

EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORKING IN BOARDING AND SUPPORTING TEACHERS' DELIVERY OF QUALITY PASTORAL CARE: A PILOT STUDY

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Abstract

A teacher's preparedness to deliver quality pastoral care presents an ongoing challenge for teacher education institutions. It also presents a similar challenge for teachers and pre-service teachers who work in school boarding house contexts. The expectations and requirements of what pastoral care involves is ever shifting in response to the evolving challenges faced by students and staff alike. There are diverse interpretations and sometimes conflicting understandings of what pastoral care in education contexts involves. This ambiguity can have implications for how teachers are prepared to provide appropriate and quality pastoral care post initial teacher education.

This paper explores the perceptions and experiences of what constitutes pastoral care from the perspectives of staff that are teachers (pre-service and in-service) working in a Tasmanian boarding school context. Using narrative analysis, the implications of professional learning opportunities in place and inherent to working in a residential-education context are elucidated. In doing so, the challenges and benefits of being/becoming a teacher in a residential-education context emerge, and the implications of the nexus between perception and enactment of pastoral care in this space is articulated.

Introduction

Teachers require substantive opportunities to establish understanding of what quality pastoral care involves, and develop appropriate skill sets in pedagogical implementation. Norman (2002) stated that "In order for a school to meet the needs of young people it is essential to have staff that are not only academically qualified but are also trained in pastoral care" (p. 36). Although schools today claim to offer pastoral care to their pupils, there are varying interpretations of exactly what is meant by the term. In addition to Norman's statement, literature suggests that very few pre-service teachers receive adequate education or preparation in areas such as human relationships and pastoral care (Goldman & Torrisi-Steele, 2009). Many of the teachers reported upon across these and other research samples (e.g., Best, 1990; 2014; Calvert, 2009; Goldman & Torrisi-Steele 2009; Norman, 2002) have indicated lacking confidence, direction and commitment in this important aspect of teaching and learning. It is very possible that these reported inadequacies were further reflected in the findings of the Australian Scholarships Group Student Social and Emotional Health Report (Bernard, Stephanou & Urbach, 2007), which identified a lack of sufficient training into the implications of students' emotional health and wellbeing as being a significant problem for pre-service teachers.

The above mentioned substantive examples indicate that further research needs to be conducted on how this problem can be addressed. This will likely require exploration of professional learning opportunities both within and outside of initial teacher education (Goldman & Torrisi-Steele, 2009). Research (e.g., Anderson, 2005; Hawkes, 2001) suggests that teachers (pre-service and in-service) who work in residential education contexts (boarding houses) are presented with authentic opportunities to develop their understanding of, and confidence to deliver quality pastoral care. These opportunities positively influence their general capacity and aptitude to provide pastoral care in education contexts. It is in these circumstances that the pertinence and timeliness of this investigation becomes apparent.

This paper reports upon an exploration of pre-service and in-service teachers' understanding of the term 'pastoral care', and how their confidence to provide quality pastoral care to students has been influenced by both their teacher education course, and their experiences of living and working in a school boarding house. This paper highlights the specific ways these experiences of working in boarding contexts contributed to these teachers professional development as providers of pastoral care.

Context

The impetus for this research derived from the researchers' own experiences of working in boarding houses concurrent to undertaking their initial teacher training (ITE). At the time of data collection (2014), the researchers were also working in administrative leadership roles within the regional boarding school (from which data was collected) concurrent to their roles as lecturers in a University Faculty of Education. In 2014, researcher one (male) had six years' experience of working in boarding and four years as an academic. Researcher two (female) had five years' experience of working in boarding and five years as an academic. This investigation was motivated by the researchers' personal beliefs pertaining to the importance of providing rich learning experiences in pastoral care for pre-service teachers, and also a perceived need for deeper understanding of what pastoral care involves for those people working in boarding house contexts. Within this paper, researcher and participant relationality is acknowledged, and interrelationships between the researcher and other are examined as a means to inform and potentially shift social understandings (Davies, 1999). As we had many shared experiences with participants we could be considered as "insiders" (Berger, 2015, p. 222). These experiences could potentially give us an advantage as we had prior knowledge of working in a variety of boarding house roles, and were familiar with the terminology participants used. This familiarity might enable better understanding of participants' perceptions, and the ability to interpret their lived experiences in a way that is impossible in the absence of this knowledge (Mruck & Mey, 2007). Our previous experiences undoubtedly affected how we conducted this research and it was important to recognise and acknowledge where and how this occurred. Personal interest is likely to be the catalyst for many research projects. We did not see a problem with this provided we maintained a reflexive position and were aware of, and continually reassessed, our influence on the research process. Having worked as boarding house tutors whilst undertaking teacher training from 2003 through to 2007, two things emerged as significant for the researchers; one was the lack of explicit attention given to pastoral care during their own respective initial teacher training, whilst the other was the significant opportunity they felt their experiences of working as boarding house tutors provided them in this area. This prompted the researchers, at their time of working in an administrative leadership position in a school boarding house, to gauge the perceived experiences of their boarding house staff who were also undertaking teacher training. The researchers sought to ascertain the degree to which they and their staff perceived their experiences of working in boarding as contributing to their understanding and competence as providers of pastoral care. Given the researchers' own past experiences of working as boarding house tutors undertaking initial teacher education (ITE) and then teaching in schools from 2003 through to 2010 inclusive, there was a curiosity to ascertain how the boarding tutor experience and ITE experience had shifted their' prioritisation of pastoral care education for staff, if at all. This curiosity was also further piqued by the researcher's exploration of pertinent literature which largely indicated existing contentions as to the effectiveness of past and present approaches to best preparing teachers to be pastoral care providers.

In order to gain genuine and purposeful understanding of self and other, the researchers acknowledge the importance of transparency in relation to our personal biases as being integral to understanding how our idiosyncratic stories relate to the larger story unfolding all around us (Webster & Mertova, 2007). The researchers understand the potential for biases to emerge when researchers are entrenched in both researcher and researched contexts. To this end, the participants were made aware of the researchers' existing perceptions of inadequacy pertaining to educating teachers in the complexities of what pastoral care in education contexts involves during their ITE, in contrast to the opportunities they felt their experiences of working in boarding provided them. Participants were also advised as to the objectives of the research, which was to ascertain the relationship perceived between experiences of working in boarding, and how this might contribute to understanding and development of capacity to

provide quality pastoral care in education contexts.

Critical reflection was used as a means to “self-check” and ensure that participants’ perceptions and experiences were represented in authentic and trustworthy ways (Muncey, 2010). The semi-structured interview format allowed participants some control in the direction of the interview, and corrected for some of the power asymmetry (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) that exists between the interviewer and interviewee. We were also aware that our position might be fluid rather than static, as reflexivity is a two way process (Berger, 2015). Just as our beliefs and values had the potential to influence the research procedures and participants, these procedures and people could have influenced our thinking. Member checking was conducted after each interview to try and ensure that the collection and representation of data was done in a way that authentically represented the voices of our participants (Berger, 2015). The data generated throughout these interviews and associated member checking provided a rich breadth and depth of data to scrutinise and draw insights that enabled us to explicate the research questions guiding this investigation.

Review of Literature

An increasing spread of research e.g., Arnon & Reichel, 2007; Bernard et al., 2007; Best, 2014; Philpott, 2015) has called for additional support and education for pre-service and beginning teachers in equipping them to deliver quality pastoral care. Yet, literature indicates that some inconsistencies shape conceptualisations of the term ‘pastoral care’ (Bernard et al., 2007; Best, 2014; Clebsch & Jaekle, 1994). These tensions appear to derive from its’ situational contexts, assigned responsibility for particular teachers, confidence and experience. A description of what pastoral care entails in relation to teacher professional knowledge and expectations has been widely conceptualised within Best’s (1990; 2014) longitudinal research as encompassing four distinct services, with each of these being defined in terms of meeting the needs of people. Three of these - casework, curriculum and control - are specifically aimed at meeting the collective and interrelated needs of young people as children, learners and citizens. The fourth is facilitative and is oriented towards the needs of staff, and ensuring staff are appropriately educated and supported in their provision of pastoral care. This investigation sought to ascertain how a group of teachers (pre-service and in-service) perceived their readiness to provide pastoral care in education contexts, and the relationship, if any, between capacity and teachers’ experiences of working in boarding. The scope of the literature review therefore focused upon collating prior research undertaken to conceptualise what is involved in preparing teachers to provide pastoral care in education contexts, and the challenges encountered in best preparing teachers for this complex aspect of their work. Research that had explored the pastoral aspects and related professional learning opportunities inherent to working within residential boarding contexts (e.g., Arnon & Reichel, 2007; Bernard et al., 2007; Best, 2014; Philpott, 2015) were also examined.

In order to deliver quality pastoral care, it is apparent that each aspect of pastoral work requires teachers to possess a diverse and flexible range of skills and attitudes. Specifically, it has been proposed that teachers need to be acquainted with and possess practical skills and knowledge of occupational health and safety requirements, physical and mental health, first aid and child protection legislation (Anderson, 2005; Hawkes, 2001). There is a perception that training and then provision of ongoing support for teachers to continue refining their skills in providing pastoral care has been overlooked in teacher training programs, or at least is not given adequate attention (Bernard et al., 2007; Cleave et al., 1997; Dewhirst et al., 2014). Best describes that the training of teachers in delivery of quality pastoral care has been “given low priority or, worse, simply ignored” (1990, p. 21), and if commitment to the development and students’ holistic wellbeing is to be more than empty rhetoric, the ways in which teachers are prepared to provide quality pastoral care “is in urgent need of correction” (Best, 1990, p. 21). Further to the comprehensive research undertaken by Best and colleagues spanning a period of 25 years, research consistently asserts that teachers’ understanding of what pastoral care in education contexts involves, and preparedness to deliver quality pastoral care is

not addressed in adequate depth or priority in their initial teacher training (Bernard et al., 2007; Cleave et al., 1997; Dewhirst et al., 2014). While Best's body of research is more seminal than contemporary, more recent research (e.g., Danyluk, 2013; Philpott, 2015) indicates that this is a need yet to be satisfactorily addressed in ITE programs.

A key challenge for ITE in the Australian context is to provide additional professional learning within an already tightly packed teacher education curriculum. For example, in relation to knowing students and how they learn, the Australian professional standards for teachers requires graduate teachers to understand the physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students, and be able to differentiate learning to meet the needs of diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds (Australian Institute for Training and School Leadership [AITSL], 2014). Across the spread of research examined, some disconnect is evident between the expected outcomes for graduate teachers, and reported capacity to meet these professional knowledge standards (Arnon & Reichel, 2007; Day & Leitch, 2001; Philpott, 2015). It is evident that this disconnect between opportunities to further teachers' skills and understandings in relation to providing pastoral care and fulfilling the objectives of the professional standards for teachers (AITSL, 2014) places pressure upon and questions the effectiveness of ITE programs. According to Arnon and Reichel (2007), programs for teacher education are being extensively challenged and intensively re-worked" (p. 443) in response to inconsistencies between professional expectations and outcomes. This intense scrutiny and reworking of ITE programs are indicative of changing perspectives of the most appropriate means of preparing trainee teachers for the demands of the modern classroom (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2001).

Academic literature on how schools provide professional learning to support teachers in their delivery of pastoral care is small, and literature on how schools provide equivalent professional learning for pre-service teachers in school is even smaller (Carroll, 2010; Philpott, 2015). Many student teachers find learning to teach a personally and emotionally challenging experience as well as an intellectually and cognitively demanding one (Paker 2011; Timostuk & Ugaste 2012). Recommendations in relation to ITE and ongoing in-service support to ensure teachers' preparedness to provide pastoral care indicates increased prioritization are prevalent across the literature explored. However, there are further opportunities outside of ITE and professional development in-service for teachers to consider which reside in complimentary contexts adjacent to mainstream teachers' professional learning in schools. An example of particular significance to the context of this investigation is situated within residential education (boarding). The Australian Boarding Schools Association (ABSA) offers a certificate course in Duty of Care (Hawkes, 2001), which ABSA uses and advocates as its base-level training for all boarding school staff across Australia. This course addresses topics such as: the philosophy of residential care; meeting boarders' pastoral needs; occupational health and safety and emergency procedures based around written tasks that require staff to reflect on their own practice (Hawkes, 2001).

Some criticism has arisen in research that questions the notion of 'training' or 'educating' staff, and the significance of these two approaches in relation to teachers' capacity to provide quality pastoral care. Lang (1989) argues that while it may be possible to train someone for their role as a provider of pastoral care for students in education contexts, it would be much more difficult to educate them for it. This difficulty is due to educating meaning that they [teachers] would need to "understand the value of what they had been trained to do, believe in its importance and have some commitment to doing it effectively" (Lang, 1989, p. 19). Reiterating findings of other research that argues for increased investment in ensuring teachers are appropriately prepared to deliver quality pastoral care, there appears to be a shared perception that provision of a rolling professional learning program for teachers in pastoral care; one that moves in dynamic momentum to meet the needs to the students for which the pastoral care is to be given (Best, 1990, 2014; Lang, 1989; Philpott, 2015).

Across the literature explored, both historical and ongoing dissatisfaction is evident in teachers' reported perceptions of their preparedness to provide quality pastoral care to their students. Interestingly, the literature informing this review drew from a diverse range of European, American and Australian research contexts and perspectives, reiterating some of the key findings from seminal

research undertaken by pastoral care experts (Best, 2014; Marland, 1975); that teachers' understanding and preparedness to provide quality pastoral care in education contexts warrants increased investment both in service and during ITE.

Methodology

This investigation embraced a constructivist paradigm, aligning with a naturalistic qualitative methods approach utilising narrative inquiry methodology. Narratives, being powerful in their capacity to allow individual teachers opportunity to share and make sense of their own experiences in teaching, also enable other teachers to connect with a larger picture (Jalongo & Isenberg, 1995). Through the sharing of and reflection upon participant narratives, the researchers elucidated meanings into how experiences of working in boarding and teaching interacted for the participants individually and collectively, which then opened the possibility for much greater understandings of self and other to be obtained (Ahn & Filipenko, 2007; Fivush & Haden, 2003). This narrative research embraced a constructivist "patching together of experiences, incorporating its contradictory and ambiguous nature, while building a richness and continuity of self" (Pearce & Morrison, 2011, p. 50). As such, the social constructivist qualities of narrative inquiry seamlessly aligned to achieve the research objectives.

The places and spaces where the participants evolved and established their identities and practices as teachers working in residential education contexts provided rich insight into how, where and when they performed as such to provide pastoral care. This was where issues pertaining to the three narrative inquiry commonplaces of temporality, sociality, and place (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) were made explicit and transparent. Within this study, considerations of temporality, sociality and place underpinned the framework of this investigation and acted as "check points" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 479). It was through these check points that we were able to identify and direct focus and attention, depending on where the participants' stories led us in relation to fulfilling the research aims and questions. The three commonplaces of temporality, sociality and place align with the constructivist approaches utilised in the study by reflecting a "whole picture from many pieces" approach. In exploring the temporality, sociality and places where teachers, pre-service or practicing work within residential education contexts, we pieced together fragments from multiple angles and perspectives to provide rich insight into complex situations and phenomena. To undertake a successful narrative inquiry, there needs to be a simultaneous and balanced exploration of all three commonplaces, as we cannot focus only on one to the exclusion of others (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin, Pushor, & Murray Orr, 2007). With this in mind, we were mindful of maintaining this balance across and between the three commonplaces whilst co-constructing with the participants. This involved us collaboratively identifying and exploring the situational, temporal and social aspects of when, how and where we performed as teachers in residential education contexts, and it was through these check points that we discerned converging points for individual, collective, and cultural stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Wood, 2001). This is indicative of how narrative inquiry can enable us to make more thorough sense of our own and others' identities and practices, and in turn, enables others to connect with the larger picture (Jalongo & Isenberg, 1995). The social constructivist opportunities inherent to narrative inquiry meant that we were able to clarify our experiences and perceptions of what it meant to become and be teachers working in residential education contexts and articulate "stories of who we and others are" (Clandinin, Pushor & Murray Orr, 2007).

For this pilot investigation, a set of four open ended semi-structured interview questions were devised, and the researchers' boarding house staff who were either working as teachers or working towards becoming teachers were invited for an interview. Of the ten participants invited for an interview, all ten accepted and were interviewed once for approximately 30 minutes. The participants included one male Head of Boarding, two House coordinators (one male and one female), and seven residential tutors. These residential tutors included two male classroom teachers and five pre-service teachers (one male and four female) currently undertaking Bachelor of Education degrees). The residential tutors' years of experience in boarding ranged from one to three years, the Head of Boarding with 25 years experience, and the two House coordinators had 7 years experience respectively. The

participants reflected a balance of male and female perspectives, and the ages of participants varied from 20 to 53 years of age.

The interview questions were adapted from examples of eminent research that sought to articulate teachers' perceptions and understanding of pastoral care in education contexts (e.g., Best, 1990; 2014; Cleave et al., 1997; Dewhirst et al., 2014). Development of questions was also informed by research and interview questions that had been applied to residential education contexts (e.g., Anderson, 2005). The four questions while open in nature, provided clear pathways for exploration of the interactivity between teacher education, teaching, working in boarding, and staff perceived preparedness to deliver quality pastoral care. These questions included:

- Describe your understanding of what 'pastoral care' is and what it entails.
- What are some of the difficulties you have faced in providing pastoral care within your boarding house context?
- How have your experiences of working in a boarding house contributed to your development as a teacher?
- What emphasis did/does your teacher training place upon pastoral care, and what opportunities did/do you have to develop skills relative to this aspect of your work?

The semi-structured interviews and subsequent co-construction of narratives allowed the researchers to collaboratively articulate with participants insightful inferences from their lived experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Cresswell, 2005) of the intersect between pre-service and in-service teaching, working in boarding school contexts and implications for capacity to provide pastoral care. Given the inter-related context of the participants' lives as teachers, pre-service teachers and providers of pastoral care, it is acknowledged that the participants' lives as learners, teachers and pastoral care providers affected and informed the data collected. Narrative inquiry effectively enabled the researchers to capture and investigate the participants' experiences as lived in time, space, person and through relationships (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

From the semi-structured interviews, the interview transcripts were annotated by the researchers and respective participants in order to construct field texts. The participants were then given the transcripts to verify, reflect upon, add to, and/or make changes to in collaboration and co-construction with the researchers. As part of the co-construction of narratives, the researchers collaboratively pieced together the fragments of our stories of becoming and being teachers working in residential education contexts, within and between the stories of others. In doing so, we worked as bricoleurs (Levi-Strauss, 1962), engaging socially in dialogic interaction with the research process and participants to co-construct images of our individual and our shared meanings (Mishler, 1986). This is indicative of the researchers' understanding that individuals who "experience the world from their own vantage points can in turn form multiple realities" (Hatch, 2002, p. 15). During the sharing and development of the field texts, the participants also had the opportunity to read, reflect upon and annotate the other participants' field texts. This process enabled the participants to consider and make sense of their own experiences as part of a larger picture, and to explore contrasts and commonalities across the diversity of experiences. This interactivity between researchers and participants was critical to ensuring genuine co-construction was achieved, where individual experiences and social implications and interpretations are drawn together (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). This approach enabled researchers and participants to explore and come to consensus as to how individual and other can interact, and to contribute to how this was then communicated and reported upon in research. This interaction was critical to cultivating openness between researcher and participant, delivering depth of insights that would likely not have been gained through a more structured interview processes (Cortazzi, 1993).

This research gained ethical approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania) Network and was given the approval number: H0014784

Preparedness to provide pastoral Care: Experiences and expectations

The ensuing discussion is presented to illustrate insights articulated in relation to the perceptions, understandings and experiences that the participants held as to how they perceived their experiences of providing pastoral care (as in-service and/or pre-service teachers) was influenced by their experiences of working within the boarding house context. It is acknowledged that the insights offered here are indicative of perceptions of what counts as research, and is unique to the participants' own situational contexts. As such, the researchers do not attest to speak for the experiences of others or for those who work concurrently in classrooms and boarding houses. Rather, the discussion is intended to provide a place where collective perspectives can converge, within which we have the capacity to construct multiple and divergent interpretations (Barone & Eisner, 2012). In this way, the researchers acknowledge how "the self does not exist in isolation" (Griffin, 1999, p. 51), and that knowing the self requires us to enter into social processes where we can explore self and other through the shaping and sharing of storied experiences.

The discussion is presented within three key contextual frames. These frames are derivative from the overarching objectives of the investigation and the interview questions developed from these. Within these contextual frames, the discussion unfolds to reveal the degree to which experiences in boarding contributed to the teachers' perceived development of skills integral to providing quality pastoral care, and the degree to which teachers (in-service or pre-service) perceived their ITE to provide adequate opportunities to understand and learn how to provide pastoral care in education contexts. The three frames are canvassing understandings of expectations inherent to pastoral care, elucidating how working in boarding contexts might contribute to development of professional skills in pastoral care, and whether experiences of working in boarding better prepare teachers to understand and deliver quality pastoral care. Contextual extracts from the participant narratives are interwoven into the discussion to help facilitate personal connection with the insights presented. Narrative extracts are differentiated from the main body of text in *italics*. To safeguard the identities of the participants who contributed data for this investigation, they were assigned pseudonyms.

Canvassing understandings of expectations inherent to providing pastoral care

Pastoral care is an overarching term that encompasses many aspects of Boarding House life from ensuring that each student has sufficient food and drink, their standard of hygiene is upheld, and also that their emotional, spiritual, and mental health needs are fulfilled - Zara

Despite the participants' varying degrees of professional experience of both working in boarding, years of classroom teaching experience and experiences of teacher development; similar understandings of what pastoral care was perceived to be, and what was involved in implementing it surfaced. There was also a shared sense across the participants narratives that the term pastoral care was a familiar term, and one that they encountered often both in-service and pre-service, although each of the participants' experiences indicated a perceived lack of learning in the specifics of what pastoral care entailed, especially what it encapsulated in the classroom, and attention given to their preparation to be providers.

Working in boarding means that I help students feel as though they are part of a family, and I carry this approach from boarding into my classroom to help foster inclusion and a sense of belonging in my students - Geordie.

This insight reiterated a long standing concern articulated across examples of historical and contemporary research that how teachers are educated and prepared to be providers of pastoral care was lacking both in-service and remained a point of concern in ITE (see Anderson, 2005; Best, 1990; 2014; Norman, 2002). Generally speaking, the participant narratives suggested an understanding that pastoral care referred to our capacity to give care and responsibility, whether it be as teachers or as boarding staff, to nurture our students' basic needs for survival and safety, as well as emotional,

spiritual, physical well-being.

Pastoral Care is an integral aspect of working in both boarding and broader school contexts. Our ability to effectively provide quality pastoral care to our students also says something of our own resilience and capacity to look beyond our own immediate needs - Margaret

Interestingly, there was a firm and shared belief that the participants' experiences of working in boarding concurrent to their work as in-service or training as pre-service teachers provided rich opportunities for them to further their understanding of what provision of pastoral care meant in practice. This explicit emphasis placed upon practicing pastoral care was particularly insightful for the pre-service teachers working in boarding, who described how their experiences of working as boarding house tutors concurrent to undertaking their ITE enabled them to address what they perceived to be an understanding that was assumed in much of their learning to become a teacher.

For me, pastoral care relates to my responsibility to create a caring, supportive and safe environment for those under my care. The work I do in the boarding house enables me to consciously practice this, and to think and talk about how to best do it with my colleagues. That's really important for me - Bridie.

As Norman (2002) suggests "in order for a school to meet the needs of young people it is essential to have staff that are not only academically qualified but are also trained in pastoral care" (p. 36). It is important for teachers to be versed in how to provide quality pastoral care to serve the holistic needs of their students. The participants' narratives indicated an understanding of what pastoral care involved that was consistent with definitions as outlined in previous studies (see Anderson 2005; Best, 1990; 2014; Hawkes, 2001), however, where this understanding was consolidated appears to be grounded in their experiences of working in boarding, as opposed to their experiences in professional learning or ITE.

How does working in boarding contexts contribute to development of professional skills in pastoral care?

In relation to how the participants perceived their experiences of working in their particular boarding house context as contributing to teacher development, all respondents were able to make distinct and purposeful connections between these two facets of their professional practice or emerging practice. This was particularly interesting to note from those tutors who were also engaged in pre-service teacher training, given that some examples of literature highlight the view that pre-service teachers receive inadequate education or preparation to deliver pastoral care in practice (Best, 1990; 2014; Norman, 2002). This is not to say that they do not understand what it means or what it should be; rather, it demonstrates in action Goldman's and Torrisi-Steele's (2009) point of the difficulty beginning and pre-service teachers can experience in being able to make genuine connections between ideas and practice. The participants effortlessly articulated a range of benefits they perceived their work in boarding to contribute to their classroom practices, particularly in relation to building rapport and developing engaging learning experiences.

It [Experiences of working in boarding] has taught me to relate to kids better and assist my behavioral management and to in turn develop engaging lessons – Ian

The participants' articulated experiences reiterate the historical concern across literature that teachers need to be given more explicit opportunities within and beyond their pre-service training to consolidate in-depth understanding of what quality pastoral care is, and continue to develop their approaches in its provision (Goldman & Torrisi-Steele, 2009; Norman, 2002). Further to this, there was a shared perception that the participants' experiences of working in boarding provided them with opportunities to engage in, reflect upon and refine their approaches to providing pastoral care;

experiences that collectively the participants' felt were lacking across their ITE and ongoing professional learning in service. It was identified that these professional experiences of practicing and crafting their skills in provision of pastoral care within the boarding house significantly impacted upon how they provided pastoral care in their classrooms.

My time working in boarding significantly contributed to my holistic development as a teacher. As well as explicit opportunities to practice providing pastoral care, other skills include time management, organizing excursions, the importance of keeping detailed records, communication with students and fellow staff members, teamwork and much more
- Alex

Can experiences in boarding better prepare pre-service teachers to understand and deliver quality pastoral care?

The participants collectively agreed that regardless of whether they were working in boarding as pre-service or in-service teachers, whether responsible for coordinating a house or tutoring, a genuine value for how their experiences of working in boarding contributed to their professional practice as teachers was evident. One tutor (also a pre-service teacher) noted that her experiences of working in boarding were particularly challenging in relation to navigating boundaries with students who were only three years younger than her, and the level of support, guidance and care she would be able to provide, being so young herself.

It was initially very confronting for me to have to direct students and provide pastoral support when I was only a few years older than the eldest student. This worried me a bit, and I relied a lot of my colleague's support to help me become more confident. - Glenda

In overcoming this challenge, she described become adept in navigating appropriate boundaries and cultivating positive relationships with her students, describing how she felt her experiences in boarding directly benefited her practical classroom teaching experiences during professional experience. The participants collectively expressed and described concrete ways in which they felt their experiences of working within residential education contexts enabled them to better understand what was involved in being a pastoral care provider.

There are challenges in boarding that I have been presented with that have directly informed what I do in my classroom, particularly around boundaries with students. There's got to be a balance of trust, rapport and distance to be able to effectively provide pastoral care. Sometimes those boundaries can be trickier to navigate when you live with your students, but the insights I gain are totally transferable [to my classroom] – Glenda

It was interesting to hear the participants speak about some of the challenges they experienced in working across boarding and classroom teaching or pre-service teaching contexts. One tutor, who was also a pre-service teacher, described having developed a strong sense of mutual respect with the boarders, and that this respect was built upon vested efforts to maintain enduring relationships. In relation to connections between experiences in boarding and teacher development emergent across the participants' storied experiences, relationships was a prominent theme. One tutor thought it likely that the challenges she had faced in forming and managing relationships in the boarding context with staff and students alike was possibly the most valuable experience of all, and her appreciation for this opportunity was evident.

If there is one thing I have learnt it is the importance of clear, consistent and reliable staff/student boundaries when it comes to being a pastoral care provider. My time working in boarding enabled me to experience how this can be really complicated, and the value of having diverse experiences to draw from - Minnie

The participants' responses reflected that despite being able to articulate understandings of pastoral care that aligned with published definitions (see Anderson, 2005; Best, 1990; 2014; Hawkes, 2001),

their experiences of ITE indicated a shared perception of inadequate opportunities to further develop this aspect of their profession in practice. This is by no means a new insight given that the Australian Scholarships Group Student's Social and Emotional Health Report (Bernard, et al., 2007) has previously highlighted the concern that training into the implications of students emotional health and well-being was still very much lacking in teacher training. What is interesting and concerning is that eight years later, this small pilot sample has expressed similar experiences and perceptions of historical concerns. What is noteworthy from this investigation is that while the participants' from this sample reiterate previously reported concerns, there are evidently significant opportunities for pre-service or in-service teachers to greatly enhance their professional learning in relation to providing pastoral care to be gained within residential education contexts.

As a pre-service teacher, my time spent working in the Boarding House has provided me with the opportunity to further develop skills that I can already see will benefit me as a teacher - Matilda

Conclusion

In exploring the storied experiences of the participants from this pilot investigation, both pre-service and in-service teachers indicated their experience of working created significant opportunities for them to consolidate their understanding and develop skills in provision of pastoral care in education contexts. Both pre-service and practicing teachers working in this particular residential education context were able to identify and make meaningful connections between their experiences in boarding and articulate specific ways in which they perceived it as contributing to their development as teachers. The most noteworthy benefits included effective navigation of professional/personal boundaries, ability to cultivate an inclusive and supportive learning environment, promoting and maintaining positive relationships, and the importance of effective communication. These are all skills and capacities imperative to provision of pastoral care across broader education contexts (Anderson, 2005; Best, 1990; 2014; Hawkes, 2001).

Further opportunities both within ITE and ongoing for in-service teachers is essential to helping teachers establish and further develop their understanding of what quality pastoral care is, its pedagogical implementation, and the intersect between personal values and experience, and the professional responsibilities and obligations for pastoral care providers. This investigation reiterated that this important aspect of teacher professional development remain inadequate, however it also demonstrated the significant opportunities to further cultivate these skills that are presented to teachers who concurrently work in residential education contexts. We propose that it would be beneficial for ITE programs to explore opportunities to make more explicit connections to and cultivate professional collaborative relationships with boarding schools. This relationship could include a collaborative sharing of professional learning resources to enhance teacher development in pastoral care for both contexts. For example, there may be opportunities for pre-service teachers to obtain roles as tutors in boarding houses as they undertake their ITE. Opportunities for professional practicum placements and/or teacher exchanges across boarding schools for teachers may also present rich opportunities for teachers (in-service and pre-service) to access and contribute to professional learning in provision of pastoral care in education contexts.

As a next step for research in this space, investigations seek to expand upon the insights obtained from this single institution perspective to ascertain the degree to which boarding schools across Tasmania value pastoral care; how they prepare their boarding staff to deliver, and whether any potential exists for opportunities for pre-service and in-service teachers to work across boarding contexts as a means to enhancing and diversifying their skills and expertise in provision of pastoral care.

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