pedagogical guidelines for addressing classroom behaviour. This conceptual relationship between disorder, student and classroom is played out under another major heading, ‘prevention’.
Under the heading ‘prevention’, Anne displays her knowledge of certain behaviour disorders (Aspergers, ADHD and ODD) and for each lists major ‘features’ or symptoms and how it is diagnosed. For ADHD and ODD Anne also lists specific pedagogical implications or ‘tasks for the teacher’ in addressing children who have such a diagnosis. These references to diagnosis-contingent pedagogy arguably draw on the biopsychosocial discourse that is prevalent in teacher education, especially in the special education field (see Section 4.2). Another indication of uptake of biopsychosocial assertions that behaviour is learnable is the way that the concept map is infused with behaviourist nomenclature such as ‘conditioning’, ‘consequences’, ‘reinforcement’ and ‘punishment’. Furthermore, Anne’s concept map reflected the biopsychosocial discourse’s unique theorisation of faculty as a primary determinant of behaviour via her repeated references to William Glasser’s (1997) Choice Theory:

Glasser’s [sic] Choice Theory: I want choice in my classroom … Each of us has a choice, many choices, as teachers we offer choices, doors for students it’s their path to choose which one to take. Not us.

(Anne, pre-PEx concept map)

Clearly, she positions the locus of control within the individual child – again, this is consistent within the biopsychosocial discourse.

Whilst responsibilising children for controlling and choosing their behaviour was a perpetual biopsychosocial motif in Anne’s concept map and interview, issues of certain children’s choice and self-control were occasionally cast in contradictory terms. Anne’s statements regarding children’s biology, for example, demonstrated distinct oscillations between various discourses. At one point she discusses the individual child’s inability to control themselves due to biological factors (a biomedical tenet); at another, the notion of choice is somewhat subordinated by assertions of the crucial effects of context (an axiom of the ecosocio discourse). Examples of Anne’s discursively multiple construals of challenging behaviour from biopsychosocial, ecosocio and biomedical standpoints
(and related apprenticed knowledges) will be described in turn. From this a case will be made that significant, contradictory, paradoxical and confused understandings ensued.

In her pre-PEx interview Anne explicitly acknowledged that her understandings of behaviour are ‘kind of whoo-hoo in my head … I’m constantly conflicted’. This confusion, I suggest, has stemmed from various discursive positionings of her apprenticed knowledge of behaviour being unsuccessfully ‘squished via oscillations’ into her formal, university-based biopsychosocial understandings. Much of this contradictory knowledge revolves around behaviour disorders and issues of choice and self-control. To demonstrate this I will compare and contrast two of Anne’s recollections of such apprenticed knowledge:

Just from personal experiences, a lot of my friends - well, one of my friends has a child who is ADHD and um, of course the school he went to, because he was diagnosed took him, quite [inaudible], I guess and when I babysit him or have him in my care, he’s the perfect angel. Like I wouldn’t ever guess he had anything wrong with him. But then when he’s in the classroom situation, he’s been suspended, I think, three times and then the, my friend just took him out of the school and now home schools him and does Distant Ed with him. So, yeah I get conflicting ideas of students with AD, ADHD in a classroom situation and … how teachers support them and perceive them, I guess, so.

(Anne, pre-PEx interview)

In this excerpt, the foundational concerns of what Anne knows of her friend’s child diagnosed with ADHD are ‘context’ and ‘teachers as supporters’; both central axioms of ecosocio understandings of behaviour. Here, despite acknowledgement of a formal diagnosis, it is the structures of schooling and teachers’ response to these, not the biology or choices of the child, that are identified as the underlying cause of his school and behavioural difficulties. The next recollection of Anne’s apprenticed knowledge almost completely contradicts this.

For all kids, I think there’s a certain amount of biological that make them willing to learn or against learning. Um, just in their own mind and their development I guess. Um, and there’s a certain of core students who have um, biological disorders, difficulties which are out of their control and then students that don’t
but they also have limitations in their own development, in their own mind development. I guess.

...

My last year prac ... I had a boy who had severe emotional ... problems and in turn hated authority and hated the school. ... So, I decided I'm not going to change him, I’m not going to try and fight him and make him want to love school but at least give him things so he’s productive ... So for your own peace of mind and his [small laugh] I just used to set him off on things like go do errands ... But my teacher was, ‘I want you to get him on task’ and I said, ‘Well why?’ Like, he’s not going to enjoy school. He’s in Year 5. He already hates authority. He’s already been in Foster Care, he’s already been in trouble. The best thing is to be a positive influence with him and let him know someone cares for him. So, yeah. I don’t know. And he was the one the Principal told me, ‘Good luck with that one. He’s challenging’. And by the end of it, he was fantastic, so.

(Anne, pre-PEx interview)

By stark contrast to the earlier ecosocio account, her last PEx seemed to generate apprenticed biomedical knowledge via her ‘successful’ management of a challenging student. For example, her self-declared knowledge that even children without formal diagnoses ‘have a certain amount of biological that makes them willing or against learning’, worked to alleviate issues of student choice and self-control. Furthermore, this knowledge positioned Anne as a ‘non-expert’ in teaching children with a biological propensity to ‘hate school’ and ‘well why’ even try and teach them to behave differently or expect them to learn? Instead, the best pedagogical resource available to her via this purely biomedical understanding was compassion and an effort to increase the child’s self-esteem via social role valorisation (running errands etc) and ‘letting him know someone cares for him’. That this approach ended in success, ‘by the end he was fantastic’, legitimated the knowledge gained from this apprenticeship, regardless of the mentor teacher’s disapproval.

What is interesting is that these extremely pertinent ecosocio and biomedical (and so discursively multiple) apprenticed knowledges are not overtly acknowledged in her concept map. When asked to graphically represent her knowledge of challenging
behaviour, Anne took an overtly biopsychosocial stance. In doing so, I claim that she ‘squished’ her contradictory knowledges into representations of the theoretic middle ground, the discourse that can (mistakenly) appear to accommodate all manner of knowledge.

One example of Anne’s epistemic process of ‘squishing via oscillation’ was occasional, covert oscillations between biopsychosocial and biomedical discourses of behaviour in her concept map. For example, whilst indicating biopsychosocial understandings of diagnosis contingent pedagogy by outlining specific pedagogical implications or ‘tasks for the teacher’ in teaching children diagnosed with ADHD and ODD, Anne also describes children with ADHD as ‘Impulsive – unable to understand or appreciate consequences before they act’. This idea of ‘inability’ (as opposed to teachable and ‘able to learn’) is rooted in biomedical conceptions that the child with ADHD has no responsibility for, or control over, inattentive, impulsive and/or hyperkinetic behaviours symptomatic of biological dysfunction (e.g. Basant 2005; Sykora 2004). Such occasional discursive alignment with the biomedical discourse of behaviour was contradictory to the otherwise pervasive biopsychosocial understandings of behaviour disorders expressed by Anne in her pre-PEx concept map and interview.

Indeed, confusion between the biopsychosocial and biomedical discourses seemed evident in Anne’s continual assertions throughout the interview that choices should be given to children, even if/when they cannot control their own behaviour:

Even though the children can’t control the behaviour, at least they have choices of what to do with the behaviour and what the consequences are.

(Anne, pre-PEx interview)

This quote neatly encapsulates the contradictions and paradoxes arising from adoption of both biomedical and biopsychosocial discourses and their respective assertions of individuals as ‘unable to control’ and ‘able to control’ their behaviour. Perhaps
surprisingly, this quote is from Anne’s discussion of her PEx school’s whole-school discipline policy based on Glasser’s Choice Theory. In terms of Anne’s knowledge of ‘choice’, then, it is interesting that this interview excerpt sees Glasser’s argument for choice (that is, ‘the only behaviour you can control is your own’) being displaced and remarried to biomedical conceptions of the child who cannot control his/herself due to biological dysfunction. The paradox of the individual being responsible for choosing what to do with their uncontrollable behaviour seemed undetected by Anne, insofar as it was expressed several times throughout the interview. This result of paradoxical knowledge was a problematic, perhaps, of overtly taking-up one discourse and covertly positioning oneself against two other discourses of behaviour.

6.2.3. Epistemic ‘squishing via negotiations’

‘Squishing via negotiation’ is the remaining epistemic practice I have identified. This epistemic practice is subtle and my theorisation of it is in many ways open to debate. It is debateable because there are few reasons for negotiating practices discernible in the data and this leaves the act of epistemic squishing by negotiation open to interpretation. To begin explicating my theorisation of epistemic negotiation, I will attempt to differentiate it from epistemic oscillating and matching practices, respectively.

Unlike the epistemic practice of oscillating, where statements from individuals may be mapped against different discourses, the statements of the individual who negotiates a discourse may be mapped consistently within a single discourse. Because statements are discursively consistent there is no need (or scope) to find discursive dissonance between apprenticed and university knowledges. However, like other epistemic ‘squishing’ practices (such as oscillation) negotiations can be viewed as an activity for sustaining existing, apprenticed knowledge. Finally, despite discursive consistency, there is also no case for epistemic matching because negotiation of the singular discourse affects the preservice teachers insofar as it can result in incomplete, inaccurate, paradoxical and/or modified knowledge. These types of knowledge products are expressed in this thesis as
‘incoherent’, insofar as they are personally constructed, unique and non-representative of the knowledge offered by any of the three posited discourses of challenging behaviour. Incoherent knowledge has potential to generate confusion for the knower, be it explicitly acknowledged or ‘undetected’. Whether such incoherent knowledge is a result of misunderstanding of university coursework, or simply a means of negotiating biopsychosocial understanding to suit personal opinions remain uncertain. Incomplete, inaccurate and/or modified (and so incoherent) uptake of a singular discourse to inform knowledge of challenging behaviour was, however, evident in the data – take, for example, Merrin’s negotiation of biopsychosocial knowledge.

**Merrin - Behaviourism and token economies**

Merrin’s concept map (Appendix D) overtly, pervasively and concurrently attends to the conceptual trio of the biopsychosocial discourse: biology (via consideration of behaviour disorders); psychology (listing several educational psychologists’ theories of behaviour); and social contexts (considering technology, time, religion, law etc). Another important ‘tell’ regarding her, overall, biopsychosocial discursive positioning is her recurring focus on ‘classroom’ and ‘management’, clearly taking on considerations peculiar to the ‘teacher as manager’ subject position (see Table 6.1 and Section 2.5). However, because her negotiation of ‘token economies’ is under consideration in this sub-section it is important to focus here on how Behaviourism featured in her concept map.

Merrin was one of the few preservice teachers to explicitly acknowledge ‘Skinner’ in her concept map (Ella was the only other). Her concept map also deploys behaviourist terminology such as ‘conditioning’ and ‘punishment’ notions of positive reinforcement are implicitly suggested, in the context of behaviour management techniques via mentions of ‘rewards and incentives’. Analysis of Merrin’s pre-PEx interview texts demonstrated consistency with her concept maps insofar as both were infused with references to Behaviourism. This, prima facie, indicates an unswerving uptake of
Behaviourism and in turn the biopsychosocial discourse of challenging behaviour. However, Merrin’s interview text is worth exploring here as it indicated some negotiation of certain axioms of Behaviourism.

Merrin (at least in part) recounted her apprenticed knowledge of ‘discipline’ in terms of her niece and nephew:

I was looking at my niece and nephew, who are two different kids and um, this is just from my sister-in-law she said one, like the—my nephew is quite hard to handle, so he needs, like he needs the teacher to be a lot harder on him, he doesn’t get offended by it, he just needs more, more discipline. Where, I think, with my niece, she’s sort of a soft little girl and I think if you were as hard on her as him, she’d end up in tears. So, it’s just working out what the child can handle from you and work out what like, how they respond to the way that [you’re managing them]

(Merrin, pre-PEx interview)

This recount may be discursively mapped as largely biopsychosocial insofar as it responsibilises the child for learning to behave and draws on discourses of ‘discipline’ to support this. In this case, Merrin’s apprenticed knowledge, then, is not overall discursively at odds with her university knowledge. From this story one might anticipate a ‘hard line’ of low tolerance behaviour management of challenging behaviour for children in Merrin’s classroom. But this is not the central message she appears to transfer to her pedagogical knowledge. What Merrin seems to have valued from this apprenticed knowledge is the imperative to ‘work out what the child can handle from you and how they respond to the way that [you’re managing them]’

(Merrin, pre-PEx interview). This becomes evident insofar as, in this example, Merrin resists elements of the principle of operant conditioning, which upholds the importance of a singular set of target behaviours (e.g. compliance with classroom rules) and consistent reinforcement of these target behaviours (often via token economies), for all students. Whilst her recount of a university group assignment indicated reasonably accurate understandings of the purpose and function of token economies (see section 5.2.3), Merrin’s interview text is worth exploring here as it indicates some *negotiation* of this behaviourist axiom.
In her discussion of token economies in the classroom, Merrin negotiated a modified behaviourist approach by discussing her plans for using token economies to effectively schedule goodness in her classroom. By this, I mean, she articulated an intention to use token economy technology but to manipulate its enactment to cast all children as ‘good’, thus ensuring fairness (i.e. opportunities to cash-in tokens):

I would definitely do the same rules for the whole class but say if you’ve got a kid that is, um, just for example you have—or, in the class I’m going in they’ve got, I think, a blue—they get a blue mark if they’re good and a red mark if they’re bad. And say—there is one kid in the class that mucks up a lot, so you’d think he’d have more red marks because he’s so naughty. But, I probably would—something I’d give one of the other kids, who’s always good a—[pause] um, I probably would, sort of, monitor it, like, alter it a bit. So, that, um, so you don’t want the bad kid, like having marks, like twenty bad marks and one good mark and everyone else in the class [trails off] … Like, say if the bad kid did something just a little bit better than usual, you’d be like [in an excited/happy voice] “Oh, yes! Well done, here’s a point, here’s a point”. So you probably would, I guess, I guess that’s being unfair but then it’s maybe giving him more of a an emotional “Oh, I actually did right—I did alright because I [trails off] … I sat in my chair”.

(Merrin, pre-PEx interview)

The very notion of a token economy is steeped in Behaviourism. Merrin’s expressed intention to use this behaviour management apparatus is in keeping with the biopsychosocial principle of individuals learning desirable behaviour, via processes of reinforcement. However, Merrin’s particular deployment of the token economy in this excerpt negotiates behaviourist principles of reinforcement. A behaviourist would postulate that tokens should be awarded only to those who display the target behaviours. By this reasoning the ‘naughty’ or ‘bad’ child Merrin speaks of would only get a token (in this instance, a blue mark) for sitting in his/her seat if everyone else sitting in his or her seats were eligible for the same reward. In this sense, her reasoning in the interview excerpt may be assessed as demonstrating ‘incorrect’ knowledge of token economies. Alternatively, rather than saying this is incorrect knowledge, one could analyse this in terms of Merrin’s discursive positioning moves. Merrin positions herself within the biopsychosocial discourse (via Behaviourism) by advocating the utility of token economies and declaring them pedagogy she would use. However, she also negotiates a
personally preferred outcome for, and levelled an amount of critique at, the notion of
token economies by evaluating them as ‘unfair’ to ‘naughty’ children. Another
interpretation of her negotiations might be that they work to modify university
knowledge of token economies so as to satisfy and sustain her apprenticed knowledge;
that is, the imperative to understand how each child might ‘handle’ and ‘emotional[ly]’
respond to their teacher’s management strategies.

Here we can see how Merrin’s epistemic manoeuvre of negotiating within the
biopsychosocial discourse resulted in a kind of incoherent understanding of behaviourist
pedagogies. Before leaving discussions of ‘squishing via epistemic negotiations’ it is
interesting to note that this type of epistemic squishing practice did not, necessarily,
generate pedagogical quandaries for the preservice teachers on their PEx. I suggest, this
is primarily because epistemic ‘squishing by negotiation’ occurred within a singular
discourse, which has an internally consistent continuum of possible subject positions
and related pedagogical responses. This renders the impact of epistemic practices of
negotiation very different from that resultant from oscillating between different
discourses (which may generate possibilities for pedagogical quandaries, see Section
8.7).

6.3. Chapter summary
This chapter has considered how the preservice teachers dynamically interacted with,
and positioned themselves in relation to, the three discourses posited in the archive,
prior to their final PEx. The discourse that all the preservice teachers overtly aligned
their pre-PEx knowledge with was the biopsychosocial discourse. Whilst Chapter 4
described the pervasiveness of the biopsychosocial discourse in university coursework,
in this chapter I argued that such exclusive presentation of biopsychosocial
understandings of behaviour is not rigorous enough to interrupt or expand the preservice
teachers’ existing knowledge).
The problem isn’t the biopsychosocial discourse itself. The problem is that the university coursework presents the biopsychosocial discourse alone, without distinction from its biomedical and ecosocio discursive counterparts (and relevant consideration for what this might mean for teacher subjectivities and pedagogical possibilities). With nothing to compare it to, the preservice teachers seemed to, erroneously, interpret that the biopsychosocial discourse (with its attentiveness to biological, psychological and social factors) as limitless. This misinterpretation functioned as a touchstone for engagement in specific epistemic processes that worked to sustain the preservice teachers existing, apprenticed and often contradictory knowledge of challenging behaviour.

Only one of the participants, Ella, clearly and consistently accepted and deployed biopsychosocial understandings of challenging behaviour. While the remaining four participants claimed biopsychosocial knowledge, analysis of their concept maps and interview texts revealed discursively multiple and incoherent knowledge that seemed otherwise undetected by these four preservice teachers. In this chapter I argued that Ella’s consistent uptake of the biopsychosocial discourse occurred because it neatly matched her existing and apprenticed knowledge of challenging behaviour. In this case, epistemic ‘matching’ practices generated ‘epistemic rest’ and offered little challenge or extension to Ella’s existing apprenticed knowledge. By contrast, the contradictions and confusions (be they explicitly acknowledged or ‘undetected’) in the other four participants’ knowledge were the result of an epistemic ‘squishing’ process.

This epistemic squishing process was evidenced by participants’ covert, or inadvertent, discursive positioning moves (discernable when their statements were not sayable and repeatable within the limits of the biopsychosocial discourse, the discourse all participants overtly drew on to understand challenging behaviour). Such covert positioning moves indicated either ‘squishing via negotiation’ within the biopsychosocial discourse, or ‘squishing via oscillation’ between biopsychosocial, biomedical and ecosocio discourses. Epistemic ‘squishing’ practices were shown to
potentially result in paradoxical, modified, incomplete or inaccurate (and so incoherent) knowledge.

The following two chapters (Chapter 7 and Chapter 8) will expand these arguments to suggest that not only is the biopsychosocial discourse alone unable to interrupt preservice teachers’ existing knowledge, but because of this it also has the potential to be unsupportive of pedagogical decision making during PEx.
The process of describing knowledge change
7. The process of describing knowledge change

This chapter focuses on how the preservice teachers’ final PEx impacted (or not) their knowledge of challenging behaviour. It will show how the preservice teachers’ propensity to take-up, negotiate within, or oscillate between discourse/s (see Chapter 4) propelled them through particular epistemological journeys during their PEx.

Whilst all the participants, from time to time, engaged in several types of discursive positioning (i.e. ‘matching’ or ‘squishing’ via negotiation and/or oscillation) over the course of their final PEx, three broad types of epistemological journeys emerged. I named these three epistemological journeys according to their defining discursive positioning move: Maintaining the line of best fit, Negotiating a complex middle ground and Traversing different discourses. Tracing the epistemic journeys of the preservice teachers through PEx demonstrated that my theorisation of their pre-PEx epistemic manoeuvres was relatively preliminary. The opportunity to observe their knowledge change processes ‘real-time’ during PEx generated a plethora of nuanced (and complicated) findings. Analysis of the preservice teachers’ PEx journeys illustrated that the journey they took during PEx was not necessarily predicted by, or the same as, the journey they took developing their pre-PEx knowledge. Further, it quickly became apparent that all of the proposed epistemic journeys resulted in various knowledge re-construction outcomes.

Post-PEx, it was not so much a case of ‘journey a results in b types of knowledge change and outcome c’ (as it first seemed when analysing the pre-PEx data, see Chapter 6). Instead, I argue that each journey was characterised by an identifiable epistemic knowledge re-construction process. This modified contention accommodates the complexity of the PEx and post-PEx research findings. Before launching this argument, attention is given to the methodological considerations for recognising participants’ knowledge change during and after PEx.
7.1.1. Concept map comparisons

As with the pre-PEx data collection phase, post-PEx the participants constructed a concept map of what they knew about challenging behaviour (see Appendix F), and they brought this to their post-PEx interview for discussion. When constructing their post-PEx concept maps, participants were asked not to refer to their pre-PEx concept maps, but to ‘start from scratch’. Their pre-PEx concept maps were brought by me to the post-PEx interview and discussed at the end of the interview as an opportunity to compare/contrast and clarify differences. A full account of my use of concept maps is afforded in Section 5.1, here I am only concerned in explaining how the concept maps were used to detect knowledge change and how such detections of knowledge change served as springboards for analysis of the PEx and Post-PEx data.

A Foucauldian approach facilitated the analysis of each preservice teacher’s pre- and post-concept map, in terms of theorising differences between the two and the related perceived changes to knowledge from PEx. These changes were considered in terms of the ‘displacement’ and ‘transformation’ of concepts. Foucault (1972, p. 5) explains how ‘displacements and transformation of concepts’ differs from traditional historical accounts of linear change over time:

The history of a concept is not wholly and entirely that of its progressive refinement, its continuously increasing rationality, its abstraction gradient but that of its various fields of constitution and validity, that of its successive rules of use, that of the many theoretical contexts in which it developed and matured.

(Foucault 1972, p. 5, original emphasis)

Considering the above quote, analysis of knowledge change is taken up in this study with two effects that can resist the urge to treat knowledge as a series of building blocks of a progressive trajectory. Firstly, resisting the notion that concepts are innately subject to ‘progressive refinement’ rescinded any necessity to make a value judgement as to whether what was ‘learned’ or ‘forgotten’ about behaviour on PEx made for ‘effective’ learning, or knowledge betterment (indeed, it was never the intention of this study to
measure knowledge acquisition against a pre-determined ‘correct’ knowledge base). This has the effect of shifting the focus of participants’ knowledge changes beyond ‘what’ to ‘how’ questions. The question was not: Did the preservice teachers learn what they ought to have about behaviour, on their PEx? Rather, and in keeping with the ‘how’ focus of the research question, the questions were: How were identifiable displacements and transformations in knowledge of behaviour indicated in the concept maps and how were the subsequent ‘successive rules of use’ (as indicated by the limits of the discourse to which the statements belonged) evidenced in the expansion and justification of ideas presented in the preservice teachers’ post-PEx interviews, their teacher talk in the classroom on their PEx and their professional dialogue with each-other in the focus group? To show this process a justification for post-PEx interviews, classroom observations is now offered (although not attended to here, an explanation of the use of the focus group was outlined in Section 5.1). The post-PEx concept maps can be found at Appendix F.

7.1.2. Classroom observations

Classroom observations were used to collect data on how PEx influenced the preservice teachers’ knowledge of challenging behaviour. Much of the justification for including classroom observation in the research design rests in Foucault’s theorisation of the link between knowledge and discourse. Foucault was interested in how certain discourses, rather than others, contribute to and/or are restricted from certain ways of knowing something; further, he was interested in how ‘knowledge [is] put to work through discursive practices’ (Hall 1997, p. 75). Field-note data resulting from researchers’ observations can enrich Foucauldian discourse analysis because ‘what people do is part of the constituting of a discursive field’ (Foucault 1980, cited in Court 2004, p. 592, original emphasis).
Rouse (2003) develops this theme by suggesting that a Foucauldian approach to epistemological studies warrants that knowledge cannot be solely understood through ‘statements’ (comprising texts such as words, sentences and formulae). This is because, taken by itself, a statement, a technique or skill, a practice, or a machine cannot count as knowledge. Only in the ways it is used, and thereby increasingly connected to other elements over time, does it become (and remain) epistemically significant.

(Rouse 2003, p. 113)

This study draws on Rouse’s (2003) argument to make a case for the necessity of classroom observations as means of observing participants ‘using knowledge’. Such observations of the preservice teachers using or working with knowledge offer unique opportunities for triangulation of data on their knowledge; data that is, otherwise, solely comprised of participants’ textual productions (concept maps, transcripts of interview and focus group texts, assignments).

This approach makes possible a means of contemplating the perceived theory/practice divide in the knowledge of each participant. Whereas the interviews, focus groups, concept mapping and document analysis were useful for collecting data on how the preservice teachers drew on a variety of discourses to re-construct their knowledge of classroom behaviour, classroom observations provided a unique opportunity to observe how preservice teacher knowledge related to their pedagogical practices. Furthermore, classroom observations were important to this research design because they provided an opportunity to: observe the natural ‘classroom’ and ‘school’ setting; gather data on the culture and physical space of the classroom and school; and compare and contrast the preservice teachers’ self-reported behaviours (as per their reflective journals, program, daybook, interviews and focus group) with observable events.

The classroom observation process was framed by Setting Theory. Setting Theory, originally part of a broader theory of ‘Ecological Psychology’ (Barker 1968, cited in
Cambourne & Kiggins 2004), was adapted by teacher educators to assist preservice teachers link ‘the professional theoretical knowledge which teachers … acquire through their university study to the contexts and settings to which it applies, namely the world of schools and how they do business’ (Cambourne & Kiggins 2004, p. 3-4) by offering a method and language for conducting classroom observations. Setting Theory’s considerations of the overlap between university and school based knowledge are well suited to the intention of classroom observations within the design of this study. For this project, Setting Theory worked as an interface for studying the relationship between ‘theoretical’, university-based and ‘working’, school-based knowledge of classroom behaviour. Another advantage of using Setting Theory for observing various indicators of teacher knowledge was that the underlying premise of Setting Theory is that the classroom, as a behaviour setting, is one that is designed and created by teacher decisions.

At its simplest level, Setting Theory conceptualises the classroom as:

a behaviour setting, which is both stable and dynamic. Like any other functioning behaviour setting the “Paraphernalia”, “Programs”, and “Human Inhabitants” are in constant movement and interaction.

(Cambourne & Kiggins 2004, p. 5)

In classrooms, Cambourne and Kiggins’ adaption of Setting Theory positions the teacher as the key decision maker who designs and manipulates the paraphernalia and programs (but not the ‘human inhabitants’, as they have little say as to who they must teach) to create the kind of “‘learning culture” that s/he desires’ (Cambourne & Kiggins 2004, p. 5). Within this teacher-created learning culture filled with teacher-decided paraphernalia and programs another layer of analysis is added, which allows the observer to notice teacher decisions about how to teach the content demanded by the syllabi:

Episodes can be considered as basic units of teaching behaviour. A school session (morning, mid–morning, afternoon), indeed a whole school day, can be described
in terms of a linear sequence of episodes which teachers design and then execute in order to achieve certain predetermined outcomes.

(Cambourne & Kiggins 2004, p. 8)

In order to capture the type of data required by Setting Theory, my daily field notes were organised under the following headings: Participants (notes describing the ‘human inhabitants’); Space and Place (notes describing the physical spaces of the research, the staffrooms, classrooms, libraries, computer labs, playgrounds using diagrams and description of the area and related paraphernalia); Teaching Episodes (notes sequencing, labelling and describing in detail each teaching episode, in turn, as it occurred throughout the school day observed); and informal conversations and interviews (which recorded incidental conversations with the mentor teachers, preservice teachers and other school staff throughout the course of the data collection).

The notion of ‘observing teacher knowledge’ was one that the two ethics committees (UOW HREC and SERAP) queried. What sorts of things was I observing, and how could these be linked to teacher knowledge of challenging behaviour? Using Setting Theory in combination with Foucault’s theorisation of knowledge (see Chapter 2) the notion of observing teacher knowledge is defensible. Appendix G offers brief definitions of human inhabitants, paraphernalia and programs, mapping these against pre-identified, possible observable events that could be related to the teachers’ knowledge and discursive positioning. An example of an abridged version of one day’s observation notes is offered at Appendix H.

Field notes were generated both by hand-written notes and by typing directly into my laptop, depending on the classroom and the perceived intrusiveness of the laptop technology. In all cases, the first two days of data collection were hand-written to allow me to ease into the classroom environment without causing too much distraction or disruption to students. I then asked the teacher/s if they would mind me taking notes directly onto my laptop. For example, in classes where the teacher often worked on their
laptop, or where the school was exceptionally IT resource rich and computers were not a novelty, typing my field notes directly into word documents was a timesaving move. In one kindergarten class, however, at the request of the preservice teacher, I took all field-notes using pen and paper because she felt the children would be distracted by the novelty of the laptop being in the classroom. Any handwritten field notes were transcribed into word documents. All word documents recording my field-notes were then uploaded to NVivo for coding and analysis.

In the classrooms, most of the time, I was an inactive observer; I sat in one spot all day taking notes, and echoed this behaviour across all learning settings (I would sit in one spot in the library, or computer lab, or school hall, or oval etc). The only variation to this was the very rare occasion where there were many students needing assistance at once, in which case I might help a child who was waiting with their hand up. There were also several one-off requests for help from teachers. Once I was asked by the mentor and preservice teacher to take a writing group one day, in another classroom I was asked to take a reading group, and once I was asked to prepare art resources for one lesson. However, all of these ‘participant observer’ activities were unplanned, spur of the moment requests and it seemed unreasonable to refuse these infrequent, small requests, especially given the preservice/teachers’ generosity inviting me into their classrooms as an observer.

7.1.3. Analysis of preservice teacher assignment work

Document analysis assisted in understanding what the preservice teachers know and do about classroom behaviour on their PEx. Assignments that the preservice teachers’ prepared for their final, fourth-year university ‘professional development’ subject provided in-depth, qualitative data on the preservice teachers’ preparation for, responses to, and reflection on, classroom behaviour in their PEx\textsuperscript{20}. Additionally to set

\textsuperscript{20}Not all participants submitted copies of each assignment they completed for university subjects “Curriculum and Pedagogy 3” and “Curriculum and Pedagogy 4”. Details of these data gaps are available
assignments, related documents collected included their daybooks and Mentor Teacher feedback sheets and the ‘Report’ from their PEx.

Apart from their utility in contrasting school and university knowledges, the inclusion of participant-authored document analysis was beneficial in addition to interview and focus group texts because, following Laverty (2008, p. 86), it was acknowledged that the ‘interviews were contrived spaces and [participants’ written work] may … provide different perspectives without the imposition of the interview structure’. Analysis of participants’ written university assignments permitted description of participants’ understandings of behaviour, in contexts unrelated to this study. This was beneficial as it was ‘less likely’ that such texts presented participants’ knowledge as glossed or framed in ways that (they imagined) might please the researcher.

7.1.4. Overview of ‘how’ PEx influenced preservice teacher knowledge

In a previous chapter (Chapter 5) part of the consideration of how the preservice teachers built their knowledge of challenging behaviour was attending to perceived knowledge sources and their value. Likewise, although one could construe ‘PEx’ as a singular, valued knowledge source, it is more helpful to consider the elements of PEx that the preservice teachers reported as most valuable to their knowledge re-construction process.

Inductive and thematic coding of the data collected during and post-PEx revealed that several knowledge re-construction processes recurred. Common to all the epistemic journeys described in this chapter (maintaining the line of best fit, negotiating complex middle grounds, and traversing different discourses) were three elements of PEx

---

in the Data Collection Timeline offered at Appendix A. On the rare occasions such ‘data gaps’ occurred it was felt that the assignment work that was submitted was sufficient to represent the types of discourses the participant drew on when preparing formal, written responses to university coursework tasks. Thus, I argue that these data gaps did not greatly impact on the quality of the analysis.
(seeing, listening and ‘doing’) that framed the preservice teachers’ knowledge reconstruction processes. Seeing (like section 5.2.2) referred to learning from direct visual observation of ‘behaviour in different contexts’, ‘teachers teaching’ and ‘children learning’. Another valuable way of learning through seeing was ‘not seeing’. This was where the preservice teachers talked about that which they couldn’t or didn’t see during their teaching practice but that became apparent in the space of reflection and/or in mentor teacher feedback. Listening referred to audible experiences on PEx such as hearing teachers’ microstorying and/or labelling of certain children’s behaviour, receiving mentor-feedback on their teaching, and listening to mentor teachers’ narratives/recounts of teaching children with challenging behaviour. Doing related directly to perceived successes and failures from teaching via (what they termed) ‘instinct’, ‘trial and error’ and either in compliance with, or resistance to, mentor teacher guidance.

7.2. An overview of epistemic journeys

In outlining the development of the preservice teachers’ pre-PEx knowledge, the previous chapter presented the argument that they engaged in epistemic practices of ‘matching’ or ‘squishing’ (via negotiation and/or oscillation) their existing, apprenticed knowledge in relation to their university studies. It was argued that they engaged in these practices so as to sustain a sense of epistemic equilibrium. Matching occurred when there was no conflict between existing and university knowledge. ‘Squishing’ (via negotiation and/or oscillations) occurred to ameliorate discursive dissonance between existing and university knowledge. This theorisation of pre-PEx epistemic ‘squishing’ and ‘matching’ (from Chapter 6) is represented graphically in Figure 7.1.

The pre-PEx (Figure 7.1) and post-PEx (Figure 7.2) findings varied and so demanded nuanced variations in theorising ‘matching’ and ‘squishing’. Two flow charts provided a way of summarising, comparing and contrasting this complexity. The alternative of
representing an overall theory in a model seemed overly simplistic, to the point of being misrepresentative.

The task of outlining how the preservice teachers’ pre-PEx knowledge developed and changed over PEx was a complex task. Unlike ‘university coursework’, each preservice teacher encountered different sets of knowledges and discourses of challenging behaviour in their PEx. Each unique PEx represented particular combinations of PEx school, mentor, students and events. This initial point of difference in the development of pre-PEx and post-PEx knowledge is visually discernable by comparing and contrasting the yellow shapes in Figures 7.1 and 7.2 respectively.
Figure 7.1 Knowledge of challenging behaviour pre-PEx
Figure 7.2 Re-constructing knowledge of challenging behaviour during PEx.
The unique nature of each PEx context (represented by the different yellow shapes in Figure 7.2) does not simply represent a case of the impossibility of ‘comparing apples and oranges’. This is because whilst each PEx was unique there were two main points of overlap that facilitate comparison between them. Firstly, the processes through which the preservice teachers encountered and built knowledge on PEx were shared, that is all preservice teachers variously (and to different effects) engaged in ‘seeing’, ‘listening’ and ‘doing’ teaching of children with challenging behaviour (See Section 7.1.4). Secondly, the map against which knowledge change can be plotted, that is the three discourses (see Section 2.5 and 2.6) of challenging behaviour in the archive, provides a stable point of reference. These two main points of overlap for individual PEx contexts become points of comparison for understanding the preservice teachers’ knowledge change during PEx. Figure 7.2 attempts to represent the general shape of the five preservice teachers’ epistemic journeys through PEx and subsequent types of knowledge change.

Figure 7.2 demonstrates that Ella (purple line) and Merrin (green line) travelled the line of best fit. Interestingly, despite engaging in similar processes of epistemic ‘matching’, points of departure, knowledge re-construction and effects were different in each of the two journeys. Ella’s pre-PEx knowledge of challenging behaviour was singularly and consistently biopsychosocial, thus offering her a space of epistemic rest from the outset. Things ‘seen’, ‘heard’ and ‘done’ on her PEx offered no challenge to this. Ella all but idolised her mentor and encountered only occasional and mild behavioural challenges during PEx. Thus, over the course of PEx Ella experienced little discernible knowledge change and maintained a state of epistemic rest. Merrin’s pre-PEx knowledge of challenging behaviour featured undetected contradictions resultant from epistemic ‘squishing via negotiation’; she displayed incoherent understandings of token economies (so, unlike Ella, Merrin’s starting point for PEx was not epistemic rest). However, like Ella, her PEx presented her with low or no epistemic dissonance. Things ‘seen’, ‘heard’ and ‘done’ on PEx neatly matched Merrin’s overt and consistent biopsychosocial standpoint. For Merrin, this matching process had a dual effect: first,
her knowledge of ‘good/bad’ behaviour and ‘behaviour management strategies’
changed and expanded slightly, within the limits of the biopsychosocial discourse;
second, her incoherent knowledge of token economies persisted throughout and after
PEx. Thus, for Merrin, ‘maintaining the line of best fit’ resulted in mild knowledge
change, with a focus on behaviour management strategies. This ‘new’ knowledge
gained on PEx regarding good/bad behaviour and behaviour management strategies,
being discursively consistent, did not seem to cause Merrin any new confusion – but
because her pre-PEx confusions regarding token economies persisted, uninterrupted, the
ultimate destination for her PEx journey (which was comprised mostly of ‘matching’
practices) was not epistemic rest.

The remaining two types of epistemic journeys through PEx involved epistemic
squashing practices. Squashing practices throughout PEx (see Figure 7.2) held both
similarities and differences to squashing practices identified in the construction of pre-
PEx knowledge (see Figure 7.1). First, pre-PEx (see Figure 7.1) epistemic dissonance
between apprenticed and university knowledge seemed like a pre-requisite for
squashing, whereas squashing practices for knowledge re-construction during PEx
seemed possible with or without dissonance (between pre-PEx knowledge and the
knowledge encountered on PEx). Second, what these remaining two types of epistemic
journeys (involving epistemic ‘squashing’) have in common is their final destination –
all squashing practices resulted in confused and contradictory knowledge, to varying
degrees. A synopsis of each epistemic journey through PEx (as per Figure 7.2) featuring
epistemic ‘squashing’ follows.

Anne’s (orange line) epistemic journey was to negotiate a complex middle ground. The
mild and undetected contradictions in her pre-PEx knowledge were not seriously
foregrounded or challenged by that ‘heard’, ‘seen’ and ‘done’ on PEx. Anne had very
few philosophical differences with her mentor (and other staff) and didn’t experience
severe behaviour management problems. In this sense there was low epistemic
dissonance for her in PEx. Any epistemic ‘squashing’ that occurred for Anne took the
form of ‘negotiating’. Whilst these negotiations can be shown to sustain contradictions and incoherence inherent in Anne’s pre-PEx knowledge, such contradictions remained undetected by her and did not give rise to pedagogical quandaries or distress during PEx. Overall, Anne’s understandings of challenging behaviour (in and of itself) remained relatively unchanged, but her repertoire of strategies for ‘managing’ challenging behaviours reportedly expanded.

Monique and Charly (brown and red lines, respectively) traversed different discourses for their epistemic journey through final PEx. For both, high epistemic dissonance was encountered on PEx insofar as what they ‘saw’, ‘heard’ and ‘did’ on PEx was, at times, strongly at odds with their, already conflicted, pre-PEx understandings. The condition of ‘high dissonance’ was a common starting point for this particular journey. Traversing different discourses was an epistemic journey characterised by epistemic ‘squishing via oscillation’. This journey generated pedagogical distress and/or quandaries and dramatic knowledge change regarding the nature of challenging behaviour. Sometimes the preservice teachers explicitly acknowledged this knowledge change, sometimes it seemed to go undetected. In this sense, close consideration of empirical material relating to Monique and Charly’s epistemological journey through PEx will support the argument that exclusive access to the biopsychosocial discourse in undergraduate coursework has potential to be unsupportive of pedagogical decision making and generate explicit epistemic tensions for preservice teachers.

7.3. Chapter Summary

This chapter has explored methodological questions of how the preservice teachers’ ‘knowledge change’ (between pre- and post-PEx) was discernable in the dataset and ‘how’ PEx impacted participants knowledge via processes of ‘seeing’, ‘hearing’ and ‘doing’. Furthermore, a graphic overview of epistemic processes used to develop pre-PEx and post-PEx knowledge was offered. This offered a summary of pre-PEx journeys theorised in Chapter 6 and introduced the PEx-journeys to be detailed in Chapter 8.
Comparing, contrasting and relating these graphic overviews demonstrated the complex and dynamic nature of knowledge re-construction during PEx and a subsequent need for me to refine of my theorisation of each knowledge journey, its prequisites and outcomes. This becomes the focus of Chapter 8.
Mapping three epistemological journeys through PEx
8. MAPPING THREE EPISTEMOLOGICAL JOURNEYS THROUGH PEx

This chapter both extends and departs from the analysis of the preservice teachers’ pre-PEx Knowledge offered in Chapter 6. It continues the work of Chapter 6 by analysing the preservice teachers’ dynamic relationship with archived knowledge via mapping their statements (from data collected during- and post-PEx) to the three posited discourses. This highlights the ongoing and changeable nature of the discursive complexities and contradictions within their knowledge and pedagogy during and after PEx. I will maintain that these complexities and contradictions point to covert discursive positioning moves characteristic of epistemic squishing practices.

Additionally, this chapter revises and nuances my initial theorisation of ‘matching’, ‘squishing’ practices and their effects on preservice teacher knowledge and pedagogy (as proposed in Section 7.2). This is achieved by identifying three different types of epistemic journeys undertaken by the preservice teachers when re-constructing their knowledge of challenging behaviour during PEx: ‘Maintaining the line of best fit’; ‘Negotiating complex middle grounds’; and ‘Traversing discursive boundaries’. Each journey is described in turn.

These journeys are described through analysis of participants’ knowledge re-construction during PEx. For each journey, empirical material collected during PEx (field notes and mentor teacher interviews) and after PEx (post-PEx concept maps/interviews and focus group) is consulted to: (i) illustrate the epistemic processes involved, (ii) describe ‘how’ knowledge was re-constructed on PEx in that instance (see Section 7.1.4), and (iii) explain any revisions to my theorisation of the epistemic processes of ‘matching’ and ‘squishing’ (via negotiation and oscillation), compared to how they were theorised regarding development of pre-PEx knowledge (see Chapter 6 and Section 7.2).
Finally, I will argue that, in the case of the third epistemic journey, ‘traversing discursive boundaries’, exclusive access to biopsychosocial discourse in undergraduate coursework has the potential to be unsupportive of pedagogical decision-making and generate explicit epistemic tensions for preservice teachers.

**JOURNEY ONE**

**Maintaining the line of best fit**

**8.1. ELLA**

**8.1.1. Describing little, if any, knowledge change …**

Ella’s pre-PEx knowledge was consistently biopsychosocial. In the pre-PEx empirical material there was no detectable contradictions in her knowledge base. Ella’s uninterrupted uptake of the biopsychosocial discourse was especially noticeable because she was the only preservice teacher who consistently aligned her knowledge with the biopsychosocial maxim that all behaviour can be managed and learned, regardless of biological disorder (See Section 6.2.1). At the beginning and end of her PEx Ella’s knowledge remained solely biopsychosocial. It would appear nothing she encountered on PEx challenged or interrupted her coherent and internally consistent biopsychosocial understandings. In this sense, she maintained ‘the line of best fit’ through PEx.

Ella experienced the least change in her knowledge of challenging behaviour between her pre- and post PEx, compared to the other preservice teachers. Sustained in both her pre- and post-PEx concept maps were themes on defining problematic/misbehaviours, managing behaviour and relationships. Themes that featured in Ella’s pre-PEx concept
map (Appendix D) that were displaced from her post-PEx concept map were: ‘theories’ (specifically, ‘Piaget’ and ‘Skinner’); non-school reasons as to ‘why’ problematic/misbehaviours occur (such as family and socioeconomics); and the formal, googled definitions of behaviour for summarising each branch of the concept map (i.e. the definitions in the boxes at the edges of the pre-PEx concept map, see Appendix D). Compared to the pre-PEx concept map, very little was new or different in the post-PEx concept map (Appendix F) and what was new seemed to be re-wordings rather than re-thinkings or discursive shifts. For example, the word ‘relationship’ explicitly featured post-PEx (whereas pre-PEx it was ‘[behaving] with/towards others’); ‘rules and routines’ was expanded to stipulate that these be joint-constructed with students; and the ‘whys’ of misbehaviour focused on notions of student ‘bored[om]’ and whether they are disabled or gifted and talented (whereas pre-PEx this was described as ‘level of work – easy [or] hard’). In this sense, change to her knowledge of challenging behaviour during PEx (from an analysis of her concept maps alone) would appear minimal.

An indicator that Ella worked to sustain sole uptake of the biopsychosocial discourse throughout and after PEx was her manner of participation in the [post-PEx] focus group. Mid-way through the focus group, Ella concurred with her fellow focus group participants that behaviour was a combination of nature and nurture – but then disengaged from the conversation and remained silent for over seven minutes. This was an unusual situation as the participants otherwise all contributed pretty ‘evenly’ throughout the rest of the focus group. On analysing silences Foucault states:

Silence itself--the things one declines to say … the discretion that is required between different speakers – is … an element that functions alongside the things said, with them and in relation to them within over-all strategies. … we must try to determine the different ways of not saying such things, how those who can and those who cannot speak of them are distributed, which type of discourse is authorized, or which form of discretion is required in either case.

(Foucault 1978, p. 27)
The above quote emphasises the importance of understanding discourse as statements that include silence. Ella clearly ‘declined’ to comment and I contend did so to support the overall strategy of maintaining discursively consistent knowledge. The conversation Ella appeared to boycott centred on the other preservice teachers’ collective confusion as to ‘how much’ biology contributed to behaviour and how one might tell whether a given behaviour stems from biological, psychological or social factors, and what that might mean for pedagogy. These are, arguably, concerns that fall outside the biopsychosocial discourse’s maxim that, regardless of biological anomaly, all behaviour can be managed and learned.

I interpreted Ella’s silence as an expressed resistance to engaging with non-biopsychosocial understandings of behaviour. Indeed, she pinpointed that the things she deemed most ‘changed’ in her knowledge, following PEx, were her understandings of ‘how I, as a teacher, can behave’ (Ella, focus group), not so much her knowledge of, and pedagogy for, teaching children with challenging behaviour. Ella managed this by observing and trying to emulate ‘the positive role model’ she found in her mentor. Such understated knowledge-change regarding challenging behaviour may be illustrated as occurring via an epistemic matching process.

8.1.2. In the context of low or no epistemic dissonance
For Ella, little (if any) conflict between her pre-PEx understandings and things seen, heard and done on PEx was discernible. In this way, Ella met the pre-requisite for ‘maintaining the line of best fit’ by engaging the process of epistemic ‘matching’. Just as Ella experienced epistemic rest via matching pre-PEx, so did she during PEx. A case for Ella encountering low or no epistemic dissonance on her PEx can be made on two counts. Firstly, Ella did not encounter many instances of challenging behaviour during her PEx (Ella, focus group) thus there was little dissonance between conceptions of ‘ideal teaching and learning’ and what actually happened. Secondly, Ella identified her
mentor as an ‘ideal’ teacher whom she would like to emulate (Ella, focus group). This meeting of minds apparently generated low epistemic dissonance for Ella.

Ella’s PEx occurred at Mountain View Public School. Mountain View PS has 670 students and is situated in a middle-class regional suburb (SEIFA decile 5)\(^\text{21}\), approximately 1.5hrs outside of Sydney. The school comprised relatively new buildings and was situated on a large, grassy site with well-established gardens. The school is located in a relatively new suburb, the houses on approach to the school were well kept, ‘project homes’ built within the last 20 years\(^\text{22}\). Ella’s PEx class was an Early Stage 1 (Kindergarten) class comprising eleven girls and nine boys. Apart from an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for one child with severe vision impairment, there were no IEPs or behavioural disorder diagnoses in the class. However, one English as a Second Language (ESL) student in the maths group (a low-ability group comprising students from several classes) was new to the school and was transferred from a behavioural unit. Overall, though, the children’s behaviour, in the PEx class, conformed to expected school behaviour. As Ella said, ‘I didn’t have any problem behaviours on my PEx’ (Ella, post-PEx interview).

Ella’s mentor teacher was Kay. Kay had 15 years teaching experience, with additional experience of being a business owner/manager (which she did part-time while her children were young). Kay had experience teaching K-6, but has a self-professed passion for teaching the younger grades (Kay, interview). Kay conducted junior choir, she also sat on the Quality Teaching committee and the welfare committee. As part of her role in the welfare committee, Kay recently helped to overhaul the discipline and

---

\(^{21}\) All school’s suburb SES status descriptions are based on suburb SEIFA data (ABS 2010) from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006 Census. Participating schools’ local government areas were located on deciles 5, 8 and 10 of the National SEIFA Index of Relative Disadvantage (on a scale where 1 represents greatest disadvantage and 10 least disadvantage). On occasions where the field note data seemed remarkably at odds with the SEIFA ranking, this was noted and justified.

\(^{22}\) I know this from my knowledge of the local area (I have lived in the region since 1989). I remember the television advertising campaign from the mid-1990s (and indeed, the ‘jingle’) that promoted landsales for the subdivisions that became the school’s suburb.
welfare policy, which was reformed to have a whole-school approach centred on five core values: ‘Be proud: show respect’; ‘Be fair: we all have the right to learn’; ‘Be safe: think safe’; ‘Be thoughtful: think of others’; and ‘Be kind: think before you act’. Kay’s business background was evident in her assertion that the school ‘actually marketed’ (Kay, interview) these values to the students and school community (via focus on values at assemblies, sculptures and wall print throughout classrooms around the school).

Assessment of mentor’s discursive positioning

From the analysis of her interview transcript, Kay’s knowledge of challenging behaviour was mapped as predominantly biopsychosocial. For example, Kay’s biopsychosocial knowledge was indicated by overt causal attribution for behaviour; she stated behaviour is caused by both ‘environmental’ and ‘genetic’ (Kay, interview) factors. Other indicators of her position in relation to the biopsychosocial discourse included her valuing of diagnosis contingent pedagogies:

It’s useful to have a diagnosis, to know … to try and understand why a child may need [pause] a different sort of approach to learning, or teaching, or um, behaviour modification or anything like that. That is interesting. But I also feel that every child is different and you’ve got to really work to find [pause] what drives them individually, as well.

(Kay, interview, original emphasis)

Also, Kay framed behaviour as the pro-actively challenging child’s choice and as a means of fulfilling a psychological need (in this example, for attention):

There are other forms of challenging behaviour … and that’s Chris. … And he just stood there [pause] passively [pause] being … resistant. Um, and he knew … what he was doing … because he’s trying now to be noticed in different sorts of ways by showing off and … being a little bit naughty.

(Kay, interview, original emphasis)
But, perhaps the most significant ‘tell’ of Kay’s predominantly biopsychosocial understandings is her perpetual uptake of the ‘teacher as manager’ subject position (see Section 2.5).

I have got lovely children [in my class] … But, there’s still little things in here that need to be tweaked. And we do need to keep onto it; really it’s about keeping onto things, straight away. When they start to get away a little bit, going in there and … dealing with it and … keeping them onside, and keeping them focused and keeping them settled. Because if I, or any other teacher, just let them go … you’d have a naughty class on your hands.

(Kay, interview)

In summary, both mentor and mentee for this PEx talk about ‘knowing’ challenging behaviour in discursively similar ways, in their interviews they both held to consistently biopsychosocial understandings of challenging behaviour.

Mentor / mentee relationship and professional dis/autonomy issues

Beyond sharing similar understandings of challenging behaviour, Kay and Ella enjoyed a good working relationship. Ella couldn’t have been happier with Kay as her mentor teacher:

Everything she said or did was happy and exiting and no-one was ever wrong … she just made everyone … feel like they were someone special and had something to give and that’s how I want to be as a teacher and I’ve never, ever had someone who’s reflected the same kind of philosophy that I kind of have, as much as she did. … So, I’ve got this philosophy, but I’ve never been, really, you know, in the classroom to do it, so it’s entirely different seeing it [pause] … It [PEx] actually showed me how it [my teaching philosophy] looks in the classroom.

(Ella, post-PEx interview)

Anything that I ever saw her do within the classroom I admired. … So there was nothing that my supervising teacher did that I disagreed with.

(Ella, post-PEx interview)
It would also seem that Kay was pretty impressed with Ella (her feedback sheets offered much praise and very infrequent, mild constructive criticism); furthermore, Kay afforded Ella a fair amount of professional autonomy:

During maths lesson Kay whispers to me: “She’s [Ella is] really good … I said to her at the beginning of the prac that I wanted her to bring in her stuff, treat this as her classroom and she has … she’s on her own [behaviour] management plan, she’s been really good”

(Field notes, 19 August 2010)

The school context and mentor relationship Ella experienced generated low or no epistemic dissonance and that not much changed in Ella’s knowledge of challenging behaviour between pre- and post-PEx. This particular type of epistemic journey that I have labelled ‘maintaining the line of best fit’ is characterised by epistemic ‘matching’ processes (see also Sections 6.2.1, 7.2 and 8.3). How this journey began and ended with epistemic rest is one example (and not necessarily a defining feature of) ‘maintaining the line of best fit’. Merrin’s epistemic journey, on the other hand, demonstrates how the ‘match’ between pre-PEx knowledge and knowledge encountered during PEx knowledge can stem from (and result in) epistemic states other than ‘rest’, and support discursively consistent knowledge change.

8.2. MERRIN

8.2.1. Describing mild knowledge change …

Merrin’s pre-PEx knowledge was mapped as overtly and pervasively biopsychosocial (see section 6.2), however she negotiated within this discourse, particularly to bend the principles of token economies to her own ideals and apprenticed knowledge. This generated undetected contradictions in her knowledge of Behaviourism. Indeed, Merrin’s pre-PEx negotiation of the meaning of token economies and tendency to ‘schedule goodness’ (see Section 6.2.3) was evident in her PEx practice and persisted in
her post-PEx interview, concept map and university coursework assignments. As this represents knowledge continuity it is not the focus of this section. Rather, the focus here is on knowledge change.

I mapped Merrin’s post-PEx knowledge as overtly and pervasively biopsychosocial. That her pre- and post-PEx knowledge was mapped as discursively consistent (i.e. biopsychosocial) indicates that any knowledge change was subtle. Knowledge change during PEx for Merrin involved epistemic processes of matching and developing knowledge within this theoretical middle ground. Merrin moved within the biopsychosocial discourse to change her understandings of ‘good/bad behaviour’ and ‘behaviour management strategies’. Things seen, heard and done on PEx gave Merrin cause to refocus her pre-PEx conception of the biopsychosocial factors influencing good/bad behaviour and to acknowledge the role of personal beliefs and tolerances of specific teachers in understanding behaviour as either ‘good’ or ‘bad’. PEx also saw Merrin expand her knowledge of classroom and educational factors that influence behaviour. This was discernable when comparing her pre- and post-PEx concept map and interview, as the post-PEx data showed an increased focus on pedagogy (especially behaviour management strategies) and decreased emphasis on factors external to the classroom.

Merrin’s post-PEx concept map (Appendix F) could be assessed as far more coherent than its pre-PEx counterpart (Appendix D) insofar as relationships between concepts characteristic of the biopsychosocial discourse were clearer. A keener appreciation for the interconnectivity of biological, social, educational and ‘[educational psychologists’] theoretical’ explanations of behaviour was demonstrated post-PEx. For example, in her pre-PEx concept map, Merrin listed several interconnected concepts, separately as level-one headings; that is, ‘diagnoses’, ‘social factors’, ‘classroom’ and ‘theorists’. However, in her post-PEx concept map she deals with the content under those four (pre-PEx) headings by collapsing it into one (post-PEx) level-one heading, ‘roots’ (by which, she explained during her post-PEx interview, she means ‘origins’ or ‘causes’).
Sustained from Merrin’s pre-PEx concept map were themes on behaviour as fulfilling a psychological function (especially as per Glasser’s Choice Theory), the influential role of home-life and the importance of token economies in classroom management (post-PEx concept map). Themes that featured in Merrin’s pre-PEx concept map that were displaced in her post-PEx concept map centred on: ‘theorists’ (with the exception of Glasser); ‘technology’; and ‘time’.

I now turn to what was new or different in Merrin’s post-PEx graphic representation of her knowledge. This new knowledge comprised a re-construction of her understandings of ‘good/bad behaviour’ and pedagogical aspects of behaviour management. When asked, Merrin described her greatest knowledge change as an identification of a skills gap she needed to address in her future professional endeavours:

I would say, you need, I would need to try multiple strategies or learn multiple strategies … for controlling the class as a whole, that would be my major [thing I learned] … from my prac is that, yep. … Yep, I need, I need that. … As I find that the most difficult.

(Merrin, post-PEx interview)

Merrin’s post-PEx concept map, especially the level one headings ‘behaviour management’ and ‘behaviour strategies’, demonstrated knowledge change in this area. Merrin’s post-PEx knowledge was far more teacher centred than pre-PEx. Behaviourist strategies for managing student behaviour (such as reinforcement, punishment and management/control) featured across both concept maps. However, the importance of teacher planning, time management and responsiveness (e.g. ‘change things if not working’, ‘try something else’, ‘create new strategies’ etc) featured far more post-PEx. Likewise, the post-PEx concept map highlighted teacher responsibilities such as ‘limiting rewards’, avoiding punishment strategies that ‘reflect badly upon the teacher’ and ‘controlling class as a whole, before [the behaviour of] individual students’. I maintain that this represented ‘new’ knowledge from PEx because this ‘teacher’ focus was absent from the pre-PEx concept map. This new knowledge represented uptake of different aspects of biopsychosocial discourse compared to pre-PEx. Significantly,
although representing knowledge change, I maintain it was discursively consistent knowledge change.

‘Good/Bad’ was a level one heading in both Merrin’s pre- and post-PEx concept maps. However, the content under this heading was treated differently (although within the limits of the biopsychosocial discourse) in each concept map. In the pre-PEx concept map ‘Good/Bad’ was framed within a non/compliance framework (e.g. ‘obey, push boundaries, misbehave, rebel’) and it was likened to acceptable/anti-social behaviours. In the post-PEx concept map, although deployment of the non/compliance framework persisted, ‘bad’ behaviour was reframed from ‘anti-social’ (pre-PEx concept map) to merely behaviour that any teacher may deem ‘undesired’ (post-PEx concept map). This, it would seem, generated room for debate and less definite deployment of the terms ‘good/bad’: ‘what some teachers classify as bad behaviour, others may class as acceptable’ (post-PEx concept map). Next, biopsychosocial causes of ‘bad’ behaviour featured in both concept maps but the specific factors outlined differed in each. The post-PEx concept map included environmental and social factors such as ‘socioeconomics’ and ‘home-lives’ compared to the pre-PEx concept map inscriptions regarding individual children’s attributes (e.g. experience of physical ‘pain’ or ‘ability’ level) and reasoning (e.g. ‘work avoidance’). Finally, that these post-PEx understandings of ‘good/bad’ behaviour remained within the biopsychosocial discourse is neatly encapsulated by the dot-point: ‘This needs to be taught (not to do it [undesired behaviour]), therefore maybe the reason casual teachers have a “tough” time when controlling behaviour’ (post-PEx concept map). The relationship between ‘controlling’ (post-PEx concept map) ‘bad’ behaviours and explicitly teaching ‘good behaviours’ is very much in keeping with assertions of the biopsychosocial discourse that behaviour can be modified/learned. Moreover this idea of ‘controlling’ children in the classroom closely aligns with the biopsychosocial continuum of teacher subject position of ‘teacher as manager’. Thus the focus of knowledge change (from analysis of Merrin’s concept maps alone) would suggest a dual shift in focus: first, a re/conceptualisation of behaviour management from ‘managing individual students’ to ‘teacher focused, whole
class behaviour management’; second, a re/consideration of what constitutes ‘good/bad’ behaviour.

8.2.2. In the context of low epistemic dissonance

Merrin encountered low epistemic dissonance during PEx. Merrin’s mentor teacher’s (Jeremy’s) knowledge of behaviour matched hers neatly insofar as it was largely biopsychosocial, with very occasional oscillations to biomedical understandings. Any mismatch regarding reality versus personal conceptions of ‘ideal teaching and learning’ conditions centred on minor considerations such as unwanted classroom noise. Whilst Merrin described experiencing some lack of professional autonomy during PEx, for the most part she seemed happy to teach her mentor’s program and adopt his pedagogical advice.

Watersedge Public School has 428 students and is situated in an affluent suburban neighbourhood (SEIFA decile 10) in Sydney’s south. The school is very well resourced, “it’s an outstanding school” (Jeremy, interview). There are interactive whiteboards in every classroom, and the PEx classroom was also a ‘connected classroom’, equipped with video conferencing facilities (field notes, 29 July 2010). Watersedge PS also featured an academically selective ‘enrichment class’ (Jeremy, interview) for Year 5/6, a number of specialist teaching spaces (a computer lab, an art room, a band room etc), and professional consultants (e.g. choreographers) were employed to oversee staging of the school’s annual concert (field notes, 10 August 2010). The school’s extra-curricular activities were well catered for with two choirs, a ‘practice’ and ‘performance’ band, several dance troupes, public speaking and debating, PSSA sports programs, and a German Language program. The school’s location, resources and scope for extracurricular programs rendered it highly marketable and branded:

It struck me (after signing-out in the visitors book) that this was the only participating school with an office foyer that did not display children’s work. This was a very corporate foyer, it featured glass vases with always-fresh flower arrangements (florist quality) and matching blue/green corporate décor and
carpets. The only wall print was professionally photo-shopped montages of ‘idealistic’, posed photos of children in full school uniform captioned with the school values and displayed on A3-sized timber-backed mat photo-blocks. The only ‘real’ photos viewable in the foyer/reception area were this year’s whole-school and staff photos (previous years were tucked round the corner near the staff toilets). [In the staffroom] Even the allergy/medical alert cards stuck on the wall are very corporate, all done in the same published format, colour coded (by type of alert) and laminated A4 sheet for each child.

(Field notes, 10 August 2010)

It seems that this marketable product was targeted at satisfying a specific, perceivably demanding, client base:

The community is quite demanding … the money in the area has generally been made in their lifetime … so it’s not like, you know, your existing wealthy neighbourhoods where it might be, the parents have had the wealth and passed down to the children and so forth it’s, it’s very much like a lot of people may have grown up in lower socioeconomic areas can now afford these waterfronts through their business. So it’s, it’s quite a demanding area in terms of parents are very, um, they can be quite difficult. Like they can be on your doorstep and questioning any decisions … you make a spelling mistake on a homework sheet, there’d be someone up here saying, you know, ‘did you know there’s a spelling sheet, mistake on the homework sheet?’ So, it sort of keeps you on your toes.

(Jeremy, interview)

School misadventures (e.g. leaving two children behind on an excursion) were discussed as “PR disaster[s]” by the school executive in the staffroom.

(Field notes, 4 August 2010)

Another striking feature of Watersedge PS was lack of published ‘school rules’ wall-print in the playground / public, communal areas. This was because the restorative practice discipline policy did not feature school wide ‘rules’, instead relying on a charter of students’ ‘rights and responsibilities’ (which were displayed within each classroom).

Overall, the behaviour of the children at Watersedge PS was considered favourably by teaching staff:
In an informal conversation with principal, during rehearsals for the school concert, she questioned wouldn’t it be better to study challenging behaviour in a “harder” school, “this school is pretty ritzy”.

(Field notes, 10 August 2010)

The behaviour of the kids and the attitude of the kids, in general, is very positive um, at this school. We don’t have too many um, behavioural problems … in general they’re pretty good kids and if there is a behavioural problem it generally takes a little bit of a chat [to address this]

(Jeremy, interview)

Of the entire school population (428 students), ‘maybe six kids’ were identified as having, ‘medical diagnoses that affect their behaviour’ (Jeremy, interview). This low prevalence of behaviour disorder diagnoses is striking when compared to the lower SES schools in the study. This is consistent with literature that identifies disproportionately large clusters of diagnoses in areas of disadvantage (e.g. David 2010; Goodman & Gregg 2010; Harwood 2010; Harwood & Allan, in press).

Merrin’s PEx class was a Stage 3 (straight Year 6\textsuperscript{23} class) comprising 17 boys and eight girls. There were no existing Individual Education Plans or behavioural disorder diagnoses amongst the students. The only child identified as having a special education need was a student with a vision and hearing impairment. Jeremy, Merrin’s mentor teacher, had 16 years teaching experience, including several years experience in a low SES, multicultural school in Sydney.

In his program, under the heading ‘class analysis’ Jeremy expressly notes: ‘the majority of students come from two parent families, predominantly Anglo-Saxon’. This perceived position of privilege also featured in his interview: ‘you want to say

\textsuperscript{23}In NSW, curriculum outcomes are organised by Stage (rather than scholastic year) level: Early Stage 1 is Kindergarten; Stage 1 is Years 1 and 2; Stage 2 is Years 3 and 4; and Stage 3 is Years 5 and 6. Because of this, classes are often organised by stage rather than scholastic year level resulting in a ‘composite’ class (eg. a Stage 3 class would be typically have Year 5 and 6 students). This is why it is worth specifying when classes are made up of ‘straight’ scholastic year levels, such as the ‘straight Year 6 class’ taught by Merrin.
sometimes to the kids [at Watersedge PS], “look, you don’t realise that, how lucky you’ve got things in this world”” (Jeremy, interview).

Jeremy identified two possible sources of behaviour problems in his class. First, the unrest caused from lack of routine stemming from his Assistant Principal duties, ‘it can be difficult on the kids cause of the disturbance of me going in and me going out, having another teacher and all those sorts of things’ (Jeremy, interview). At the time of data collection, Jeremy had been Assistant Principal at Watersedge PS for seven years. Part of the AP role was fulfilling the duties of Stage 3 Coordinator and, often, Relieving Principal. Secondly, Jeremy framed the disproportionately high number of boys in the class as potentially problematic for whole-class behaviour management:

They’re a good group but they, they do need direction, and … I mean I’m not being horrible but having 17 boys, Year 6 boys in particular, they can be quite talkative and so forth.

(Jeremy, interview)

Merrin rarely described the behaviour of the class as a whole, except to say they were ‘chatty’ and ‘noisy’ (post-PEx interview) and she also ventured to suggest that, typically, the children were ‘spoiled’ by their parents (field notes, 29 July 2010).

Assessment of mentor’s discursive positioning

I mapped Jeremy’s knowledge of challenging behaviour as predominantly biopsychosocial with occasional biomedical leanings. However, because Jeremy and Merrin had no reason to discuss or act on biomedical conceptions of behaviour (there were no students in the class and very few children in the playground with behavioural disorder diagnoses) these occasional oscillations are not brought under close analysis here. Thus, overall, Jeremy’s mostly biopsychosocial understandings of behaviour neatly matched Merrin’s.
Jeremy’s biopsychosocial knowledge was mappable on several fronts. First, his fervent advocacy of restorative practice methods for disciplining children and holding them ‘accountable for [their] actions’ (Jeremy, interview) speaks directly to biopsychosocial tenets of the responsible child capable of choice and of learning behaviour. Secondly, Jeremy repeatedly spoke of children pushing boundaries: ‘they’ll push, and you know, and it’s particularly with the older kids, I mean the older kids, they can manipulate things a little bit to their way’ (Jeremy, interview). Such talk of children’s ‘pushing’ and ‘manipulating’ speaks directly to the biopsychosocial discourse object of the ‘pro-actively challenging child’. Third, beyond use of restorative practice strategies, Jeremy’s additional classroom management strategies were typically behaviourist (a theory peculiar to the biopsychosocial discourse). For example, Jeremy relied on token economies and punishments for behavioural reinforcement (field notes, various dates). Finally, Jeremy’s talk consistently indicated that he takes on the subject position of ‘teacher as manager’. His management expertise was discernable in his statements regarding the importance of ‘controlling’ (Jeremy, interview) the behaviour of students. He goes so far as to state:

> It’s very hard for a visiting teacher to go into someone else’s room because … you’ve established what you expect for your class, um, but how you do that is, the personal thing, so it’s hard to sort of grab someone else’s car and drive it, so to speak … it’s sort of like, well I know how I drive my car and I drive my car really well, but your car is a bit different.

(Jeremy, interview)

In this quote Jeremy talks of the perceived importance of teachers’ management of the classroom. He draws on metaphors that cast the teacher as ‘driver’ and the class as a ‘car’. This is an interesting choice of metaphor for commenting on the centrality of ‘teacher as manager’ because a car is completely inanimate and inert without direction and management from the driver.
Mentor / mentee relationship and professional dis/autonomy issues

Overall, Merrin and Jeremy enjoyed a positive, professional relationship. Whilst there were some professional autonomy issues these were mostly restricted to issues of programming rather than management style (Watersedge PS programmed collaboratively across Stages and so the Stage 3 program was already determined before commencement of Merrin’s PEx). For example, on matters of ‘management style’, Jeremy said:

> Obviously my main aim is that, that the educational, um, programmes within the class exist and still keep going to the way they should … but, I’m really hoping that you know, Merrin earns their [the students’] respect, develops her own management style whether it’s based on mine or whether its whatever, fine.

(Jeremy, interview, emphasis added)

Ultimately, Merrin seemed happy to operate within these relatively minor restrictions. In the following quote, Merrin explains her decision to ‘just do things as Jeremy does’ (field notes, 4 August 2010):

> Considering, from what I’ve heard from other friends, like one girl had complete class control from Day One, like she did everything she wanted to, like it would have been a lot more work … in a way I was happy to just do that, happy to fit in … and follow someone else’s lead ‘cause I’m not that experienced and I feel some of my pracs have been a bit worthless and so, at least I could learn from someone else’s ways, I guess.

(Merrin, post-PEx interview)

Merrin’s willingness to learn from her mentor’s ‘ways’ was acknowledged by Jeremy in his final report on her PEx; he writes that Merrin is, ‘willing to accept constructive criticism and alter her teaching style [accordingly]’ (Jeremy, PEx report). Whilst this is not perhaps unusual, what is worth examining here is the extent to which Jeremy’s constructive criticisms impacted on Merrin’s knowledge of challenging behaviour.
Merrin seemed to forgo her existing apprenticed and professional knowledge and beliefs in order to follow and learn from her mentor’s instructions. In her post-PEx interview Merrin gives two examples of following Jeremy’s advice, against her better judgement. The first was when she moved the children into rows [seating arrangements] despite her belief in the importance of social learning (Merrin, teaching philosophy from PEx program document). The second was when she adopted the ‘name and shame’ disciplinary strategy despite her understanding that this was a negative and inappropriate approach.

That [moving the students desks into rows] was keeping them quiet, but I think with me, um, I would like, ‘cause I was so, doing exactly what Jeremy wanted me to do basically, like, ‘you do this lesson today, you do this lesson today’, I would have done … other activities as a group, like ‘ok, you three go over, sit over there’ or then change the desks around during the days or ‘everyone bring your chairs to the other side’, I think I was just going from Jeremy’s instructions really.

(Merrin, post-PEx interview)

Jeremy pointed out you have to control the whole class before you individualise … OK get the whole class under control and then … single out the kids that aren’t behaving and one strategy he said ‘Name & Shame’ as he called it, ‘Rupert, you’re not working’, ‘Rupert we’re waiting for you’, ‘Tony, can you finish talking’. He said use that, so, I will. Like, before prac I would have thought that was not a nice thing to do and I wouldn’t have done it, I would have [thought] that would have been a, negative strategy to use. But if he said ‘do it’, like, I don’t know. I just think Uni, from what we’ve been taught at Uni they would say to do that from, I don’t know, I have it in the back of my head that we’ve been taught not to do that … But Jeremy said, ‘do it’ and it seems to work and all the teachers seem to do it, so I will do it.

(Merrin, post-PEx interview)

In these interview excerpts Merrin, in a climate of otherwise minimal epistemic dissonance, volunteers herself to a high level of professional non-autonomy via her uptake of Jeremy’s behaviour management expertise. This valuing of experienced teachers’ advice is not, in itself unusual – teachers and schools are highly valued knowledge sources of behaviour for preservice teachers (Joram 2007; Lortie 1975, McMahon 2007). However, this relationship dynamic between mentor/mentee, this willing ‘following’ of things Merrin saw and heard Jeremy do, was important to Merrin
re-constructing her knowledge of challenging behaviour during her final PEx, especially in terms of expanding her knowledge of behaviour management strategies.

So far it has been established that Merrin’s pre- and post- knowledge of challenging behaviour was consistently biopsychosocial and so any knowledge change on PEx was subtle and resultant from the process of ‘epistemic matching’. Specifically, Merrin’s understandings of good/bad behaviour and the teachers’ role in behaviour management were discernable sites of knowledge change across the pre- and post-PEx concept maps. The school and classroom context of Merrin’s PEx provided low epistemic dissonance (the mentor’s discursive positioning largely matched her own and her class were reasonably well behaved, if somewhat ‘chatty’). Despite this lack of epistemic dissonance, Merrin positioned herself as the non-autonomous novice, taking on behaviour management advice from her mentor regardless of how this related to her existing apprenticed and/or professional knowledge.

8.3. A final word on ‘matching’

All of the proposed epistemic journeys can result in multiple knowledge re-construction outcomes. This is a different finding compared to analysis of pre-PEx knowledge, in Chapter 6, where the only discernable epistemic outcome for ‘matching’ was ‘rest’ (see also Figure 7.1). Analysis of the PEx journeys demonstrated that if knowledge contradictions exist before the journey commences (as per Merrin’s conflicted understandings of token economies) the ‘line of best fit journey’ in and of itself does not necessarily ameliorate these confusions and result in epistemic rest. Furthermore, analysis of Merrin’s PEx journey showed that the process of epistemic matching does not necessarily exclude possibilities for discursively consistent knowledge re-construction (as may have seemed the case if only looking at Ella’s pre and post-PEx epistemic matching practices). In summary, Ella and Merrin’s epistemic journeys may both be categorised as ‘maintaining the line of best fit’ insofar as they both experienced epistemic matching processes, but their journeys had different points of departure,
tracked different results for knowledge change, and so terminated in different ‘epistemic states’ overall.

JOURNEY TWO
Negotiating complex middle grounds

8.4. ANNE

8.4.1. Describing the knowledge change …

Anne’s pre-PEx knowledge of challenging behaviour was assessed as overtly biopsychosocial, with covert dynamic positioning moves to both ecosocio and biomedical discourses of behaviour. For Anne, pre-PEx confusions arising from such discursive oscillations, I suggest, centred on understandings of behaviour disorders and issues of behavioural choice and self-control. Such confusion and epistemic ‘squishing by oscillation’ resulted in the undetected paradox of ‘knowing’ that individual children are responsible for choosing what to do with their uncontrollable behaviour (see Section 6.2.2). Oscillating, however, was an epistemic practice left behind on Anne’s journey through PEx. Instead, still operating within her propensity to ‘squish’ existing knowledge to new knowledge (and vice versa), Anne negotiated the complex middle ground of the biopsychosocial discourse. Anne remained within biopsychosocial understandings of behaviour throughout PEx but seemed to manipulate these to her own ends through processes of ‘squishing via negotiation’. This resulted in new, but variously incomplete and modified (and so incoherent) biopsychosocial knowledge.

When asked in her post-PEx interview if she felt she learned anything new from PEx, Anne reported, ‘Not particularly, um, yeah, not really. No – nothing that was
completely new to me, there was nothing new’ (post-PEx interview). In fact, after recounting her ‘only run in’ (post-PEx interview) with challenging behaviour during her PEx (a playground incident involving one of the students from the IO class), she expressly stated,

I think a lot of my teaching, I don’t really take it from what someone else has taught me to do. I try and take it instinctively. … And then, I don’t know, I think it sometimes gets me caught out, but [pause] I don’t know, it just feels the natural way to teach. Like I don’t try and let someone else tell me.

(Anne, post-PEx interview)

Whilst this is testimony to the preservice teachers’ propensity to value and sustain their existing, apprenticed or ‘instinctual’ knowledge of teaching, I contend Anne did experience some knowledge change regarding challenging behaviour. However, this knowledge change was subtle and discursively consistent with her pre-PEx knowledge (insofar as Anne’s knowledge was largely biopsychosocial before and after PEx) and so, perhaps, difficult to articulate. This subtle knowledge change can be explored via analysis of her concept maps, and other empirical material collected during and after Anne’s PEx.

Sustained from her pre-PEx concept map (Appendix D) were themes on Glasser’s Choice Theory, the role of relationships in managing challenging behaviour and the importance of generating an audibly positive classroom climate (Anne, post-PEx concept map). Themes that featured in Anne’s pre-PEx concept map that were displaced from her post-PEx concept map (Appendix F) were mentions of the nature/nurture debate, specific behavioural disorders and early intervention. This is not to infer that such knowledge was forgotten or no longer valued.

Well, this [pointing to the pre-PEx concept map] came from more of … I’d like to say it was like [my] university brain … and this, my second one [indicating the post-PEx concept map], it’s changed in a way, that I’ve gone, ‘no, this is realistic’. … They’re both [the concept maps] as valuable as each other. Like as I look at the … first concept map and I look at the depth that I was just able to bring out … and then I look at this one [post-PEx concept map] where I was so isolated
to one classroom that I couldn’t think any further out. So, they both have their positives.

(Anne, post-PEx interview)

Here, Anne reiterates a perceived theory/practice divide between her pre/post concept maps (respectively). I now turn to what was new or different in Anne’s post-PEx graphic representation of her knowledge. Overall, her post-PEx concept map places importance on whole-class focus (whereas her pre-PEx concept map dealt mainly with individual students), and certain strategies for managing/preventing challenging behaviour (such as the popcorn token economy and ‘thanking’ students at the end of the day) also only feature on the post-PEx concept map.

From analysis of her concept maps alone, the focus of Anne’s knowledge change was an expansion of strategies of how to teach children with challenging behaviour, rather than a change in her understanding of ‘challenging behaviour’ itself. Different points in the dataset, however, illustrate that Anne did perceive changes to her understandings of challenging behaviour throughout PEx. Anne stated that the thing she deemed most ‘changed’ in her knowledge was her understandings of token economies (interview) and ‘choice’ (focus group). Both of these knowledge changes occurred within one (the biopsychosocial), rather than between multiple discourses and both were a result of the epistemic process of ‘squishing via negotiation’.

8.4.2. In the context of low or no epistemic dissonance

Low or no epistemic dissonance between understandings and things seen, heard and done on PEx was discernible. Whereas dissonance was, I argued, a pre-requisite for epistemic ‘squishing via negotiation’ pre-PEx, during PEx the only pre-requisite for negotiating biopsychosocial discourse seemed to be the preservice teachers’ pre-PEx propensity to ‘squish’. A case for Anne encountering low or no epistemic dissonance on her PEx can be made on two counts. Firstly, Anne did not encounter many instances of
challenging behaviour during her PEx thus there was little dissonance between conceptions of ‘ideal teaching and learning’ and what actually happened. Secondly, throughout my observations during PEx, including many informal interviews, and my analysis of mentor teacher feedback to Anne on her lessons, there were few perceivable tensions between the mentor and mentee on matters of teaching philosophy and interpretations of the purpose of the internship. This meeting of minds seemed to generate low epistemic dissonance for Anne.

Anne’s PEx occurred at Elvyndale Public School. Elvyndale has 410 students, including 28 per cent from non-English speaking backgrounds, and is situated in a middle-class suburb (SEIFA decile 6) of a large, regional city in NSW. Anne’s mentor teacher, Sonya, said, ‘generally, it’s good behaviour at the school. It’s a PBS school, Positive Behaviour for Success. Um, and that sets a [positive] tone among the whole school’ (Sonya, interview). Positive Behaviour for Success is a common theoretical framework for NSW primary school behavioural policies and rests in the biopsychosocial discourse (see Section 4.3). All the playground signage, staffroom wall print and even staffroom talk were consistent with the PBS principles, and so the biopsychosocial discourse:

We often call them the ‘tip of the triangle kids’ … because with the PBS we have a triangle of behaviours. And they acknowledge there will be that very small percentage up the top that the PBS won’t be working for. So, whereas explicit teaching of all the behaviours that we are expecting and being positively reinforced over and over and over constantly, works for the majority of the school. There’s the tip of the triangle ones, and they’re the ones that our school is actually targeting at the moment and um, our PBS committee are coming up with ways they think they may be able to monitor and encourage correct behaviour amongst those students. But our focus really, is ‘find the positive’, um, so we don’t really talk a lot about [pause] that sort of negative behaviour.

(Sonya, interview)

The school staff meetings also had a strong focus on student welfare to develop school-wide awareness of and support for children who may be having life difficulties or behavioural difficulties (Sonya, interview; Anne, post-PEx interview). Most of the
behavioural difficulties in the school were attributed to students from the special education needs ‘support classes’ (Sonya, interview; Anne, post-PEx interview).

Anne’s PEx classroom was an Early Stage 1 (Kindergarten) classroom comprised of eight girls and seven boys. One Individual Education Plan existed for an English as Second Language student and one student was informally identified as having behavioural problems. Anne described her class as ‘a pretty good class, I didn’t have many behaviours. I had one boy who had a few home situation issues … and he brought them to school. But besides that I had … a nice and easy class’ (Anne, focus group). Her mentor agreed ‘I don’t think there’s any discipline problems, or behaviour problems at all in the Junior School [Kindergarten – Year 2]’ (Sonya, interview). There certainly were no major, recurring behaviour management problems observed while I was in the classroom.

Sonya had 28 years teaching experience in many capacities: casual teaching; teacher of a one-teacher K-6 rural school; ESL teaching overseas; and reading recovery. Sonya had a passion for learning and had done, ‘every bit of T&D [training and development] I can possibly do’ (Sonya, interview) and at the time of this study, was volunteering as a ‘test case’ for the Triple L literacy program. Sonya sat on the ‘Literacy’ and ‘Technology’ committees at Elvyndale PS.

Assessment of mentor teacher’s discursive positioning

Sonya’s knowledge of challenging behaviour was informed by both ecosocio and biopsychosocial discourses (biomedical statements are entirely absent from her interview texts and the field notes). Her predominantly ecosocio understandings were evidenced by her foregrounding of context over individual psychology as the primary causal attribution of behaviour:
I think it’s just my philosophy. I just assume there won’t be behaviour problems, so there isn’t. Yeah, and I know that sounds silly to say but [pause] you know, I find that just, I mean, even, ugh, you know, just talking to them, it, it works, like.

(Sonya, interview)

It is interesting that Sonya seems acutely aware of how unusual it is for a schoolteacher to privilege ecosocio knowledge of behaviour over the biopsychosocial discourse that dominates school settings, when she says, ‘I know that sounds silly to say’.

Furthermore, when explaining the only challenging behaviour presented in her classroom, and/or known to her on the playground, Sonya cites only contextual possibilities as catalysts for the behaviour:

When things are good at home … he’s slept well, he’s eaten, so he’s fine when he comes into class. If anything he’s perr-fect on those days. And so, it’s only sort of spurts that you’ll get [any challenging behaviour] where, obviously, you know something has happened [at home].

(Sonya, interview)

We do sometimes have the seniors [who have been in trouble] come down [to the junior playground] that are there in that sort of helpful role … well, I’ve never seen them act out [in the junior playground] even though they had been acting out in the primary playground ‘cause they’ve been feeling stressed up there or whatever issue’s happening. It’s [being a helper in the Junior playground is] sort of a breather for them to remove themselves from [that primary playground upset].

(Sonya, interview)

Sonya occasionally oscillated to biopsychosocial understandings of behaviour, but only elements thereof. For example, she recognised children’s behaviour as fulfilling a psychological function (Sonya, interview). However, Behaviourism is one popular tenet of biopsychosocial understandings prevalent in education settings that Sonya has actively resisted, insofar as she never talked of ‘consequences’ or punishment (interview and field notes), and explicitly expressed her dislike of ‘time out’ policies (Sonya, interview). Instead, if she perceived behaviour needed to change, she preferred to only ever engage in individual conversations with children, during class and on the
playground (Sonya, interview). Thus Sonya, in her talk about children with challenging behaviour, drew predominantly on the ecosocio discourse of behaviour.

**Mentor / mentee relationship and professional dis/autonomy issues**

Whilst analysis of Sonya’s interview transcript suggested that she held very different discursively positioned knowledge of challenging behaviour to Anne, there was limited opportunity for this to impact on Anne as there weren’t any behavioural challenges throughout PEx that warranted mentor/mentee discussion or feedback. Throughout my observations during PEx and my analysis of written feedback from Sonya to Anne on her lessons, there seemed little if any conflict between the two teachers. Anne held a lot of respect and admiration for Sonya’s ‘really positive’ approach to teaching (Anne, focus group) and, in turn, Sonya afforded Anne respect via professional autonomy:

>This internship allowed me to explore the values I hold as a teacher and implement these into my lessons and my classroom. I was able to bring myself into the classroom and not simple [sic] simulate my supervisors [sic] teaching style.

(Anne, post-PEx assignment for Curriculum and Pedagogy 4)

In this sense, Anne seemed to enjoy a meeting of minds with her mentor and had a ‘nice and easy’ class. So far, this section has established that Anne experienced some development of her knowledge of challenging behaviour, particularly in relation to token economies and choice. Further, the discursive background to this knowledge change (that is, the PEx context within which this new knowledge was developed and established) was described and a case made for low epistemic dissonance being encountered on PEx. The following sections describe how this knowledge changed via processes of ‘negotiating’ complex middle ground occurred during PEx.
8.4.3. Negotiating understandings of token economies – ‘Each good thing deserves popcorn’

In her pre-PEx interview, Anne referred to the importance of ‘continuously’ reinforcing ‘social, activity, [in a way that] will suit the student’ (Anne, pre-PEx interview). This quote highlights the importance Anne placed on reinforcement for ‘the student’, singular, in her pre-PEx knowledge. Post-PEx, Anne’s understanding of the principle of reinforcement was different. The differences between her pre- and post-PEx concept maps are twofold: (i) the mode of reinforcement is made clear; and (ii) the focus shifts from reinforcing individuals to whole-group behaviours. The mode of reinforcement becomes less vague with explicit mention of a ‘whole class reward system [i.e. popcorns] to eliminate negative personal comments and [isolation]’ (Anne, Post-PEx concept map), with the frequency of individual rewards being reduced from ‘continuous’ (Anne, pre-PEx concept map) to an ‘as needed’ basis (Anne, post-PEx concept map).

This indicates an expansion of Anne’s knowledge of Behaviourism to include group contingency token economies (e.g. Theodore, Bray, Kehle & Jenson 2001), a pedagogical apparatus for positive reinforcement. This knowledge change is discursively consistent insofar as both pre- and post-PEx concept maps deal with behaviourist notions of reinforcement, and so align with the biopsychosocial discourse. However, just as Merrin negotiated within the biopsychosocial discourse in her understandings of token economies pre-PEx (see section 6.2.3), field notes from observing Anne’s PEx, her post-PEx interview and the focus group transcript all indicate that her particular knowledge of group contingency token economies was negotiated, and so incoherent.

Anne’s design, implementation and discussion of her ‘popcorn’ reward system suggests incoherent, negotiated knowledge of token economies. The whole-group popcorn reward system comprised edible popping corn kernels as tokens, and the ‘reinforcer’ being the promise of cooking the accumulated popping corn for movie/party on the final
afternoon of Anne’s PEx. Anne explained the popcorn reward system as contributing to an audibly positive classroom climate and providing emotional support and motivation for her students:

All the comments that come out of my mouth are hopefully, more positive than negative in ratio … my reward system, which I was given from my teacher, which was like a whole-group reward through the popcorn system, which I liked because it eliminated the negative personal feelings and isolation if they weren’t achieving and … I also liked, because when I said, ‘oh, you got five popcorns’ or it was for Jim, in my classroom who I was having troubles with, I’d be like, ‘oh, fantastic Jim, today you get ten popcorns’ and having that extra amount gave him a bit more of um, motivation and I think it worked more effectively like, ‘you’ve got ten today!’", instead of one sticker and one tick.

(Anne, post-PEx interview)

The growth of the popcorn jar provided enough continuous motivation for the students

(Anne, post-PEx assignment for Curriculum and Pedagogy 4)

From this it is evident that Anne negotiated her knowledge of group contingency token economies. Their intended design is not to generate an audibly positive classroom climate, offer motivation and emotional support for students or ‘schedule goodness’ (see Section 6.2.3). Rather, the purpose of a token economy (according to a complete take-up of the biopsychosocial discourse) would be to promote behavioural compliance with explicitly described target behaviours (e.g. Maggin, Chafouleas, Goddard & Johnson 2011).

At this juncture it is also important to note that another of Anne’s negotiations was that she did not appear to set specific target behaviours for reinforcement. Anne awarded popcorns for almost any perceived academic or behavioural achievement, for example: correct spelling; packing away at the sound of a drum; voluntarily surrendering a banned toy during floor time; correct answers to comprehension questions; diligent seatwork; general compliance, ‘you’ve done everything I’ve asked you to do, give yourself five popcorns’, and kindness (via whole class discussions of ‘who was nice
from [our class] during lunch’ and awarding two popcorns per ‘nice’ story) (field notes, 20 August 2010). Overall, instead of reinforcing a set of target behaviours, Anne informs the class, ‘each good thing deserves popcorn’ (field notes, 20 August 2010).

This epistemological ‘squishing via negotiation’ and resultant knowledge-change during PEx involved a double-edged process of compliance to things heard and resistance to things seen during PEx. Anne both followed her mentor’s verbal advice and resisted practices that she ‘saw’ her mentor had in place for behavioural reinforcement. Anne’s mentor, Sonya, was supportive of Anne using whatever behaviour management system she liked, thus offering Anne professional autonomy on the matter:

So a lot of them [preservice teachers] like to have, and I can understand and think it’s good that they take on different management [approach to me] …. So they remember to use it. Whereas if I’m telling them to use what I’ve got, sometimes they find that hard to sort of think, ‘damn! I didn’t put any ticks on the chart’ [laughs].

(Sonya, interview)

Anne liked and adopted ‘the idea of the popcorn and that group um reward system, I’ve never really done before as a whole collective and that comes from [listening to] the teacher, so that was a really nice idea that she, um introduced me to and I liked that’ (Anne, post-PEx interview). However, Anne resisted the mentor teacher’s token economy for individuals. Her resistance on this count was not, however, (as Sonya imagined) solely because she found it hard to implement. Her resistance stemmed from her observations of children in her class:

With the, um, ticker chart I also found it hard because the only times that … the kids actually wanted to do it was during news time. … There was a few favourites in the class, they were constantly the ones being chosen for the final question [A teacher-constructed question posed to the audience to gauge comprehension / active listening to the news story] … the kids [presenting the news] did the choosing [of who answered the final question] which, then … like proved … kind of negative for some of the kids like Jim, or you know, the other kids who didn’t get … chosen. So, or who didn’t have the confidence to put up their hand to
answer the questions … yeah, I didn’t really agree with it too much. But I saw its purpose, but I like the popcorn idea better for myself.

(Anne, post-PEx interview)

It is not unreasonable to postulate that the children remembered to do the sticker chart every news time because they knew the target behaviour was to listen carefully, remember the news presented by their peers and answer the teacher’s ‘final’ comprehension question accurately. In this sense it was very effective in generating the desired behaviour. To clarify, the news presenter did often pick their friend/s to answer the question but if their friend/s got it incorrect, the next person had a chance etc. The behaviour rewarded with a tick on the chart then was listening/comprehension and not necessarily friendship. But, like Merrin’s pre-PEx negotiations of token economies, Anne didn’t see such a standard construal of a token economy as ‘fair’ to all students and so resisted it. Instead, she kept the ‘news’ format and final question routine however, she rewarded the child who answered the final question with popcorn kernels (field notes, 30 July 2010), something all would benefit from.

My point here is not to promote an unquestioning uptake of token economies; indeed, Maggin et al.’s (2011) meta-analysis of research on the topic found there is currently insufficient empirical support to label token economies as an evidence-based practice. Instead, my argument is that, through a series of within-discourse dynamic positioning moves, or negotiations, Anne took on those parts of token economies she agreed with, and modified those parts she disagreed with. In this case ‘squishing via negotiation’ supported re-construction of knowledge (resulting in incoherent knowledge) regarding the effectiveness of group contingency token economies.
8.4.4. Negotiating understandings of choice – ‘Do it now or at recess, you choose’

When the focus group was asked ‘how did PEx change your knowledge of challenging behaviour’, Anne (as did Charly and Monique) commented on changes to her understanding of ‘choice’ as it relates to behaviour.

On my prac, ‘cause I didn’t have many difficult behaviours, I only had one, and … I always thought that I believe in the choice—the choice approach to behaviour. But, I don’t know, with the younger kids it was a lot harder to, kind of, get them to think outside of what they immediately wanted … well it’s hard to kind of say you have this choice or this is going to happen when they’re so young sometimes, ‘you have two choices’ they just didn’t really get that concept.

(Anne, focus group)

In her post-PEx interview, Anne offered an example of how she came to this understanding via trial and error during PEx:

A: Sometimes it [offering children choices] was hard though, without having a consequence straight away … what’s far enough [away] for that kid to want it so much that they’ll change the behaviour now? … I originally did free time for the last 15 minutes of each day. … So, I would say, ‘well, you either do this activity now or you won’t get free time’. And that was like a lot of the choices I’d give them, you know. …

…

S: Did anyone ever pick missing out on play?

A: Jim did … Yeah. So, and that’s why I changed it for him. [After that] I always used to say, ‘well, you can either get a popcorn for doing this action now [or not]’.

(Anne, post-PEx interview)

Here we see negotiation of understandings of ‘choice’ on several fronts. First, it could have been possible for Anne to articulate this new (essentially behaviourist) knowledge in terms of understanding the effectiveness of immediate (as in the popcorn) rather than delayed (as in the removal of free time at the end of the day) reinforcement in modifying (or changing) a child’s behaviour. Instead, Anne described how this
experience altered her knowledge of behavioural ‘choice’ by adding a caveat that some are more suited to choose than others – that is, not kindergarten aged children. What is also interesting is that Anne’s conception of choice, despite clearly and consistently crediting Glasser with this idea (Anne, pre- and post- concept maps and interviews), is remarkably non-Glasserian.

I posit that Anne has negotiated an incoherent knowledge of ‘choice’ by concurrently drawing on Glasser’s Choice Theory and Behaviourism (both theories sayable and repeatable within the biopsychosocial discourse but at odds with each other on conceptions of choice). By describing the Glasser/Behaviourism incoherent knowledge negotiated, an explanation is offered regarding how things seen, heard and done by Anne during her final PEx might have contributed to re-constructing her understanding of ‘choice’, in this peculiar way.

The ultimate incoherence (and indication of negotiated knowledge) lies in Anne’s understanding that Glasser’s theorisation of behavioural choice for students as comprising information imparted from the teacher in the format, ‘you have this choice or this is going to happen’ (Anne, focus group), or in her comment ‘Glasser’s Choice Theory … Always allow the student to choose their path. Provide them the right behaviour or action, then provide the consequence if they continue their action or behaviour’ (Anne, post-PEx concept map). Here Anne has construed ‘choice’ as a dichotomy of eventualities - compliance or consequence. Is this a choice? It depends on which theoretical standpoint you adopt. Whilst the notion that behaviour is learnable and people ‘choose’ and control their behaviour is particular to the biopsychosocial discourse, theorisation of choice within that discourse varies (see for example, Table 8.1).
Table 8.1 Comparison of some axioms of Behaviourism and Glasser's Choice Theory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Some axioms of Behaviourism</th>
<th>Some Axioms of Glasser’s Choice Theory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Behaviourism may be classified as a Stimulus / Response (SR), or external control psychology.</td>
<td>Glasser’s Choice Theory may be classified as an ‘internal control’ psychology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operant conditioning holds that one’s behavioural ‘choice’ is a response to the stimuli of previous consequences.</td>
<td>Almost all behaviour is chosen. We are driven by our genes to satisfy five basic needs: survival, love and belonging, power, freedom and fun. We can only satisfy our needs by satisfying the ‘pictures in our Quality World’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thus, via manipulation of consequences (or reinforcement) one can modify or manage another person’s behaviour.</td>
<td>The only person whose behaviour we can control is our own. All we can give another person is information.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Glasser (1997) construes ‘logical consequences’ of rewards and punishments set out by teachers as ‘managing students by coercion’ and that such ‘bossing’ strategies distance the teacher from the students’ picture of their quality world (and so distance the students from possibilities for ‘choosing to learn’). In Glasserian terms, ‘you have this choice, or this is going to happen’ (Anne, focus group) is not a choice; it is an ideologically unsound ultimatum. The notion of response, or ‘choice’, between a compliance/consequence dichotomy is far more in keeping with axioms of Behaviourism.

By construing ‘choice’ (under the label of Glasser’s Choice Theory) as existing for children solely between either compliance or consequence, Anne demonstrated the preservice teachers’ propensity to only take on board those parts of ‘theoretical knowledge’ that they agree with; she negotiated an incoherent knowledge of choice to favour her opinion. Glasser’s conception of choice was resisted (in its entirety) with a double-edged epistemic ‘squish via negotiation’. On the one hand, Anne took on the Glasserian tenet that ‘the only behaviour one can control is your own’; thus, thoroughly responsibilising the child for ‘choos[ing] their own path’ (Anne, post-PEx concept map) and reducing her capacity as teacher to merely ‘offering information’ to support such
decision-making. On the other hand, Anne rejected that aspect of Glasser’s theorisation of ‘choice’ that necessitated teachers becoming part of the child’s picture of their quality world; instead, she holds that what teachers offer students to ‘inform’ their behavioural choices are, in fact, behaviourist compliance/consequence ultimatums (designed to assist the teacher in controlling, or modifying the students’ behaviour).

This is an epistemic ‘squishing via negotiation’ that generates a knowledge paradox: only the child can choose/control their behaviour, but the teacher can manipulate these choices to effect desired behavioural change. In this way, the teacher may ‘mask’ punishment as something the students choose:

And I think, by saying, giving them that choice, whatever it is, it’s not a punishment it’s a choice. And I think by changing that in my own head, I go, ‘no, I’m not making this negative. This is a choice, you have that choice’. And I think just by changing that in my head it makes it a little bit easier for me because if I said, ‘this is your punishment for not doing this’, I just say, ‘no, these are your two choices that you have’ and I don’t know, it just makes it easier for me somehow.

(Anne, post-PEx interview)

What’s interesting here is Anne’s explicit acknowledgement that the ‘consequence’ in the compromise/consequence ultimatum, is (and she used the appropriate behaviourist term) a punishment. However, because she resists the idea of punishing children, she ‘changes it in her own head’, or squishes it by negotiation, to fit under Glasser’s theory of ‘choice’ (post-PEx concept map), which she finds more appealing. Whilst this is a description of Anne’s knowledge change journey via negotiation, interestingly, this variant of incoherent knowledge of choice is also something understood by Charly and Monique on their PEx – and so perhaps, worth contemplating further in terms of how teacher educators might work to ameliorate such confusions.

Additional and unique to Anne’s negotiation of Glasser’s Choice Theory to feature behaviourist tenets, is the development of her ‘own little Choice Theory’ (Anne, post-PEx interview). What made this version of Choice Theory her ‘own’ was the tenet that sometimes students have no choice. Such understandings are explicitly attributed to
‘seeing’ and ‘hearing’ teachers talk with children (during a mini-PEx for a subject, at a different school), ‘They say to the kids, you know, “in life, there’s just times when you have to do what you have to do” … and I like that’ (Anne, post-PEx interview). The knowledge paradox generated by epistemic squishing this time was that ‘children choose their behaviour … except when I demand compliance’. The paradoxical and incoherent nature of her knowledge claims seemed to go unnoticed by Anne.

8.5. A final word on epistemic ‘squishing by negotiation’

Anne ‘squished via negotiations’ within a singular discourse (the biopsychosocial discourse) to effect knowledge change during PEx. The internally consistent framing of the actively challenging child, with its related pedagogies and ‘teacher as manager’ subject position provided consistent pedagogic resources for responding to challenging behaviour, during PEx.

Despite lack of pedagogical quandaries on PEx, the act of epistemic ‘squishing via negotiations’ resulted in contradictions and incoherences within Anne’s knowledge of challenging behaviour (especially her knowledge of Behaviourism and Choice Theory). What I think is clear is that each of these theories offered within the biopsychosocial discourse were poorly delineated in Anne’s understandings. It is also clear that Anne ‘negotiated’ her biopsychosocial understandings of behaviour. However, the sequencing of these two events and their relationship to each other is much less transparent in the data. Are the confusions a result of a propensity to engage in epistemic ‘squishing by negotiation’ so as to sustain personal, apprenticed knowledge? Is ‘squishing by negotiation’ only possible because of existing confusions, because each theory (and its practical applications for pedagogy) was not explicitly differentiated in university coursework content in the first place? While matters of causality are beyond the scope of this project, these questions should become the focus of future studies.
8.6. CHARLY

8.6.1. Describing the knowledge change …

Charly’s biopsychosocial, but ‘mostly social’ pre-PEx understanding of behaviour comprised reflections and refractions of, and oscillations between, three different discourses of behaviour (see Section 6.2.2). The contradictions inherent in oscillating between biopsychosocial, biomedical and ecosocio discourses of behaviour seemed largely undetected by Charly. In the very least the complex and contradictory knowledge claims evident in her narratives were not actively or consciously represented in her pre-PEx concept map (Appendix D). Instead, her pre-PEx concept map overall defined behaviour as occurring ‘from an early age’ and as something that is ‘genetic’ and ‘learned’ – the combination of which is a singularly biopsychosocial notion. Thus, epistemic ‘squishing’ was evident as Charly overtly identified her knowledge with a singular, coherent discourse whilst inadvertently demonstrating discursively multiple knowledge.

When asked in the focus group if she felt she learned anything new from PEx, Charly reports, ‘I think my understanding of behaviour grew [pause], probably broadened … like, I don’t think it completely did a turn around and shifted’ (Charly, focus group, original emphasis). What is interesting is that this knowledge growth was not evenly distributed, at least in terms of her dynamic, covert discursive positioning moves. Charly’s knowledge of challenging behaviour didn’t ‘completely turn around and shift’ (Charly, focus group) insofar as it remained overtly positioned as biopsychosocial pre-
and post-PEx. However, I argue that Charly’s covert discursive positioning moves variously ‘grew’, or were displaced, over the course of PEx. Charly’s pre-PEx statements (such as those describing her brother’s exclusion from school, see Section 6.2.2), mappable against the ecosocio discourse, were completely displaced from her post-PEx data. Concurrently, post-PEx, Charly’s oscillations between discourses were exclusively between biopsychosocial and biomedical discourses. These changes to Charly’s knowledge of challenging behaviour (comprising decrease in ecosocio and increase in biomedical understandings) are the focus of the ensuing analysis. The initial point of analysis is a comparison of her pre- and post-PEx concept maps.

Sustained from her pre-PEx concept map, were themes of nature/nurture and the imperative to ‘know ones students’ by developing the teacher/student relationship (Charly, post-PEx concept map). Themes that featured in Charly’s pre-PEx concept map (Appendix D) that were displaced from her post-PEx concept map (Appendix F) were considerations of functional behaviour (goal directed, antecedents etc) and consideration of the match between children’s school and home contexts. I now turn to what was new or different in Charly’s post-PEx graphic representation of her knowledge. For example, under her understandings of nature/nurture, the concept of ‘choice’ appears and Charly re/labels challenging behaviours to ‘disruptive behaviour’ but sustained related definitions thereof. Perhaps the most striking change between her pre- and post-PEx concept maps is an overarching shift in focus from the child to the teacher. Specifically, the pre-PEx concept map focuses on the child’s genetics, upbringing, parents, siblings, emotions, needs, and relationships with teachers and peers. By contrast, the post-PEx concept map highlights teacher responsibility to: set expectations and consequences; ‘prevent’ challenging behaviour via manipulation of curriculum (engaging lessons) and space (student seating arrangements); and record patterns of behaviour and document in compliance with school discipline policy.

From analysis of her concept maps alone, the focus of change would seem an expansion of knowledge regarding the teachers’ role in responding to children with challenging
behaviour, rather than her understanding of challenging behaviour itself. Concept map analysis aside, Charly articulated that the things she deemed most ‘changed’ in her knowledge were her understandings of ‘things [strategies] to try and manage the behaviour’, ‘understanding different kids and where their behaviour comes from’ in terms of ‘seeing’ the impact of personal lives in the classroom, and ‘the choice thing’ (Charly, focus group). By ‘the choice thing’, Charly refers to post-PEx understandings of student choice similar to Anne’s (see Section 8.4), regarding the importance of offering children choices based on a compliance or consequence ultimatum. However, unlike Anne, Charly appeared to take this behaviourist knowledge at face value and did not try to ‘squish’ (or negotiate) this knowledge into Glasser’s Choice Theory.

This prac has kind of cemented … in my head … I see the importance of not getting, like involved emotionally and keeping it really, you know, just [pause] calm and … make a choice … ‘you know what the rules are, you know what the consequence is, you need to make a choice. If you choose to break the rule, you get the consequence. That’s just how it works’.

(Charly, post-PEx interview)

It is remarkable that Anne’s and Charly’s knowledge change during their final PEx shared similarities in terms of their understanding of offering ‘choices’ to students exhibiting challenging behaviour. However, ‘the choice thing’ (Charly, focus group) will not be the focal point for analysing Charly’s knowledge change as it is so similar to that detailed in Section 8.4.4. Instead, analysis centres on Charly’s shifting understanding of ‘things to try and manage the behaviour’ and ‘understanding different kids and where their behaviour comes from’. Dual consideration of these knowledge changes will illustrate how Charly’s ecosocio understandings of behaviour were displaced, and her uptake of biomedical understandings of behaviour increased. Both of these knowledge changes may be illustrated as a product of epistemic ‘squishing via oscillations’.
8.6.2. In the context of high epistemic dissonance and professional dis/autonomy

As was the case for both preservice teachers who journeyed PEx by ‘traversing discursive boundaries’, a high epistemic dissonance between pre-PEx understandings and things seen, heard and done on PEx was discernible. Firstly, Charly encountered many instances of challenging behaviour during her PEx thus creating the conditions for a dissonance between her conceptions of ‘ideal teaching and learning’ and what actually happened. Secondly, throughout my observations during PEx, and from my analysis of mentor teacher feedback to Charly on her lessons, I discerned tensions between the mentor and mentee on matters of teaching philosophy and interpretations of the purpose of the internship. This initial non-meeting of minds on causes and management of challenging behaviour apparently generated high epistemic dissonance for Charly and was an effective catalyst for knowledge change.

Beth (Charly’s mentor teacher) viewed learning about behaviour management at university as not possible due to a theory/practice divide. She construed her job as mentor to impart teaching knowledge to the preservice teachers: ‘That’s the main thing that they [mentors] need to pass on, those [behaviour management] skills, cause they’re [the preservice teachers are] not going to learn them in an assignment, they’re not going to learn them in a tut[orial]’ (Beth, interview). To this end Beth made her professional wisdom available to Charly via extensive debriefing conversations, written feedback sheets, and encouraged her to email and/or text message anytime (field notes, 16 August 2010). During one informal interview Beth exclaimed, ‘I’ve only got five weeks to fit as much stuff into her head as I can!’ (field notes, 3 August 2010). This sense of urgency, this perceived last chance to impact a preservice teachers’ knowledge of teaching before they are qualified to teach was felt by both Beth and Charly as a series of epistemic pushes and pulls.

And that’s something Beth really pushed as well on prac … That took me a while
I think to get my head around, which is silly, ‘cause it just seems so silly now, but at the time, like, it is kind of hard.

(Charly, post-PEx interview, emphasis added)

I had to really push the idea in the beginning …

(Beth, interview)

Whilst, such forceful transmission of expertise and information was initially interpreted by Charly as a lack of professional autonomy (field notes, 3 August 2010), she yielded early on: ‘During prac I pretty much implemented every piece of advice that she [Beth] gave me’ (Charly, post-PEx interview). At times, Charly stated that Beth’s advice was accepted even though it was contrary to her personal teaching philosophy.

Charly’s PEx occurred at Bordertown Public School. Bordertown PS has 840 students, and is situated in an affluent suburb (SEIFA decile 10) on the southwestern outskirts of Sydney. Beth advised that the school serves suburbs from mixed demographics, whilst there are “lots of big houses” on approach to the school, there are also some pockets of disadvantage in the school’s catchment area (field notes, 28 June 2010).

I think it’s quite a good school. The children usually behave [pause] … I think our [the teachers’] expectation is reasonably high when it comes to behaviour … There’s plenty of issues here, but they’re ah, more learning oriented or emotionally centred and um, they don’t seem to manifest here in the way that I’ve seen at other schools. There’s not the punch-ups or the overt bullying and stuff.

(Beth, interview)

Whilst the discursive positioning of Bordertown PS’s policy documents regarding student behaviour and welfare were clearly and consistently biopsychosocial (see Section 4.3), certain elements of the school environment indicated that biomedical understandings permeated the school culture. For example, Bordertown PS made unique use of the student alert board in the staffroom. In many NSW schools, student alert boards feature photographs of children with their name, the name of their classroom and a brief listing of: severe medical conditions such as asthma, epilepsy,
allergies/anaphylaxis; and also, extreme legal considerations such as current restraining orders (with pictures of restricted persons etc). Bordertown was the only school from this study that also included children with behavioural concerns in their student alert board (field notes, 16 August 2010). By displaying elective mutism, Aspergers, Autism, ADD and ODD alongside medical conditions such as epilepsy and asthma, the school visibly payed credence to biomedical explanations of behaviour.

Beth taught a Stage 3, straight Year 5, class comprised of 14 girls and 15 boys with diverse learning needs; seven students had Individual Educations Plans (including three for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, for whom IEPs are mandatory). When describing children in her class, Beth identified ‘plenty of issues’ (Beth, interview): one child diagnosed with and medicated for ADHD; a ‘poster boy for Aspergers’ who was also medicated for anxiety; two ‘anxiety ridden children’ whom she had referred to the school counsellor; one child whom she ‘reckon[ed] is on the borderline of the Autism spectrum’; one boy with neglect issues (regarding lack of sleep, poor school attendance and lack of warm clothing in winter); one girl from a ‘tricky family’ (that experienced drug and alcohol problems); a boy whose father was in a nursing home (and so his home life was difficult); a ‘passive potato kid’ who resisted participating in class; and a gifted and talented student (field notes, 28 June 2010). When describing the same class to her preservice teacher colleagues, Charly said,

The Year 5 class, itself, was not too bad in terms of behaviour. Um, I had an Aspergers child, who, he was fairly bright, he had like, a few typical Aspergers behaviours but nothing too dramatic. Um, I don’t think there was any other diagnosis of kids in the class, but there were certainly a few that were very, um, defiant anyway. Um, probably my maths group was the biggest learning curve and that was filled with ADHD, kids with dramas at home that weren’t coping at school or at home and kids that didn’t know how to follow rules … And I think that was … were I did the most of my behaviour management

(Charly, focus group)
Beth had 20 years teaching experience as a classroom and an ESL (English as second language) teacher. Beth identified her teaching style as ‘authoritarian’ (Beth, interview; field notes, 29 July 2010) and nominated student welfare as her special interest:

my special interest in children I suppose are kids with a story or with an issue or with something a bit quirky because, I like to try and bond with them, on a different level, to try and get the best for that child.

(Beth, interview)

Furthermore, Beth expressed her preference for valuing individual students and supporting them in achieving their personal best:

[Children can achieve] success in a different way than just your ABC arena, and also personal success rather than competitive success. And um, not that there’s anything wrong with being a good student and striving to be better and wanting to come first. But by the same token, it’s no more important or no less important than any other student, with their own path that they’re on.

…

But my main [teaching] philosophy has always been, always will be, is “everyone has got something to offer”. And every child in that room … has to realise that every child has something worthwhile and positive to offer.

(Beth, interview)

Such valuing of individuals sometimes, in would seem, superseded her compliance with school policy. For example, the maths group facilitated by Beth is the lowest level ability group for Year 5 and she had negotiated an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for her entire maths group (rather than one per individual as policy dictates) to set achievable learning goals and relieve them from (failing to meet) Year 5 outcomes (field notes, 28 June 2010). Beth displayed the school discipline policy in her classroom, as she is required to, but obscured it with furniture to allow her to implement a self-devised version of the discipline policy that she felt was more supportive of students; she also admitted to stealing ‘minis’ [i.e. level one tokens in the school-wide discipline/award system] from the staffroom when she ran out of her weekly quota so as to sustain sufficient positive reinforcement in her classroom (field notes, 28 June 2010).
Assessment of mentor’s discursive positioning

Like Charly, Beth demonstrated predominantly biopsychosocial understandings of behaviour:

I tend to think they muck up because they have a reason to. … I mean, clearly, children are going to muck up and be revolting just for the sake of it from time to time. But you’ve got to look at what led up to that: are they overtired; have they had a mixed up week; is their teacher away; is there something going on at home…? You know, like usually, I would say nine times out of ten, you can find a reason. But, for the kid who is just difficult for the sake of it I would say there’s always a reason and most of it, I think it’s just the frustration. The frustration of whatever is their issue. … I always know that, it’s not their fault, generally, that they’re doing that. If it’s a conscious choice to do that, why is it a conscious choice and you need to intervene that choice making.

(Beth, interview)

This excerpt from Beth’s interview attends to beliefs on social aspects of behaviour. Beth’s social explanations of behaviour also repeatedly referred to ‘reason’ and ‘choice’ (Beth, interview) and so are imbued with psychological notions of faculty and self-control. As such, Beth’s statements are best described as drawn from the biopsychosocial discourse.

Also, like Charly, Beth occasionally oscillated to ecosocio and biomedical discourses. An example of an ecosocio oscillation was when talking of her own children’s schooling experiences.

Given that I’ve got four of my own kids [pause] and um, the first one’s bright enough but he’s totally ‘outside the box’ so he never really fitted in to the um, the little, the little building block of how to be a good student--he was a little bit oppositional, a little bit vocal and very good public speaker and liked to express his opinion quite often and quite loudly--and didn’t take too kindly to teachers doing the wrong thing, in his opinion. Then I have, the next one down’s on the Autistic Spectrum so, he has lots of challenges and [pause]. He was intervened since he was two, so I’ve got all that knowledge, ‘under my belt’, and all those strategies that [pause] I don’t know, I suppose gives me a little bit of an extra-- And um, then my third one, is a little bit, ugh, he’s a mixture of the first two and he’s repeated Year 1 and doesn’t [pause] doesn’t particularly excel at school--
likes reading but doesn’t like writing. And then the fourth one is a very rambunctious girl, who is probably the only one of my four who is suited to school!

(Beth, interview)

Apart from the mention of diagnosis-specific teaching ‘strategies’ for children with Autism (which is a distinctly biopsychosocial notion), Beth demonstrated ecosocio understandings through this narrative insofar as her dominant consideration was the impact of the structures of schooling on her children’s behaviour. After 52 minutes of interview offering biopsychosocial explanations of behaviour such as those in the excerpt above, Beth had not offered any mention of ‘biology’ as a contributing factor to behaviour. This was surprising as aspects of biology are inherent in biopsychosocial explanations of behaviour and, from previous discussions with Beth, I was aware that she had a son diagnosed on the autistic spectrum. So, towards the end of the interview I asked her if she felt biology played a role in children’s behaviour:

Why, definitely. ADD kids and ADHD kids, like … Brett. On medication he’s one child, off medication he’s a completely different person. He has no control over that, so how can you punish him? Because, he can’t control it, which is why he’s on medication! … Jim [boy diagnosed with Aspergers]: it’s not his fault. He can’t—um, you know, he doesn’t choose to be so obscurely different to the other children, that’s just who is he is. And everyone has to go, ‘alright, well that’s who he is, that’s how he operates and we need to accommodate that’. Instead of, ‘oh, well you should be doing this’. Because, well, no he shouldn’t. Because who are you, to tell [them] your way’s better than their way … Um, look at Toby, he so innately operates within his [Aboriginal] culture. And he wouldn’t—he couldn’t tell you the first thing about it—but that’s how he operates, that’s who he is. He—he hasn’t chosen to be like that, it’s just him. And that’s got nothing to do with his raising, ’cause he was raised with his mum, who’s Anglo.

(Beth, interview)

In contrast to her explanations of behaviour earlier in the interview, in this excerpt about biological factors of behaviour, all mention of a child’s ability to make ‘choices’ and learn self-control is absent from her talk. Instead, biology is repeatedly identified as a factor that both leads to an individual’s inability to control their behaviour and negates effects of environment (such as Toby’s upbringing). Such types of statements, I
contend, are only sayable and repeatable within the biomedical discourse of behaviour. Whilst some of Beth’s assertions, such as the conflation of ethnicity and genetically inherited ‘cultural’ behaviours, may be hotly debated within the biomedical discourse of behaviour - discussing such behaviours at a purely somatic level is a possibility unique to this discourse. So then, like Charly, Beth drew on mutually exclusive discourses of behaviour to explain the single phenomenon of challenging behaviour; biopsychosocial and biomedical discourses (see Section 2.5) were both deployed in her talk about children in her classroom.

Beyond illustrating complexities and contradictions in Beth’s knowledge of behaviour the above interview excerpt warrants further analysis in terms of considering the potential impact of these narratives on Charly’s knowledge of behaviour. This excerpt demonstrates a microstorying of children insofar as children are objectified in certain ways in Beth’ narrative. The concept of objectification through discourse is attended to in Foucault’s (1995) book *Discipline and Punish*, where discussion is offered as to how knowledge/power may work to construct ‘biographical unities’. Examples of biographical unities that Beth ‘speaks into existence’ in her acknowledgement of biology’s role in children’s behaviour include the ‘ADHD kid’, the ‘Aspergers kid’ and the ‘Aboriginal kid’. These certain types of ‘kids’ are biographical unities in the sense that each is portrayed as having particular and predictable biographies and personal traits as a result of their peculiarly ADHD, Aspergers, or Aboriginal ‘biology’. Han (2003) comments that, in Foucauldian terms, subjectification and objectification are ‘mutually dependent’ (p. 177) and ‘an entity or epistemological domain can only appear as an object to be known if it is discovered through a specific positioning of the subject of knowledge’ (p. 177). In this sense, it is my contention that, Beth’s narratives presented certain types of children with challenging behaviours as biomedical ‘objects to be known’. Where Beth and Charly’s biomedical understandings differ, I argue, is that Beth’s offered authoritative knowledge of certain children (or discourse objects) whilst Charly’s pre-PEx considerations of biomedical understandings generated uncertainty and confusion (see Section 6.2.2). I postulate that it is the certainty afforded
biomedical explanations in Beth’s knowledge that offered Charly stable platforms into the biomedical discourse of behaviour, which she used to re-construct her knowledge of challenging behaviour during PEx.

8.6.3. Oscillating toward more biomedical understandings - ‘seeing nature’

Charly’s pre- and post-PEx interviews indicated a shift in her knowledge of behaviour; she moved from a ‘mostly social’ understanding of behaviour pre-PEx to one that is far more attentive to biology (Charly, focus group). In her post-PEx concept map and interview, whilst Charly’s overarching identification of biopsychosocial definitions of behaviour offered in the pre-PEx interview were sustained, socio-cultural explanations of behaviour no longer featured and biomedical discussions of behaviour appeared more often.

After spending five weeks immersed in her mentor teacher’s micro-storying of biographical unities in the classroom (the ADHD kid, The Aspergers Kid, The Aboriginal kid etc.) and ‘seeing’ behaviour disorders considered side by side with anaphylaxis and epilepsy in staffroom wall print (of student alert cards), Charly’s narratives and knowledge took on a more biologically focused lens.

When I was on prac, like I still think you can see when it really is nature. Like, the kids that like, really just can be trying their damnest to do the right thing and then struggle to sit still or... you can really see the look on their face, where they just can’t sit still or they just can’t control, you know. And ... I think, like for kids that really do struggle because of whatever it is they’ve got ADHD, or whether they’ve got, just screwed up home lives, or whatever they’ve come to school with and they’re just not in the frame of mind, or whatever it is, I think that there’s, um, I think my expectations, probably, were a little bit different for the kids that I knew were struggling. Like, in terms of not being able to control their behaviour.

(Charly, post-PEx interview, emphasis added)
Compared to her pre-PEx biomedically-inspired hesitations as to ‘how much’ a person diagnosed with a behaviour disorder might control their behaviour (see Section 6.2.2), Charly’s post-PEx construals of biological caveats to behavioural control are far more certain. There are clear understandings that ‘nature’ renders some children as ‘not … able’ to control their behaviour. This certainty stems from things ‘seen’ on PEx, ‘you can really see the look on their face, where they just can’t…’ (post-PEx interview), once again demonstrating the value the preservice teachers tend to place on knowledge reconstruction via visual observations. This knowledge change was reported to directly impact her pedagogy insofar as there is a discernible shift in her expectations for ‘struggling’ students: ‘I think my expectations, probably, were a little bit different for the kids that I knew were struggling’ (Charly, post-PEx interview).

This interview excerpt demonstrates how Charly drew on biomedical understandings of behaviour to understand and respond to students who were ‘struggling’ with behavioural issues. Her increased oscillations to the biomedical discourse during PEx seemed to clarify one of her original (pre-PEx) uncertainties (that is, behaviourally disordered children ‘can’t’ control their behaviour) and its related pedagogical response (therefore one should shift/lower teacher expectations). However, this new epistemological certainty seems to have generated more confusion than it resolved.

The almost exclusive deployment of the biopsychosocial discourse in university coursework could be understood to have generated an unintended and problematic consequence for the preservice teachers traversing different discourses of behaviour during PEx. Such discursive exclusivity has delimited possibilities for a language to identify and reflect on shifts in explicit knowledge change resultant from PEx. Explicit post-PEx epistemic change comprised new and clear understandings that ‘nature’, or a person’s biology, can negate self-control. With no other discursive resource at her disposal, Charly seems to have attempted to reconcile this new biomedical knowledge to her predominantly biopsychosocial understandings and ‘failed’ (perhaps not surprisingly as these discourses are mutually exclusive, see Chapter 2). She ‘failed’, I
contend, because she had no discursive resources to express this confusion or knowledge change. Indicators of Charly’s failure to successfully ‘squish’ her new biomedical knowledge under the biopsychosocial umbrella are her conflation of ‘screwed up home lives’ and ‘nature’ as equally but alternatively responsible for lack of behavioural control.

This conflation suggests an understanding that behaviour disorders aren’t necessarily based in biology and recurs later in the interview when she speculates whether ‘[behaviour] disorders are nurture anyway’ (Charly, post-PEx interview). This confusion may be described as ‘incoherent’ knowledge as it belies not only her biopsychosocial understandings, but also the understandings set out by all three posited discourses. It is not true for any discourse that social factors alone negate a person’s ability to control their behaviour. Thus, my argument is that the singular promotion of the biopsychosocial discourse in university coursework, leading to a lack of understanding as to the discursive limits of the biopsychosocial discourse and its biomedical and ecosocio counterparts, was unsupportive for reflecting on knowledge change from PEx. Indeed, this was epistemically dangerous insofar as it afforded opportunities to generate new incoherent knowledge and confusions.

8.6.4. Oscillating away from the ecosocio discourse – a change of heart regarding exclusionary disciplinary practices

In the post-PEx focus group Charly identified one of the key developments in her knowledge following PEx as an expanded range of ‘things to try to manage the [challenging] behaviours’ (Charly, focus group). The new ‘thing to try’ under consideration here was enforcing the school disciplinary policy. This is of interest because taking up the school discipline policy as a management strategy demonstrated significant discursive positioning shifts for Charly, specifically, a move away from ecosocio toward biopsychosocial understandings. Whilst taking up the school discipline policy could be interpreted as pragmatism (indeed, one must comply with the school
policies), I contend that this was not without effect on her knowledge. As PEx progressed, Charly’s discursive position (and so knowledge) regarding exclusionary discipline shifted and changed.

In Charly’s pre-PEx knowledge there were occasional oscillations to the ecosocio discourse, the example given was her description of her brother’s exclusion from class and school (see section 6.2.2). In this pre-PEx recount Charly levelled a critique at the structures of schooling and questioned the ethics and effectiveness of the ‘three strikes and you’re out’ discipline policy. On her final PEx Charly’s school had such a discipline policy; one she was required to enforce. This requirement seems to have impacted on her understanding of this disciplinary mechanism. I now move to consider how Charly’s knowledge changed via things seen, heard and done on PEx and how this discursive re-positioning (although arguably significant), seemed to go largely unnoticed by Charly.

Charly’s knowledge change was neither abrupt nor unquestioning, rather it occurred over the course of the PEx in a context of high epistemic dissonance and via ongoing ‘struggles’ in taking up several contradictory subjectivities. Charly seemed to strongly resist adopting approaches handed down by the discipline policy and her mentor that she felt were authoritarian and managerial (and so vastly different to the ‘teacher supporter’ position she took up in her oscillations to ecosocio discourses pre-PEx). This struggle through knowledge re-construction could be described as a series of epistemic pushes and pulls. I now turn to explicate the epistemic pushing (via instruction from mentor and policy) and pulling (Charly’s resistance to these) characteristic of Charly’s knowledge change process during PEx. Of interest here are the ‘pushes and pulls’ that seemed to facilitate her oscillations away from ecosocio and towards biopsychosocial understandings of behaviour management.
Push ...

Feedback sheets, from day one of PEx, show the mentor as ‘pushing’ use of the discipline policy as a means for asserting and maintaining teacher control. This was particularly the case for the Maths group:

Use the school discipline policy

(Excerpt from ‘initial lesson feedback-Maths’, Beth, 26 July 2010)

All her feedback and time spent with her is on the classroom management area. I stayed back [after school] for 30 mins [minutes] this arvo and spoke to her about it as well. … I repeated to her about … how to maintain herself whilst being more assertive and … an authority figure and “the boss” of the room

(Excerpt of email from mentor to researcher, 28 July 2010)

Incorporate classroom/school discipline policy in an everyday manner

(Excerpt from feedback sheet for Charly, 28 July 2010)

Pull ...

Only a few days into PEx Charly had reached the standpoint that although her mentor ‘doesn’t really let me do the types of things I want to do’, she has decided to ‘do what she has to’ (i.e. comply with Beth’s expectations) to ‘get a good PEx report so I can go out next year and teach how I want to teach’ (field notes, 3 August 2010). Given her pre-PEx ecosocio critiques of exclusionary discipline (see Section 6.2.2), initially, it is perhaps unsurprising that her ‘compliance’ in using the school ‘3 strikes and you’re out’ discipline policy was pedagogically distressing.

Charly told me that she felt she was ‘failing’ in classroom management because authoritarian was not her style and she felt she was being nothing but negative with the students (field notes, 3 August 2010). To redress this pedagogic distress, Charly had attempted to implement an interdependent group contingency token economy, where tokens could be redeemed by the whole class for the privilege of playing a game (and so temporary relief from class work) at the end of the week. However, Charly reported that
Beth was unsupportive of this insofar as she wouldn’t allow Charly and the class ‘time’ to play the game earned (field notes, 3 August 2010). Giving up on alternatives that better suited her teaching philosophy of working from the positive (i.e. the token economy), Charly conceded and began to implement the disciplinary policy. However, the first few occasions I observed her do this, I also noted a certain amount of resistance from her:

This session (writing an information report on ‘Electricity’) was the first time I saw Charly use the school-wide discipline policy. She put two names on the board. Henry’s name was put up for twanging elastic bands after having a class discussion on why not to. The other name was ‘Jim’, but Charly wiped his name off when he seemed to be on task again – the rubbing off is her own variation on the disciplinary policy’s procedure.

(Field notes, 11 August 2010)

Charly: Ben [student in maths group], that’s the [sic] name on the board for distracting people.

Ben: Can I work it off?

Charly: Yes you can.

…

When Ben got his first cross against his name Michael called out, “That’s time out!” (which is true to the school discipline policy). However, time out was not enforced, instead Charly told Ben, ‘Next time, your going to Mrs Smith [the deputy principal]’.

(Field notes, 16 August 2010)

In this excerpt Charly, is observed as complying with feedback from the mentor that she needs to implement the school discipline policy in order to properly manage the classroom. However, we also see some pedagogical distress that manifests in resistances to the discipline policy. Rubbing names off the board, offering chances for students to earn their name to be rubbed off the board and not enforcing the exclusionary discipline practice of ‘time out’ may be interpreted as resisting enforcing the disciplinary policy so as to generate consistency with her pre-PEx ecosocio critiques.
I contend that if Charly’s pre-PEx knowledge had been consistently biopsychosocial, the disciplinary policy would have matched her knowledge and resulted in no pedagogical quandaries or distress. The reward/punishment pedagogic apparatus afforded by the discipline policy would have neatly matched construals of the actively challenging child and teacher subject position of ‘manager’. However, Charly faced the task of enforcing the biopsychosocial discipline policy in her final PEx with contradictory subjectivities from her pre-PEx understandings, particularly her ecosocio understandings of exclusionary discipline practices that she had ‘squished via oscillations’ into biopsychosocial knowledge. Here we see the capacity of the biopsychosocial discourse, interpreted in such a way as to mask the concurrent use of more than one discourse of challenging behaviour in knowledge re-construction, give rise to pedagogical distress. For Charly, there was no epistemic match, only dissonance, which resulted in her resistance (described above). Here, Charly attempted to sustain her pre-PEx ‘squished’ standpoint of seeing exclusionary discipline practices as ‘not balanced’ whilst having her PEx mentor insist that she enact these practices. This initial, resistant, ‘pull’ from Charly was not to be sustained.

Push ...

The following is an excerpt from my field notes in which a discussion with Beth records her approval and reinforcement of Charly’s implementation of the school discipline policy:

Beth also said that, ‘Charly chucked Matt out of maths last Thursday [because of sustained misbehaviour’], which was a big thing because preservice teachers don’t often like to do that in case they are challenged, ‘well, why couldn’t you manage them?’ , but that the deputy principal was very supportive and said she didn’t mind how many students Charly had to send to her. … Beth said that she and Charly did some investigating that day and found out that Matt’s dad had just got out of jail ... So, Beth told Charly that he was obviously having a bad day and that it wasn’t any reflection on her teaching or her management. Beth felt that ‘chucking him out’ was an excellent learning experience for Charly. Beth said she told Charly that the only thing she did wrong was put up with it [the bad behaviour] for too long. She [Charly] needed to start those warnings [names and crosses on board] as soon as class started so that any ongoing distractions were removed, so
that the majority of the class could settle to their lessons for the majority of the
time (rather than wait to send him to the deputy in the last 15 minutes, like she
did).

(Field notes, 16 August 2010)

Charly recalled that Thursday maths lesson was particularly difficult because Matt
refused to do set tasks. … She said she went through the discipline policy warning
system with them (Ben and Matt) and ended up sending Matt to the office. … ‘As
much as I don’t want to be that person who sends kids out of the class all the
time, he was just completely disrupting the class and not allowing them to do their
work’. Charly said she felt terrible but then felt much better after she talked with
the Deputy Principal, who gave her support and ‘permission’ to do what she did.
Charly reported she felt this worked because Friday was a much better lesson.

(Field notes, 16 August 2010, original emphasis)

What is important here is that Charly’s pedagogic distress at ‘feeling terrible’ about
disciplinary strategies she implemented was alleviated by that which she heard and was
‘pushed’ upon her from the deputy principal and her mentor. Charly was told she had
done nothing wrong (by her mentor) and given support and ‘permission’ from the
executive to continue the practice. This in, turn was reinforced by the effect of what she
had done, she perceived that the children were more responsive to her as an authority
figure in the next maths lesson.

Post-PEx ...

By the end of her PEx, Charly’s knowledge of exclusionary discipline was discernibly
and discursively distant from her pre-PEx understandings:

The school discipline policy [three strikes and you’re out of the classroom] was
[long pause] interesting. Um, like, we started off using it, like I try not to use it as
my first level of ‘go to’. And then, this is in combination with the mentor teacher
obviously because she—like we had lots of chats about ‘what to do when they do
this’ and ‘where to go, in terms of consequences’ and things like that. So, we
followed to policy for a little bit … which was good while the … stage supervisor
was supportive of that. And then when she wasn’t, we stopped that and got rid of
the—like we didn’t even bother doing the name on the board, the cross, the
sending out because it just wasn’t going anywhere.

(Charly, post-PEx interview)
Unlike the pre-PEx story of her brother’s exclusion from school and her ecosocio-critique of exclusionary discipline, this post PEx story shows disappointment in the discipline policy of ‘three strikes and you’re out’ purely from a point of view of systemic failure (i.e. withdrawal of support from stage coordinator). In this story it is not the structures of schooling ill-suited to her brother that is considered, the misbehaviour is located within the student and identified as student choice / control or lack thereof, with ensuing consequences to be borne by the child.

This is an example of within-child, biopsychosocial knowledge of behaviour encountered in PEx via mentor narratives and school policy documents displacing her pre-PEx socio-cultural knowledge of behaviour present in her story of her brother’s exclusion from school. As such, it is an apposite example of altered preservice teacher epistemology during PEx. Unlike claims of ‘seeing the biology’, this knowledge change was not apparently explicit – In the post-PEx interview or focus group, Charly did not recall or make comparisons to her pre-PEx story of her brother. Therefore biopsychosocial discourse, as a sole discursive resource, accommodated rather than highlighted, a largely undetected, knowledge change.

8.7. **MONIQUE**

8.7.1. Describing the knowledge change ...

I categorised Monique’s pre-PEx knowledge as mostly biopsychosocial but with a strong emphasis towards ‘more social’ understandings of behaviour (her concept map did not mention biological influences). It was surprising then to unravel her uptake of contradictory subject positions (both ‘teacher as manager’ and ‘non-expert’) in her pre-PEx interview via occasional oscillations to biomedical understandings, particularly regarding behavioural disorders, choice and self-control. Strikingly, these oscillations did not appear to cause Monique any confusion pre-PEx (see Section 6.2.2). During and
after PEx Monique continued to oscillate between the biopsychosocial and biomedical discourses but to a much different effect. During PEx, and within the context of the high epistemic dissonance encountered therein, these contradictory knowledges generated a series of pedagogical quandaries. The pedagogical quandaries, in turn, were identified as instrumental in altering Monique’s understanding of challenging behaviours; specifically, the knowledge that biology has ‘so much more impact [on behaviour] than I’ve ever given it credit for’ (Monique, focus group, original emphasis).

Sustained from Monique’s pre-PEx concept map were themes of behaviour being connected to choice, social factors, relationships and interactions and environmental factors (post-PEx concept map). Themes that featured in Monique’s pre-PEx concept map (Appendix D) but were displaced from her post-PEx concept map (Appendix F) included notions of social responsibility, assertions that individuals can control only their own behaviour and references to behavioural theorists, namely Glasser and Vygotsky. Having compared and contrasted the pre- and post-PEx concept map, I now turn to what was new or different in Monique’s post-PEx graphic representation of her knowledge. The most striking new features of Monique’s post-PEx concept map were her inscriptions: ‘Biological factors – Have more impact than I initially gave reference to’; and ‘From prac: children with challenging behaviour cannot help but act that way’ (Monique, post-PEx concept map).

The focus of Monique’s knowledge change from an analysis of her concept maps alone suggested a fundamental shift in her understanding of ‘challenging behaviour’. Her general representation of behaviour (the central concept of her concept map) remained biopsychosocial insofar as it attended to biological and social factors and centred on notions of choice and stimulus/response psychology (insofar as behaviour was cast as involving ‘react[ionary]’ choices). However, ‘challenging behaviour’, specifically, was cast as beyond personal choice and the possibility of learning alternative behaviours; the person ‘cannot help but act that way’ (Monique, post-PEx concept map). This notion of the in-actively challenging child who cannot help but be challenging is peculiar to the
biomedical discourse (see Section 2.5). Considering this, its inclusion in a graphic representation of otherwise biopsychosocial knowledge creates a striking conceptual juxtaposition. That this was explicitly attributed to knowledge gained ‘from prac’, I contend, occurred via an epistemic process of ‘squishing via oscillation’, particularly oscillations between biopsychosocial and biomedical discourses. This is the focus of the remainder of this section.

8.7.2. In the context of high epistemic dissonance

Monique encountered high epistemic dissonance on her final PEx (a prerequisite, it would seem, for those who ‘squished by oscillation’ and so ‘traversed discursive boundaries’). She commented on the mismatch between what she ‘knew’ and what she saw, heard and did on PEx: ‘from what I understood about behaviour [pre-PEx], a lot of it just didn’t fit with what I was seeing [during PEx]’ (Monique, post-PEx interview) and so, subsequently, ‘I had to shift my whole thinking [about challenging behaviour]’ (Monique, focus group). Monique encountered many instances of challenging behaviour during her PEx thus creating dissonance between conceptions of ‘ideal teaching and learning’ and what actually happened. Also, whilst there were few perceivable tensions in the professional relationship between Monique and her Mentor, the mentor teachers’ discursive positioning moves (in constructing knowledge of challenging behaviour) were sufficiently different to Monique’s to interrupt, challenge and, I maintain, ultimately change them.

Monique’s PEx took place at Westside Public School. Westside PS has 630 students, including 20 per cent from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds, and has a selective Opportunity Class for Year 5 and 6 students. Westside PS is situated in an upper-middle-class suburb (SEIFA decile 8) on the western outskirts of Sydney. This is the only school where the empirical material contradicts the Bureau of Statistics data used to classify the area’s socioeconomic status. This may be because the SEIFA data used
(see ABA 2010) drills down to local government area, not suburb; so, Westside may possibly represent a pocket of disadvantage in a largely middle-class area.

Compared to Elvyndale (SEIFA decile 6) Westside seems equally, if not more disadvantaged. The drive approaching the school is characterised by small, older houses that were often poorly maintained compared to houses immediately surrounding other schools in the study. All the windows in the school were barred with security mesh (field notes, 29 October 2010). Furthermore, Westside has somewhat of a reputation for being a ‘hard area’ (Monique, focus group). Katherine also alluded to this in her assessment of how Westside has changed over time,

Um, I’ve been on Kindergarten for eleven years and through that time, the, the clientele at Westside has changed a lot. We’ve gone from a lot more stable, family lives to a lot more split homes, lower socio-economic children and fa-families and that changed the behaviours at our school. We are also getting a lot more children with diagnoses who [have] behaviour problems, special needs as well.

(Katherine, interview)

Katherine’s comment about behaviour overall was that, ‘most of the school are quite well behaved’ (Katherine, interview). Westside PS has newly introduced the PBS framework to support an overhaul of their school discipline policies and systems (Katherine, interview). Like Sonya, Katherine deployed terminology particular to the Positive Behaviour for Success (PBS) policy model to describe children with challenging behaviours as *top of the pyramid kids*. But, unlike Sonya, Katherine elaborated that these children, ‘are the challenging behaviours and they’re the children who have been mostly diagnosed with ODD and ADHD or Aspergers’ (Katherine, interview). The school’s policies and environmental wall-print were consistently aligned with the PBS approach and so drew exclusively on the biopsychosocial discourse (see Section 4.3). The school used RISK software to track each student’s progress through the PBS reward and discipline system and also to store relevant documentation from the school counsellor. The RISK data was assessed by a staff-
based committee weekly to locate patterns of recurring discipline problems that may be addressed at whole-school level.

One informal policy in this school was remarkably different from other schools in the study. The principal and Kindergarten coordinator (Katherine) were collaboratively utilising kindergarten orientation interviews to encourage parents to seek behavioural disorder diagnoses prior to their child commencing school:

   Katherine said that parents don’t understand that if they tell the school at orientation that their child has behavioural difficulties then the school can organise support for the child from the outset, rather than chase assessments/diagnoses for children once they are at school and then have them miss out early support (it takes about a year from diagnoses to receiving support resources such as funding for a teacher’s aide etc). To remedy this, this year’s orientation now includes a parent interview, which the principal and Katherine call an ‘interrogation’ where they ‘find out everything there is to know about your child’. Katherine reported that this was very effective because they had already identified one child as a candidate for early assessment for Aspergers Syndrome.

   (Field notes, 29 October 2010)

On her PEx, Monique taught an Early Stage 1 (Kindergarten) class comprised of nine girls and eleven boys. There were nine diagnoses shared between three boys (each of the three were diagnosed with ADHD and ODD, two students were classified IM [mild intellectual disability], and one had a ‘Mental Health II’ (ME2) classification, for concerns of early signs of schizophrenia). At the time of observations, another child was being referred for assessment for Aspergers Syndrome. The class had very diverse ability levels. Whilst there were two IM students, there were also twelve children performing above Early Stage 1 benchmarking outcomes (reading levels) and of those, five were performing above Year 1 levels (field notes, 15 November 2010). The class was overall described as presenting, ‘very challenging and defiant behaviour’ (Katherine, final PEx report, p. 2).
Katherine has had to, as she described, ‘evacuate’ the classroom three times (prior to PEx) due to violent outbursts from students and she reported that the behaviour consultant for South Western Sydney (school district) described this is the worst kindergarten class in the South-Western Sydney area (field notes, 23 November 2010). Katherine said that her classroom is laughed at school wide and is popularly dubbed ‘the wild side’ by other staff (field notes, 29 October 2010). But this is not to say that Katherine agrees with this sentiment, she stated that had an opportunity to leave the class during a school-wide restructure, but chose to stay because she liked the kids (field notes, 15 November 2010).

Monique was keenly aware of her PEx class’ reputation, ‘on prac my class was the joke of the school and the district that’s how bad it was’ (Monique, focus group). When describing her class to her preservice teacher colleagues, Monique recalled:

I had quite a few challenging behaviours. Um, I had three ‘star pupils’ that were known as my bad trio [the three boys sharing nine diagnoses] … Um, but underneath that I had a whole group of interesting kids, [laughs] ‘weird kids’ my mentor teacher kept calling them.

(Monique, focus group)

A major source of dissonance, and one that made Monique re-construct her knowledge of challenging behaviour, was ‘seeing’ children behave in challenging ways during PEx (Monique, post-PEx interview). In this sense, the children’s behaviour was a source of epistemic dissonance, a stark contrast to the ‘ideal’ class assumed and imbued in university coursework.

Katherine had 20 years teaching experience. For the last eleven years she has been teaching kindergarten at Westside PS and was also an Assistant Principal, part of her duties in this role included ‘Supervisor for Early Stage 1 (Kindergarten)’. At the time of the study, Katherine also sat on the Discipline Committee, Learning Support Committee and coordinated Literacy and Scripture for the school. Katherine seemed a highly
organised and motivated person and this is reflected in her classroom, everything in the classroom was neat and colour coordinated (to a pink and purple theme).

**Assessment of mentor’s discursive positioning**

Katherine’s discursive positionings were predominantly biopsychosocial, but her oscillations to ecosocio and biomedical assertions were consistent and persistent. Rather than ‘bouncing’ between these contradictory discourses (as all other participants seemed to do). Katherine made connections and relationships between these. What was interesting was that Katherine seemed remarkably clear about switching between these discourses and this happened according to a very particular sequence: first ecosocio (it was the teacher’s responsibility to create schooling structures supportive of positive behaviour); second biopsychosocial (once supportive structures were in place, it was ultimately the child’s responsibility to learn positive behaviour); third biomedical (when all ecosocio and biopsychosocial ‘attempts’ were deemed fruitless, biology was credited with completely obstructing the possibility of learning to behave differently). As logical as this may seem, uptake of such contradictory discourses (and related subject positions) still generated pedagogical quandaries for the mentor teacher.

Katherine’s ecosocio understandings were continually shown in her attention to ensuring that the structures of schooling (such as instructional pacing, timing, and task design) were directly linked to behaviour and it was the teacher’s job to support children’s behaviour by manipulating these elements appropriately. This was evident in her teaching and in her feedback to Monique:

> Katherine talked with me about why she inserted an unscheduled ‘developmental play’ session in the middle teaching block (between lunch and recess). She came up to me when the children were settled and playing cooperatively and said, ‘they’re in Kindergarten, they’re allowed to play’, she acknowledged that she saw that [the three children sharing nine diagnoses] ‘were on a downward slide’ throughout the day thus far and that play was introduced at this point to restore calm, ‘rather than fight them’.

*(Field notes, 23 November 2010)*
Behaviour was an issue in this lesson, I feel the long time the ch’n [children] were on the floor was partly to blame for this. … If you notice the ch’n [children] becoming restless remember it is OK to change your lesson to accommodate their behaviour.

(Katherine, teacher feedback sheet, no date)

Whilst Katherine’s first port of call was teacher responsibility to design schooling structures supportive of children’s behaviour (and so directly aligned with the ecosocio subject position of ‘teacher as supporter’), this was coupled with continual biopsychosocial assertions that behaviour was teachable and learnable via techniques afforded by Behaviourism. For example,

[Monique] has continued to develop her classroom management skills throughout her internship. … [Monique] is developing the skill of being consistent when defining clear expectations and following through with the consequences of negative behaviour. She has displayed an awareness of acknowledging and rewarding children who follow the rules and class expectations.

(Katherine, Final PEx report, 19 November 2010)

Concurrent with upholding biopsychosocial notions that behaviour is learnable, especially under the tutelage of an expert teacher-manager, were assertions that for children with behavioural disorders, no teaching strategies were deemed effective in causing behavioural change, ‘nothing works’:

[Even though I am] experienced, I still have troubles dealing with some of these behaviours because everything you’ve learned does not work with some of these children

(Katherine, interview)

I had [an] ISTB [Itinerant Support Teacher – Behaviour] in here [observing children with diagnoses], they try, they said, ‘look [Katherine], what you’re doing is, that’s it. That’s what you can be doing.’ And they just said, ‘we wish you luck’ and they left. … Nothing works. … You try the positives, you try the negatives, you try the yelling and screaming, you try the bribing … everything.

(Katherine, interview)
In these last two excerpts, Katherine takes up the subject position of non-expert, where she positions herself as unable to effectively teach the in-actively challenging child, the child that can’t help their behaviour because of their biological disorder. Because Katherine consistently oscillated to purely biomedical knowledge of behaviour at a certain point (that is, once all social and psychosocial factors had, to her mind, been exhausted) her biomedical knowledge was definite. I suggest it is this ‘strength’ of biomedical conviction that generated dissonance for Monique on PEx. Such strength of biomedical knowledge was very different to Monique’s occasional and largely undetected oscillations to the biomedical discourse that didn’t appear to disrupt her ‘very social’ pre-PEx understandings of behaviour. I posit that it was this strong, biomedical knowledge of her mentor that seemed to offer a platform for development of Monique’s biomedical conceptions of behaviour during PEx.

*Mentor / mentee relationship and professional dis/autonomy issues*

Monique and Katherine enjoyed a very positive professional relationship with no discernable conflicts. Monique gently lamented that during PEx she was, ‘still trying to teach it the way my teacher would teach’ (Monique, focus group). However, this was not perceived as a huge barrier to professional autonomy; Monique designed and implemented her own behaviour management system and units of work. On balance, Monique was reportedly ‘open to suggestions and feedback and readily employed and accepted all advice given’, and ‘open to professional dialogue with colleagues’ at meetings and in staffroom interactions (Katherine, PEx final report, 19 November 2010).
8.7.3. Traversing discursive boundaries – A case of changeable questions, pedagogical quandaries and dangerous ‘answers’

Changeable questions

Monique seemed to struggle to reconcile what she saw and heard on PEx with her pre-PEx understandings that behaviour was biopsychosocial but ‘mostly social’ (see section 6.2.2). Moreover, these dissonances led to the positing of a new, epistemologically and pedagogically significant question. This subsection examines the conditions that led to such questioning. First, the dissonance generated by Monique’s ‘seeing’ and ‘hearing’ on PEx will be described, then the epistemic move outlining the positing of the question will be outlined.

Monique talked of ‘seeing’ the behaviour of children in her class who had behaviour disorder diagnoses and how that challenged her knowledge:

I had a lot of emphasis on social [understandings of behaviour in the pre-PEx concept map] influences on behaviour. But then, after prac, after seeing the boys who couldn’t help themselves, couldn’t sit still, no matter what they did … biology has so much more of an impact than I’ve ever given it credit for.

(Monique, focus group, original emphasis)

Like talking to Katherine, she would explain that ‘yes, this [inattentive behaviour is] intrinsically part of him. This is what will happen’. But then also seeing it for myself, seeing [Daniel], that he just couldn’t concentrate … It was kind of a bit of a ‘moment’ for me … I was like ‘okay, I see it now’ whereas it was something I hadn’t really experienced before. Um [pause] and just kind of like although all these [reward/discipline] systems were in place that I’ve seen [elsewhere] that have worked … but even with them in place, these children still didn’t [pause] respond … like every other child that I’ve seen, or the other kids in the class.

(Monique, post-PEx interview)

I guess in past weeks, I’m like, ‘Daniel, you’re doing the wrong thing. Why?’ … Then this last week, when he didn’t have his medication, I could just see him.
Yeah, ‘pay attention!’; then just the change in his face, I’m like [pause] it kind of took that moment for me to realise, ‘you can’t help what you’re doing, [trails off]

(Monique, post-PEx interview)

In these recounts of what she ‘saw’ of challenging behaviour on PEx, Monique moves from biopsychosocial preoccupations of reasoning and self control (‘why?’), to biomedical understandings that the child ‘can’t help’ their behaviour. Also, what Monique heard on PEx challenged biopsychosocial understandings that yes, biology plays a part but all children can learn desired behaviours. She heard this primarily through her mentor’s microstorying of ‘the behaviours’ (Katherine, interview) in her class as well as from her assertions that, for certain children, behaviour is beyond being manageable and teachable. This was, according to her mentor, the case even for experienced and authoritative teaching figures such as the principal:

From what I’d heard from other teachers, from what I’d heard from Katherine … I mean, Katherine had obviously prepared me for the worst, but by doing that she kind of had been telling me the worst. Like, at times, like when the principal was in the room and they were still throwing chairs and trying to climb out of the classroom [windows] and screaming at her.

(Monique, post-PEx interview)

These biomedical understandings that biologically disordered children can’t control their behaviour or learn to behave differently were at odds with the almost solely biopsychosocial knowledge presented to Monique in her university studies (and previous PEx). The epistemic dissonance experienced by Monique manifested with the generation of a new question.

Through, I guess, I don’t know, the theory that we’ve learned at uni, it’s like ‘okay, yeah, that’s what makes most sense to me’ … but being in the practical field, so much of that doesn’t fit.

(Monique, focus group, original emphasis)

I guess what I had understood [from university studies] is that, okay here’s the biological but you can influence it and control it by giving these [psychological and] social things. Whereas, and so I’m like, ‘okay, yeah, that’s fine but it doesn’t
I suggest that this is an excellent example of how the university’s almost singular presentation of the biopsychosocial discourse provided a covert springboard for concurrently considering other, mutually exclusive discourses of behaviour. The biopsychosocial assertion of ‘three at once’ becomes a different question, ‘which one of three?’.

Monique’s recount of the dominantly biopsychosocial university knowledge presented a coherent set of possible pedagogical responses and subject position of ‘teacher as manager’. By asserting understandings of behaviour as ‘three at once’, behaviour was framed as ever and always a combination of biological, psychological and social factors. Or, as Monique put it, ‘there’s the biological but you can influence it and control it by giving these social things’ (post-PEx interview). But the epistemic dissonance encountered on PEx caused her to re-frame this knowledge with a new question ‘which of three’: ‘Which [behaviour] is showing?’ (Monique, post-PEx interview), is it biology, psychology or social? Without clear understanding of the discursive boundaries between biopsychosocial, biomedical and ecosocio discourses of behaviour (and their implications for pedagogy), this new and powerful question allowed scope to oscillate freely between contradictory knowledges of ‘the child with challenging behaviour’. When knowing ‘all three’, the pedagogical responses and subject positions afforded by the biopsychosocial discourse are clear. When asking the question, ‘which of three?’ quandaries arose regarding choice between the conflicting pedagogical responses afforded by each discourse. This epistemic move, this posing of a new question and subsequent covert oscillating practices, resulted in pedagogical quandaries for Monique when teaching ‘children with challenging behaviours’ during her final PEx.
**Pedagogical quandaries**

One pedagogical quandary Monique encountered during PEx was whether or not to punish a child for challenging behaviour:

One of the biggest things he [Daniel, diagnosed ADHD / ODD / IM] got in trouble, and was in Reflection [detention with a focus on explicit teaching of behaviour], for most days, with was his swearing and his language. Which, he learnt from his parents, or, or, or Katherine thinks it was his Dad in particular, um, particularly the use of like, the ‘F’ word … And he’d been told that it’s not appropriate language, so he knew, that at school it wasn’t appropriate language … So, that was a difficult thing ‘cause like Katherine’s like, ‘I know he can’t help it … he doesn’t know’, like we couldn’t tell if he just didn’t know [because of his disorders] that it was inappropriate, or if he knew but just kept using it because [pause] he wanted to.

(Monique, post-PEx interview)

Here we can see tensions between knowledge that behaviour is learned (via assertions of learning swearing from parents and teachers’ efforts to educate Daniel that ‘it’s not appropriate’) and that ‘he can’t help it … he doesn’t know’. Or, tensions between biopsychosocial and biomedical understandings, respectively. What is important here is that these tensions manifest in a real pedagogical quandary regarding whether or not to punish based on the problematic question ‘which of three?’, indicated by the if/or language deployed. What is also interesting is that the pedagogical quandary was reportedly shared – ‘we couldn’t tell’ (emphasis added). I suggest that such indications of a pedagogical quandary for the mentor infers her oscillating practices had a similar epistemic effect to the preservice teacher’s oscillating practices.

Another of the pedagogical quandaries facing Monique on PEx was whether or not to expect children with behavioural disorders to do their schoolwork. For example,

I just don’t, like after seeing [pause] like the boys, they would go off, particularly Justin, when he would just, he wouldn’t do the work I’m like well, ‘is this something that is socially learnt?’ like, [pause] like the, this was what Katherine was saying, ‘he’s not doing his work’. But, I couldn’t tell if that was just because it was, he didn’t want to because he had ODD and was just saying he didn’t want
to or if that was because he’d, Katherine said he was getting scared of like, failure because you know he’s not as bright as the other kids - he knows that and he didn’t like getting things wrong, so is that something that is biological and it’s hard to tell, I’m like ‘well?!?’.

(Monique, post-PEx interview)

The confusion around whether Justin’s resistance to seatwork was either a ‘socially learned’ fear of failure or ‘because he had ODD’ became an issue of exasperation: ‘well?!?’ The exasperation rested, it seemed, on indecision about whether it was reasonable to demand compliance from a child who had a disorder that rendered him innately ‘oppositional’ and ‘defiant’, whereas ‘avoidance issues’ may be ameliorated by all manner of pedagogy. Likewise, she recounts the quandary of whether or not to expect a child with ADHD and ODD to participate and/or achieve in scheduled learning experiences:

When he wasn’t paying attention … he would go over and play with the dollhouse … when he did that, I was conflicted by that. I’m like, well, do I make him come and sit back down because he’s not paying attention, he’s not learning [pause] But yeah, I don’t know whether to push it and try and make him sit down or if I should just let it go. And on the other hand, Katherine has been saying a lot of the behaviours you just need to ignore them. And I’m like, well, is this one I ignore or is this one I get on … Which one’s this one?

(Monique, post-PEx interview)

In the focus group, Monique expanded on this quandary by expounding concerns and fears regarding how the behaviour of a child diagnosed with ODD might affect the rest of the class (by interrupting their learning):

Like, I’m stopping the learning, I’m stopping the flow of the lesson to talk to him and then I know if I tell him to come and sit back down, he’s most likely to say no … and he’s probably going to start throwing chairs, and he’s probably going to start screaming and squealing … and so I’m like, I’ll just let him do it. But then, I’m like, he’s not learning now. So that was a bit of a conflict that one.

(Monique, focus group)
Here, Monique took on biomedical understandings and resolved a pedagogical quandary by relieving expectations of students with known behaviour disorders to engage and learn, because they ‘[can’t] help themselves’ (Monique, focus group). But, within a single teaching session, Monique would both ‘ignore’ children she assessed as displaying innately dysfunctional behaviours, and inform them that they could do their work ‘now or recess, that’s your choice’ (field notes, 15 November 2010), or ‘put it in your pocket or I’ll keep it until lunch, make your choice’ (field notes, 15 November 2010). This demonstrates the possibility of different outcomes to the same quandary based on oscillations between discourses. When she ‘saw’ the biology of the in-actively challenging child she relieved the child from all requirements to engage with learning experiences. Concurrently, when she ‘saw’ that same child as pro-actively challenging she offered a compliance/consequence ultimatum. Interestingly, like Anne and Charly, Monique construed the compliance/consequence ultimatum as a ‘choice’ for the challenging child.

Dangerous answers - ‘its biological when social doesn’t work’

The main crux of the problem underpinning these pedagogical quandaries rests in the prevalence of the biopsychosocial discourse in teacher education. In being all but solely presented with biopsychosocial understandings of behaviour the preservice teachers were able to ‘squish’ their apprenticed knowledge under its seemingly broad umbrella (it attends to biological, psychological and social aspects of behaviour).

In Monique’s case the positing of a new question facilitated ‘squishing via oscillations’. Moving away from biopsychosocial assertions of ‘all of three’ (biology, psychology and social factors), Monique’s stronger oscillations to biomedical understandings from PEx were ‘squished’ under the biopsychosocial umbrella with the forming of a new question ‘which of three?’. In short, because the biopsychosocial discourse could not be overtly defined and compared and contrasted to its discursive counterparts, the inappropriate, ‘squishing via oscillations’ question ‘which of three?’ was posited and pedagogical
quandaries ensued. This is another example of sole presentation of the biopsychosocial discourse being unsupportive of reflecting on knowledge change acquired during final PEx.

What is concerning is that, despite inherent contradiction and being unsupportive of pedagogical decision-making, this new ‘squished’ knowledge of Monique’s offered its own, indisputable solutions. In discerning ‘which of the three’ is showing, Monique now ‘knows’ that the biological is the ‘base-line’ (Monique, focus group) and the social is either going to change it, or not. This new idea from PEx that sometimes, ‘nothing works’ (Monique, focus group) assists in answering her self-devised question (see Section ‘changeable questions’), ‘which is it [biology, psychology or social factors], which one’s showing?’:

> When you’ve tried, when you’ve implemented everything that you know: you’ve tried the social, you’ve tried the motivation and nothing seems to be working. I think, well okay, there’s something maybe more [going on] than what I can do [because the behaviour is biological]

(Monique, focus group)

Deeming behaviour biological and so beyond teacher intervention or assistance according to the limits of teacher behaviour management knowledge is, I would argue, a precarious position for a pedagogue and her students. It is a dangerous ‘answer’ to the question ‘which of three’ insofar as it permits the teacher to non-reflexively oscillate to a ‘teacher as non-expert’ subject position, at their own discretion. Children, under this reasoning, could be deemed ‘unable to help their behaviour’ and ‘beyond help’ purely because their teacher felt they had exhausted their ‘teacher as supporter’ or ‘teacher as manager’ understandings. Given this ‘teacher as non-expert’ subject position supported Monique’s pedagogical decision making in favour of not expecting children to engage and learn (see examples above) – this should be troubling for teacher educators. Whilst this relatively neat ‘answer’ to the question ‘which of three’ seemed to strongly influence resolving pedagogical quandaries, its inherent contradictions via covert oscillation between mutually exclusive discourses perpetuated epistemic unrest:
Well, the next thing I’ve got on here is that, ‘not all behaviours are voluntary’. I think that comes back from the biological, what I was saying about Daniel where [pause] he [pause] he was sitting there and for five seconds, it was literally that long, and then he couldn’t pay attention any more. And then he’d be off. And so, he wasn’t, ‘yeah, I want to make, I, I want to destruct the class’ it was just what he was, was doing. And he, I don’t think he could control it. … Um, but even coming back to that, I think… [referring to concept map] ‘children know what behaviours they generally know what is good and bad’ … So they [children with challenging behaviours] know [pause] what’s good and bad, which they learn through interactions or through the school rules, the classroom rules, ‘you sit down, do your work’ um, yeah, they know what [inaudible] is, some choose not too and they’re the ones [pause] or not necessarily choose, but some don’t do it, the challenging behaviours whether it’s the biological, tell them that they’re not to, tell them not to blow the rules because--I’m so confused with what I know.

(Monique, post-PEx interview)

In this post-PEx talk about what Monique understands about behaviour we see, for the final time the effects of covert epistemic ‘squishing via oscillations’ (in this case oscillating between biopsychosocial and biomedical discourses). The effect is paradoxical knowledge and confusion, especially around notion of ‘the in-actively child who can’t control themselves pro-actively choosing their behaviour’.

8.8. A final word on epistemic ‘squishing’

The pedagogical distress and quandaries faced by those who journeyed through PEx by traversing different discourses (and so ‘squishing by oscillation’), I maintain, would not be entertained if there was some understanding of the limits of three unique discourses of behaviour and their delimiting effects on pedagogy and teacher subjectivity. Further, such confusions may be avoided if the challenging child was recast in university coursework as several discursively constituted objects, rather than simply as an individual with innate abilities to control and/or choose their behaviour (or not). If one could come to understand that each discourse constituted an epistemological standpoint, a certain way of knowing, with unique but internally consistent possibilities for pedagogy and teacher subjectivities – a fair portion of confusion would be limited to deciding a standpoint. To teacher educators the possibility of preservice teachers
adopting a ‘biomedical’ standpoint may be completely undesirable, and the possibility of preservice teachers adopting an ‘ecosocio’ standpoint may be contentious, but findings from this study show that those who are taking the teacher-education-preferred ‘biopsychosocial’ standpoint are doing so with gross inaccuracies (insofar as they repeatedly fail to consistently sustain the central assertion that, despite biological anomalies, behaviour can be taught and learned).

In terms of squishing (by either negotiation or oscillations), the problem isn’t the biopsychosocial discourse in and of itself. The problem is that the biopsychosocial discourse is the prevailing discourse of behaviour presented in teacher education. With no (or remarkably few) reference or points of discursive comparison offered in teacher education, the preservice teachers were unsuccessfully manipulating this theoretic middle-ground. This resulted in their own confusion: a confusion that at best remained undetected and at worst generated significant pedagogical quandaries.

The preservice teachers perceived a ‘broadness’ of university knowledge of behaviour as attending to biological, psychological and social aspects of behaviour. However, this partial understanding of the biopsychosocial knowledge presented in university coursework (see Section 4.2) was shown to be malleable to the point of epistemic ‘squishing’, where the preservice teachers bent the limits of the biopsychosocial to accommodate their preferred (and often apprenticed) understandings of behaviour. To this end, the biopsychosocial understandings encountered at university were shown to lack rigour. Considered alone, the biopsychosocial discourse failed to: (a) interrupt the preservice teachers’ existing, apprenticed knowledge; (b) consistently support pedagogical decision making; and (c) operate as a reflective tool for making sense of new knowledge gained during PEx. To begin to address this, I contend that development of a discussion of various knowledges of behaviour, but more importantly the implications of each of these knowledges on pedagogy and teacher subjectivity, should be explicitly taught in teacher education contexts.
8.9. Chapter summary

In this chapter I have argued that, despite moments of drawing on various epistemic processes, each preservice teacher tended to maintain an identifiable, overarching epistemic journey through knowledge re-construction during PEx. Ella and Merrin toured the line of best fit (Sections 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3); each encountered low or no epistemic dissonance during PEx and what they saw, heard and did on PEx was discursively consistent with their pre-PEx biopsychosocial knowledge. Little or mild knowledge change was experienced by these participants. Anne who negotiated a complex middle ground (Sections 8.4 and 8.5) entered her PEx with subtle yet undetected contradictions in her biopsychosocial understandings of behaviour, and what she saw, heard and did on PEx did not seem overly influenced or impacted by these contradictions. This journey was characterised by epistemic ‘squishing via negotiation’ and Anne’s knowledge change was discernible but mostly in terms of biopsychosocial pre-occupations, particularly regarding different strategies for managing children with challenging behaviour. Thirdly, Charly and Monique who traversed different discourses (Sections 8.6, 8.7 and 8.8) entered their PEx with contradictory knowledge of challenging behaviour. Their journey was characterised by ‘squishing via oscillation’ practices and influenced their PEx insofar as it gave rise to pedagogical distress and/or quandaries. Moreover, for these preservice teachers, things seen, heard and done on PEx resulted in significant changes to their knowledge and discursive positioning – which resulted in paradoxical knowledge and confusions, rather than clarity.

It is the nuances of this third type of epistemological journey, the traversing of different discourses, that sustained two new arguments put forward this chapter. Previously, (in Chapter 6) I argued that the almost exclusive deployment of the biopsychosocial discourse in university coursework failed to challenge the preservice teachers’ existing, apprenticed knowledge. In this chapter, I contended that solely presenting the biopsychosocial discourse in university contexts had two additional, unintended but problematic consequences, especially for preservice teachers ‘traversing different discourses’ through PEx. The first of these consequences was that, in seeming to
accommodate the preservice teachers’ epistemic practice of ‘squishing via oscillations’ between competing discourses of behaviour (see Chapter 4), the biopsychosocial discourse masked contradictions in their knowledge; moreover, this was unsupportive of pedagogical decision making, particularly in terms of responding to children’s challenging behaviour. The other unintended and problematic consequence was that such discursive exclusivity delimited possibilities for a language to identify and reflect on shifts in their knowledge resultant from PEx. Preservice teachers traversing different discourses experienced knowledge change during PEx, particularly regarding challenging behaviour. If or when that knowledge change did not align with the biopsychosocial discourse – with no other formal knowledge base to reconcile the new knowledge to, these preservice teachers experienced paradoxical knowledge, confusion and uncertainty. They had no discursive resources to express this confusion or knowledge change. The effect of the university as an ‘authority of delimitation’ (Foucault 1972, see also Section 2.5.1) on preservice teacher knowledge of challenging behaviour, in this sense, seemed complete.
PART IV: The power and limitation of maps
Conclusion
9. CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have problematised the notion of ‘children with challenging behaviour’ as a newly mandated knowledge referent for the profession of teaching in Australia. I have demonstrated the complexity and multiplicity of the term, which seems to have been reduced to ‘commonsense’ understandings related to general classroom management concerns of teachers. Finally, I have deployed a Foucauldian theorisation of knowledge as archevised and dynamic (see Chapters 2, 5, 6, 7 and 8) to map and theorise how five preservice primary teachers re-constructed their knowledge of ‘challenging behaviour’, during their final PEx.

To conclude this thesis I revisit each research question, somewhat out of order, so as to outline key findings, contributions to knowledge and recommendations for future research. The research questions driving this project were,

- How do preservice teachers re-construct their knowledge of children’s challenging behaviour in their final ‘professional experience’ (PEx)?
- What discursive resources do they draw on to do this?
- With what effects for their knowledge and teaching practice?

First, I consider the knowledge resources, then the participants’ knowledge itself, the epistemic practices and their effects. This, in turn, culminates in a discussion regarding the need to reconceptualise the theory/practice divide in teacher education and teacher professional knowledge and cast the problem, instead, in terms of knowledge.
9.1. **Resources for re-constructing knowledge of challenging behaviour**

In this thesis I have identified particular knowledge resources and their features. I conclude my considerations of the resources for re-constructing knowledge of challenging behaviour in three moves. First, I revisit the archive of challenging behaviour I constructed and the discursive resources this offered. Then, I consider the restrictions and access issues of the discursive resources afforded by the archive, particularly the role of universities and schools as ‘authorities of delimitation’ (Foucault 1972). Finally, I turn to dynamic knowledge resources such as the participants’ apprenticed knowledge and detail how this study has developed and modified this notion.

*The archive as a knowledge resource*

The notion of constructing and re-constructing a personal knowledge base very much involves the individual in perpetual and dynamic relationship with knowledge, but with which knowledge and from where does the knowledge come? This is where the archive as a knowledge resource comes into play. The archive variously posits that which can be known whilst simultaneously pointing to the sources of knowledge. Understanding knowledge as archevised, as something that circulates (at least in part) at the level of discourse, produced new possibilities for understanding preservice teachers’ knowledge of challenging behaviour.

Deploying a Foucauldian notion of knowledge as ‘archevised’ offered a means of pulling focus on the vague and elusive concept of ‘challenging behaviour’. I began this thesis by outlining the problem that although “defining challenging behaviour … has always been an unsatisfactory enterprise” (Visser & Cole 2003, p. 10), it is a mandatory component of teachers’ professional knowledge and accreditation in Australia (NSW Institute of Teachers 2006). This problem was compounded as (in Chapter 4) a strong case was made that the term ‘challenging behaviour’ underwent extensive re-writing
and despecification in contemporary educational contexts and was subsequently relegated to the realm of teachers’ ‘common sense’. ‘Challenging behaviour’ came to mean, ‘any child’s behaviour that the teacher finds challenging’. In this way, understandings of ‘challenging behaviour’ in ‘school’ and ‘teacher education’ contexts were cast as ‘really obvious’. So, as well as vast and complex definitional disagreement in ‘challenging behaviour’ literature and documentation, teachers’ professional knowledge of challenging behaviour was cast as comprising mostly subjective, personalised definitions.

This study’s treatment of challenging behaviour was unique as it moved beyond the definitional debates imbued in ‘challenging behaviour’ literature and documentation and simultaneously problematised a ‘common sense’ approach to such a complex issue. This move away from definitional debates was achieved through deployment of Foucault’s (1972) rules of discursive formation. The rules of discursive formation were used to analyse the hundreds of scholarly articles, newsprint media, and government, policy and university documents reviewed (see Chapters 2, 3 & 4 and Appendices B & C) that comprised the archive of challenging behaviour. From this analysis I identified three discourses in the archive. I have argued that each of these discourses featured unique discourse objects (that is, the in-, pro- and re- actively challenging child) and limits as to how these may be talked about and known. I posited subtle but discernable differences between biomedical, biopsychosocial and ecosocio discourses of challenging behaviour and their implications for teachers’ subjectivities, knowledge and pedagogy (see Chapter 2).

I have argued that the three posited discourses of challenging behaviour in the archive were the knowledges that the preservice teachers variously and dynamically accessed (via ‘matching’ and/or ‘squishing’ epistemic processes) to re-construct their knowledge of challenging behaviour during their final PEx (See chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8). With the three posited discourses setting discernable limits of the sayable and repeatable about children with challenging behaviour, it became possible to set aside definitional debates.
and instead, discursively ‘map’ participants’ statements (and so knowledge and knowledge-change). Such mapping allowed me to identify which discourse/s the preservice teachers adopted, rejected and negotiated and to note the effects of this on their knowledge, pedagogy and teacher subjectivities. This method for discursively mapping and analysing preservice teacher knowledge change is another contribution of this thesis, insofar as I have not encountered it elsewhere in the literature to date.

Accessible discourses? The delimiting effect of the university and school on discursive resources for understanding challenging behaviour

Although three discourses of challenging behaviour were mapped in the archive, the educational contexts of this study pervasively featured one. When challenging classroom behaviours were discussed, the participating university and schools’ texts almost exclusively referred to the pro-actively challenging child that the teacher must ‘manage’ 24. This represented an almost exclusive deployment of the biopsychosocial discourse (see Chapter 4). In this way, the university and school were functioning as ‘authorities of delimitation’ (Foucault 1972). These institutions, through various aspects of teacher education programs (including PEx), deployed one (biopsychosocial) discourse and in doing so rendered the remaining two (biomedical and ecosocio discourses) far less accessible as a knowledge resource for the preservice teachers. I have extensively critiqued the effects of such delimited discursive resources for the preservice teachers’ knowledge re-construction practices. Particularly, I have argued that such delimited discursive resources became a condition of possibility for the unhelpful epistemic practice of ‘squishing’ (via oscillation and/or negotiation) (see Chapters 6 and 8) complicated pedagogical decision making and restricted opportunities for reflective practice (see Chapter 8). Whilst Foucault (1972) studied the effects of ‘authorities of delimitation’ on archevised knowledge, I have theorised how (in this specific situation) delimited discursive resources have impacted dynamic aspects of

24 The exception to this rule was the ‘Indigenous Education’ university coursework subject, which exclusively drew on ecosocio discourses of behaviour when discussing behavioural concerns. However, the words ‘challenging behaviour’ did not explicitly feature in any of the 30 required and recommended readings for ‘Indigenous Education’ texts.
knowledge, particularly individuals’ epistemology via their knowledge re-construction practices.

*An expanded notion of ‘apprenticed knowledge’ – the role of PEx and ‘seeing’ in forming apprenticed knowledge*

Regardless of which epistemic journeys the preservice teachers undertook in re-constructing their knowledge of challenging behaviour, some commonalities were found across the data. Particularly, practical knowledge sources (especially those one can ‘see’) were highly valued and theoretical knowledge sources were not. This finding is not new. However, that the preservice teachers in this study valued particular elements of practical, traditional ‘apprenticed knowledge’ over others is a relatively new concept.

Dan Lortie’s (1975) ‘apprenticeship of observation’ theory was drawn on to frame practical information sources as contributing to the preservice teachers’ apprenticed knowledge. However, Lortie’s conception of ‘apprenticed knowledge’ refers to knowledge sourced from the preservice teachers’ own compulsory schooling experiences; that is, knowledge gained from observing their teachers teach. I mobilised an expanded notion of Lortie’s (1975) ‘apprenticeship of observation’. This notion was expanded to attend to practical information resources such as PEx, personal experience and ‘seeing’, which the preservice teachers found valuable in developing their knowledge of, and pedagogy for, children with challenging behaviour.

This idea of ‘seeing’ as a means of attaining knowledge was closely pursued in this study, and was much more specific and flexible than Lortie’s (1975) broader notion of apprenticed knowledge via ‘observation’ of personal schooling experiences. Knowing through ‘seeing’ was sometimes connected to the preservice teachers’ viewing of broadcast media, sometimes connected to them personally seeing teachers teach (throughout their own schooling and PEx), parents parent and children mis/behave in
school and other social contexts. The intense value that these five preservice teachers ascribed ‘knowing through seeing’ was clear, especially that which they ‘saw’ during PEx. During PEx, ‘knowing through seeing’ included learning from direct visual observation of: children’s behaviour in different teaching contexts; teachers teaching; and children learning. Another valuable way of learning through seeing on PEx was ‘not seeing’; where the preservice teachers talked about that which they couldn’t or didn’t see during their teaching practice but which became apparent in the space of reflection and/or in mentor teacher feedback. In this sense PEx was construed as a highly valuable ‘practical’ knowledge source. This valuing of the practicum as a knowledge source is consistent with findings from other studies of preservice teachers’ epistemology (e.g. Joram 2007; Many, Howard & Hodge 2002). Joram (2007), for example, posits that one reason preservice teachers value PEx so highly is that their epistemology is more like their mentor teachers’ (typically, personal and contextual) than their university professors’ (who tend to value research and theory).

Whilst a call for more frequent and intensely supervised PEx features in teacher education reform literature (e.g. Cambourne & Kiggins, in press; Darling Hammond 2006, 2010), little is published on how PEx functions as a knowledge resource. This study found some interesting commonalities between PEx sites/experiences on how the preservice teachers re-construct their knowledge during PEx. Lortie (1975) conceptualises the practicum as the closest thing to a ‘real’ apprenticeship that teachers encounter. As such, it was not surprising that the common modes of knowledge re-construction related to garnering practice knowledge from mentor teachers. Whilst I have just summarised how the participants learned by seeing during PEx, other elements of observation (such as listening) and apprenticeship (such as doing ‘practice teaching’) were also found to be valuable resources for re-constructing their knowledge of challenging behaviour (see Section 7.1.4).

Listening referred to audible experiences on PEx such as hearing teachers’ microstorying and/or labelling of certain children’s behaviour, receiving mentor-
feedback on their teaching, and listening to mentor teachers’ narratives/recounts of
teaching children with challenging behaviour. Microstorying deals with
power/knowledge intersections that reduce complexity of children and their behavioural
traits to ‘biographical unities’ (Foucault, 1995); for example, teachers referring to
particular children as ‘the behaviours’, ‘my bad trio’, or ‘the ADHD child’.

Doing related directly to perceived successes and failures from teaching via instinct,
trial and error and either in compliance with, or resistance to, mentor teacher guidance.
Notably, ‘doing’ was valued as a knowledge resource for expanding personal
repertoires of ‘behaviour management strategies’. This aligns with Joram’s (2007, p.
131) finding that, ‘one of the main reasons preservice teachers do not value university
classroom instruction as much as their field experiences is that they are on a mission to
acquire very specific professional skills of teaching’.

9.2. Epistemic practices for re-constructing knowledge of
challenging behaviour

The central work of this thesis was building theory to describe ‘how’ preservice
teachers re-construct their knowledge of challenging behaviour during their final PEx.
What is unique to the theory I have presented is its Foucauldian treatment of knowledge
as both archevised and dynamic and so inextricably linked to discourse. Tracking
knowledge re-construction via discursively mapping an individual’s knowledge claims
opened up new possibilities for understanding preservice teacher epistemology. It
highlighted the complex and individualised work that preservice teachers undertake to
sustain their highly valued apprenticed knowledge and ‘common sense’ construals of
challenging behaviour. Although each preservice teacher’s epistemological journey was
individualised, the epistemic processes they deployed in re-constructing their
knowledge of challenging behaviour were found to share fundamental similarities (and
differences). These epistemic processes were described as either ‘matching’ or
‘squishing’ (via oscillations and/or negotiations).
The epistemic processes of ‘matching’ or ‘squishing’ (via oscillation or negotiation) were not always mutually exclusive processes; indeed, participants often used more than one process at different points in time. However, I have demonstrated that they are uniquely identifiable processes and there is a tendency for participants to favour particular processes in a sustained way, within particular contexts (e.g. coursework learning versus PEx learning – see for example Figure 7.1 compared to Figure 7.2).

**Matching**

An epistemic ‘matching’ process occurred when the knowledge of the preservice teacher was internally discursively consistent and mirrored the discursive positioning of the knowledge base encountered (either via university studies or on PEx). In this case, little or no knowledge change occurred for the preservice teacher and any knowledge change that eventuated was discursively consistent with their existing, apprenticed knowledge.

**Squishing**

Underpinning this proposed theory of epistemic squishing practices were two main conditions of possibility. *Firstly*, there was a unanimous propensity for the preservice teachers to perceive a theory/practice divide in the professional knowledge of teachers, and to value ‘practice’ knowledge over ‘theory’. *Secondly*, the university presented the biopsychosocial discourse almost exclusively (Section 4.2), without distinction from its biomedical and ecosocio discursive counterparts. I contended that, with nothing to compare it to, the preservice teachers erroneously interpreted the biopsychosocial discourse as some kind of limitless theoretic middle ground. This middle ground apparently seemed broad enough to accommodate, via ‘squishing practices’, their apprenticed (and often contradictory) knowledge/s of challenging behaviour (Chapters 5 and 6).
Epistemic ‘squishing’ seemed the result of the preservice teachers’ attempts to sustain their highly valued existing, apprenticed knowledge. If a preservice teacher’s apprenticed knowledge was internally, discursively inconsistent and/or different to the discursive position of the knowledge base encountered (i.e. university studies or PEx) an epistemic ‘squishing’ process occurred.

Squishing is, simply put, the act of overtly positioning one’s knowledge as, overall, aligned with a singular and coherent discourse (or knowledge) of challenging behaviour, whilst inadvertently demonstrating discursively multiple and/or incoherent knowledge. Put differently, ‘squishing’ is inappropriately and erroneously identifying one’s discursively multiple and/or incoherent knowledge under the ‘label’ of a singular and coherent discourse. In this sense, ‘squishing’ may be construed as an inappropriate or misrepresentative knowledge claim. That discursively multiple and/or incoherent knowledge was discernable within the dataset of a participant was evidence of what had happened, that is, ‘squishing’. How this squishing happened was theorised as processes of ‘oscillation’ and/or ‘negotiation’.

When the ‘squished’ knowledge manifested in the data as ‘discursively multiple’, I proposed that squishing had occurred via the epistemic process of ‘oscillation’. The epistemic ‘squishing’ practice of oscillating involved inadvertently drawing on multiple discourses of challenging behaviour, whilst overtly identifying with one discourse. Engagement with this epistemic process had dual indicators in the empirical material. First, conflicting statements (from one individual) and/or concurrent uptake of contradictory subject positions that could be mapped against different discourses of behaviour. Second, the epistemic conflict stemming from this was traceable to the value placed on certain existing, apprenticed knowledge, which was discursively at odds with their pervasively biopsychosocial understandings. For example, pre-PEx, when the preservice teachers’ existing, apprenticed knowledge did not discursively match the pervasive biopsychosocial knowledge of behaviour (as singularly presented in their university studies), the preservice teachers ‘squished’ that apprenticed knowledge into
biopsychosocial terms, until it mostly complied. This epistemic ‘oscillating’ practice then may be generally conceptualised as an effort to maintain a sort of knowledge equilibrium, to match unmatchable knowledges.

When the ‘squished’ knowledge manifested in the data as incoherent, I argued that squishing had occurred via the epistemic process of ‘negotiation’. Unlike the epistemic practice of oscillation, where statements from individuals may be mapped against different discourses, the statements of the individual who negotiates a discourse may be mapped consistently within a single discourse. Therefore, because statements are discursively consistent there is no need (or scope) to find discursive dissonance between apprenticed knowledge and the knowledge base encountered. Despite this discursive consistency, indictors of negotiations in the empirical material included incomplete, inaccurate and/or modified (and so incoherent) interpretations of the discourse. Like other epistemic ‘squishing’ practices (such as oscillation) negotiations can be viewed as an activity for sustaining existing, apprenticed knowledge. Knowledge change resultant from processes of negotiation, detected via incompleteness and modifications of the preservice teachers’ knowledge of challenging behaviour, is curious and open to interpretation. Whether such incoherent knowledge was a result of misunderstanding university coursework, or simply a means of ‘negotiating’ biopsychosocial understandings to suit personal opinions remains uncertain. Capturing such reasoning is the task of future studies. I would especially recommend in-depth, qualitative enquiry centring on preservice teachers’ knowledge of children’s ‘choice’ and/or Behaviourism (both being biopsychosocial knowledge referents that several participants ‘squished via negotiation’).

The preservice teachers’ attempt at generating an epistemic equilibrium by ‘squishing’ featured slightly differently in the pre- and post-PEx data (see Section 7.2). The main point of difference was, unlike the pre-PEx examples (see Figure 7.1) where dissonance was a prerequisite for ‘squishing’, squishing practices during and post-PEx seemed possible with or without epistemic dissonance (that is, discursive differences between
the preservice teachers’ pre-PEx knowledge and the knowledge-base encountered on their PEx). The exceptions to this rule were cases of ‘high’ epistemic dissonance that lent themselves uniquely to oscillating practices during and post-PEx. What was common to both pre- and post-PEx squishing practices was that they resulted in confused and contradictory knowledge, to varying degrees.

9.3. **Knowing challenging behaviour: The effects of ‘squishing’ on preservice teachers’ knowledge and pedagogy**

The epistemic practices of ‘matching’ and ‘squishing’ (via negotiation or oscillation) influenced the preservice teachers’ knowledge of, and pedagogy for, children with challenging behaviour. ‘Squishing’ negatively influenced the preservice teachers’ knowledge of challenging behaviour by supporting development of ‘discursively multiple’ and/or ‘incoherent knowledge’, indicated by contradictory and/or inaccurate knowledge claims and ‘confusion’. In the case of ‘squishing via oscillation’, squishing also impacted the preservice teachers’ pedagogy for children with challenging behaviour, insofar as it generated pedagogical distress and quandaries during PEx.

The preservice teachers’ contradictory understandings of challenging behaviour, I have contended, were resultant from epistemic ‘squishing’ (be it via negotiation or oscillation). The types, origins and effects of such knowledge contradictions were, however, varied. ‘Discursively multiple’ knowledge stemmed from oscillating processes, whilst ‘incoherent’ knowledge resulted from negotiation processes (see Section 9.2). Regardless of the type or origin of the preservice teachers’ knowledge contradictions resultant from ‘squishing’, the effects of these contradictions shared some commonalities, but also some differences (see Figure 9.1).
When the participants’ knowledge was discernibly contradictory (regardless of the form the contradiction took, e.g. paradoxical, modified, incomplete or inaccurate knowledge claims), I talked about this knowledge as a ‘confusion’. This is not to say the preservice teachers always overtly claimed they were ‘confused’. To capture this I described the ‘confused’ or ‘contradictory’ knowledge (and I often used these terms interchangeably) as either ‘undetected’ or ‘explicit’. By ‘undetected’ I did not assume to make comment on the participants’ mental state or capacity for self-reflection. I simply needed a word to differentiate two types of knowledge ‘contradictions’ encountered in the data. In some cases participants were able to explicitly discuss contradictions in their knowledge and the resulting confusion from this. In other cases, the data clearly indicated contradictory (that is, discursively multiple or incoherent) knowledge claims, insofar as these were pinpointed in the transcripts etc, but the preservice teacher did not explicitly discuss this and/or its implications. Rather, she would move quite fluidly within and/or between the paradoxical, incomplete, modified or inaccurate understandings and view these understandings as unproblematic. It is this second type of knowledge contradiction I refer to as ‘undetected’ contradictions (see Figure 9.2).
Perhaps the most disconcerting effect of ‘squishing’ on preservice teacher knowledge was its potential for generating pedagogical distress and quandaries during PEx (see Figure 9.3). Each discourse holds potential for unique sets of teacher subject positions and related pedagogical responses to challenging behaviour (see Section 2.5). Thus, ‘discursively multiple’ knowledge (at times) concurrently accessed mutually exclusive discourses. This generated moments of counterintuitive teaching which led to ‘distress’, and, sometimes, immobilising ‘quandaries’ for the preservice teachers when they were
responding to children with challenging behaviour (e.g. Charly and Monique’s PEx stories, in Sections 8.6 and 8.7).

**Figure 9.3 Effects of squishing on preservice teacher knowledge and pedagogy**

In addition to the effects outlined in Figure 9.3, ‘matching’ and ‘squishing’ had one common negative effect on the preservice teachers’ pedagogy for children with challenging behaviour. Both epistemic processes demonstrated potential to discourage the preservice teachers’ engagement in reflective practice, during and post-PEx. This effect rests, for both ‘matching’ and ‘squishing’ practices, in the university’s
delimitation of knowledge of challenging behaviour as biopsychosocial. For all participants this discursive exclusivity delimited possibilities for a language to identify and critically reflect on their apprenticed knowledge, and shifts in their knowledge and discursive positionings resultant from PEx. For example, both preservice teachers who ‘squished via oscillation’ during PEx (i.e. Charly and Monique) experienced knowledge change during PEx, especially regarding challenging behaviour. If or when that knowledge change did not align with the biopsychosocial discourse – with no other formal knowledge base to reconcile the new knowledge to – these preservice teachers explicitly expressed confusion and uncertainty. In short, they found it difficult to ‘squish’ their new, and in both cases, overtly biomedical knowledge into the biopsychosocial paradigm (perhaps not surprisingly as these discourses are mutually exclusive, this was discussed in Chapter 2). Moreover, they had no discursive resources to express this confusion or knowledge change. Alternatively, for Ella and Merrin who engaged in ‘matching’ processes during PEx, their discursive position largely matched that of university coursework and school contexts. Whilst this discursive consistency assisted Ella and Merrin in avoiding new ‘confusions’, for these preservice teachers there were no perceivable, alternative knowledges presented to challenge their apprenticed, existing knowledge and expand possibilities for reflective practice. For example, the question can be posed: How can the teacher who only and ever identified herself as a ‘manager’ of the pro-actively challenging child reflect on ways to modify the social and curricular structures surrounding the child so as to better ‘support’ their behaviour?

9.4. A problem of ‘theory and practice’ reconsidered

Given the confusions, pedagogical quandaries and distress resultant from epistemic squishing practices, the obvious question facing teacher educators is, ‘What can we do to minimise epistemic squishing and its effects?’ The problem inherent in this question is that ‘matching’ and ‘squishing’ are subtle, variable and highly personalised (insofar as they are closely tied to an individual’s apprenticeships of observation and PEx). Moreover, the preservice teachers tended to use various epistemic processes from time
to time, so it is not easily or immediately obvious who matches and who squishes. With such assessments thus rendered an unrealistic strategy, I contend that the best course of action for teacher educators is to tackle and so render ‘impossible’ the two ‘conditions of possibility’ for matching and squishing. Teacher educators need to (i) reconceptualise and ‘work within’ the perceived theory/practice divide and (ii) critique commonsense understandings of ‘challenging behaviour’ and redress the delimiting effects of the university by presenting clearly delineated, multiple discourses of challenging behaviour, and their respective implications for pedagogy.

Reconceptualising and ‘working in the middle of’ the theory/practice divide

The ‘theory/practice divide’ is both a long-standing issue in teacher education reform (e.g. Cochrane-Smith & Lytle 2010; Darling-Hammond 2006a, 2006b, 2010; Green 2010; Gutierrez & Vossoughi 2010; Reid 2011) and inherent to preservice teacher epistemology (e.g. Many, Howard & Hodge 2002; White 2000). Consistent with this, the preservice teachers in this study specifically discussed a theory/practice divide in terms of valuing their existing, apprenticed knowledge and ‘practical’ knowledge sources over their ‘theoretical’ university studies.

Importantly, for these preservice teachers and on the matter of challenging behaviour, theory/practice is not such a polarity to be bridged. This notion of a non-divide between theory and practice is a relatively new conceptual resource for understanding educators’ professional knowledge. If the theory/practice problem is recast in terms of knowledge, the preservice teachers seem to be doing a good deal of complex epistemological work ‘in the middle’ of theory and practice. Take for example the preservice teachers’ negotiated knowledge of token economies and Glasser’s Choice Theory (see Sections 6.2.3, 8.4.3 and 8.4.4). Here theory is not considered irrelevant, it is mobilised to make specific pedagogical decisions during PEx (teaching practice), but understandings of these ‘practical theories’ are fraught with the incoherence and confusions associated with ‘squishing by negotiation’. Although the preservice teachers’ knowledge indicates
they are ‘working in the middle’ of theory and practice, they are not doing so with great accuracy or effectiveness. Thus, it is necessary to offer preservice teachers more comprehensive tools to work with knowledge, rather than theory/practice. To this end I recommend that the study of epistemology be reinstated and re-valued in teacher preparation programs.

In this study, the preservice teachers demonstrated both undetected and explicit ‘confusions’ about their ‘really obvious’ knowledge of ‘challenging behaviour’. Such confusions and their consequences indicate there is a strong need for preservice teachers to critically analyse this thing called ‘knowledge’ which rests, often unquestioned, at the centre of education and teaching. In this sense, I join the call for explicit teaching about knowing in teacher education programs. Strong connections have been made between students’ epistemological belief and learning and ensuing calls for students’ epistemological beliefs to be ‘brought out into the open’ (Schommer 1994, p. 315) and for ‘ways of knowing’ to be explicitly taught in teacher education (Lyons 1990). Participants in this study ascribed value to the opportunities to focus on their epistemological beliefs. Monique, as her final comment in her post-PEx interview noted the value of her participation in this study as helping her reflect on ‘how’ she came to know what she does about challenging behaviour:

Um, I think, like this, I really enjoyed doing this because it’s really made me think about it and I think, this class, that I’ve had, has in a way, taught me so much about how kids, I guess, can be and I’ve learnt so much about it … it’s really changed my ideas, my own perceptions about behaviour, from what I knew … It’s really opened my eyes kind of thing.

(Monique, post-PEx interview)

Monique’s declaration of benefits about being ‘made to think’ about her knowledge of challenging behaviour prompts another recommendation for future research. Further research on the effects of ‘making’ the preservice teachers ‘think’ about knowledge and knowing, via ‘educational philosophy’ or ‘epistemology studies’ coursework is worth pursuing. Via such coursework the possibilities for and practicalities of ‘multiple
knowledges’ and the relationship between ‘suprapersonal’ and ‘individual’ knowledges (Bereiter 2002) may be examined. Furthermore, notions of ‘commonsense’ understandings in teachers’ professional knowledge could be problematised and debated. Given the preservice teachers’ propensity to ‘disregard theory’, this may at first glance appear a paradoxical recommendation. However, I would point out that Monique (in the quote above) seems to value her participation in the study because her ‘thinking about thinking’ was directly related to her classroom teaching/learning experience during PEx. So, whilst I propose a return to ‘educational philosophy’ or ‘epistemology studies’ in teacher education, I recommend a move away from more traditional, theory-focused modes of delivery. I contend that studies of epistemology might only be considered valuable by the preservice teachers if contextualised in practice – via deliberate and sustained linkage to the preservice teachers’ apprenticed knowledge, to their PEx, and/or via specific ‘case studies’ and ‘practical’ examples.

*Critiquing ‘commonsense’ conceptions and expanding university knowledges of challenging behaviour*

Given the participants overtly disregarded their undergraduate teacher preparation course (with the exception of PEx) as ‘theory’, questions arose regarding the effectiveness of their teacher education program’s in/ability to impact their apprenticed knowledge of teaching children with challenging behaviour. This aligns with White’s finding that:

> pre-service teachers’ beliefs appear to be little affected by teacher education programmes. . . . most lack the understanding of the nature of knowledge or the ways of reasoning that would enable them to make judgments that are defensible. Bereft of such understanding and reasoning ability, they fall back on their natural basis of verifying credibility for the purpose of judgment making on the beliefs they have acquired through lived experience.

(White 2000, p. 302)

It is this issue of moving beyond ‘common sense’ and ‘practice’ to defensible knowledge and pedagogy that propels this project not, necessarily, a critique of practical
sources of knowledge. Or, as Adams (2011) suggests in his discussion of educational policy, the issue is to move pedagogy from ‘ritual’ to ‘mindfulness’. Before taking this argument further, what I would like to make entirely transparent is I do not position apprenticed, practice or tacit knowledge of preservice teachers as generally ‘wrong’, undervalued or in dire need of intervention from teacher education programs. The literature rightly turns attention to the value of tacit and practical knowledge in teaching (e.g. Buchmann 1991; Ernest 1999; Green 2010; Kincheloe 2004; Tirri, Hisu & Kansenan 1999; Reid 1996). Moreover, in drawing on Lortie’s (1975) theory of apprenticeships of observation I had no intention of perpetuating, ‘[t]he "dead-hand-of-the-past" argument [which] implies that future teachers' "apprenticeships of observation" perpetuate the eternal shortcomings of schooling’ (Buchmann, 1991 p. 279). Whilst I do not discount the value of tacit, practical and apprenticed knowledge I did, however, find limitations as to the pedagogical functionality and defensibility of some of the preservice teachers’ apprenticed knowledge of challenging behaviour. This poses particular challenges for teacher education:

Our challenge … [as teacher educators] is to make this [teaching] practice ‘strange’ for them [the preservice teachers] – to allow them to study it rather than just repeat it. Our challenge is to find a way to allow student teachers to confront the work of teaching as something that they do NOT already know all about, and as something that must be practised and refined, reflected upon and tried again

(Reid 2011, p. 304)

How then could we make ‘commonsense’ and apprenticed knowledge of challenging behaviour ‘strange’ for preservice teachers via teacher education programs? My recommendations are twofold. First, it is plausible to place boundaries around the seemingly limitless theoretic middle ground characteristic of understandings of challenging behaviour in teacher education coursework. This boundary construction is achievable via delineation and presentation of multiple knowledges/discourses of challenging behaviour and their implications for pedagogy and teacher subjectivity. In this sense ‘commonsense’ construals of challenging behaviour are made ‘strange’ via comparisons.
Second, if ‘seeing’ is as important to preservice teachers’ knowledge re-construction processes as my findings suggest, then perhaps ‘knowing through seeing’ should be more rigorously theorised in teacher education. Can the preservice teachers be taught how to ‘see’ practice with theoretical rigour by using a ‘practical’ theoretical framework for conducting classroom observations – such as Setting Theory (Cambourne & Kiggins 2004) – then be closely guided and challenged in their post-observation ‘practice to theory connection-making’ during university coursework? Under these conditions ‘seeing’ ‘simple’ teaching acts such as disciplining a child are made strange by considering their theoretical elements and related pedagogical decisions.

In these ways, could teacher educators teach future teachers the value of ‘theory’ in moving their intuitive, apprenticed knowledge to defensible, professional knowledge of teaching? Could teacher educators elevate preservice teachers’ valuing of ‘university’ as a knowledge resource for ‘challenging behaviour’ to something other than merely ‘background knowledge’, or worse, irrelevant ‘theory’? Further research is required to ascertain the viability and effectiveness of working ‘in the middle’ of the theory/practice divide by providing preservice teachers with tools for working with knowledge, and more rigorously theorizing ‘knowing through seeing’ as a knowledge resource in teacher education.

### 9.5. Closing thoughts

This study aimed to describe how preservice teachers re-constructed their knowledge of challenging behaviour in their final ‘professional experience’ [PEx] and the resources they drew on to do this. It is hoped that teacher educators may benefit from the findings of this study. This study located and problematised preservice teachers’ taken-for-granted assumptions about behaviour and in doing so uncovered a ‘basis for conscious knowledge’ (Garrett and Wrench 2007, p. 26) of challenging behaviour, which was characterized by confusions and contradictions. More than simply locating these assumptions, this study contributes a description of how these assumptions and
knowledge were re-constructed by five preservice teachers on their final PEx. This was achieved through theorising the epistemic processes deployed by the preservice teachers, such as ‘matching’ or ‘squishing’ (via oscillations and/or negotiations). Understanding these taken-for-granted assumptions about behaviour may assist in designing teacher education coursework that challenges preservice teachers to identify their assumptions and use them as a tool for evaluating their university- and school-based learning experiences and reflecting upon their professional knowledge and teaching practice.
Legislation referred to in this thesis

Anti-Discrimination (Amendment) Act, No. 142 (NSW) (1982).
Disability Services Act, No. 3 (NSW) (1993).
Institute of Teachers Act, No. 65 (NSW) (2004).
Children and Young Persons Legislation Amendment Regulation, No. 46 (NSW) (2011).

References


Ware, L. (2001). Writing, identity and the other: Dare we do Disability Studies? *Journal of Teacher Education, 52*(2), 107-123.


Appendices
11. APPENDICES

Appendix A  Timeline of data collection process
Appendix B  DEC document review summary
Appendix C  University documents review summary
Appendix D  Pre-PEx concept maps
Appendix E  Concept mapping - Participant information sheet
Appendix F  Post-PEx concept maps
Appendix G  Observing knowledge – possible observable events
Appendix H  Abridged observation notes
## Data collection timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Merrin (July PEX)</th>
<th>Anne (July PEX)</th>
<th>Charly (July PEX)</th>
<th>Ella (July PEX)</th>
<th>Monique (November PEX)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orientation / Deliver concept map info sheet</td>
<td>Yes - Fri 28/05/2010, 1230, 67 Dining</td>
<td>Yes - Tue 18/05/2010, 1200, 67 Dining</td>
<td>Yes - Fri 21/05/2010, 0900, 67 Dining</td>
<td>Yes - Tue 25/05/2010, 1030, 67 Dining</td>
<td>Yes - Tue 25/05/2010, 1030, 67 Dining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consent forms</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-PEX concept map</td>
<td>Yes – received at interview 15/06/2010</td>
<td>Yes – received at interview 16/06/2010</td>
<td>Yes – pdf via email 02/06/2010</td>
<td>Yes – received at interview 22/06/2010</td>
<td>Yes – received at interview 11/10/2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal info pack</td>
<td>Yes – hand delivered (28/05/2010)</td>
<td>Yes – posted Fri 28/05/2010</td>
<td>Yes – posted Fri 28/05/2010</td>
<td>Yes – posted Fri 28/05/2010</td>
<td>Yes – hand delivered (11/10/10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor consent</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor pre-PEX obs</td>
<td>Yes-Thu 22/07/2010 and Fri 23/07/2010 (interview Thursday afternoon)</td>
<td>Yes – Mon 21/06/2010 and Wed 23/06/2010 (interview Wednesday morning)</td>
<td>Yes – Mon 28/06/2010 and Tue 29/06/2010 (interview Tuesday afternoon)</td>
<td>Yes - Tue 20/07/2010 and Wed 21/07/2010 (interview Wednesday afternoon)</td>
<td>Yes – Tue 23/11/10 No – Fri 26/11/10 (stop work meeting called for DET schools in area)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix A
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Merrin (July PEX)</th>
<th>Anne (July PEX)</th>
<th>Charly (July PEX)</th>
<th>Ella (July PEX)</th>
<th>Monique (November PEX)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PEX obs – Week 1</td>
<td>Yes - Thu 29/07/2010</td>
<td>Yes - Fri 30/07/2010</td>
<td>No – (car troubles) Mon 26/07/2010</td>
<td>Yes - Tue 27/07/2010</td>
<td>n/a late notice with school means week one not possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEX obs – Week 2</td>
<td>Yes - Wed 04/08/2010</td>
<td>Yes - Mon 02/08/2010</td>
<td>Yes - Tue 03/08/2010</td>
<td>Yes - Fri 06/08/2010</td>
<td>Yes – Fri 29/10/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post PEX concept map</td>
<td>Yes - Tue 07/09/2010 – Mel dropped by office to hand it in.</td>
<td>Yes – Wed 29/09/2010 - received at interview</td>
<td>Yes – received at interview</td>
<td>Yes – received at interview</td>
<td>Yes – received at interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDPD401 assignments</td>
<td>Yes - Received by email 28/05/10.</td>
<td>Yes - Received via thumbdrive 16/06/2010.</td>
<td>Yes - Received 2/3 via email 2/06/2010. Received 1/3 via hard copy left at office 09/09/2010</td>
<td>Yes – Received via email 13/09/2010.</td>
<td>Yes – received via email 29/01/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDPD402 assignments + Day books/programs/feedback sheets.</td>
<td>Yes - received program and PEX report (paper copies) Received Reflection</td>
<td>Yes - Received via email 29/09/11</td>
<td>Yes - Received feedback sheets/reflection sheets/day book /</td>
<td>Yes - Received via email 27 February 2012</td>
<td>Yes – received via email 29/01/11 and 07/02/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Merrin (July PEX)</td>
<td>Anne (July PEX)</td>
<td>Charly (July PEX)</td>
<td>Ella (July PEX)</td>
<td>Monique (November PEX)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assignment for EDPD402 via email 11/01/11.</td>
<td>Permission received to get EDPD402 assignment from Julie Kiggins – done.</td>
<td>report from PEX (Wed 15/09/10).</td>
<td>No - EDPD402 Assignments, not received despite emailed requests.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Group</td>
<td>No – overseas commitments</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Documents</td>
<td>June to December 2011 – see also Chapters 3, 4 and Appendices E &amp; F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Documents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School documents</td>
<td>Yes – welfare policy</td>
<td>Yes – Welfare policy</td>
<td>Yes – discipline policy</td>
<td>No – unavailable in hard copy at time of data collection. On several occasions since, I have emailed school principal, deputy and mentor but to no avail.</td>
<td>Yes – discipline policy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**NSWDEC Document Review Summary**

Record of first 100 'hits' on DET website search for 'challenging behaviour'.
The code allocated justifies inclusion or exclusion in the document review for this thesis.

Legend:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Explicitly featured term 'challenging behaviour'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Features the word behaviour but not challenging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Features the word challenging but not in direct relationship with behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Not specifically but related info good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Secondary Schools document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>TAFE document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Duplicate - document features in the top 100 'hits' more than once and first mention has already been assessed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Document name</th>
<th>URL</th>
<th>Include</th>
<th>Document Type</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>NSW Govt response ...: Inquiry into the provision of education to students with a disability or special needs</td>
<td><a href="https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/about-us/news-at-det/inquiry_into_the_provision_of_education_to_students_with_a_disability_or_special_needs.pdf">https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/about-us/news-at-det/inquiry_into_the_provision_of_education_to_students_with_a_disability_or_special_needs.pdf</a></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>NSW Government</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Document name</td>
<td>URL</td>
<td>Include</td>
<td>Document Type</td>
<td>Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Document name</td>
<td>URL</td>
<td>Include</td>
<td>Document Type</td>
<td>Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Unit3 OHS: Student safety in the workplace</td>
<td><a href="https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/vetinschools/documents/OHS/Unit3/Unit3OHS.doc">https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/vetinschools/documents/OHS/Unit3/Unit3OHS.doc</a></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Staff development</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Document name</td>
<td>URL</td>
<td>Include</td>
<td>Document Type</td>
<td>Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Team Based Professional Learning (TBPL) Quality Teaching as a vehicle of change in moving from a welfare to a curriculum driven school</td>
<td><a href="https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/proflearn/areas/sld/research/joske.htm">https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/proflearn/areas/sld/research/joske.htm</a></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Document name</td>
<td>URL</td>
<td>Include</td>
<td>Document Type</td>
<td>Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Document name</td>
<td>URL</td>
<td>Include</td>
<td>Document Type</td>
<td>Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>WA online survey to test the exposure draft of the National Standards for Principals</td>
<td><a href="https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/proflearn/aitsl/documents/surveywa.pdf">https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/proflearn/aitsl/documents/surveywa.pdf</a></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>DET online survey to test the exposure draft of the National Standards for Principals</td>
<td><a href="https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/proflearn/aitsl/documents/det_pilot.pdf">https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/proflearn/aitsl/documents/det_pilot.pdf</a></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Behaviour Management</td>
<td><a href="https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/proflearn/areas/nt/resources/bm01.htm">https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/proflearn/areas/nt/resources/bm01.htm</a></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Practice notes</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Excellence and Innovation: A consultation with the community of New South Wales on public education and training</td>
<td><a href="https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/detresources/excellence_innovation_OhrixfhgnV.pdf">https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/detresources/excellence_innovation_OhrixfhgnV.pdf</a></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Community consults</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Document name</td>
<td>URL</td>
<td>Include</td>
<td>Document Type</td>
<td>Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Document name</td>
<td>URL</td>
<td>Include</td>
<td>Document Type</td>
<td>Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Document name</td>
<td>URL</td>
<td>Include</td>
<td>Document Type</td>
<td>Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Document name</td>
<td>URL</td>
<td>Include</td>
<td>Document Type</td>
<td>Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td>Our young learners - giving them the best possible start</td>
<td><a href="https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/detresources/Our_young_learners_LjZhXuAKbn.pdf">https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/detresources/Our_young_learners_LjZhXuAKbn.pdf</a></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td>Our Middle Years Learners</td>
<td><a href="https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/detresources/Our_Middle_Years_gANxIHEeua.pdf">https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/detresources/Our_Middle_Years_gANxIHEeua.pdf</a></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
University Texts Reviewed (sorted alphabetically by subject then status)

Legend
CB = Challenging behaviour
y = Yes
n = No
* = Duplicate text, already reviewed for another subject.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Name</th>
<th>Core subject</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Text Status</th>
<th>Includes terms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum &amp; Pedagogy 3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Hinde-McLeod &amp; Reynolds (2003)</td>
<td>Recommended</td>
<td>* *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject Name</td>
<td>Core subject</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Text Status</td>
<td>Includes terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum &amp; Pedagogy 4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Synott (2009)</td>
<td>Major text</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum &amp; Pedagogy 4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Groundwater-Smith et al. (2007)</td>
<td>Recommended</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum &amp; Pedagogy 4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Killen (2005)</td>
<td>Recommended</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum &amp; Pedagogy 4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Marsh (2004)</td>
<td>Recommended</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum &amp; Pedagogy 4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>McLeod &amp; Reynolds (2003)</td>
<td>Recommended</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum &amp; Pedagogy 4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>NSWIT (2006)</td>
<td>Recommended</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Education</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Australian Government, Department of Education, Science and</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject Name</td>
<td>Core subject</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Text Status</td>
<td>Includes terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Education</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Board of Studies NSW. (2003) Aboriginal Languages K-10. Sydney: NSW Board of Studies.</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject Name</td>
<td>Core subject</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Text Status</td>
<td>Includes terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enhance Australian Aboriginal Students’ Mathematics Learning. A case</td>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>study. In L. Bragg, C. Campbell, G. Herbert and J. Mousley (Eds)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*Proceedings of the 26th Annual Conference of the Mathematics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Education Research Group of Australia* (pp 436-443) MERGA Geelong</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Education: The importance of Knowing* (pp.139-148). Pearson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Education, Australia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Education</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Munro &amp; Peotsch (2006) - &quot;Getting a school-based Aboriginal</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Language Program off the ground: A step by step guide. Available</td>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Education</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>National Aboriginal &amp; Torres Strait Islander Observance Committee</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(NAIDOC), (2011) <em>NAIDOC History</em>. Available URL:</td>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Education</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>New South Wales Board of Studies (no date). <em>Aboriginal perspectives</em></td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>through integrated units. Available URL:</td>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>original.html (accessed 16/7/11)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>teacher’s handbook*. Sydney. (Pp1-18).</td>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Available URLs:</td>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Education</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Rennie, J. (2008) Reading and Writing the Landscape. Conference</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>in Education.</td>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In, Knipe, S. (Ed) <em>Middle Years Schooling</em>. Frenchs Forest. Australia:</td>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pearson</td>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject Name</td>
<td>Core subject</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Text Status</td>
<td>Includes terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology of Youth and</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Austin, J. (2005) <em>Culture and Identity.</em> Frenchs Forest: Pearson Education</td>
<td>Recommended</td>
<td>n   n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject Name</td>
<td>Core subject</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Text Status</td>
<td>Includes terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td>Australia.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education Needs</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Lavoie, R. (2005). Chapter 4: Paralinguistics. It’s so much work to be your friend: Helping the Child with Learning Difficulties find Social Success. Touchstone, NY.</td>
<td>E-Readings</td>
<td>y   n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject Name</td>
<td>Core subject</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Text Status</td>
<td>Includes terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education Needs</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Foreman (2008)</td>
<td>Major text</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Subject Name | Core subject | Text | Text Status | Includes terms
--- | --- | --- | --- | ---

**I was unable to locate the following four texts for the Indigenous Education subject, and so these were not reviewed:**


Malin, M. (2000) *A Whole Life View of Aboriginal education for Health: Emerging models*. Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal and Tropical Health (pp1-24) e readings

The preservice teachers’ Pre-PEx Concept Maps
Charly’s pre-PEx concept map
Monique’s pre-PEx concept map

**Behaviour**

- Significant to a particular time/place/context/setting.
- Can only control our own behaviours or inform that of others.
- Influences our relations with others.
- Vygotsky - Socially learnt
- Individualised
- Social/Psychological process of understanding
- Results from social interactions; successors or failures
- Learnt by the behaviours + reactions of significant others.
- Influenced by situation and circumstance: culture, society, socio-economic status, family beliefs etc.
- Exists within a specific set of cultural rules
- Usually chosen
- Reflects our understanding of social responsibility
- Encompasses everything we do.

- William Glasser - to satisfy 5 basic needs
- What we do that makes sense to us at the time.
Ella’s Pre-PEx Concept Map
Some helpful concept mapping info

To support you in the task of making a concept map on what you understand about ‘challenging behaviour’ I thought the following URLs might be helpful. Please remember, this doesn’t have to be a task you complete in ‘one sitting’, you can add to, change, modify your concept map as things occur to you. You may use pen and paper (no size restrictions), post-its, free to download software, whatever you find easiest.

‘Concept- or mind-mapping explanation and interactive demonstration / also has a link to free web-based program where you can make your own mind-maps’
http://www.studygs.net/mapping/

‘How to construct a concept map’
http://www.udel.edu/chem/white/teaching/ConceptMap.html

If you’d like to find some free downloads for mind-mapping software there’s lots out there to google (but the one I’ve played with is FreeMind) and there’s info and downloads at:
http://freemind.sourceforge.net/wiki/index.php/Main_Page
Preservice teacher participants’ concept maps
Charly's Post-PEx Concept Map

- **Nature/Nurture**
  - Upbringing
  - Choices
  - Element of Nature

- **Knowing the students**
  - Student interests
  - Student Abilities
  - Personalities

- **Recording**
  - Patterns
  - School discipline policy

- **Preventative** (To an extent)
  - Engaging lessons
  - Seating - student combinations

- **Disruptive Behaviours**
  - Hard to control
  - Affect learning (Self and others)

- **Teacher**
  - Expectations
  - Response
  - Consequences

**Challenging Behaviour**
Behaviours are learnt through interactions with others.

Parents are key influences when young.

Actions are different in different contexts and environments.

Still believe that children learn behaviours (both appropriate and not appropriate) from peers and significant others.

Social Factors

Biological Factors

Not all behaviours are voluntary.

Children know what behaviours are and are not acceptable.

Difference are found with how children choose to act/react.

From practice: children with challenging behaviour cannot help but act that way.

Have more impact than initially gave reference to.
Ella’s Post-PEx Concept Map

Concept map created in coloured pens – did not scan well. This word on the ‘original’ reads “consequences”

These words on the ‘original’ read “maintain consistency”
Anne’s Post-PEx Concept Map

My Post-PEx concept map

Choice — Glasser choice theory
- Always allow the student to choose their path. Provide them with the right behaviour or action, then provide the consequence if they continue their action or behaviour.
- I also allowed choice in rewards for after school activities.
- This notion may not work in another classroom or age group but I hope to continue this theory in my teaching.

Rewards and positive environment.
- Whole group reward system to eliminate negative personal comments or isolation.
- To eliminate negative communication, positive environment is needed. One where all students feel respected, accepted and valued. Simple things such as welcoming individuals, knowing the students lives, having teachers and students on an after school activity, reading to students in any way possible.
- Individual rewards can be put in place. When needed.
- Encourage students throughout lessons individually, privately or as a class group.
- Promote peers to motivate and encourage each other. Promote an environment where everyone is cherished and vocally told so daily.

New ideas/thoughts
- As my relationships grew with my students, I was able to become more proactive in eliminating situations, behaviours and actions of my students.
- It was hard to think of appropriate consequences at some points during my teaching.

- Whole group rewards work effectively as the use of small reward e.g. popcorn allow large amounts of fun to motivate and encourage students, such as "well done" give yourself 2 popcorns, sounds more impressive to 1 sticker or 1 tick etc.
- Afternoon procedure of thanking individual students for being part of the class and something they have achieved today.
* What some teachers classify as bad behaviour, others may class as acceptable. This can also be largely noticed within areas of high/low socio-economic status. Swearing by can in some schools would be a huge problem/ concern, but in other schools it can often been seen as everyday speech.

* Good behaviour is the desired behaviour that a teacher wants. Bad behaviour is undesired behaviour although it may not necessarily be that bad. I.e. I consider bad behaviour something that would require a student being suspended or expelled (e.g. fighting).

* Within PEx teachers kept saying that bad Year 6 had become. I just think they were getting bored of Year 6 or outgrowing it. They had many Year 6 talks on misbehaviour, yet I could not see any specific incident which was that major. They did talk about that was about the extent of it.

* It seems it is always the same kids being "bad" or not acting in the teachers desired way. I still believe it is often for attention that kids play up. I strongly believe it is often when needs a reflection on their home. If kid gets lot of attention at home, they expect it in class. Very obvious with only children.

* Very hard to have all kids doing exactly what you want at all times. They could be behaving but may have a question; call it out, right then putting their hand up.

This needs to be taught (can’t do it). Everyday thereafter maybe the reason casual teachers have a tough time when controlling behaviour.
* Behaviour Management

Strong links with strategies

Managing behaviour in class is essential for lessons to run as planned. If a lot of time is wasted controlling students, this can impact on the lesson. This then would link with time management.

As a teacher, if you believe 5 mins will be spent on behaviour management - incorporating this into the lesson plan/structure/time of lesson is important. Without doing so, the lesson could be over due to time constraints (bell has run) but you may not have concluded lesson.

* Behaviour

Managing behaviour or a behaviour strategy is to always proceed with any warnings or consequences that have been issued. E.g. If you tell kids you will keep them in at lunch, you must do so - because next time if you warn they will do it - don’t do it - they will continue undesired behaviour.

Therefore strategy unsuccessful & as behaviour continues the same, even by getting worse kids will continue to misbehave or do their own thing (their own thing)
Merrin’s Post-PEx Concept Map
Page 3 of 4

* Limit Rewards
Tell students they will receive rewards if they make sure that this student has been outstanding in their efforts.

* Change things if not working. Seating in the classroom made a big difference to kids' behavior. (We changed from groups to straight line table setting/seating).

* What you think may work, often doesn't. Do not continue with this strategy, try something else. Bottom line, one strategy does not work for every child.

* Be careful about what you say to kids. Sometimes you have to do things without telling kids why.

* Do not send kids outside - (to stand there) as reflects badly upon teacher. Ask students who are misbehaving to walk out & walk straight back in ... hopefully with new attitude or being more controlled with their behavior & actions.

* Make sure strategy is age appropriate. I.e. I don't think "following the teacher's clap pattern" is suitable for Year 6, however I did see it used ... is not very successful.

* Control class as a whole before individually. (not always). That is, if trying to control one side of room, berside may play up. Entire class name important. Obviously if one child misbehaving get a top of it immediately.

* Create new strategies, make them fun/interesting so that kids will respond well to, (Can be jargons) eventually make popcorn). Did not have chance to introduce but did idea.
Merrin’s Post-PEx Concept Map

Page 4 of 4

*Where/Why?*

Does this behaviour come from?

- **Nature**
- **Nurtue**

**Nature**

- Is behaviour inherit to a certain level?

**Nurtue**

- comfort at school.
- eg. New girl at school and trouble fitting in, as did the 2 new boys.

**The surrounding environment:**

- Dominantly home life, personal issues etc.

**Can be affected by:**

- Drugs (legal and illegal)

**Conditions:**

- ADHD, Aspergers, ADD etc.

**Combination of both**

**Ability:**

- if kid good at something they will want to do it, however if they are not, other undesired behaviour can occur.

- **Distraction**
- to get out of doing work whether it is too hard or not of interest to the student.
- Boredom - tasks could be too easy for child (especially gifted child in regular class).

- **Attention**
- to gain attention from the other kids & teacher (showing off).

- **Power**
- **Survival**
- **Love**

As before, I believe all behaviour stems from somewhere. Within a classroom I do feel a lot of it is for:

- to gain attention from the other kids & teacher (showing off).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviour Setting</th>
<th>Definition of variable</th>
<th>Possible observable event relating to teacher’s decision making about this variable</th>
<th>Relates to heading on field notes template</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Behaviour settings are mixes of physical and human components ... and they are ongoing occurrences of (they are Programs of) events. (Barker et al. 1978, cited in Cambourne &amp; Kiggins 2004, p4)</td>
<td>The impact of physical setting on what is conceived as ‘challenging’: e.g. teaching outdoors, visits to the library, playground duty, assembly etc. – does ‘challenging’ have some kind of fluid / situationally changeable meaning across different learning contexts?</td>
<td>Teaching Episodes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraphernalia</td>
<td>Inanimate physical objects and environment designed, selected, placed, modified and used to facilitate and interact with teaching and learning process.</td>
<td>Physical layout of desks / classroom floor plans give indicators of discourses of behaviour that the teacher adopts: e.g. are children with ‘challenging behaviour’ placed in groups or individually, grouped together at one table or dispersed throughout the classroom; what is their proximity to teacher’s desk and other teacher centres such as demonstration spaces; is there a ‘time-out’ space; are there quiet and energetic spaces; what sort of student movement is facilitated by the physical classroom, classroom rules, wallprint etc? The effect of specific teacher designed and and/or deployed resources on behaviour: eg. Use of technology or modification of resources to support children with challenging behaviour.</td>
<td>Space and Place Maps of classroom layout Teaching Episodes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs</td>
<td>The design and implementation of certain roles, routines and relationships that work to organize and control the setting.</td>
<td>School policies and classroom rules and routines established and maintained by the teachers Lesson and teaching program design and delivery Teacher talk that fosters a certain classroom culture and various relationships with and between students Use of social role valorisation and other strategies designed to create a sense of community</td>
<td>Teaching Episodes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Inhabitants/Participants</td>
<td>The people who ‘behave’ within these settings. In this case the teachers, students, librarians, casual teachers, parent helpers, teachers aids and the researcher.</td>
<td>Talk about the students exhibiting challenging behaviour. Challenging behaviour exhibited by students. The interactions between participants and their students (talk with / pedagogical responses to students with challenging behaviour).</td>
<td>Participants Teaching Episodes Informal discussions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Abridged field notes, school ABC -2010-08-03

Participants
Mentor Teacher (MT)
Pre-service Teacher (PT)
12 Boys
13 Girls
(whole school during hall time)

Space and place
Class desks in same arrangement for ‘chatty groups’ that mentor teacher organised 29/06/10.
Other changes to the classroom (mapped in field notes book) and (1) -- (2) Teachers desk oriented perpendicular to what it was and the student desk in front of teachers desk was now clear of teacher paraphernalia and permanently in use by a new student who started beginning of term (Hamish) (3) -- (4) --

Regarding the staffroom – see map in field note book under today’s entry. The staffroom comprises two long tables with chairs all the way around them (which the paid teachers use) and a row of five, low-lying ‘staffroom chairs’ situated at the end of and facing perpendicular to, the heads of the two long tables (on which the PEX teachers are, quite literally, lined-up facing and below the gaze of the teachers). The number of PEX teachers outnumbers the number of staffroom chairs and so some PEX teachers stand (as it does not seem the accepted thing to sit on the paid teachers’ table if you’re not one, even if there are ‘free’ chairs at the table).

Teaching Episodes

E1a – Literacy block – USSR
Students came to class and started USSR without prompting from teacher/s. While class reading PT marked roll silently (just by looking), she then tasked ‘peer readers’ to do that rather than USSR. Throughout USSR PT gives timing updates [delivered as whole-class announcements] and guidelines to peer readers telling class they have “less than ten minutes to do peer reading”, “peer readers finish that page then do word lists”, “30 seconds left”. At close of USSR PT did the morning greeting for the class and acknowledged the excitement of the pending performance (school concert today and tonight where each class was performing an item, her class was dancing to ‘funky town’) and she provided a structure/overview of the day highlighting differences from normal routine.

E1b – Literacy block - spelling
I noticed very early on that PT used a very sophisticated ‘teachers voice’ reserving a loud ‘teacher voice’ for whole class instruction and reprimanding/working closely with individuals in a quieter voice this had the effect of uninterrupted whole-class teaching/management messages.
Whole class focus:
When giving instructions for spelling lesson [used teacher voice the whole time]:

Called class to attention vocally (no clapping or other non-verbal cue or game)
Explained work that was already written up on the whiteboard – must have done this prior to commencement of class.
Embedded expectations in the task eg. one of the tasks on the whiteboard was “put these words into an excellent sentence”
Demanded compliant seatwork posture and space use (a) “sit on your seat properly Josh. Thanks” (b) [girl got out of her seat] “sit down please Jane” [Jane sits down and raises her hand and when PT finishes giving spelling task instructions she says] “Yes, Jane?”; J: “May I please get a tissue, PT: “Yes, thank you for asking”.

Her final instruction for the spelling lesson was “You’ve got 20 minutes to do this, that means you to stop when the big hand gets to the 9”.

Individual work:

Children sit and their desks and work silently on their spelling.
While students work PT stands at front of classroom marking work and then walks around entire classroom monitoring/providing extra instruction for individuals as she notices it is needed eg. “Well done Jonah, could you please remember to put a capital at the beginning of your sentences? Good Job.”

-- [descriptions of episodes go for nine pages so I have stopped example here, mid E1b and simply listed the remaining episodes observed. Deletions are indicated with “—”]

E2 – Literacy block - Marking spelling (whole class focus) --
E3 – Literacy block - Reading groups (individual focus) --
LUNCH – wet weather (students played in the classroom) --
E4 – Getting ready for the school concert --
E5 – Walk to the high school’s hall / watch show and do performance / walk back --
E6 – Return to classroom --
RECESS --
E8 – RFF --

Records of informal discussions / interviews

PT and Me – before school (while on playground duty)
- PT said the staffroom was “not friendly”.
- She also said the MT doesn’t really let her do the types of work she wants to do but PT says she has decided to do what she has to do (ie. comply with MT expectations) to “get a good PEX report so I can go out next year and teach how I want to teach” (PT).
--

PT and Me at lunch
- Beyond the school discipline policy / class rules being upheld, PT tried to implement her own management system (2 jars with marbles in them each jar had big felt letters labelling them ‘Miss Hayes’ and ‘5C’ respectively). They started off with 50 marbles in each jar at the beginning of the week and (a) if they did the right thing 5C got marbles off Miss H and (b) vice versa if they did the wrong thing. If they (5C) ended up with more marbles than the teacher at the end of the week they would play a game. PROBLEM = MT wouldn’t allow PT and class time for the ‘game’ earned; after
returning from the infants performance of their part of the ‘school concert’ yesterday. PT wanted to play a game ‘cause there was only 1/2hr of the day left but MT insisted they would be too unsettled because they were out of routine and made the PT give them work instead. Sam’s note: I haven’t witnessed her give or take marbles as incentives/disincentives in the classroom.

**MT and me at lunch (see also emails from MT sent to me last week)**

- Contrary to my discussion with PT, MT says “I pretty much let her do what she wants”

- Regarding the new student in her clas (Hamish). Mentor says he’s only been here a week and he was getting blue slips [negative behaviour notifications] in the playground and disrupting those around him during class (particularly, one other boy, Brandon who, the MT, says became Hamish’s “new play thing”) … and then she got his [record] cards from his last school and, it’s like, “‘Right, I’ve got your number’, I’m squashing him like a bug”. She said she felt she had to “get on top of him straight away so he doesn’t get to the point where he was at at his old school”. She says she’s still figuring him out but she can’t let it go and wait until she figures it out because “it will be too late then [to modify his behaviour and make a difference for him at this school]”. Sam’s note: This new boy, Hamish, sits alone, in front of and facing the teachers desk with his back to the class and the board.

- MT feels that Courtney is responding well to “the hard word” (eg. MT said she gave her a talking to about expectations of behaviour walking students from morning lines to the classroom and since that talk Courtney has managed to walk the students to class in an orderly way). MT said she felt that half PT’s problem was that she’d mainly taught younger years “where all is positive and light, whereas older kids need a harder line of discipline”(MT). “You don’t have to keep them [the older students] happy [like you do the little ones]”. MT says she can’t stand younger kids because “they’re so needy and fussy” (MT).

**PT – RFF discussion with me**

Re use of space:

--

Re pacing and timing:

--

Genneral:

PT said she felt she was “failing” because ‘authoritarian’ is not her style and she felt she was being nothing but negative with the students.

**MT and me after school**

MT called herself an ‘authoritarian’ teacher. “I think she [PT] thought she knew it all and very quickly found out that she didn’t” MT believes PTs learn about behaviour through ‘doing’ and learning from mentors

Re education, MT says that she “doesn’t believe it’s about pleasing the students, it’s about learning”, inferring PT is too worried about being nice to the kids.

“She’s only got 5 weeks, she’s got to work stuff out quickly” (offered as a rationale for providing lots of feedback early on, suggesting that by the time PTs would figure these things out for themselves, they wouldn’t have any time left on their PEX to ‘fix it’ or try different ways of doing it differently).

--