



Curtin University

Developing workforce capacity in pre-service teachers: Examining present and possible future selves.

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Professional identity

- An important element of becoming a member of a profession is the development of a sense of identity to both a particular group of people and a set of established practices (Trede & McEwen, 2012).
- Opportunities to reflect upon past and current personal personas as well as imagine future possible identities may assist undergraduate initial teacher education students to cross the threshold from **student-novice** to **teacher-expert**: a paradigm shift from a personal identity to a professional identity.

- The construction of a professional identity ...



- This implies **intervention** on the part of the educator so that students are supported to reflect on and make sense of theory and practice to which they are exposed throughout their course.

- This presentation reports on findings from a year-long study conducted in the Bachelor of Education Primary degree in 2016.
- The participants were drawn from second year, under-graduate initial teacher education students enrolled in the Bachelor of Education Primary in the first Professional Studies unit of the degree.
- The study was underpinned by Markus and Nurius' (1986) theoretical model of “possible selves” thereby prompting the participants to reflect upon their present self, and to visualise what they hoped, expected or feared becoming (Bennett, 2015).



This study

- This study incorporated **drawings** as a data source and extended this approach to go beyond inductive coding of the drawings.
- This was achieved by incorporating captions, characteristics of effective teachers, and the PSTs' concerns about going into their first professional placement.
- The drawings were not privileged over the text components; rather, they were examined in tandem.

Data sets

- The semester 1 data sought to investigate the students' projection of their professional self as a teacher **prior** to experiencing a teacher role in a classroom (survey 1): $n = 87$
- The semester 2 data allowed the students to reflect on their perceived professional selves after experiencing “real” teaching. (survey 2)
- **Pairing** the data sets ($n = 72$) allowed the researchers to examine the impact of the work placement upon the students' present and possible future selves, including their identities as teachers.

Data analysis - drawings

- The drawings from PST Survey 1 were examined by the research team, and a classification in five categories was reached by consensus: metaphor, teacher only (T), teacher and artefact/s (TA), teachers and student/s (TS), or teacher, student/s and artefact/s (TSA) based on the content analysis methodology used by Rose (2012).

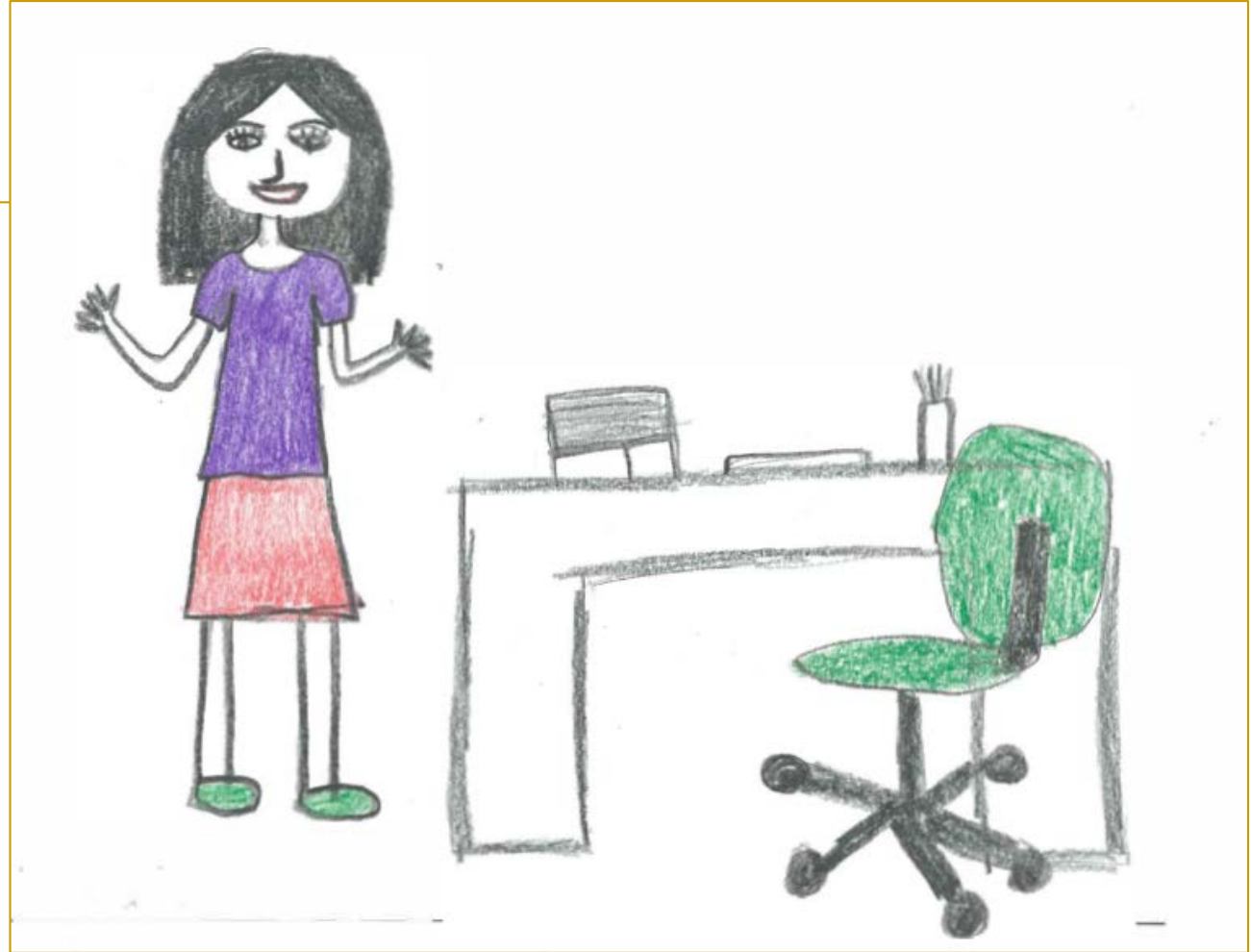
Metaphor



Teacher



Teacher & Artefact/s



Teacher & Student/s



Teacher & Student/s & Artefact/s



Findings

Proportion of each drawing category (n = 87)

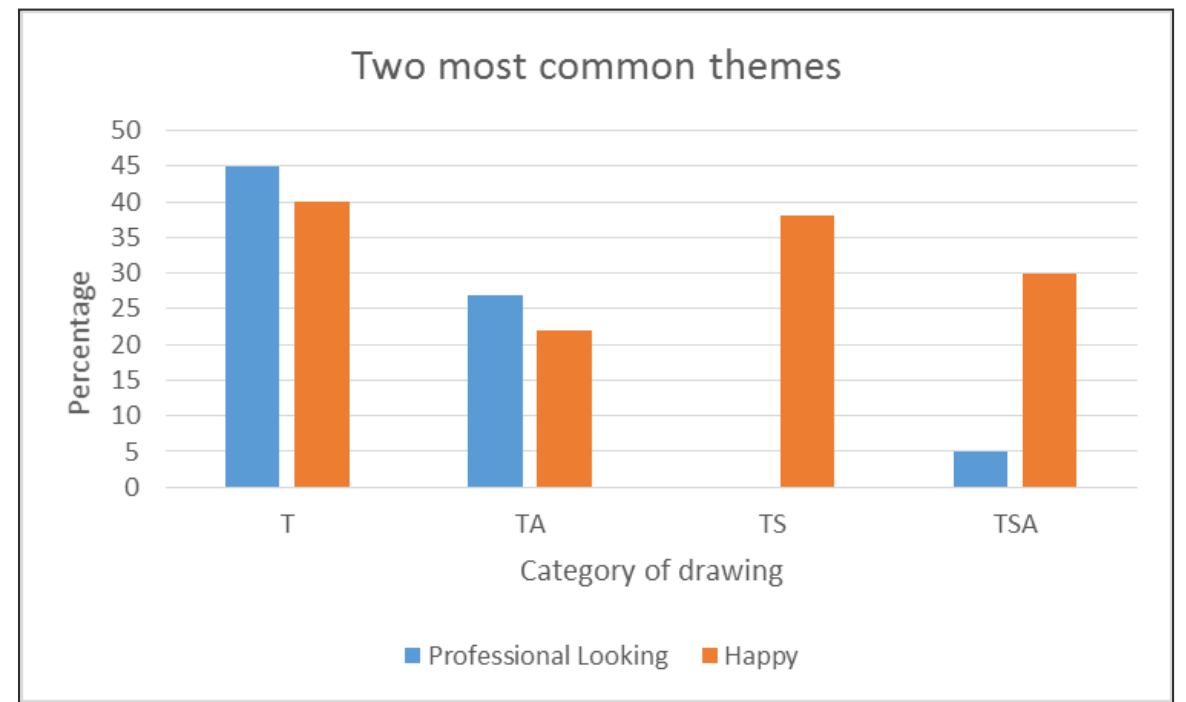
Drawing category	% of participant group
Teacher only (T)	23
Teacher and artefact/s (TA)	21
Teacher and student/s (TS)	9
Teacher and student/s and artefact/s (TSA)	46
Metaphor	1

Artefacts drawn and position of the teacher

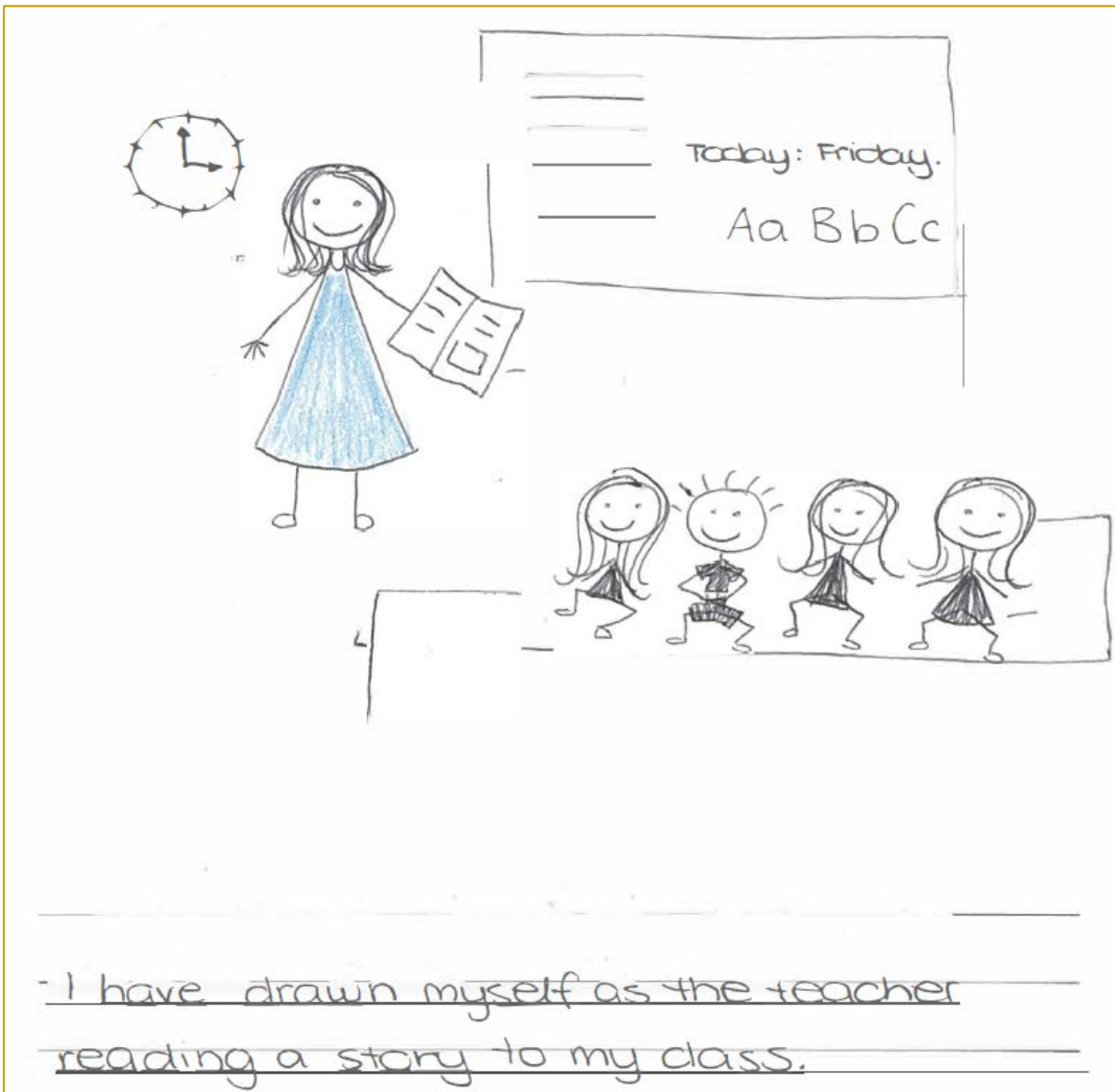
Drawing category	Artefacts (percentages)			Position of teacher
	Board only	Desk/s only	Both	
Teacher & artefact (TA)	16.5	22	39	Teacher at front of the room 22
Teacher, student/s & artefact/s (TSA)	47.5	7.5	22.5	77.5

Caption analysis

- The captions were analysed to identify common themes or statements.
- The graph shows the comparison amongst the four drawing categories (excluding the metaphor). The two most common themes or statements were: *dress*ing or looking professional and *happy*/smiling.



In this drawing, I am reading a book to my students. I am a happy and ^{the} best teacher I can possibly be. ☺



- A third theme or reference, which is not in the same numbers as “professional looking” or “happy/smiling”, was a description of the participants **reading** to or with their students.

Characteristics of effective teachers

- Participants listed 57 different characteristics of effective teachers. The four highest scoring characteristics were: *organised* (39%), *knowledgeable* (31%), *engaging* (29%), and *approachable* (26%).
- Of interest is that only the two categories of drawing that included students (that is, TS and TSA) scored highly for “engaging” and that only the two categories that did **not** include students (that is, T and TA) scored highly for “approachable”. The characteristic of being “organised” was highly rated in all of the categories.

Concerns about teaching

Whilst the participants expressed their concerns in many different ways, they were coded and categorised under four key themes: **pedagogy, managing student behaviour, curriculum knowledge, and confidence.**

Drawing Category	Concern 1	Concern 2	Concern 3
T	Pedagogy 37%	Managing Student Behaviour 20% (including respect)	Curriculum Knowledge 10%
TA	Pedagogy 28%	Confidence 11.5%	Curriculum Knowledge 10% Managing Student Behaviour (including respect) 10%
TS	Pedagogy 10%	Parents 7% Confidence 7%	Curriculum Knowledge 5%
TSA	Pedagogy 60%	Managing Student Behaviour (including respect) 37%	Curriculum Knowledge 28%
Metaphor	How can I cover all of the curriculum? - confidence	How will I be able to implement what I've learnt? - confidence	How will I know if I am doing it right? - confidence



Other concerns

- *Cracking under pressure*
- *Pressure to be a perfect teacher*
- *Pressure for testing in lower primary years*
- *Bad policy that makes my job harder*
- *The government will implement something awful that I don't agree with*
- *Bad policy or rules that make work difficult.*

Final item in PST Survey 1: “Where do you see yourself in 10 years’ time and what will you be doing?”

Drawing code	Teaching/classroom			Higher duties	Not teaching
	General	Regional	Overseas		
T	76%	5%	19%	0	0
TA	66.6%	0	22.2%	11%	0
TS	50%	37.5%	12.5%	0	0
TSA	64%	10%	18%	5%	0

PST Survey 2 Item 2: “Has your thinking about being a teacher changed since your first placement?”

	Yes		No	
	+	-	+	-
T	47%	0	41%	0
TA	53.3%	0	26.6%	0
TS	50%	0	33.3%	0
TSA	38%	6%	29%	0

Examples of the coding

- Examples of positive “yes”:
- *Yes, my thinking has changed about being a teacher as I now realise how much I enjoy it.*
- *Yes, it’s a far more positive outlook on how I need to differentiate my lessons to suit all levels.*
- Example of negative “yes”:
- *Yes, it has changed in a negative way, I still want to be a teacher but it has made me think if I still enjoy teaching as much as I did before my prac.*
- Examples of positive “no”:
- *No, I still think that teaching is for me.*
- *Not really – this prac motivated me more to get through it all because it is exactly where I want to be.*

Neutral responses – providing insight and an emerging professional identity

Survey 2 Item 3: What do you think you need to work on in preparation for your second (next) placement?"

Drawing category	Highest rated	Next highest	Third highest
T	Beh/class management (35%)	Time management (29%)	Catering for differences (29%)
TA	Beh/class management (66.6%)	Time management (60%)	Lesson planning (46.6%)
TS	Beh/class management (83.3%)	Lesson planning (50%)	Assessment (33.3%)
TSA	Beh/class management (53%)	Lesson planning (44%)	Teaching skills (29%) Confidence (29%)

Matching initial concerns with Survey 2 Item 3: “What do you think you need to work on in preparation for your next placement?”

Drawing category	0 matches	1 match	2 matches	3 matches
T	88%	12%	0	0
TA	53.4%	26.6%	20%	0
TS	50%	50%	0	0
TSA	65%	29%	6%	0

Assumptions

1. TSA drawing category – student-centred and professionally aligned.
 2. Add “happy” from the caption – resilient.
 3. Identify 4 key characteristics of an effective teacher (*organised, knowledgeable, engaging, and approachable*) – positive personal traits + content knowledge.
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- Students in these 3 categories – “successful”?

The continuing study

- In semester 2, 2017 participants from the paired data sets will be surveyed again prior to their third placement in class, and in the last week of their 4-week placement using an online survey.
- We feel that this is imperative – monitoring the professional identity of the PSTs as they progress through their degree. Furthermore, their concerns must have some impact on the Professional Studies units' content – and they need to be given a voice and agency into their learning and development.