I just felt so guilty: The emotional dimension of supporting problematic preservice teachers.

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Abstract

Research in the field of emotions in relation to teaching is relatively new, and as yet there is still a silence in the literature addressing the emotional dimension of preservice teacher education, particularly with respect to the role of school (or centre)-based teacher educators. This paper reports the initial findings from a study conducted as part of a doctoral program. The focus of the study is the emotional dimension of the practicum for school-based teacher educators as they support preservice teacher colleagues. The study adopts a feminist poststructuralist stance to attempt to make sense of the emotions teachers experience while supporting a preservice teacher in their workplace. It investigates teachers’ shifting sense of agency throughout the experience as they work within apparently competing discursive frames. The case study reveals the depth of emotions experienced by teachers and examines the impact of the emotions on the teacher’s identity. It appears that tertiary sector has failed to recognise the emotional costs of such experiences and the needs of school-based teacher educator. Finally the paper asks in what ways can staff in universities work collaboratively with teachers to address the concerns being raised by a study such as this as there is a genuine need to assist teachers cope with the emotional outcomes of working with our problematic preservice teachers.
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**Introduction**

It is recognised that teachers’ work is emotionally demanding. Hargreaves (1998b, p. 835) asserts that emotions are at the heart of teaching and good teaching is ‘charged with positive emotions’. In all disciplines emotions are emerging as an important field of study and education and teaching are no different. In the discipline of education, the emotions associated with schooling, teaching and learning have come under the scrutiny of an increasing number of researchers (Zembylas, 2003; Day & Leitch, 2001; Hargreaves, 2000; Marshak, 1996). Nias (1989) suggested that an examination of teachers’ experiences would be incomplete if it did not incorporate discussion about emotions, both positive and negative. While supporting a preservice teacher, school-based teacher educators continue to interact with their pupils, colleagues and members of the immediate school community, but they have additional intensive contact with the pre-service teacher and university staff. It should be assumed that emotions are felt in relation to all these interactants (Denzin, 1984). By the nature of the role, it could be suggested co-operating teachers often face greater levels of emotional labour (Hochschild, 1990) because of the increased number of different interactants.

There are significant studies focussing on the emotions associated with tertiary education (including teacher education) – the voices of the preservice teachers Bloomfield (2004), nurses (Drake, 1995; Hand, 2003), social work supervisors (Urdang, 1995) and even academic staff (Goldenberg & Waddell, 1990) are heard. There exists a small body of research that addresses issues related to the emotional cost of failing students (Marland & McSherry, 1997; Oermann & Sperling, 1999). However, studies examining the emotions experienced by school-based teacher educators are still under-represented in the field. Lukabyo, (1986) examined the causes of stress and a follow up study by Fry & Martin (1996) focussed on the stressors facing co-operating teachers. (Fleet, 1993) noted in her doctoral study that situations of conflict occur in the relationship between student and school-based teacher educator.

This paper reports some of the initial findings of a doctoral study that aims to build on previous work by the author who initially identified the emotional dimension of the role of the school-based teacher educator in a Masters study (Hastings, 2004). In essence, the doctoral study focuses on school-based teacher educators who have recently worked with problematic practicum students and the stories they tell of the emotional impact that experience has on them personally and professionally. I have chosen to report this case, which addresses the notion of agency, discursive frames and how emotions impact on a teacher’s identity.

I chose this as my doctoral study because it is part of my lived experience as a co-operating teacher, university supervisor and now, as Sub Dean working with school-based teacher educators who are faced with unsuccessful preservice teachers. Further, I believe it is essential to my own work as a Sub Dean Professional Experience, with a responsibility for policy development regarding preservice teacher education. It is expected that the findings from the study will inform decisions about professional experience programs at my university with a particular focus on the nature of the support for school-based teacher educators – pre-, during and post-prac.

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1 I have chosen to use the term “school-based teacher educator” rather than co-operating teacher or associate teacher as it offers a different ‘position’ in teacher education than the other terms.
Research Design

The research is guided by the questions:

- What is the emotional impact of a problematic preservice teacher on a school-based teacher educator?
- What are the means of coping and/or sources of support that school-based teacher educators access?

Approach

It was essential to choose a qualitative design as ‘qualitative work enables researchers to see the world through their subjects’ eyes and because the associated techniques are less structured than in quantitative approaches, [so it] can be made more responsive to the needs of respondents and the nature of the subject matter.’ (Williams 1998, p. 128). The subject matter addressed in this study is about the needs and often-silenced emotions of my colleagues in schools and accordingly must be dealt with in an empathetic and reflexive manner.

Experiencing emotion is a social, interactional, linguistic and physiological process (Denzin 1984 p. 31). Accordingly it was appropriate to be guided by feminist poststructuralist theory which recognises the dynamic nature of emotions and their impact. The research attempts to be highly reflexive in that I acknowledge my own cultural beliefs and positions. The study acknowledges that what reported is my interpretation of the ‘text’ of the teachers’ stories (Williams, 1998).

Research Participants

I have engaged the support of colleagues in universities throughout Australia to contact school-based teacher educators from their own programs who have recently been involved with problematic practicum students. Using cases from other universities enables me to adopt a stance independent of my own context and each of the other universities. Further, my ‘distance’ from the host university may have enhanced the sense of ‘voluntarism’ among my research participants, which may not have been the case if I had approached teachers directly or invited teachers working with students from my own university to participate.

Twenty three teachers from seven different universities initially indicated that they were willing to participate. However, in order to manage the size of the project and geographical spread of teachers, I ultimately interviewed sixteen teachers from six different universities. These were ‘chosen’ because they responded to my follow-up request. According to Lincoln & Guba (1985) that is more than sufficient to achieve saturation, so I did not feel the need to seek further applicants. Of the sixteen participants, thirteen are female and seven were primary school teachers but unfortunately, none of the volunteers were working in the early childhood sector. It may be worth noting at this point that eleven of the problematic preservice teachers were post graduates; ten were mature-aged (not recent school leavers or university graduates). The gender split was even, which of course, does not reflect the typical balance of gender in teacher education programs.

In effort to provide anonymity to my participants, I gave each the opportunity to choose a pseudonym. One teacher chose not to be anonymous and asked that her name be used, while the remainder left the choice up to me. Accordingly, the names used throughout this paper and the doctoral thesis will be fictional and of my choosing, with the one exception.

Data Collection

I conducted the semi-structured interviews over a period of five weeks and completed all transcriptions within a month. I used recently published research related to emotions, across a range of disciplines, to develop probe questions for use following from the teachers’ original narratives.
Oliver (1998) suggests that ‘the use of narrative allows researchers to study and reveal how humans experience their world’ (p. 250).

Issues related to control & power, support, coping strategies and emotional labour (Hochschild, 1979, 1990) seemed to be pertinent to this study, but did not limit the interview process.

Throughout the interview process I maintained connections with the participants by sharing anonymously other stories to help them ‘believe’ that they were not alone in this ‘story’, as well as to make explicit my reasons for undertaking the study. Kincheloe (1991) asserts that it is essential for the researcher to lay open to the participant their own experiences – ‘to reveal their allegiances, to admit their solidarities, their value structures and the ways such orientations affect their inquiries’ (p. 38). Sharing the stories addresses a need for reflexivity (Hand, 2003) which, according to feminist theory is most appropriate as it ‘contributes towards making the relationship between the researcher and researched more transparent and, thereby, to the feminist notion of strong objectivity’ (Williams, 1998 p. 132).

**Data Analysis**

I used a simple qualitative iterative approach to interrogate the data, for major themes. Patterns emerge from the data that enabled me to ‘[render] intelligible those repetitions in social life which may be invisible or perceived in purely isolated and personal terms by the individual’ (Frye, 1990 p.135). School-based teacher educators told stories of their experience with the problematic practicum students and the feelings associated with this work. Clearly, my analysis is my world view of the teachers’ voices and can never be a ‘true’ representation of their world view in that time and space. However, I am firm in the belief that ‘by studying and interpreting self-narratives, the researcher can access not only the individual identity and its systems of meaning but also the teller’s culture and social world’ (Lieblich, Turval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998 p. 9).

**Teacher’s Narratives**

The literature tells us that schools are complex social sites and teachers within and outside them operate from a number of different subject positions (Lye, 1997, p. 1). They function and interact with others in the school in a number of different ways, for instance as: teacher, staff member, employee, colleague, friend, school-based teacher educator, parent, typically female, white…. and the list goes on. The first phase of analysis, and as indicated earlier these are initial findings, identified a range of emotions experienced by school-based teacher educator. They describe situations resulting in feelings of anger, shame, hurt, fear, frustration, anxiety. The teachers showed enormous variability in their capacity to experience both different and similar emotions in different as well as similar situations. For example, anger was not always the response when a preservice teacher failed to address issues raised by the school-based teacher educator.

The initial analysis has also revealed a number of discourses acquired and/or learnt2 by the teachers in the specific role as teacher educator and evidenced through their language (body & verbal) – the carers & nurturers (I tried to be always looking for the positives, being supportive); gatekeepers (we don’t need people like that in the profession); the professional (I’m just doing my job); assessor (I kind of knew what a third year should be doing). Further, the analysis has revealed that school-based teacher educators who operate predominantly in the position of ‘gatekeeper’ appear to be able to distance themself from the emotionally demanding aspects of dealing with problematic preservice teachers. The following case study illustrates the emotions experienced by one teacher who, was working in a range of different discourses, and the impact of the emotions and the multiples discourses on her.

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2 I am adopting James Gees distinction between acquisition and learning (Gee, 1991 p 3)
Therese’s Story

The Context
Therese is a mature woman working with a young first year undergraduate primary education student. She is an experienced classroom teacher, who had previously supported preservice teachers. Neil was placed at Therese’s school for a four week block practicum, typical of many undergraduate programs. The university provided documentation outlining its expectations and a university supervisor was appointed, who was expected to make two visits to the school to assist Therese and Neil as well as undertake assessment procedures.

Therese described her situation as ‘very difficult’ and ‘particularly unpleasant’. I have included the complete sections of text below in order to give the reader a sense of the emotional impact that Neil had on Therese during what was a period of two weeks. Therese experiences guilt, anger, frustration, shame, regret, fear, relief, sadness and a sense of isolation during and after her time with Neil.

According to Therese, the material that was sent by the university, outlining the program and expectations was clear and appropriate. However, Neil did not accept the directions in relation to the university and Therese’s expectations. He decided that he would do everything his own way. For example, he was expected to teach two full days towards the end of the practicum, after he had completed team teaching and collaborative planning days in the first three weeks. Neil argued consistently that he could teach the two days in the second week “to get them out of the way’. He did ‘plan’ to teach for a whole day but the plan focussed on one reading activity only. Therese would not allow the ‘lesson’ to proceed.

He refused to complete the ‘situational analysis’, which was due by the end of the first week, even though that was a specific requirement of the program. Therese outlined further how Neil was not willing to listen to her, to accept advice when he was planning a teaching session, or follow simple directions and requests such as attend playground duty or assist the reading teacher with his class when they were working in the library – he simply left the students and returned to the staffroom, where Therese was working. It was these behaviours that resulted in Therese’s decision that the practicum was at risk.

Discourses, emotion and agency.
The following section is an interweaving of the discourses in which Therese is positioned, the emotions she experiences and an interpretation of her sense of agency in each situation. Clearly the categorisations and labelling of each discourse is arbitrary and continuous and should not be seen as significant, but is an attempt to make the presentation of material manageable.

Teacher, Adult, School-based teacher educator, Carer
Therese summed his overall attitude up as lack of commitment to the practicum. Therese felt that Neil questioned everything that she did or everything that she asked of him – behaviour that she found ‘arrogant’ and his attitude (as a young person) towards an older person ‘was appalling’.

Therese: He just would not listen - he just would totally ignore what you had to say. He was so great that he didn’t feel that he had to be answerable to anyone.

W: He was like a recalcitrant child? He was running the show because he just refused to conform to things?

In some respects Therese saw Neil as a child and was amazed by his behaviour towards her as an adult but also his failure to recognise her position as teacher – as a figure of authority and as a supportive colleague. So she loses her sense of authority in this circumstance.
Therese: Yeh. I was gob smacked. I really didn’t know how to deal with it, because it hadn’t occurred to me that somebody that young could be so bloody arrogant.

W: So there must have got a point in time where you or the Principal has said you are so upset by this that it’s not fair - So what – did something special happen or did you just run out of control?

Therese: I just ran out of ‘control’? And I thought this is hopeless. I can’t stay with him if he’s behaving like this. It’s not fair on him, because he’s not learning anything. And it’s not fair on me. All the money in the world’s not worth it. So, you know, it was for his own sake, too. But at the start I just had it, because it was actually worse than dealing with a child. It was his stubbornness -it was absolutely..

W: And you’ve never experienced it before?

Therese: No. NO. I have experienced laziness with one other but not, you know, like he just would not... And I tried to be as pleasant as possible and not make it a dreadful experience but there was certainly no response from him in that term. Yeh, I was ..[pause ] Angry - I was angry

As difficult as Neil was, Therese felt that she had control in her classroom even though he upset her confidence in other ways.

W: Did he rock your confidence in the classroom?

Therese: No, Not in the classroom. I think just as a teacher he rocked my confidence – nothing - he wouldn’t be able to interfere with my classroom.

As a teacher Therese is socially constructed as supportive & nurturing but Neil does not see her as teacher (in any capacity) and does not apparently need any nurturing, because he does not respond to this aspect of the role of teacher either. Consequently, her perception of herself in those discourses is diminished by Neil’s behaviour, but not by her own class where she sees herself as being in control.

Parent and carer

She sees Neil as a child (because of his apparent lack of maturity) and associates him with her own children, who are about the same age. However, in her experience, ‘children’ respond to advice and directions, but Neil does not do so - much to her frustration. Her own children show respect to older people - something Neil does not do. Again, her perception of herself as adult/parent is not shared by Neil and she is clearly affected by that.

Therese: They just say – don’t put up with it Mum.

W: So do they listen and then say “don’t put up with it or you don’t actually get a chance to talk to them?

Therese: They listen. You know. Yeh, they make observations and things.

W: So they’re a bit of a sounding board as well?

Therese: Yeh, My eldest isn’t that old. He’d be a couple of years younger than Neil and I thought if he ever spoke to an adult like that, I’d kill him... I’d kill him. You know. I just find that the closeness in age – I just couldn’t see any comparisons between the 2 boys. So, yeh...

In the discourse of ‘parent’ in relation to Neil, she has limited control

Colleague

Therese describes situations where she relied on her colleagues for support in dealing with Neil. Sharing her feeling and recounting his behaviour, to ‘vent her spleen’ but also to protect herself from possible repercussions.

Therese: yeh well they way I dealt with it - I’d go and the lady who teaches next to me, an AP. So I’d go and spit my bile out at, you know, her. Basically I would spit my bile out at other staff members. Basically every one knew and I’m like that. If I get angry, I want to tell everybody.
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W: So that’s how you deal with it?
Therese: Yes. I get all agro and then I can deal with it. But also it was a covering thing for myself, because even if he said anything about me I had the back up here at school to say “No”. I was just talking to Frank um, another colleague. He said “Oh it wasn’t your fault. You know, he just wasn’t right for it.”

However, ultimately allowing her colleagues to share her situation caused her to experience some strong negative emotions. Apparently her colleagues believed that she was not dealing with Neil in an appropriate manner by not ‘pulling him in to line’. She was hurt by the way she was being perceived by the rest of the staff and she felt that she could not remedy the situation. She was frustrated by her inability to let them know what she was trying to do. Such feedback from colleagues results in Therese feeling demeaned in the eyes of her colleagues.

W: Anything else about how you coped. Anything else about that particular
Therese: When other teachers came in and said (whispery voice)-“How do you put up with him being so rude?” I felt demeaned in a way.

W: From what they said?
Therese Yes, from what they said. You know. That I was putting up with him when he was being so rude.

W: Do you know why you put up with him?
Therese I would say things to him but then it went right over his head. It was just really bizarre..

W: You felt demeaned but you felt— I’m trying to deal with it …. Did it affect how you thought you were being perceived by your colleagues?
Therese Yes it did. Yes it did. I felt like, very frustrated how it was coming across to them...

Therese described how she got the stage where she felt that she can no longer work with Neil and attempted to avoids him. She hides on her way home from the school so that he can’t walk with her— he followed me everywhere. I need my space.

In an effort to overcome the criticism of colleagues, and impart some of her experience as a school-based teacher educator in terms of how preservice teachers should behave, she attempted to be assertive and pull him in to line – fitting in to some of the discourses in which she is positioned.

However, she finally loses control:

W: So did you ever raise your voice to him like with a recalcitrant child?
Therese: Yes I did, you know, at one stage. Then I felt ashamed of myself. I didn’t expect to go off. I got very curt, you know um and made it quite obvious that I wasn’t a happy camper but still, as you say, it didn’t deter him.

W: But you felt ashamed?
Therese Yes!

W: Because you lost control?
Therese Yes. Because really he was a kid, wasn’t he. I mean you always do whenever you go off at anything. You do tend to feel a bit ashamed when you’ve calmed down. So yeh. I did. I felt — I embarrassed myself, I mean because I think underneath it all I didn’t think that he was worth getting agro about. You know what I mean?

W: So did other people hear you um losing control and that bothered you more or you?
Therese: No. It was in the classroom basically. One time too many he either looked away or didn’t, didn’t agree to do something I had asked, or whatever…. Yes, I’m supposed to be the

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Therese referred to Neil as a recalcitrant child earlier in the interview.
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Professional, you know. So he managed to unseat me there, too by his sheer persistent behaviour. Yes so I lowered myself. That’s what I was embarrassed and ashamed about. I had lowered myself.

However, her behaviour results in feelings of shame as she felt she was unprofessional in the manner in which she dealt with Neil – who really was a child in her eyes.

School-based teacher educator, assessor

In her capacity as school-based teacher educator, Therese believes she is expected by the university to be firm and evaluative and even a little “nasty” with him when operating as ‘evaluator’, which she sees is at odds with the discourse of supportive nurturing teacher.

In another attempt to take control of the situation in her capacity as school-based teacher educator, with responsibility for Neil’s program, Therese sought advice from the Principal, who called the university seeking support for her. At this point the Principal takes over and positions her as ‘needing’. When the supervisor arrived, he terminated the practicum because of the apparent effect Neil was having on Therese’s emotional well being. She had not expected the practicum to be terminated but the supervisor did not ask her opinion or seek her input. Therese’s function in assessment and mentoring is displaced by the university supervisor.

Once it became apparent that the practicum was to be terminated, she saw Neil as ‘underdog’ and felt guilty (as well as simultaneously relieved and sorry) about the outcome. She then worried for her professional reputation because she believed that he would spread rumours about her competence.

When the university decided to terminate the practicum Therese experienced feelings of guilt, even though the decision was not made by her. The guilt is felt in tandem with fear for her personal safety and professional standing, and then relief because the preservice teacher was removed.

W: So how are you feeling [...] that point in time when you were waiting for the university to come and he’s not doing what you want?
Therese: I was really quite um I was angry. I was with him, because I thought there is nothing more I can do so I went to the boss and he decided to contact the university but I didn’t expect him to get shafted the way he was. Because why we rang up was to get him some help. That made me feel really dreadful.

W: The fact that he got ‘shafted’ made you feel really dreadful?
Therese: Yeh, Yeh, because he I wasn’t actually allowed to say anything to him about the lecturer being there. And of course when he found out, you know, he said he didn’t think things were very bad. And I thought, “Well what did you think?” But I hadn’t expected that. I had expected someone to step in and simply tell him to get his act together. So..

W: So you felt bad for him then?
Therese: I felt bad for him yeh, but I knew that the tables would turn and I’d be the bad guy when he started to be defensive about the prac..

W: So you felt hard that he was being shafted but you were also worried that he would feel badly about you?
Therese: Yes. Yeh: Um I felt pretty bad because he was all teary and what not. He did go in and say goodbye to the kids, which I thought was courageous of him. And then I was worried walking home in case he decided to seek retribution [nervous laugh].

W: So you were quite personally afraid of him?
Therese: No only at that stage. You know – You never know how people are going to react. There’s always that thing in the back of your mind that they might decide to have a go at you or whatever and that sort of occurred to me.
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Then I thought he might go around and defame my name and saying she was a stupid bitch. She didn’t do this for me and she didn’t do that, or what not, which is unfair. I tried with him and that’s why I got so upset when they shafted him. But I was quite relieved as well because I thought I don’t have to deal with this person anymore.

W: So there was a sense of relief?

Therese: Mmm. There was- in a way

W: So you’re professionally affronted; you’re personally affronted; you’re to some degree scared – um other emotions through this time?

Therese: I felt sorry for him. I’m a bit like that. I can be angry with someone but if they go down I’m immediately all for the underdog, but relief that he had actually gone and I didn’t have to keep going [whispery voice]

The experience causes Therese to adjust the way in which she would position herself with preservice teachers in the future. When I asked her what she had learnt about herself from the practicum she said that she would hesitate before ever having another student. Therese also stated that she would be:

Therese: Harder. Yes, I’d be less likely to be not assertive, but friendly. You know – crack a smile. That’s terrible isn’t it. Your whole personality changes because of what other people do to you.

W: That is a serious effect.

Therese: It is a serious effect.

Discussion

The interviews are Therese’s recollections of that experience with Neil. Therese recalled her feelings of guilt, fear, shame, anger, embarrassment, frustration, of being demeaned, as she told her life story.

Clearly Therese struggled to make sense of the competing discourses in which she is positioned and the emotions which resulted from her attempts to operate within these competing discourses. In all of these situations Therese demonstrates little sense of agency - limited authority to change the outcomes of any of these events and is positioned as powerless. Others appear to be strong influences and leave her appearing as “needing”.

School-based teacher educators seek support from colleagues and family in order to cope with the emotional labour associated with supporting a preservice teacher. (Leary, 2000) argues that people need to maintain interpersonal connections with other people in order to deal with the emotional work. Therese’s support at school was differentiated and her teenage children at home were not always supportive of her dilemmas. Griffith, (1999) notes that lack of strong family or work support exacerbates the level of stress felt in difficult emotional situations.

Therese had not been offered the opportunity to participate in any formal preparation for the task of supporting Neil (a scenario repeated by almost all of the study’s volunteers). Her lack of knowledge of university protocols and expectations may have exacerbated her situation as she had to rely on colleagues and her own preservice experiences to frame her responses. Therese’s reliance on her colleagues’ interpretations of how she ‘should’ act and how she ‘should’ respond is typical of the socialisation processes that occur in schools.
This case study highlights the fact that school-based teacher educator knowledge of the discourses within which they operate appears fractured and teachers need to be supported to enable them to make sense of the competing discourses. Therese operated from a diminished position because she was unaware of the possibilities the role offered, as the ‘role’ is not fixed by some authority but is responsive to the contexts and the people in which it operates. Therese was trying to be what she thought her colleagues, university, Principal and children thought she should be. Clearly there is an opportunity for Therese and other school-based teacher educators to be empowered to have greater awareness of the discourses in which she is operating.

It is clear that the experience for Therese and her colleagues was particularly stressful. What are the effects of such an experience on her both personally and professionally? Zembylas (2003) asserts that emotions have an important role to play in the development of teacher identity. Accordingly, negative emotions experienced in a problematic practicum will have a significant impact on teacher identity.

‘The emotions that teachers experience and express … are not just matters of personal disposition but are constructed in social relationships and systems of values in their families, cultures and school situations’ (Zembylas, 2003 p. 216). Teachers do not experience emotions because that is who they are. Post-structuralist theory argues that there is no singular self who performs singular acts but teachers are ‘vulnerable social subjects who produce and are being produced by culture’ (Britzman, 1993 p 28). Teacher identity is produced through a dynamic process with emotional highs and low clearly impacting at any given point in time. Emotions as strong as shame and being demeaned - emotions that mark a pervasive sense of powerlessness - can result in teacher’s silence and isolation (Bartky 1990). What will be the university’s response to teachers who are left vulnerable by such an experience?

Zembylas (2003) argues that there is potential for self transformation through such experiences. If teachers recognise the role that emotions have in teacher identity formation and ‘embrace’ rather than mask emotions there is potential to prevent the silence and isolation that results from strong negative emotions. Teachers need support mechanisms to assist them to reconstruct and reaffirm their identities when faced with situations where they become losers from the process of preservice teacher education rather than gainer (Bartky, 1990). Universities need to work collaboratively with the schools and centres where preservice teachers are working to more effectively support school-based teacher educator (and broader school community) particularly when the outcome is less than positive.

Zembylas, (2003) suggests that teachers becoming aware of their emotional responses through storying may in fact be empowering. Renee was one of the first teachers I interviewed and she found the opportunity ‘cathartic’ and many of the participants were surprised that anybody is bothering to listen to their stories. None of the participants in the study were provided with any form of follow-up support, in the form of storying or counselling etc, in order to address the impact of such experiences. Clearly, there is potential for assisting teachers to cope with such an experience as a problematic student if university personnel make time to hear the teacher’s stories, particularly those with negative experiences. A typical preservice program is not structured in a way that enables preservice teachers and school-based teacher educators to develop emotional understandings between each other. However, introducing support programs between school-based teacher educator and university staff could potentially increase the quality of the relationship between the university and school because we develop emotional understanding by sharing feelings and experiences with significant others (Hargreaves, 1998). In a climate where there is a shortage of high qualify practicum placements in school and centres, it is imperative that tertiary staff consider both the emotional and professional needs of work-place colleagues as they are inextricably linked.
and collectively impact on teacher identity and ultimately the teacher’s capacity to support the professional learning of a preservice teacher.

**Conclusion**

What is important is for the stakeholders to publicly affirm that the practicum does involve an expanded set of emotions for participating school-based teacher educators. I would argue that universities are currently unaware of the kinds of emotions experienced by school-based teacher educator as well as the level of impact of such negative emotions. It is possible that universities could ameliorate some of the impact if they firstly recognise the impact and then respond by ensuring school-based teacher educators are fully informed of the implications of such experiences and are provided with appropriate support.

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I just felt so guilty: The emotional dimension of supporting problematic preservice teachers


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