Empathy and Mentalization among Australian Primary Teachers

Mr. Paul Anthony Swan

Student #22118004

Bachelor of Economics, Newcastle University

Graduate Diploma of Primary Education, RMIT

Master of School Leadership, Monash University

A thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy at

Monash University in 2017

Faculty of Education

Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Signed:

[redacted]

29/03/2017

Abstract

This study analyses how six Australian primary teachers, identified by principals as effective empathisers, draw on that quality to support their students. Empathy in this study is defined as "an ability to access the life of the mind of others in their bodily and behavioural expressions, and psychologically project oneself into another in an attempt to understand his/her thinking or feeling" (Zahavi & Overgaard, 2012, p. 10). It incorporates cognitive and affective elements. Empathic interactions enhance the quality of teaching by creating positive learning environments, unconditional positive regard (caring) and support (Butler, 2012; Riley, 2013). Effective teacher empathy involves recognising a student's mental state (intentions, beliefs, desires and emotions) and responding with an appropriate emotion based on care (Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004). The study aimed to examine demonstrated teacher behaviour in empathic engagement, drawing on a blend of evaluation methods. Teachers and student participants completed a Teacher Style Survey (Watt & Richardson, 2007) to assess perceptions of classroom environment tapping relatedness, expectations, structure and negativity. Teachers also rated their relational goals (Butler, 2012), which have been found to predict teacher- and student-reported levels of support. Two observers assessed "live" lessons for levels of emotional support (positive climate, teacher sensitivity and regard for student perspectives) using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS: Pianta, Hamre, & Mintz, 2012). Teachers' filmed their classroom practice at two timepoints and identified positive "empathy interaction moments" (vignettes) for analysis, and completed a diary to record thoughts, feelings, and actions. Teacher perspectives were explored more intensively at interview. An interpretative phenomenological approach (IPA: Smith, 1996) was used to analyse transcripts for themes to explore teachers' lived experience of empathic engagement. Teacher diaries were coded for mentalization characteristics, and vignettes coded for cognitive and affective empathy. The study revealed high correlations (r.87–1) between CLASS emotional support factors in lesson observations and vignettes, based on Spearman's correlation coefficient (2-tailed). One sample t-tests of teacher and class means found an alignment between teachers' and students' perceptions

of classroom climate. More generally, the study found that empathic teachers tend to be highly motivated to connect with students, take a personal interest in students, display high levels of social and emotional support, and regulate teaching to meet students' needs. The study proposes an Empathy Assessment Instrument using a phenomenological approach, as a platform to enhance empathic engagement skills among primary educators.

Thesis Publications

Peer reviewed published article

Swan, P., & Riley, P. (2015). Social connection: Empathy and mentalization for teachers. *Pastoral Care in Education*, *33*(4), 220–233. doi:10.1080/02643944.2015.1094120

Refereed international and national conference presentations

Swan, P., & Riley, P. (2017, August). *Manifestations of empathy: Teacher-student relationships among Australian primary teachers.* Abstract accepted in symposium 'Teacher-student relationships in different phases of schooling', 17th Biennial European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction (EARLI). Tampere, August 29 – September 2.

Swan, P., & Riley, P. (2016, November). *The role and functions of empathy for teachers in the classroom: Building positive learning environments for learners.* Peer reviewed full paper presented in symposium 'Teacher development, identity, relationships and wellbeing: Research perspectives across career stages', Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) Annual Conference. Melbourne, November 27 – December 1.

Swan, P., & Riley, P. (2016, April). *Social connection: Empathy and mentalization in elementary teachers.* Round table presentation in the session 'Lives of teachers – Characteristics and traits', American Educational Research Association (AERA) Annual Conference. Washington D.C., April 8 – 12.

Swan, P., & Riley, P. (2015, November). *Mentalization and empathy among Australian primary school teachers.* Peer reviewed full paper presented at Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) Annual Conference. Fremantle, November 29 – December 3.

***** This paper won the AARE Postgraduate Student Research Paper Award (2015).***

Swan, P., & Riley, P. (2015, April). *Mentalization and empathy among effective Australian elementary school teachers.* Round table presentation in the session 'Lives of teachers - Cognitive and affective features', American Educational Research Association (AERA). Chicago, April 16 – 20.

***** This peer reviewed paper won an AERA International Travel Award (2015).***

Swan, P. (2013, July). *Mentalization for teachers: Building a positive learning environment for learners.* Paper presented in symposium 'Teacher motivations, professionalism, and wellbeing', Social Psychology of the Classroom International Conference (SPCIC). Auckland, July 15 – 18.

Swan, P., & Riley, P. (2012, December*). Mentalization: A tool to measure teacher empathy in primary school teachers.* Peer reviewed full paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) Annual Conference. Sydney, December 2 – December 6.

Swan, P. (2011, November). *'There but for the grace of God go I': Empathy enhancement education for primary school teachers.* Poster presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) Annual Conference. Hobart, November 27 – December 1.

Acknowledgements

With heartfelt gratitude to my supervisors Associate Professor Philip Riley and Senior Lecturer Angelika Anderson (equal primary supervisors), and Professor Dennis Moore. I have been fortunate to have supervisors who complement each other, who are skilled researchers who work with integrity, and from whom I have learnt so much. Thank you for your eye for detail, supportive leadership, questions, and analytical knowledge. I need to especially thank Philip Riley (Australian Catholic University), who has been a supervisor on the project since its inception. Thank you for your ongoing encouragement, assistance, editing, and challenging my thinking. While PhD writing cannot be considered to be pleasurable, Philip constantly reminded me to immerse myself in the research and to enjoy the pleasures of writing/thinking - "What do we know now, and how do we know it?" I also need to send a special thanks to Helen M.G. Watt for her guidance and support, chairing all of my panels, and acting as 'supervisor at large' to provide advice throughout this research.

This study of Victorian primary teachers would not have been possible without the support of the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD), and the support of School A and School B. I want to sincerely thank the teachers (students and principals) who opened their doors in this study and who were so generous with their time sharing their inspirational practice. A special thanks to Shelley who underwent CLASS Training to become my fellow emotional support evaluator, and to Jane at Monash University who helped me with the phenomenology analysis. Thank you both for your assistance and enthusiasm for the project.

Most importantly, I want to thank my constant supporter, Stephen. I am forever grateful for your support, patience, and editing. To my mother and amazing sisters, thank you for your love and encouragement, especially to Alexis for all of her help. To Agata, Beck, Caterina, Ryan, and Shelley – thank you for keeping me sane throughout the journey.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Abbreviations

ACARA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
CLASS	Classroom Assessment Scoring System
DEECD	Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
DET	Department of Education Victoria (formerly DEECD)
EAI	Empathy Assessment Instrument
ICSEA	Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
i_1, i_2	Interview 1, Interview 2
M	Mean
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
MITB	Model for Interpersonal Teacher Behaviour
MUHREC	Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
QTI	Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction
SD	Standard Deviation
TiM	Thoughts in Mind project
TSS	Teaching Style Scale
T_1, T_2	Timepoint 1, Timepoint 2
v_1, v_2, v_3	Vignette 1, Vignette 2, Vignette 3
VIT	Victorian Institute of Teaching

Chapter 1 Introduction

Empathy has been described as “the spark of human concern for others; the glue that makes social life possible” (Hoffman, 2001, p. 3), and “a universal solvent” (Baron-Cohen, 2011, p. 127) with “the power to transform our lives… and create a revolution of human relationships” (Krznaric, 2014, p. 9). The term was first used in the English language in 1909 by psychologist Edward Titchener, who translated it from the German word “einfühlung”—meaning feeling into to project yourself into what you observe (Titchener, 1909). Human beings who feel empathy with others have been said to experience emotions ranging from joy, fear, anger, and sadness, to more complex emotional states such as guilt, embarrassment, and love (Singer, 2006). Conversely, living without empathy has been described as akin to being “emotionally tone deaf” (Goleman, 1995, p. 96).

More recently, the term has become entrenched in the mainstream vernacular as a social buzzword, at times, even setting political agendas. In 2006, Barack Obama spoke of “America’s empathy deficit” (Obama, 2006), while in his 2008 presidential campaign, he promoted empathy as a social value. In his second memoir, he stated “a sense of empathy defines my personal moral code (and serves as) a guidepost to my politics” (Obama, 2007, p. 66). In Australia, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has called for people “to show empathy and concern for mothers” (Chan, 2015) in relation to paid parental leave. Conversely, in relation to matters of asylum seekers and national security, he has argued, “we can’t let the empathy we feel for the desperate circumstances that many people find themselves in cloud our judgment” (Owens, 2016).

Empathy is a concept that spans social work, medical education, psychotherapy, neuroscience, developmental psychology, philosophy, literary studies, and anthropology, and research into empathy and its significance is extensive across these fields. In medicine, empathic responses by physicians have been found to help patients to clarify their feelings (Coulehan, Platt, & Enger, 2001). Patients provide physicians with many opportunities for empathy to be expressed. Bylund and Makoul (2005) studied physicians’ reactions to these potential opportunities. They

found more than 80 percent of physicians could detect empathic opportunities and did react by confirmation, acknowledgment, and pursuing or elaborating on patients' concerns. Physicians benefit from an empathic approach that builds rapport with patients through better levels of information (Hardee, 2003). Patients' beliefs concerning a physician's understanding of their concerns completes the loop of empathic engagement as an interpersonal phenomena. If a physician misses an opportunity for empathy, patients tend to provide the opportunity again—often repeatedly—in the hope the physician might offer a gesture or statement of empathy. In philosophy and psychology, the concept of empathy is entrenched as a pre-condition of relatedness (Preston & de Waal, 2002).

In the field of education, the teacher accounts for up to 30 percent of achievement variance between students (Hattie, 2003). Meta-analyses show that cultivating teacher-student relationships, grounded in empathic orientations among teachers, improves student learning, achievement, and attitude outcomes (Cornelius-White, 2007; Hattie, 2009). In a meta-analysis of over 800 studies, Hattie (2009) found improving teacher-student relationships to have a large effect (effect size of .72 where the typical effect size is .40) on student achievement. Similarly, Cornelius-White's (2007) meta-analysis of 119 studies found person-focused teacher variables such as honouring student voice, and adapting to individual and cultural differences, to have a mean correlation with improved student achievement and attitude outcomes of .31.

Social interaction between teacher and student directly shapes the student's ability to "take in new experiences and learn" (Siegel, 2013, p. 12). Productive teacher-student relationships—"the generalized interpersonal meanings students and teachers attach to their interactions with each other" (Wubbels et al., 2014, p. 364)—involve the teacher showing students they care for their learning and "can see their perspective and communicate it back to them, so that they have valuable feedback to self-assess, feel safe, and learn to understand others and the content with the same interest and concern" (Cornelius-White, 2007, p. 12). Within these relationships, empathy has been documented as an important skill for educators to create positive learning environments (Good &

Brophy, 2000; Sergiovanni, 1994), learning environments similar to good parenting (Wentzel, 2002[1]; Baumrind, 1971), and unconditional positive regard (caring) and support (Rogers, 1959; Noddings, 1988; Osterman, 2002). Empathy involves recognising a student's mental state (intentions, beliefs, desires and emotions), and responding with an appropriate emotion based on care (Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004).

Many teaching regulatory agencies worldwide require teachers to provide empathy or display care to students as a professional responsibility. In Ireland and Ontario, teachers are required to show care "through empathy in practice" (Teaching Council of Ireland, 2012, p. 5; Ontario College of Teachers, 2006, p. 1). In Australia, the National Professional Standards for Principals endorse empathy as a personal quality (AITSL, 2011b). Further, some state registration boards require teachers to display empathy (Tasmania, Northern Territory) or care (Queensland) under Teacher Codes of Conduct. In Victoria, the standards for graduating teachers required beginning teachers to "demonstrate empathy and positive regard for, and rapport with, students" as a requirement of Standard 3 "Teachers know their students" (Victorian Institute of Teaching, 2009, p. 1). In none of these examples is the concept of empathy defined. Despite these professional requirements, "cognitive and emotional misunderstandings [are] chronic features of many schools and classrooms" (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 839).

The research contained in this PhD aims to identify and explicate the processes teachers go through to know students' mental states and respond with sensitive care. These are essential skills for creating positive, empathic learning environments, based on the notion that teaching is relational. While empathy is widely regarded as central to this process, there is little consensus among theorists as to a formal definition. This study adopted a phenomenological approach

[1] Wentzel (2002) identified a commonality between theoretical models attempting to explain parent promotion of children's positive behaviour and that of teachers—there is a potential for teacher style to affect student functioning in similar ways to parenting style despite differences in context and closeness of relationships.

(Chapter 3) to explore how teachers express concern for, and take the perspectives of, students in everyday manifestations of empathy in classrooms.

The case studies within this research explore a range of teacher behavioural displays that participants' believe reflect their empathic approach in day-to-day teaching. The displays aim to meet student needs, improve welfare, and create supportive learning environments for students and teachers alike. Individual differences are likely to draw some teachers toward empathic displays, whilst others avoid them. Some teachers take on student's internal states reflexively and outside their conscious awareness. For others, empathy varies with the characteristics of empathisers and the particulars of classroom situations. Motivation and attitude play a key role in driving teachers to approach or avoid empathic engagement with students' thoughts and feelings (Zaki, 2014). We know little about the specific attributes of teacher empathy conceptually, including how empathy is practised to create positive classroom climates (Barr, 2011). Who are the effective empathisers in our schools and how do their empathy skills manifest in their classrooms? Further, what avenues exist for professional development to improve interpersonal empathic skills and relational practice in teacher–student relationships?

1.1 Researcher Perspective: A Personal and Professional Journey

My research interest in classroom empathy stems from a variety of contexts. I have ten years' experience as a primary teacher in Melbourne metropolitan schools teaching across all grade levels. In my final years, I had wider responsibilities for school literacy, coaching, and curriculum development. As a coach, I co-designed, co-taught and evaluated lessons by peers and pre-service teachers that allowed me to observe a range of teaching styles and learning environments. It was apparent from these observations that classroom environments are not always positive. As part of my Master's degree, I designed and implemented an empathy enhancement trial in a Melbourne school. The trial involved working with staff and the leadership team, the school community, and the student population on a program to promote social and emotional competencies.

During my PhD, I worked part-time in Melbourne University's Masters of Teaching program, observing and providing pre-service teachers with feedback to improve their teaching. Over this period, I conducted over 700 primary classroom observations across Melbourne, working with (and evaluating) pre-service teachers on placement in various grade levels and school settings. My approach was to create an environment of mutual trust, where pre-service teachers felt safe to work with me to improve their practice. These milestones began the journey that led to this study.

1.2 Approach

Teacher empathy impacts on the social and emotional wellbeing of students, the quality of interpersonal relationships between teacher and students, and the tone of the learning environment. Classroom environment—"the general class atmosphere including attitudes towards learning, norms of social interactions, acceptance of ideas and mistakes, and learning structures set by a teacher" (Urdan & Schoenfelder, 2006, p. 340)—affects learning climates that foster students' motivation and engagement (Spearman & Watt, 2013), in turn influencing academic outcomes (Martin & Dowson, 2009). Teaching style dimensions, relational goals, and the quality of teacher–student interactions set the tone for a constructive classroom environment that is conducive to learning. This study examines how six primary teachers, deemed by principals to be effective empathisers, establish, build and maintain relationships with students, and how their empathy builds those relationships.

Theoretical approach. Preston and de Waal (2002) proposed a model that grounds empathy and related phenomena in perception-action mechanisms. They considered empathy to be a shared emotional experience occurring when one person comes to feel a similar emotion to another as a result of perceiving the other's state. The perception can arise either from situations where the subject directly perceives the object, or merely imagines the state of the object. In an empathic exchange, the subject must maintain focus on another and attend to them, experience a similar emotional state, and respond appropriately, but avoid contagious distress (Preston, 2007). Baron-

Cohen and Wheelwright (2004) use this approach to operationalise empathy as recognising a student's mental state (intentions, beliefs, desires and emotions), and responding with an appropriate emotion based on care. Mentalizing—"the mental processes by which an individual implicitly and explicitly interprets the actions of himself and others as meaningful on the basis of intentional mental states such as personal desires, needs, feelings, beliefs, and reasons" (Bateman and Fonagy, 2004, p. 21)—has been documented in the neuroscience literature as a critical component of empathic responding.

Rogers (1969) held "certain attitudinal qualities exist in the personal relationship between the facilitator and the learner" (p. 106) which engender significant learning. Cornelius-White (2007) argued facilitation (teaching) "requires at least an initial genuine trust in learners by the facilitator, followed by the creation of an acceptant and empathic climate" (p. 114). My study applies a phenomenological qualitative approach to the meaning and practice of empathy in which I sought to understand the practice from the perspective of participants who were living the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Merriam (2009) asserted phenomenology is the best placed perspective to study emotional human experience. My study adopted a social constructivist view (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Mertens, 2010) as any examination of the role of empathy needs to consider matters of teacher identity, motivation and the classroom environment context—the world teachers and students co-create.

Methodological approach. A teacher's identity is a narrative construction; who they are is, in a sense, a product of how they see themselves (Creswell, 2013). The realities of teachers' lives, their behavioural mannerisms, histories and ways in which they experience and construct meaning in their world, cannot be understood solely by an outsider observing behaviour. While maintaining objectivity as researcher, I took an intersubjective approach to try to understand the interior consciousness of the participants themselves. Hence, the narratives set out in this thesis give weight to the experiential and existential character to convey the 'how' as well as the 'why' of empathy.

This study draws on a variety of methods and data sources to acquire insight into the inner and outer world of the participants. I sought to tap into a teacher's inner thoughts and motivations in diaries in which they recorded their thoughts, feelings and actions relating to empathy displays in filmed vignettes of classroom practice. I sought to understand how each teacher applied and demonstrated empathy, and to distil the essence of the empathy phenomenon for each participant. I spent many hours with another observer in each classroom, setting up cameras, repeatedly watching vignettes of classroom practice, and comparing diary entries with the footage. I repeatedly surveyed teacher perceptions of the role of relational goals and teaching style dimensions, before interviewing each participant to deconstruct the various aspects of their empathic practice. Additionally, I surveyed participating students for their perceptions of teaching style dimensions, requiring me to establish a culture of trust that would elicit honest student responses on the various social and emotional support aspects of their teacher's practice.

In applying Smith, Flowers, and Larkins' (2009) interpretative phenomenology framework, my aim was to explore each teacher's personal understanding of empathy through themes encapsulating their experiences in classrooms. I sought to make sense of those meanings from the perspective of each teacher's lifeworld (Moustakas, 1994). A phenomenological approach enabled deeper insights into each teacher's experience, and I felt privileged to observe firsthand expressions of empathy as a human quality. Each empathic effort revealed the talents of the participants and the real impact teachers have on student lives. The diaries allowed me to glimpse the mental models teachers were using to engage with students. This was pivotal to understanding the motivations and actions for empathic displays to occur. The vignette footage allowed me to glimpse moments of transformation in the classroom, and the creation of alternate states of student wellbeing. It was humbling to be given the trust of each participant and to witness empathic interpersonal interactions firsthand.

As a former primary teacher myself, I was conscious of the social desirability aspect attached to the subject of empathy. Respondents are likely to be unaware of a tendency to want to attribute statements that are desirable to themselves and reject those which are undesirable to show themselves in the best possible light (Fisher, 1993). Most, if not all, teachers would like to consider themselves highly empathic people, given their empathy is considered a necessary attribute of "the caring professional" (Hansen & Mulholland, 2005, p. 124). Teachers therefore tend to speak in empathic terms regardless of their actual practice. In this study, a key aim was to examine how teachers manifested empathy in practice. In my interactions with each participant, I identified myself as a former teacher to elicit peer responses from one teacher to another. I was aware that the nature of the project meant that in many ways the participants were, or sought to be, empathic because I was talking to them about empathy. It was therefore essential to bracket my assumptions and dispositions on the subject matter and carefully analyse the case material to establish what the information revealed rather than what I (or they) wanted it to reveal. I applied this bottom-up process inspired by a grounded theory approach (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) and the mentalizing and empathy literature to develop an Empathy Assessment Instrument (Chapter 11) to be trialled more extensively in future research.

Sample. I conducted a qualitative study of six primary school teachers at two schools who were deemed by their principals to be "relationally effective" (i.e. effective empathisers). The primary school level was chosen due to its relatively high classroom interaction time between teacher and student. This study provides insights into the teaching world of the participants, and the role empathy plays in their teaching as expressed in their respective classrooms. The teachers worked with a diversity of students, including some with Autism Spectrum Disorder, disrupted home lives, social dislocation issues, high levels of anxiety, absenteeism, transitory home lives and moving schools, and repeating year levels. Each classroom was treated as one case in the traditional sense (Yin, 2009) – but equally they are classrooms of individual students, each of whom has a unique sense of the world, based on their experiences in it. The thesis includes stories of awareness

and adaptation of practice, including teachers going to great lengths to change or adapt aspects of their practice to meet student needs. For some, this process of adaptation is largely instinctual, but others conscientiously work to develop skills and practices in this area.

1.3 Chapter Outline

This research responds to a growing demand in education to improve teacher empathy to better meet student needs and create supportive learning environments. It aims to address a gap in the literature by exploring conceptualisations, profiles, correlates, and outcomes of teacher empathy displays that underpin teacher-student relationships. In studying these interactions, this study explored teachers' perceptions of their actions, thoughts and feelings, and their perceptions of students' thoughts and feelings in nominated empathy moments of classroom practice. Previous studies have explored concepts of teacher care (Bieg, Backes, & Mittag, 2011; Nias, 1999; Noddings, 2001; Wentzel, 1997), but empathy research has largely focused on student perspectives (Garandeau, Vartio, Poskiparta, & Salmivalli, 2016; Camodeca & Coppola, 2015), including studies on school bullying and student welfare. Few studies examine teacher empathy (Cornelius-White, 2007; Tettegah & Anderson, 2007), and an even smaller number of studies consider teacher mentalization (Lundgaard Bak, 2010; Twemlow, Fonagy, & Sacco, 2005a; 2005b). This study is the first to examine these areas of practice among primary teachers in Australia.

The thesis begins with an extensive literature review. Chapter 2 outlines the theoretical foundations guiding this study, including literature on the phenomena of empathy, mentalization and related constructs, and the scope of existing research in the teaching profession that provides context for the research. The relationship between mentalization and empathy is explored in relation to levels of teacher responding, and the aims and questions to be addressed in the study are presented.

Chapter 3 details the methods used to explore the mentalization and empathy phenomena. Teacher reports of their relational goals and teaching style dimensions, together with parallel

student-rated teaching style dimensions, complement filmed classroom practice at two timepoints from which positive empathy interaction moments were chosen for analysis. This study's research method, design, sampling, settings, participants, data collection, instruments, procedure, and data analysis techniques including coding, reliability and provisions of trustworthiness are outlined.

Chapters 4–9 present phenomenological case study results for each of the six participants—Sophia, Christine, Emily, Gretyl, Alice and Alan. Each chapter reports the study results for relational goals to predict levels of social support, and perceptions of teaching style dimensions. Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA: Smith et al., 2009) relating to themes and sub-themes in each participant's teaching are explored to derive each participant's personal understanding of empathy and identify the essence of the participant's experience. Synopses of the vignettes, diary entries recording thoughts, feelings, and actions in relation to scenarios in the vignettes, and teacher responses on reviewing the vignettes at interview are reported. The results of coding participants' mentalization characteristics, and teacher actions for cognitive and affective empathy elements are presented. Independent evaluation of "live" classroom lessons and the vignettes, as rated by two coders for levels of emotional support using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS; Pianta et al., 2012), are also reported for each participant.

Chapter 10 presents the cross-case findings for the high order themes and sub-themes from the six case studies to identify common empathy elements, and prominent mentalization characteristics. This chapter also quantitatively reports evaluations of the observed emotional support dimensions of classroom climate using CLASS, and correlational data between the emotional support factors in lesson observations and vignettes. Teacher and student perceptions of teaching style dimensions are reported and compared, and one sample *t*-tests applied to determine if differences between these perceptions were significant.

Chapter 11 provides an integrative discussion that links the case study findings and points of convergence and departure against the extant literature in relation to empathy and mentalization.

Theoretical and methodological contributions to the field are considered, and strengths and limitations of the study. An Empathy Assessment Instrument constructed from a grounded theory approach (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) and the literature is presented for trialling with a larger teaching sample. Finally, Chapter 12 outlines the implications for practice and makes recommendations for future research in the teaching profession.

Chapter 2 Definitions and Conceptualizations

This chapter outlines how the concept of empathy has evolved in the literature, as well as related concepts of sympathy, compassion, mentalization, and attachment. It begins with a discussion of the ambiguities associated with the concept's origins, before considering defining features. I then offer an operational definition of empathy as a basis for observing and analysing manifestations of empathy in primary classrooms. Following this, the distinct but related components of cognitive and affective empathy are considered, as well as longstanding confusions between empathy and related responses such as sympathy and compassion. The constructs of attachment and mentalization, foundational to an understanding of empathy, are then presented, followed by discussion of their interrelationship. The final sections examine previous studies of teacher mentalization and teacher empathy in education. The chapter concludes with the research aims and questions to be addressed and a glossary of operational definitions (Table 2.3) applied in this study.

Human beings seek to develop networks of social interdependence characterized by shared goals, joint attention, and cooperative behaviour (Hermann, Call, Hernandez-Lloreda, Hare, & Tomasello, 2007). Social cognition—"the capacity to think about and understand others" (Fonagy, 2012, p. 4)—allows us to navigate the world of relationships. This requires cooperation and reading of the "subtle and shifting currents... to make sense of social events" (Goleman, 2006, p. 90). Research on social cognition has found that empathy may hold the key to foundational issues in interpersonal understanding (Decety & Ickes, 2009).

Social cognition allows us to make sense of others and ourselves in context. Teachers spend their professional lives in the company of their students (Fiske & Taylor, 2013). Understanding the internal states and intentions of their students and themselves enables a teacher to make sense of, and connect with, those students (Baron-Cohen, Knickmeyer, & Belmonte, 2005; Butler, 2012; Noddings, 1988; Zaki, 2014).

Teaching regulatory agencies have made the provision of empathy, support, or care to students a professional responsibility of teachers for example, in Ireland (Teaching Council of Ireland, 2012), Ontario (Ontario College of Teachers, 2006), and a number of Australian states (Queensland College of Teachers, 2008; Teachers Registration Board of the Northern Territory; Teachers Registration Board of Tasmania, 2006). Yet empathy, as a form of care, is rarely defined in standards documents. This raises the question of how standards authorities can expect teachers to behave empathically without providing clarity on the concept.

2.1 Background

"*Empathy*" is an elusive concept (Basch, 1983) and difficult to define and measure (Kestenbaum, Farber, & Sroufe, 1989). Its conceptual history is marked by ambiguity, discrepancy and controversy among philosophers and behavioural, social and medical scholars (Preston & de Waal, 2002; Wispé, 1978, 1986). Eisenberg and Strayer (1987) describe empathy as a "slippery concept… that has provoked considerable speculation, excitement and confusion" (p. 3). Reik (1948) stated "the word empathy sometimes means one thing, sometimes another, until now it does not mean anything at all" (p. 357). Wispé (1986) suggested any outcomes of empathy research should be carefully considered because empathy means different things to different people. Levy (1997) proposed the term be abandoned altogether and replaced by a less ambiguous one.

Approaches to identifying empathy states and traits differ across disciplines. In *developmental psychology*, empathy evolves in and from psychological phenomena connected to the relationship between infant and caregiver. In the *social cognition* field, empathy is perceived as an ability to understand the thoughts, feelings or intentions of others, with a focus on the cognitive process of understanding and perceiving (Eisenberg & Strayer, 1987). In *phenomenology*, empathy involves describing someone's experience from the viewpoint of another, without confusing the self with other (Agosta, 2010). This other-directed intentionality allows the other's experiences to disclose themselves as those of the other rather than as our own (Husserl, 1959). In *social*

neuroscience (a melding of social psychology and cognitive neuroscience), empathy has been viewed as a multi-faceted process, with some aspects being automatic and emotional (immediately getting upset when we see a loved one upset), and others being more reflective and conceptual (understanding why someone might be upset based on what we know about the person).

A consensus exists that empathy is a critical skill among helping professionals (Perlman, 1979). Practitioners in these professions, such as doctors, nurses and teachers, have professional care responsibilities and tend to have an intuitive sense of what empathy is without being able to clearly define it. Despite its conceptual ambiguities, empathy is among the most frequently mentioned humanistic dimensions of patient care in medicine (Linn, DiMatteo, Cope, & Robbins, 1987). In therapy, empathy is "at the heart of the therapeutic relationship" (Meissner, 1996, p. 150), while in social work it is a foundational principle of practice (Compton & Galaway, 1994; Hepworth & Larson, 1993).

Similarly, the concept of empathy is widely discussed in the education literature. My search of the Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC) database found some 417 peer-reviewed articles pertaining to both "teacher" and "empathy" published since 2000. Many of these studies sought to investigate the development of empathic responses, suggesting a belief that empathy can be learned. While the literature advocates engaging empathy in teacher-student relationships as a necessary condition for good practice, concrete definitions are often taken for granted. While there is a wide acceptance of empathy's role in education, there is limited research into the role of teacher empathy in everyday classroom contexts (Barr, 2011). Without an operational definition, the concept is difficult to observe and measure.

2.2 Origins

The first mentions of empathy were made in 1873 by Robert Vischer, a German art historian and philosopher, who used the German word *Einfühlung*— "to project yourself into what you observe" to describe an observer "feeling into" works of art (Jackson, 1992, p. 1626). In 1897, German

psychologist-philosopher Theodore Lipps brought *Einfühlung* into psychology and contributed the idea of projection and imitation (Wispé, 1987). In 1903, experimental psychologist Wilhelm Wundt became the first to use the term in the context of human relationships (Hunsdahl, 1967), and two years later Sigmund Freud used *Einfühlung* to describe the psychodynamics of putting oneself in another person's position (Pigman, 1995).

The psychologist Edward Titchener introduced the term *empathy* into the English language in 1909, deriving it from the Greek *empatheia,* meaning appreciation of another person's feelings (Wispé, 1987). Titchener in 1915 used "empathy" to convey "understanding" of others, and Southard (1918) described the importance of empathy in relationship between a clinician and patient. Since then, social and behavioural scientists have studied empathy in counselling, prosocial behaviour and altruism (Batson & Coke, 1981; Carkhuff, 1969; Feshbach, 1989; Hoffman, 1981), in psychoanalysis (Jackson, Brunet, Meltzoff, & Decety, 2006; Wolf, 1980), and in social psychology, clinical psychiatry and psychology (Berger, 1987; Eisenberg & Strayer, 1987; Ickes, 1997).

2.3 Definitions, Descriptions and Features

There has recently been a renewed interest about empathy in philosophy (Kogler & Stueber, 2000; Stueber, 2006), psychotherapy (Bohart & Greenberg, 1997), neuroscience (Decety & Ickes, 2009), and medicine (Farrow & Woodruff, 2007; Halpern, 2001). Empathy is a term spaning social work, medical education, psychotherapy, developmental psychology, philosophy, literary studies, and anthropology—but with no agreed definition. Indeed, there are almost as many definitions of empathy as there are scientists studying the phenomenon (Wispé, 1987). Different researchers use the term to refer to different psychological states (Batson, 2009). A list of definitions and descriptions are presented in Appendix A. I draw on some key definitions and descriptions from psychology to help situate the study and provide a framework for the conceptualization and operational definitions of empathy that follow later in this chapter.

Carl Rogers (1959) defined empathy as “an ability to perceive the internal frame of reference of another with accuracy *as if* one were the other person but without ever losing the as if condition” (p. 210). In later work, Rogers (1975) described the experience of empathy as entering into the private perceptual world of another to become thoroughly at home in it. Similarly, Schroeder (1925) in an early psychoanalytical study, considered “empathic insight implies seeing *as if* from within the person who is being observed” (p. 159). As noted elsewhere in this chapter, the “as if” condition is a key distinguishing feature between empathy and sympathy.

Mead (1934) defined empathy as “the capacity to take the role of another person and adopt alternative perspectives” (p. 27), while Aring (1958) described it as an act or capacity of appreciating another person’s feelings without joining those feelings. Similarly, Hogan (1969) defined empathy as “the intellectual or imaginative apprehension of another’s condition or state of mind without actually experiencing that person’s feelings” (p. 308), while Clark (1980) defined it as “a unique capacity of the human being to feel the experience, needs, aspirations, frustrations, sorrows, joys, anxieties, hurt, or hunger of others as if they were his or her own” (p. 187). These definitions are all compatible with Rogers (1959) “as if” condition.

Another group of definitions equate empathy with open-mindedness and tolerance for others. Wispé (1986) described empathy as “an attempt by one self-aware self to comprehend nonjudgmentally the positive and negative experiences of another self” (p. 318). Levasseur and Vance (1993) define empathy as “a mode of caring… (and) not a psychological or emotional experience, nor a psychic leap into the mind of another person, but an openness to, and respect for, the personhood of another” (p. 83), while Shamasundar (1999) similarly defines empathy as related to open-mindedness and tolerance for ambiguity and complexity.

Still other definitions describe empathy as an element of social and/or emotional intelligence. Salovey and Mayer (1990), and later Goleman (1995), position it as an ability to recognise emotions in others and as a domain of emotional intelligence. Schutte et al. (2001) found

support for the proposition that empathy has significant overlaps with measures of emotional intelligence and social skills, and Howe (2008) affirmed it as a key component of emotional intelligence.

In neuroscience, empathy has been described as a neural matching mechanism made up of a mirror neuron system in the brain that enables us to place ourselves in the 'mental shoes of others' (Gallese, 2001, 2003; Gallese & Goldman, 1998). This research originated in Italy, with the discovery that neurons in the premotor cortex of the brains of macaque monkeys were firing both when a monkey performed hand movements, and when it merely observed another monkey or human performing the action (Ferrari, Gallese, Rizzolatti, & Fogassi, 2003; Gallese, Fadiga, Fogassi, & Rizzolatti, 1996). These mirror neurons were considered evidence for a brain mechanism that represents the subject's own world and that of others. Mirror neurons are activated merely upon observing another's goal-directed actions or behaviours, and involve many of the same neuron networks that would fire if the observer were to actually perform or experience the observed actions themselves. Since the discovery of mirror neurons, scholars in various disciplines have made empathy a research focus. Several studies demonstrated a similar coding of the perception and generation of motor actions in the human brain (Decety & Grèzes, 2006; Singer & Frith, 2005), making empathy one of the most investigated social constructs in neuroscience (Jacobs, 2012).

In psychology, empathy is regarded as an important human characteristic to identify another person's emotions and thoughts, and respond to these with an appropriate emotion where the function of empathy is to make sense of, and predict another's behaviour (Baron-Cohen, 2011). To consider empathy is to consider both basic non-conscious ways in which we react to the world and others, as well as more conscious awareness and engagement with others. Walter (2012) defines empathy as "the ability to share another's internal world of thoughts and feelings" (p. 9), while Krznaric (2014) frames empathy as "the art of stepping imaginatively into the shoes of another person, understanding their feelings and perspectives, and using that understanding to guide your

actions" (p. 10). Empathy therefore consists of feelings and/or concern for others, and is a motivational state aimed at improving another's welfare (Decety & Howard, 2014).

2.4 Operational Definition

Working definitions are used to conceptually distinguish between different phenomena to provide a basis for investigation. This study required a working definition of empathy so that all teacher participants could be systematically researched. Teacher empathy has been defined in the literature as "the ability to express concern for, and take the perspective of, a student" (Tettegah & Anderson, 2007, p. 50; Table 2.3). It is not a distinct emotion but a form of intentionality directed at another (Stein, 1989).

To date, only limited research has focussed on the specific role of empathy in the everyday school experiences of teachers. Empathy in the classroom occurs when teachers "suspend their single-minded focus of attention, and instead adopt a double-minded focus…When empathy is switched off, they think only about their own interests. When empathy is switched on, they focus on other people's interests too" (Baron-Cohen, 2011, p. 10). A teacher's ability to express and communicate their empathetic feelings and understandings by verbal and/or non-verbal means are what students see and experience (Cotton, 2001). While teacher–student relationships are well-documented, little work has been done to identify the role and functioning of empathy within those relationships.

2.5 Empathy Viewed from a Cognitive and Emotional Perspective

A key definitional issue for this study was to determine the elements of an empathic response or action. In accordance with the empathy literature, I propose to distinguish two interrelated components—cognitive empathy (perspective-taking) on the one hand, and affective empathy (emotional empathy) and related affective phenomena on the other (Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004; Davis, 1983; Decety & Jackson, 2006; Decety, Jackson, & Brunet, 2007; Preston & de Waal, 2002; Walter, 2012).

Cognitive empathy. Cognitive empathy is an ability to *understand* and conceptualize the mental states or feelings of others, to allow an individual to predict and understand another person's behaviour (Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004; Feshbach & Feshbach, 1982). It involves "intellectually taking the role or perspective of another person" (Gladstein, 1983, p. 468), and is based on imagining another's experience and situation (Davis, 1983) to understand their states without being in a similar affective state ourselves (MacKay, Hughes, & Carver, 1990; Walter, 2012). For example, one can understand that someone is angry, without being in a corresponding state of anger ourselves.

Those who stress the importance of cognitive empathy emphasize understanding and social insights over emotional involvement (Rogers, 1975). The purpose of cognitive empathy is to perceive and decode another's emotional state to accurately infer what they are thinking or feeling (Decety & Jackson, 2006). This ability involves mentally acquiring and processing information through perspective-taking to attribute desires, beliefs, intentions, and emotional states to another (also referred to as Theory of Mind: Baron-Cohen, 1995; Baron-Cohen, Leslie, & Frith, 1985; Blair, 2005; Jones, Happé, Gilbert, Burnett, & Viding, 2010). It is a cognitive role-taking capacity to engage in another's psychological point of view (Frith & Singer, 2008) and draw inferences about another's affective and cognitive mental states (Shamay-Tsoory, Aharon-Peretz, & Perry, 2009). Cognitive empathy skills are needed in the work of many professions. For example, a physician does not need to experience the intense emotions of a patient which may impede his/her work. Rather, he/she needs to understand these feelings and relate to them while maintaining a sense of self to meet the needs of both the patient and physician (Bellet & Maloney, 1991).

Perspective-taking is defined as taking over the mental perspective of the observed other "to put oneself mentally in the shoes of the other" (Walter, 2012, p. 11). Perspective-taking is neutral to the question whether an (isomorphic or non-isomorphic) affective state is elicited in an observer. Rather, perspective-taking is understood to be a cognitive mechanism, which is important in both cognitive and affective empathy, as well as in mentalizing about the perceptions, beliefs, and

intentions of ourselves and others. Baron-Cohen's working definition of *cognitive* empathy is "an ability to recognise other people's mental states such as intentions, beliefs, desires and emotions" (Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004, p. 164), and this definition has been adopted for the study (Table 2.3).

Affective empathy. Affective empathy is an ability to perceive, recognise and feel another's emotions (Feshbach & Feshbach, 1982). Hoffman (1981) defines it as "a vicarious affective response to someone else's situation rather than one's own" (p. 41), and Eisenberg (1989) as "an emotional response that stems from the apprehension of another's emotional state or condition congruent with the other's emotional state or condition" (p. 108). Affective empathy includes sharing or mirroring an appropriate emotional response triggered by another person's emotion (Blair, 2005; Decety & Jackson, 2004; Eisenberg et al., 1994; Hoffman, 2001; Reniers, Corcoran, Drake, Shryane, & Völlm, 2011). Mirroring involves using our own mind as a model to "mirror" or "mimic" the mind of others by pretending to be in their mental shoes. In teaching, mirroring is "a process by which a person attunes to a child's inner world and provides the child with the words and behaviours for self-expression" (Cozolino, 2013, p. 52). To experience the emotional response of another involves recognising another's emotional state and responding with a similar emotion to what the other person feels or would be expected to feel (Gladstein, 1983). Affective empathy is therefore a quality of perceiving, anticipating, and responding with care to the emotional experience of another (Decety & Batson, 2009).

Baron-Cohen and Wheelwright's (2004) affective empathy definition is "an ability to respond to other people's mental states with an *appropriate* emotion" (p. 164). The word "appropriate" is important as displays of affective empathy are not just any emotional response to another's emotion (for example, a psychopath feeling pleasure at someone else's pain is not affective empathy) nor does it need to trigger a matching emotion (Rueda, Fernández-Berrocal, & Baron-Cohen, 2015). Rather, the response needs to reflect that the observer cares how the other

person feels (Baron-Cohen, 2011). This affective empathy definition was adopted for the study (Table 2.3).

Separate or interrelated empathy components? Is empathy a wholly emotional response triggered by another person's emotions or an entirely cognitive operation (putting oneself into another person's shoes and perceiving the world from their point of view)? Many definitions concur that the concept of empathy is not unitary (Zaki, 2014). Preston and Hofelich (2012) argue it is an umbrella term for states of feeling "with" that involve "processes by which observers come to understand and/or feel the state of another" (p. 25).

Most scholars recognise both cognitive and affective components are necessary in defining empathy (Decety & Jackson, 2004; Dziobeck et al., 2008; Reniers et al., 2011), and empathy involves *both* cognition and emotion (Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004; Davis, 1994). Bennett (2001) referred to "a mode of relating in which one person comes to know the mental content of another, *both affectively and cognitively*, at a particular moment in time and as a product of the relationship that exists between them" (p. 7). Similarly, Davis (1994) argued cognitive and affective components interact such that an individual's responses to the experiences of another include "the process taking place within the observer and the affective and non-affective outcomes which result from those processes" (p. 12). Duan and Hill (1996) argue effort is needed to understand how the cognitive and affective aspects of empathy "may exist separately, coexist or influence each other" (p. 263).

Empathy relies on the ability to share emotions as well as to understand another's thoughts, desires, and feelings. Evidence from neuroscience points to two distinct systems: an emotional system supporting our ability to empathise emotionally, and a cognitive system for intellectually understanding another's perspective (Shamay-Tsoory, 2011). While the two appear to work independently, every empathic response may involve both components, depending on context.

Baron-Cohen and Wheelwright (2004) conceptualized empathy as having two components: the cognitive ability to recognise other people's mental states (such as intentions, beliefs, desires and emotions), and the affective ability to respond to those with an appropriate emotion based on care. This two-factor definition sidesteps the debate about whether empathy is a wholly emotional response (the emotion triggered by another person's emotions) or an entirely cognitive operation (the ability to put oneself into another person's shoes and perceive the world from their point of view). The Baron-Cohen and Wheelwright (2004) definitions of cognitive and affective empathy were used to code vignettes in this study (Table 2.3).

2.6 Sympathy and Compassion

Vicarious emotions may result from perceiving others displaying an emotional expression (Lanzetta & Englis, 1989), and empathic concern and personal distress are two emotional episodes that may result when a person perceives someone in need (Batson, 1991, 2011; Batson, Early, & Salvarani, 1997). Batson and Ahmad (2009) define emotional responses based on empathic concern for the perceived welfare of another to include "feeling sympathy, compassion, tenderness and the like" (p. 146). Empathy needs to be clearly delineated from these related phenomena.

A response to observing another's suffering may result in *personal distress* (Batson, 1991). Personal distress is defined as a negative affective state elicited by observing the affective states of others (Walter, 2012). Personal distress is self-oriented and linked to egoism (Batson, 2011). For example, when you see a person suffering, you may react with a negative state motivating you to turn away in order to feel better.

To prevent an excessive sharing of suffering leading to personal distress, one may respond to another's suffering with compassion characterized by feelings of warmth, concern, and care for the other, or *sympathy* (Singer & Klimecki, 2014). *Compassion* derives from the Latin "to suffer with another" (Krznaric, 2014, p. 12), while *sympathy* comes from the Greek *sym* meaning "being with" and *pathos* meaning "suffering or pain" (Black, 2004). The emphasis is on affective

connections to feel another's emotions. A sympathetic response occurs where the observer's emotional response to the distress of another leads them to help to relieve the other's suffering (Davis, 1994). Displays of sympathy include feelings of pity or feeling sorry *for* someone rather than feeling *as* the other to understand their emotions or points of view as occur in displays of empathy (Krznaric, 2014).

Baron-Cohen and Wheelwright (2004) distinguish cognitive and affective empathy from sympathy in *Figure 2.1*, where sympathy is a special case of the affective component of empathy.

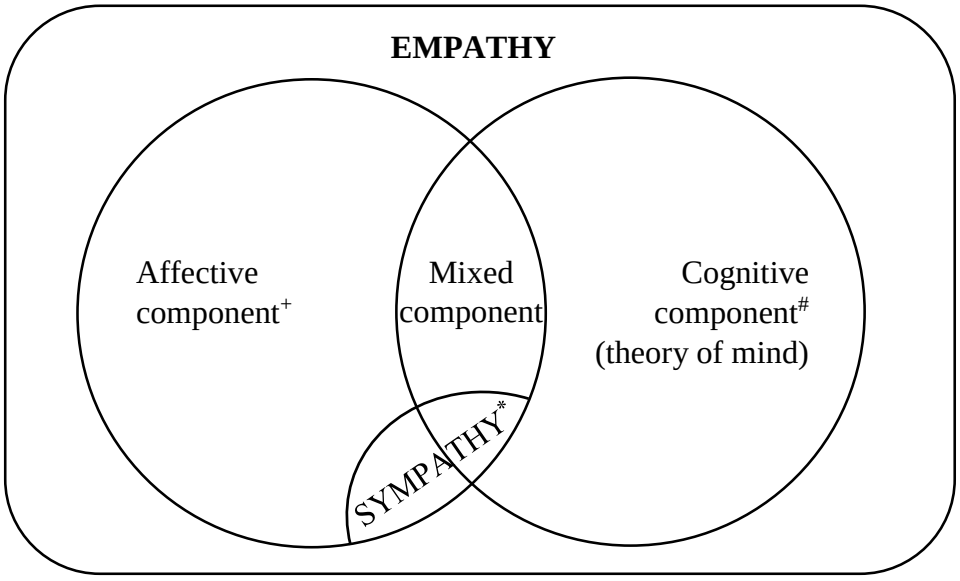


Figure 2.1. A Model Showing the Two Overlapping Components of Empathy where Sympathy is a Special Case of the Affective Component of Empathy. + Feeling an appropriate emotion triggered by seeing/learning another's emotion. # Understanding and/or predicting what someone else might think, feel, or do. * Feeling an emotion triggered by seeing/learning of someone else's distress which moves you to want to alleviate their suffering. Adapted from "The Empathy Quotient: An investigation of adults with Asperger Syndrome or high functioning autism, and normal sex differences," by S. Baron-Cohen and S. Wheelwright, 2004, *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 34*, p. 165.

Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright (2004) provide distinguishing examples,

> If you walk past a homeless person in winter and you are "moved" or "touched" to want to help them, this would count as sympathy. You may do nothing more. For example, you may feel that your action would be futile given the many other homeless people in the same neighbourhood and the near impossibility of helping them all. So you might walk past and do nothing. Your reaction would still count as sympathy because you felt the desire to alleviate another's suffering. This same term would also apply even if you did indeed take action, and gave the homeless person your gloves. If, however, you experienced an appropriate emotion (e.g., pity) to the homeless person's emotion (e.g., hopelessness), but you did not experience any desire to take action to alleviate his or her suffering, then this would count as empathy, but not sympathy. As a final note of clarification, if you felt an inappropriate emotion to the homeless person's emotional state (e.g., feeling glad that you had a warm home with a well-stocked refrigerator), this would count as neither empathy nor sympathy. (p. 165)

Concepts of sympathy and empathy are often placed in the same terminology category, resulting in confusion (Black, 2004; Wispé, 1986; Zhou, Valiente, & Eisenberg, 2003). Evidence from the medical profession suggests the two constructs reflect different human qualities (Nightingale, Yarnold, & Greenberg, 1991). Hojat (2007) differentiates the concepts by defining sympathy as "the act, or the capacity of entering into or *joining* the feelings of another person, while empathy is the capacity to understand *without joining* the feelings of the patient" (p. 12). This distinction is supported by Decety and Jackson (2004), who see empathy as an ability "to recognise the other person as like self, while maintaining a clear separation between self and other" (p. 85).

Empathy should not be confused with sympathy or compassion (Zahavi & Rochat, 2015). There is a convergence of understanding between two people in an empathic relationship rather than parallel feelings in displays of sympathy (Buchheimer, 1963). Self-awareness is augmented in displays of empathy and reduced in displays of sympathy. The underlying motivation in empathy is

altruistic rather than egoistic as is the case with sympathy where the goal of helping is to reduce our own levels of stress (Coke, Batson, & McDavis, 1978). Compassion is a sympathetic emotional response involving feeling *for* the other rather than feeling *as* the other. Eisenberg defined sympathy as "an affective response frequently invoked by empathy consisting of feelings of sorrow or concern for the distressed or needy other" (Eisenberg, Wentzel, & Harris, 1998, p. 507). This sympathy definition has been adopted for the study (Table 2.3).

2.7 Mentalizing

Mentalizing (or mentalization) is an imaginative mental activity to interpret and attend to mental states in ourselves and others (Allen & Fonagy, 2006). It is a social construct in the sense that we are attentive to the mental states of those we interact with. This capacity to perceive and interpret human behaviour in terms of intentional mental states (Bateman & Fonagy, 2006; Fonagy & Target, 2005) allows us to understand our actions and those of others by "holding the mind in mind" (Allen & Fonagy, 2015, p. 166). An increase in mentalizing capacity has been associated with increases in self-regulation, more positive relationships, an ability to make better choices, make frustrations more tolerable, and higher self-esteem (Fonagy, Gergely, Jurist, & Target, 2002; Fonagy & Target, 1997).

The first recorded use of the term "mentalization" was in 1807, and the Oxford English Dictionary added the term in 1906, defining it as "to give a mental quality to" and "to cultivate mentally" (Allen, 2006). The concept first appeared in the French psychoanalytic literature in the late 1960s, before splitting into two fields of research in the 1990s. One stream evolved into the field of neurobiology, focussing on autism and schizophrenia. The other strand focused on relationship attachment dynamics and developmental psychopathology in the work of Peter Fonagy and colleagues. The treatment of Borderline Personality Disorder—an inability to manage emotions effectively— and psychotherapy treatments draw on mentalization techniques. Today,

psychoanalysis, neuroscience, developmental psychology, philosophy and phenomenology are among the fields using mentalization approaches (Bateman & Fonagy, 2012).

Mentalizing allows us to understand another's mind and to reflect on our own mental states in relationship from verbal and non-verbal cues such as facial expressions and gaze direction, as well as knowledge about a person's perspectives and beliefs (Baron-Cohen, 1995; Frith & Frith, 2006). Feelings within ourselves and our impressions of others' feelings provide us with considerable information about the mental skills that underpin behaviour (Damasio, 2003). To mentalize is to draw inferences about another's beliefs, intentions and thoughts by reflecting on the context and causes of those thoughts and feelings (Fonagy et al., 1991). It requires careful consideration of the circumstances of actions and prior patterns of behaviour, including prior experiences an individual has been exposed to. Mentalizing involves such cognitive operations as "attending, perceiving, recognising, describing, interpreting, inferring, imagining, simulating, remembering, reflecting, and anticipating" (Allen, 2006, p. 6).

Our behaviour and those of others in relationship is based on mental states that are always in flux. We mentalize consciously to understand the behaviour of others (e.g., "Why was she so abrupt with me? Is she upset because I didn't respond?"), and our own behaviour (e.g. "How could I have eaten that chocolate when I am on a diet?"). Basic mentalizing involves explaining another's behaviour based on the other's belief state. More advanced mentalizing involves integrating knowledge about beliefs with knowledge about the emotional impact of those beliefs. It involves self-awareness as well as openness to the mental states of others to make moment-to-moment adjustments to verbal and emotional signals read in others.

Mentalizing is context dependent and is considered an important skill for coping and mental health (Lungaard Bak, 2013). Reading one's own mind results in better coping strategies in interactions and affective relationships, because the self can anticipate its *own* actions and reactions as well as those of others. The capacity to anticipate, cope with, and selectively avoid certain

emotional responses in ourselves allows for control of emotional states. Simultaneously, mentalizing for others enables us to anticipate the various factors acting on the reactions of others in a given situation. An increasing number of mentalization-based treatments address different populations and diagnoses (Allen & Fonagy, 2006; Bateman & Fonagy, 2004; Fonagy & Target, 1998) based on core strategies of reflecting on affect states, thoughts and the capacity to reflect, linking behaviours to affect, considering multiple perspectives, questioning certainties, and encouraging developmental thinking over time (Luyten, Mayes, Fonagy, Target, & Blatt, 2015).

Mentalizing for teachers requires a capacity to consider and treat a child as a psychological agent motivated by mental states (Fonagy et al., 2002). Teacher mentalization – how teachers "know" students' minds and reflect on their own (Swan & Riley, 2015) – underpins displays of teacher empathy allowing them to simultaneously make sense of students as well as their own mental states. It is something teachers do—or fail to do—interactively. Teachers "turn up" or "turn down" mentalizing, based on their motivation to understand students' internal states (Hodges & Wegner, 1997; Ickes, 2011). When interacting in a mentalizing mode, we aspire to understand and influence each other based on our understanding. In a non-mentalizing mode, we dehumanize and treat each other as objects, and resort to coercive and controlling behaviour (Allen, 2006). Mentalizing enables teachers' to attribute mental states to self and students, and to take on various perspectives in understanding student thoughts, feelings, and intentions.

Mentalization can occur implicitly as an unconscious process that would be less observable than displays of empathy (Allen, 2006). But mentalizing can also occur explicitly as conscious, deliberate behaviour in teacher diaries as a useful tool to aid reflection. "What was the situation? What happened? How did you interpret it? What did you do?" (Allen, 2006, p. 9). Explicit mentalization is pivotal to self-awareness, emotional regulation, and solving interpersonal problems.

This study adopted Bateman and Fonagy's (2004) definition of mentalization—"the mental process by which an individual implicitly and explicitly interprets the actions of himself and others as meaningful on the basis of intentional mental states such as personal desires, needs, feelings, beliefs and reasons" (p. 21; Table 2.3). It involves a capacity to interpret thoughts and actions to think about thinking. It is concerned with the meanings that we attribute to actions to interpret why we or another might have thought or done something. It involves taking an intentional stance and may be present or absent in degrees (Holmes, 2006). In summary, mentalizing is a teacher's ability to hold students' mind in mind – to reflect upon his or her own internal mental experiences as well as those of the student (Luyten, Mayes, Nijssens, & Fonagy, 2017).

2.8 Attachment Style

The concept of infant attachment was first introduced by Bowlby (1969) who described it as a motivational-behaviour control system initiated at birth and activated in the first year of development when the infant shows preference for a small number of caregivers, most notably the mother. The influence of attachment is observable "from the cradle to the grave" (Bowlby, 1979, p. 129). It is a regulatory system of "emotional distance and accessibility to clearly identified persons maintained by behavioural instead of physiological means" (Bowlby, 1988, p. 29). Every human being is born seeking an emotional connection, an attachment to a protective adult who will tune in and respond to them (Gerhardt, 2010). If a baby does not receive deep affection in its first year, there is a risk of developing such behaviours as anxiety, emotional detachment, aggression, sociopathic traits, and violence (Ainsworth, 1982; Bowlby, 1975; Sroufe, 2005).

Hazan and Shaver (1987) extended the concept to show attachment theory is also a relevant framework to measure adolescent and adult attachment. The model consists of two dimensions to plot adult attachment styles: one's sense of self, and one's sense of others. Four adult attachment prototypes were outlined: *secure* (the sense that one is lovable and others are accepting and responsive); *preoccupied* (one is unlovable while believing others are accepting and responsive);

dismissing (one is unlovable and others seem untrustworthy and/or rejecting resulting in avoidance of social relationships); and *fearful* (feeling lovable but perceiving others negatively as untrustworthy or rejecting) (Batholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Attachment prototypes or "styles" are measured by self-report, partner ratings or interviews. For example, in middle childhood attachment security is often measured using questionnaires that assess children's perceptions of their current relationships with specific caregivers. Items on the Kerns Security Scale (Kerns, Keplac, & Cole, 1996) assess children's perceptions of their caregivers (Kerns, 2005; Kerns, Tomich, & Kim, 2006) where attachment security manifests as the child's trust in a primary caregiver's availability during times of need (Collins & Russell, 1991; Mayseless, 2005).

Attachment theory has been applied to other personal relationships such as teacher-student relationships (Riley, 2009). There is evidence to suggest that teachers may experience a corrective emotional experience from relationships with students, which may adjust for their own negative attachment experiences in childhood or in their romantic relationships. It has been suggested that a teaching career may be chosen unconsciously to afford a corrective emotional experience (Riley, 2009) or satisfy a need to be in control (Riley, Lewis, & Brew, 2010).

There is limited research on the relationship between adult attachment styles and empathy despite researchers recognising the constructs to be theoretically related. Briton and Fuendeling (2005) found the development of a secure base is "at least partially dependent on the ability to recognise [others'] needs" (p. 521) suggesting an association between empathy and the quality of adult attachment. Wayment (2006) explored the relationship between adult attachment style, empathy, and helping behaviour among undergraduates in the United States (N = 314) one month after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. Results from this study found attachment style to be related to a person's ability to experience empathy and engage in helping behaviour. Those with lower scores on avoidant attachment (more secure individuals) reported greater empathy with the bereaved, while those with higher scores on avoidant attachment reported reduced empathy.

Empathy for the bereaved was significantly correlated with helping behaviour. No relationship was found between anxious adult attachment and empathy due to a curvilinear relationship. In other studies, high avoidance has been associated with lower levels of empathy (Wei, Liao, Ku, & Shaffer, 2011). For example, mothers were found to emotionally distance themselves from their child in moments when the child experiences negative affect (Goldberg, MacKay-Soroka, & Rochester, 1994; Haft & Slade, 1989).

Some have argued that the relationship between a student and teacher parallels the attachment between child and parent (Siegel, 2012). Teachers follow parents as authority figures as a source of nurturance and safety to become the first "secure base" (Bowlby, 1988) outside the family (Riley, 2013) and provide a safe haven that supports the learning process (Lewis & Riley, 2009; Romi, Lewis, Roache, & Riley, 2011; Riley, 2013). To achieve self-experience, children require their emotional signals to be accurately mirrored by an attachment figure (Gergely & Watson, 1996), where the mirroring is exaggerated for the child to understand this display as part of their emotional experience rather than an expression of the caregiver (Fonagy et al., 2002). Attachment defined as "any form of behaviour that results in a person attaining or maintaining proximity to some other clearly identified individual who is conceived of as better able to cope with the world" (Bowlby, 1988, p. 26) has been used in this study (Table 2.3).

2.9 Mapping the Conceptual Territory: Separate but Closely Related Constructs

An operational definition of empathy needs to properly distinguish it from related constructs. Verducci (2000) called for researchers to explore "conceptions of empathy" (p. 66) and to study empathy as a constellation rather than a single phenomenon. Preston and Hofelich (2012) report on multiple overlapping but separately distinct empathic phenomena. A seminal review by the psychologist Stephanie Preston and the primatologist Frans de Waal (Preston & de Waal, 2002) noted the variety of concepts used in the literature as shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1

Terminology used by Researchers of Empathy and Related Constructs

Term	Definition	Self-Other distinction?	State matching?	Implications for helping?	Synonyms
Empathy	Subject's state results from attended perception of the object's state	Yes	Representational level, not necessarily visible	Increasing with familiarity, similarity, salience	
Cognitive empathy	Subject represents state of object through top-down processes	Yes	No	Depends	True empathy, Perspective-taking
Sympathy	Focussed more on object's situation than physical state	Yes	No	Depends	
Prosocial behaviours	Actions taken to reduce the object's distress	Usually	Not necessarily	Yes	Helping, succorance
Emotional contagion	Subject's state results from the perception of object's state	No	Yes	None	Personal distress, vicarious emotion, emotional transfer

Note. Adapted from “Empathy: Its ultimate and proximate bases,” by S. Preston and F. de Waal, 2002, *Behavioral and Brain Sciences, 25,* p. 4.

Preston and de Waal (2002) advanced a theory of empathy based on findings concerning mirror neurons involving matching the state of the subject and object. They found that empathy increases with familiarity (previous experience of the self with the other), similarity (perceived overlap between self and the other such as personality, age, gender), learning (explicit or implicit teaching), past experience (with situations of distress), and salience (strength of perceptual signals, e.g., louder, closer, more realistic). They proposed a perception–action model to explain their findings and integrate the different views on empathy. According to their model the perception of the other’s state automatically activates the observer’s representations of that state and generates autonomic and somatic responses associated with that state. In other words, observing an emotion in someone else automatically generates (parts of) that emotion in the observer. Walter (2012)

proposed a decomposition of empathy and related concepts to identify their essential constituent subcomponents as shown in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2

Essential Components of Empathy and Related Concepts

	Affective behaviour	Affective experience	Affective isomorphy	Perspective-Taking	Self-Other distinction	Other orientation	Prosocial motivation
Emotional mimicry	+						
Emotional contagion	(+)	+	+				
Personal distress	(+)	+			+		
Affective empathy	(+)	+	+	+	+	+	
Cognitive empathy	(+)			+	+		
Sympathy	(+)	+		+	+	+	+

Note. Adapted from “Social cognitive neuroscience of empathy: Concepts, circuits, and genes,” by H. Walter, 2012, *Emotion Review*, *4*, p. 10.

In Table 2.2, affective empathy is conceived as an affective state that is elicited by the perceived, imagined, or inferred state of the affective state of another. It is similar (*isomorphic*) to the other’s affective state, and is oriented towards the other. It includes an appreciation of the other’s affective state comprising perspective-taking, self–other distinction, and knowledge of the causal relation between the self and the other’s affective state. Affective isomorphism has been made a defining criterion of empathy. Including isomorphism in the definition of affective empathy is consistent with current use in cognitive neuroscience (Walter, 2012). Expressions of sympathy do not require affective isomorphism.

The simplest affective reaction to the affective state of others is *emotional mimicry*, defined as automatic synchronization of emotional behaviour, for example, affective expressions, vocalizations, postures, and movements with those of another (Walter, 2012). Empathy also needs

to be clearly distinguished from *emotional contagion*—literally catching another's emotion and acquiring it as your own (Scheler, 1954). The emotion of the other takes possession of the observer by mere association, for example, when you feel happy because others around you feel happy, contagious yawning, when you panic in a crowd of people feeling panic, or breaking into tears when someone else is crying. Emotional contagion is self-centred and does not require perspective-taking whereas empathy is characterized by explicit self–other distinction (Bischof-Köhler, 2012). In an empathic response, the observer remains aware the emotion belongs to another and not oneself.

Choi-Kain and Gunderson (2008) considered the links and conceptual overlaps between mentalization and the four related concepts of mindfulness, psychological mindedness, empathy, and affect consciousness as shown in *Figure 2.2*. In the Venn diagram, the four related concepts of mindfulness, psychological mindedness (thought – awareness), empathy, and affect consciousness (feeling – awareness) are each represented by a circle. Psychological mindedness is a capacity to relate our actions to thoughts and feelings (Appelbaum, 1973). Mindfulness is an acute orientation to current experience reflecting an attitude of openness to the physical and mental world (Bateman & Fonagy, 2006). Affect consciousness is an ability to consciously perceive, tolerate, reflect upon, and express affect through degrees of awareness, tolerance, and emotional (non-verbal) and conceptual (verbal) expression (Solbakken, Hansen, Havik, & Monsen, 2011).

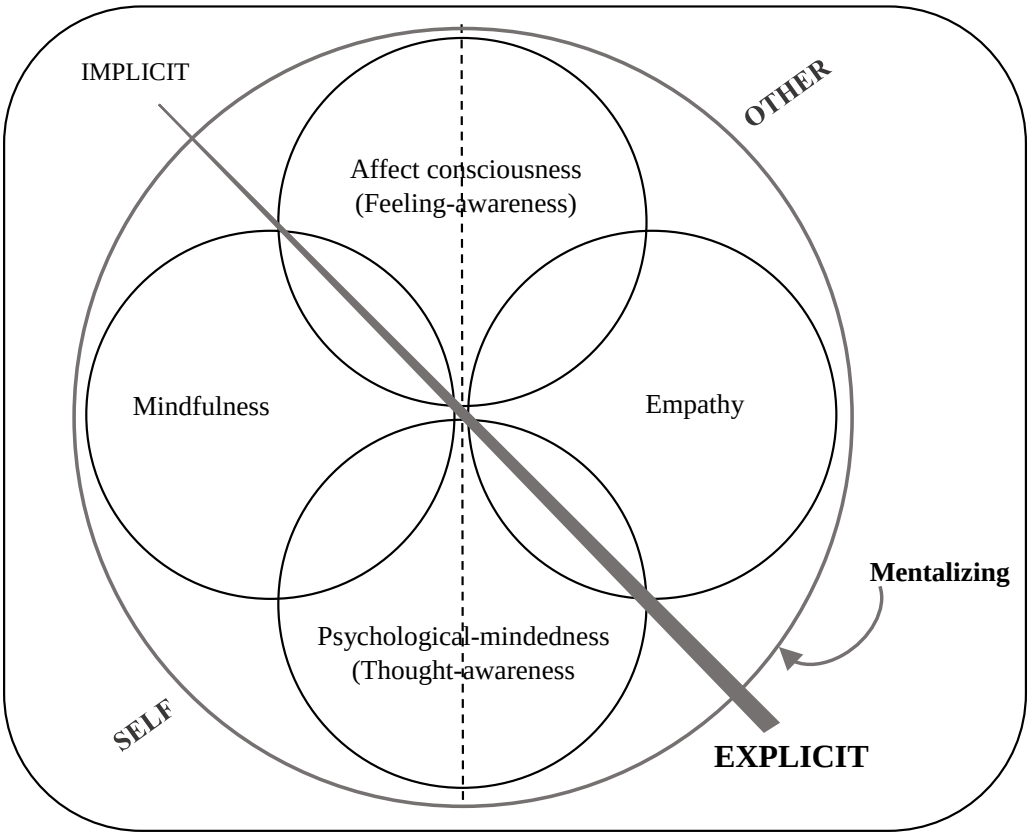


Figure 2.2. Conceptual Overlap of the Relationship between Mentalization, Empathy and Related Constructs. Adapted from "Mentalization: Ontogeny, assessment, and application in the treatment of borderline personality disorder," by L. Choi-Kain and J. Gunderson, 2008, *American Journal of Psychiatry, 165*, p. 1130.

The lines cut the diagram according to the three dimensions of self/other oriented, implicit/explicit, and cognitive/affective and are permeable and non-absolute. In the self/other dimension, mindfulness focuses on mental states in oneself, and empathy is one's imagination or representation of the mental states of another. Affect consciousness and psychological mindedness are both sides of the self/other distinction. Mindfulness and psychological mindedness explicitly emphasize both cognitive and affective aspects of mental states. Affect consciousness and empathy are both explicit and implicit relating to affective mental contents and functioning. Mentalizing bounds these concepts.

2.10 Empathy – Mentalization Built from Attachment

Researchers posit that two related capacities underlie sensitive caregiving behavior: *mentalization*, the ability to interpret one's own and others' behaviour in terms of underlying thoughts, feelings, motivations, and intentions (Fonagy & Target, 1998; Fonagy et al., 2002), and *empathy*, the ability to comprehend and "feel with" the emotional experience of another (Goldstein & Michaels, 1985; Stern, Borelli, & Smiley, 2015). This section considers how the capacities to mentalize and show empathy are linked.

In neuroscience, mentalizing and empathy represent distinct neural mechanisms that underpin abilities to assess affective states in ourselves and others. Mentalizing is associated with activation of the middle prefrontal areas of the brain, particularly the paracingulate cortex (Gallagher & Frith, 2003). Other brain systems involved in mentalizing include those that underpin attentional processes and emotional reactions. From the mirror neuron system, the neural circuits underlying cognitive empathy (ventromedial prefrontal cortex) and affective empathy (anterior insula, midcingulate cortex, and possibly inferior frontal gyrus) also overlap (Decety & Ickes, 2009; Lamm, Decety, & Singer, 2011). Mentalization has been found to positively influence two dimensions of cognitive empathy: perspective-taking and levels of personal distress (Hooker, Verosky, Germine, Knight, & D'Esposito, 2008; Krasner et al., 2009). Higher level mentalizing requires integrating knowledge about beliefs with knowledge about emotions which relates to the capacity to empathise (Shamay-Tsoory, Tomer, Berger, & Aharon-Peretz, 2003). The concept of empathy as used by Gallese (1996; 2001; 2003) assumes an awareness of a self-state that can be mapped on to the state of another in order to apprehend that state—mentalization of the self as a precursor.

Mentalizing and empathising abilities are used in concert when we try to understand other people's intentions, beliefs, desires and feelings. But preliminary evidence from studies of autism and psychopathy suggest these mechanisms are distinct abilities, each with dedicated neural

circuitry (Blair, 2005; Singer, 2006). The flexible interplay of brain circuits associated with attention, cognitive control, and mentalizing allow us to feel and empathise with the inner lives of others (Keysers & Gazzola, 2014). Including mentalizing in definitions of empathy likens the construct to Theory of Mind—the metacognitive capacity to explain, predict and interpret behaviour by attributing mental states (desires, beliefs, intentions and emotions) to ourselves and to others (Decety & Howard, 2014). In reality, it is likely there will be blends and co-occurrences of empathy and mentalization,

> Apart from extremes such as psychopaths it is possible that mentalizing the emotions of others (affective ToM = cognitive empathy) might more or less automatically lead to experience of similar affective states in oneself (affective empathy). Vice versa, affective empathy that is elicited automatically by visual signals (facial expressions, crying) will normally lead to mentalizing about the emotions of the other. Therefore, cognitive and affective empathy will often co-occur in real life. (Walter, 2012, p. 11)

Mentalizing and empathy both involve perceiving another's mental or emotional state, but empathy additionally requires *sharing* another's emotional experience (Decety & Jackson, 2004; Singer, 2006). Empathy focuses on the other rather than the self, as humans use social abilities such as cognitive empathy to infer another's emotions and mental states. Bateman & Fonagy (2012) argue that broadly conceived mentalizing is a more inclusive concept than empathising, as it encompasses empathy for the self as well as for others and that empathy is in a sense one facet of mentalizing. If the concept of empathy was extended to include empathy for ourselves, mentalization and empathy would be virtually synonymous (Allen, 2006).

Studies of empathy often contrast cognitive and affective empathy but ignore mentalizing about emotions (Walter, 2012). There are many occasions in which another's emotional response is not observable but can only be inferred or imagined. Empathy research usually focusses on empathic accuracy—a perceiver's ability to accurately assess a target's emotional states based on

observable cues (Ickes, 1997). Mentalizing emotional states is about thinking about feelings in oneself and others where we aspire to “feel clearly” (Allen, 2006, p. 8). An ability to predict a student’s emotional response provides a teacher with the opportunity to use that representation to guide behaviour in ways that promote wellbeing. While both mechanisms help us draw inferences about another’s cognitive and emotional states, empathy may also have a motivational and prosocial role (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1991).

From attachment theory, it follows a teacher’s mentalizing capacity—as a “significant other” for students— is important for healthy student social and emotional development. Where children project their own schema onto teachers, teachers have the power to regulate or modify their projections through empathic understanding of the child’s motives. Even minor changes in teacher mentalization about children can significantly impact on the child’s emerging mind (Shai & Fonagy, 2014). Attachment offers the opportunity to provide security to insecurely attached students and build relationships where “the caregiver is able to predict what the child needs and, *through empathy,* keep the child in mind when interacting with her” (Riley, 2011, p. 14). A key component of empathy and mentalization is the teacher’s ability to mirror the mind of the student. In this study, teacher embodied mentalization involves focusing on moments of empathy to examine the degree to which a teacher’s ability to appreciate his or her own and students’ mental states translates into modifying behaviour by both teacher and students.

2.11 Field Studies of Teacher Mentalization

Teacher mentalization is a process by which teachers know students’ minds and reflect on their own. Finding ways of bringing an awareness of the importance of mentalization to those working with—and caring for—children has been described as a priority (Lundgaard Bak, 2013). A characteristic of mentalization-based intervention is its flexibility and adaptability across settings. Mentalization has been supported in school education programmes such as in the Peaceful Schools Project, and Danish Thoughts in Mind project.

The Peaceful Schools project, which operates in the United States, Hungary and Jamaica, applies mentalization techniques to create a safe school environment (Twemlow et al., 2005a). The program, launched in 2005, contrasted a social systems approach to school bullying and violence with a mentalization approach that focussed on the relationships of the school system as a whole rather than prevention strategies for students “at risk”. By mentalizing the power dynamics, teachers and students co-create the social climate. Over 1,300 Grade 3–5 students from 9 elementary schools in the Midwest of the United States provided trial data, with a further 3,600 K–5 students exposed to the interventions. The study used a randomized control trial, and measured outcomes through peer and self–reports of bullying and victimization, aggression and helpful bystanding, and self-reports of empathy toward victims of bullying. The study found lower rates of peer-reported victimization, aggression, and aggressive bystanding compared to control schools, and greater student empathy defined as a student’s awareness of the negative effect of victimization on other students (Twemlow et al., 2005b). The researchers proposed steps to create “mentalizing schools”, including positive climate campaigns, classroom management plans, and peer and adult mentorship.

CASSE Australia (http://www.casse.org.au) is an organisation of psychologists who work with vulnerable people and communities to provide support and develop secure relationships that promote psychological wellbeing. They ran a five year pilot of the Peaceful Schools Program in Australia to understand and address problem behaviours from unresolved trauma and distress. The pilot was implemented in 12 schools ranging from severely disadvantaged to affluent, and was tailored to each school. All schools reported safer and more supportive environments leading to positive shifts in school culture, including reduced conflict, bullying and violence.

In Aarhus in Denmark, the “Thoughts in Mind” (TiM) project is a large-scale school-based education programme based on the Peaceful Schools project. This psycho-educational community programme is group-based for teachers and parents in schools and day-care centres. The aim is to educate teachers and parents to use mentalizing ideas in their day-to-day interactions with children

(Lungaard Bak, 2010). The hypothesis is that even minor changes in adult mentalizing can significantly improve children's mental health. After a four year trial, TiM was implemented in 2010 across 15 schools that were selected as a representative trial group. Another 35 schools were matched on a social ranking scale as a control group. A follow-up a year later observed improvements in school attendance and academic results (Lundgaard Bak, 2013). In 2011, a further study of 30 Grade 4 classes (*N* = 700 students) to a TiM course with their parents (compared with 120 Grade 4 classes as a control) found evidence of improved mental health (Lungaard Bak, 2013).

2.12 Field Studies of Teacher Empathy in Schools

An empathic approach can sensitize educators to how students might be thinking and feeling. Positive perception of a teacher's empathy has been found to influence a student's academic motivation (Branwhite, 1988), and the development of their own empathy (Hoffman, 2001). Research into the characteristics and behaviour of effective teachers define an orientation of care as the heart and essence of quality teaching (Agne, 1992; Cohn & Kottkamp, 1993; Noddings, 1992; Rogers & Webb, 1991). Teachers seek to form secure attachments (Cozolino, 2013), and students who perceive their teachers as caring are more likely to exert academic effort and social responsibility (Furrer & Skinner, 2003; Wentzel, 1997). An exceptional educator is one who is attuned to their own and students' "thinking and feeling processes" and who uses empathy or empathic intelligence to "mobilise deep shifts in consciousness" (Arnold, 2005, p. 12).

Aspy (1972) found that a teacher's ability to "understand" students' experiences was expressed by the tone of their voice and the extent to which student responses were acknowledged, echoed and elaborated on. Aspy's study identified authenticity, genuineness, respect for students and holding students in positive regard as important. A limitation of the study was that it assumed no difference between students as individuals and the class as a whole,

> Judging a teacher's empathy with one group may possibly be different from judging it with another. If the teacher has to spend much of the time on overt classroom management

> because of the nature of the group, or because of individuals within the group, would the teacher's observed characteristics be the same? If one or more difficult pupils made the teacher angry, for example, then according to Goleman (1995), the teacher would be less able to be receptive and empathic to their pupils. It is likely that empathy may be dependent on various factors involved in the context of the interaction, not just on the teachers themselves. (Cooper, 2011, p. 36)

Teich (1992) highlighted empathy as crucial to establishing teacher-student rapport and relationships, and Brunel, Dupuy-Walker, and Schleifer (1989) found the "relationship between a teacher's empathy and their teaching ability is linked to the classical notion that a teacher cannot properly instruct pupils without knowing them well" (p. 228). The educational literature on special needs and pastoral care stresses the importance of emotional support and growth fostered by empathy (Lang, Best & Lichtenberg, 2004; Lang, Katz, & Menezes, 1998). Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development" (1978) encompasses emotional and cognitive aspects, with the highest levels of cognitive development being embedded in social relationships. Teacher empathy has also been examined in such contexts as bullying (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006; Boulton, 1997), drama (Deloney & Graham, 2003; Goodwin & Deady, 2013), and through techniques such as restorative justice—seeking to repair relationships that have been damaged by helping students to be resilient and aware of the impact of their behaviour on others (Morrison, 2007), and circle time— raising awareness of thoughts, emotions and behaviours where children sit in a circle to express themselves and discuss issues to develop empathy, mutual help and cooperation (Mosley, 1993).

A worldwide teaching program, the "Roots of Empathy" project, has been found to raise levels of mutual care among students. In this program, a class "adopts" a baby who visits them regularly over the school year with its mother or father. The teacher and students watch the baby develop discussing emotional responses, changing views of the world, and the relationship with parents. Students engage in art and drama to make the cognitive leap from trying to understand a

baby's feelings and perspectives to those of their classmates (Krznaric, 2014). The Canadian project was founded by parenting expert Mary Gordon. Over half a million children aged 5–12 have taken part (Krznaric, 2014). Studies of the program found reductions in playground bullying, and improved academic performance and cooperation (Gordon, 2007).

In the United Kingdom, the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme, created in 2005, focuses on teacher empathy alongside skills of self-awareness and managing feelings. By 2010, around eight percent of all primary and secondary schools in the United Kingdom were using the SEAL programme (Krznaric, 2014).

In the United States, McAllister & Irvine (2002) studied the beliefs of 34 in-service teachers and perceptions about the role of empathy in their teaching practice with culturally diverse students. The teachers described attributes of empathetic behaviour, such as sensitivity, patience, respect, tolerance, acceptance, understanding, flexibility, openness and humility. The study found empathic classrooms improved positive interactions, classroom climates, and strengthened student-centered practices.

In 2002, Wentzel examined the utility of parent socialization models for understanding teachers' influence on students in middle schools in the United States. Teachers were assessed with respect to their modelling of motivation and Baumrind's (1971) parenting dimensions of control, maturity demands, democratic communication, and nurturance. Student responses were defined in terms of social and academic goals and interest in class, classroom behaviour, and academic performance. The research found that teachers' high expectations, fairness, negative feedback, rule setting, and teacher motivation significantly influenced student motivation, social behaviour, and achievement. Teachers' high expectations were a consistent positive predictor of students' goals and interests, and negative feedback (lack of nurturance) was a consistent negative predictor of academic performance and social behaviour. Wentzel (2004) concluded that for students to fully engage with a teacher and classroom lessons, they needed to feel that they are known and accepted.

For these reasons, the quality of the teacher–child relationship and "pedagogical caring" (Wentzel, 1997) should be prioritised for teacher development.

Barr (2011) examined the relationship between teacher empathy and teacher perceptions of school culture among elementary, middle-school and high school teachers. He found teachers' perspective-taking were positively correlated with perceptions of student–peer relations (r = .20), school norms (r = .23) and educational opportunities (r = .20). Teachers' personal distress was negatively associated with student–peer relations (r = –.27). He argued pre-service teacher training programmes needed to focus on developing cognitive and emotional empathic capacities.

While researchers agree on the importance of teaching skills in student learning (Hattie, 2003), the specific role of teacher empathy in education is relatively unexplored. Krznaric (2014) argues that "most of us exercise our empathic brains every day, although we are not conscious of doing so" (p. 16). This study aims to explore the reality and significance of everyday empathic behaviour among teachers to identify and explicate the processes whereby teachers perceive students' internal states and respond with sensitive care to create positive classrooms.

2.13 Research Aims

I had a number of objectives in mind for this research. The overarching objective was to examine how empathy manifests in classroom practice. Rogers (1969) defined empathy as "viewing the world through the student's eyes" and considered it "almost unheard of in a classroom" (p. 112). I sought to identify themes relating to the role and functioning of empathy in the classroom from viewing actual displays of teaching practice. This knowledge could in future support the design of training and other interventions to enhance the quality of teacher-student relationships.

Within classrooms, there is a continuum of empathy practice depending on the skill and priorities of the teacher. Every teacher interacts with students and manages their classroom environment in ways that enhance, remediate or diminish teacher–student relationships. It explored

the abilities of effective teachers to display empathy and so understand and identify with a student's thoughts, feelings and perspectives to build positive learning environments.

The aims of this study were threefold. First, to use a multidimensional operational definition of empathy to guide observations of teachers' interactions with students. Second, to examine demonstrated teacher empathy practice and explore mentalization as a component of teacher empathic responding (Bateman & Fonagy, 2004). Finally, drawing on outcomes of participant experience, to develop an empathy assessment instrument that could be trialled with teachers and ultimately used in classrooms to improve relational practice (Chapter 11) and so enhance empathy experiences in classrooms.

In summary, this study sought to examine the demonstrated techniques of empathic educators, to provide evidence that may contribute to better learning environments and better equip teachers with skills in effective relational practice. The research questions guiding this study were:

1. What is the relationship between mentalizing and teacher empathy? How do teachers "mentalize" to know students' internal states and respond with sensitive care to create positive, empathic classrooms?
2. How does empathy manifest in the behaviour of teachers deemed by principals to be effective empathisers?
3. What are the lived experiences of empathy in the classrooms of these teachers, and how do they establish, build, and maintain student relationships?

2.14 Summary

Empathy has always been associated with a means of "knowing" another and understanding aspects of another person's experience. Zahavi (2012) noted the lack of consensus on a precise definition of empathy. Stueber (2012) argued, "the correct way of defining the term empathy does not exist" (p. 68). Definitions typically refer to empathy as "a way of assessing what another person is thinking, feeling, or doing from a quasi-first-person point of view, which includes both emotional

and cognitive aspects" (Hollan, 2012, p. 71). Rather than defining it, researchers distinguish affective and cognitive empathy components. While empathy entails an emotional resonance between empathiser and object, it is characterized by a clear cognitive and experiential boundary between the two. The empathiser can always distinguish his/her thoughts and feelings from those of the other, which separates empathy from the related concepts of sympathy, compassion, and forms of emotional contagion. The need for an empathic approach is promoted in the helping professions as a practitioner skill consisting of affective and cognitive components that are communicated through verbal and non-verbal responding.

Classrooms are social contexts co-constructed by a teacher and students. An extensive body of research documents that students' relationships with their teachers affects their academic motivation and learning (Hamre & Pianta, 2006; Roorda, Koomen, Spilt, & Oort, 2011). Empirical research supports the hypothesis that supportive learning environments (including empathic and supportive teacher practices) are conducive to student learning and achievement (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Liew, Chen, & Hughes, 2010; Pianta & Stuhlman, 2004). But little research has directly examined teachers' empathy-like processes and skills in context. Preston and Hofelich (2012) stress the need to incorporate rich descriptions that rely on interpretation and draw on structured contexts of meaning. Further, Hollan (2012) claims that a comprehensive account of empathy needs to consider the role of context and background knowledge which accords with the phenomenological approach taken in this study of empathy (Chapter 3). Teacher mentalization— the process by which teachers know students' minds and reflect on their own—effect embodied displays of empathy in classrooms.

This chapter considered the literature on definitions and conceptualizations of empathy. A review of definitions discussed the distinct but related components of cognitive and affective empathy. An operational definition—"to access the life of the mind of others in their bodily and behavioural expressions to psychologically project oneself into another in an attempt to understand

his/her thinking or feeling" (Zahavi & Overgaard, 2012, p. 10)—was proposed to examine manifestations of empathy in the classroom. The objective of this study is to examine teacher personal meanings as a pathway for exploring the complex world of teacher lived experiences of empathy in the classroom including perceptions of the student's frame of reference. The chapter then outlined the constructs of mentalization and attachment as related but distinct constructs, and considered previous studies of teacher empathy and mentalization in education. The chapter concluded with the research aims and questions for the study raised from the literature. A glossary of key definitions used throughout the study is presented in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3

Conceptual Definitions used in this Study

Operational definition of empathy	To access the life of the mind of others in their bodily and behavioural expressions to psychologically project oneself into another in an attempt to understand his/her thinking or feeling. (Zahavi & Overgaard, 2012, p. 10)
Cognitive empathy	An ability to recognise other people's mental states such as intentions, beliefs, desires and emotions. (Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004, p. 164)
Affective empathy	An ability to respond to other people's mental states with an appropriate emotion. (Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004, p. 164)
Teacher empathy	The ability to express concern and take the perspective of a student, and it involves cognitive and affective domains of empathy. (Tettegah & Anderson, 2007, p. 50)
Sympathy	An affective response frequently invoked by empathy consisting of feelings of sorrow or concern for a distressed or needy other. (Eisenberg et al., 1998, p. 507)
Mentalization	Mental processes by which an individual implicitly and explicitly interprets the actions of himself and others as meaningful on the basis of intentional mental states such as personal desires, needs, feelings, beliefs, and reasons. (Bateman & Fonagy, 2004, p. 21)
Attachment	Any form of behaviour that results in a person attaining or maintaining proximity to some other clearly identified individual who is conceived of as better able to cope with the world. (Bowlby, 1988, p. 26)

Chapter 3 Method

This chapter provides the rationale for the instruments and analysis employed in this exploratory study. The study explores how the lived experiences of six primary teachers, identified by school principals as effective empathisers, create supportive learning environments. The chapter begins by reviewing the research design and sampling method used in the study, including details of the school settings, teacher and student participants. The range of data collection techniques are then outlined, including rationale for use and the procedures for collecting participant data. The chapter concludes with a description of the data analysis and coding, and the veracity checks put in place to ensure trustworthiness of the data.

The study is predominantly qualitative in nature with some supporting quantitative elements. Qualitative research is a means of exploring and understanding the meanings individuals or groups ascribe to social issues (Creswell, 2013). It involves evaluating responses to questions with data typically collected in a participant's setting. Data analysis is typically inductive in nature, building from the particulars to general themes, with the researcher drawing interpretations of meaning from the data.

In choosing a qualitative research approach, the researcher makes certain philosophical assumptions. This study is grounded in two worldviews—in post-positivism as "a basic set of beliefs that guide action" (Guba, 1990, p. 17), and social constructivism (Creswell, 2007). Within post-positivism, a critical realist worldview is that there is a reality independent of our thinking that can be studied even if it is difficult to know with certainty. Conducting research therefore requires using a variety of methods, a series of logical steps, multiple perspectives, and a reductionist approach. Social constructivism and contextualism (Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006) are also used in this study in interview questions that are broad and rely on participants' lived experiences and interpretations to ascribe meaning.

3.1 Research Design

This study used a collective case study design to analyse characteristics of teacher mentalization and expressions of teacher empathy. A case study is “a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information” (Creswell, 2007, p. 73). Case studies provide insights and illuminate meanings that expand a reader’s understanding of a particular experience (Merriam, 2009). A collective case study involves the researcher finding multiple cases to illustrate an issue (Creswell, 2007). Within-case analysis provided descriptions of the phenomenon based on unique attributes and patterns, before looking for themes across the cases that transcend them (Yin, 2009).

This study adopted a phenomenological approach to explore participant understandings and demonstrations of empathy in teaching. Phenomenology is a philosophical approach to the study of experience (Smith et al., 2009). The aim of phenomenology is to “determine what an experience means to those who have had the experience and are able to provide a comprehensive description of it” and from there to derive the “essence” of the experience (Moustakas, 1994, p. 13). The essence is the “inner core… without which it could not be” (Strandmark & Hedelin, 2002, p. 79). The researcher seeks to understand the meaning for participants who have experienced or “lived” the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). I set aside my prior knowledge and experiences related to the subject through bracketing to “see things as they appear, free from prejudgments and preconceptions” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 90) to understand a phenomenon at a deeper level (Merleau-Ponty, 1956).

Interpretive phenomenological research is a philosophical stance in which participants’ lived experiences make them experts in co-constructing research discoveries. Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) emphasized the centrality of the human context in which a researcher seeks to understand human experience. Phenomenology is best placed to understand the meanings and manifestations of empathy grounded in a participant’s lived, subjective experience or “lifeworld” (Husserl,

1970/1936). It allows information to come through focused description that “leads to deeper layers of meaning through an interweaving of person, conscious experience, and phenomenon” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 96).

A phenomenological approach allowed me to access the participant’s lifeworld as a source of evidence. From this, I sought to understand the essence of the phenomenon and its structure. Interpretative phenomenology seeks to capture and portray the quality and texture of participants’ experiences, and explore their meanings and significance by getting as close as possible to the participants’ experience: “to step into their shoes and look at the world through their eyes—in other words, to enter their world” (Willig & Billin, 2012, p. 119).

In this study I conducted in-depth interviews to access teacher perspectives as perceptions of lived experience to better understand the role of teacher empathy in student care. As the purpose of the study was to explore effective empathy practice, an IPA within a case study design was used to understand the experiences of teacher manifestations of empathy in classrooms as the most appropriate research methodology. Methods used in the study emphasize the individual as the unit of analysis (Smith, Harrè & Van Langenhove, 1995) to give meaning to the lifeworld of participants. Teachers’ stories (particularly in relation to filmed vignettes of practice) provided insights into the experiences of the role and functioning of empathy in classrooms.

A reductive process was used in the study to elicit as pure and rich a description of the phenomenon as possible. The research design included constant comparative analysis in reducing data through re-examination and re-coding (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Participant data were gathered from multiple sources: interviews, a mentalization diary, survey responses, and independent evaluations. A second phase of supplementary quantitative data were collected for each participant to establish empathy motivation and independently verify through observation and evaluation the various emotional support elements demonstrated in classroom practice.

3.2 Sampling

Phenomenological studies typically employ a purposive homogenous sampling strategy (Creswell, 2007) to select information rich cases (Patton, 2015). This study selected a small sample of six teachers deemed by principals to be more relationally effective than their peers. The selection of participants was guided by my interest to explore the ways effective empathisers manifest empathy in classroom practice. Samples in interpretative phenomenology studies are typically small to enable detailed case-by-case analysis. Qualitative research methodologists have published guidelines on sample sizes for these studies, ranging from about six participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), to 10 (Morse, 2000), and 3–10 cases (Creswell, 2013).

3.3 Procedure

Ethics approval for the study was granted by the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC) (Appendix B) and by the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (Appendix C). In February-March 2014, I wrote to 70 primary school principals across Melbourne, inviting them to nominate teacher participants they deemed to be more relationally effective than their peers (effective empathisers) in establishing, building and maintaining strong teacher-student relationships.

Principals were asked to consider teachers of middle and upper primary students from: grades 2-6 in the Melbourne metropolitan area; who were currently teaching; had teaching experience with primary aged children; and who were prepared to talk about their everyday experiences of classroom empathy. For the nominated teachers, principals were required to complete a Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction (QTI: Fisher, Fraser, & Creswell, 1995; Appendix D) to access their perceptions of how these teachers interact with students. Teachers who scored highly on the QTI's behavioural dimensions of *understanding* and *supporting*, and who were perceived as displaying high levels of empathy by principals, were approached to participate in the study.

Ten teachers met the selection criteria. A recruitment email was forwarded to the principals to forward to those teachers. The email described the aims of the study, particulars of what would be required, and an invitation to contact me directly should they wish to participate. All of those invited initially agreed to participate, but four later withdrew due to low student response rates and/or personal reasons. This left six teachers from two primary schools consenting to participate (Teacher Consent Letter; Appendix E) once they had read the teacher explanatory statement (Appendix F). The teachers then obtained formal approval from their principals to participate.

All students in a participant's class were invited to participate. I visited each school to explain what would be required to invite participants. Explanatory statements for parents (Appendix G) as well as consent forms for parents/guardians (Appendix H) and students (Appendix I) were distributed to request informed consent. Returned forms were collected by teachers. Students who gave consent, and whose parents/guardians also gave consent, participated in the study.

After obtaining ethics approval from Monash University and the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, I approached teachers deemed by principals as effective empathisers to participate. After obtaining informed consent, I conducted two interviews with each participant of 60–90 minutes duration between July and December 2014. All participants agreed to allow interviews to be audiotaped and transcribed verbatim.

Each teacher participant was asked to complete the teacher questionnaire (Appendix J) on relational goals (Butler, 2012) and perceptions of teaching style dimensions (Watt & Richardson, 2007). Some participants completed the questionnaire electronically while others completed it in hardcopy. Students completed a student version of the questionnaire on teaching style dimensions (Appendix K*)* during regular class time. The student survey took approximately 30 minutes to complete, and participants were supervised by one of the two CLASS observers outside the normal classroom context. In administering the survey, the raters asked students to honestly express their

thoughts and feelings, noting that anonymity would be maintained and their teacher would not see their responses. Participants completed the surveys at two timepoints to observe how goals and values may be changing over time.

Teachers' were provided with a behaviour image camera to film classroom practice during two one-week periods. During these weeks, teachers also completed a mentalization diary, in which they nominated up to three positive empathy moments (vignettes) from the footage for analysis.

Four "live" lesson observations took place (two for each observation week) and were coded for levels of emotional support (CLASS; Pianta et al., 2012). Lesson observations occurred across a range of subjects and a variety of times of the day. The trained observer and I sat in different corners of the room. As recommended by the CLASS developers, observations were conducted in 25-minute cycles, where we watched classroom interactions, took notes for 20 minutes followed by five minutes to formulate judgments and record scores for each dimension and sub-factor. Scores were based on the detailed descriptions and ranges in the CLASS manual. The scores of each rater were then averaged for a master score.

At interview, participants were asked broad questions about the role and meaning of empathy in their classroom before considering examples in the selected empathy vignettes. The participants were then asked to verify the written synopsis of each vignette. The diary entry describing the interaction moments were then read aloud to remind them why they chose each moment. The vignette footage was then played back to the participants either through a class data projector or laptop computer. Upon reviewing the footage, participants were asked to respond in terms of what they noticed in relation to the actions identified in the interactions, the empathy shown, and its significance. In some cases, teachers shared their thoughts while the movie was playing. Others chose to pause the movie at certain points to discuss elements, while others watched it in its entirety before responding.

3.4 School Settings

Expressions of empathy as part of teacher behaviour are framed by context (Hollan, 2012). The schools in this study served mainly high socio-economic student populations in the Melbourne metropolitan area.

School A is a state co-educational primary school located in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne, with an enrolment of over 600 students. A stated aim on School A's website is to provide a challenging and comprehensive curriculum for students in a caring and stimulating environment. A key strategy is to build relationships based on a learning community where stakeholders have shared understandings. The school encourages children to develop their full potential—academically, emotionally, physically and socially. Over 80% of the student population are in the top quartile of the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2015) compared to the national average of 25%. ICSEA is a scale of socio-educational advantage calculated for each school. A value on the index corresponds to the average level of educational advantage of a school's student population relative to other schools. It is used to make fair comparisons to understand levels of advantage or disadvantage that students bring to their schooling. ICSEA quartiles for each school are displayed in percentages to give contextual information about socio-educational composition. If students at a school were drawn proportionally from the broad spectrum of the community, there would be 25% in each quarter (http://www.acara.edu.au/_resources/About_icsea_2014.pdf). One of the five stated school values that School A promotes to the school community is empathy.

School B is a state co-educational primary school located in the inner north west of Melbourne, with an enrolment of over 530 students. It is organised into teaching teams of composite classes across grade levels (for example, a grade 3/4 class contains grade 3 and grade 4 students). School B has a stated school aim to foster life-long learners and to develop socially responsible individuals. School B's website states their educational philosophy is based on the

premise that learning is a social activity where students learn through interaction and co-operation with peers, teachers, parents and the community. Approximately 60% of the student population at School B are in the top quartile of the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2015).

3.5 Participants

A purposive sample of six teachers—five females and one male who were deemed effective empathisers by principals—participated in the study. Four teachers taught at School A, and two at School B. The teachers were drawn from three classifications of experience as defined in the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers Framework administered by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL, 2011a): “Graduate” (0-5 years’ experience), “proficient” (> 6 years’ experience), and “lead” (a position of responsibility for implementing priorities contained in a school strategic plan). The participants comprised three “graduates”, two “proficient”, and one “lead” teacher.

Teaching experience ranged from 2–17 years, with a mean of 8.83 years’ experience (*SD* = 6.40). Participants taught a variety of levels—one teacher at each of grade levels 6, 5, 4, and 2, and two teachers with composite grade 3/4 classes. All participants were current classroom teachers. One participant worked part-time, engaged in a job share arrangement with another teacher. She worked two days per week. To maintain anonymity, pseudonyms are used throughout the study.

Students were also surveyed to obtain parallel ratings of their perceptions of classroom teaching style dimensions. Student participants (*N* = 65*)* came from participating teachers’ classrooms, and response rates are shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Response Rates for Student Surveys

Teacher	Participating *N*	Total *N* of class	Response rate (%)
Sophia	13	25	52
Christine	14	26	54
Emily	6	27	22
Gretyl	12	25	40
Alice	10	27	37
Alan	10	22	45
Total	65	152	42

Student participants ranged in age from eight to 12 years (*M* = 9.98 years, *SD* = 1.29). Of these, 62% were female and 38% male. Twenty percent of students were in Year 2 (*N* = 13), 8% were in Year 3 (*N* = 5), 42% were in Year 4 (*N* = 27), 15% were in Year 5 (*N* = 10), and 15% were in Year 6 (*N* = 10).

The quality and reliability of survey data can be affected by response rates. The student response rates were lower than expected. Possible reasons for this include the timing of data collection midway and late in the school year with school reporting in progress. National testing for literacy and numeracy for grade 3 and 5 students occurred during timepoint 1. Findings in relation to student data should not necessarily be considered representative of groups of students or the class as a whole and should be read with caution (especially with regard to the low response rate for Emily and Alice). While the primary focus of this study was teacher perceptions of experiences of empathy in the classroom, student data are nonetheless important, as a triangulation with the teacher data and, as Australia moves towards assessing teachers against national standards, student voice is an important aspect of feedback on teacher effectiveness. The student sample size (*N*= 65) for this element of the study is satisfactory for qualitative research (Ritchie, Lewis, & Elan, 2003).

3.6 Instruments

Qualitative and quantitative data were collected, using a range of instruments to explore the empathy phenomenon. A summary of measures is presented in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2

Summary of Measures and Target Respondents

Materials	Target Respondent				Information Source
	Teacher	Students	Observers	Principal	
Examples of demonstrated empathy – Filmed vignettes of interaction	√				Filmed empathy interaction moments nominated by teachers
Mentalization Diary	√				Diary developed for this study (Swan, 2014)
Semi-Structured interviews	√				Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004
Principal survey - QTI				√	Fisher, Henderson, & Fraser, 1995
Teacher survey -Relational goals	√				Butler, 2012
Teacher survey – TSS	√				Watt & Richardson, 2007
Student survey - Student Parallel-Reported TSS		√			Watt & Richardson, 2007
Lesson observations and vignette ratings (CLASS Emotional Support Domain)			√		Pianta, Hamre, & Mintz, 2012

Note: CLASS, Classroom Assessment Scoring System; QTI, Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction; and TSS, Teacher Style Scale.

Data were collected at two timepoints: Timepoint 1 (T_1: Term 3, 2014) between July and September 2014, and timepoint 2 (T_2: Term 4, 2014) between October and December 2014. Appendix L sets out the detailed timelines for data collection for each participant.

3.7 Qualitative Methods

Examples of demonstrated empathy – vignettes of interaction. Teacher reports are not always a reliable indicator of how teachers actually behave in their classroom (Deemer, 2004; Ryan, Gheen, & Midgley, 1998; Wubbels, Brekelmans, & Hooymayers, 1991). Teachers may encounter difficulties enacting their pedagogical beliefs in the daily routine of teaching. Further, self-serving

biases may cause teachers to endorse what they see as desirable practices to a greater extent than what occurs in their actual practice (Deemer, 2004; Ryan et al., 1998). Throughout the study, I was conscious of the social desirability element attached to the subject and discussion of empathy. Most, if not all, teachers would like to consider themselves highly empathic people. Social desirability therefore had the potential to inject bias towards participants responding in ways that would be viewed favorably by others. For this reason, I sought to corroborate a teacher's account through filmed interaction moments (vignettes) of classroom practice to ground our discussions at interview in reality.

Vignette studies are often used in appraisal studies to ensure actual rather than reported behaviour is examined (Levine, 1996). Vignettes collect situated data on teacher and student values, beliefs, and norms of behaviour (Jenkins, Bloor, Fischer, Berney, & Neale, 2010). Discussing elements of the vignettes at interview was a valuable way to explore sensitive topics in a non-threatening way. Video-recording can be seen to be more reliable than real-time observations, as it allows for repeated viewing and is not limited to selective recall (Bloor & Wood, 2006). Playing back the vignettes to the participant acted as a stimulus to focus discussion on the scenario presented.

All teachers were filmed at two timepoints for one-week, to generate vignettes of interaction for analysis. During filming weeks, teachers chose the position of the camera in the classroom. The cameras could be moved during the day if the teachers chose to do so. Teacher participants operated the camera via a remote control often worn around the neck or carried in their pocket, and activated it as often as they wished. Once pressed, the button would record up to 30 minutes of video footage. The teacher was able to select moments where they felt empathy episodes were occurring in the classroom, and also chose when to turn it off. The Zahavi and Overgaard (2012) definition of empathy (Chapter 2) was given to participants prior to filming to support common identification of empathy interaction moments and to help participants with diary responses. The teachers were

instructed to film, explore, and identify interaction moments that focused on the practice of empathic exchange. Participants could record as many segments as they liked before nominating up to three examples of empathy interaction in vignettes for analysis at each timepoint.

A criticism of the use of video technology is that some participants may not act naturally in the presence of filming, casting doubt on the authenticity of the data. I met with all participants prior to filming to discuss this issue. Participants discussed the purpose of filming with the class, explaining why they were being filmed, and invited students to ask questions and share concerns. Other strategies used to mitigate this concern included the use of a remote control to activate the camera to enable a covert approach to filming that could better capture normal interactions. Subsequent feedback from participants was that they enjoyed having the camera in the classroom and, once they and their students got used to the technology, they tended to forget it was there.

The study necessarily accounts for ethics issues relating to filming only students who had consented to participate in the study. Only interactions involving consenting students were considered. For one participant, this resulted in rearranging the classroom during filming weeks so that consenting students were in the part of the room where the camera was located. A number of participants captured quality footage only to have a non-consenting student walk through the filming, which required it to be amended or deleted. Other participants sought to capture one-on-one interactions with students in conferencing or in group work as a way to create usable footage. These were the teaching realities in which the participants filmed and selected vignettes. There were no reports by participants of significant disruptions to classroom routines or interactions.

At the end of a week of filming, participants identified up to three positive empathy interaction moments from the footage (vignettes) at each timepoint resulting in up to six vignettes for each participant. In filming weeks, they concurrently kept a mentalization diary to record thoughts, feelings, actions and perspectives on these interactions with students. The entries identified the relevant footage and were used to splice the nominated empathy interaction moment.

Interviews were scheduled as close as possible to filming to maximise participant recall of scenarios. Student names referred to in vignettes were given pseudonyms in reporting, and all vignettes were stored in a secure, password-protected cloud.

Mentalization diary. Lifeworld data were gathered through written mentalization diaries (Appendix M) to complement the filmed vignettes. Diary entries allowed access to a teacher's mental models in relation to scenarios contained in the footage. The diaries were created specifically for the study and used only in filming weeks. Teachers were asked to record their thoughts, feelings, and actions, as well as their perspectives on student thoughts, feelings and actions in relation to the empathy interaction moments. Most participants completed the diary electronically, while others completed it manually. The electronic diary prompted participants to record the time, date, duration, and relevant contextual information or background in which the empathy interaction occurred.

Diaries as a research method are frequently used alongside qualitative interviews with participants. The diary becomes an aide-mémoire for both the respondent and the researcher, with the interview amplifying and clarifying events recorded in the diary (Plummer, 1983). Elliot (1997) argued diaries encourage reflection and provide the respondent with an opportunity to prepare for an interview. The diary also aided recall and provided data on actions and experiences over extended periods of time. Participants often regard their written words to hold more significance than what is spoken (Johnson & Bytheway, 2001). Teacher perspectives and nuances were explored in the interview based on the footage and mentalization diary entries.

Diary use in phenomenological studies provide access to naturally occurring sequences of activity that might otherwise be unobservable (Wieder & Zimmerman, 1977). This is particularly so in regard to mentalization, which has been theorised as a somewhat unconscious process often attached to internal attachment relationships. Participants documented only conscious processes to explain thinking, actions, perspectives, and significance of behaviour.

Semi-structured interviews. Consistent with the interpretative phenomenological case study design, the primary data source for this study was the interview (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009; Scholz & Tietje, 2005). Semi-structured interviews were used to explore how participants made meaning of their empathy experiences in classrooms. To elicit experiential descriptions, I used a general interview guide (Appendix N) to ensure consistency of approach. This form of interviewing allowed me to engage in a dialogue whereby initial questions could be modified in light of responses and experience.

Two interviews were conducted with each teacher participant (n=6) between September 2014 and December 2014, as shown in Table 3.3. Interviews were held in classrooms before school (Sophia i_1 and i_2), at lunchtime (Christine i_1; Gretyl i_2; Alice i_1 and i_2), during a time-release hour (Emily i_2), or after school (Christine i_2; Emily i_1; Gretyl i_1; Alan i_1 and i_2). In this thesis, each empathy vignette is given a vignette number and referenced by interview, for example, Interview 1, Vignette 1 is abbreviated to i_1 v_1.

Table 3.3

Timeline of Teacher Interviews Conducted

Participant	i_1 Interview	i_2 Interview
Sophia	17 September, 2014	16 December, 2014
Christine	12 September, 2014	3 December, 2014
Emily	15 September, 2014	26 November, 2014
Gretyl	27 October, 2014	5 December, 2014
Alice	15 September, 2014	5 December, 2014
Alan	17 September, 2014	12 December, 2014

The participants were encouraged to respond in a conversational style. At T_1, they were asked broad questions (e.g. “What does empathy in the classroom mean to you?”, “How do you go about creating an empathetic environment in your classroom?”) to establish empathy motivation, teaching experience and teacher held beliefs. Participants were then asked about practices that enhance relationships with students, whether they considered themselves to be empathic and, if so, how empathy practice may have changed.

Questions were chosen for their relevance to a primary teaching context. For example, I used questions from the Empathy Quotient questionnaire (Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004) which contains items such as “I really enjoy caring for others”, “I find it easy to put myself in someone else’s shoes”, and “I find it easy to be in tune with what others are thinking or feeling”. Follow-up questions were asked to elicit more detailed explanations. To describe a lifeworld experience, respondents were asked about specific empathy events or experiences (Todres & Holloway, 2004) captured in filmed vignettes of classroom practice. The questions related to the nature of the experience, how it occurred, and what it was like (Appendix N).

3.8 Qualitative Analysis

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). All interview transcripts were analysed using IPA which seeks to express experience “in its own terms, rather than according to predefined category systems” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 32). I transcribed each interview to immerse myself in the data and to begin examining the perceptions of each participant. The text of each transcript was uploaded using the qualitative analysis software *NVivo 10* and each line was numbered. All transcripts were read and re-read several times.

Applying the Smith et al. (2009) method encompassed the following procedural steps. In keeping with IPA’s idiographic commitment, each interview was first analysed in-depth individually. I conducted an initial “free-coding” (Willig, 2001) to consolidate my preliminary ideas and reactions, writing everything that came to mind in the margins, capturing thoughts, reflections, tentative themes, and possible ideas to pursue in the second round of data analysis. In this phase, I also listened to the audio of all interviews, and made notes I thought may be significant to fully appreciate the participant’s experiences from a holistic perspective (Giorgi, 1997). I re-read my initial descriptive notes before moving to the transcripts. I made a first attempt to write a summary of the participant’s account to shape the gist of the content. I made annotations by hand of what

came to me in writing the summary (Smith et al., 2009). These annotations I transferred into electronic comments (date stamped) which I added to my initial notes.

Phenomenological reduction consisted of bracketing, horizontalization, invariant themes, and textural portrayal of each theme. During bracketing, the data concerning meanings of empathy were examined. According to Patton (2002) bracketing involves locating key phrases and statements that speak directly to the phenomenon in question; interpret the meanings of these phrases as an informed reader; obtaining the subject's interpretations of these phrases; inspecting these meanings for what they reveal about the essential features of the phenomenon being studied; and offering a tentative statement or definition of the phenomenon in terms of the essential recurring features.

In the next stage of analysis I identified and labelled conceptual themes aimed at capturing the essential qualities of what the data represented. I hand wrote exploratory comments to construct descriptive summaries – what issues were identified, what events relayed, what feelings expressed (Smith et al., 2009). I grouped initial thoughts with supporting quotes under subheadings. I listed all expressions relevant to the phenomenon, an activity known as data horizontalization. Patton (2002) describes horizontalization as a process whereby: "the data are spread out for examination, with all elements and perspectives having equal weight. The data are then organized into meaningful clusters" (p. 486). I identified possible themes relating to the meaning of empathy to the participant. Further reading of the transcripts led me to refine and cross-check initial themes. Up to this point, I was familiarising myself with the data, reading for gist, dividing the transcripts into chunks, re-reading the descriptive summaries, and clustering initial themes to record thoughts in the margins of the transcripts.

The third stage of IPA was to introduce structure to the analysis to "make sense of the data" (Merriam, 2009, p. 175). I listed the themes identified and began to cluster them for meanings that captured the essence. Smith et al. (2009) detail how themes can be identified through abstraction

(putting ‘like with like’ and developing a new name for the cluster); subsumption (where an emergent theme itself becomes a theme as it draws other related themes towards it); polarization (examining transcripts for oppositional relationships); contextualization (identifying the contextual or narrative elements within an analysis); numeration (the frequency with which a theme is supported) and function. From each transcript, significant phrases or sentences pertaining to the lived experience of empathy were identified. I continued this with each interview until it was apparent the sources were exhausted or saturated—there was an “emergence of regularities” (Merriam, 2009, p. 177) where any further analysis resulted in the layers of information being unearthed veering away from the identified clusters (Willig, 2001). The fourth and final stage of analysis was to summarise the structured themes and sub-themes to capture the essence of the quality of the participant’s empathy experience. In doing this, I shifted to a more deductive mode, comparing my findings to what was found in the literature (Merriam, 2009).

IPA moves progressively from narrow specific statements to broader themes based on descriptions of the essence of participant experience. The themes for each participant are reported in the results chapters (Chapters 4–9) as a structural synthesis containing the bones of the experience, and then discussing the meaning of that experience to the participant. While it is not possible to draw conclusions from the interviews and observations, I sought to understand the specific actions perceived by each participant as empathic displays. The synthesis for each case study is compared and condensed in the Findings chapter (Chapter 10) and in developing the Empathy Assessment Instrument (Chapter 11).

3.9 Provisions for Trustworthiness

Guba (1981) identified four aspects of trustworthiness relevant to qualitative studies—truth value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality. Truth value asks whether the researcher has established confidence in the truth of the findings and the context in which the study was undertaken (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It is obtained from the discovery of human experience as lived and perceived by a

participant. In relation to applicability, Guba (1981) refers to transferability, where findings remain applicable in contexts beyond the study. Consistency relates to whether findings can be replicated with the same subjects or in a similar context. It is defined in terms of dependability where variability can be ascribed to sources. Neutrality relates to freedom from bias in procedures and results (Sandelowski, 1986). It is the degree to which findings are a function of the informants and conditions of research rather than other biases, motivations, and perspectives. Establishing validity and reliability in qualitative research requires an assessment of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009), and all four areas were addressed in this study.

Credibility. Internal validity or credibility deals with the question of "how research findings match reality" (Merriam, 2009, p. 213). In addressing credibility, researchers attempt to demonstrate that a true picture of the phenomenon under scrutiny is presented (Shenton, 2004). Yardley (2000, 2008) and Elliott, Fischer, & Rennie (1999) developed frameworks to evaluate and demonstrate the validity of IPA findings. Specifically, Yardley (2008) draws attention to sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence, and impact and importance.

I sought to adopt appropriate research methods that were well established and applied in previous research. I engaged in the field to establish a relationship of trust with each participant, and to become familiar with the culture of each school and classroom. I collected data over time at two timepoints. Interviews were conducted to determine teacher perceptions of how they enact empathy and what empathic actions they demonstrate in their classroom, and a collective case study approach (Stake, 1994) enabled multiple voices to be heard to gain knowledge of context.

Credibility can be demonstrated through triangulation, which includes the use of different methods, types of informants, and sites (Shenton, 2004). The rationale for including multiple grade levels and locations was to view the same phenomenon from different angles, a process that constitutes one form of triangulation (Willig, 2001). I sought to establish rapport in interviews and

credibility as a researcher. I indicated there were no right or wrong answers to questions asked. Areas of practice identified by a participant were checked against what was observed by raters in lessons and vignettes, and student perceptions were sought to present a rich canvas of attitudes and behaviours. Including two school sites was a way to mitigate the effect of local factors unique to one organisation, and thick descriptions (Shenton, 2004) helped convey the actual situations investigated and the contexts surrounding them.

Member checks were the single most important provision used to bolster the study's credibility (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Spot checks were used to verify the accuracy of the data. For example, I wrote a synopsis of each vignette and provided these to the participant at interview for member checking. After interviews were transcribed, I emailed a copy of the transcript to the participant for reading and invited suggestions and clarifications to ensure honest and accurate reporting (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998). I sought to verify the emerging themes and inferences from IPA analysis through the use of an independent researcher and colleague. Case study results set out in Chapters 4–9 were emailed to relevant participants for verification in a two-week member check. Were the themes identified consistent with experience? Were any themes missing? Is there anything else you would like to include? All participants approved their results chapter and no additional material was added or removed from case study chapters.

Transferability. Transferability is the extent to which the findings of a study can be applied to other contexts (Merriam, 2009). Researchers should provide sufficient detail of the context of field work for a reader to be able to determine whether the findings can be justifiably applied to other settings, and to enable a future researcher to repeat the study (Shenton, 2004). With this in mind, the study had clearly identified boundaries. It specifies the school sites, the criteria for selecting participants, numbers of participants, data collection methods, the number and length of data collection sessions, and the time period over which data were collected. It sets out background data on context, and describes the empathy phenomenon in detail so that comparisons can be made.

As discussed in Chapter 11, empathy takes place in multiple environments and realities in schools. This study aims to provide some baseline understandings for which future work can be compared. The study was designed so that its findings are transferable to other educational settings as change and reform are implemented.

Dependability. Dependability refers to whether a study would yield equivalent results if replicated (Merriam, 2009). Because a qualitative study deals with human behaviour, replicability is more challenging than in a quantitative study because no two human experiences are identical. This study uses overlapping methods such as interviews, observations and surveys, and the research design describes what was planned and executed (Shenton, 2004). In this chapter, I have described in detail the procedures used and how data were collected, how categories were derived, and decisions made throughout the work.

Confirmability. Confirmability is the degree to which research findings are derived from data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Researchers must take steps to demonstrate their findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of informants, rather than characteristics and preferences of the researcher (Shenton, 2004). This study used triangulation to gather multiple perspectives and reduce the risk of investigator bias. I bracketed my beliefs and assumptions, and applied a data oriented approach. The study's findings were evaluated by my supervisors, and the themes derived from IPA were verified by an independent reviewer at Monash University to ensure confirmability.

3.10 Quantitative Methods

Principal Questionnaire. Principals rated personal perceptions of the teacher's interactions with students at a class level using the QTI (Wubbels, Creton & Hooymayers, 1985). The QTI is based on a model for interpersonal teacher behaviour (MITB) as shown in *Figure 3.1*.

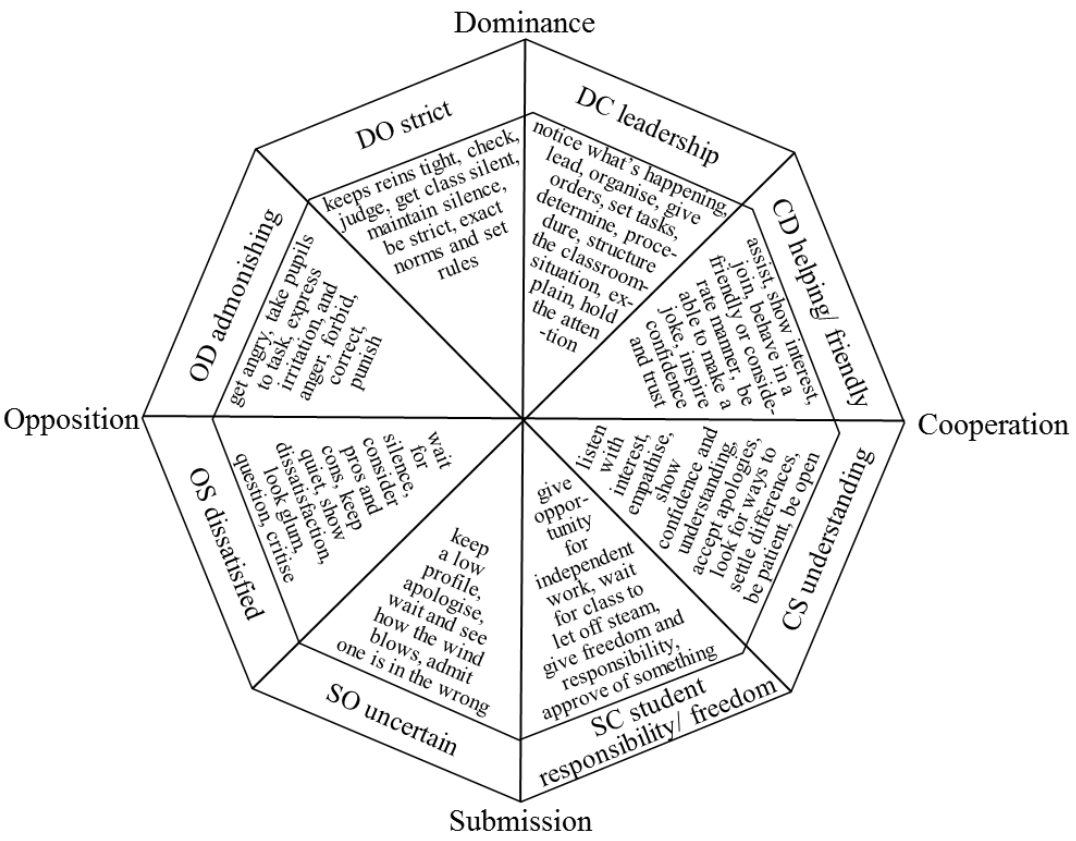


Figure 3.1 The Model of Interpersonal Teacher Behaviour. Adapted from "Two Decades of Research on Teacher–Student Relationships in Class," by T. Wubbels and M. Brekelmans, 2005, *International Journal of Educational Research, 43*, p. 9.

The MITB maps teacher behaviour on a Proximity dimension (Cooperation - Opposition) and an influence dimension (Dominance - Submission). Influence describes the extent to which a teacher controls student relationships and the degree of cooperation between a teacher and students. Interpersonal teacher behaviour is described as combinations of interpersonal valence on these two dimensions.

These dimensions can be further subdivided into eight sectors to describe teacher behavioural aspects: Leadership (DC), Helpful/Friendly (CD), Understanding (CS), Student Responsibility and Freedom (SC), Uncertain (SO), Dissatisfied (OS), Admonishing (OD), and Strict (DO). *Figure 3.1* shows typical behaviours associated with each sector. Helpful/friendly behaviour, for example, contains a degree of dominance and a high degree of cooperation, while understanding

behaviour contains a degree of student responsibility and freedom, and a high degree of cooperation. The model describes empathising as a typical behaviour for the understanding sector.

Based on the MITB, Wubbels et al. (1985) constructed the QTI. The QTI assesses the eight sectors to provide a description of teacher interactions with students. It originally consisted of 77 items answered on a Likert-type 5-point scale (0=Never; 4=Always). A shorter 48-item version has been widely used including in Australia (Fisher, Fraser, Wubbels, & Brekelmans, 1993; Fisher, Fraser, & Creswell, 1995). The short QTI version was sent to primary principals as the basis to identify teachers with high levels of interpersonal behaviour (Appendix D). Principals rated their perceptions of the behaviour of teachers in interactions with students at the class level.

Table 3.4 lists typical QTI items and internal consistencies as measured in the 1995 Australian study (Fisher et al., 1995). Perception scores for the QTI understanding and helping/friendly sectors were used as proxies for empathy interaction in the classroom. In the 1995 Australian study (Fisher et al., 1995), the Cronbach's alpha for helping/friendly was .94, and for understanding was .95 (den Brok et al., 2003), which are very high.

Table 3.4

Typical Items for the Scales of the Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction at the Teacher/Class Level

QTI Scale	Typical Item	α
DC - Leadership	"S/He is a good leader"	.96
CD - Helping/Friendly	"S/He is someone students can depend on"	.94
CS - Understanding	"If students have something to say, S/He will listen"	.95
SC - Student Responsibility/Freedom	"S/He gives students a lot of free time in class"	.84
SO - Uncertain	"S/He seems uncertain"	.93
OS - Dissatisfied	"S/He is suspicious"	.94
OD - Admonishing	"S/He gets angry"	.86
DO - Strict	"S/He is strict"	.76

Note. α= Cronbach's alpha. Sourced from "Students' Perceptions of Secondary Science Teachers' Interpersonal Style in Six Countries: A Study on the Cross National Validity of the Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction," by P. den Brok, D. Fisher, M. Brekelmans, M. Richards, T. Wubbels, J. Levy, and B. Waldrip, 2003, *Annual Meeting of the National Association for Research in Science Teaching*, p. 15.

In recent work, the MITB has been re-cast with the two dimensions now represented as agency and communion, and the eight sectors labelled as directing, supporting, understanding, acquiescing, hesitating, objecting, confronting, and imposing (Wubbels et al., 2012). The communion dimension describes the level of affiliation or friendliness shown towards another (Gurtman, 2009) and may entail immediacy (Anderson, 1998), teacher empathy (Cornelius-White, 2007), and teacher care (Wentzel, 1997). A teacher showing high levels of communion behaviour such as understanding (asking students and showing respect), and providing support (helping, complimenting, being open, welcoming, and conversing) is likely to show high levels of interest and empathy (Claessens et al., 2016).

Teacher questionnaire. Teachers completed a teacher questionnaire (Appendix J) for empathy motivation and to access perceptions of teaching style dimensions. Teacher participants scored their interpersonal relational goals with students to predict levels of social support.

Butler (2012) assessed the importance teachers place on striving to achieve and maintain close and caring relationships with students, and found relational goals to be the strongest predictor of both teacher and student reports of teacher social support.[2] These relational goals focus on teacher socio-emotional support (social support) in setting the classroom climate (Ryan & Patrick, 2001; Skinner & Belmont, 1993; Trickett & Moos, 1973). Students' perceive social support as their teacher cares about them and can be trusted to help (Kunter et al., 2008; Patrick, Ryan, & Kaplan, 2007; Trickett & Moos, 1973). Teachers motivated to strive for relationships of trust and care with students, were more likely to report they provided social support. Butler's (2012) relational goals

[2] In Butler's study 1, results from 530 elementary and secondary teachers in Israel confirmed a 5-factor model for relational goals where teachers aspire to create close and caring relationships with students. In study 2, results from a sub-sample of 272 teachers confirmed the teachers' relational goals were coherently and differentially related to their teaching practices assessed several months later. Only relational goals predicted levels of teacher social support. Multilevel analyses showed teacher relational goals predicted student reports of teacher social support.

formed a reliable scale with a Cronbach's alpha for teacher reports of relational goal orientation at .86, and social support at .78.

In this study, participant relational goals (Butler, 2012) were collected at T_1 and T_2 to consider the levels of motivation to connect. Participant's reported their relational goals on a 5-point scale (1=totally disagree; 5=totally agree). Items included "I would feel most successful as a teacher if I saw that I was developing closer and better relationships with students in my class", "My main goal as a teacher is to show my students that I care about them", "More than anything, I aspire to create deep personal relationships with each and every student", and "As a teacher, building relationships with students is most important for me" (Appendix J). Social support for student items (Kunter et al., 2008; Wellborn, Connell, Skinner, & Pierson, 1992) included "I take care of my students if they have problems" and "I take time to get to know my students and to know what is happening with them in school and at home".

Research comparing teacher and student perceptions of the same classroom has found teacher perceptions tend to be more positive than those of their students (Dorman, 2008; Fraser, 1982; Sinclair & Fraser, 2002). For classroom environment, participants rated their teaching style dimensions (Watt & Richardson, 2007) in the teacher survey tapping Relatedness, Positive expectations, Structure, and Negativity. The Teaching Style Scale (TSS) combines Baumrind's (1971) parenting styles and Wentzel's (2002) teaching styles to assess teacher perceptions of their classroom environment. Sample items are shown in Table 3.5. All TSS subscales demonstrated acceptable reliability with Cronbach's alphas from .72–.85 (Spearman & Watt, 2013).

Table 3.5

Typical Items for Classroom Perception Factors in the Teaching Style Scale

Factor	*N* items	Example Item
Relatedness	7	"To what extent do students in your class feel they enjoy interacting with you?"
Structure	3	"To what extent do students in your class feel there are clear expectations about student behaviour?"
Negativity	7	"To what extent do students in your classes feel you might react negatively towards their mistakes?"
Positive Expectations	6	"To what extent do students in your class feel that you expect them to work hard to achieve their full potential?"

Note. Sourced from "Perception Shapes Experience: The Influence of Actual and Perceived Classroom Environment Dimensions on Girls' Motivations for Science," by J. Spearman and H.M.G. Watt, 2013, *Learning Environments Research, 16,* p. 224.

Student Questionnaire. The TSS was adapted by the developers for student respondents to provide parallel perceptions of teaching style dimensions. In this study, student participants completed the parallel survey (Watt & Richardson, 2007) to rate their teacher's style dimensions and provide their perceptions of classroom climate (Appendix K).

Goodnow (1988) and Wentzel (2002) stressed the importance of considering student perceptions of the teacher and classroom environment. Students may differ in their perceptions of the same classroom setting, which can result in an array of experiences within a classroom (Wolters, 2004). Focussing on the students' perceptions of what occurs in the classroom, what they think about their teacher, and what they learn and do, are variables that can influence the teacher's behaviour and help explain differences in the relationships teachers have within classes and between students (Wubbels, Brekelmans, den Brok, & van Tartwijk, 2006).

The student version of the TSS consists of 29 directly parallel items of the same classroom dimensions, rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale. The items of the student version similarly load onto the constructs of Relatedness, Expectations, Negativity (feedback), and Structure. All student

version subscales demonstrate acceptable reliability with Cronbach's alphas from .71–.87 (Spearman & Watt, 2013).

Independent Lesson Observations and Vignette Ratings. Classroom observations and teacher empathy vignettes in the study were rated using the CLASS – Upper Elementary instrument (Pianta et al., 2012). The CLASS is a multifaceted observational instrument developed to assess classroom quality based on observed interactions between teachers and students (Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008). Observations are grouped into four domains: emotional support, classroom organization, instructional support, and student engagement. The domains are based on research demonstrating that relational supports, connections, autonomy, competence, and relevance are critical to school success (Allen, Hauser, Bell, & O'Connor, 1994; Allen, Kuperminc, Philliber, & Herre, 1994; Allen et al., 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Each domain is analytically distinct, and can be rated independent of the others (Pianta et al., 2012). The CLASS instrument has been validated in over 3,000 classrooms in the United States from preschool to Grade 12 (Hamre, Mashburn, Pianta, & Downer, 2006).

To explore empathy phenomena in this study, the CLASS emotional support domain was selected as a key signifier of classroom climate where displays of empathy and genuine concern for students are the basis of providing emotional support. Emotional support encompasses a teacher's ability to foster students' social and emotional functioning in the classroom (Greenberg et al., 2003; Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg, & Walberg, 2004). In healthy teacher-student relationships, it is a two-way street; both teacher and students' in the relationship give and receive emotional support freely. Student perceptions of positive emotional support from teachers has been shown to relate to high academic performance, positive social functioning, and emotional wellbeing (Chang, 2003; Hughes, Cavell, & Jackson, 1999; Wentzel, 1994, 1997, 2009).

Within each CLASS domain are dimensions and sub-factors. Classifying observations of classroom environment into dimensions allows researchers to identify behavioural characteristics

that can help teachers tailor their teaching style to enhance student motivation and engagement. Pianta (personal communication, July 24, 2013) identified Positive Climate, Teacher Sensitivity, and Regard for Student Perspectives within the emotional support domain as relevant proxies for teacher empathy. These three dimensions are defined in the CLASS Emotional Support domain as:

> *Positive Climate* reflects the emotional connection and relationships among teachers and students, and the warmth, respect, and enjoyment communicated by verbal and non-verbal interactions demonstrated between teachers and students, and among students.
>
> *Teacher Sensitivity* reflects the teacher's awareness and timely responsiveness to academic and social/emotional concerns, behavioural, and developmental needs of students and the entire class.
>
> *Regard for Student Perspectives* captures the degree to which teachers' interactions with students and classroom activities place an emphasis on students' interests, motivations, and points of view. (Pianta et al., 2012, p. 17)

Students achieve best in classroom climates where they feel a positive connection (Cothran, Kulinna, & Garrahy, 2003; Genty, Gable, & Rizza, 2002). Teacher sensitivity to student concerns, interests, and culture, as well as recognition of student needs for autonomy and decision making, are important. Finally, regard for student perspectives based on peer relationships and cooperation in classroom interactions should be meaningful and productive (Crosnoe, Cavanaugh, & Elder, 2003; Slavin et al., 1996).

The sub-factor markers underpinning the dimensions of Positive Climate, Teacher Sensitivity, and Regard for Student Perspectives in the CLASS Observation Protocol (Appendix O) are set out in Table 3.6. In the CLASS instrument, each dimension and sub-factor is rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1=minimally characteristic; 7=highly characteristic). Scores of 1 or 2 indicate "low quality"; 3-5 indicate "mid-range quality"; and a rating of 6 or 7 is "high quality". In

the Measure of Effective Teaching study (2012), Pianta reported all emotional support dimensions demonstrate acceptable reliability with Cronbach's alphas of .85 for Positive Climate, .86 for Teacher Sensitivity, and .77 for Regard for Student Perspectives (Pianta et al., 2012).

Table 3.6

Classroom Assessment Scoring System Emotional Support Dimensions and Sub-Factors

Positive Climate	Teacher Sensitivity	Regard for Student Perspectives
Relationships	Awareness	Flexibility and student focus
Positive affect	Responsive to academic and social/ emotional needs	Connections to current life
Positive communications	Effectiveness in addressing problems	Support for autonomy and leadership
Respect	Student comfort	Meaningful peer interactions

Note. Sourced from "Classroom Assessment Scoring System: Upper Elementary Manual" by R. Pianta, B. Hamre, and S. Mintz, 2012, p. 21.

Inter-rater reliability. I underwent training to use the CLASS instrument by a certified trainer in 2011, which involved observing, coding, and analysing video segments of classroom teaching. A trainee's observations are deemed reliable when 80% of their codes are within one scale point of the trainer's master CLASS codes (Pianta et al., 2008). My codes met this criterion for 93% of observations, making me a reliable observer. I have since conducted over 700 observations using CLASS across Melbourne primary schools to evaluate pre-service teachers on placement.

I engaged a second observer for the study, and instructed that person in the CLASS protocol as it relates to the emotional support domain. The observer was chosen for her diverse experience in working in primary and early childhood settings. Specifically, she has worked for seven years in a Melbourne inner city primary school (not used in this study) as an aide to children with special needs across many classrooms. Prior to this, she worked for 20 years in early childhood settings. The breadth of her experience made her a suitable observer to gauge the emotional support climate in participant classrooms.

Calibration through periodic check-ins with master-coded segments maintained observer reliability over time, and allowed observers to refine their observation techniques and counter coding biases or coder drift (Orwin, 1994). We each undertook a reliability test prior to data collection where we observed and coded three unseen video teaching segments against the CLASS domains to compare our codes against master codes to meet the 80% reliability criteria through Teachstone Training (http://teachstone.com). Two video segments were evaluated prior to data collection, and one at the midway point to maintain reliability. Two videos related to Upper Elementary (grades 4-6), and one for Lower Elementary (K-grade 3). All emotional support sub-factors were coded and averaged to derive scores for Positive Climate, Teacher Sensitivity and Regard for Student Perspectives.

For the three video segments, my codes met the reliability criterion for 100% of observations. Similarly, the second rater met the criterion for 89% of her observations. Between the raters, this criterion was also met for 89% of observations. In this research, the inter-rater reliability for the two coders with regard to codes being within one scale point of one another was 98.3% for lesson observations, and 98.6% for vignettes.

3.11 Quantitative Analysis

Coding of mentalization characteristics. The study coded teacher mentalization practice elements using Luyten, Fonagy, Lowyck, and Vermotes' (2012) study classifications as shown in Table 3.7. While acknowledging mentalization is a largely unconscious process, scoring the data sources against these indicators provides a general measure of participant mentalizing abilities captured in data.

Table 3.7

Teacher Characteristics of Mentalization

Item Description
Security of mental exploration and openness to discovery
Acknowledgement of opaqueness and tentativeness of mental states
Genuine interest in the mental states of self and others and their relation
Adaptive flexibility in switching from automatic to controlled mentalization
Acknowledgement of changeability of mental states, including awareness of developmental perspective (attachment history influences relating to self & others)
Integrate cognitive and affective features of self and others (“embodied mentalization”)
Sense of realistic predictability and controllability of mental states
Ability to regulate distress in relation to others
Capacity to be relaxed and flexible, not “stuck” in one point of view
Capacity to be playful, with humour engaging rather than hurtful or distancing
Ability to solve problems by give-and-take between own and other’s perspectives
Ability to describe one’s own experience rather than defining other people’s experience or intentions
Willingness to convey “ownership” of behaviour rather than it “happens to” me
Curiosity about other people’s perspectives and expectations that one’s own views will be extended by others
Relational strengths • Curiosity • Safe uncertainty • Contemplation and reflection • Perspective-taking • Forgiveness • Impact awareness • Non-paranoid attitude
Perception of one’s own mental functioning • Developmental perspective • Realistic scepticism • Internal conflict awareness • Self-inquisitive stance • Awareness of the effect of affect • Acknowledgement of unconscious or preconscious functioning • Belief in changeability
Self-representation • Rich internal life • Autobiographical continuity • Advanced explanatory and listening skills
General values and attitudes • Tentativeness • Humility (moderation) • Playfulness and humour • Flexibility • Give-and-take • Responsibility and accountability

Note. Sourced from “Assessment of Mentalization,” by P. Luyten, P. Fonagy, B. Lowyck, and R. Vermote, 2012, *Handbook of Mentalizing in Mental Health Practice*, p. 58.

Characteristics were coded from open comments and their frequency (a measure of relevance and importance of themes) entered in NVivo. After initial coding against these items, data were then regrouped. Data are reported in the case study chapters under the subheadings of student thoughts and feelings, perceptions of mental functioning, self-representation characteristics, and general values and attitudes providing a checklist to use in assessments of mentalization. The reader is advised to consider the numbers reported for each participant in each case study in the context of the empathy moments as indicators of taking a mentalizing stance. The frequency of coding shows the importance of each theme to each participant. The numbers are reported to provide guidance as to what elements were directly observable for inclusion in the Empathy Assessment Instrument (Chapter 11).

IPA coding. The analysis of participants' experiences is typically reductive in nature as I classified participant experiences into categories. Creswell (2007) described a systematic process for coding data in a phenomenological inquiry, in which specific statements are analysed and categorized into clusters of meaning in representing the phenomenon of interest.

The study used open coding to develop categories from the first round of data reduction. Transcripts were coded by identifying passages, or units of meaning, that exemplified the participant's essential experiences of empathy. Significant meaning units were extracted and connected to named nodes indicating an idea or concept shared. Further reducing and recording allowed possible core categories to emerge (Charmaz, 2001; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987). The nodes were grouped and the case written using direct quotations to illustrate the discussion. I reduced the data in NVivo through constant comparative analysis, which involved recoding (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) after initial open coding to develop clusters or meaning categories from participant accounts (Creswell, 2007). Constant comparison provides assurance that all data are systematically compared to all other data to explore each and every case before

producing generalized statements (O'Connor, Netting, & Thomas, 2008). The study used four levels of codes to classify the themes across participants.

Peer examination involves the researcher discussing the research process and findings with impartial colleagues who have experience in qualitative methods. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest this keeps the researcher honest by contributing to reflexive analysis. Colleagues increase credibility by checking categories developed out of data and by looking for disconfirming or negative cases. In relation to the IPA coding in this study, I provided the interview transcripts to an independent reviewer, a Professor at Monash University with significant qualitative research experience, to separately code and analyse participant transcripts for emergent IPA themes. We then met and reviewed each other's findings to reach consensus on the final themes and sub-themes.

Teacher expressions of cognitive and affective empathy. Teacher accounts of demonstrated empathy interactions from the vignettes and discussed in-depth at interview were coded in NVivo using the Baron-Cohen and Wheelwright (2004) empathy definitions (Chapter 2). Teacher expressions and actions were coded for cognitive and affective empathy elements. In particular, instances from the vignette accounts were coded where the teacher participant recognised student mental states (cognitive empathy) and where they responded with an appropriate emotion based on care (affective empathy).

CLASS descriptive statistics and correlations of lessons and vignettes. This study used double coding, with two raters observing and coding the same lesson or vignette. The two coders evaluated all vignettes (four to six per participant) and lesson observations (four for each participant) using CLASS which has been validated for use in observations and coding videotapes (Mashburn, Hamre, Downer, & Pianta, 2007). Each case study chapter reports average CLASS scores (Pianta et al., 2012) at each timepoint for levels of emotional support. Descriptive statistics for CLASS observations and vignettes including tests of normality and correlations for the entire sample are reported in Chapter 10.

One-sample *t*-tests of teacher and student perceptions of teaching style dimensions. All teacher and student survey data (relational goals, teaching style dimensions) were entered into SPSS version 22.0. There was only a small percentage of missing responses on individual surveys (approximately 1%), so a replacement with means procedure in SPSS was used to replace missing values of any items omitted in student surveys. The procedure computes the mean responses for each survey and assigns the mean score to the missing item. This procedure is a conservative means to deal with the problem of missing data while preserving the size of the enumeration (Field, 2000).

One-sample *t*-tests were applied to compare distributions of students' ratings against their matched teacher's rating per factor of the TSS. Each teacher's factor mean constitutes the critical value against which the student average matched ratings are compared. Alpha adjustments are not required as each teacher was involved in a different (per class) test and there is no power problem for the applied tests. Composite factor scores were created from the student data by averaging component items for each and plotting factor means. In Findings (Chapter 10), student-average scores for Relatedness, Positive expectations, Structure, and Negativity are compared with their teacher's self-ratings by absolute means, and then by *t*-tests to determine if differences in perceptions were significant. The first of the case study results for Sophia will be examined next in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4 Case 1 – Sophia

The first case study relates to Sophia's experience of teacher empathy in her classroom. Sophia has been teaching for two years at School A and is classed as a "graduate" teacher (<6 years' experience: AITSL, 2011a). In 2014, she taught Grade 2 (7-8 year olds), and this was her second year teaching this level. She taught in a large, open learning space of four classrooms. Sophia and her 25 students regularly move around the various classrooms and therefore had no fixed address.

This chapter opens with Sophia's relational goals (Butler, 2012) and self-ratings of her (and her students') perceptions of teaching style dimensions (Watt & Richardson, 2007). Sophia nominated five positive *empathy moment* vignettes from the footage as demonstrations of her teacher empathy in her interactions with students. The results of data coding for her mentalizing characteristics (Luyten et al., 2012) are presented as the building blocks to consider the empathy data. A written synopsis of each vignette was read to Sophia at interview for a trustworthiness check (Guba, 1981; Shenton, 2004). Her diary entry was read aloud to remind her of her justification for the chosen moments, actions, thoughts, and beliefs and her views on student perspectives.

Sophia's personal understanding of empathy is explored, followed by her three higher order themes derived from the Smith et al. (2009) analysis—(1) *Knowing students as individuals*, (2) *The role of awareness*, and (3) *Collaborating and positioning in the learning community*. Sophia's actions were coded for cognitive empathy (where she recognised a student's mental state) and affective empathy (where she recognised a student's mental state and responded with an appropriate emotion based on care) using Baron-Cohen and Wheelwright's (2004) definitions. The final sections provide examples of Sophia's self-nominated demonstrations of empathy in the classroom, both from the vignettes and the interviews. The results of data coding for a range of empathy aspects are then presented including independent evaluations of Sophia's lessons and vignettes for

levels of emotional support using CLASS (Pianta et al., 2012). The chapter concludes with a discussion of themes as a narrative account of the essence of Sophia's empathy experience.

4.1 Relational Goals

Sophia described her class as "calm and sensitive" who "really care about each other and value what each other has to say". The class had a few students with behavioural needs "where being in such a calm class helped them to make good decisions" and some above level students "who were supported and extended". She has enjoyed teaching this class as "I have seen them grow and seen so much improvement". She has worked to "really engage as I have a few sensitive souls who it has taken a long time to connect with. I am finally seeing them put their hand up and I have felt really positive about it" (i_1).

Sophia provided ratings of her relational goals for interacting with her students using Butler's (2012) criteria at Timepoint 1 (T_1: Term 3, Week 5) and 15 weeks later at Timepoint 2 (T_2: Term 4, Week 8). Sophia rated her goals on a 5-point scale (1=totally disagree; 5=totally agree), and all scores were very high (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1

Sophia's Self-ratings of Relational Goals: Scale 1 (totally disagree) – 5 (totally agree)

Item Description	*T_1 Score*	*T_2 Score*
"I would feel most successful as a teacher if I saw that I was developing closer and better relationships with students in my class"	5	5
"My main goal as a teacher is to show my students that I care about them"	4	4
"More than anything, I aspire to create deep personal relationships with each and every student"	5	4
"Building relationships with students is most important for me"	5	5
"I take care of my students if they have problems"	5	4
"I take time to get to know my students and to know what is happening with them in school and at home"	5	4

Note. Sourced from "Striving to Connect: Extending an Achievement Goal Approach to Teacher Motivation to Include Relational Goals for Teachers," by R. Butler, 2012, *Journal of Educational Psychology, 104*, p. 729.

4.2 Perceptions of Teaching Style Dimensions

Sophia was asked to rate her teaching style dimensions (TSS) at each timepoint using Watt and Richardson's (2007) instrument to assess perceptions of the classroom environment on a 7-point Likert-type scale (*Figure 4.1*).

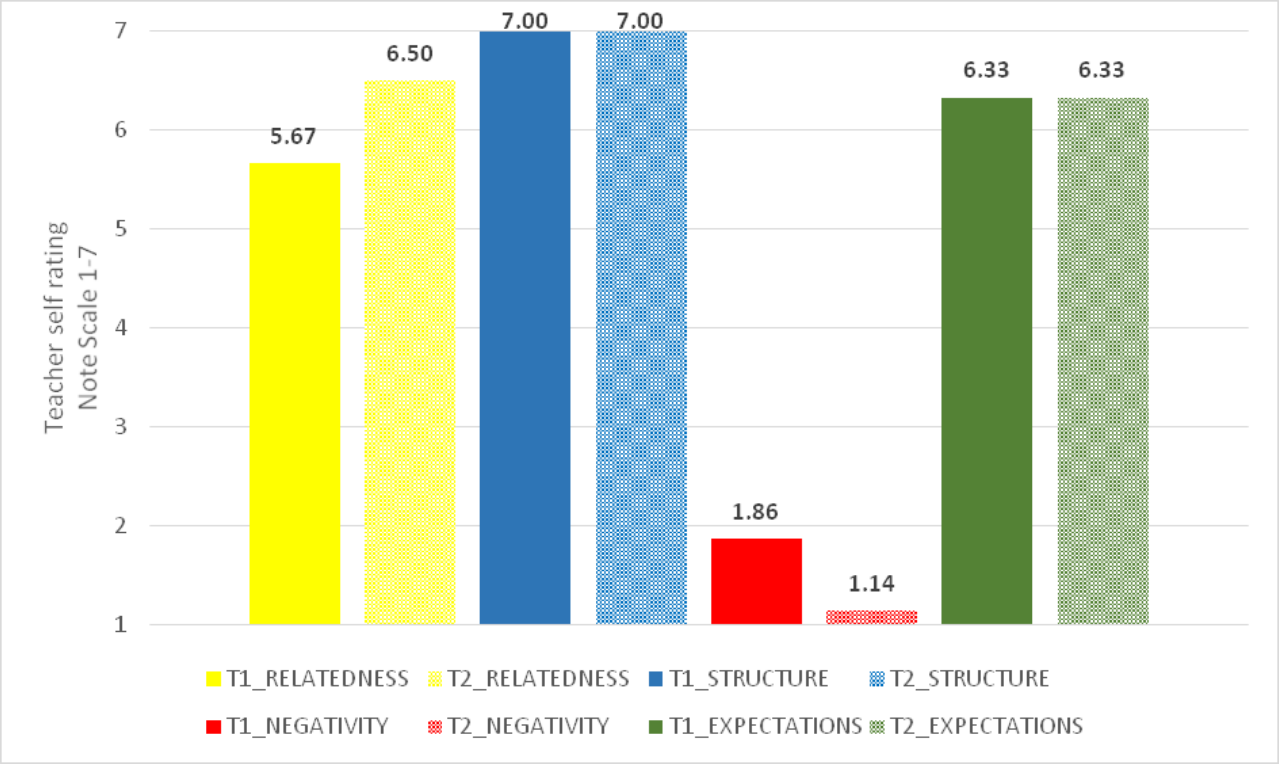


Figure 4.1 Self-Rated Teaching Style Scale factor means for Sophia. *Note:* 1= Not at all; 7= A lot.

Sophia's perceptions of her *relatedness* were high, and slightly higher at T_2 (5.67_{t1} – 6.50_{t2}). Her scores for *expectations* ($6.33_{t1, t2}$) and *structure* ($7.00_{t1, t2}$) were constant at a very high level, while her perceptions of *negativity* were low, and still lower at T_2 (1.86_{t1} – 1.14_{t2}).

Sophia's 13 students also rated their perceptions of her teaching style using the Watt and Richardson student instrument (Appendix K). Composite factor scores were created by averaging component items for each and factor means were plotted (*Figure 4.2*).

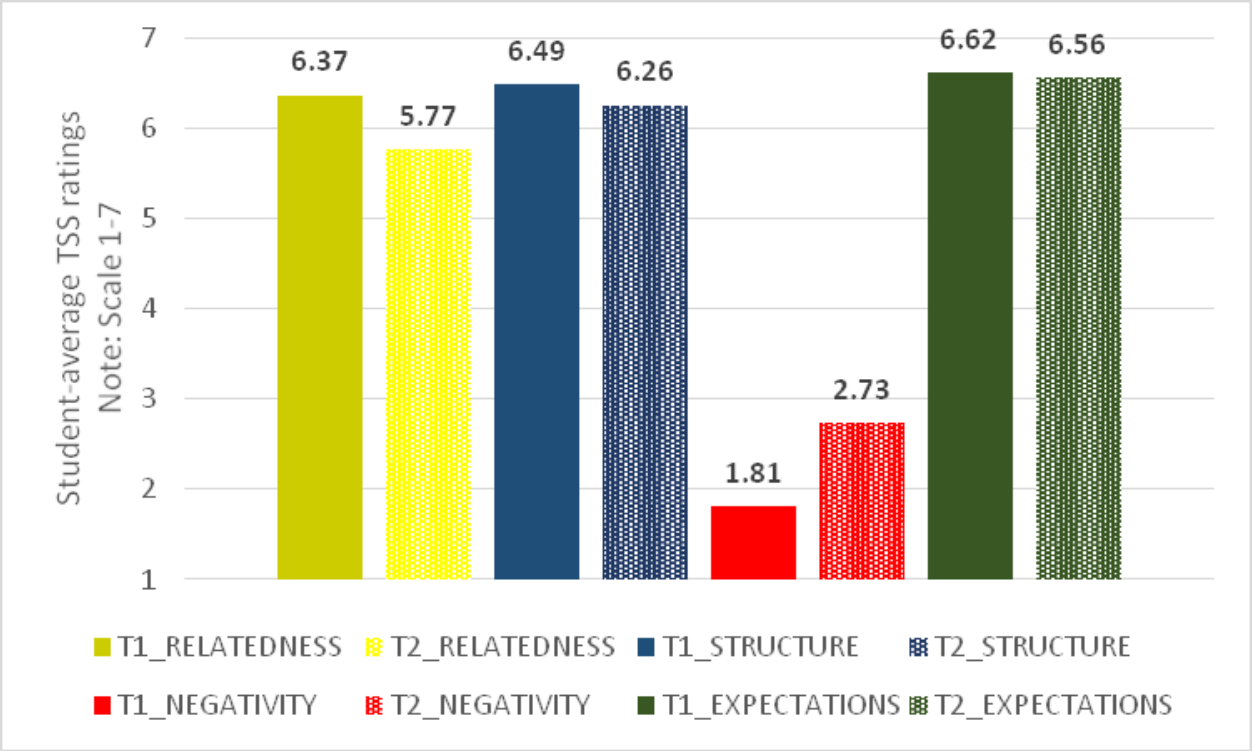


Figure 4.2 Student-Rated Teaching Style Scale factor means for Sophia. *Note:* 1= Not at all; 7= A lot.

Sophia's students perceived her relatedness to be high with a slight fall at T_2 (6.37_{t1} – 5.77_{t2}). Their perceptions of her positive expectations (6.49_{t1} – 6.26_{t2}) and structure (6.62_{t1} – 6.56_{t2}) were also very high, whereas their perceptions of her negativity were low but higher at T_2 (1.81_{t1} – 2.73_{t2}).

4.3 Sophia's Mentalization Characteristics

As discussed in Chapter 2, mentalization is a system for interpersonal understanding that is particularly relevant within an attachment context (Fonagy, Bateman, & Luyten, 2012). The mentalization aspects evident in Sophia's responses from all data sources are reported here. Table 4.2 lists themes covered by the coded open comments using Luyten et al. (2012). The frequencies indicate the prominence of each mentalization characteristic to Sophia.

Table 4.2

Frequency of Sophia's Mentalization Characteristics from Diary Entries and Interviews

Item Description	Frequency
Security of mental exploration and openness to discovery	56
Acknowledgement of opaqueness and tentativeness of mental states	46
Genuine interest in the mental states of self and others and their relation	55
Adaptive flexibility in switching from automatic to controlled mentalization	34
Acknowledgement of changeability of mental states, including awareness of developmental perspective (attachment history influences relating to self & others)	45
Integrate cognitive and affective features of self and others ("embodied mentalization")	23
Sense of realistic predictability and controllability of mental states	31
Ability to regulate distress in relation to others	5
Capacity to be relaxed and flexible, not "stuck" in one point of view	40
Capacity to be playful, with humour engaging rather than hurtful or distancing	8
Ability to solve problems by give-and-take between own and other's perspectives	48
Ability to describe one's own experience rather than defining other people's experience or intentions	27
Willingness to convey "ownership" of behaviour rather than it "happens to" me	61
Curiosity about other people's perspectives and expectations that one's own views will be extended by others	35
Relational strengths	
• Curiosity	15
• Safe uncertainty	23
• Contemplation and reflection	53
• Perspective-taking	50
• Forgiveness	12
• Impact awareness	54
• Non-paranoid attitude	12
• Perception of one's own mental functioning	
Developmental perspective	30
• Realistic scepticism	8
• Internal conflict awareness	18
• Self-inquisitive stance	20
• Awareness of the effect of affect	19
• Acknowledgement of unconscious or preconscious functioning	50
• Belief in changeability	23
Self-representation	
• Rich internal life	10
• Autobiographical continuity	5
• Advanced explanatory and listening skills	63
General values and attitudes	
• Tentativeness	15
• Humility (moderation)	30
• Playfulness and humour	7
• Flexibility	21
• Give-and-take	32
• Responsibility and accountability	33

Note. Sourced from "Assessment of Mentalization," by P. Luyten, P. Fonagy, B. Lowyck, and R. Vermote, 2012, *Handbook of Mentalizing in Mental Health Practice*, p. 58.

Sophia's mentalization characteristics with regard to student thoughts and feelings were coded in 763 instances. In 61 instances Sophia showed a willingness to convey ownership of her behaviour rather than it just happens to her (for example, "I set really high standards for behaviour and I can come across as quite strict I think initially. But I think that works really well because the kids know that there are boundaries and they know that if they break a rule there will be a consequence"). In 56 coded instances, Sophia showed security of mental exploration and openness to discovery (e.g., "Always taking opportunities to say 'Hi, how are you going? What happened on the weekend? Tell me what's going on in your life?'"). In another 55 instances, she displayed genuine interest in the mental states of self and others and their relationship (e.g., "If there is an issue sitting them down, taking them away saying "what's going on? What can you tell me?"). Finally, in 54 instances Sophia showed impact awareness as a relational strength (e.g., "It builds rapport with the students when you take the time to sit and look at their work with them").

Sophia's displayed perceptions of her own mental functioning were coded in 168 instances. In 50 of those instances she acknowledged unconscious or preconscious functioning (e.g., "From the first day you are showing empathy to them because it's stressful. They have to move up, they are going from year one into year two, and they are going into a new building. I mean it's hard"). This behaviour demonstrates a relaxation of controlled mentalizing and judgments of intent and trustworthiness in a secure attachment relationship in favour of more automatic, intuitive processes (Bartels & Zeki, 2004). In 30 coded instances Sophia demonstrated a developmental perspective in regard to her own mental functioning (e.g., "What can I do to support this student's thinking?"), and in another 23 instances she showed a belief in a developmental process (e.g., "I think as you grow older you become more empathic").

Sophia's self-representational characteristics were coded in 78 instances. In 63 of these instances she displayed advanced explanatory and listening skills (e.g., "Trying to smile when I talk. I try and do that because I know that when you smile it makes your voice sound better, more pleasant"). Another 10 instances were coded for rich internal life (e.g. "I have actually really

enjoyed this class. I feel like I am going to be sad at the end of the year”). Finally, there were five instances coded for autobiographic continuity (e.g., “I am a different person to who I was10 years ago. I think it is a life progression and you are always learning and changing”).

Sophia’s general mentalization values and attitudes were evident in 138 instances: there were 33 instances relating to responsibility and accountability (e.g., “I found that in the past I haven't actually sat down and documented with the kids setting a goal. So this term we have set a goal every fortnight. And we reflect on the goal”), 32 instances where she displayed “give-and-take” (e.g., “Always when you are looking at the work, looking for positives. So understanding that it is probably quite overwhelming a teacher saying ‘Oh you need to work on this and this.’ So always do what they are doing really well first”), and 30 instances of humility/moderation (e.g., “the way you interact with kids. I know that I would not appreciate someone standing over me and telling me what to do”).

4.4 Phenomenology Themes

Sophia’s accounts generated 247 identified empathy moments in the classroom which I coded by applying the IPA framework (Smith et al., 2009). Three themes—*knowing her students* (57 moments), *awareness to display an empathic approach* (98), and *collaborating and positioning in the learning community* (92)—emerged from her interviews and vignettes. Table 4.3 lists these higher order themes with associated sub-themes. Sophia’s personal understanding of empathy, and her experiences of empathy in the classroom can be classified with respect to these themes.

Table 4.3

Sophia's Empathy Themes

Theme	Sub-Theme
Knowing your students	Personal interest and positivity Listening and valuing Physical cues
Active awareness	Having a student's "mind in mind" Individual needs Modelling Body language
Collaborating and positioning in the learning community	We are a team Teacher and student positioning

Personal understanding of empathy. "I think empathy is so important. With empathy, you build resilience and optimism" (i_2). Sophia's reported experience of empathy begins with a passage revealing the basis for her empathic teaching approach in her classroom,

> Empathy means I understand what they are going through and how they are feeling. I think it's all about knowing your kids and the way you interact. It is me sitting and listening. It's also the kids empathising with other kids. It's not just me showing the kids empathy. But making sure it is an environment where the kids know that we need to be empathetic to others. Being willing to answer questions, not being afraid of getting things wrong, and knowing that mistakes are okay. It feels safe. (i_1)

Sophia's accounts introduce three levels of empathy—1) empathy she models *to* students ("I am showing empathy to them"); 2) empathy the students *show to her* ("they are showing empathy to me"); and 3) valuing empathy shown *by* students ("They are showing empathy to each other"). For example, "That builds empathy between the students so not just me modelling empathy, it's the empathy developing between them" (i_1 v_2), and "It works on three levels. It is getting the kids to understand and be empathetic towards each other and for me to be empathetic to them. They show empathy to me" (i_2 v_1).

Sophia models empathy overtly and sees it as a teaching tool. She encapsulates her understanding of empathy as "I understand how they are feeling at particular times of the day and how I can make that work in our classroom" (i_1). The extract below illustrates the pride and fulfilment Sophia feels in creating an empathic classroom. When asked how open her students were in sharing their feelings and experiences, she said,

> We did a really great Circle Time[3] the other day about the sleepover that we are working towards. For lots of them, it's their first time sleeping away from mum and dad. So I said that over the holidays they should make sure they have a practice sleepover. So the things that came up? Lots of things about bed wetting and a couple of things you would think that they would be quite embarrassed to share and mum and dad had spoken to me about already. They were all very open and so respectful of each other, which was fabulous. (i_1)

This extract shows Sophia's caring approach to her class. Caring teachers have been shown to promote student self-regulation (Porter & Brophy, 1998).

Sophia's demonstrations of empathy reflect a recognition that students have a variety of needs requiring her to moderate her approach. In the vignettes, for example, Sophia can be seen to use a series of positive hand gestures to interact and regulate the behaviour of students with auditory processing difficulties,

> I have a few kids who have hearing issues - Auditory processing, focussing, poor hearing. So reminding these kids they need to sit up the front within a two metre radius of me. I make sure that when I am talking to them that I sit at a certain level facing them. They are either on a chair or I am on the floor. They show me a fist pump at the start so I know they

[3] Circle-time (Mosley, 1993) aims to raise student awareness of thoughts, emotions and behaviours and encourage development of empathy, mutual help and cooperation. It is based on principles of awareness (knowing who I am), mastery (knowing what I can do) and social interaction (knowing how I function in the world of others). All participants, including the teacher, sit in a circle on the same level to discuss a theme and share ideas and feelings.

> are in a space where they can hear me. You can see the student there give me a signal to be a bit louder. It is something special for them. (i_1, v_3)

This extract shows Sophia's use of attention modulation as an empathy regulatory strategy to alter or modify the initial process of generating emotions (Zaki, 2014). Observers can up- or down- regulate empathy by shifting their attention toward or away from affective cues (Todd, Cunningham, Anderson, & Thompson, 2012). Sophia sets high expectations and responds to approach motives by modifying her attention and her initial cognitive empathy approach to strengthen her modelling of affective empathy.

Knowing students as individuals. A recurring phrase in describing the classroom environment in which Sophia's empathy is expressed is "I have to know my kids" (i_1). She described how she achieved this by taking a personal interest and through positivity,

> You have to start by knowing your students, finding out about them, having an interest in them. Always take opportunities to say "Hi, how are you going? What happened on the weekend? Tell me what's going on in your life?" Even in Grade 2 they are capable of that and they want to share. Building those relationships. You have got to connect. Making sure they understand that we are here to learn but it is also a fun place to be. Reinforcing that positivity about school. (i_1)

Sophia prioritises "relationships and how we interact with others" (i_1). Her emphasis is on "communicating, collaborating, making sure the kids explicitly know the behaviours expected, and understanding other kids" (i_1). In establishing relationships, Sophia puts in place systems and class routines,

> I have one student who constantly interrupts. So I sat down with him and made sure that he knows that when he puts his hand on my shoulder (a physical cue) it is a sign so I know that he is waiting for me to speak to him. He knows that if his hand is on my shoulder I am going

> to answer his question next. Setting up those relationships from day one to make sure that he knows that he will be addressed but he has to wait. (i_1)

This quote demonstrates Sophia initiating the physical cues to regulate student behaviour. At the outset she is overwhelmed and feels the effects of the student's behaviour: "I was constantly having things thrown at me. Not thrown at me, but words" (i_1). She experienced an intense feeling of her values of fairness being overwhelmed ("he has to wait" – i_1). To regulate his behaviour and meet his needs, she negotiates with the student to put a routine in place. A strong teacher-student relationship has been shown to reduce discipline problems and correct behaviours both in and out of the classroom (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001; Wolk, 2002). The teacher reiterates and reinforces students' expectations to encourage positive behaviour (Good & Brophy, 2000) and uses strategies to redirect negative behaviour (McLeod, Fisher, & Hoover, 2003).

A sub-theme that emerged in the narratives was the importance of listening to and valuing student contributions. Active listening shows students that the teacher cares about their lives, as well as what is happening in the classroom. In the act of listening, teachers pay attention and understand what students are saying to know the students "first as people, and second as students" (Stronge, 2007, p. 24). Examples of this sub-theme can be seen in the following extracts,

> I think listening is really important. If there is an issue sitting them down and saying "What's going on? What can you tell me?" (i_1)

> I care about what they are saying. It is important to listen because she is not only telling the class but she is telling me about what she was thinking. (i_2 v_2)

> I could spend all day with that student but it's important that I always value all the student's work and get around to all of them. Making sure I try to make the kids feel valued and feel like they have enough time with me as well. (i_1 v_3)

These extracts illustrate the inherent tension in meeting the needs of the individual versus the needs of the class. For example, the first extract shows the importance Sophia places on the sub-themes of listening and valuing in her teaching. The second extract shows a strategy she uses to meet both the needs of the individual and the needs of the group. In the third extract, Sophia considers how to balance the needs of one student with learning needs against the needs of the class, acknowledging the juggling act and the need for equity.

Active awareness of what kids are going through. Sophia highlights active awareness in displaying empathy in her classroom by stating: “It’s a natural awareness of what kids are going through”. In “understanding how students are feeling” (i_1), Sophia engages in mindful awareness to develop relationships. The following two extracts illustrate how she experiences empathy through stepping into the shoes of her students. The first extract illustrates how she has a student’s “mind in mind” (Allen & Fonagy, 2015, p. 166) before negotiating a shared goal in writing. The second extract provides a vignette example of her awareness in regulating her approach to meet individual needs,

> I was trying to read Adrian’s feelings towards his writing. I understand it is quite overwhelming when the teacher says "Oh you need to work on this". So always look for positives. Then bring it back to "perhaps we could work on this” and set some goals. (i_1 v_1)
>
> If it was another student and I wanted to push them further, I would probably ask more questions. But for her, I want her to feel comfortable and to see she has success. (i_2 v_2)

A typical sequence of events in an empathy display for Sophia proceeds from talk through to behavioural expression. She is self-aware in modelling (e.g., “the way that I behave” – i_1) to create a positive classroom climate where an empathic approach frames her body language and cognitive processes,

> I always try to smile when I talk. I try and do that because I know that from when I used to work on reception. When you smile it makes your voice sound better, more pleasant. I think voice level as well is really important. (i_1)

> Giving her wait time takes away that anxiety of “Oh I need to come up with an answer really quickly”. I understand that it takes her longer to form ideas. So I give her time and then come back to her. I am also thinking about how I am going to go back to Clare so some think time for me as well. (i_1 v_3)

When asked how easy it is for her to be in tune with what students are thinking or feeling, Sophia highlighted the importance of awareness and reading student body language to access student states of mind,

> Body language gives so much away. You can tell as soon as you see it. You see some students and think “something is not quite right this morning". You walk over and have a chat with them, targeting those kids and taking the time to say "Oh come and read with me" or "let’s have a look at this great work", "what’s going on?" Reading their facial expressions. I think that that makes such a difference. Watching the way they come into the classroom. Do they come in and say hello? Do they come in and just sit down and read quietly? (i_1)

> From the first day you are showing empathy to them because it’s stressful. They have to move up. They are going from year one into year two. I mean it’s hard! (i_1)

> Sometimes I really feel for the kids. (i_1)

The first quote demonstrates Sophia displaying her care and genuine interest in students. She engages in a welcoming classroom routine to start the day based on “positivity” and “fun” (i_1) where her empathy can be expressed. She uses her awareness of facial expressions and posture to

read students' body language and access their states of mind. In examining human consciousness and modes of awareness, Donald (1991) argued the mind is a hybrid of the brain and an invisible symbolic web (culture) in socialized groups. This hybrid mind allows humans to explore another's face and body language to feel and share emotions as "a kind of cognitive ability that extends conscious control into the domain of action" (p. 261). The ability to control and share attention enables us to reflect on past events and to plan and shape future ones. This is consistent with Peart and Campbell's (1999) finding that teachers who create a supportive and warm classroom climate tend to be more effective with all students.

The remaining extracts could be construed as Sophia showing the related construct of sympathy. In the vignettes, there are instances of Sophia displaying a sympathetic response where she is feeling *for* student situations ("it is such a small thing" – i_2, v_2). As discussed in Chapter 2, sympathy involves feelings of sorrow or concern for a distressed or needy other (Eisenberg, Wentzel, & Harris, 1998). In the second quote, if Sophia experiences pity for her students based on their stress, it would illustrate a sympathetic response. If, on the other hand, Sophia is showing a capacity to imagine herself in the situation of her students, thereby vicariously experiencing the emotion of stress (without pity), she would be mirroring her students and engaged in an affective empathy response. Her empathic skills allow her to *experience* the feelings of her students. One can express sympathy but in empathy one shares.

"We are a team": Collaborating and positioning. Sophia attributes her empathic approach in the classroom to working with the class as a team. She is clear how she is positioned in relation to the class ("They know that we are a team. I make that really clear. To make their learning easier and better, we need to work together" – i_1).

The next extract exemplifies how the empathy experience is situated within her team approach when engaging in behaviour management. The repeated use of the word "we" underlines the team approach and implies a sharing of individual goals with students,

> If I am sitting down having a chat with someone who has done something wrong, we know that we are working on this together. We are not in trouble. Reinforcing that just because I am talking to them doesn't mean they are in trouble. There are other things that we need to work through to realise what is causing the issue. (i_1)

When asked if she can have a strict discipline policy and be empathic at the same time, Sophia answered in the affirmative. Rather than citing classroom management as the objective, she establishes classroom rules upon which to project her empathic approach. In the next extract, Sophia describes how she sets high expectations for behaviour and then consistently applies these,

> I think I set really high standards for behaviour. The kids know there are boundaries and consequences. If you set clear boundaries the kids really respect you for that. It builds rapport with them. They know that I respect them for respecting those first few weeks (i_1).

In the vignettes, Sophia describes how the class reacts to disruptive behaviour. In reinforcing the class rules, she "always ensures students are provided with a reminder as part of the learning community before I speak to them one-on-one". The students as members of the team "remind themselves of the correct behaviour and the high expectations we set" (i_2 v_1). Instead of letting her anger build and discharging itself in an outburst that embarrasses students, Sophia engages in cognitive empathy strategies to reinforce the learning community concept. She reminds the class of the importance of listening. She closes her eyes to allow students to consider their seating options and to move without penalty. She places an emphasis on student's taking responsibility and acting as "self-managers" (i_2 v_1) within the learning community.

Sophia's belief that she and her students operate as a team was a recurrent theme across the accounts. Within the team, Sophia focuses on positioning of students and herself. For example, in her diary for i_1 v_1, she highlights "the positioning of the child and the positive way the goal setting is presented" where she is "sitting at the same level as the student". She considers this to be "very

important" because "it emphasises to the student that we are working on the goal together" (i_1 v_1). In one vignette, the students were positioned on swivel chairs "so they are all at the same level to give everyone a voice" (i_1 v_2), and in another she "worked *at the same level* as Clare so as not to intimidate her" (i_1 v_3). Sophia is conscious of positioning within the team and seeks to sit at an equal level to allay perceptions of power (Schrodt et al., 2008).

4.5 Expressions of Cognitive and Affective Empathy

Sophia was asked if she considers herself to be empathic and if this was always the case. She answered in the affirmative noting,

> It is something you express in the way you are talking to the students - the way you behave. I think as you grow older you become more empathetic. I am definitely more empathic than I was as a student teacher. I feel in this environment especially you have other teachers there to support you and you are learning from them too. (i_1)

Sophia's accounts of the specific examples of empathy in the vignettes were coded against the Baron-Cohen and Wheelwright (2004) empathy definitions (Chapter 2). On 27 occasions across the vignettes, she *recognised* student(s) mental state. For example, "Adrian has had difficulty with his writing and it has been a point of discomfort for him to work on something… it is quite exposing having someone else read your work and give you feedback" (i_1 v_1). In 30 instances, she *responded* to a student's mental state with an appropriate emotion based on care. For example, "I don't single out students…make them feel embarrassed. I know exactly who has moved but it gives them a second chance to make that choice for themselves" (i_2 v_1).

4.6 Examples of Demonstrated Empathy – Vignettes of Sophia's Interaction

Sophia's teaching was filmed for a week at two timepoints – in Term 3, Week 4 (T_1: 4–8 August, 2014) and 12 weeks later in Term 4, Week 4 (T_2: 27–31 October, 2014). Sophia identified three positive empathy moments at T_1 and two moments at T_2 (five altogether) from the footage as

vignettes for closer analysis. A synopsis of each vignette was provided and checked for trustworthiness at interview (Guba, 1981; Shenton, 2004). This section reports on these synopses, Sophia's mentalization diary entries and her responses on reviewing the vignette at interview.

T_1 Vignette 1. The first of the five vignettes chosen by Sophia for analysis illustrates her empathic actions of listening, emotional support, and positioning. A synopsis of the elements observed and agreed to by Sophia in the vignette appears in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

Writing Conference

Vignette synopsis
Sophia is conducting a writing conference with "Adrian" to set new goals to improve his work. She engages in feedback in conducting the conference at the side of the classroom. Sophia and Adrian sit at the same level at a student desk. She reads Adrian's writing piece with him. She talks positively about the work pointing out the positive aspects. She then outlines a goal setting process using praise and encouragement to help Adrian set new goals based on his reflections. She listens and encourages Adrian to think about what he wants to work on next based on his needs and student voice.

In her diary, Sophia stated she chose this moment to demonstrate,

> Conducting conferences with students to set goals to improve aspects of their writing. At times students in this class have lacked resilience when given feedback to improve. Note the positioning of Adrian and the positive way the goal setting is presented.

Sophia identified her actions as "Sitting at the same level as the student, talking positively about his writing, pointing out the good work he has already completed. I praise him and encourage him to set a goal for future learning". She described her thinking during the moment: "I was trying to read Adrian's feelings towards his writing, talking positively about the work he has done to set an achievable goal with him". She described her feeling state as "positive about the experience". Looking back later, what did she think? "Sitting at the same level as the student emphasises that we are working on the goal together and it builds rapport". From the student perspective, Sophia provided some background information: "Adrian at times feels anxious about getting things

wrong". She identified his actions in the vignette as typical: "He fidgets in these situations. He finds it hard to take feedback but is always pushing himself to better his work. He has an ability to look at his work and develop his own goal". Sophia described Adrian's thoughts as "happy with the work he has done. He can see improvements. He has done a good job at focusing on the goal and is now ready to take on another", and his feeling state as "confident after receiving praise. Building on that confidence by giving him a second achievable goal".

Upon reviewing the vignette, Sophia provided the following observations,

> I set fortnightly goals with the students where we reflect on our goal and plan a new one. I was talking to Adrian and listening to him. I was sitting relatively as best as I can at the same level as him. I used a positive, warm voice to get him to consider the feedback. It's quite a calm situation so we are not being interrupted. (i_1, v_1)

When asked to identify the empathy shown and its importance, Sophia replied,

> You have to listen to the child, think about what they want to work on as well. It's not always about what Sophia wants. Getting the student to have ownership and making sure they are thinking about what they are learning. (i_1, v_2)

Sophia is aware of Adrian's anxieties. She seeks to provide a calm environment, model active listening and co-negotiate the new goal based on Adrian seeing improvements in his work. She seeks to put Adrian at ease to enable him to reflect and set the new goal. She engages in a cognitive empathy approach to build his self-esteem to consider other perspectives and validate his experience.

In summary, Sophia's empathic actions observed in this vignette were: active listening, emotional support, student voice, feedback, reflection, and positioning.

T_1 Vignette 2. The second vignette chosen by Sophia relates to making connections through literature, listening, valuing, shared experience, student voice, modelling, and body language. A synopsis of the elements observed in the footage and confirmed by Sophia appears in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5

Reading Group

Vignette synopsis
Sophia conducts a guided reading session with eight students. She listens to student responses acknowledging student opinions. She uses a “turn and talk” strategy[4] to encourage contributions to the group. Students build on each other’s ideas. She hands out individual whiteboards and textas to give students a way to record their thinking. Students come up and scribe questions about the text on the class board. She seeks group feedback on how they are going (a thumbs up/down, show of hands). She asks clarifying questions to get students to justify responses. Sophia provides feedback and invites them to “take me through your thinking". She listens, recaps the strategies used, and models a sentence starter to help them respectfully put forward opinions ("I disagree with Michael because..."). Sophia models facial expressions of considered thought.

In her diary, Sophia stated she chose this moment to show “listening to the students and valuing what they have to say, sitting the kids on swivel chairs, building on one another’s ideas with partners”. She nominated her actions as “listening to the students, and valuing great thinking”. She described her thinking as “how can I get the best out of these students and what ideas can we build on?”, and her feeling state as “positive – All the kids were having a say”. Looking back later, what did she think? “I seek to set the kids up to achieve rather than to fail by trying to take their thinking further. ‘Turning and talking’ helps all students build some ideas and encourages contributions to the group”. From the student perspective, Sophia describes their actions as: “They were listening and weren’t talking over one another. Students were interested in what they were working on. The students shared their ideas with one another prior to responding”. Sophia described student thinking as “interested in the topic. They had something to contribute”, and feeling states as “positive”.

[4] This strategy allows all students to participate in discussion, rather than a select few dominating group or class-wide discussions. A question is posed for students to discuss. Students turn to a specific partner. A timer is set, and all students begin discussing the assigned question. When time is up, partners share their thoughts and ideas from their pair discussions back to the group.

At interview, Sophia was asked about the importance of positioning (the chairs) and use of the individual whiteboards. “It is giving everyone a voice. It ensures they all have a chance to write something that sometimes they don’t feel confident saying” (i_1, v_2). On reviewing the vignette, Sophia observed that,

> I sat the kids in a round on swivel chairs so they are all at the same level. I keep coming back to them. "Do you have something you want to contribute?” Sometimes it is hard when other kids contribute a lot. Making sure they feel part of the group. (i_1, v_2)

When asked to identify the empathy she is showing and its significance, Sophia replied,

> Making sure everyone has a voice and everyone has an opportunity to contribute. Understanding there can be other opinions. We don’t always have to agree. We can disagree. Justifying those opinions and making sure they are presented in a respectful way builds empathy between students. (i_1, v_2)

When Sophia states, “we can disagree” and justifying our opinions “respectfully”, she appears to be displaying genuine interest based on her knowledge of students. She is seeking to build shared connections through enthusiasm and a love of literature to build perspective-taking based on a cognitive empathy approach. Mar and Oatley (2008) argue engaging in fiction can “facilitate the understanding of others who are different from ourselves and augment our capacity for empathy and social inference” (p. 173).

In summary, Sophia’s empathic actions observed in this vignette were: making connections through literature, discussion, listening, valuing, encouraging, sharing, student voice, feedback, positioning, respect, body language, and shared experience.

T_1 Vignette 3. The next vignette nominated by Sophia relates to support, perspective-taking, follow up, and positioning. A synopsis of the elements observed and confirmed by Sophia at interview appears in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6

Writing Support

Vignette synopsis
Sophia is working with a group of students on the floor to create images to go with a procedure. As part of the group, Sophia works with "Clare". She asks Clare a question relating to the text and it is clear Clare cannot think of a response. Sophia negotiates a timeframe with Clare to think more about it and come up with a response. Sophia recaps the steps that will be required. Sophia follows-up with Clare after working with Samantha. She praises Clare's effort and willingness to have a go. By giving her thinking time, Sophia has taken away Clare's anxiety of needing to come up with an answer quickly.

In her diary, Sophia stated she chose this moment to show "Working at eye level, scaffolding, and the use of wait time[5] with a student". Sophia provided some additional information regarding this student,

> Clare has some learning difficulties and finds it hard to articulate her thinking. She is a gentle student who is strengthening her relationships with those around her. She is becoming aware of not being able to do certain things in relation to her peers and this increases her levels of anxiety. It has taken some time for Clare to feel confident to share her thoughts and ideas and even now gives minimum responses. (i_1, v_3)

Sophia nominated her actions: "I scaffold her thinking and gave her an opportunity to answer by giving her a timeframe while I worked with someone else. I talked positively about her work". At interview, she elaborated on these actions: "I ensure Clare understood what is required. I am thinking 'I will give her a certain amount of time' and then come back to her after I check on Samantha". She described her thinking as "how can I get the best from Clare and what can I do to support her?", and her feeling state as "confident that Clare could answer the question given sufficient time". Looking back later, what did she think? "I was speaking positively about Clare's effort and praising her when she has a go". From the student perspective, Sophia describes Clare's

[5] Wait-time (Rowe, 1986) relates to periods of silence that follow teacher questions and students' responses. These were found to rarely last more than 1.5 seconds in typical classrooms. When periods of silence were extended to at least 3 seconds, deeper responses occurred for both students and teachers.

actions in the vignette as typical: “Clare was giving me eye contact and listening carefully to what I had to say”. She described Clare’s thoughts as “focussing on the other students staring at her. This is why I chose a safe group where I knew her peers would not notice my scaffolding”, and Clare feeling “a bit apprehensive, but once she was given time to think of a response she felt a lot safer”.

When asked to identify the empathy she is showing and its significance, Sophia stated,

> The vignette shows the diversity within the class and the different levels of empathy you have to work at and show. Different levels of understanding, having opportunities to listen, and to think about how you can get the most out of someone. I am reading Samantha’s work there but I am also thinking about what I am going to say when I get back to Clare. So there is some think time for me as well. (i_1, v_3)

Sophia is displaying her cognitive empathy through negotiating an appropriate timeframe based on her knowledge of the student where she makes a conscious effort to focus on the minds of others (Krznaric, 2014). She positions the student within a supportive group, recaps the task, provides wait time, and engages in active listening, encouragement, and perspective-taking. Cognitive empathy is typically operationalised as perspective-taking in shaping positive social relationships (Batson, 1991; Eisenberg et al., 1993).

In summary, Sophia’s empathic actions observed in this vignette were: questioning, support, positioning, wait time, follow-up, and providing security.

T_2 Vignette 1. The first vignette chosen by Sophia from the T_2 footage relates to situation selection, attention modulation, mutual respect, and class expectations. A synopsis of the elements observed in the vignette and confirmed at interview appears in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7

Good Listening Skills

Vignette synopsis text
The class is seated on the floor as Sophia introduces the lesson. Sophia is distracted by students talking as she turns to scribe on the whiteboard. She stops what she is doing and uses a class reminder about good listening behaviour. She talks about why it is important to listen to ensure they see how it interrupts others. She explains when students behave in this way her “heart grows smaller” so they understand it affects her as well. Sophia invites the class if they are sitting next to someone who is, or will be, distracting to consider moving. She tells the students she will close her eyes and count to ten before opening them allowing movement to happen without penalty. When she does this, two students take up the opportunity and move apart. The lesson resumes.

In her diary, Sophia described the class context: “By term 4, students have a good understanding of class expectations and were listening to instruction on writing”. She identified her actions as “reminding the students of good listening behaviour. I talk to the entire class and I don’t single anyone out. I stop what I am doing to remind them. I connect the reasoning for listening to the students”. She described her thinking as “how to get the message across in a clear and concise manner in order to return to the task”, and her feeling state as “focused on the writing lesson at hand. I was distracted by students being distracted on the floor”. Looking back later, what did she think? “I always ensure students are provided with a reminder as part of the learning community before I speak to them one-on-one. This gives students an opportunity to think about behaviour and make connections with the entire learning community". From the student perspective, Sophia describes student actions as “some students distracting one another. I think they were enthusiastic about the task and perhaps getting carried away”. She described student thinking as “reminding themselves of the correct behaviour and high expectations we set. Students were thinking about how they can improve their behaviour”, and student feeling states where “some students were probably frustrated that others were being distracted around them”.

At interview, Sophia elaborated on aspects of this vignette. She observed,

> I don’t like to single out children because I think they are really good self-managers. Once they get a reminder, they don’t need reminding again. Giving them an opportunity to think

> about their behaviour is important. They know I understand they have made a mistake but they are not going to be punished. They just need to make a good decision and work on it. If you confront them in front of everyone, it just makes them embarrassed. I knew who the kids were that were doing the wrong thing. It is good because they recognise their own behaviour. I actually do close my eyes and make sure that I can't see them because they think I can't see them. (i_2 v_1)

In identifying the empathy in the vignette and its significance, Sophia stated,

> It is getting the kids to understand and be empathetic towards each other by not singling them out. Giving them choice over their behaviour. Using the image "my heart grows smaller". The kids understand this is not only disrupting other kids, but it is also distracting me which makes my lessons not as successful. "Oh she is really happy. Her heart is really big" or "She is really sad. Her heart is not big". The kids know that if they move it is okay. It's not something we need to worry about, because I move on straight away. (i_2 v_1)

Sophia can be seen to model positive classroom management techniques and to follow-up on classroom expectations. The class reflects and takes responsibility for the incident and is then given an opportunity to make better choices displaying Sophia's empathy and care. She uses a powerful visual image ("My heart grows smaller") so the students can see how their behaviour impacts on her as well.

In summary, Sophia's empathic actions observed in this vignette were: management, reflection, positioning, mutual respect, positivity, class expectations.

T_2 Vignette 2. The final vignette chosen by Sophia from the footage relates to modelling, support, positioning, listening, body language, valuing, and student voice. A synopsis of the elements observed in the vignette and confirmed by Sophia at interview appears in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8

Presenting to the Class

Vignette synopsis
A reserved student, “Anna”, is presenting a recap of a class story and sharing a time when she has helped others. The class listens and reflects on their own experience. Anna positions her body diagonally to the class and to Sophia so she addresses both. She models interest in what Anna is saying. In modelling listening, she shows considered thought and provides gentle prompts to further discussion.

In her diary, Sophia elaborated on why she selected this interaction moment,

> We have been talking about empathy and understanding others. I read a story to the class about a grandmother who helped penguins. I then encouraged the students to discuss why and how we help others. I worked with Anna prior to her explaining her thinking to the class by discussing the questions I would ask her to ensure she would be confident. I want the other students to value what Anna is saying and for Anna to feel comfortable and experience success.

Sophia identified her actions as “listening to Anna’s responses and prompting discussion”. She described her thinking as “how can I get the students to understand empathy and think about times in their lives when they have needed to help others”, and her feeling state as “positive about the discussion. I didn’t want to get involved in the student’s thinking because I wanted them to express themselves”. Looking back later, what did she think? “I worked with Anna prior to her presenting. This prepared her for her recap of the story and to articulate where she had helped others”. From the student perspective, Sophia recognised Anna’s actions as “confidently recalling information. The conversation was important so the students were listening and they then had an opportunity to discuss and reflect on their own lives”. She described class thinking as “recalling times when they helped others and making connections to the story we read”. She described Anna’s feeling state as “proud of herself for getting up and presenting in front of others”.

At interview, Sophia provided some additional background about Anna and her learning needs,

> Anna is a reserved character. I spent a lot of time with her beforehand preparing her to get up in front of the class. I didn't put words in her mouth, but rather just prepared the questions for her. It was great how confident she looked up there. She answered the questions well and she connected with the text. It was wonderful to see. She was positive and had great responses. I knew she was not going to remember everything we spoke about. Giving her the questions beforehand gave her a prompt to tap into her prior thinking. Connections we can make to our own lives when we have shown empathy to others and understand if something has been difficult in their lives. (i_2 v_2)

At interview, Sophia was asked about the range of responses generated by the class. She stated "There was a great variety. It is really important they understand why it is important and why we have got to help them understand what they go through" (i_2 v_2). Sophia described the empathy shown and its importance in the following terms,

> I want the kids to value what she is saying. That's what I want at the end of the day. For her, her body was positioned at the class and at me. I want her to feel comfortable and to see she has success and I care about what she is saying. It gives her a sense of achievement. (i_2 v_2)

For Sophia, a key phrase for her motivation to engage in her empathic approach is to help Anna "experience success" (i_2 v_2). She is aware of Anna's positioning when presenting, and she engages in a cognitive empathy approach to allow Anna to feel confident and allow the class to share and consider other perspectives to validate her experience.

In summary, Sophia's empathic actions observed in this vignette were: modelling, support, positioning, listening, body language, prompting, valuing, and student voice. The next section

provides the independent evaluation ratings of Sophia's lesson observations and vignettes for levels of emotional support using the CLASS instrument (Pianta et al., 2012).

4.7 Emotional Support Ratings of Lessons and Empathy Vignettes

Sophia's five vignettes were scored for levels of emotional support (Positive climate; Teacher sensitivity; Regard for student perspectives) using the CLASS (Pianta et al., 2012). Four additional *live* classroom lessons (two at each timepoint) were observed for levels of emotional support and similarly coded (Appendix O). Sophia's average ratings across the lessons and vignettes are shown in *Figure 4.3*.

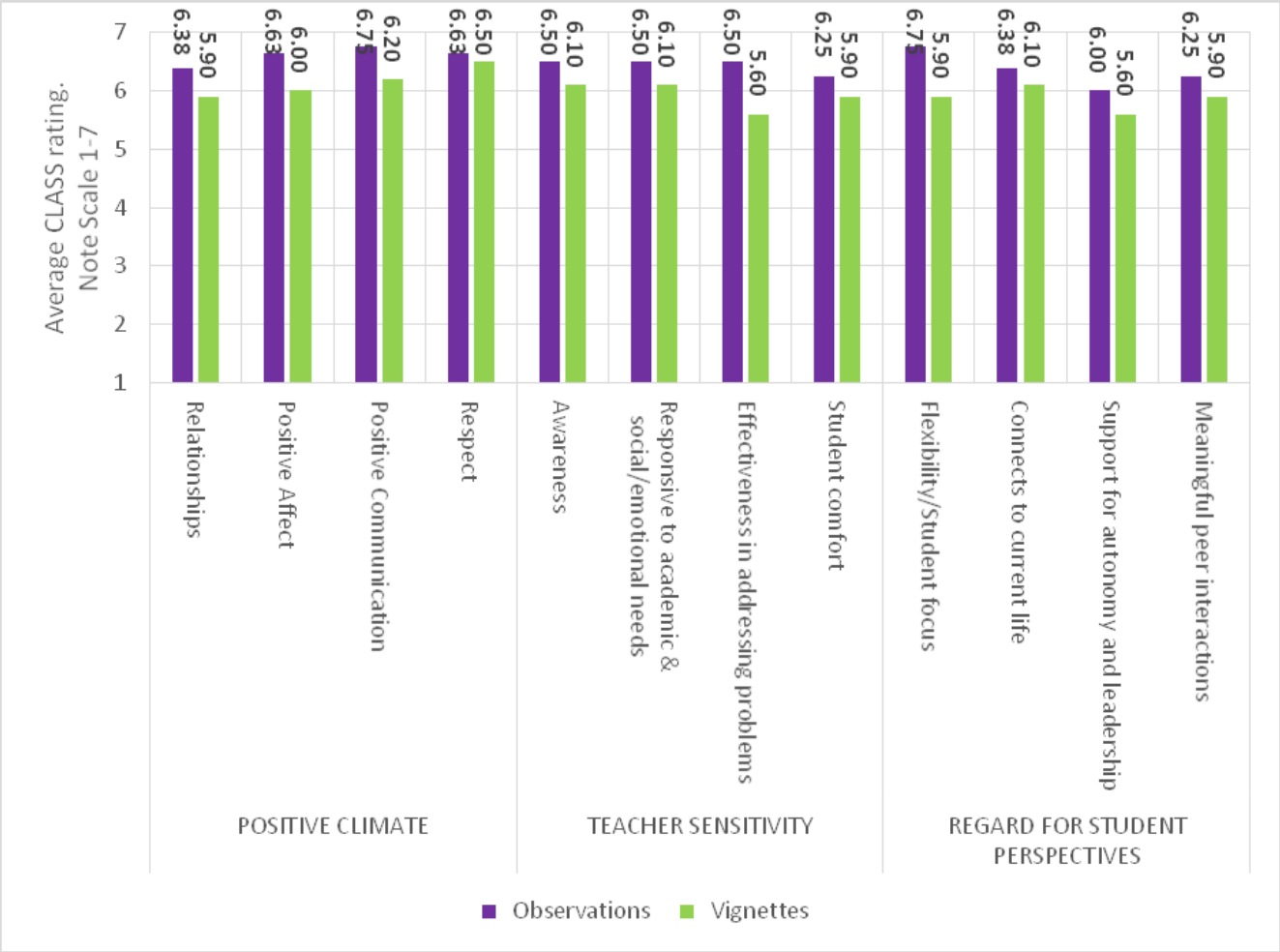


Figure 4.3 Sophia's Average Lesson Observation and Vignette Ratings by Emotional Support Dimension. *Note:* 1–2=low quality; 3–5=mid-range quality; and 6–7= high quality.

Sophia's emotional support variables at the domain levels of positive climate, teacher sensitivity and regard for student perspective were within the high range across all lesson observations and vignettes. At the dimension level, all elements in the vignettes were rated at the low to mid end of the high range.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter introduced Sophia's personal understanding of empathy and her relational and teacher style goals. A phenomenological research design (Chapter 3) was used to access Sophia's thoughts and feelings to show how she experienced empathy. An exploration followed of how she demonstrates and experiences empathy in the classroom drawing on her vignettes, diary entries and responses at interview. Phenomenological analysis of the transcripts distilled the essence of empathy in Sophia's teaching and conveyed what this experience is like for her. She sees empathy as something she expresses in the way she interacts with students. She is motivated to know students as individuals and she strives to connect with them. Sophia creates a classroom climate based on understanding how students think and feel, and based on her awareness of student situations. She seeks to make students feel valued as part of a team. She models empathy overtly through understanding, listening, and thinking about how to maximise experiences for students and encourage student voice.

The empathy vignettes and corresponding diary entries show that Sophia feels "positive" about the experiences in empathy she displays (i_1 v_1; i_1 v_2; i_2 v_2). Her word choices and imagery show that she is passionate about the role of empathy in her teaching. At interview, she identified a few individuals "who it has taken time to connect with", where her emotional labour resulted in her "finally seeing them put their hand up and I have felt really positive about it" (i_1).

Sophia recognises a student's mental state and responds with appropriate emotions based on care. Her "awareness of what students are going through" is shown in the "different levels of empathy" she works at in the various relationships in her classroom. Manifestly, she makes

cognitive judgments that are intuitive based on reading and interpreting student body language (e.g., “You see some students’ and you think ‘something is not quite right this morning’. Targeting those kids and taking the time. Reading their facial expressions” – i_1). She feels an imperative to engage in an empathic approach in her teaching (“You have got to connect. Eye contact with the kids, listening with the kids. If there is an issue sitting them down and asking ‘What’s going on?’ ‘What can you tell me?’” – i_1), and she looks to improve her empathic displays based on a cycle of continuous improvement (“I hear staff talk about physical cues and I think "that would be good for Erica”. It’s all about the right strategies” – i_1).

Chapter 5 Case 2 – Christine

The next case study relates to Christine's experience of teacher empathy in her classroom. Christine has been teaching for 12 years in three schools. She has taught at School B since 2012, and is classed as "proficient" (>6 years' experience: AITSL, 2011a). This was her third consecutive year teaching a composite Grade 3/4 (8-10 year olds). There were 26 students in her class including a student with Autism Spectrum Disorder who has a full-time aide. Teaching was shared with a colleague with each teacher working half of each week. Christine "loves working in this classroom" where she values teacher-student relationships "very highly" (i_1).

This chapter begins with Christine's relational goals (Butler, 2012) and her (and her students') ratings of teaching style dimensions (Watt & Richardson, 2007). She nominated five positive empathy vignettes from the footage as demonstrations of her teacher empathy in her interactions with students. Her mentalizing characteristics (Luyten et al., 2012) are presented as the building blocks to consider the empathy data. A written synopsis of each vignette was read to Christine at interview for a trustworthiness check (Guba, 1981; Shenton, 2004), as was her diary entry to remind her of her justification for the chosen moments, and her views on student perspectives. Her perspectives of her actions were explored at interview, and thematically analysed. Christine's personal understanding of empathy is explored followed by her four higher order themes derived from the Smith et al. (2009) framework—(1) *Understanding students as individuals*, (2) *Awareness of student situations*, (3) *Following-up and providing social and emotional support*, and (4) *Feeling too much for student situations*.

The final sections provide examples of Christine's self-nominated demonstrations of empathy in the classroom, both from the vignettes and interviews. Her actions were coded for cognitive and affective empathy elements, and the vignettes and live lessons for levels of emotional support (CLASS: Pianta et al., 2012). The chapter concludes with a summary discussion of themes as a narrative account of the essence of Christine's empathy experience.

5.1 Relational Goals

Christine described her class as "a mixed group in ability and especially in personality" (i_1). She provided ratings of her relational goals for interacting with her students using Butler's (2012) criteria. Christine rated her goals at T_1 (Term 3, Week 2) and 13 weeks later at T_2 (Term 4, Week 2) on a 5-point scale (1=totally disagree; 5=totally agree), and all scores were very high (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1

Christine's Self-Ratings of Relational Goals: Scale 1 (totally disagree) – 5 (totally agree)

Item Description	*T_1 Score*	*T_2 Score*
"I would feel most successful as a teacher if I saw that I was developing closer and better relationships with students in my class"	5	5
"My main goal as a teacher is to show my students that I care about them"	4	4
"More than anything, I aspire to create deep personal relationships with each and every student"	4	4
"Building relationships with students is most important for me"	4	4
"I take care of my students if they have problems"	5	5
"I take time to get to know my students and to know what is happening with them in school and at home"	5	5

Note. Sourced from "Striving to Connect: Extending an Achievement Goal Approach to Teacher Motivation to Include Relational Goals for Teachers," by R. Butler, 2012, *Journal of Educational Psychology, 104,* p. 729.

5.2 Perceptions of Teaching Style Dimensions

Christine was asked to rate her teaching style dimensions (TSS) at each timepoint using Watt and Richardson's (2007) instrument (Appendix J) to assess perceptions of the classroom environment on a 7-point Likert-type scale (*Figure 5.1*).

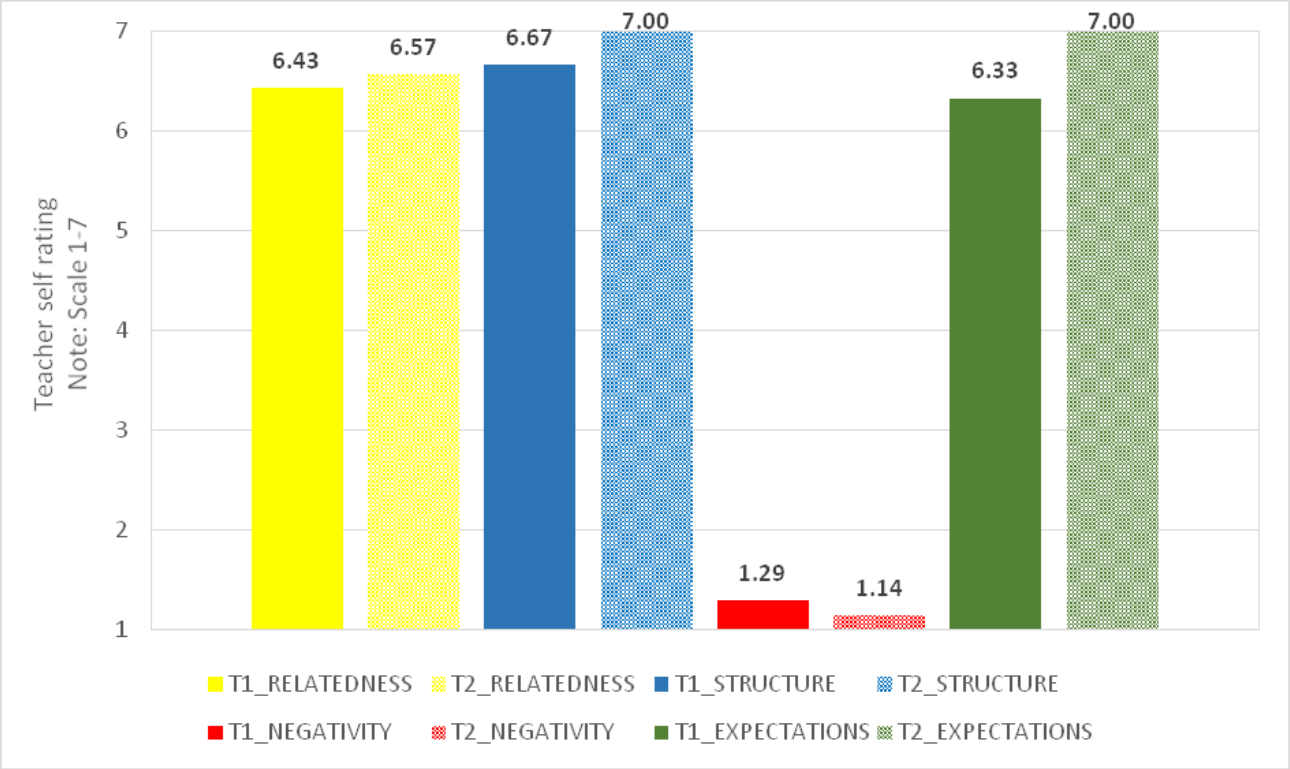


Figure 5.1. Self-Rated Teaching Style Scale factor means for Christine. *Note:* 1= Not at all; 7= A lot.

Christine's perceptions of her *relatedness* were very high, and were slightly higher at T_2 (6.43_{t1} – 6.57_{t2}). Her scores for *structure* (6.67_{t1} – 7.00_{t2}) and *expectations* (6.33_{t1} – 7.00_{t2}) were also very high, and at the maximum rating for T_2. Her perceptions of *negativity* were very low, and declined further at T_2 (1.29_{t1} – 1.14_{t2}).

Christine's 14 student participants also rated their perceptions of her teaching style using Watt and Richardson's (2007) student instrument (Appendix K). Composite factor scores were created by averaging component items for each and factor means were plotted (*Figure 5.2*).

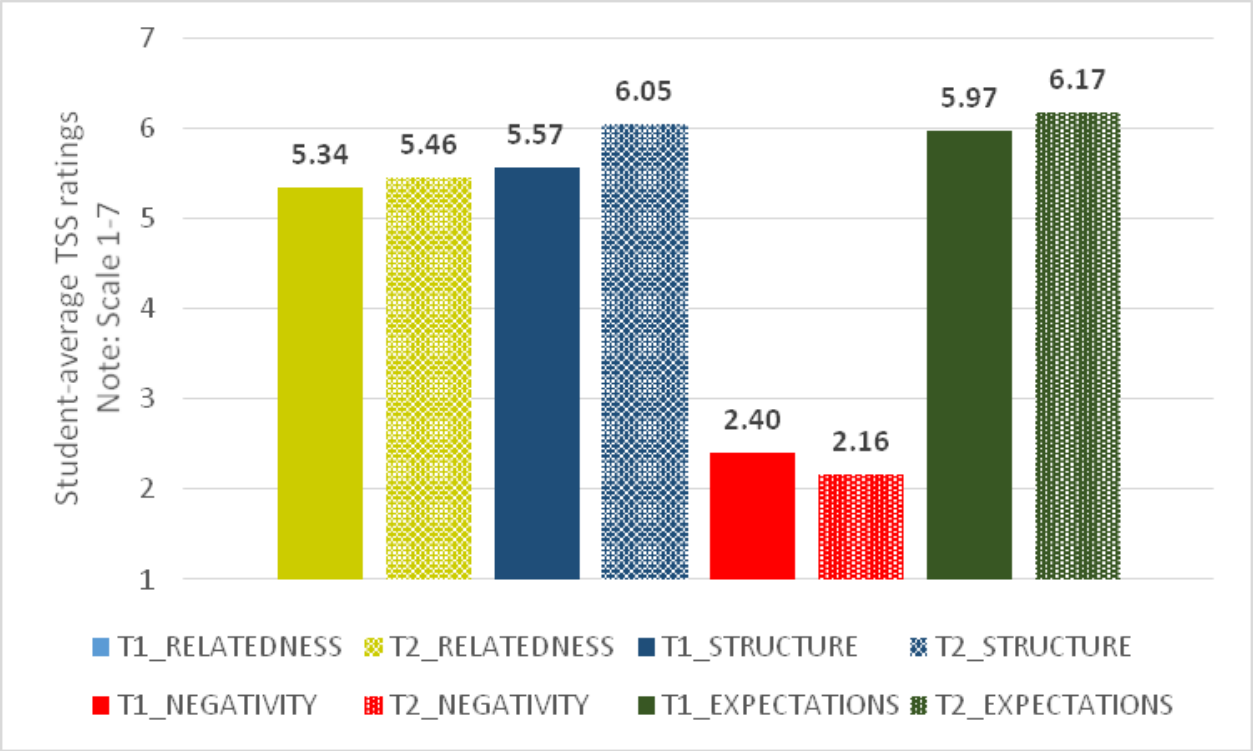


Figure 5.2. Student-Rated Teaching Style Scale factor means for Christine. *Note:* 1= Not at all; 7= A lot.

Christine's students perceived her relatedness to be high, and higher again at T_2 (5.34_{t1} – 5.46_{t2}). Their perceptions of her expectations (5.97_{t1} – 6.17_{t2}) and structure (5.57_{t1} – 6.05_{t2}) were also higher over time, whereas their perceptions of her negativity were low and declined over time (2.40_{t1} – 2.16_{t2}).

5.3 Christine's Mentalization Characteristics

The mentalization aspects evident in Christine's responses from the diary entries and interviews are reported here. Table 5.2 lists themes covered by the coded open comments using Luyten et al. (2012). The frequencies indicate the prominence of each mentalization characteristic to Christine.

Table 5.2

Frequency of Christine's Mentalization Characteristics from Diary Entries and Interviews

Item Description	Frequency
Security of mental exploration and openness to discovery	28
Acknowledgement of opaqueness and tentativeness of mental states	33
Genuine interest in the mental states of self and others and their relation	47
Adaptive flexibility in switching from automatic to controlled mentalization	21
Acknowledgement of changeability of mental states, including awareness of developmental perspective (attachment history influences relating to self & others)	23
Integrate cognitive and affective features of self and others ("embodied mentalization")	23
Sense of realistic predictability and controllability of mental states	26
Ability to regulate distress in relation to others	26
Capacity to be relaxed and flexible, not "stuck" in one point of view	30
Capacity to be playful, with humour engaging rather than hurtful or distancing	4
Ability to solve problems by give-and-take between own and other's perspectives	27
Ability to describe one's own experience rather than defining other people's experience or intentions	32
Willingness to convey "ownership" of behaviour rather than it "happens to" me	47
Curiosity about other people's perspectives and expectations that one's own views will be extended by others	24
Relational strengths	
• Curiosity	16
• Safe uncertainty	20
• Contemplation and reflection	38
• Perspective-taking	37
• Forgiveness	10
• Impact awareness	42
• Non-paranoid attitude	12
Perception of one's own mental functioning	
• Developmental perspective	13
• Realistic scepticism	3
• Internal conflict awareness	9
• Self-inquisitive stance	15
• Awareness of the effect of affect	24
• Acknowledgement of unconscious or preconscious functioning	49
• Belief in changeability	10
Self-representation	
• Rich internal life	21
• Autobiographical continuity	4
• Advanced explanatory and listening skills	50
General values and attitudes	
• Tentativeness	9
• Humility (moderation)	27
• Playfulness and humour	4
• Flexibility	16
• Give-and-take	38
• Responsibility and accountability	31

Note. Sourced from "Assessment of Mentalization," by P. Luyten, P. Fonagy, B. Lowyck, and R. Vermote, 2012, *Handbook of Mentalizing in Mental Health Practice*, p. 58.

Christine's mentalization characteristics with regard to student thoughts and feelings were coded in 566 instances. In 47 instances Christine showed genuine interest in the mental states of self and others and their relationship (for example, "I was ready to listen to students discuss the lead up and the situation. I was prepared to find out the reasons. I feel they genuinely wanted to solve the problem and were happy to spend the time"). In 47 instances Christine conveyed ownership of behaviour rather than believing it happens to me (e.g., "To be there to make suggestions on how they can solve the problem. They need assistance in doing that"). Finally, in 42 instances Christine showed impact awareness as a relational strength (e.g., "I made sure each student's opinion was listened to and accepted by the other student. I made sure they communicated with each other to maintain a connection between the two classmates").

Christine's displayed perceptions of her own mental functioning were coded in 123 instances. In 49 of those instances she acknowledged unconscious or preconscious functioning (e.g., "She was so incredibly upset when she gave me her work that I thought 'No, no, no. It's not the work'. I need to find out if she is upset about this trip"). This behaviour demonstrates a response *to* the object (e.g. consolation to distress) (Preston & de Waal, 2002). In 24 coded instances Christine displayed awareness of the effect of affect (e.g., "I want him to understand his feelings so that next time it happens he can deal with them a little bit more appropriately"), and in another 15 instances she engaged in a self-inquisitive stance (e.g., "I was thinking I cannot allow a small incident such as this to pass without addressing it otherwise it will continue").

Christine's self-representational characteristics were coded in 75 instances. In 50 of those instances she displayed advanced explanatory and listening skills (e.g., "It would sound like listening and questioning. Questions that are respectful and understanding of situations"). Another 21 instances were coded for rich internal life (e.g., "I think I am sometimes too empathetic because I feel too much for situations"), and four instances were coded for autobiographic continuity (e.g., "I have learnt that I can't necessarily take on the issues of students so I have learnt to deal with it professionally. I need to have a relationship with them").

Christine's general mentalization values and attitudes were evident in 125 instances. There were 38 instances of "give-and-take" (e.g., "I thought, you know, you are here now. Let's deal with it and see if you can go away happy and calm"), 31 instances relating to responsibility and accountability (e.g., "I was thinking how his parents must feel knowing this is happening. I was thinking how this sort of issue can lead to bigger issues at high school. Because of this I found it vital to deal with it now"), and 27 instances of humility/moderation (e.g., "I think you just need to have a little bit of understanding about human nature and how it operates and compassion for fellow human beings").

5.4 Phenomenology Themes

Christine's accounts generated 115 identified *empathy moments* in the classroom, which I coded by applying the IPA framework (Smith et al., 2009). Four themes—*understanding students as individuals* (29 moments), *showing awareness of student situations* (35), *providing social and emotional support* (33), and "*feeling too much" for student situations* (18)—emerged from the interviews and vignettes. Table 5.3 summarises these higher order themes and associated sub-themes that encapsulate Christine's experiences of empathy. Christine's personal understanding of empathy can be derived from these themes as well as her experiences of empathy in the classroom.

Table 5.3

Christine's Empathy Themes

Theme	Sub-Theme
Understanding students as individuals	Taking an interest in and out of school Keeping students in mind
Awareness of student situations	A motivated approach Listening and questioning Mutual respect
Following-up and providing social and emotional support	The value of acknowledgement Providing social support Providing emotional support Following-up to ensure it is resolved
Feeling "too much" for student situations	Self-awareness A regulated approach

Personal understanding of empathy. Christine encapsulates her understanding of empathy as "I make sure I am aware of what is going on in their lives and I adjust the way I see or deal with a child based on their situation" (i_1 v_1). She outlines her empathic teaching approach as follows,

> I start the year modelling empathy so they have the idea how we treat each other and that I see this as a valuable part of the classroom culture. It is something I expect will become ingrained. I listen and ask and watch how they interact with their peers. (i_1)

Christine models empathy overtly by "listening" and by asking "questions that are respectful and understanding of situations", where the aim is "to draw a child out to help you understand what they are thinking or doing" (i_1). At interview, she provided the following example,

> Even if it is a situation I don't understand, I still need to consider their feelings and consider this is a big event for them. Last year I had a student who was fasting during Ramadan. Even though this is not something I do, I still need to respect that that is what she is doing. She might have peaks and troughs through the day because of her situation, and the other children need to respect her. I think it is important kids understand these situations because it gives them empathy on a day-to-day basis. (i_1)

This extract illustrates Christine's use of strategies such as situation selection, attentional modulation, and appraisal that alter the course of empathic episodes (Zaki, 2014). Situation selection shows regulation preceding rather than following emotion generation.

Christine's accounts introduced two levels of empathy: 1) empathy she models *to* students ("Tara needed to understand how Jane felt about the situation and what she could learn to do for next time" – i_1 v_1), and 2) valuing empathy shown *by* students to each other ("I think the other students were extremely supportive and keen to put her mind at rest. They all suggested supportive things and tried to make her laugh. They succeeded to their credit" – i_1 v_3). Christine keeps student comfort in mind ("I made sure she felt secure and that she hopefully felt comfortable speaking with

me about the problem”), and adjusts her approach to resolve situations based on “what was going to be most comfortable” for the student (i_2 v_2).

“Understanding students as individuals”. Christine regards care and showing students she cares as critical to building and maintaining strong teacher-student relationships (“I just don’t want to talk to them when I am teaching. I need to have a relationship and be interested in their lives” – i_1 v_3). A theme that emerged across her accounts is the importance of knowing students as individuals (i_1 v_3), with Christine seeking to “understand them as people”,

> I make sure I spend time at the beginning of the year getting to know them so that I know them as more than just students. I am interested in what they are interested in like what sports and hobbies they do and things they like to do outside school. Then what their strengths are at school in terms of what they are good at and what they feel happy to do. And of course what they feel uncomfortable doing so we can work on that. (i_1)

Christine’s overt demonstration of empathy reflects her recognition that students have diverse needs requiring her to understand them as individuals and to regulate her approach. In the vignettes, she can be seen to explore student perspectives where “I am always interested in (Melissa’s) motivation for her social issues” (i_2 v_2). She recognises Melissa’s “need to be a perfectionist” and her capacity to “withdraw into herself”,

> What I am trying to do is avoid her becoming reclusive and going into herself. She won’t ask her peers and teachers for help. She cuts off if she can’t do something. So I try and encourage her to talk. To say “I don’t get this” or “Can I have some help?” I also try to encourage her to understand that it’s okay not to know everything and that is a thing we need to teach you next time. I know she will listen, pick it up and take it on board. I think a lot of her social issues come from the fact that she shuts down and that affects the way she interacts with other students and with me. (i_2 v_2)

In this extract, Christine displays her care and genuine interest in students, and uses her knowledge and awareness of them to read their body language. She appraises the situation by listening, encouraging and accepting to model and alleviate Melissa's anxieties. Caring teachers have been shown to promote student self-regulation (Porter & Brophy, 1988). Melissa attends to and retrieves information in ways that suit her goals, and she may selectively access information that allows her to infer and have unrealistic amounts of control over external events (Epley & Dunning, 2000; Taylor & Brown, 1988).

"I am aware of what is going on in their lives". In displaying her interest in students "based on the things they come to school happy and wanting to share" (i_1), Christine engages in mindful awareness of student situations to develop relationships where "I need to find out. I am ready to listen to students discuss openly the lead up and the situation and to find the reasons without accusations" (i_2). She uses her knowledge of student situations to regulate her teaching ("Grandparents living with them, renovating and all those things that go on in families. I make sure I adjust the way I see the child based on their situation" – i_1). Her approach is "to draw out what is going on" without applying pressure to understand situations.

From the vignettes, she was "very aware of how nervous Jane was", based on "how she kept coming up to me to tell me things and how she was acting with her friends" (i_1 v_3). She classified her actions as "wanting to listen" and "to focus my attention on Jane whilst being aware of the others",

> I found out that just the night before her dad had told her that her auntie was sick again with cancer. I knew that her auntie had cancer earlier in the year, so it wasn't a shock but to find out that she has got it back again is the shock. When she was explaining her situation, I felt really sad for her. I felt bad for her situation because she was on the cusp of an exciting holiday and then this disastrous family event happens. (i_1 v_3)

In another example, Oliver "knows I am aware of the situation and willing to deal with it. I felt proud of him for using the strategies we discussed to deal with the problem. He did not allow it to escalate" (i_2 v_1). When she follows-up she asks the group "to express how they are feeling about it because there may be another side of the story I am not aware of. I find out fully what is going on" (i_2 v_2). Christine realises that Melissa needs to calm down before she is able to share her feelings: "She has had social problems before so I was aware of her difficulty with some children in the class" (i_2 v_2).

Mutual respect is another underlying value across her accounts. She believes empathy can be taught ("I try and teach children in my class to do this") and she models it to them as something she values "to have a little bit of understanding about human nature and how it operates, and compassion for fellow human beings" (i_1).

The need for support. Christine describes her empathic approach as following-up to provide social and emotional support. For example, she described Melissa as "in need of support" (i_2 v_2), and at interview acknowledged "there were a lot of social issues that go on in this class",

> If I am not going to have these conversations with these students then it's going to impact on their learning. They are going to think "I am not valued in this classroom. My thoughts and my interactions are not acknowledged so what is the point?" What I try and do is to be acknowledging and give them ways of making decisions to go forward. (i_2 v_2)

Christine's demonstrations of empathy reflect a recognition of the value of following-up and meaningfully responding to social and emotional issues. She listens, "pays attention" and negotiates with individual students as to the best approach to provide this support. In the vignettes, Christine responds to Ella's concern by negotiating with the students so that Hayden can "have a little bit of understanding for a fellow classmate" (i_1 v_2). In another example, Christine "sits Jane down to talk to her about it, rather than just saying 'it will be okay'. I never ignore it" (i_1 v_3). She follows-up to ensure issues are meaningfully resolved. For example,

> I left her with options to deal with the problem. I couldn't have said to her to go out and tell them what you think because she wouldn't have been able to do it. But in a situation where we are sitting down together and she has got me there or an adult it would be more likely to happen. It wouldn't be as confronting for her if we are having an open discussion. I am not going to say to her "Okay you can't play with her, and that you have got to play with her". She seemed relieved by the end of the conversation. She wasn't upset. She knew there is going to be a way to solve this problem. (i_2 v_2)

Christine is aware of the value of providing support and can be seen to engage in a cognitive empathy approach,

> She was incredibly upset. I needed to find out if she was upset about the trip. Even if she is, I am happy to let her talk about it so that she can get it off her chest. Because all I kept thinking about was that she is going to be stuck on that plane for hours. And if she is upset, that is going to be a really long trip for her. So I thought, she is here now. Let's deal with it and see if she can go away happy and calm. (i_1 v_3)

In another vignette, she ensures Oliver "felt safe and had the skills to deal with the incident or similar incidents in the future" (i_2 v_1). When asked about the strategies she gave him, Christine stated,

> He understands that he has been upset or angry by the situation. I would have spoken to him about what they were doing and why. "What do you think?" I would have tried to link in with the situation and listen to what he had to say. (i_2 v_1)

Christine acknowledges to students her awareness, availability and willingness to assist them to help them solve their problems. She makes suggestions aimed to "work them towards understanding what the best decisions for their friendships are". In addressing Melissa's situation, Christine negotiates a way forward "acknowledging she needs me to help her solve the problem"

(i_2 v_2). She firstly asks Melissa if she is willing to act on the strategies they discussed. When Melissa indicates she is not, Christine asks if she would be happy for her to do it. When Melissa says she is, Christine suggests they convene the group.

Christine seeks "to acknowledge" *and* to receive an acknowledgement from the student of her empathic approach, noting "I want them to acknowledge I am listening and that I am available to assist them" (i_2 v_2). The benefits to Christine of student acknowledgement include appreciation for being listened to, for her time and attention for her advice, a sense of trust, and a feeling of strengthening the teacher-student attachment bond. The benefits to the student of acknowledgement include a sense of personal power and choice as to when and how to engage Christine to provide perspectives on social and emotional situations, a greater awareness of unconscious feelings, relief in times of distress, help and clarity in decision making, and combatting feelings of isolation.

Responding to the emotional state of another to provide support is a fundamental aspect in defining and shaping patterns of teacher-student relationships. Christine's responsiveness may be essentially cognitive in nature when she recognises the meanings of various emotional displays, and may at times involve an affective response to the emotion perceived in a student. For example, there is a sharing of affect between Christine as observer and Melissa as the observed (i_2 v_2), where "nurturance is the tendency to engage in behavior that promotes emotional support for others" (Gruen & Mendelsohn, 1986, p. 611).

"I feel too much for situations". In the literature, experience sharing (Zaki, 2013; Zaki & Ochsner, 2012) refers to an observer's tendency to take on the sensory, motor, visceral, and affective states they find in others (Gallese, 2003; Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1994; Stotland, 1969). Christine invests in displaying an empathic approach and can be personally affected by students' thoughts and feelings. Looking across the accounts, she is aware of an internal conflict in this area. She describes herself as being "sometimes too empathetic because I feel too much for situations" (i_1).

Christine has “learnt to deal with it professionally” so she is not overwhelmed, at one point noting “I know how that child would feel”. In another instance, she recognises that “I cannot necessarily take on the issues of students. It is my role to take an interest in their lives so professionally that is what I would do 100 percent” (i_1). When asked on the extent to which she takes a personal interest, she said “if I saw them outside of school I would continue to take an interest in them but it would be more of a family interest. I am very interested in them” (i_1). While effective teachers consistently behave in a friendly and personal manner, they also seek to maintain appropriate teacher-student structure roles (Brookhart & Loadman, 1992; Peart & Campbell, 1999). At interview, Christine spoke of a year in which she taught a student whose parent suicided during the term. Seeing the impact this had on the student on a daily basis required Christine to learn to manage her empathy in the classroom.

Christine is aware she might overreach at times in her feelings for student situations and is sometimes unsure whether there is a matched affect (Pianta et al., 2008). For example, in the vignettes Christine says “But now looking at Hayden and how confused he looks, I think I need to consider that further. I am still trying to look at him to get a response because he has not given me one” (i_1 v_2). In another vignette, she acknowledges that after Melissa engages in writing about how she is feeling that “I was still trying to get her to talk to me. I can just tell in my voice there that I am trying to do that” (i_2 v_2).

5.5 Expressions of Cognitive and Affective Empathy

Christine was asked if she considers herself to be empathic and if this was always the case. She answered in the affirmative. Christine’s accounts of the specific examples of empathy in the vignettes were coded against the Baron-Cohen and Wheelwright (2004) empathy definitions. On 22 occasions across the vignettes, Christine *recognised* student(s) mental states (e.g., “I think that she was thinking 'Why won’t he answer my question?' She was frustrated” – i_1 v_2). In 28 instances, she

responded to a student's mental state with an appropriate emotion based on care. For example, "I was playfully tugging on her hat to show her some reassurance" (i_2 v_2).

5.6 Examples of Demonstrated Empathy – Vignettes of Christine's Interaction

As Christine worked part-time, her teaching was filmed in two separate weeks to make up a week of footage – in Term 3, Week 2 (T_1: 24–25 July, 2014) and Week 7 (T_1: 28–29 August, 2014), and eight weeks later in Term 4, Week 3 (T_2: 23–24 October, 2014) and Week 5 (T_2: 6–7 November, 2014). Christine identified three positive empathy moments at T_1 and two moments at T_2 (five altogether) as vignettes for analysis, and a synopsis of each vignette was provided and checked by her for trustworthiness (Guba, 1981; Shenton, 2004). This section reports on these synopses, Christine's mentalization diary entries and her responses on reviewing the vignette at interview.

T_1 Vignette 1. The first of the five vignettes chosen by Christine for analysis relates to her use of situation selection and modelling. A synopsis of the elements observed in the footage and agreed to by Christine appears in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4

Tara and Jane

Vignette synopsis
"Jane" falls over during transition from class to a Japanese lesson. "Tara" stands over her and laughs at her. Jane blushes with embarrassment. Christine calls the girls over to discuss their responses. Christine explains that Tara needs to understand how Jane felt about the situation and what she should do next time and to ensure Jane doesn't feel embarrassed. Tara apologises and gives Jane a hug.

Her diary stated that Christine chose this moment to demonstrate how she "responded to a student laughing at another for falling over". She described her relationships with these students as "strong, respectful and caring. Jane is very sensitive and often anxious". Christine identified her actions as "noticing Tara laughing and Jane on the ground. I called them over for a conversation about the incident and their responses to it". She described her thinking as "a teachable moment for Tara who is reasonable once things are explained to her", and her feeling state as "sad for Jane who

is already over anxious". Looking back later, what did she think? "I treated both girls respectfully and honestly. I made sure Tara understood the error and that Jane was no longer embarrassed. I maintained the relationship between myself and each girl, and between them". From the student perspective, Christine describes student thinking as "Tara laughing at Jane on the floor, and Jane realising that she was being laughed at. Tara was not considering Jane's feelings. Jane felt embarrassed that she fell and that someone laughed at her", and student feeling states as "Jane was still embarrassed as I was speaking to them. But then she was relieved after Tara understood and apologised. Tara gave Jane a hug without prompting".

In identifying the empathy shown and its significance, Christine said "I don't want Tara to go through life laughing at people who make mistakes, and I don't want Jane to think it is okay for someone to laugh when she makes mistakes" (i_1 v_1). Upon reviewing the vignette, she talked about how "Tara doesn't read social situations very well", consequently stating that "this was a good moment for her",

> I wanted to talk to these girls about it. This wasn't something that Jane intended or wanted to be funny. Jane is seeing a psychologist to address issues of anxiety. I thought Tara needed to understand how Jane felt and what she could learn for next time something like this happens. (i_1 v_1)

The vignette illustrates the use of positioning and perspective-taking as an empathy strategy. Christine engages in shared experience to build perspective-taking, using a cognitive empathy approach to provide social support. Modelling provides a way to infer other people's mental states to which we have no direct access allowing insights into behaviour (Frith & Frith, 2001).

In summary, Christine's empathic actions observed in this vignette were: following-up, social and emotional support, modelling, valuing, perspective-taking, motivation, behaviour management, and respect.

T_1 Vignette 2. The second vignette chosen by Christine relates to the role of attention modulation to modify emotions where observers' up- or down- regulate empathy (Zaki, 2014). A synopsis of the elements observed in the footage and confirmed by Christine appears in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5

Hayden and Ella

Vignette synopsis
Hayden has refused to answer Ella's survey question ["which is your favourite football team?"]. Ella is confused why he won't answer. She has approached Christine for help. Christine identifies the issue by listening to each student. Ella does not have Hayden's team in her options. Christine explains to Hayden he is not being unfaithful to his team by nominating another. She negotiates with Ella to ensure the wording of her question allows for a "preference" rather than a "favourite". Hayden answers Ella's question.

In her diary, Christine stated she chose this moment as "Ella had approached me saying that Hayden refused to answer her survey question. They were frustrated". She nominated her actions as "listening to each student and then speaking to Hayden about Ella's purpose to help him see he was not being unfaithful by nominating another. I ensured a rewording of Ella's question". She described her thinking as "Ella must be confused about why Hayden won't answer. Hayden was frustrated that his team was not represented in Ella's options", and her feeling state as "feeling for each student because I could see the predicament from both sides". From the student perspective, Christine identified student actions as "Hayden being stubborn and Ella being willing to listen and make changes if necessary". She described student thinking as "Ella was calm and eventually understood by me and then Hayden. I think Hayden was initially stubborn but then understood the situation more clearly after discussion", and student feeling states as "they both left the discussion happy with no further questions. Hayden answered. I think they accepted each other's state of mind."

Upon reviewing the vignette, Christine provided further elaboration about the scenario,

> Hayden has been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. I wanted to help the children clear a disagreement so they could both go on with the survey. I didn't notice it then, but

> looking at it now Hayden looks really confused. At the time I was more concerned for her. She came to me with the issue. Hayden was unsure because she didn't present him with an option he wanted to choose. I think she was thinking "Why won't he just answer my question?" I think she wouldn't have understood. She wanted to get everybody's response. This is something within her control and that is why she spoke to me. (i_1 v_2)

Christine described the empathy shown and its significance in this vignette in the following terms,

> I can help Hayden's understanding towards a classmate. Some of the things that occur with him are bigger things that he might not understand. With something like this, I can talk to him to help him see it doesn't have to be his favourite. For Ella, I want her to know if she has a concern it will be dealt with. (i_1 v_2)

This quote demonstrates Christine engaging in attention modulation as an empathy strategy to alter the initial process of generating emotions (Zaki, 2014). She seeks to down- regulate empathy and emotional responses by shifting attention away from affective cues (Todd et al., 2012). Christine responds to avoidance and approach motives by the students and is seen to be modifying her attention to student emotions to increase her empathy. She engages in shared experience to build mutual perspective-taking by modelling cognitive empathy to explore what students think and feel. She then assesses situational perspective-taking based on empathy accuracy (Ickes, 1997), and shows mindful awareness of Hayden's recent attitudes, actions and behaviour in the classroom. She initially reads Ella's emotional state as it was Ella who initially approached her. As the vignette progresses, her attention to Hayden's state of mind increases. Upon reviewing the vignette, Christine feels she may have appraised Hayden's emotional cues wrongly.

In summary, Christine's empathic actions observed in this vignette were: active listening, attention modulation, appraisal, student voice, following-up, reflection, negotiation, and positioning.

T_1 Vignette 3. The next vignette chosen by Christine relates to situation selection where teachers make choices about empathic engagement before being exposed to student states and accordingly regulate their approach. A synopsis of the elements observed in the footage appears in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6

Jane

Vignette synopsis
A discussion with a group of students whilst eating lunch. Jane is going on an overseas flight this evening and is anxious about the trip. She talks about what is about to happen. A group of girls share their experiences. The lunch bell rings and the lesson begins. Jane comes up to Christine with her work saying "I can't do this". At the end of the lesson Jane gives Christine her work in tears. Christine sits down with Jane for a chat. She asks "What is the matter?" Jane explains she is upset as she found out last night from her dad that her auntie is sick again with cancer. Christine lets Jane talk and her friends come over to offer support.

In her diary, Christine wrote that she chose this moment to show "how keen children are to share their experiences. Initially Jane is trying to draw attention to herself about her trip through what she is sharing and her body language. Notice how the students rally around Jane to provide support". Christine described her actions as "keeping the discussion light and focussed on everyday things. Once I realised what was going on, I sat her down to talk to her about it rather than just saying it will be okay". She described her thinking state during the moment: "She often requires more day-to-day events to ground her. I thought she was anxious about her trip but on discussion with her I discovered there was more to it. She has a lot on her plate. She is going on a huge overseas trip and she has just found out her aunty is unwell again". She described her feeling state as "initially calm and understanding". Looking back later, what did she think? "I allowed her to say

what she needed to say as well as encouraging other children to participate. I think I dealt with the issue appropriately and put her thoughts at ease".

Upon reviewing the vignette, Christine talked about the role of appraising student states and modifying her empathic approach,

> I was very aware how nervous Jane was. I wanted to let her talk about what was going on and to listen. I focus my attention on her. I knew that it was work that she was capable of so I didn't think it was the work making her upset. She kept coming to me saying "I just can't do this". I thought that was unusual. I knew something was wrong. If she is upset about this trip, I am happy just to let her talk. She was distraught. She gave me her work sobbing. I felt a lot for her when she was explaining her situation. Possibly the reason the girls swarmed to her is because they saw how upset she was and how concerned I was. (i_1 v_3)

When asked to identify the empathy she is showing and its significance, Christine replied,

> It's important because I just don't want to talk to them when I am teaching. I need to have a relationship with them and be interested in their lives beyond the classroom because obviously it makes up who they are. (i_1 v_3)

An empathy strategy of situation selection is based on the idea that regulation often precedes, as opposed to follows, emotion generation in another. In the classroom teachers make choices about empathic engagement before being exposed to student states. Initially, Christine perceives a milder version of Jane's affect (e.g., sadness). She misreads the cues resulting in a misread of Jane's affect and situation (Bernstein, Young, Brown, Sacco, & Claypool, 2008; Porter & ten Brinke, 2008). Christine is seen to shift her belief about the intensity of Jane's affective state and adjust her approach. At first, Christine chooses to allow Jane to talk about her trip with peers and to keep her distance heading off the need for an initial empathic response. Observers can choose to put themselves in, or take themselves out of, empathy's way based on the observers' use

of exposure control to adjust the balance of contact with empathy-inducing cues (Hodges & Bissas-Denier, 2007; Hodges & Wegner, 1997). Once Christine realises the seriousness of the issue, she can be seen to engage in a sympathetic response.

In summary, Christine's empathic actions observed in this vignette were: situation selection, attention modulation, appraisal, listening, sympathy, and social/emotional support.

T_2 Vignette 1. The first vignette chosen by Christine from T_2 illustrates her empathic actions of following-up, situation selection, and appraisal. A synopsis of the elements observed and confirmed by Christine for trustworthiness appears in Table 5.7.

Table 5.7

Oliver

Vignette synopsis
A lunchtime chat between Christine, Oliver and a group of four students. In the conversation, it is made clear that yesterday Oliver had experienced difficulty with the group and became very upset. Oliver wants to play but the group are not interested and are teasing him. Christine is following-up to see how Oliver is feeling. He is okay today. Christine states that she is aware of the situation and willing to help him.

In her diary, Christine wrote that she chose this moment to show "Oliver having difficulties with another student. I spoke to him yesterday when I noticed it happening. We discussed strategies and ways to deal with it. Today I wanted to touch base and see how he is coping and feeling". Christine nominated her actions as "giving him the opportunity to air his opinion. I don't want him to think he is alone in having to deal with it". She described her thinking as "how he must feel being victimized when he has done nothing to provoke it", and her feeling state as "proud of him for having used the strategies". Looking back later, what did she think? "I ensured he felt safe and that he had the skills to deal with these incidents". From the student perspective, Christine described a history of conflict between these two students: "Oliver has had repeated incidents with this child. He gets very upset. He has matured over the year in dealing with the other child's behaviour". She identified his actions as typical: "He is listening, taking on board what is being said and acting on

the advice/suggestions". She described his thinking as "wanting to go out to play. He immediately thought he was in trouble when I asked to talk to him", and his feeling state as "being listened to by people who will help him".

Upon reviewing the vignette, Christine talked about the motivation for her actions: "I wanted to help him. I am listening and modelling. I want them to hear how others deal with the situation so they see the effects of their behaviour". In identifying the empathy in the vignette and its significance, Christine replied, "I wanted to see how he was coping. He doesn't understand why he is crying, why this situation made him so upset and why it is affecting him" (i_2 v_1).

Empathy processes are deeply contextual where features of the situation in relation to Oliver, his experience, and his relationships with other student(s) alter the empathy expressed by Christine. Her motivation to want to help Oliver can be seen as an intensification of empathy that has already occurred—a modulation of the initial empathy experience she felt when she encountered Oliver being "victimised" the day before (i_2 v_1).

In summary, Christine's empathic actions observed in this vignette were: following-up, listening, appraisal, and social/emotional support.

T_2 Vignette 2. The final vignette chosen by Christine relates to situation appraisal, emotional manipulation, student body language, and modelling to alleviate a student's anxiety. A synopsis of the elements observed in the vignette and confirmed by Christine appears in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8

Melissa

Vignette synopsis
Melissa is crying and too distraught to talk. Christine asks her to write down her feelings. Melissa does so and leaves the letter addressed to Christine on a table in the classroom. Christine asks Melissa to come inside (lunchtime) to talk about it. The letter raises three issues. First, Melissa found something in maths too difficult. The second issue relates to feedback Christine has given that some work needs editing. The third issue relates to an ongoing social issue with a friend. Melissa is crying and turns away. Christine provides support by making suggestions to Melissa about how she might resolve the issue. Christine asks “Are you happy to do this?” Melissa indicates she is not. Christine asks “What if we convened the whole group and we did it together?” This satisfies Melissa. Christine ensures Melissa feels okay to go outside and is no longer upset. Christine touches Melissa’s hat as a gesture of reassurance on her way out.

In her diary, Christine wrote that she selected this moment to show “how very upset Melissa is and how I try to understand her upset”. The context was “Melissa’s social problems with some of the other children. My relationship with her is good. I don’t think she would voluntarily speak up without me inviting her to explain her feelings”. Christine identified her actions in the vignette: “I spoke to her privately. She gets shy when having personal/social discussions in front of other children”. She described her thinking as “noticing how incredibly upset she appears to be. She seemed to be more upset than usual. I wasn’t sure why she was so upset, so I was keen to get to the bottom of it", and her feeling state as “feeling concerned for her wellbeing.” Looking back later, what did she think? “I made sure she was feeling okay. I left her with options to deal with the problem from here onwards”. From the student perspective, Christine describes Melissa’s actions as “ongoing issues with a friend. She was very upset, crying, and turning away. She is often shy, but rarely crying like she was during this discussion”. She described Melissa’s thinking as “genuinely upset. I don’t think she was looking to solve the problem herself. I think she wanted me to solve it”, and Melissa’s feeling state as “overwhelmed and needing support”.

At interview, Christine was asked to elaborate on the scenario and discussion including the issues raised in the letter,

> I go through what Melissa had written in her letter and try to have that discussion that she wasn't able to before because she was so upset. She is a bright student, but feels she has to get everything right. When she doesn't, she panics and withdraws into herself. She won't ask for help. That's why I say to her "you must come and see me". The social issues are common for her. I think a lot of it comes from the fact she shuts down when she can't achieve something. (i_2 v_2)

Christine described the empathy shown and its significance in this vignette in the following terms,

> This is the reason these conversations take place. Because if I am not going to have these conversations with these students then it's going to impact on their learning because they are going to think "I am not valued in this classroom. My thoughts and my interactions are not acknowledged, what's the point?" What I try and do in these situations is be acknowledging, and try and give them some ways to make decisions to go forward. (i_2 v_2)

A criticism of empathy raised in the literature is that cognitive insights generated can be used to manipulate people for self-serving ends (Bateman & Fonagy, 2006). This type of misuse involves distortions of others' feelings or a misrepresentation of one's own experience. An example often cited in the literature relates to a serial killer trying to understand his victim's mind to lure them to their deaths by taking the cognitive steps into another's shoes without any affect sharing or concern for welfare (Krznaric, 2014). Stotland (1969) examined techniques for manipulating empathy where subjects were exposed to a person in distress and were consequently instructed either to observe the victim's reactions (low empathy) or to imagine the victim's feelings (high empathy). Subjects in the low-empathy condition helped less when escape was easy than when it was difficult based on an egoistic desire to relieve sadness (personal distress). Subjects in the high empathy condition, however, displayed a high rate of selfless help even when escape was easy. Their help was directed toward the altruistic goal of reducing the distress of the person in need.

According to the empathy-altruism hypothesis (Batson, 1991), if you feel empathy towards another person you will help regardless of what you might gain from it.

Christine is aware Melissa is seeking to manipulate the situation when she states “she had been moping openly, ensuring I notice” (i_2 v_2). She reasons about Melissa’s representations of the world requiring her to mentalize about states she does not share. There is a hydraulic relationship between empathy where deploying her mentalizing inhibits her experience of sharing with the student (Epley, Keysar, Van Boven, & Gilovich, 2004; Zaki, Hennigan, Weber, & Ochsner, 2010). Emotional states such as fear can restrict Melissa’s capacity to mentalize (“she shuts down” – i_2 v_2) resulting in reverting to stereotypical fixed patterns of conceptualization - to assume immediately the past is repeating in the present. Melissa reacts on the basis of concrete behaviours and her own internal mental state wanting the fear to subside. In extreme cases, she would go into ‘fight/flight/freeze’ (Cannon, 1932) or ‘tend and befriend’ (Taylor et al., 2000). Whether one fights, freezes, or flees in response to arousal depends on the stressor. If the person sizes up the threat and determines they have a realistic chance, then attack or fight is likely. In circumstances in which the threat is perceived to be more formidable, flight is more probable. Tending involves nurturance activities designed to protect the self and others that promote safety and reduce distress; befriending is the creation and maintenance of social networks that may aid in the process.

In summary, Christine’s empathic actions observed in this vignette were: noticing, following-up, motivation, student comfort, manipulation, altruism, listening, appraisal, and social/emotional support.

5.7 Emotional Support Ratings of Lessons and Empathy Vignettes

The five vignettes were scored for levels of emotional support (Positive climate; Teacher sensitivity; Regard for student perspectives) using CLASS (Pianta et al., 2012). Four additional live classroom lessons (two at each timepoint) were observed for levels of emotional support and

similarly coded (Appendix O). Christine's average ratings across the lessons and vignettes are shown in *Figure 5.3*.

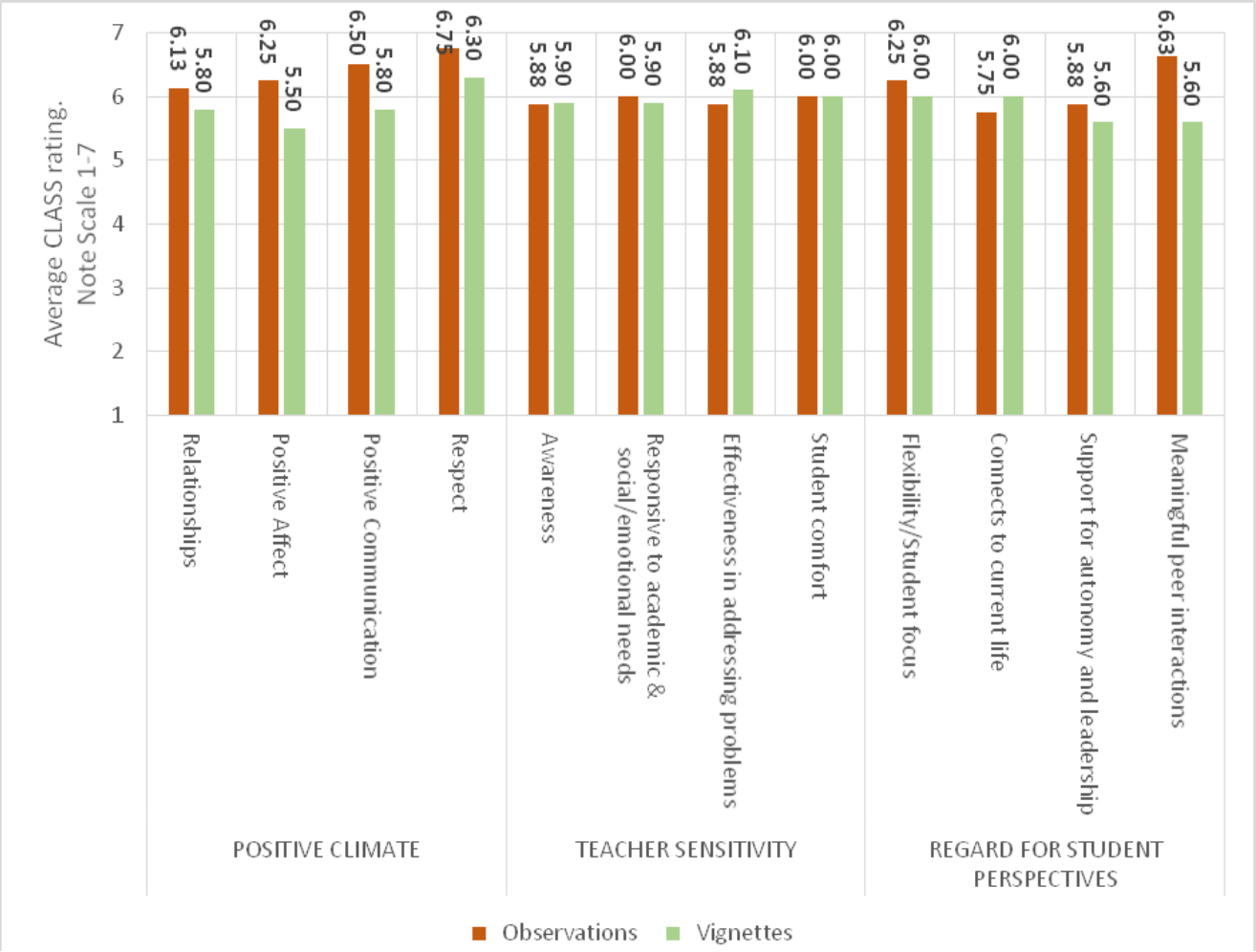


Figure 5.3. Christine's Average Lesson Observation and Vignette Ratings by Emotional Support Dimension. *Note:* 1–2=low quality; 3–5=mid-range quality; and 6–7= high quality.

Christine's emotional support variables at the domain levels of positive climate, teacher sensitivity and regard for student perspective were within the high-range across all lesson observations and vignettes. At the dimension level, all elements for both the lesson observations and vignettes were also rated in the high-range or the top of the mid-range.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter introduced Christine's personal understanding of empathy and her relational and teaching style goals. A phenomenological research design was used to access Christine's thoughts

and feelings to show how she experienced empathy including how she demonstrates and experiences empathy in the classroom drawing on her vignettes, diary entries and responses at interview.

Phenomenological analysis of the transcripts distilled the essence of empathy in Christine's teaching and conveyed what this experience is like for her. She seeks to understand students as people first and to know them as more than students. She strives to be aware of what is going on in their lives and to adjust the way she sees or deals with a student based on their situation. Christine asks respectful questions and listens to understand what students are thinking or doing. She follows up to know how a child feels about a situation. She is sometimes "too empathetic" and feels "too much" for situations. She has learnt not to take on all the issues of students and to draw a line to deal with issues professionally. She starts the year modelling empathy to teach students to understand their peers and their situations, show mutual respect and compassion. She acknowledges and gives students ways to make decisions for themselves. She listens and is available to help.

The empathy vignettes and mentalization diary entries show that Christine "enjoys" her relationships with her students, values students as individuals and seeks to create a classroom culture based on "children showing mutual respect" (i_1), where students feel "comfortable", "safe", and "secure" (i_2). Her word choices and imagery show she is passionate about the importance of empathy in her teaching. Wiemann (1977) defined communicative competence as "an ability to choose behaviours that successfully accomplish interpersonal goals within the constraints of a situation, where displays of respect are manifestations of affiliation/support" (p. 198). Christine's diary entries reveal she often feels "supportive" about the experiences in the empathy she models. "Teachers (need) to understand… that emotions are an essential part of a productive adult life, and are important in understanding the goals we attain" (Sutton, 2005, p. 271). Her empathy manifests as an affective and cognitive process expressed through understanding students as individuals, an awareness of student situations, following-up to provide social and emotional support, and feeling

“too much” for student situations. She actively works to establish positive relationships and to empower students to make decisions through negotiation.

Christine values relationships with her students, being “very interested in them as people” (i_1). She values empathy in the culture of the classroom as a means to show students “they are valued” (i_2) and “acknowledged” (i_2). She sees empathy as a way of providing support and as a strategy to empower individuals to make decisions and increase their agency. “That’s the way that I show empathy. I don’t want to solve the problem for them. I want them to solve it” (i_2 v_2). Christine’s approach reflects a combination of cognitive and affective assessments in response to social and emotional cues. At interview, she discussed the situation of a student whose grandfather had passed away and her expectations his peers would respect him and not make comments they know would be hurtful, stating that she wouldn’t tolerate that and would follow up appropriately. Her focus on modelling authenticity is shown in the “different levels of empathy” she works at in relationships to meet individual needs.

Chapter 6 Case 3 – Emily

This chapter presents the case study findings of Emily's experience of teacher empathy in the classroom. Emily has been teaching for two years and is classed as a "graduate" teacher (<6 years' experience: AITSL, 2011a). This was her second consecutive year teaching a composite Grade 3/4 class (7-9 year olds) at School B. There are 27 students in her class. Emily values teacher-student relationships "very highly", based on "having a really good relationship with the kids" and being "very proactive in what the kids do" (i_1).

This chapter begins with Emily's relational goals (Butler, 2012) and self-ratings of her (and her students') perceptions of teaching style dimensions (Watt & Richardson, 2007). Emily nominated four empathy vignettes for closer analysis, and a written synopsis of the actions contained in each vignette were read to Emily for a trustworthiness check (Guba, 1981; Shenton, 2004). The results of data coding for her mentalizing characteristics (Luyten et al., 2012) are presented as the building blocks to consider the empathy data. Emily's personal understanding of empathy is explored, as well as her three higher order themes derived from IPA (Smith et al., 2009)—(1) *Taking a personal interest*, (2) *Modelling and acknowledging students*, and (3) *Providing social and emotional support*. Emily's actions in the vignettes were coded for cognitive and affective empathy elements.

The final sections provide examples of Emily's self-nominated demonstrations of empathy in the classroom, both from the vignettes and the interviews. The results of data coding for a range of empathy aspects are then presented including independent evaluations of Emily's lessons and vignettes for levels of emotional support using CLASS (Pianta et al., 2012). The chapter concludes with a discussion of themes as a narrative account of the essence of Emily's empathy experience.

6.1 Relational Goals

Emily described her class as "a really responsive group with a lot of personalities. I have a few tricky kids and a few 'out there' kids. A couple of students are behaviourally very demanding and

my time is taken up so much by them" (i_1). She provided ratings of her relational goals for student interaction using Butler's criteria (2012). Emily rated her goals at T_1 (Term 3, Week 5) and 14 weeks later at T_2 (Term 4, Week 6) on a 5-point scale (1=totally disagree; 5=totally agree), and all scores were very high (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1

Emily's Self-ratings of Relational Goals: Scale 1 (totally disagree) – 5 (totally agree)

Item Description	*T_1 Score*	*T_2 Score*
"I would feel most successful as a teacher if I saw that I was developing closer and better relationships with students in my class"	5	5
"My main goal as a teacher is to show my students that I care about them"	5	4
"More than anything, I aspire to create deep personal relationships with each and every student"	4	4
"Building relationships with students is most important for me"	4	4
"I take care of my students if they have problems"	5	5
"I take time to get to know my students and to know what is happening with them in school and at home"	5	4

Note. Sourced from "Striving to Connect: Extending an Achievement Goal Approach to Teacher Motivation to Include Relational Goals for Teachers," by R. Butler, 2012, *Journal of Educational Psychology, 104*, p. 729.

6.2 Perceptions of Teaching Style Dimensions

Emily was asked to rate her teaching style dimensions (TSS) at each timepoint using Watt and Richardson's (2007) instrument (Appendix J) to assess perceptions of the classroom environment on a 7-point Likert-type scale (*Figure 6.1*).

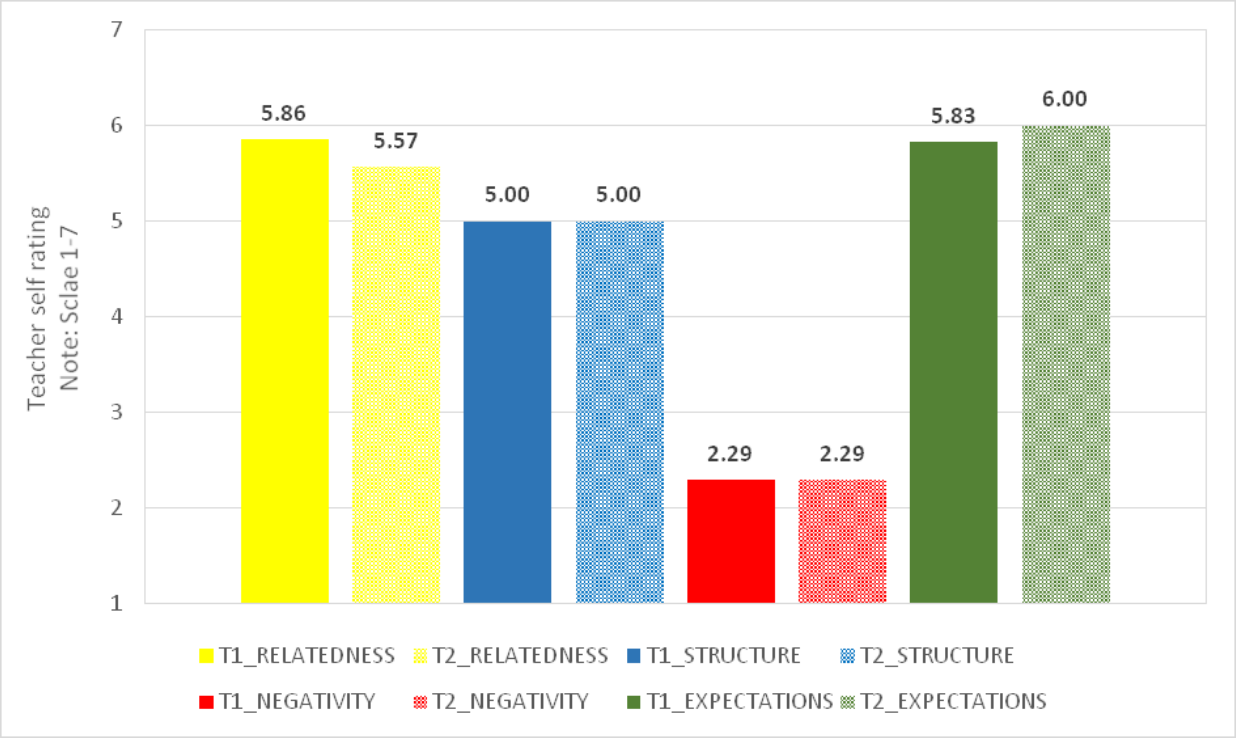


Figure 6.1. Self-Rated Teaching Style Scale factor means for Emily. *Note:* 1= Not at all; 7= A lot.

Emily's perceptions of her *relatedness* were high and reasonably constant (5.86_{t1} – 5.57_{t2}). Her scores for *structure* ($5.00_{t1, t2}$) and *negativity* ($2.29_{t1, t2}$) were also constant, whereas her perceptions of *expectations* were high, and slightly higher at T_2 (5.83_{t1} – 6.00_{t2}).

Emily's six students also rated their perceptions of her teaching style using Watt and Richardson's (2007) student instrument (Appendix K). Composite factor scores were created by averaging component items for each and factor means were plotted (*Figure 6.2*).

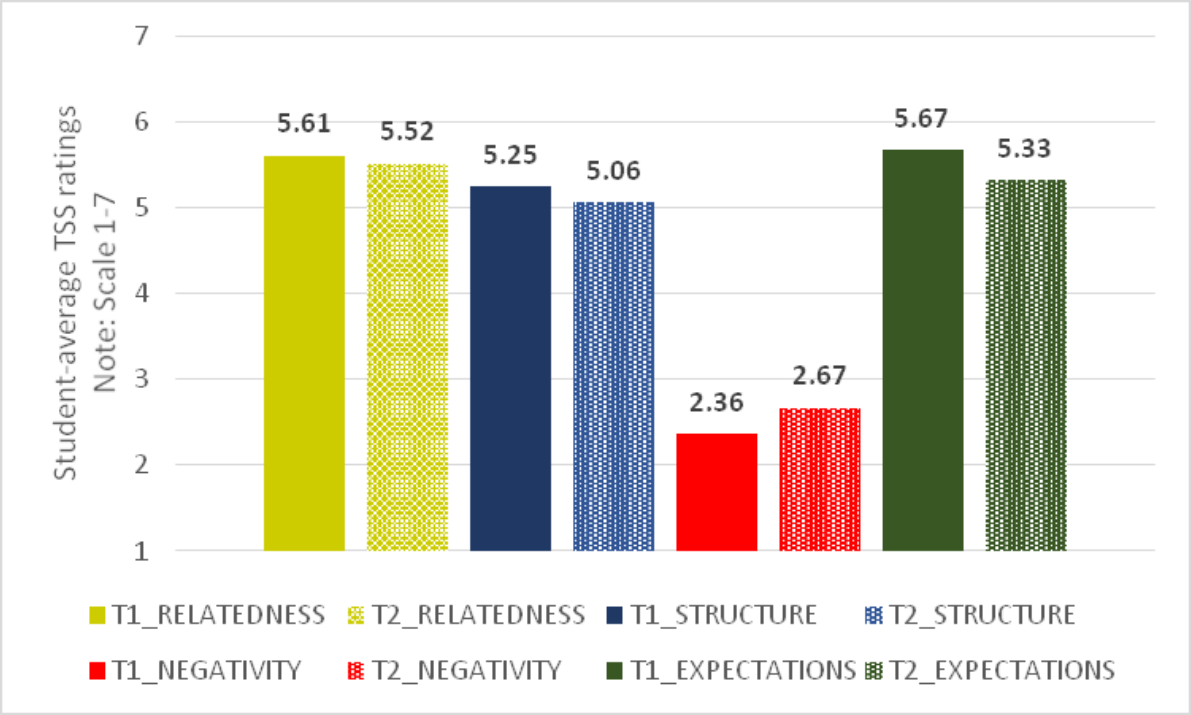


Figure 6.2. Student-Rated Teaching Style Scale factor means for Emily. *Note:* 1= Not at all; 7= A lot.

Emily's students perceived her relatedness to be high and fairly constant (5.61_{t1} – 5.52_{t2}). Their perception scores of her expectations (5.67_{t1} – 5.33_{t2}) and structure (5.25_{t1} – 5.06_{t2}) were also high although slightly lower at T_2, whereas their perceptions of her negativity were low, but slightly higher at T_2 (2.36_{t1} – 2.67_{t2}).

6.3 Emily's Mentalization Characteristics

The mentalization aspects evident in Emily's responses from her diary entries and interview responses are reported here. Table 6.2 lists themes covered by the coded open comments using Luyten et al. (2012). The frequencies indicate the prominence of each mentalization characteristic to Emily.

Table 6.2

Frequency of Emily's Mentalization Characteristics from Diary Entries and Interviews

Item Description	Frequency
Security of mental exploration and openness to discovery	44
Acknowledgement of opaqueness and tentativeness of mental states	37
Genuine interest in the mental states of self and others and their relation	41
Adaptive flexibility in switching from automatic to controlled mentalization	21
Acknowledgement of changeability of mental states, including awareness of developmental perspective (attachment history influences relating to self & others)	25
Integrate cognitive and affective features of self and others ("embodied mentalization")	15
Sense of realistic predictability and controllability of mental states	33
Ability to regulate distress in relation to others	17
Capacity to be relaxed and flexible, not "stuck" in one point of view	38
Capacity to be playful, with humour engaging rather than hurtful or distancing	12
Ability to solve problems by give-and-take between own and other's perspectives	23
Ability to describe one's own experience rather than defining other people's experience or intentions	21
Willingness to convey "ownership" of behaviour rather than it "happens to" me	26
Curiosity about other people's perspectives and expectations that one's own views will be extended by others	12
Relational strengths	
• Curiosity	20
• Safe uncertainty	19
• Contemplation and reflection	62
• Perspective-taking	35
• Forgiveness	13
• Impact awareness	56
• Non-paranoid attitude	14
Perception of one's own mental functioning	
• Developmental perspective	29
• Realistic scepticism	14
• Internal conflict awareness	18
• Self-inquisitive stance	22
• Awareness of the effect of affect	26
• Acknowledgement of unconscious or preconscious functioning	54
• Belief in changeability	13
Self-representation	
• Rich internal life	26
• Autobiographical continuity	7
• Advanced explanatory and listening skills	63
General values and attitudes	
• Tentativeness	10
• Humility (moderation)	28
• Playfulness and humour	9
• Flexibility	15
• Give-and-take	36
• Responsibility and accountability	27

Note. Sourced from "Assessment of Mentalization," by P. Luyten, P. Fonagy, B. Lowyck, and R. Vermote, 2012, *Handbook of Mentalizing in Mental Health Practice*, p. 58.

Emily's mentalization characteristics with regard to student thoughts and feelings were coded in 584 instances. In 44 instances Emily displayed security of mental exploration and openness to discovery (for example, "I love it. I really do! I love hearing their stories and their views on different things that they are interested in"). In 41 instances, Emily showed genuine interest in the mental states of self and others and their relationship (e.g., "There are a couple of girls here who play netball and so we usually get together on a Monday morning and report how we have all gone. We talk about that social aspect because I think they get a better understanding that you do care"). Another 38 instances were coded where Emily displayed a capacity to be relaxed and flexible and not 'stuck' in one view (e.g., "I was focussed when talking, listening to James and I was open. Asking questions so that we were having a conversation. Not just me talking at him or him talking at me"). Finally, in 62 instances Emily showed contemplation and reflection as a relational strength (e.g., "I think you need to have a positive relationship. If your relationship is always negative, for example, if someone is always doing the wrong thing I don't think you would have as much empathy. Being in this profession you may come across particular children who you might have more negative interactions with. You say to the kids 'that one is in the past and we are starting fresh' so when you talk again with that person it is not negative").

Emily's displayed perceptions of her own mental functioning were coded in 176 instances. In 54 of those instances she acknowledged unconscious or preconscious functioning (e.g., "I always come home and really think about things that they have said or funny things that they do"). This behaviour demonstrates a relaxation of controlled mentalization and judgments of intent and trustworthiness in secure attachment relationships (Bartels & Zeki, 2004). In 23 coded instances, she demonstrated a developmental perspective in regard to her own mental functioning (e.g., "I think my expectations have also developed because in my first year I was trying to find my feet whereas now I know what to expect and am able to just cope with different situations"), and in another 24 instances she displayed awareness of the effect of affect (e.g., "I think they know they can trust me").

Emily's self-representational characteristics were coded in 96 instances. In 63 of those instances she displayed advanced explanatory and listening skills (e.g., "I came home from camp feeling really guilty, because I thought those kids with behavioural needs obviously needed me which is fine… but those other kids who were coping, I didn't get the opportunity to bond with them. I came away thinking I was a bit disappointed in myself that I wasn't able to manage that better"). Another 26 instances were coded for rich internal life (e.g., "I think I have a welcoming environment that makes them feel safe so they are comfortable to come to me about anything"), and seven instances were coded for autobiographic continuity (e.g., "When I was working in retail and you'd have a tricky customer who maybe wasn't satisfied, being able to empathise with them and go 'I understand where you are coming from!' and trying to do your best to work with them. I think I have had a bit of indirect training with that prior work leading up to teaching").

Emily's general mentalization values and attitudes were evident in 125 instances: there were 36 instances of "give-and-take" (e.g., "I put my hand on their shoulder and say 'is that okay?' to just do that verbal check"), 28 instances of humility/moderation (e.g., "We have talked about coming to the teacher earlier rather than leaving it as a problem may be getting bigger"), and 27 instances relating to responsibility and accountability (e.g., "Using the restorative justice practice and going through those steps I think is a very empathetic approach hearing both sides and ensuring that it is followed through").

6.4 Phenomenology Themes

Emily's accounts generated 62 identified *empathy moments* in the classroom which I coded by applying Smith et al.'s (2009) IPA framework. Three higher order themes—*taking a personal interest in and out of school* (18 moments), *engaging in acknowledging student thoughts and feelings* (22), and *providing social and emotional support* (22) — emerged from the interviews and vignettes. Table 6.3 summarises these themes and associated sub-themes encapsulating Emily's

experiences of empathy. Emily's personal understanding of empathy is derived from these themes, as is her experiences of empathy in the classroom.

Table 6.3

Emily's Empathy Themes

Theme	Sub-Theme
Taking a personal interest in and outside school	A motivated approach Getting to know them Creating a positive environment
Modelling and acknowledging students	Positioning Role of touch and gesture Value of acknowledgment
Providing social and emotional support	Restorative justice to meet needs A regulated approach

Emily's understanding of empathy. Emily encapsulates her understanding of empathy as "being caring but also considerate and thoughtful of others" (i_1). Her reported experience of empathy begins with a passage where she describes how her teacher empathy is enacted,

> At the start of the year I think it is really important when you are trying to build that relationship that they know that what they are going to say is valued. If they come to me with a problem, it is important those first couple of times how I tackle it. If they came to me and said "this has happened" and I say "Oh well. You will be fine!" that is not very caring! They wouldn't get the sense I can come to Emily with a problem and she will help me sort it out. (i_1)

Emily overtly models empathy as a teaching tool by "showing I am caring, being positive and giving students' time to talk through things. You are safe, secure, and you are welcome" (i_1). At interview, she provided the following example,

> I show that I am facing them. That's important because that is a recognition that someone is acknowledging me and showing their full attention. I don't like to raise my voice. I keep a neutral tone. I know from feedback the kids appreciate that. I think I create a welcoming

> environment that makes them feel safe so they are comfortable to come to me about anything. A lot of them come up to me in the morning and give me a cuddle. (laughs) (i_1)

This extract illustrates Emily's use of strategies to create an empathic and nurturing environment, where "nurturance is the tendency to engage in behavior that promotes emotional support for others" (Gruen & Mendelsohn, 1986, p. 611).

Emily's accounts introduce two levels of empathy: 1) empathy she models *to* students ("I was listening, asking questions, seated at his level. I was focussed when talking, listening to James and open") and 2) valuing empathy shown *by* students ("Sophie is really good at dealing with social situations, being neutral and listening to their side"). Emily keeps student comfort in mind in her interactions ("the students need to feel comfortable for the level of empathy to be high") and adjusts her approach in response to a student's mental states. For example, in the vignettes she notices that Trevor "is feeling fairly comfortable, but then he is also probably also feeling anxious" during an assessment task,

> This can be a little daunting! Emily sitting on a table, on her own, calling you up, saying 'we are just going to read'. Particularly with that assessment, not all the kids read. I was trying to give him many prompts and make it as informal as I could as he can get nervous and anxious. So trying to think how I can do that better to make these kids feel comfortable and not put out. (i_1 v_2)

Similarly, she provides support by "sitting with James and taking extra time to have that one-on-one discussion…Looking at him, listening, working together as a team". This results in James feeling "quite comfortable to talk to me about the book". Once he is comfortable, Emily moderates her approach to "be a bit more light-hearted" and to "have a bit of a giggle about the story" in "a shared moment" (i_2 v_1).

A personal interest in and outside of school. Emily takes a personal interest in connecting with students both within and outside of school, describing her approach as "talking about that social aspect. Being involved in their lives in and outside of school is really important because I think they get a better understanding that you do care",

> I am very proactive in what the kids are doing, knowing who their siblings are in the school and being able to say "Oh, I saw your brother today and he told me you did this on the weekend". They are open and feel confident to talk to me about things that happen at school but also things that happen at home. I seek out what they are going to be doing, what their hobbies and interests are. I've got three girls that participate in the State School Spectacular, which I went to see on Friday. I wanted to show them that I was acknowledging what they were doing. Those girls were thrilled that their teacher took the whole day and was with them. I think it is really important to see we share interests and I acknowledge things they are interested in. (i_1)

Positive teacher-student encounters mostly occur outside the classroom, where conversations can cover a wide range of topics (Claessen et al., 2016). This extract shows friendly interaction by Emily to develop positive relationships with students based on high levels of affiliation. Including the setting in which such interactions take place helps interpret their meaning for participants (Nakamura, 2008). Frelin and Grannäs (2010) emphasize out-of-class spaces as relational arenas and argue that teachers and students co-construct in-between spaces where informal interactions can take place.

Emily models empathy in her personal interest to "get to know" her students "to understand them and find out what they like, to work out who their friends are, and the dynamics of the classroom, including the best ways to engage them, so they know that what they say is valued" (i_1). She seeks to establish a positive classroom environment early in the school year to connect and respond to students as individuals,

> One of the first activities we did was to reflect on the school holidays and what we had done. I sit at each table and I did my own reflection as well. We were talking about what we did, what was in common, and what was different. I talk to the kids to find out more about them to begin that relationship. I think that I am a very caring person and I show that care by acknowledging what they did to create the initial bond. (i_1)

In establishing relationships, Emily puts in place systems and routines that build an "open" environment where empathy can be expressed. For example, she uses a regular fortnightly class meeting to check-in and reflect on levels of empathy and positive climate,

> You can see the change in dynamics by the end of the term. We have more class meetings to talk about things. For example, "Look, we are not getting along as well. What might be the reasons?" By the end of the term, I am really tired and my patience is low. If someone does something I am not going to react as well. I think what is important is to have positives. Because if it is always negative then we would be reporting back saying "well you are doing this wrong", "this isn't working". It doesn't give you that positive feeling. I often put things up. It might be something little like "being really nice" or "I heard a couple of people say some friendly things today" to give that boost. I read a student one today. It says "Everyone is being really caring towards each other". I thought 'that was nice'. We share. (i_1)

In the literature, teachers have been shown to experience positive and negative affect in teacher-student relationships (Claessen et al., 2016). Emily invests in displaying an empathic approach and can be personally affected by students' thoughts and feelings. For example, when Trevor "talks for hours" about a holiday in America, Emily values talking informally to objectively imagine and understand a student's feelings and experiences, and to model listening and engagement in relation to those experiences (i_1 v_2). She views "talking informally" as a means to develop "a really good relationship" (i_1).

“A recognition that someone is acknowledging me”. A theme that emerged from her accounts was the value Emily places on acknowledging student effort. She does this by devoting her full attention and by using engaged body language such as facing them, eye contact, and sitting with them to “acknowledge what students’ are doing”, and “things they are interested in” (i_1). In the vignettes, Emily is seen to acknowledge Trevor’s interests in reading, and then to “work to develop those interests” based on “what he enjoys” (i_1 v_2). Another example of the value she places on demonstrating her full attention can be seen in Maria’s writing conference in i_1 v_1. In this vignette, the raters observed Emily physically turning towards Maria, looking at her work and at her using eye contact, and modelling considered listening and respectful language. Emily also described her actions,

> I stop and really show my whole attention, my listening. I think that is really important. Showing your full attention because they are sharing something personal. (i_1 v_1)

A number of vignettes highlight Emily’s focus on reading students’ body language. For example, she knows “James is uncomfortable” because “he gets very angry in the face”, “quite red”, “the frown” and “he fidgets a lot” (i_2 v_2). This alerts her that an incident has occurred requiring her immediate attention. She is “proactive to bring it on” and ask if “something has happened” (i_2 v_2). Before engaging in a restorative justice discussion (Morrison, 2007), Emily consciously sets up the physical positioning for her empathic approach by sitting at an equal level to allay perceptions of power (Schrodt et al., 2008),

> I was sitting down, trying to be at his level rather than standing over him and talking. Making sure I was listening and asking questions so we are having a conversation. Not me talking at him, or him talking at me. Asking him to come closer to me because quite often he will stand three metres away and try to have a conversation. (i_2 v_2)

The interpersonal aspect describes the positioning of a teacher toward the student. In the literature, proximity has been shown to be an important predictor of the onset of relationships with seating arrangements and positioning of students influencing teacher-student interactions (Claessen et al., 2016). Patterns of questions posed by teachers can differ between areas in a classroom (Moore, 1984), and students seated in specific zones may ask more questions (Marx, Fuhrer, & Hartig, 1999). That said, the exact effect of proximity in classroom settings, physical nearness and positioning on positive relationships remains unclear (Claessen et al., 2016).

A theme that emerged across the narratives is Emily's use of touch or gesture as a "physical way of showing that I am listening" (i_1 v_1),

> I think it's a caring way to just acknowledge and make them feel you are listening. A recognition someone is acknowledging me. My body language facing the student. Putting my hand on their shoulder if they are going through a hard time. With all the students in here, I'd feel quite comfortable to do that. At the beginning of the year, I wouldn't have done that because I wouldn't feel I have a close enough relationship. Whereas now, I feel comfortable and I think they feel comfortable. Obviously I put my hand on their shoulder and say "is that okay?" to do that verbal check. Because sometimes if you don't, they might feel uncomfortable and may not speak up. I know there is one student in here who doesn't appreciate being touched. But that is only if he doesn't feel comfortable with you. It is something you build up with different students. It doesn't even need to be a touch. If you are sitting on the floor, I might give a thumbs up, a wink or an air "high-five". A physical body acknowledgment, a gesture. (i_1)

In teacher-student encounters, recognition of non-verbal cues and explicit acknowledgment of students' feelings, concerns, and experiences are important to establish rapport in empathic relationships. Rapport can be strengthened by a teacher's ability to decode and encode non-verbal messages and convey understandings to students. Non-verbal behaviours that promote rapport

include efforts to match student postures, gestures, tempo and tone of voice, language patterns, gaze, laughter, and facial expressions (Mathews, Suchman, & Branch, 1993). The raters observed Emily trying to objectively imagine and understand students' feelings and experiences, and modelling this by focusing attention on students and their work.

"I would do anything to help and support them". The final theme that emerged across the accounts is Emily providing social and emotional support. Recurring fragments relating to the role of empathic connection with her students included "to help" (i_2 v_2) and provide "support" (i_2 v_1). She uses "restorative justice practices" (Morrison, 2007) to "make sure the students have time to talk it through" so that a child feels a situation is resolved (i_1). When asked whether empathy was always felt and/or expressed, Emily said,

> I think you need both elements. If you don't feel like you are being empathised with, I don't think you would be satisfied. Even just putting my hand on their shoulder if they are going through a hard time if something has happened would be something. (i_1)

Emily's demonstration of empathy reflects her recognition that students have diverse needs requiring her to understand them as individuals and to regulate her approach. In the vignettes, she can be seen to provide "support" to overcome Trevor's state of being "mildly anxious" and feeling "pressure" during assessment. She "rewords the questions to support him and make him feel like it is not an assessment" (i_1 v_2).

In another example, Emily provides social support to James, who is having issues in the playground. She focusses on "building his coping skills to support him" (i_2 v_2). James has been at four primary schools in three years and so "it takes him a long time to get comfortable with someone and start to trust them or think they are on his side" (i_2 v_2). She arranges a three-way meeting with James and his parents, noting "I am here for him and to help him" (i_2 v_2). It is agreed that James will look for Emily whenever he is having problems to enable him "to get help to solve problems" recognising that "sometimes we need help and someone to mediate" (i_2).

6.5 Expressions of Cognitive and Affective Empathy

Emily was asked if she considers herself to be empathic and if this was always the case. She answered in the affirmative, noting "I think being in this profession you maybe come across particular children who you might have more negative interactions with. It is really important to be able to manage that" (i_1).

On 47 occasions across the vignettes, Emily *recognised* student(s) mental states. For example, "I think that he is starting to trust me a bit more. Before, if he had a question and he couldn't understand something, he wouldn't ask. Whereas the last few days, he has been coming up and saying 'I don't get it. Can you come and help me?'" (i_2 v_2). In 40 instances, she *responded* to a student's mental state with an appropriate emotion based on care. For example, "I felt quite comfortable to put my hand on Maria's shoulder as a caring way to just acknowledge and make her feel you are showing your full attention" (i_1 v_1).

6.6 Examples of Demonstrated Empathy – Vignettes of Emily's Interaction

Emily's teaching was filmed for a week at two timepoints – in Term 3, Week 5 (T_1: 11–15 August, 2014) and 13 weeks later in Term 4, Week 6 (T_2: 10– 14 November, 2014). Four positive empathy moments (two at each timepoint) were identified from the footage as the vignettes for analysis. A synopsis of each vignette was provided and checked for trustworthiness at interview (Guba, 1981; Shenton, 2004). This section reports these synopses, Emily's mentalization diary entries and her responses on reviewing the vignette at interview.

T_1 Vignette 1. The first of the four vignettes chosen by Emily for analysis relates to her modelling body language and attentiveness. A synopsis of the elements observed in the footage and agreed to by Emily appears in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4

Maria's Writing Conference

Vignette synopsis
Emily conducts a personal writing conference with "Maria" at a student table to share her writing and to give feedback. She takes notes while Maria introduces her story. The conference is briefly interrupted by the behaviour of a group of boys in another part of the classroom. Emily goes over to sort it out and then returns and the conference resumes. She faces Maria, places a hand on Maria's shoulder in a caring way to acknowledge she is listening, and engages in the sharing. Emily is positive, supportive and focussed on Maria and her work. Maria talks about the process and discusses aspects of the story. Emily physically turns towards Maria, looks at her work, at her, engages in eye contact, and models considered listening to show her full attention.

Her diary stated that Emily chose this moment to "physically show that I am listening through my body language—facing Maria, eye contact, and physical contact". She described her relationship with this student as "great and positive. I have taught Maria now for two years". Emily nominated her actions as "a hand on Maria's shoulder and verbal interaction". She described her thinking as "making sure that Maria felt valued which is important when she is sharing. I was focussing on her", and her feeling state as "positive and supportive". Looking back later, what did she think? "I ensured I provided sufficient time and focus to Maria". From the student perspective, Emily had identified that Maria was "wanting a conference to share her writing and receive feedback". She nominated Maria's actions in the vignette as typical: "She is verbally sharing, sitting comfortably and looking around from time to time". She described Maria's thinking as "being creative and trying to share her thoughts and ideas", and her feeling state as "physically and mentally as I would feel" namely "feeling ownership at times, being disrupted/interrupted, and acknowledged".

Upon reviewing the vignette, I asked Emily to identify the empathy shown and its significance and to discuss the role of touch in expressing empathy in her classroom. In particular, I asked whether she uses physical cues with all or some students. She replied,

> This vignette shows what I am doing physically. Looking at them. At times I am writing notes, but then I stop and really show my whole attention. My whole body listening.

> Turning towards Maria, looking at her work, looking up at her. I think touch is okay with some students to make them feel you are listening. (i_1 v_1)

Her empathy approach is framed by her use of body language to support her cognitive processes. Donald (1991) argued the mind allows humans to explore another's face and body language to feel and share emotions. Empathy is adaptive, as sharing and understanding targets' states facilitates cooperation between interdependent individuals (de Waal, 2008).

In summary, Emily's empathic actions observed in this vignette were: body language, eye contact, positioning, management, acknowledging, touch, listening, genuine interest, modelling attention, sharing, valuing, questioning, encouragement, and tone of voice.

T_1 Vignette 2. The second vignette chosen relates to situation appraisal, student body language, and modelling to alleviate a student's anxiety. A synopsis of the elements observed in the footage and confirmed by Emily appears in Table 6.5.

Table 6.5

Trevor's Reading Conference

Vignette synopsis
Emily is in discussion with "Trevor" giving him many opportunities to respond to questions as part of an assessment task. She prompts him verbally and physically (pointing), talks calmly, gives him wait time and provides encouragement while he formulates his answers. Trevor is moving his legs, fidgeting, pausing and looking away. When talking informally, it can be seen that Emily and Trevor enjoy a positive relationship. But when Emily asks him a question related to the task, he can be seen to be nervous (fidgeting, looking away). She makes additional efforts to put him at ease by giving Trevor many prompts to make the assessment as informal as possible and discusses alternate topics relating to his interests to provide support.

In her diary, Emily stated that she chose this moment to show "my interactions with Trevor. I am talking with him and giving him many opportunities to respond to questions". She described Trevor as "very quiet and reserved". Emily nominated her actions as "looking and prompting (verbally and physically pointing), and talking calmly and quietly". She described her thinking and feeling states as "focussed to make sure I give him time and support". Looking back later, what did

she think? “I discussed alternative topics with Trevor and related these to his interests”. From the student perspective, Emily described Trevor as “working on his reading” and his actions in the vignette as typical: “He was talking at times off topic, moving his legs, pausing, looking away”. She described his thinking as “focussed on the questions knowing it is an assessment” and his feeling state as “anxious (mild), focussed, feeling pressure, comfort and support”.

Asked to elaborate on the scenario at interview, Emily provided some background about her relationship with Trevor, his attitude to reading, and how she moderates her teaching to meet his needs,

> Trevor is six months below level. At the start he wasn’t really interested and independent reading was a challenge. I have been working to develop his interests of what he enjoys. I try to purchase books I know are going to interest him and give him options. He can sometimes get nervous and anxious. I think he knows that he is not really confident and he doesn’t know the answer. He gets a bit stunned! He is not sure how to handle it. (i_1 v_2)

When asked to identify the empathy she is showing, and its significance, Emily said,

> Trevor doesn’t have that confidence. He freezes. I was trying to give him many prompts and make it as informal as I could. Giving him those questions but trying to reword it and give him helpful hints to support him. I think it is important because Trevor is not open and confident. It is a different sort of empathy I have to show. Trying to think on reflection how could I do that better to make him feel comfortable and not put out. (i_1 v_2)

These extracts demonstrate Emily seeking to display her care and use her knowledge and awareness of students to read their body language. She appraises the situation by listening, encouraging and accepting to model support and alleviate Trevor’s anxiety by using wait time. Emotional states such as fear restrict Trevor’s capacity to mentalize (“he freezes” – i_1 v_2). In

extreme cases, he would go into fight/flight/freeze (Cannon, 1932) or tend and befriend (Taylor et al., 2000).

In summary, Emily's empathic actions observed in this vignette were: inviting tone of voice, gesture, wait time, encouragement, prompting, and relating to student interests.

T_2 Vignette 1. The first vignette chosen by Emily at T_2 relates to appraisal, support and situation selection. A synopsis of the elements observed in the vignette and confirmed by Emily at interview appears in Table 6.6.

Table 6.6

James' Reading Conference

Vignette synopsis
"James" is catching up on a reading task. He has missed a lot of school due to a protracted family holiday. He is doing a literature response and working one-on-one with Emily. He has read the first chapter and they are discussing it. Emily sits with him and they read the questions together. She asks "Before you write anything, what could you write?" He says "Oh it's a cat". She says "Okay it is a cat. But what else can you tell me about it?" She provides prompts to enable him to respond in more detail. They look, listen, and work as a team. They laugh about the story and what's coming next.

In her diary, Emily stated she chose this moment as "James has been away and is catching up on a reading task. James is reserved. He has only been here for two terms. He is unsure with his learning and not confident". She nominated her actions as "discussing the book with him and we were brainstorming. I used hand actions and eye contact to ensure I was looking at him". She described her thinking as "wanting to ensure he understood what he needed to do through discussion". From the student perspective, Emily stated that James was "a little unsure getting back into school after eight weeks holiday". She describes James' actions as "fidgeting and restless. He was moving around and not always looking which is very typical". She described his thinking as "a little unsure. He wanted to read his own book and not the group's literature book" and his feeling state as "unsure based on his physical reactions".

Emily was asked to identify the empathy shown and its significance in the vignette, and to provide further elaboration about the scenario, James and his needs,

> Because he has been away, I have been working with him one-on-one. If he went ahead and did the responses I know I wouldn't get out of him what he has. So we read the questions together. I will say "Before you write anything, what could you write?" Having that discussion beforehand enables him to write with more detail. He needs support. I could easily say "off you go" and "you work it out" and not sit with him. But I think to support him, taking that time to have that one-on-one discussion is really important. So me sitting there, looking at him, listening, working as a team. Next year he will participate in some learning support. This vignette happened early. There haven't been any negative issues. The problems that occur for James are in the yard. He is comfortable talking about the book. I am trying to be light-hearted. Having a giggle about the story. A shared moment. (i_2 v_1)

Within a class, a teacher is actively seeking "to interactively regulate each other's internal states" (Cozolino, 2013, p. 42). Problematic teacher-student relationships that are characterized by conflict and low levels of affiliation are mentioned by teachers to be sources of stress and negative emotions (Yoon, 2002). An interesting aspect relates to Emily following-up and taking action to address James' transition back into the class showing the useful role empathy plays in student and teacher wellbeing. An empathic teacher-student relationship can improve the physical, mental, emotional, and social wellbeing of the teacher as well as the student (Zaki, Bolger, & Ochsner, 2008).

In summary, Emily's empathic actions observed in this vignette were: listening, conferencing, discussing, gesture, eye contact, awareness, team work, expectations, prompting, support, and sharing.

T_2 Vignette 2. The final vignette chosen by Emily relates to awareness of social issues, body language, modelling and the role of support. A synopsis of the elements observed in the vignette and confirmed by Emily appears in Table 6.7.

Table 6.7

Follow-Up on Lunchtime Misbehaviour

Vignette synopsis
Emily is conducting an after lunch discussion with James following-up on an issue that occurred in the yard. She asks "has something happened?" and he says "yes". The first part is with James. She asks him to come closer to have the conversation as he can be seen to hang back. He points to his leg where he had been kicked. Emily sits at his level, listens and asks questions. James is animated in explanation in voice and in his hand gestures. They then discuss who put stickers up all around the yard. James initially denies it but as the vignette unfolds it is clear he did it. James is frustrated and upset, moving around, fidgeting, and not wanting to be in trouble. He raises his voice. He is angry, frowning, and red in the face. The second part involves Emily corroborating aspects of James' story with eyewitness "Sophie".

Emily chose this vignette to demonstrate "a social problem that had occurred in the yard during lunchtime. James is just getting back into the rhythm of school lacking social connections. He has not been having a great time outside". Emily nominated her actions as "listening, asking questions and I was seated at his level". She described her thinking as "wondering and wanting to find out the truth", and her feeling state as "trying to manage the whole class as it was a busy time of the day". Looking back later, what did she think? "I was focussed when talking and I was listening to James. I was open to the conversation". From the student perspective, Emily stated that "James knew I was going to speak to him. He had already been spoken to by another teacher at lunch about these problems". She describes James' actions in the vignette as typical: "moving around uncomfortably, not telling the whole truth". She described his thinking as "not wanting to get caught or be in trouble" and his feeling state as "frustrated and upset. He told me so and I could see it".

At interview, Emily provided some background to the scenario. James arrived at School B at the start of Term 3 and was there for the last two weeks of term before he went on a family holiday.

The holiday was extended and so he was away for the first four weeks of Term 4. His parents frequently relocate due to work commitments. He had only just started to establish friendships in the class when he went on holiday and when he returned, he basically has had to re-start his friendships. Emily was asked to describe the empathy shown and its significance in this vignette,

> A lot of the kids are getting ready for next year knowing they are going to be in different classes and some of the friendships are already changing. With him coming back and trying to fit in where he was, he doesn't really fit. You can tell James is not particularly happy or loving school which isn't great to see. Even if it was the last day of school, I would still follow it up. (i_2 v_2)

For Emily, a key phrase for her motivation in her empathic approach is "I would do anything to help him" to support James because "you can tell he is not particularly happy or loving school which isn't great to see" (i_2 v_2). She is aware of his position with his peers given his lengthy absences, and she engages in a cognitive empathy approach to seek to build a positive relationship and to consider other perspectives to validate his experience. Modelling provides a way to infer other people's mental states, to which they have no direct access, allowing insights into behaviour (Frith & Frith, 2001).

In summary, Emily's empathic actions observed in this vignette were: following-up, social/emotional support, positioning, listening, restorative justice, and awareness.

6.7 Emotional Support Ratings of Lessons and Empathy Vignettes

Emily's four vignettes were scored for levels of emotional support (Positive climate; Teacher sensitivity; Regard for student perspectives) using CLASS (Pianta et al., 2012). Four additional *live* classroom lessons (two at each timepoint) were observed for levels of emotional support and similarly coded (Appendix O). Emily's average ratings for all classroom lessons and vignettes are shown in *Figure 6.3*.

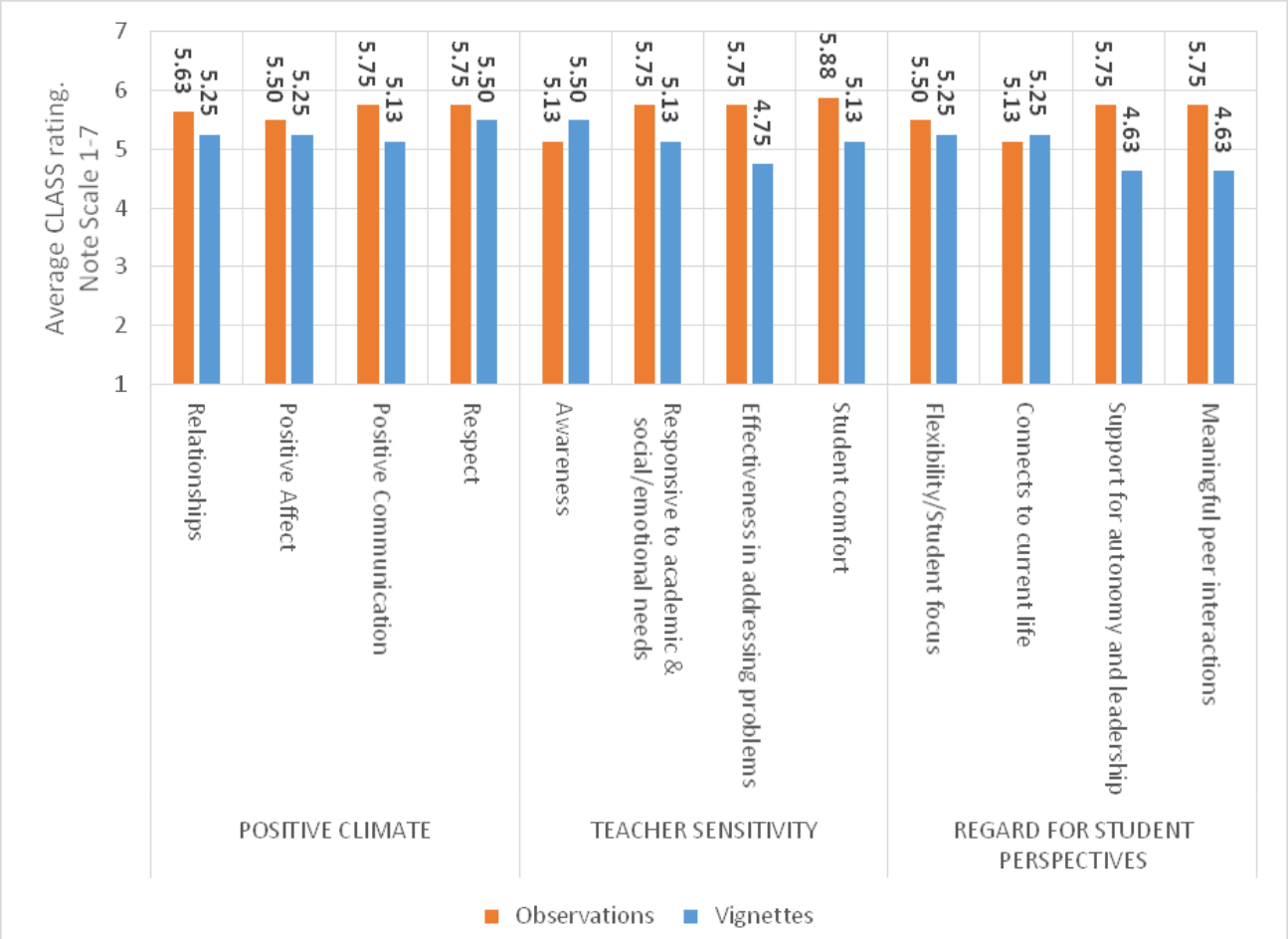


Figure 6.3. Emily's Average Lesson Observation and Vignette Ratings by Emotional Support Dimension. *Note:* 1–2=low quality; 3–5=mid-range quality; and 6–7= high quality.

Emily's emotional support variables at the domain level of positive climate, teacher sensitivity and regard for student perspective were within the high end of the mid-range across all lesson observations, and in the mid to high end of the mid-range across Emily's vignettes. It is noted that Emily's observation ratings are all higher than her vignette ratings. To some extent, the lower vignette scores may be the result of the content and footage shown which is context and scenario dependent. For example, all of Emily's vignettes are one-to-one interactions which may explain some of the lower scores for some elements e.g., meaningful peer interactions, opportunities for autonomy or leadership. For these elements it is worth noting the higher ratings scored in the lesson observations. At the dimension level, all elements in the vignettes were rated at the mid to high end of the mid-range.

6.8 Conclusion

This chapter introduced Emily's personal understanding of empathy and her relational and teacher style goals. A phenomenological research design was used to access Emily's thoughts and feelings to explore how she demonstrates and experiences empathy in the classroom drawing on her vignettes, diary entries and responses at interview.

Phenomenological analysis of the transcripts distilled the essence of empathy in Emily's teaching and conveyed what this experience is like for her. Empathy is "trying hard" to understand where students are coming from and how they are feeling. She seeks to model a climate of care that is welcoming and makes students feel safe. She builds trust so students are comfortable to come to her. She acknowledges student interests in and out of school. Emily establishes positive relationships and manages negative interactions. Claessen et al. (2016) found teachers define the quality of relationships with students by the level of communion (friendly versus hostile) instead of by the level of agency (in control versus powerless). She emphasises positive class examples to engender positive feeling. She is motivated to provide support and she follows-ups until an issue is resolved. She uses physical gestures to acknowledge she is listening. She values students, works one-on-one, and as part of a team.

The empathy vignettes and corresponding mentalizing diary entries show Emily "enjoys" her relationships with her students, values "hearing their stories and their views on different things" and "really thinks about things that they have said or funny things that they do" (i_1). Her word choices and imagery show she is passionate about the role of empathy and care in her teaching. Her diary entries illustrate that she often feels "positive" and "supportive" about the experiences in the empathy she models and displays with her students, and she sees the benefits of "creating an empathic climate" in terms of making students feel "comfortable", "safe", and "secure" (i_1).

Emily values relationships with her students and has a strong focus on modelling authenticity in the "different levels of empathy" she works at in various relationships to meet

individual needs. She is motivated in her empathic approach where she “tries really hard” (i_1) and “would do anything to help” (i_2). Her approach is largely based on a combination of cognitive assessments (“Making sure I was listening. Asking questions so that we are having a conversation. Not just me talking at him or him talking at me” – i_2 v_2) and affective assessments (“Showing that care. They get a better understanding that you do care” – i_1).

Emily’s prides herself on “a welcoming environment” where students “know they can trust me and are comfortable to come to me about anything” (i_1). Empathy as an affective and cognitive process is expressed through touch and physical gestures, based on acknowledging students and their needs, taking a personal interest in and outside school, and providing social and emotional support. She actively works to establish positive relationships and to address negative situations through negotiation with students.

Chapter 7 Case 4 – Gretyl

The fourth case study relates to Gretyl's experience of teacher empathy in her classroom. Gretyl has been teaching for 17 years in three primary schools. She has taught at School A since 2000 where she has taught Grades 2–6, but mostly Grades 5 and 6. She is classed as a "proficient" teacher (>6 years' experience: AITSL, 2011a). In 2014, she taught Grade 4 (9-10 year olds), and this was her third consecutive year teaching this level. She taught in a large, open learning space of three classrooms. Gretyl and her 25 students moved around the learning space rotating fortnightly to one of the three classrooms and therefore had no fixed address. The rationale for this was "for students to experience the whole Grade 4 community as their classroom and to feel ownership over all of the space" (i_1).

This chapter opens with Gretyl's reports of her relational goals (Butler, 2012), followed by her (and her students') perceptions of her teaching style dimensions (Watt & Richardson, 2007). She nominated six positive *empathy moment* vignettes filmed at two timepoints for analysis. A written synopsis of the vignette was read to Gretyl for a trustworthiness check (Guba, 1981; Shenton, 2004). All sources were coded for mentalizing characteristics (Luyten et al., 2012) to access the empathy data. Gretyl's personal understanding of empathy is explored, followed by her three higher order themes derived from the Smith et al. (2009) analysis—(1) *Building teacher-student relationships*, (2) *Following-up and responding to social and emotional needs*, and (3) *Student comfort*. Gretyl's actions were coded for cognitive and affective empathy elements. The vignettes and *live* lessons were coded for levels of emotional support using CLASS (Pianta et al., 2012). The chapter concludes with a narrative account of the essence of her empathy experience.

7.1 Relational Goals

In describing her class, Gretyl stated she had "a very good relationship with the students", based on the students being "incredibly supportive of one another and supportive of me too". The class had a number of special needs students and she "loves the way the students rally to support them". When

asked about the extent to which she takes a personal interest, she noted "I draw a teacher-student boundary line that you don't want to cross over", where "some issues are best handled with family" (i_1). Gretyl provided ratings of her relational goals for student interactions using Butler's criteria (2012). She rated goals at T_1 (Term 3, Week 5) and 15 weeks later at T_2 (Term 4, Week 8) on a 5-point scale (1=totally disagree; 5=totally agree). All scores were high (Table 7.1).

Table 7.1

Gretyl's Self-Ratings of Relational Goals: Scale 1 (totally disagree) – 5 (totally agree)

Item Description	*T_1 Score*	*T_2 Score*
"I would feel most successful as a teacher if I saw that I was developing closer and better relationships with students in my class"	5	5
"My main goal as a teacher is to show my students that I care about them"	4	4
"More than anything, I aspire to create deep personal relationships with each and every student"	4	3
"Building relationships with students is most important for me"	4	4
"I take care of my students if they have problems"	5	5
"I take time to get to know my students and to know what is happening with them in school and at home"	4	4

Note. Sourced from "Striving to Connect: Extending an Achievement Goal Approach to Teacher Motivation to Include Relational Goals for Teachers," by R. Butler, 2012, *Journal of Educational Psychology, 104,* p. 729.

7.2 Perceptions of Teaching Style Dimensions

Gretyl was asked to rate her teaching style dimensions (TSS) at each timepoint using Watt and Richardson's (2007) instrument (Appendix J) to assess perceptions of the classroom environment on a 7-point Likert-type scale (*Figure 7.1*).

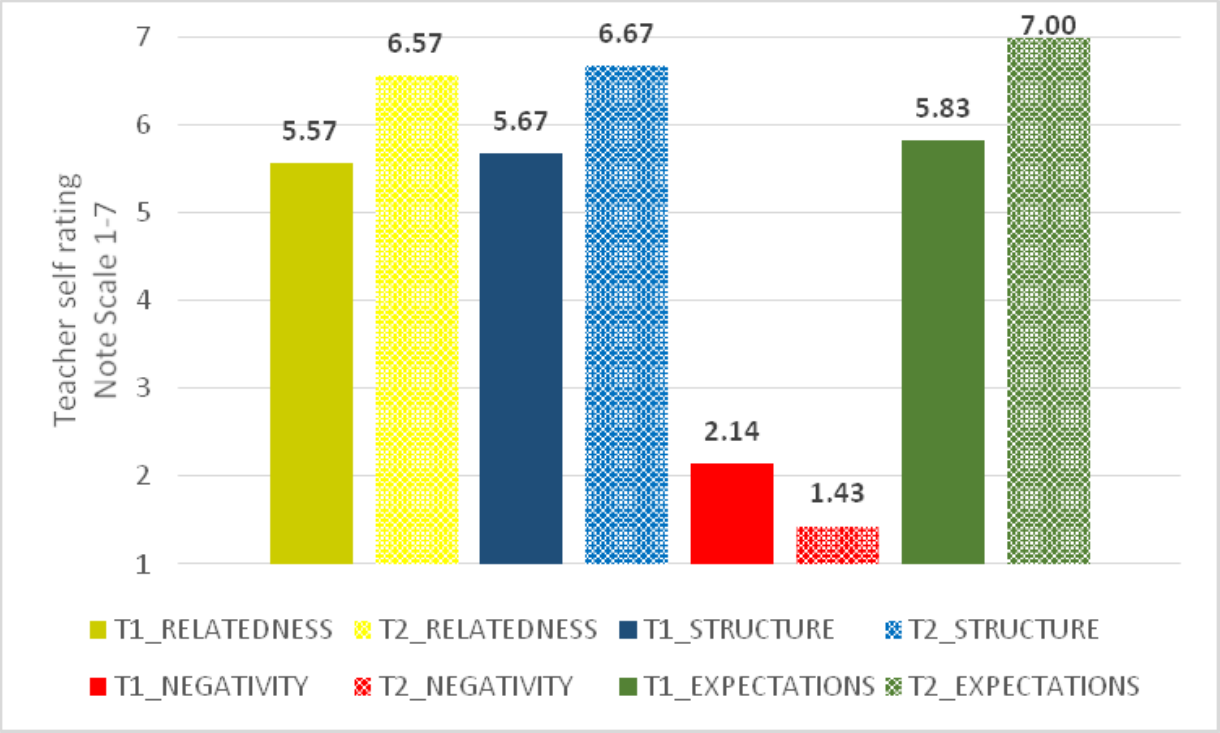


Figure 7.1. Self-Rated Teaching Style Scale factor means for Gretyl. *Note:* 1= Not at all; 7= A lot.

Gretyl's perceptions of her *relatedness* were high, and were higher at T_2 (5.57_{t1} – 6.67_{t2}). Her scores for *expectations* (5.83_{t1} – 7.00_{t2}) and *structure* (5.67_{t1} – 6.67_{t2}) were also higher, and very high at T2, while her perceptions of *negativity* were low, and lower at T_2 (2.14_{t1} – 1.43_{t2}).

Gretyl's 12 student participants also rated their perceptions of her teaching style using the Watt and Richardson's (2007) student instrument (Appendix K). Composite factor scores were created by averaging component items for each and factor means were plotted (*Figure 7.2*).

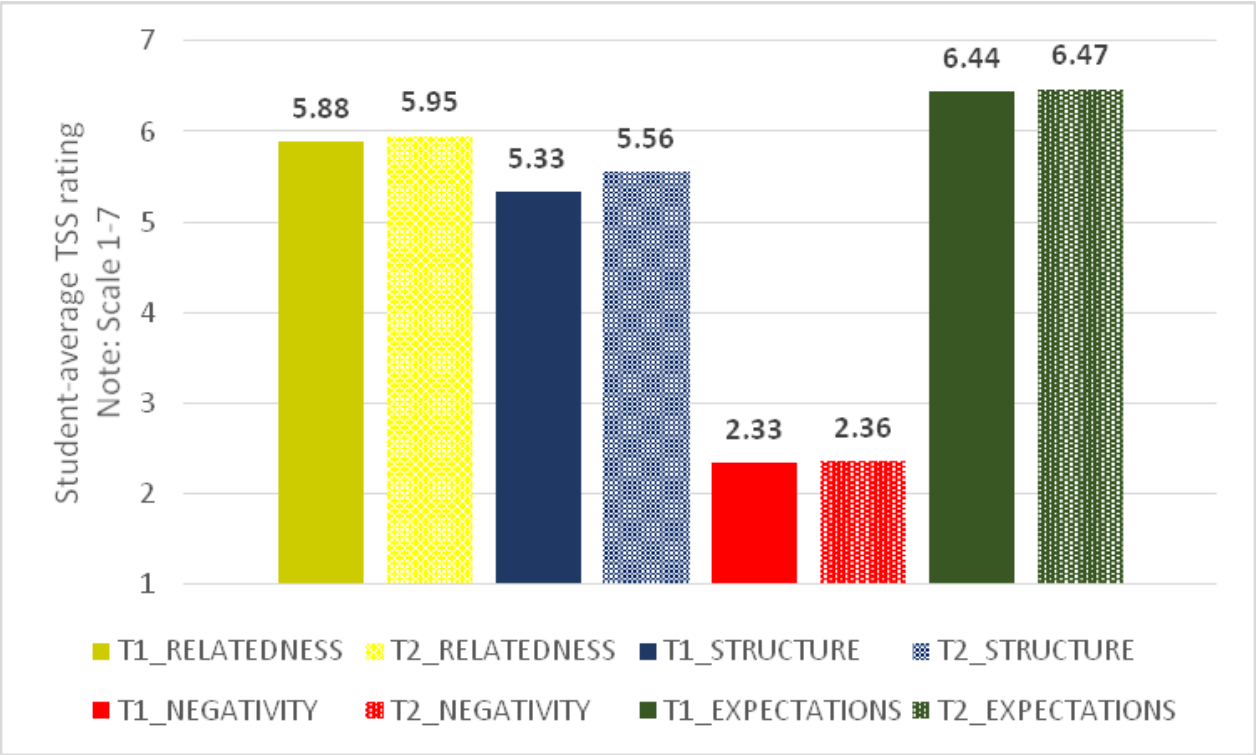


Figure 7.2. Student-Rated Teaching Style Scale factor means for Gretyl. *Note:* 1= Not at all; 7= A lot.

Gretyl's students perceived her relatedness to be high and constant (5.88_{t1} – 5.95_{t2}). Their perceptions of her positive expectations (6.44_{t1} – 6.47_{t2}) and structure (5.33_{t1} – 5.56_{t2}) were also high, whereas their perceptions of her negativity were low and remained virtually unchanged (2.33_{t1} – 2.36_{t2}).

7.3 Gretyl's Mentalization Characteristics

The mentalization aspects evident in Gretyl's responses from her diary entries and interview responses are reported here. Table 7.2 lists themes covered by the coded open comments using Luyten et al. (2012). The frequencies indicate the prominence of each mentalization characteristic to Gretyl.

Table 7.2

Frequency of Gretyl's Mentalization Characteristics from Diary Entries and Interviews

Item Description	Frequency
Security of mental exploration and openness to discovery	31
Acknowledgement of opaqueness and tentativeness of mental states	27
Genuine interest in the mental states of self and others and their relation	46
Adaptive flexibility in switching from automatic to controlled mentalization	18
Acknowledgement of changeability of mental states, including awareness of developmental perspective (attachment history influences relating to self & others)	21
Integrate cognitive and affective features of self and others ("embodied mentalization")	20
Sense of realistic predictability and controllability of mental states	12
Ability to regulate distress in relation to others	11
Capacity to be relaxed and flexible, not "stuck" in one point of view	28
Capacity to be playful, with humour engaging rather than hurtful or distancing	9
Ability to solve problems by give-and-take between own and other's perspectives	17
Ability to describe one's own experience rather than defining other people's experience or intentions	18
Willingness to convey "ownership" of behaviour rather than it "happens to" me	24
Curiosity about other people's perspectives and expectations that one's own views will be extended by others	8
Relational strengths	
• Curiosity	5
• Safe uncertainty	6
• Contemplation and reflection	25
• Perspective-taking	27
• Forgiveness	8
• Impact awareness	45
• Non-paranoid attitude	10
Perception of one's own mental functioning	
• Developmental perspective	8
• Realistic skepticism	16
• Internal conflict awareness	5
• Self-inquisitive stance	4
• Awareness of the effect of affect	28
• Acknowledgement of unconscious or preconscious functioning	24
• Belief in changeability	27
Self-representation	
• Rich internal life	9
• Autobiographical continuity	3
• Advanced explanatory and listening skills	27
General values and attitudes	
• Tentativeness	6
• Humility (moderation)	17
• Playfulness and humour	10
• Flexibility	20
• Give-and-take	23
• Responsibility and accountability	12

Note. Sourced from "Assessment of Mentalization," by P. Luyten, P. Fonagy, B. Lowyck, and R. Vermote, 2012, *Handbook of Mentalizing in Mental Health Practice*, p. 58.

Gretyl's mentalization characteristics with regard to student thoughts and feelings were coded in 416 instances. In 46 instances Gretyl showed genuine interest in the mental states of self and others and their relationship (for example, "I need to build that trust and relationship with them"). In 45 instances Gretyl showed impact awareness as a relational strength (e.g., "Trying to move them on from that very obvious answer"). In a further 31 instances Gretyl conveyed security of mental exploration and openness to discovery (e.g., "When you have discussions trying to get them to feel comfortable in voicing an opinion that may not necessarily be popular with their peers or not necessarily saying what they think I want to hear"). Finally, in 28 instances Gretyl showed a capacity to be relaxed and flexible and not stuck in one point of view (e.g., "So I think they are all at different stages and I partly take my lead from them as to what their needs are").

Gretyl's displayed perceptions of her own mental functioning were coded in 112 instances. In 28 of those instances, she showed an awareness of the effect of affect (for example, "I was wanting to connect with Steven to build his self-esteem and sense of worth"). In 27 coded instances, she demonstrated her belief in changeability (e.g., "Are you having trouble because…? We work on this. This is a goal for us"), and in another 24 instances she acknowledged unconscious or preconscious functioning (e.g., "Trying to judge how they feel to guide my response"). This behaviour demonstrates a relaxation of judgments of intent and trustworthiness in secure attachment relationships in favour of more automatic, intuitive processes (Bartels & Zeki, 2004).

Gretyl's self-representational characteristics were coded in 39 instances. In 27 of those instances she displayed advanced explanatory and listening skills (e.g., "His interest is very much music and so I was taking a trek through music with him for what we were doing. Whereas if I was working with a group that's not everyone's interest. It would be something else"). Another nine instances were coded for rich internal life (e.g., "I think I have an openness. I am often commented upon that I have a smile on my face so comments that you know there is a warmth and openness that the children respond to"). Finally, three instances were coded for autobiographic continuity (e.g., "I think I am building on it all the time").

Gretyl's general mentalization values and attitudes were evident in 88 instances. There were 23 instances where she displayed "give-and-take" (e.g., "It's a form of respect I show and they give that respect back"), 20 instances showing her flexibility (e.g., "I partly take my lead from them"), and 17 instances of humility/moderation (e.g., "Maybe a change in how we approach something").

7.4 Phenomenology Themes

Gretyl's interviews and vignettes generated 147 identified empathy moments in the classroom, which I coded by applying Smith et al.'s (2009) IPA framework. Three high order empathy themes—*building teacher-student relationships* (48 moments), *following up and responding to social and emotional needs* (44), and *student comfort* (55)—emerged from her accounts. Table 7.3 lists these themes with associated sub-themes. Gretyl's personal understanding of empathy, and her experiences of empathy in the classroom can be classified with respect to these themes.

Table 7.3

Gretyl's Empathy Themes

Theme	Sub-Theme
Building teacher-student relationships	Teacher care Building rapport through sharing Personal interest through literature
Follow-up and responding to social and emotional needs	Social and emotional support Follow-up, restorative justice, and resolution
Student comfort	Shared humour Respectful, positive climate Student voice Body language

Gretyl's understanding of empathy. Gretyl encapsulates her understanding of empathy as "being able to see things from their point of view" (i_1). Her reported experience of empathy begins with a passage where she describes how empathy is enacted in her classroom,

> We talk about empathy openly. So they [the students] are probably more familiar than most with the phrase "walking in someone else's shoes" and "seeing things from other points of view". I think I model it to the grade. It's a form of respect I show to them and they give that

> respect back. "I can see that you are feeling..." or "I can see that this is hard for you because..." It's conversations we model but it is also pointing out when they show empathy that I am impressed with them and pointing out that they are modelling to others. (i_1)

Gretyl's accounts introduce two levels of empathy—1) empathy she models *to* students ("I show to them"); and 2) valuing empathy shown *by* students ("I am impressed with them where they are modelling to other students"). She is motivated to understand students' states. A recurring theme across her accounts is she is "very aware" of the importance of relationship building in empathic displays,

> I build relationships all the time not just between them and me, but also between the children as well so all the relationships are strong. I am very aware that I need to build that trust and relationship with them to maximise learning. I have a smile on my face and there is a warmth and openness that the children respond to. Through conversations it shows you do get to know them quicker than I expect but you are always building. (i_1)

In the literature, smiling has been shown to be a strong predictor of warmth (Bayes, 1972). Gretyl overtly models empathy by smiling. She relates her emphasis on empathy to a recognition that students have diverse needs that require her to understand them as individuals, and that this requires her to moderate her approach. In the vignettes, she exhibits both high expectations that students will negotiate, and her active moderation of student behaviour,

> Let's just moderate that, let's think that you are actually a bright kid, a capable kid. So let's bring it back to that and calm you down and get you in that better frame of thinking that I want you in at the moment. (i_2 v_2)

Gretyl applies a holistic approach to relationships rather than focussing on incidents of student (mis)behaviour. In her interactions, she regulates student behaviour by demonstrating

affiliation and friendliness (Gurtman, 2009). Her view of teacher-student relationships impacts on her perceptions of moment-to-moment teacher-student encounters.

Gretyl considers it important to quickly rebuild the connection if something negative happens in a relationship with a student. In working to re-establish the connection, Gretyl said,

> Along the way little things can happen to change the dynamics. If something negative happens I am always very conscious to rebuild the connection. I do things to make sure my relationship with them isn't damaged. (i_1)
>
> I worked in class to re-establish good relations - all went positively. (i_2 v_3)

In the literature, Hamre and Pianta (2001) call for inclusion of a relationship perspective when studying teachers' perceptions of moment-to-moment interactions. Positive interpersonal relationships allow teachers and students to restore the relationship to more friendly interactions after an incident of confronting behaviour. Both sides can then adopt a positive stance towards one another to restore a complementary pattern of interaction that is high in levels of friendly communion (Claessen et al., 2016).

Building teacher-student relationships. "The generalized interpersonal meaning students and teachers attach to their interactions with each other" (Wubbels et al., p. 364) originate in perceptions of day-to-day interactions. Moment-to-moment interactions are the building blocks of relationships and secure relationships "include friendliness, trust, empathy, and helpfulness" (Abele & Wojciszke, 2007, p. 753). A recurring theme across Gretyl's accounts is her emphasis on building relationships and trust. An encounter between a teacher and student is a purposeful interpersonal event. Engendering positive outcomes for a student depends on a teacher's skill in forming empathic relationships that earn student trust. Gretyl described building relationships in several ways—through caring, building rapport with students, and being an advocate for students. When asked how she establishes and maintains relationships with students, Gretyl said,

> I am very aware that I need to build that trust and relationship with them. It feels quite caring in here. Building relationships between the children as well so all the relationships are strong not just between you and them, but also between the children. (i_1)

Recognising students' non-verbal cues and providing an explicit acknowledgment of their feelings, concerns, and experiences are important in establishing rapport in empathic relationships. Rapport is strengthened if a teacher can decode and encode non-verbal messages and convey understanding to students. Non-verbal behaviours that promote rapport include efforts to match student postures, gestures, tempo and tone of voice, language patterns, gaze, laughter, and facial expressions (Mathews, Suchman, & Branch, 1993).

Gretyl sees caring—and showing students that she cares—as essential to building strong teacher-student relationships. She recognises the diverse needs of her students in this area,

> Some students push themselves more on you than others... they are needier than others. And some are more independent and don't want as big a relationship and I respect that too. It's not as important to them. They are just a lot more independent and don't feel that need for a strong relationship. I partly take my lead from them as to what their needs are. (i_1)

Gretyl places a high value on teacher care in maintaining strong relationships. In describing following-up and providing social and emotional support to students she noted: "I needed to ensure that all the parties involved felt the issue was resolved and that I cared" (i_2 v_3).

One strategy Gretyl uses to build teacher-student relationships is developing student interests in personal reading. She makes personal recommendations as a pathway to establish connections with students who, at first, seem difficult to engage,

> I have one boy in my grade…probably at the start of the year... I didn't struggle to build connections with him… but we certainly built our connection through reading. He brought a book to school that his mum had given him. I told him "I read that when I was in school". So

> we talk about it. I said “You know what book I think you’d like? I think you would like to read *Hatchet*”. I get it from the library for him and then he comes and he says “I am up to this bit”. It just helps build all those connections between us. That was our pathway. And there is probably two or three students every year that that’s a pathway for building really good connections. (i_1 v_2)

This extract illustrates Gretyl displaying genuine interest in students to build relationships that enhance the learning process. In the literature, complementarity describes the probable reaction an action invites (Tracey, 2004). In relationships, individuals seek complementary responses from others to provide familiar and consistent feedback about themselves (O’Connor & Dyce, 1997). Gretyl shows high communion, interest, and empathy in reading choices, inviting an equally supportive reaction from students who show interest in Gretyl’s opinion of those choices.

Gretyl builds rapport by encouraging students to share in class. This is always voluntary (“never forced”) and based upon a premise of mutual respect. If she notices an aspect of a student’s work she wants to highlight to the class, she always asks first if they want to share, and respects the decision,

> You walk around the room while they are reading and you say "Oh Belinda, can you read that? Are you happy to share?” And she will share it, and I say "I love that because..." When you give a positive response they listen and respond. And sometimes if it’s a reading session or it’s a piece of writing, I will say "Would you like me to read it?" "No, I don’t want to share at all". Yes, fine. (i_2 v_2)

This extract illustrates Gretyl valuing students’ work, selectively using praise, and inviting sharing based on mutual respect. In the medical literature, a physicians’ ability to decode and encode nonverbal messages and convey understandings to patients has been shown to increase

rapport (DiMatteo, 1979). Synchronization—sharing—typically occurs between individuals who have good rapport with one another (Goldstein & Michaels, 1985).

Following-up and responding to social and emotional needs. Gretyl's empathic approach includes following-up and responding to social and emotional cues—"you have got to build that social" (i_1). In her accounts, she stresses the value in following-up to "build self-esteem", "social acceptance" and "to show things are valid for him so that it puts him back in that social happiness". She seeks to "build his self-esteem and a sense of worth to make him feel his opinions are valued. Trying to make him feel valued, and good about himself" (i_1 v_1).

An aspect of this theme was the need for regular follow-up to ensure all parties feel that issues are meaningfully resolved,

> I just had lunch with a group of boys. For our restorative chat (Morrison, 2007) we often have lunch together so we sit down and go through it. This group of boys were throwing dice at an autistic student which was really mean. We talked about the other students and how supportive they are and why this is important. I keep following up on it. (i_1)

> I needed to ensure that all parties involved felt the situation was resolved…I followed up a number of times. One thing is to make sure that when we have an issue that it is fully resolved. (i_2 v_3)

These extracts illustrate Gretyl providing social support to regulate student behaviour. Empathy requires a functional social support network (Morgan, 2002) – a multidimensional construct of social relationships to share understanding and emotions so that individuals can cope with stress (Cohen, 2004), develop a sense of belonging (Wellman, 1998), and enjoy wellbeing (Rodrigues & Cohen, 1998).

Gretyl goes to great lengths to display empathy both within and outside the classroom by following-up and responding to social and emotional needs:

> I went out to play basketball. I still go out and play basketball sometimes because that is where we have our issues. I wanted to make sure Steven felt the situation was resolved and he felt comfortable in the playground. (i_2 v_3)

This extract shows Gretyl actively regulating student emotional responses in terms of quality, frequency, intensity, and duration. Regulating emotions has been positively linked to empathy as an expression of concern for others (Decety & Jackson, 2004). Gretyl engages in friendly interaction to maintain positive relationships based on high levels of affiliation. Positive teacher-student encounters mostly occur outside the classroom, where conversations cover a wide range of topics (Claessen et al., 2016), and out-of-class spaces are co-constructed and used as relational arenas where informal interactions can take place (Frelin & Grannäs, 2010).

Student comfort. The final theme emerging from the analysis was Gretyl seeking to establish student comfort in her relationships by creating a positive, respectful climate,

> They are very comfortable to tell you things about yourself. But in a respectful way. They are not being disrespectful. If I think they are being disrespectful, I will pull them up on it straight away. (i_2)

> I try to judge how they feel to guide my response. (i_1 v_3)

Gretyl seeks to create a class climate of relationships where students feel comfortable in respectfully voicing their opinions. To empathise with her students, she believes you need to be aware of what and how they are thinking or feeling. She engages in active listening to be present and open. The role of gauging student body language is to “tell you a bit about how they are feeling and how much they want to engage” (i_2 v_3). In relation to the role of comfort and student opinion, Gretyl said,

> One of the things when you have discussions is trying to get honest responses and making them feel comfortable with their thinking. (i_2 v_1)

In teacher-student encounters, recognising non-verbal cues and explicitly acknowledging students' feelings, concerns, and experiences help establish empathic rapport. That rapport can be strengthened by a teacher decoding and encoding non-verbal messages to convey understanding. In the medical profession, "being present" and providing support has been described as the "gift of presence" (Hojat, 2007, p. 27). Gretyl listens and engages to understand student thinking, and she models respect and valuing student voice by focusing attention on students and their work.

The final sub-theme relating to student comfort is the role of shared humour. Gretyl said: "They like that, it just makes them feel comfortable" (i_2 v_1). The following extract illustrates the shared experience of humour in her classroom,

> There is definitely shared humour. He is into puns. We have a thing going about puns, him and me. Every time I have a pun, I will say "David, did you hear that?" And he will say "Mm. It wasn't that funny". (laughs) (i_2 v_2)

In the medical literature, empathy has been shown to correlate with personal qualities such as a sense of humour. Patients perceive a sense of humour in health care providers as a signifier of empathic engagement (Hojat, 2007).

7.5 Expressions of Cognitive and Affective Empathy

Gretyl was asked if she considers herself to be empathic and if this was always the case. She answered in the affirmative to both questions. When asked if she thinks she is more empathic at this stage of her career than in her first year of teaching, Gretyl noted,

> Do you know what? No, I don't think so. I might respond differently to children. There might be slight differences in reactions. I have often been asked if I am a different teacher for being a parent. I don't think so. I think I have got better at being firm and acknowledging a point of view and giving a child something to work on. I am firm but fair! (i_1)

This view was reinforced at the T_2 interview where Gretyl stressed “not being overly familiar”, and “the importance of still being firm with the children so they are not walking all over you because there is a difference” (i_2). While teachers consistently behave in a friendly and personal manner, they also need to maintain appropriate teacher-student structure roles (Brookhart & Loadman, 1992; Peart & Campbell, 1999).

On 59 occasions across the vignettes, Gretyl *recognised* student(s) mental states. For example, “There were some 'show off for friends' responses, some were heart felt, and some were worried about friends’ reactions” (i_2 v_2). In 38 instances, she *responded* to a student’s mental state with an appropriate emotion based on care. For example, “I don’t put him down. I make sure that I show that I like him and I appreciate all his qualities” (i_2 v_2).

7.6 Examples of Demonstrated Empathy – Vignettes of Gretyl’s Interaction

Gretyl’s teaching was filmed for a week at two timepoints – in Term 3, Week 4 (T_1: 4–8 August, 2014) and 13 weeks later in Term 4, Week 5 (T_2: 3–7 November, 2014). She identified three positive “empathy moments” at each timepoint (six altogether), which became the vignettes for analysis. A synopsis of each vignette was provided and checked for trustworthiness at interview (Guba, 1981; Shenton, 2004). This section reports on these synopses, Gretyl’s mentalization diary entries and her responses on reviewing the vignette at interview.

T_1 Vignette 1. The first vignette chosen by Gretyl for analysis illustrates her empathic actions of modelling, perspective-taking, providing support, and situation selection. A synopsis of the elements observed in the vignette and confirmed at interview appears in Table 7.4.

Table 7.4

Internet Usage

Vignette synopsis
Gretyl listens to Steven's perspective after the class watch a *Behind the News* television clip on internet usage. Steven has very restrictive internet access at home based on parental choice. Gretyl clarifies the rules he has. She engages in active listening and seeks to validate his family's internet rules. Class discussion and shared experience of the variety of rules students have at home helps Steven feel his opinions are valued.

Her diary stated that Gretyl chose this moment to demonstrate "listening to all the children's perspectives". Gretyl nominated her actions as "listening, clarifying and validating their thinking". She described her thinking during the moment noting that "Steven has been feeling quite isolated socially, so listening to him and validating the internet rules his family has in place even though they weren't the norm". She described her feeling state as "relaxed, wanting to connect with Steven – build his self-esteem and sense of worth". Reflecting back on this vignette at interview she later noted, "Regular chats on all sorts of topics and issues make him feel that his opinions are valued". From the student perspective, Gretyl provided some background information noting that Steven "was feeling picked on/isolated from some of the other children". She described his actions in the vignette as typical: "A thoughtful response and some attention seeking behaviour". She described his feeling state as "pleased and feeling special. Prior to that, probably feeling a bit isolated."

Upon reviewing the vignette, Gretyl talked about how Steven goes through periods where he is "socially isolated" and "a bit of an outcast". She saw a role in "modelling often and trying to build up his self-esteem but also showing the other children that he is important and things are valid for him so that it puts him back in that social happiness and social acceptance". She described his interpersonal skills as "very up and down. I think a lot of it very much depends on what is going on at home and how he is feeling as to how he comes to school and reacts to other children". Gretyl pointed out her use of facial expressions, hand gestures, and use of questioning in the vignette to show "that you are listening and that you are interested". She bring out his interests in terms of what

he uses the internet for at home and then asks about homework and research to make connections back to school.

When asked to identify the empathy shown in the vignette and its significance, Gretyl replied,

> Every now and then Steven does something really silly to the other kids and they react and then you have got to rebuild the social. I was trying to make him feel valued, good about himself within the lesson. (i_1 v_1)

For Gretyl, a key phrase for her motivation to engage in her empathic approach is to help Steven “rebuild the social”. She is aware of his positioning with his peers, and she engages in a cognitive empathy approach to share diversity of experiences and consider other perspectives to validate his experience. Comparably, people form models of the minds of those with whom they interact. Modelling allows us a way to infer other people’s mental states, to which they have no direct access, allowing insights into behaviour (Frith & Frith, 2001).

In summary, Gretyl’s empathic actions observed in this vignette were: listening, social and emotional support, questioning, student voice, valuing student opinion, and modelling acceptance.

T_1 Vignette 2. The second vignette chosen by Gretyl illustrates her empathic actions of modelling, perspective-taking and showing enthusiasm. A synopsis of the elements observed in the footage and confirmed by her appears in Table 7.5.

Table 7.5

A Chat about Personal Reading Books

Vignette synopsis
Gretyl leads a discussion with a group of students to build personal connections and interest in reading. She discusses with students what they are reading. A few students respond and share aspects of their books. Gretyl models enthusiasm and a love of reading. She makes recommendations on other book choices. The students are eager and enthusiastic that Gretyl is taking an interest and making connections with other books and personal experience in the discussion. While students individually respond, others tune in and listen to the discussion.

In her diary, Gretyl stated she chose this moment to show she was “trying to further engage children in making better reading choices”. She describes her actions as “engaging children individually with chat about books”. She described her thinking during the moment as “trying to understand what they like to read and to think about how to expand it”. She identified her feeling state: “I love talking to them about reading and I get genuinely excited when they’re engaged”. Looking back later, what did she think? “I like to take a personal interest in their book choices and make personal recommendations and follow up on these”.

On reviewing the vignette, Gretyl was asked about modelling genuineness with students. She replied: “It is definitely genuine. I don’t think I could go through the motions because I would become too distracted” (i_1). She provided some additional background,

> I often go around and have conferences with students. Often I have a question on the board for students to respond to. “If you recommended this book to someone in the grade, who would you recommend it to and why?” They would say "I recommend my book to X, because of …" Or I just have a chat at the end of a session and a couple of kids will respond and share what they are reading. They get very inspired from one another to try other books. When we go to the library I do a lot of recommending. "I think this would be a really good book for you because…” It works really well. (i_1 v_2)

When asked to identify the empathy she is showing and its importance in the vignette, Gretyl replied,

> I work out what their interests are and I acknowledge what they like. They like that you are taking an interest and they very much like to please you and try something you suggest. They like that shared connection. They come back and we have lots of discussions about the book. (i_1 v_2)

When Gretyl states “she works out what their interests are” and she “acknowledges what they like”, she appears to be displaying genuine interest based on her knowledge of the student. She is seeking to build shared connections through enthusiasm and a love of literature. She engages in shared experience to build perspective-taking based on a cognitive empathy approach. Mar and Oatley (2008) argue fiction literature offers models or simulations of the social world via abstraction, simplification, and compression to create a deep and immersive simulative experience of social interactions and a form of learning through experience. Engaging in fiction can “facilitate the understanding of others who are different from ourselves and augment our capacity for empathy and social inference” (p. 173).

In summary, Gretyl’s empathic actions observed in this vignette were: making connections through literature, discussing, showing genuine interest, knowing students, modelling personal recommendations, shared experience, and listening.

T_1 Vignette 3. The next vignette chosen by Gretyl illustrates her empathic actions of listening, appraisal, perspective-taking, and encouragement. A synopsis of the elements observed in the footage and confirmed at interview appears in Table 7.6.

Table 7.6

Maths Lesson

Vignette synopsis
Gretyl is listening to student problems and solutions during an open ended maths task. The students use a range of strategies and work with a partner. Discussion is actively encouraged and Gretyl joins in to model. She listens to problems, and guides students to consider approaches and understandings. She responds positively and provides encouragement. Gretyl can be seen to be judging how students are feeling about the task to guide her responses. The students listen to the techniques others use as a self-check. Gretyl listens to student explanations, models mathematical language, builds their understandings, and encourages them to go further.

In her diary, Gretyl stated she chose this moment to show "how I listen to student problems and solutions. They work with learning partners, and discussion is encouraged. I model this". She described her actions: "I listen to the problem, and guide them to understanding". She described her thinking during the moment as "how best to lead their thinking to reach understanding". She described her feeling state as "confident". Looking back later, what did she think? "I always respond positively to maths questions and show I have faith in their ability. I try to judge how they feel to guide my responses".

At interview, Gretyl elaborated on her actions,

> I was listening to their explanations. It might be mathematical language that needs to be looked at, so it is trying to build on their understanding, challenging them to go further, any misconceptions. I mean the "amount of right" at that point. (i_1 v_3)

Gretyl was asked about the role of empathy in mathematics and whether certain subjects lend themselves to an empathic approach. In identifying the role of empathy in the vignette and its importance, she replied,

> It might be a little more evident in some content areas than others but no I think it should be in all. I know mathematics is a lot more black and white and there is often no emotional response. However, it's their confidence and how they see themselves as learners that's important. (i_1 v_3)

For Gretyl, a key phrase for her motivation to engage in her cognitive empathy approach is "the amount of right at that point". She is open-minded and aware that individuals experience mathematics in different ways. She is listening and using appraisal to gauge student needs and seeking to respond positively through discussion to promote confidence and self-esteem.

In summary, Gretyl's empathic actions observed in this vignette were: active listening, discussion, appraising, positive responding, encouraging, and self-esteem.

T_2 Vignette 1. The first vignette nominated by Gretyl from the T_2 footage illustrates her empathic actions of situation selection, student voice, modelling, and appraisal. A synopsis of the elements observed and confirmed at interview appears in Table 7.7.

Table 7.7

A Controversial Issue

Vignette synopsis
This reading group lesson focussed on the skill of synthesising – taking old and new information and putting it together – to establish new understandings. The issue being discussed was the history of whaling in Australia. Gretyl encourages the students to voice an opinion. After an initial discussion about whaling by Japan, Gretyl tries to draw out more detailed responses by asking "Do you know Australia used to whale?" She listens and models synthesising by including personal experience of her own visit to a whaling station in Western Australia. Gretyl uses humour throughout the vignette. She asks on a number of occasions what individual students are thinking about the issue.

In her diary, Gretyl stated she chose this moment to show "I have good relationships with this group of students where I encourage them to voice their opinions not what they think is popular or what they think I want to hear". She described her actions as "I listened, I joined the discussion. I modelled synthesising which was the lesson focus by including personal experience". She described her thinking during the moment as "trying to get honest responses". She reported feeling "some frustration if they gave a shallow response. I was asking questions to get better, more honest ones". Looking back later, what did she think? "I see the importance of some humour to make students feel comfortable with their thinking". From the student perspective, Gretyl describes the groups' actions as "typical behaviour. I was trying to encourage individual thinking". She described student

thoughts as “some pretty honest answers, some holding back and some shallow thinking”, and student feelings where “they like discussion so they were all happy to contribute”.

At interview, Gretyl described how she tried to draw deeper responses from students by giving the example of Australia’s experience “because they had this very negative attitude to Japan given what they have heard in the news and the tiny bit they had read” (i_2 v_1). She described her actions in the vignette noting that “in the discussion, I lean forward and try to look like I am really interested in all they are saying” (i_2 v_1). When asked to identify the empathy she is showing and its importance, Gretyl stated,

> It is not devaluing anything that they say at all but rather listening, and adding to it. Sometimes asking more questions of them to get a bit more information. It is their opinions. One of the things when you have discussions is trying to get them to feel comfortable in voicing an opinion that may not necessarily be popular or not necessarily saying what they think I want to hear or what’s going to be popular with their peers. (i_2 v_1)

Gretyl is seeking to access genuine student thoughts and opinions and to create a space for students to share and influence student thinking. She seeks to activate student voice and engage students in reflection. She is aware of the impact of the perception of student peers as inhibiting students from expressing divergent responses. To counteract this, she uses humour to gently probe and provoke student thinking, and models body language to show her interest and engagement. Throughout this vignette, she is accepting, supportive and persistent in challenging and engaging students in all aspects of instruction.

In summary, Gretyl’s empathic actions observed in this vignette were: student voice, questioning, listening, appraisal, humour, encouragement, student comfort, modelling, personal experience, discussion, and high expectations.

T_2 Vignette 2. The next vignette chosen by Gretyl illustrates her empathic actions of situation appraisal, modelling, humour, re-engagement, and providing support. A synopsis of the elements observed and confirmed at interview appears in Table 7.8.

Table 7.8

Grateful

Vignette synopsis
Gretyl talks to the class about their gratitude journals. Students discuss their journal entries and work towards meaningful responses. Gretyl models and shares her own before students discuss and share their entries. She gives positive feedback when she says "I love that because..." At one point, David gives a flippant answer about being grateful for his bladder. Gretyl suppresses the humour and engages in direct eye contact. She asks him to further explain his answer to justify his response. At the end of the discussion she asks him how he is going with his individual learning goal to calm him down and re-engage him with the task.

In her diary, Gretyl wrote that she chose this moment to show “where student thinking is at and the small steps in moving it forward. The lesson was based on recent work with Hugh Van Cuylenburg on gratitude and happiness”. Hugh Van Cuylenburg is the Director for “The Resilience Project” (http://theresilienceproject.com.au). This organisation aims “to help young Australians be mentally healthy”, and promotes values of gratitude, empathy and mindfulness. This expert had been working with the school and the Grade 4 area had been chosen to trial lessons using this approach. Gretyl nominated her actions as “chat about their gratitude journals that we have just started”. She described her thinking as “wondering how deep this gratitude was and how much was lip service", and her feeling state as “wondering where their responses would take us”. Looking back later, what did she think? “We need to keep doing the journals and share and discuss our entries to work towards more meaningful responses. I will model my own entries to help move them on”. From the student perspective, Gretyl noted “they are not in the habit of practising gratitude”. She described student actions as “Some 'show off for friends' responses, while others were very shallow. Students modelled, shared, and we discussed the good ones”. She described student thinking during the moment as “some pretty shallow responses for half the class while some

responses were heart felt”, and student feeling as “some were worried about friends’ reactions. We need to work to move past this”.

At interview, Gretyl stated the goal was to “practise thinking about being grateful and being consciously grateful for things” (i_2 v_2). After David comes up with the answer of "bladder", she questions him to go further and redirects him to his individual learning plan goals. On reviewing the vignette, Gretyl stated,

> Sometimes I will say "Explain it further and ask for an explanation" just to moderate that silliness. He is working on an individual learning plan for the term at home on telling the time. And he has got it. A bit of one-on-one and he got it. He really needs that strong connection with the teacher, which he hasn’t always had. I can have a laugh with him over things. I know that he has loved having that one-on-one with me. (i_2 v_2)

When asked to identify the empathy she is showing and its importance, Gretyl stated:

> I don’t put him down. He certainly needs a lot of moderating of behaviour but it’s... I make sure that I show that I like him and that I appreciate all his qualities. He just needs a little bit of one-on-one work. It doesn’t take much. (i_2 v_2)

Gretyl can be seen to model the sharing of personal information and to engage in active listening, questioning, and providing emotional support. In relation to David, she acknowledges shared humour before engaging in classroom management techniques based on high expectations. She uses wait time based on a well-placed question to increase participation and engagement (Stahl, 1994) as the basis for modelling a cognitive empathy approach.

In summary, Gretyl’s empathic actions observed in this vignette were: modelling, high expectations, discussion, feedback, humour, eye contact, wait time, questioning, and re-engagement.

T2 Vignette 3. The final vignette chosen by Gretyl illustrates her empathic actions of listening, modelling, emotional support, body language, and following-up. A synopsis of the elements observed and confirmed by Gretyl appears in Table 7.9.

Table 7.9

Follow-Up Student Welfare after a Playground Fight

Vignette synopsis
Gretyl is involved in a restorative chat with four boys in a breakout room while eating lunch. She is following-up after a playground fight involving two of these students from the day before on the basketball court. Gretyl checks in with each boy. She asks questions of each student to ensure they see each other's perspectives. The students are relaxed and freely engage in the discussion. Gretyl ensures Steven and the others all feel the situation is resolved and are comfortable. She then talks to the group about how she assesses student social skills that appear on student reports.

In her diary, Gretyl wrote that she chose this moment to show "following-up and checking on student welfare". The context was "a fight that had occurred playing basketball the day before where I had conducted a restorative chat with the students involved on the day". She identified her motivation and actions as "wanting to make sure Steven felt the situation was resolved and he felt comfortable in the playground". She described her thinking during the moment: "Steven's social skills can make him a target. I was just reading what he was telling me in terms of his body language at that moment (it was positive)". She identified her feeling state as "I felt I had a good handle on the situation but was conscious I needed to ensure all parties felt it was resolved". Looking back later, what did she think? "I followed up a number of times (went out to play basketball). I worked in class to re-establish good relations (all went positively)". From the student perspective, Gretyl stated that, "Steven has trouble seeing other's perspectives. We worked on this". She reflected on student actions: "It was a more extreme version but not atypical". She described Steven's thinking as "I think he'd moved on and thought it was resolved", and his feeling state as "Steven trying to hide his feelings (you need to dig a bit with him)".

At interview, Gretyl elaborated on the initial restorative chat with all parties stating that "Steven in social situations does things to antagonise to get a reaction from the other kids. It would

be intentional" (i_2 v_3). After the restorative chat, the students had gone to a specialist class where "David (who was involved in the incident) was saying he appreciated that Steven had gone out and actually said nice things and was encouraging" (i_2 v_3). When asked why she played basketball at recess, Gretyl replied "I still go out and play basketball sometimes because that is where we have our issues and they always want me to go and play with them" (i_2 v_3). When asked why she raised how she assesses social skills in student reports, Gretyl stated "I find that now that they are older, you can talk about reports. That we report on these things and these are the skills we are looking for. It actually makes them more accountable for their actions" (i_2 v_3). In relation to the body language present in this vignette, Gretyl stated,

> They are pretty relaxed. I was thinking now, not necessarily then, when these situations happen, with someone like Steven you can tell he's sort of trying to edge away and not share his feelings. So it is trying to relax him and get him to open up. I think that sometimes their body language tells how they are feeling and how much they want to engage. (i_2 v_3)

Gretyl can be seen to model restorative justice techniques (Morrison, 2007) and the importance of follow-up to ensure all parties feel the incident is resolved to display her empathy and care. She works to follow-up on her classroom management from the day before to allow her teacher empathy to be expressed. With Steven, she reads his body language and gestures, which allow "communication in interaction to proceed where conventional language fails" (Enfield & Levinson, 2006, p. 51). In summary, Gretyl's empathic actions observed in this vignette were: active listening, eye contact, classroom management, emotional support, body language, restorative justice, and follow-up.

7.7 Emotional Support Ratings of Lessons and Empathy Vignettes

Gretyl's six vignettes were scored for levels of emotional support (Positive climate; Teacher sensitivity; Regard for student perspectives) using CLASS (Pianta et al., 2012). Four additional "live" classroom lessons (two at each timepoint) were observed for levels of emotional support and

similarly coded (Appendix O). Gretyl's average ratings across the lessons and vignettes are shown in *Figure 7.3*.

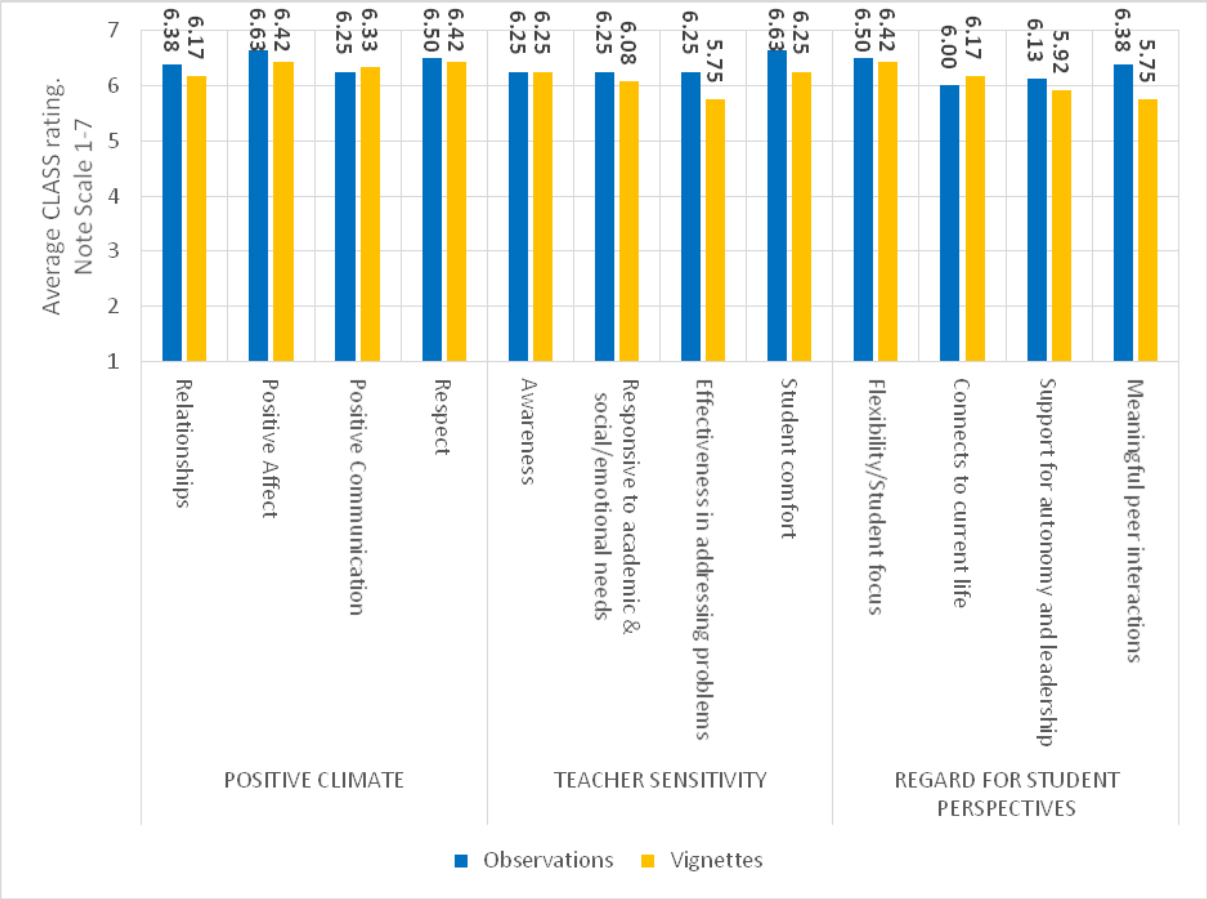


Figure 7.3. Gretyl's Average Lesson Observation and Vignette Ratings by Emotional Support Dimension. *Note:* 1–2=low quality; 3–5=mid-range quality; and 6–7= high quality.

Gretyl's emotional support variables at the domain levels of positive climate, teacher sensitivity and regard for student perspective were within the high range across all lesson observations and vignettes. At the dimension level, all elements in the vignettes were also rated in the high range.

7.8 Conclusion

This chapter introduced Gretyl's personal understanding of empathy and her relational and teaching style goals. An exploration followed of how she demonstrates and experiences empathy in the classroom drawing on her vignettes, diary entries and responses at interview.

Phenomenological analysis of the transcripts distilled the essence of empathy in Gretyl's teaching and conveyed what this experience is like for her. She sees empathy as a way of showing faith in students' abilities and trying to understand their thinking by acknowledging their points of view and co-negotiating an approach. Gretyl creates a class climate based on care, building rapport, sharing and mutual respect. She shows empathy by modelling, listening, valuing, and appraising how students feel which then guides her responses. Gretyl promotes student voice, values opinions and shows appreciation of students as individuals. She tries to provide student comfort through social and emotional support to promote social happiness, acceptance and student self-esteem. The metaphors a person uses can indicate how they construct their world (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Gretyl's reference to "the amount of right at any point in time" is a key metaphor illustrating how she applies empathy in her classroom.

The empathy vignettes and corresponding diary entries show that Gretyl feels a wide variety of rich feelings ("love"– i_1 v_2; "wonder"– i_2 v_2; "confidence"– i_1 v_3) in the empathy she models and displays with her students. She experiences a range of sensations ("I am impressed"; "it feels quite caring" – i_1), and nourishment ("I get genuinely excited" – i_1 v_2; "I show that I like him and that I appreciate all of his qualities" – i_2 v_2). Further, she engages in behaviour both in and out of the classroom that demonstrates her empathic approach ("I still go out and play basketball at break sometimes because that is where we have our issues" – i_2 v_3). Her word choices and imagery show she is passionate about the role of empathy and levels of care in her teaching.

Gretyl values relationships, appraises student states and selects situations that maintain relationships between students and with her. Manifestly, she makes cognitive judgments that are intuitive ("It can very much depend on what is going on at home and how he is feeling as to how he comes to school and reacts to other children" – i_1 v_1) and concrete ("Working with them, hearing them and interacting. We had a conversation this morning about listening. 'So what you are saying is…?' A good listener might repeat back to make sure they have understood" – i_1). She works to establish positive relationships and to address negative situations through negotiation with students.

Chapter 8 Case 5 – Alice

This chapter presents the case study findings of Alice's experience of teacher empathy in the classroom. Alice has been teaching for six years and is classed as a "proficient" teacher (>6 years' experience: AITSL, 2011a). She has taught at both the primary and secondary levels. She has been teaching for the last five years at School A, and this is her third consecutive year teaching Grade 5 (10-11 year olds). There are 27 students in her class including a number of high achieving students and one with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Alice values teacher-student relationships, based on her belief that "unless you have a relationship built with them (students), it is really hard to develop them further. If your students are feeling comfortable and they feel safe, they want to learn and they are very open" (i_1).

The chapter begins with Alice's relational goals (Butler, 2012), followed by her (and her students') perceptions of teaching style dimensions (Watt & Richardson, 2007). Her mentalizing characteristics (Luyten et al., 2012) are then presented. Next, Alice's personal meaning of empathy is explored followed by her three higher-order themes derived from the IPA (Smith et al., 2009)—(1) *Providing social and emotional support*, (2) *Being in tune with student thoughts and feelings*, and (3) *Taking a personal interest in and out of school*. Finally, the data coding of Alice's expressions of empathy in the vignettes for cognitive and affective empathy are reported.

The final sections provide examples of Alice's self-nominated demonstrations of empathy in the classroom from the vignettes and interviews. The results of data coding for empathy aspects are then presented including independent evaluations of Alice's lessons and vignettes for levels of emotional support using the CLASS assessment tool (Pianta et al., 2012). The chapter concludes with a summary of key themes and subthemes as a narrative account of the essence of Alice's empathy experience.

8.1 Relational Goals

Alice described the student with Autism Spectrum Disorder as "quite challenging to engage". She has "worked hard to understand his sense of humour" so "he connects well with me now but it has taken a while to get to that point" (i_1). She provided ratings of her relational goals for student interactions using Butler's (2012) criteria at Timepoint 1 (T_1: Term 3, Week 5) and 16 weeks later (T_2: Term 4, Week 8). Alice rated her goals on a 5-point scale (1=totally disagree; 5=totally agree). All scores were high (Table 8.1).

Table 8.1

Alice's Self-Ratings of Relational Goals: Scale 1 (totally disagree) – 5 (totally agree)

Item Description	*T_1 Score*	*T_2 Score*
"I would feel most successful as a teacher if I saw that I was developing closer and better relationships with students in my class"	3	5
"My main goal as a teacher is to show my students that I care about them"	4	5
"More than anything, I aspire to create deep personal relationships with each and every student"	5	4
"Building relationships with students is most important for me"	5	5
"I take care of my students if they have problems"	5	5
"I take time to get to know my students and to know what is happening with them in school and at home"	5	5

Note. Sourced from "Striving to Connect: Extending an Achievement Goal Approach to Teacher Motivation to Include Relational Goals for Teachers," by R. Butler, 2012, *Journal of Educational Psychology, 104*, p. 729.

8.2 Perceptions of Teaching Style Dimensions

At T_1 and T_2 Alice was asked to rate her teaching style (TSS), using Watt and Richardson's (2007) instrument (Appendix J) to assess perceptions of the classroom environment on a 7-point Likert-type scale (*Figure 8.1*).

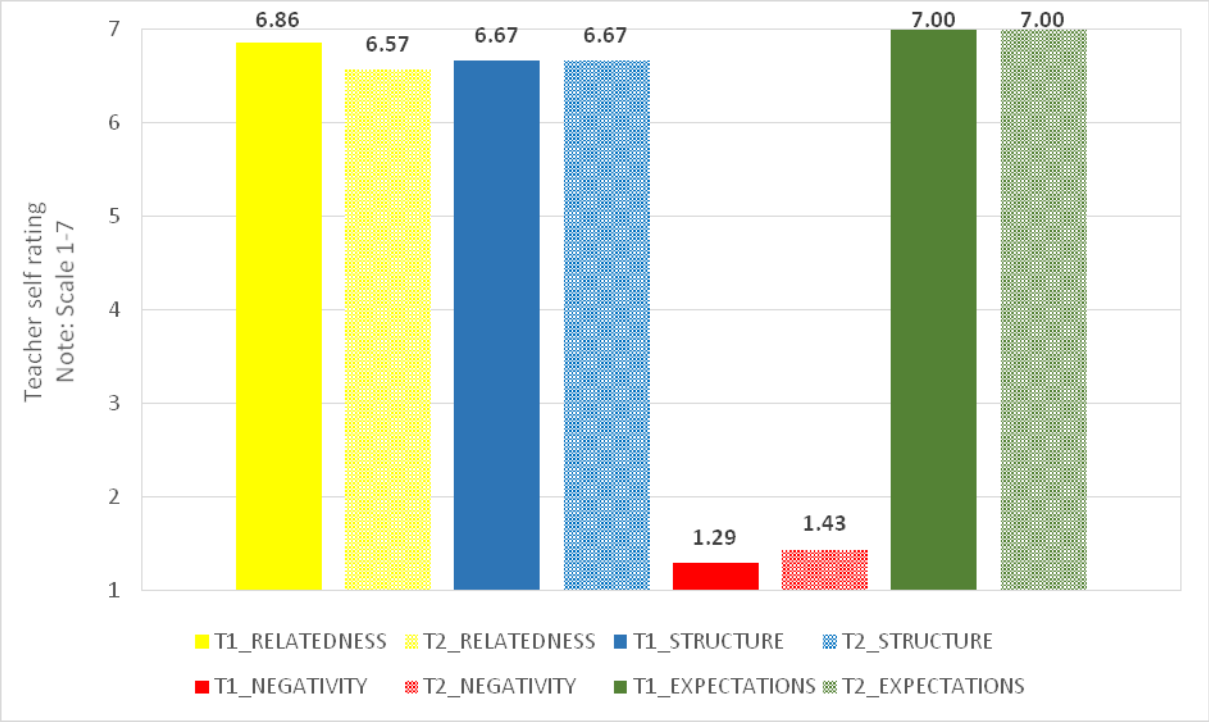


Figure 8.1. Self-Rated Teaching Style Scale factor means for Alice. *Note:* 1= Not at all; 7= A lot.

Alice's perceptions of her *relatedness* were high and fell slightly over time (6.86_{t1} – 6.57_{t2}). Her scores for *structure* ($6.67_{t1, t2}$) and *expectations* ($7.00_{t1, t2}$) were also high and constant, whereas her perceptions of *negativity* were very low, although slightly higher at T_2 (1.29_{t1} – 1.43_{t2}).

Alice's 10 student participants also parallel rated their perceptions of her teaching style using Watt and Richardson's (2007) instrument (Appendix K). Composite factor scores were created by averaging component items for each and factor means were plotted (*Figure 8.2*).

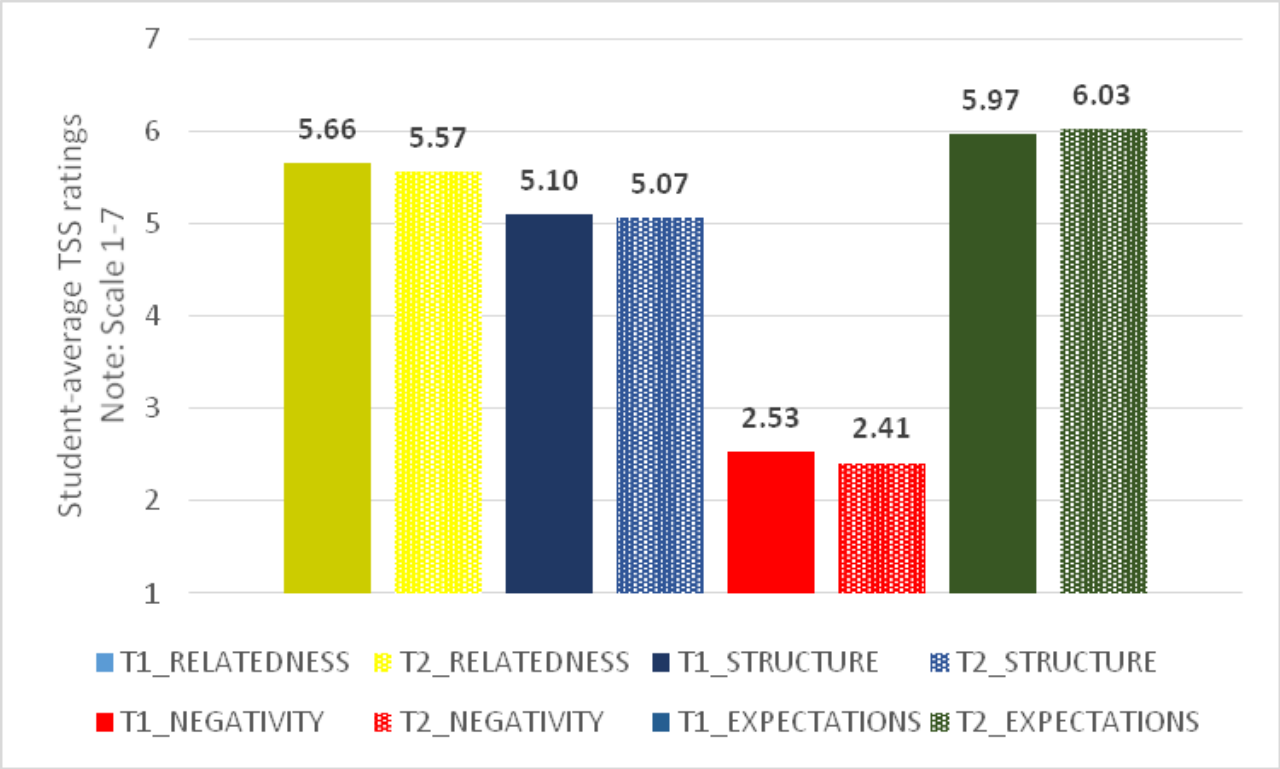


Figure 8.2. Student-Rated Teaching Style Scale factor means for Alice. *Note:* 1= Not at all; 7= A lot.

Alice's students perceived her relatedness to be high and fairly constant (5.66_{t1} – 5.57_{t2}). Their perceptions of her positive expectations (5.97_{t1} – 6.03_{t2}) and structure (5.10_{t1} – 5.07_{t2}) were also high, whereas their perceptions of her negativity were low and diminished (2.53_{t1} – 2.41_{t2}).

8.3 Alice's Mentalization Characteristics

The mentalization aspects evident in Alice's responses from her diary entries and interview responses are reported here. Table 8.2 lists themes covered by the coded open comments using Luyten et al. (2012). The frequencies indicate the prominence of each mentalization characteristic to Alice.

Table 8.2

Frequency of Alice's Mentalization Characteristics from Diary Entries and Interviews

Item Description	Frequency
Security of mental exploration and openness to discovery	36
Acknowledgement of opaqueness and tentativeness of mental states	37
Genuine interest in the mental states of self and others and their relation	49
Adaptive flexibility in switching from automatic to controlled mentalization	32
Acknowledgement of changeability of mental states, including awareness of developmental perspective (attachment history influences relating to self & others)	23
Integrate cognitive and affective features of self and others ("embodied mentalization")	24
Sense of realistic predictability and controllability of mental states	20
Ability to regulate distress in relation to others	13
Capacity to be relaxed and flexible, not "stuck" in one point of view	24
Capacity to be playful, with humour engaging rather than hurtful or distancing	3
Ability to solve problems by give-and-take between own and other's perspectives	19
Ability to describe one's own experience rather than defining other people's experience or intentions	28
Willingness to convey "ownership" of behaviour rather than it "happens to" me	33
Curiosity about other people's perspectives and expectations that one's own views will be extended by others	21
Relational strengths	
• Curiosity	17
• Safe uncertainty	22
• Contemplation and reflection	43
• Perspective-taking	31
• Forgiveness	16
• Impact awareness	45
• Non-paranoid attitude	13
Perception of one's own mental functioning	
• Developmental perspective	23
• Realistic scepticism	9
• Internal conflict awareness	9
• Self-inquisitive stance	15
• Awareness of the effect of affect	24
• Acknowledgement of unconscious or preconscious functioning	60
• Belief in changeability	11
Self-representation	
• Rich internal life	26
• Autobiographical continuity	5
• Advanced explanatory and listening skills	44
General values and attitudes	
• Tentativeness	12
• Humility (moderation)	36
• Playfulness and humour	6
• Flexibility	18
• Give-and-take	45
• Responsibility and accountability	33

Note. Sourced from "Assessment of Mentalization," by P. Luyten, P. Fonagy, B. Lowyck, and R. Vermote, 2012, *Handbook of Mentalizing in Mental Health Practice*, p. 58.

Alice's mentalization characteristics with regard to student thoughts and feelings were coded in 549 instances. In 49 instances Alice showed genuine interest in the mental states of self and others and their relationship (for example, "I find that I really get his sense of humour so he connects quite well with me now"). In 37 instances Alice acknowledged opaque and tentative mental states (e.g., "Some students you think you have got them and then something will happen and you will think wow that came from left field"). In a further 36 instances Alice conveyed security of mental exploration and openness to discovery (e.g., "I try and be in tune with what they are thinking"). Finally, in 45 instances Alice showed impact awareness as a relational strength, as shown in her discussion of the use of the class journal for social and emotional issues (e.g., "They don't actually have to tell me face-to-face which for some kids is really difficult. It could be if they are having some problems out in the yard, it could be a strategy they could use").

Alice's displayed perceptions of her own mental functioning were coded in 151 instances. In 60 instances, she acknowledged unconscious or preconscious functioning (e.g., "Sometimes they are a bit harder to crack"). This behaviour demonstrates that features of observers' situations, experiences, and relationships to targets may systematically alter the experience of empathy (Zaki, 2014). In 24 coded instances, Alice displayed awareness of the effect of affect (e.g., "Whenever you see a child who's in your care is upset, it does upset you. I became quite emotional"), and in another 23 instances she demonstrated a developmental perspective in regard to her own mental functioning (e.g., "I had to get to know him better and work out what makes him think, what makes him tick, what engages him and keeps him on task").

Alice's self-representational characteristics were coded in 75 instances. In 44 of those instances she displayed advanced explanatory and listening skills (e.g., "If you have a good relationship and your students are feeling comfortable, they feel safe, they want to learn as well, and they are very open with you"). Another 26 were coded for rich internal life (e.g., "Everyone is different and unique and we should celebrate that difference"), and five instances were coded for

autobiographic continuity (e.g., “That is all part of my journey as a teacher as well connecting with them and showing I can support them”).

Alice’s general mentalizing values and attitudes were coded in 150 instances: there were 45 instances of “give-and-take” (e.g., “I asked her if she would like to talk out how she was feeling and if she was okay. She said she was fine and she just wanted to write about it”), 36 instances of showing humility and moderation (e.g., “Everyone in some point in their life needs to ask for help and there is no shame in that”), and 33 instances relating to responsibility and accountability (e.g., “I have to show empathy and patience towards him and I had to get to know him better”).

8.4 Phenomenology Themes

Alice’s accounts generated 110 identified empathy moments in the classroom, which I coded by applying the IPA framework (Smith et al., 2009). Three themes—*providing social and emotional support* (33 moments), *being in tune with student thoughts and feelings* (51), and *taking a personal interest* (26)—emerged from the interviews and vignettes.

Table 8.3 summarises these higher order themes and associated sub-themes that encapsulate Alice’s experiences of empathy. The results of the analysis relating to each theme and sub-theme are explored below. Alice’s personal definition of empathy is derived from these themes as well as her experiences of empathy in the classroom.

Table 8.3

Alice's Empathy Themes

Theme	Sub-theme
Providing social and emotional support	An open journal An individual needs approach
In tune with what students are thinking and feeling	Appraising student states Modelling body language Reading student body language
Taking a personal interest in and outside school	Getting to know them Circle Time A motivated approach Sharing personal experience

Personal understanding of empathy. Alice's reported experience of empathy in the classroom begins with a passage revealing the basis for her empathic teaching approach. At T_1, Alice was asked how her empathy is enacted in the classroom,

> Empathy for me means showing respect towards your peers and showing an understanding that everyone has different feelings and beliefs, and we need to respect those. Kids from different backgrounds have different values at home and they bring them to school. You need to instil in each child that just because someone doesn't believe the same things as you, doesn't mean we don't listen and respect ideas. When you are interacting with others, you get a sense of someone, how empathetic they are and how they react to situations. (i_1)

Alice seeks to discover what can be shared with them. She classifies her empathy in the classroom as "cooperative, caring, positive, and respecting of others" and it feels like "you are valued" (i_1). She models it overtly in her teaching. At the T_1 interview, she provided the following classroom example,

> Kids need to understand empathy. Empathy is something that is hard to teach and it's hard for the kids to define. You need to make empathy explicit by putting it into the context of something kids' understand. If they don't understand it, they are not going to be able to display it. To hear it from the kids is really important to get their ideas of what empathy is.

> Some may have ideas already. This helps you understand misconceptions. I model it and I am really explicit on how I am showing those values and how they can show them. I give examples of empathy and some scenarios for them to relate back to their lives. I then see if they can think of examples where they have showed empathy or where someone has been empathetic to them. We go through the school values to understand and show care and compassion, and link them into empathy. That is how I structure it in my classroom to explicitly teach it to kids. (i_1)

Perception-action mechanisms emphasize that perception selects elements in the environment that require or suggest a response by the subject (Preston & de Waal, 2002). Basic information processing components of empathy require familiarity, similarity, and experience. This extract shows Alice's approach to teaching students about empathy, using strategies including situation selection, attention modulation and appraisal to build a classroom climate based on empathic understanding (Zaki, 2014).

Alice encapsulates her view of empathy when she says she "tries to objectively imagine and understand a student's feelings and experiences, and to model this by drawing on my own personal experiences" (i_1). A key event underscoring the significance she places on empathy occurred in 2014 when she took three months leave to participate in building a school in Cambodia,

> I think that was a really good teaching point for me – to be able to come back and talk about empathy and how I have helped another society to build their education system and how this is showing empathy. When you are empathetic, you feel like you have some pride and you have achieved something. It is just as much about what you do for others as how it impacts you emotionally. (i_1)

This extract shows Alice imagining and contributing to the Cambodian education system through selfless help directed toward the altruistic goal of reducing the distress of persons in need.

According to the empathy-altruism hypothesis (Batson, 1991), if you feel empathy towards another person(s) you help them, regardless of what you might gain from it. Feelings of empathy for others produces an altruistic motivation to increase their welfare as an end in itself.

Alice's accounts introduce two levels of empathy—1) empathy she models *to* students ("I described a sad memory from my life. We discussed how this made me feel and what words we could use to describe the situation" – i_1 v_1); and 2) valuing empathy shown *by* students to each other ("We show empathy toward one another. Every Friday we do a Circle Time (Mosley, 1993) where we nominate students we think have demonstrated the values to celebrate success, attitudes to school and respect they are showing peers" – i_1). Alice always has mutual respect in mind ("that we respect one another", "the respect they are showing to their peers") and adjusts her approach to work through situations based on "being very open", "being positive", and ensuring students "feel comfortable" (i_1).

"Being able to support and help them". Alice describes her empathic approach as providing social and emotional support where "I can show that I can support them and connect with them on a different level" (i_1 v_1). A recurring phrase across her accounts was "being able to support and help" where she works with teachers and parents "to support kids to reach their goals" (i_1).

In addition to following "restorative justice principles" (Morrison, 2007) to resolve social disputes, Alice maintains a class journal that students can use at any time to enter into an open dialogue with her about social and emotional issues. Alice provided some elaboration on the purposes and use of the journal,

> At the end of lunchtime if something has happened or whenever they feel like sharing, they can write in the journal. I find that that this is an open conversation between me and the student. I take it home once a week and I respond in writing and give it back on a Monday for them to read. It could be a strategy they could use. (i_1)

Alice's demonstrations of empathy reflect a recognition that students have a variety of needs requiring her to regulate her approach. For example, in the vignettes Alice can be seen to provide social and emotional support to Aaron to "give him encouragement and support him" to self-manage his behaviour (i_1 v_2).

"In tune with what students are thinking and feeling". In "trying to be in tune with what students are thinking and how they are feeling" (i_1), Alice engages in mindful awareness to develop relationships. Her approach reflects her understanding that individual student concerns and needs are not everyone's concerns and needs, and that some compromise must be achieved moment by moment. Her accounts highlight the importance of awareness and "the body language you are using" in displaying empathy (i_1). When asked "how easy it is to be in tune with what students are thinking or feeling", Alice stated,

> You have to really gauge the reaction and pick up on their body language. It depends on the student. Some students are more challenging than others. You pick up on their body language or they have certain traits that help you to understand them. (i_1)

Alice gauges student states of mind and steps into the shoes of her students through mindful awareness as the basis for cognitive empathy displays. For example, she refers to Frida's emotional state based on her knowledge of the student before engaging in her empathic approach,

> She is never a child that would hold back so clearly this had hit her heartstrings and was quite emotional for her. This was the first time I had ever seen her in this type of situation. Would you like to talk out how you are feeling? (i_1 v_1).

Further, Alice is self-aware in modelling "the body language you are using" (i_1) to create a positive environment where an empathic approach frames her cognitive processes. She models active listening when she says,

> We have been teaching him some different skills to realise that you have got to show respect. Even though he is listening, it looks like he is not listening because he is not giving them eye contact, the body language he is using. So teaching him those skills. When he is sitting with me, getting him to look at me. To have that conversation and not get distracted. (i_1 v_2)

A number of vignettes show Alice's beliefs on the importance of reading student body language. For instance, she observes that Aaron is willing to share based on "his body language" (i_1 v_2), and engages empathically with Rebecca recognising "the effort she put in" after reading "her facial expressions, how reserved she was" and her "worry and distress" (i_2 v_1). Elsewhere, she reads Jason's body language and decides an empathic approach is required to lessen his anxiety levels. She looks for physical cues in him, noting that "he does hold his cards very close to his chest and can be hard to read". In her appraisal, she notes that "he fidgets a lot when he is anxious" (i_2 v_2). Effective cooperation requires being in tune with the emotional states and goals of others.

"When you give up something from your experience, kids connect". The final theme that emerged across the accounts is Alice taking a personal interest in connecting with students. Alice describes herself as "one of those teachers who actually likes to take an interest not only in the school facet but outside as well",

> I go and ask them "what are you playing on the weekend in the way of sport or dance or whatever?" I will actually go and look at their games or performances. As soon as you have done that for one child, they all want you to come. So by the end of the year I try to make sure that I have gone to a specific event they are involved in. The sense of pride they have when they actually see you are in the audience. They love it. I also do lunchtime clubs so you get to interact with the kids on a different level. (i_1)

This extract shows a friendly interaction pattern by Alice in her positive relationships with students, where high levels of affiliation are a primary source of teacher enjoyment and motivation (Hargreaves, 2000), and encounters in positive relationships have been shown to occur mostly outside the classroom (Claessens et al., 2016).

Alice models empathy reflecting a personal interest to "get to know" her students (i_1). She begins this process in the school holidays to connect and respond to students as individuals,

> Before the school year even starts I send a letter to all my students telling them about myself. Some kids will have interacted with me before but others have not. I give them a business card as a magnet, which has my email on it and my photo so they know who I am. If they have a problem and they are at home with mum or dad, they can email me if they have any concerns. When they first come back I get them to respond to my letter that they have received in the holidays to tell me a little about themselves. (i_1)

Alice uses class routines to start the day by "respecting each other" to build relationships and create an "open" environment,

> I start every day with a Circle Time (Mosley, 1993). Every child faces a partner. I get them to have a discussion. It could be talking about something that is happening that week or something that has already happened. It could be reflecting on something you were proud of last week or something you are looking forward to. I might pick a few kids to share. I find that if you are open and this is regularly scheduled and it is consistent, the kids know this is how we sit, that we respect and show empathy to each other. (i_1)

From the vignettes she nominated for analysis, it is clear Alice invests personally in displaying an empathic approach and can be personally affected by students' thoughts and feelings. For example, "My heart went out for Frida as I could see she was clearly distressed by having to approach these emotions. What impacted me most was to see her so upset" (i_1 v_1).

Alice is also aware that students in her class enjoy her sharing of personal information to model and express empathy ("for me to be able to share too"). Here, Alice models a sad moment from her own experience and how this made her feel prior to the class "expressing themselves through writing as a release" (i_1 v_1),

> You have a conversation because they are interested in what happened and what you talked about. They like to show they have an interest in you too. When you are willing to give something up from your own experience the kids really connect with that. I had a child two weeks ago whose grandfather died and she wanted to talk about him. I gave her a reflection. I talked about when a similar situation had happened to me when I lost a grandparent and how that made me feel. To share my experience. (i_1)

Alice recognises that students want to connect with her and take an interest in her welfare. They follow-up on matters they impute are important in her life.

8.5 Expressions of Cognitive and Affective Empathy

Alice was asked if she considers herself to be empathic and if this was always the case. She answered in the affirmative, noting "how I explicitly teach it to the kids has changed with experience" (i_1). On 24 instances, Alice *recognised* student(s) mental states across the vignettes (for example, "You can see it in his body language, just the change in his face"– i_2 v_2). In 24 instances, she *responded* to a student's mental state with an emotion based on care (e.g., "I approached her and I said 'Do you need a tissue?', 'Do you want to go get a drink?', and 'Do you want some fresh air to clear your head?' to show I understand how she is feeling" – i_1 v_1).

8.6 Examples of Demonstrated Empathy – Vignettes of Alice's Interaction

Alice's teaching was filmed for a week at two timepoints – in Term 3, Week 4 (T_1: 4–8 August, 2014) and 12 weeks later in Term 4, Weeks 4 and 5 (T_2: 27 October–7 November, 2014). She identified three positive *empathy moments* from the footage at T_1 and two moments at T_2 (five

altogether) as the vignettes for analysis. A synopsis of each vignette was provided to Alice and checked for trustworthiness (Guba, 1981; Shenton, 2004). This section reports on these synopses, Alice's mentalization diary entries and her responses on reviewing the vignette at interview.

T_1 Vignette 1. The first of the five vignettes chosen by Alice for analysis illustrates her empathic action of attention modulation. A synopsis of the elements observed in the footage and agreed to by Alice appears in Table 8.4.

Table 8.4

Sad Memories

Vignette synopsis
Alice is conducting a writing lesson on sad memories to allow students to express themselves through writing. She shares a sad moment from her life with the class, and then discusses how this moment made her feel. She asks for words she could use to describe the situation. During the lesson, "Frida" can be seen to become emotional, putting her head on the desk and crying. Alice is seen to be assessing the situation and considering what to do next. She allows students' some reflection time and then approaches Frida. She asks "are you okay?" and "would you would like to talk out how you are feeling?" She asks Frida if she needs a tissue, wants to get a drink, or get some fresh air. Frida says "No I am fine" stating that she is reflecting on the situation and wants to write about it. "I just need some time".

In her diary, Alice stated that she chose this moment to demonstrate "reflecting on sad memories when Frida became quite overcome with emotions". She described Frida as "a happy student who openly shares her thoughts". Alice nominated her actions as "listening very carefully, asking questions, allowing students some reflection time and then approaching her. I asked "if she would like to talk out how she was feeling". She described her thinking "that maybe the students were not mature enough to write about emotions that are confronting for them. However, allowing a student to express themselves through writing is often a good release", and her feeling state as "my heart went out to Frida as I could see she was clearly distressed by having to approach these emotions". Looking back later, what did she think? "I think I supported Frida well through this situation". From the student perspective, Alice nominated Frida's actions as "becoming emotional when reflecting on a sad memory in her life. She began to cry. Frida is usually good at articulating

her feelings but struggled today". She described Frida's thinking and feeling state as "upset and a little embarrassed" because "she didn't know how to explain how she was feeling".

Upon reviewing this vignette, Alice talked about the role of emotion in writing and reflected on the result of this experience for Frida. She observed that subsequent to this event Frida selected this writing piece to publish in the class share book so "she does come to terms with it". She observed that,

> Frida never holds back. This was the first time I had ever seen her in this situation. I tried to talk her through it. If a child is not feeling well, often they won't say anything. But she said "No. I am fine. I am just reflecting on this. And I want to write about it". So I walked away to give her time but I kept going back just in case. I offered her a tissue, a drink, and some fresh air but she said she was fine. I showed I understood how she was feeling. When we shared as a class, I said "I know a lot of you did get upset and I completely understand". We talked about raw emotion and how it can be fresh in your mind. Sometimes it is easier to talk about it with time. It may always be raw. For me to share that was important." (i_1 v_1)

In identifying the empathy shown and its significance, Alice was asked to talk about how she was feeling seeing Frida in an emotional state. She recognises that Frida is upset and this results in Alice becoming "upset" and "quite emotional" as well,

> I guess that is part of my journey as a teacher as well in connecting with them and showing I can support them and using that moment to connect with Frida on a different level. Frida has made progress and seen how this has helped her, which is great. (i_1 v_1)

The vignette illustrates the use of attention modulation as an empathy strategy. Attention modulation can be used to alter or modify the initial process of generating emotions (Zaki, 2014). Observers can up- or down- regulate empathy by shifting their attention toward or away from affective cues (Todd et al., 2012). Alice responds to avoidance and approach motives by modifying

her attention and her initial cognitive empathy approach to increase her affective empathy. She understands Frida's emotions and in turn becomes emotional herself.

In summary, Alice's empathic actions observed in this vignette were: situation selection, emotional support, appraisal, responding, attention modulation, reflection, listening, questioning, student voice, following-up, and respect.

T_1 Vignette 2. The second vignette chosen by Alice relates to making an emotional connection with another. A synopsis of the elements observed in the footage and confirmed by Alice appears in Table 8.5.

Table 8.5

Aaron's Reading Conference

Vignette synopsis
Alice is interacting with "Aaron", a student with Autism Spectrum Disorder. She firstly gets him on task by finding his belongings before engaging in a discussion about his reading. His reading group have different roles to prepare for a literature circle group discussion. Aaron hasn't worked out which is his role. Alice asks "how could you find your answer? Where would you find what role you are doing this week?" Aaron then goes and asks other group members what role they are doing to work out his role.

In her diary, Alice stated she chose this moment as "Aaron is often disorganized and slow to settle to tasks and therefore requires extra scaffolding. He very rarely shares his thinking despite being incredibly intelligent, and he often is defiant". She described her actions as "prompting him to discuss the text and ensuring he was on task". She described her thinking and feeling state as "trying to nut out his level of comprehension so I was thinking of questions". Looking back later, what did she think? "I needed to put more strategies in place to scaffold his learning and keep him engaged". From the student perspective, Alice identifies Aaron's actions as typical: "He came to me unorganised and this is something we are working on". She described his thoughts and feelings as "preferring one-on-one sessions where he is more willing to share his ideas. He is quite relaxed and knows he is being listened to. I know this from his body language and willingness to share ideas".

At interview, Alice was asked to elaborate on the scenario and Aaron's behaviour. In responding, she provided another example of how Aaron interacts and how she moderates her teaching to meet his needs,

> Today we looked at an image on screen of people after a hurricane who were clearly upset. I asked him for some words to describe it. I said "When I look at the image, I see their raw emotions". He said "Raw? Like they haven't cooked the emotions yet?" The kids laugh. They think he is being funny when really he is asking "is that what you mean?" We have a bit of a laugh and then I say "No that is not what we mean" and I unpack it. I am explicit with him. I am trying to get him to see it not so literally. (i_1 v_2)

When asked to identify the empathy she is showing, and its significance, Alice said,

> I give him encouragement and support but I don't spoon feed him the answer. I show empathy and patience. Other children want to please you as the teacher or see progress. They are competitive and want to do better. For him, nothing like that matters. I have been working on this with his parents. They say "I don't know what to do? How can we get him to be engaged?" When he is at home he will say to dad "Can you read me a book?" While dad is reading, he will start to play the guitar. Dad stops. Aaron says "Don't stop. I want you to keep reading". Dad says "Well, why do you think I stopped?" Aaron says "I don't know". He doesn't pick up that he is being rude by playing the guitar. We have been teaching him different skills to realise that you have got to show empathy and respect to show you are listening. (i_1 v_2)

This extract sees Alice seeking to demonstrate her ability to make an emotional connection with another and model cognitive empathy. Kestenbaum, Farber, and Sroufe (1989) argue a child learns to be empathic when adults model being empathic with the child. The child's understanding of relationships comes from experiences of relationships.

When Alice states “she has had to get to know him better”, she appears to be displaying a genuine interest based on her knowledge of the student. She is making a conscious effort to focus on his mind and behaviour. She engages in modelling, questioning and interaction to provide him with social and emotional support and in shared experience to build mutual perspective-taking by modelling cognitive empathy to explore what he thinks and feels. She then assesses situational perspective-taking based on empathy accuracy (Ickes, 1997), and has mindful awareness of Aaron’s recent attitudes, actions and behaviour in the classroom in mind.

In summary, Alice’s empathic actions observed in this vignette were: organising, prompting, support, modelling, encouragement, perspective-taking, sharing, knowing students, following-up, reflection, and reading body language.

T_1 Vignette 3. The next vignette chosen by Alice relates to a moment of shared experience to build mutual perspective-taking. A synopsis of the elements observed in the footage and confirmed by Alice appears in Table 8.6.

Table 8.6

Celebrating Success in Writing

Vignette synopsis
At the end of a writing lesson, there is a class discussion and a share of three student writing pieces. The students are each asked by Alice if they want to read out their pieces. Instead they ask Alice to do it. In reading out the work, Alice acknowledges the student’s writing achievements. She models pride and respect in the finished pieces and highlights elements to the class for discussion to encourage their efforts.

In her diary, Alice stated she chose this moment to show “celebrating the success of students who are sharing their fabulous writing. While Aaron is often hard to engage, he was very engaged here so I chose his piece as one of the three to share”. Alice nominated her actions as “verbally celebrating the student’s achievements and sharing their work with the class”. She described her thinking as “how proud I was of all three students for the sophistication and detail they showed in

their writing", and her feeling state as "impressed with their achievements". Looking back later, what did she think? "I think the sharing at the end of a writing session is important".

Upon reviewing this vignette, Alice talked about the role of getting student permission to share, and the empathy she is showing and its significance,

> I ask "Would you mind if we read this one out? Do you want to read it yourself?" Some say "No, you can read it out" because they are shy. Others say "Yes I will read it". In this case, all three asked "can you read it for me?" The share is really important especially for those kids that might struggle with writing. For them to feel proud of what they have done and for the class to respect everyone's abilities in the share. We talk about showing respect. It is important because they look forward to it. They love it. We have a share book. Each week I pick a piece to go into the book, and they are proud of what they have achieved. (i_1 v_3)

This quote demonstrates Alice displaying genuine interest in students to build relationships and a positive climate to enhance the learning process. She models respect, listening, sharing, and celebrating student voice. She engages in shared experience to build mutual perspective-taking using a cognitive empathy approach. In summary, Alice's empathic actions observed in this vignette were: student voice, sharing, acknowledging, celebrating, respect, encouragement, pride, modelling, and enjoyment.

T_2 Vignette 1. The first vignette chosen by Alice from the T_2 footage relates to situation selection. A synopsis of the elements observed in the vignette and confirmed by Alice at interview appears in Table 8.7.

Table 8.7

Dead Battery

Vignette synopsis
“Rebecca” is agitated and is seen to approach Alice wanting help. She has been word processing on a laptop when the battery died. Rebecca hasn’t saved and she is worried she has lost her work. She says she is not going to be able to remember the piece to redo it. Alice says "Okay, what can we do?" She problem solves with Rebecca to assist her and provide support. She listens and shows understanding for the effort Rebecca has put in. Alice then suggests Rebecca use the teacher laptop charger. Fortunately the file is recovered and no work is lost. Rebecca is relieved and appreciative.

In her diary, Alice stated she chose this moment as “Rebecca came up to me upset wanting me to help her find a solution to her problem. I showed empathy for the effort she had put in to her work”. She described her relationship with this student as “very good. She was confident to come to me when she needed assistance”. Alice nominated her actions as “assisting Rebecca with her problem by allowing her to use my laptop charger. I prompted her to save more regularly in the future to avoid losing her work”. She described her thinking as “thinking on my feet to try and assist her and also thinking how I could be supportive and empathetic towards her”.

Upon reviewing the vignette, Alice reflected that “accidents do happen and we forget these things. She didn’t lose any work so it was a win for both of us. Rebecca said ‘I will make sure I save as I go in future’”. In identifying the empathy in the vignette and its significance, Alice stated,

> You have to gauge a student’s reaction to provide support and it pays to be calm and supportive. I could tell she was upset by her facial expressions and how reserved she was. Rebecca can see I am trying to think it through as a problem to solve together. Sometimes students expect you to just have a solution but it is about them as well. I try and help her problem solve and remind her this is a very valuable lesson. Later on, she came up and thanked me saying she would have lost all her work. (i_2 v_1)

Alice allows Rebecca to talk through her problem and initial distress regarding the situation, and keeps her distance to head off the need for an initial empathic response. She then problem

solves with Rebecca to allow the student to take ownership engaging in a cognitive perspective-taking approach.

In summary, Alice's empathic actions observed in this vignette were: attention modulation, appraisal, listening, sympathy, emotional support, perspective-taking, and problem solving.

T2 Vignette 2. The final vignette chosen by Alice from the footage relates to situation appraisal, student body language, and modelling cognitive empathy to alleviate a student's anxiety. A synopsis of the elements observed in the vignette and confirmed by Alice appears in Table 8.8.

Table 8.8

Catching Up After an Illness

Vignette synopsis
"Jason" has missed a number of publishing sessions due to illness. Alice sees that Jason is stressed at being behind. He fidgets and can't focus. She approaches him and offers to help by getting him to dictate his piece to her as she types. This allows him to catch up. Alice provides support and encourages him to ask for assistance when he needs it.

In her diary, Alice stated that she chose this moment to demonstrate "being able to recognise a student's anxiety and stress. I could see Jason stressing so I decided to assist. This meant he could catch up to his peers and not be so stressed about missing the work". She described her relationship with this student: "Jason has a history of experiencing anxiety. He doesn't openly ask for assistance". Alice nominated her actions as "not causing a fuss or asking questions. I just took note of what his body language was telling me. I decided to assist him by typing his writing piece". She described her thinking "that as much as I wanted him to do it, it wasn't worth the stress for Jason. I could get him to edit the piece once we had typed it", and her feeling state as "glad I could assist him". Looking back later, what did she think? "I ensured I didn't make a big deal out of Jason's anxiety. This was important to ensure he didn't feel different or incapable of completing the task".

Upon reviewing the vignette, Alice provided further elaboration about the scenario,

> When Jason feels anxious you can see it in his body language – the change in his face. He is not as bubbly. He always wants to please you. By asking for help, he feels he is letting you down. This has been a huge battle for him this year in getting him to understand that he needn't be afraid to ask. He is becoming better at it but it is still something he needs to work on. I was watching him and I could see that he was stressing. He is a one finger typist so it is slow for him. By the end, I had typed it up and he was back to where he needs to be. Already you can see he is feeling happier. (i_2 v_2)

Alice described the empathy shown and its importance in this vignette in the following terms,

> Being empathic towards how he feels and trying to help him build strategies without getting angry at him because you don't need to be like that. It's about helping him develop strategies so that he can independently ask for assistance rather than relying on me to pinpoint when he might be feeling anxious. Showing him it is okay. (i_2 v_2)

These extracts demonstrate Alice seeking to display her care and use her knowledge and awareness of students to read their body language. She appraises the situation by listening, encouraging, and accepting to model and alleviate Jason's anxiety. Emotional states such as fear can restrict Jason's capacity to mentalize ("at that point, that obviously changes his focus and he can't focus on what he is doing because he is kind of overwhelmed" – i_2 v_2). In extreme cases, he would go into 'fight/flight/freeze' (Cannon, 1932) or 'tend and befriend' (Taylor et al., 2000).

In summary, Alice's empathic actions observed in this vignette were: appraisal, altruism, support, encouragement, modelling, and reading body language.

8.7 Emotional Support Ratings of Lessons and Empathy Vignettes

Alice's five vignettes were scored for levels of emotional support (Positive climate; Teacher sensitivity; Regard for student perspectives) by the two raters using the CLASS (Pianta et al.,

2012). Four additional *live* classroom lessons (two at each timepoint) were also observed for levels of emotional support and similarly coded (Appendix O). Alice's average ratings across the lessons and vignettes are shown in *Figure 8.3*.

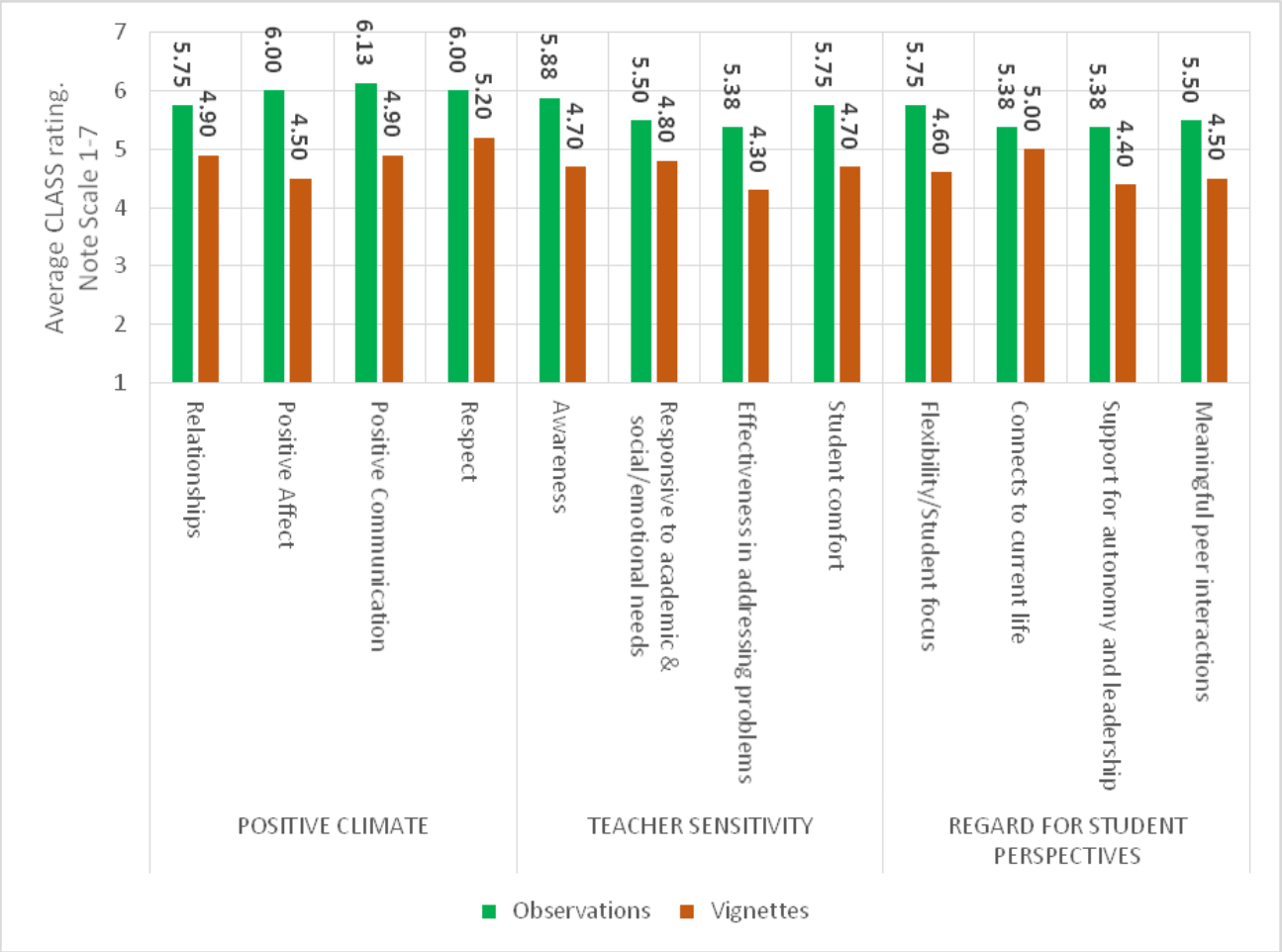


Figure 8.3. Alice's Average Lesson Observation and Vignette Ratings by Emotional Support Dimension. *Note:* 1–2=low quality; 3–5=mid-range quality; and 6–7= high quality.

Alice's emotional support variables at the domain levels of positive climate, teacher sensitivity and regard for student perspectives were within the low to mid end of the high-range across all lesson observations, and in the high end of the mid-range across the vignettes. At the dimension level, all elements in the vignettes were rated at the mid to high end of the mid-range. Finally, it is noted that Alice's observation ratings are all higher than her vignette ratings. This may reflect additional elements observed by raters in live lessons versus the quality of interactions captured in scenarios in her vignettes.

8.8 Conclusion

This chapter introduced Alice's personal meaning of empathy and her relational and teacher style goals. Her vignettes, diary entries, and responses at interview enabled an exploration of the specifics of how she demonstrates and experiences empathy in the classroom. A phenomenological research design (as outlined in 2.14) was used to allow Alice to voice and show how she experienced empathy in her classroom.

Phenomenological analysis of the transcripts distilled the essence of empathy in Alice's teaching and conveyed what this experience is like for her. She tries to be in tune with what students think and feel. She gets to know students as individuals to work out how they think, to uncover their motivations and to establish what engages them. Alice creates a classroom climate where all participants are respectful of strengths and weaknesses, and she frequently draws on personal experiences. She models empathy as something you do for others based on respect, eye contact, and body language, and feelings of pride and achievement as a way of connecting. She provides support for student situations and models understanding of other's feelings by appraising student body language and responding to how they might feel and react.

The empathy vignettes and corresponding diary entries show that Alice "loves teaching" and enjoys her relationships in "seeing them grow and being able to support and help them" (i_1). Her word choices and imagery show that she is passionate about the role of empathy in her teaching. Her diary entries reveal she often feels strong emotions in relation to student thoughts and feelings and her experience in the empathy she models (e.g., "my heart went out for her" – i_1 v_1, "proud and impressed" – i_1 v_3, and "glad I could assist and remove his anxiety" – i_2 v_2). For Alice, her empathy *response* is a cognitive or affective process in response to social and emotional issues to meet individual needs, and reflects a willingness to take a personal interest.

Alice's approach is initially based on a combination of cognitive and affective assessments where she engages in heightened awareness to attempt to be "in tune" with what students are

thinking and feeling. She seeks to perceive and decode student emotional states (Decety & Jackson, 2006) to infer what students are thinking and feeling. She engages in a cognitive empathy approach based on imagining a student's experience (Davis, 1980). Further, she draws on her own experiences to engage in emotional sharing in responding to the affective states of students (Decety & Batson, 2009). Alice values relationships with her students and has a strong focus on empathy structures in her teaching, and she feels an imperative to engage in an empathic approach to teach the skills of empathy in her teaching.

Chapter 9 Case 6 – Alan

The sixth and final case study relates to Alan's experience of teacher empathy in his classroom. Alan has been teaching for 14 years, including two five-year periods at School A where he is a "lead" teacher (AITSL, 2011a). A lead teacher is a position that has responsibility for implementing priorities contained in a school three year strategic plan. In 2014, he taught Grade 6 (11-13 year olds), and this was his 12th consecutive year teaching this level. His class has 27 students, including one with Autism Spectrum Disorder, and another with not wanting to come to school issues. Alan teaches in a large, open learning space and believes that "students work best when you have a strong relationship with them" (i_1).

The structure of this chapter replicates that for Chapters 4–8. In summary, it opens with Alan's reports of his relational goals (Butler, 2012), followed by his (and his students') perceptions of teaching style dimensions (Watt & Richardson, 2007), and mentalizing characteristics (Luyten et al., 2012). Next, his six positive empathy vignettes filmed at two timepoints are thematically analysed using an IPA approach (Smith et al., 2009). A written synopsis of the vignette footage was read to Alan at interview for a trustworthiness check (Guba, 1981; Shenton, 2004). Alan's personal meaning of empathy is explored, as well as his four higher order themes derived from the Smith et al. (2009) approach—(1) *Taking a personal interest*, (2) *Modelling and scaffolding with empathy*, (3) *Collaborating and teacher positioning in the learning community*, and (4) *Personal value of being empathic*. Alan's actions were coded for cognitive empathy (where he *recognised* a student's mental state) and affective empathy (where he recognised a student's mental state and *responded* with an appropriate emotion based on care). The vignettes and *live* lessons were coded for levels of emotional support using CLASS (Pianta et al., 2012). The chapter concludes with a summary of key themes and subthemes as a narrative account of the essence of Alan's empathy experience.

9.1 Relational Goals

Alan described his students as "very engaged and responsive", with "probably only one or two students who, from time to time, I have issues with regarding their attitude or behaviour" (i_1). He provided ratings of his relational goals for student interactions using Butler's criteria (2012). Alan rated his goals at Timepoint 1 (T_1: Term 3, Week 5) and 17 weeks later at Timepoint 2 (T_2: Term 4, Week 10) on a 5-point scale (1=totally disagree; 5=totally agree), and all scores were very high (Table 9.1).

Table 9.1

Alan's Self-ratings of Relational Goals: Scale 1 (totally disagree) – 5 (totally agree)

Item Description	*T_1 Score*	*T_2 Score*
"I would feel most successful as a teacher if I saw that I was developing closer and better relationships with students in my class"	5	5
"My main goal as a teacher is to show my students that I care about them"	5	5
"More than anything, I aspire to create deep personal relationships with each and every student"	5	5
"Building relationships with students is most important for me"	5	5
"I take care of my students if they have problems"	5	4
"I take time to get to know my students and to know what is happening with them in school and at home"	4	4

Note. Sourced from "Striving to Connect: Extending an Achievement Goal Approach to Teacher Motivation to Include Relational Goals for Teachers," by R. Butler, 2012, *Journal of Educational Psychology, 104,* p. 729.

9.2 Perceptions of Teaching Style Dimensions

Alan was asked to rate his teaching style dimensions (TSS) at each timepoint using Watt and Richardson's (2007) instrument (Appendix J) to assess perceptions of the classroom environment on a 7-point Likert-type scale (*Figure 9.1*).

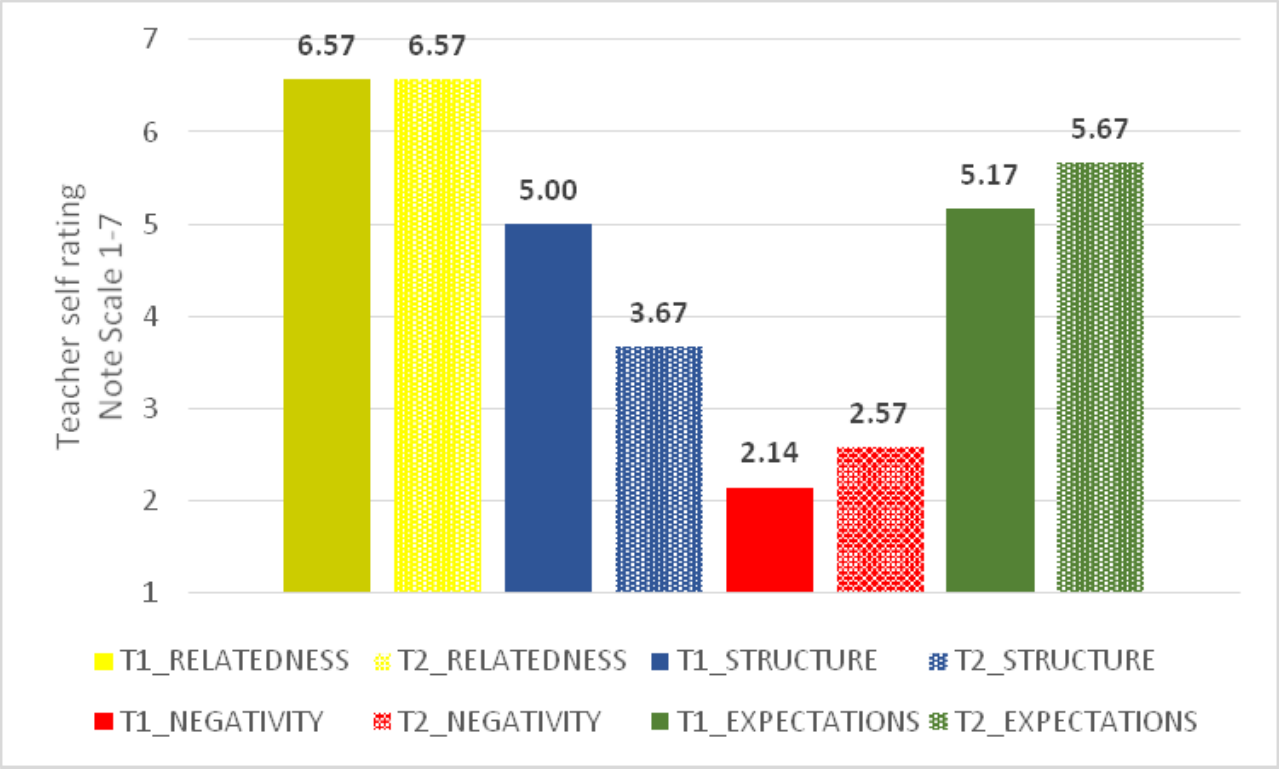


Figure 9.1. Self-Rated Teaching Style Scale factor means for Alan. *Note:* 1= Not at all; 7= A lot.

Alan's perceptions of his *relatedness* were high and fairly constant ($6.57_{t1, t2}$). His scores for *expectations* (5.17_{t1} – 5.67_{t2}) were also high, particularly at T_2. Alan's scores for *structure* were in the mid-range and declined over time (5.00_{t1} – 3.67_{t2}), while his perceptions of *negativity* were low, but slightly higher at T_2 (2.14_{t1} – 2.57_{t2}).

Alan's 10 students also rated their perceptions of his teaching style using the Watt and Richardson student instrument (Appendix K). Composite factor scores were created by averaging component items for each and factor means were plotted (*Figure 9.2*).

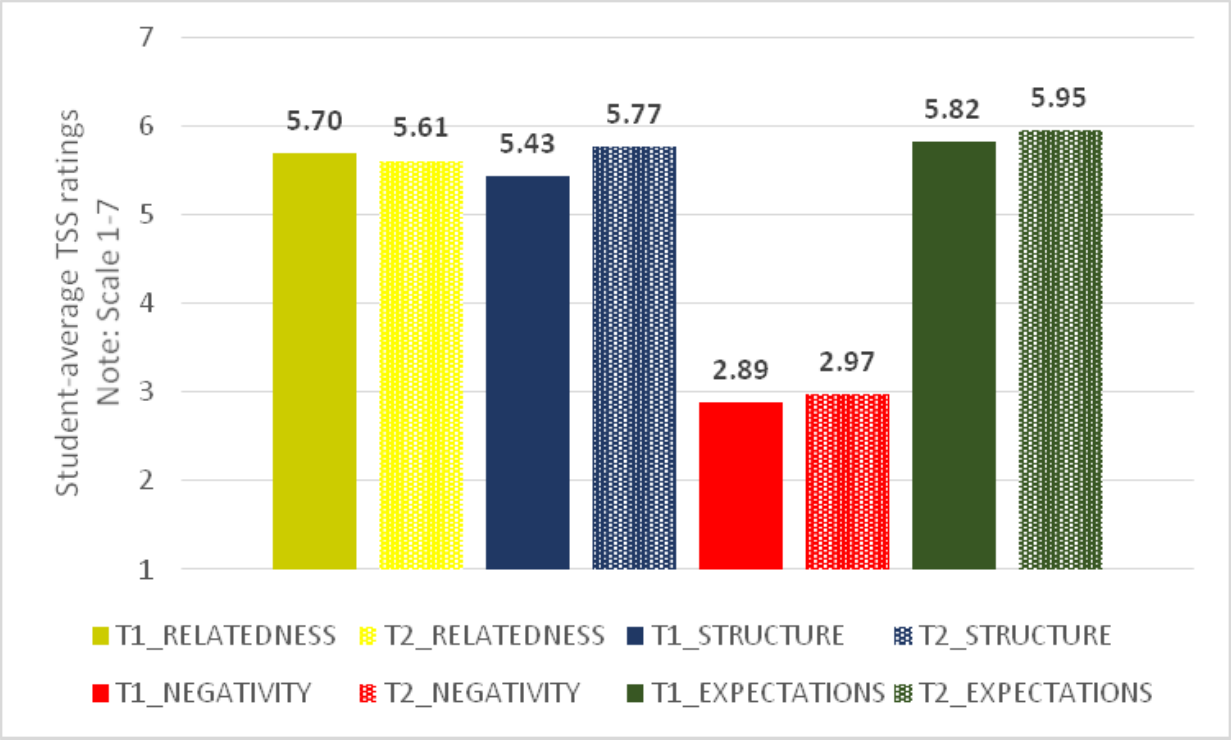


Figure 9.2. Student-Rated Teaching Style Scale factor means for Alan. *Note:* 1= Not at all; 7= A lot.

Alan's students perceived his relatedness to be high and fairly constant (5.70_{t1} – 5.61_{t2}). Their perceptions of his expectations (5.82_{t1} – 5.95_{t2}) and structure (5.43_{t1} – 5.77_{t2}) were also high, whereas their perceptions of his negativity were low and remained virtually unchanged (2.89_{t1} – 2.97_{t2}).

9.3 Alan's Mentalization Characteristics

The mentalization aspects evident in Alan's responses from his diary entries and interview responses are reported here. Table 9.2 lists themes covered by the coded open comments using Luyten et al. (2012). The frequencies indicate the prominence of each mentalization characteristic to Alan.

Table 9.2

Frequency of Alan's Mentalization Characteristics from Diary Entries and Interviews

Item Description	Frequency
Security of mental exploration and openness to discovery	53
Acknowledgement of opaqueness and tentativeness of mental states	35
Genuine interest in the mental states of self and others and their relation	58
Adaptive flexibility in switching from automatic to controlled mentalization	31
Acknowledgement of changeability of mental states, including awareness of developmental perspective (attachment history influences relating to self & others)	23
Integrate cognitive and affective features of self and others ("embodied mentalization")	8
Sense of realistic predictability and controllability of mental states	17
Ability to regulate distress in relation to others	9
Capacity to be relaxed and flexible, not "stuck" in one point of view	34
Capacity to be playful, with humour engaging rather than hurtful or distancing	3
Ability to solve problems by give-and-take between own and other's perspectives	19
Ability to describe one's own experience rather than defining other people's experience or intentions	48
Willingness to convey "ownership" of behaviour rather than it "happens to" me	41
Curiosity about other people's perspectives and expectations that one's own views will be extended by others	24
Relational strengths	
• Curiosity	22
• Safe uncertainty	21
• Contemplation and reflection	38
• Perspective-taking	28
• Forgiveness	7
• Impact awareness	30
• Non-paranoid attitude	15
Perception of one's own mental functioning	
• Developmental perspective	47
• Realistic scepticism	14
• Internal conflict awareness	16
• Self-inquisitive stance	28
• Awareness of the effect of affect	23
• Acknowledgement of unconscious or preconscious functioning	61
• Belief in changeability	20
Self-representation	
• Rich internal life	16
• Autobiographical continuity	15
• Advanced explanatory and listening skills	66
General values and attitudes	
• Tentativeness	17
• Humility (moderation)	44
• Playfulness and humour	8
• Flexibility	30
• Give-and-take	38
• Responsibility and accountability	36

Note. Sourced from "Assessment of Mentalization," by P. Luyten, P. Fonagy, B. Lowyck, and R. Vermote, 2012, *Handbook of Mentalizing in Mental Health Practice*, p. 58.

Alan's mentalization characteristics with regard to student thoughts and feelings were coded in 564 instances. In 58 instances Alan showed genuine interest in the mental states of self and others and their relationship (for example, "I sometimes think I hope I am not going too far looking at my technique there. I would hate to think that I sort of hijack it and start talking for them"). In 53 instances Alan conveyed security of mental exploration and openness to discovery (e.g., "Trying to have a positive conversation around maths and saying 'isn't that interesting?' or 'well done, you have picked up on that'"). In a further 48 instances Alan described his own experiences rather than defining other people's experience or intentions (e.g., "So I wanted to make sure that it was something that I do as well. I actively engage in it and see it as important"), and in 38 instances Alan applied contemplation and reflection as a relational strength (e.g., "If you make time to have these chats you can find out some really important stuff that helps your teaching. It just makes the kids think and share. There is a couple of things there that came out that were really important").

Alan's displayed perceptions of his own mental functioning were coded in 209 instances. In 61 of those instances, he acknowledged unconscious or preconscious functioning (e.g., "I like to show that I make mistakes, I am certainly fallible"). This behaviour demonstrates his negotiation of emotional expression with students to reinforce positive affect, transform negative affect, and provide breaks when arousal becomes too high (Malatesta & Haviland, 1982; Tronick, 1989). In 47 coded instances Alan demonstrated a developmental perspective in relation to his own mental functioning (e.g., "I try to know about their lives, their family backgrounds, what they do outside school"), and in another 28 instances he engaged in a self-inquisitive stance (e.g., "How can I scaffold with empathy?").

Alan's self-representational characteristics were coded in 97 instances. In 46 of those instances he displayed advanced explanatory and listening skills (e.g., "I like for the kids to see that I am approachable, that I am human and that I am here to help"). In 16 coded instances he displayed rich internal life (e.g., "There is so much I do not know and that is what makes learning so interesting because there are so many things to know in the world"), and in another 15 instances he

displayed autobiographic continuity (e.g., “That is probably what lead me into teaching. I was not really sure what I wanted to do for quite a few years after school and then doing some work with children in an out of hours setting realising that this is what I want”).

Alan’s general mentalizing values and attitudes were evident in 173 instances. There were 44 instances of humility/moderation (e.g., “I like for the kids to see that I am approachable, that I am human and that I am here to help”), 38 instances where he displayed “give-and-take” (e.g., “Once we got on to the family issues, I think they enjoyed hearing about my background and where I fit in my family and there was some really good discussion around their family life”), and 36 instances relating to responsibility and accountability (e.g., “I firmly believe unless you get teacher-student relationships right, you are not going to get the optimum learning outcomes”).

9.4 Phenomenology Themes

Alan’s accounts generated 110 identified empathy moments in the classroom, which I coded by applying the IPA framework (Smith et al., 2009). Four themes—*taking a personal interest* (30 moments), *modelling empathy* (85), *collaborating* (41), and *the personal value of being empathic* (36)—emerged from his interviews and vignettes. Table 9.3 summarises these higher order themes and associated sub-themes that encapsulate Alan’s experiences of empathy. Alan’s personal understanding of empathy is derived from these themes as well as his experiences of empathy in the classroom.

Table 9.3

Alan's Empathy Themes

Theme	Sub-Theme
Personal interest	A motivated approach Creating a positive, open environment Getting to know them Starting from student interests
Modelling	Genuine interest to model and scaffold Sharing personal experience
Collaborating	Positioning Engaging on an equal level
It is important to me	Personal value of being empathic Where empathy fails

Personal understanding of empathy. Alan encapsulates his understanding of empathy in the classroom as,

> Me working hard to understand what the children are thinking and where they are coming from and how they are feeling at any point in time. It is understanding how they are feeling about different things, whether it is their attitude toward new concepts and learning or, particularly in Grade 6, their social interactions and things that are happening within their peer group. Or it might be things that are happening at home. It is me being able to understand that and modify or change my teaching to make sure I meet those needs. (i_1)

He models empathy overtly and regards it as a teaching tool. He described his empathy in the classroom as "happy, positive, and energetic", it feels "really open" (i_1 v_3), and where students "share their feelings and emotions, are listened to, and are being empathic" (i_2). These quotes illustrate that Alan sometimes confuses empathy with the related construct of emotional self-regulation. Emotional regulation involves cognitive processes of attention, information processing, and encoding internal cues (Krohne, Pieper, Knoll, & Breimer, 2002; Gross, 1998). For an experience to be empathy, "the observer must recognise that the emotion she/he is experiencing is a response to the other's emotional state" (Lamm, Porges, Cacioppo, & Decety, 2008, p. 56). Alan's

approach displays his own emotional regulation as a vehicle to provide a safe haven to support the learning process (Lewis & Riley, 2009).

While Alan's definitions of empathy show some confusion with other constructs, his behaviour in the accounts nonetheless demonstrates his empathy at three levels—1) empathy he models *to* students ("Me working with them"); 2) empathy *they show* to one another ("Them working together"); and 3) Alan *valuing* empathy shown by students to one another ("They were being listened to and being empathic"). For example, Alan says "I was hoping to show students I really cared and was interested by their personal thoughts" (i_1 v_1).

"Personal interest". A theme that emerged across Alan's accounts is that he "works really hard" to connect with students, believing "you are here to build relationships". For example,

> I very much take a personal interest. I try to know about their lives, their family backgrounds, what they do outside school. Any opportunity I get to sit and talk with them I take. I feel I know them really well. (i_1)

This quote shows Alan's caring approach. He knows his students as individuals, and understands their personalities, likes and dislikes, and their personal situations that affect their welfare, behaviour and performance. Langer (2000) found effective teachers go beyond merely respectful relationships to caring relationships with students. Similarly, Ilmer, Snyder, Erbaugh, and Kurtz (1997) found caring teachers intentionally keep aware of student cultures outside of school.

Alan seeks to establish a positive classroom environment from early in the year to set the basis for his empathic teaching approach,

> I take some time at the start of the year to get to know and connect with them. I really enjoy the relationships and the connectedness. I engage in a range of activities where we sit and talk. We do Circle Time (Mosley, 1993) which I run a lot particularly in the first couple of

> weeks. I tell them about myself. Then throughout the year it is about strengthening, maintaining and refining. (i_1)

This quote demonstrates Alan displaying genuine interest to build relationships that enhance learning. Alan engages in classroom routines based on "talking in a positive manner" (i_1) to create an "open" (i_1 v_3) environment where empathy can be expressed. Peart and Campbell (1999) found teachers who create a supportive and warm classroom climate tend to be more effective with all students. Alan described his daily routine to connect with students,

> When the kids come in the door I am really interested to talk to them and for them to see I am happy to see them. "Good morning, how are you going? What's happening?" I remember something they were doing last night. I can talk about this and that thing. (i_1)

In this extract, Alan displays his readiness, positive attitude and eagerness for interaction to set the tone for the day. Caring teachers know students formally and informally (Stronge, 2007), and he uses his management skills to show he is willing and prepared to respond to the ebb and flow of classroom dynamics.

From the vignettes nominated for analysis, it is evident Alan's approach is based on "starting from student interest" and then "showing I am interested" in student "personal thoughts" (i_1 v_2). For example, he engages in "showing genuine interest in student feelings and thoughts" and "student backgrounds" (i_1 v_1) through "gentle questioning" (i_2 v_2), "attentive listening" and "feedback" (i_1 v_3) to give students "the opportunity to talk about" (i_2 v_2) issues and perspectives from their lives.

"Modelling". Alan describes expressing empathy as "how you hold yourself. It is your body language, how you talk, and how you respond", which is important "because that is what the kids see" (i_1). "Showing genuine interest" is a recurring phrase describing the basis for scaffolding and modelling with empathy.

Alan believes “I can model” being empathic (i_1). He seeks to express empathy by showing “through the way that I teach, that there is empathy there. It is in the way we approach new concepts, new topics” (i_1) and “showing I am engaged” (i_2 v_2). He highlights the importance of modelling to display empathy when introducing personal reflections about gratitude, and stresses the need,

> For me to go first, as it is always good to model it and for them to see that it is okay to talk openly about personal things. I did a bit of talking about the mental health side and why it was important *so* they were able to give some really good answers. (i_2 v_1)

To develop the empathy skills among his peers to improve teacher-student relationships, he noted “I can model it. We can open the walls and they can see me and the way I speak to students” (i_1).

A sub-theme emerging from the vignettes was Alan’s scaffolding of student learning, drawing on shared experience. In the following quote, he uses empathy to manage a student’s sensitivity and confidence in mathematics,

> She has asked for some assistance. I have gone over and tried to get her to come to the answer herself by using some of her prior knowledge. I am trying to use my tone to say that this is actually a good thing we have come across this. This is interesting. This is fun. What do we do here? Let’s help each other. To show my empathy and give her feedback. (i_1 v_3)

Alan’s diary entry for this vignette shows his mentalizing process in the statement “How can I scaffold with empathy?” He is aware of his own and the student’s mental state in the moment in regard to the situation. Elsewhere, he connects with students’ thoughts and feelings based on shared experiences in writing conferences,

> The students are writing about some things that I had knowledge about. I think she is writing about going to America and I knew she had gone. I knew some of the things so we shared. I was showing I had empathy. (i_1 v_2)

Alan appears to engage in a cognitive empathy approach to take the role or perspective of the student drawing from her thoughts, feelings, and experiences.

Another sub-theme is Alan's awareness that the class enjoys his sharing of personal information to model and express empathy: "I tell them about myself. They really enjoy hearing anything about me, my personal life or anything personal and I know that. So that is one way of showing empathy" (i_2 v_1). For example, Alan holds a discussion with a student group around their family dynamics and how they fit in: "I think they enjoyed hearing about my background and where I fit in my family" (i_2 v_3). These examples show Alan's awareness that students want teachers to hold them in mutual respect and be willing to talk about their personal lives and experiences (Stronge, 2007).

"Collaborating". A key theme across Alan's accounts was "the kids knowing you are there to work with them and to help them, and that if they are struggling with something that is not a problem that is just a point for us to work together" (i_1). Alan described empathy as a tool of collaboration; that "we are in this together" (i_2 v_1). His classroom does not have a teacher desk so "I am never seated anywhere except at a student table with them" making the class "look very collaborative" (i_1). Alan describes the relationships arising based on this positioning as "open and approachable",

> We are really building a team environment. Me working with them, them working together, me working down with them at their tables. It is me speaking in a manner that is not overly authoritative or having the final say in everything or being the expert or dictator. That makes me open and approachable. (i_1)

Alan uses a variety of strategies to interact with students. Teachers who are aware of their own style of interacting can co-construct a warm supportive classroom climate. Constructive social interactions between teachers and students have been shown to contribute to student learning and to increase student self-esteem by fostering feelings of belonging (Stronge, 2007). Further, students

who perceive their teachers as caring exert academic effort and social responsibility (Wentzel, 1997). Effective teachers pay attention to what students have to say (Thomas & Montgomery, 1998), encouraging students to participate in decision making (Kohn, 1996).

Classroom positioning is a base for Alan's empathic approach. He is conscious of this positioning when providing emotional support to students with special needs,

> I am working with the group so I have not wanted to position myself in one spot. I am having a discussion with the group. I am aware that I want to be close to Jane because something might pop up. I am trying to, as I said give her some support in an empathetic manner because she does not always respond well to me sitting down with her and saying do this. She likes to feel she is doing things independently as we all do. I am there in case she needs me. (i_1 v_3)

In this quote, Alan presents as proactive, with a heightened sense of awareness, a capacity to anticipate potential problems, and a willingness to intervene. His management skills include the use of space, proximity and movement around the classroom to be near trouble spots and encourage attention (McLeod at al., 2003). He understands Jane in terms of her abilities and needs, and is ready should she require support.

A sub-theme that emerged was Alan's focus on engaging with students "on an equal level", something he considers to be "the most important thing" (i_1). In several vignettes (i_1 v_1; i_1 v_2) he seeks to "talk to the student as equals". He predicts students' mental states in his diary: "wanting to share their thoughts and talk personally with me", "relaxed and confident I would listen", and "calm but excited to be sharing with me". On reviewing the vignettes, Alan reiterated the importance of a team approach, noting "I wanted to make sure it was something I do as well" (i_2 v_1).

"It is important to me". The final theme to be explored is the personal value Alan attaches to empathy, which he states is "important to me" (i_2 v_2). Empathic teachers care about their

students and demonstrate that they care in a way that makes students aware of it. Alan believes in the importance of letting students know this,

> Just letting the kids know they are really important to you. Yes the curriculum is really important and yes assessment is really important. But them as people, are super important and the most important thing to your teaching. (i_1)

Effective teachers care for students first as people, and second as students, and respect each student as an individual (Stronge, 2007).

At the time of data collection, Alan was acting "lead" teacher. The school had identified student perceptions of teacher empathy, as measured in the annual Attitudes to School Survey as lower than expected. This DEECD survey collects student opinion data for Grades 5 to 12 (http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/management/Pages/performsurveyat.aspx) to understand students' perceptions of wellbeing, teaching, learning and the school. As a result, the school had prioritised a focus on improving teacher empathy. Alan was rewarded for engaging in an empathic approach by leading this effort. He received "lots of feedback from others" from a DEECD 360° survey[6] where "other staff mention that I am strong", and "they could come and talk to me" (i_1). He has had experiences in the past where "colleagues have really struggled with it (teacher-student relationships) and I almost threw my hands up and thought 'you know what, I cannot teach this stuff!'". While noting "some people naturally want to spend time with and talk to kids", it was his view that "we could spend more time with staff doing professional development on this issue" (i_1).

[6] The 2007 Victorian *Developmental Learning Framework for School Leaders* (http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/profdev/developmentallearn.pdf) describes critical capabilities school leaders need to establish high quality teaching and learning and assist teachers to identify professional learning needs. The *iLead 360° Survey* (2007) complements the Framework to assess leadership capacity contingent on relationships. As well as teacher self-ratings, the survey provides for feedback from peers.

This quote illustrates that Alan has mixed views on the role of empathy in the classroom. On the one hand, he seems to regard empathy as a fixed personality trait, with some people naturally better at it than others. On the other, he recognises that training can improve results and their staff could benefit from professional development in this area. Through experiences with colleagues, he has openly modelled his empathic approach.

Alan consciously portrays empathy, and is self-aware. He sees the benefits of an empathic approach and believes his empathic qualities in the classroom have improved with experience. For example, "If you make time to have these sort of chats you can find out some really important stuff that helps you with your teaching" (i_2 v_2). Elsewhere in the interviews and vignettes, he refers to the benefits of engaging in an empathic approach as "giving me a strong connection" (i_1), "giving me the opportunity to talk with students" (i_1), "it was really good to hear" (i_2 v_1), and "it was helpful" (i_2 v_2).

Alan has identified some students he cannot reach (that is, where his empathic approach fails). Rather than accept failure—"for some students who might not be willing to share" (i_1)—he "hopes" for success. The literature notes that most conceptualizations frame empathy as a "practitioner-offered" condition (Rogers 1957, 1975) that ignores the student's contribution. Barrett-Lennard (1993) and Jordan (1991) draw attention to the need for mutual empathic involvement of client and practitioner in negotiating empathic exchanges. Effective teachers think about how to manage students with varying attachment styles (Riley, 2011). A recurring phrase across Alan's narratives is his determination "to try harder", showing he is prepared to go to great lengths to model empathy.

9.5 Expressions of Cognitive and Affective Empathy

When asked if he considers himself to be empathic and if this was always the case, Alan noted,

> I had that already when I went into teaching and it has gotten better. I am definitely more empathetic, more understanding. And probably much more knowledgeable about what happens in a broader context with parent situations, things at home. (i_1)

On 48 occasions across the vignettes, Alan *recognised* student(s) mental states. For example, "They are getting a real buzz and are really keen on what they are doing. So I think the boy who's not quite as high ability there is enjoying working together on that" (i_1 v_3). In 34 instances, he *responded* to a student's mental state with an appropriate emotion based on care. For example, "I am trying to give her some support. I am there in case she needs me" (i_1 v_3).

9.6 Examples of Demonstrated Empathy – Vignettes of Alan's Interaction

Alan's teaching was filmed for a week at two timepoints – in Term 3, Week 5 (T_1: 11–15 August, 2014) and 13 weeks later in Term 4, Week 6 (T_2: 10–14 November, 2014). He identified three positive *empathy moments* at each timepoint (six altogether) from the footage as vignettes for closer analysis. A synopsis of each vignette was provided and checked for trustworthiness at interview (Guba, 1981; Shenton, 2004). This section reports on the synopses, Alan's mentalization diary entries and his responses on reviewing the vignette at interview.

T_1 Vignette 1. The first of the six vignettes chosen by Alan for analysis illustrate his empathic actions of listening, positioning and modelling. A synopsis of the elements observed in the footage and agreed to by Alan appears in Table 9.4.

Table 9.4

Group Writing Conference

Vignette synopsis
Alan is conducting a writing conference with a group of four students. He talks with each student before working extensively with one student, "Anita". Alan shows interest in students' thoughts and feelings about their writing and acknowledges student backgrounds and interests. He listens carefully, asks guiding questions and seeks confirmation to show his understanding. He validates student feelings through engagement and encouragement. The students appear motivated and engaged in sharing.

His diary stated that Alan chose this moment to demonstrate “engaging with and showing genuine interest in student feelings and thoughts” while students were working on “from the heart” writing pieces. Alan nominated his actions as “listening very carefully, asking questions and showing understanding of feelings”. He described his thinking in the moment as “wanting to engage with students and encourage them to think deeply”. He described his feeling state as “engaged and motivated”. Reflecting back on this vignette at interview he later noted, “I showed genuine interest in student background and interests”. From the student perspective, he described the group’s actions as “wanting to show their thoughts and talk personally with me”. Alan described student thinking as “relaxed and confident I would listen. They were thinking deeply”, and student feeling states as “calm but excited to be sharing with me”.

Upon reviewing the vignette, Alan talked about the role and importance of shared experience. In identifying the empathy shown, he stated,

> I am sitting with the students and I try to do that all the time. I engage in eye contact and talk to them as equals. I am sitting with Anita, showing interest and using a positive tone. This type of task lends itself to really connecting with the students and their thoughts. It is really important to have these one-on-ones but you also need to be aware of what is happening in the classroom. (i_1)

For Alan, sitting at the same level expresses equality in the relationship (“Talking to them as equals”). While teachers consistently behave in a friendly and personal manner, they also maintain appropriate teacher-student structure roles (Brookhart & Loadman, 1992; Peart & Campbell, 1999). He works to manage the classroom climate in which his empathy can be expressed.

In summary, Alan’s empathic actions observed in this vignette were: positioning, listening, genuine interest, questioning, encouragement, eye contact, and management.

T_1 Vignette 2. The second vignette chosen by Alan for analysis illustrates his empathic actions of sharing interests and perspective-taking. A synopsis of the elements observed in the footage and confirmed by Alan appears in Table 9.5.

Table 9.5

Individual Writing Conference

Vignette synopsis
Alan is conducting a writing conference with “Rachel” and “Stuart” in a small group during a writing lesson. Rachel discusses her perspectives and experience and is eager to share. He listens as she reads her piece about going to the United States. Alan asks her questions, shows genuine interest, gives positive feedback, and encourages Rachel’s reflections on her writing. Rachel identifies that her writing is repetitive. He praises her for picking up on this. In the second half of the vignette, Alan is conducting a writing conference with “Stuart” concerning his upcoming football final. He shows interest and shares in Stuart’s reflections on his writing.

In his diary, Alan stated he chose this moment to show “the questions I am asking students and the use of positive reinforcement and encouragement”. He identified his actions as “asking deep questions and showing genuine interest”. He described his thinking in the moment as “hoping to show students I really cared and was interested in their personal thoughts”, and his feeling state as “engaged and motivated”. Looking back later, what did he think? “I asked questions and showed I knew about them”. From the student perspective, Alan considers the student actions as typical as “they were open in their discussions”. He described student thoughts as “recounting their past experiences” and student feelings as “relaxed but eager to share”.

The importance of taking an interest was emphasised, and a recurring phrase in Alan’s account for this vignette was “I really try to work hard”. On reviewing the vignette, when asked to identify the empathy shown and its significance, Alan observed that,

> While the other students are working, note the positive environment I have created. I have modelled and given her lots of positive feedback. I am showing real interest and this is also something you can turn in to a good writing piece. I showed I knew about them and I knew some of the things so we shared. I was showing I had empathy. I try to work hard on starting

from their interest, showing I am interested. It is in the way I am sitting and the way I am talking. (i_1)

When Alan states “he works hard on starting from their interest”, he appears to be displaying genuine interest based on his knowledge of the student, providing encouragement to model and giving positive feedback through questioning. He engages in shared experience to build mutual perspective-taking, based on a cognitive empathy approach to know what students think and feel. He is motivated to assess situational perspective-taking (Ickes, 1997).

In summary, Alan’s empathic actions observed in this vignette were: questioning, encouragement, genuine interest, knowing students, positive climate, modelling, feedback, and shared experience.

T1 Vignette 3. The next vignette nominated by Alan illustrates his empathic actions of creating a positive climate, group interaction, perspective-taking, and providing support. A synopsis of the elements observed and confirmed by Alan appears in Table 9.6.

Table 9.6

Maths Group Support

Vignette synopsis
Alan is working with a group of students on a new challenge in maths. He reinforces learned concepts prior to releasing the challenge. He listens to student responses, models and recaps student thinking. One student in the group, “Jane”, requires additional support. Alan engages in a positive conversation with the group around the role of mathematics in the problem. Jane asks for help and Alan tries to lead her to discover the answer herself by accessing her prior knowledge. He poses a general question to the group to empower all the students and provide another avenue of support for Jane. Alan uses a positive tone to express interest and a high level of interaction is evident.

In his diary, Alan stated he chose this moment to show “my encouraging approach to students undertaking challenging tasks and tackling new maths concepts”. He identified his actions as “reinforcing prior learning positively”. He described his thinking during the moment as “How can I scaffold with empathy?” and his feeling state as “engaged and pleased at student learning”.

Looking back later, what did he think? “I listened, modelled and explained”. From the student perspective, Alan noted “Jane has a very negative attitude to maths”. He considered student actions as “working to understand the new concept. This was not typical behaviour for Jane”. He described student thoughts as “some confusion over maths language” and student feelings as “some satisfaction from my observations and their language”. At interview, Alan elaborated on his actions,

> I have gone over and tried to get her to come to the answer herself. She has come to a sticking point. I have posed it as a question. I am trying to use my tone to say this is a good thing “Gee, you are doing really well because you already know the median is the middle number”. You can see those two boys are keen to help so trying to make it a really open environment. We have outbursts and thrown books. Jane storm outs during maths sessions and always has since she was little. I am trying to support her in such a way that the focus is not entirely on her. I am having the discussion with the group. Other things are popping up so I am chipping in and saying things to Jane as well. I could tell she was feeling supported and good about herself. When she does not, it is very plain for everybody to see. (i_1)

When asked to identify the empathy he is showing and its significance, Alan stated,

> Jane comes to the answer herself, which gives her confidence. She has worked it out rather than me telling her. I hope I have shown her it was interesting and a good point for us to work through together and provided support as well. (i_1)

Alan can be seen to draw on his knowledge of Jane to engage in an empathic approach. He uses encouragement, modelling, and interaction with the group to provide her with emotional support and promote self-esteem. In summary, Alan’s empathic actions observed in this vignette were: listening, positioning, modelling, emotional support, encouragement, positive feedback, empowering, and sharing experience.

T_2 Vignette 1. The first vignette chosen by Alan for analysis at T_2 illustrates his empathic actions of situation selection, shared experience and perspective-taking with others. A synopsis of the elements confirmed by Alan appears in Table 9.7.

Table 9.7

Gratitude

Vignette synopsis
A group of six students share their feelings, experience and emotions about the role of "gratitude" in their lives. The school is working with resilience expert Hugh Van Cuylenburg who advocates student reflection on personal gratitude as a means to improve mental health. Alan models the concept and frames the discussion by outlining links to mental health, social justice, and fairness. He shares his personal experience in relation to his family and he listens attentively and asks further questions to prompt and support students who are attentive, engaged and energised and show respect in sharing.

Note. Hugh Van Cuylenburg is Director for "The Resilience Project" (http://theresilienceproject.com.au).

In his diary, Alan stated he chose this moment to show "sharing of feelings and emotions" for "a group of students who needed some emotional support". Alan identified his actions as "listening attentively and asking further questions". He described his thinking during the moment as "thinking how to prompt and support these students" and his feeling state as "calm and engaged". From the student perspective, Alan considered the group's actions as "attentive, engaged and energised." He described the group thinking as "thinking about themselves and their feelings" and student feeling states as "being listened to and being empathetic with each other".

In identifying the empathy in the vignette, Alan stated,

> It was a way of focussing on trying to counteract some negative thoughts coming in. "James" is explaining how he is grateful for pens and paper. He loves drawing. I share myself. I wanted to make sure I was not just getting them to do it. I actively engage to show I see it as important. "Dylan" has Autism Spectrum Disorder. Just having him there is really

important. Hopefully they can move away from negative thinking and Dylan was picking up on a bit of that. (i_2)

Alan can be seen to model the sharing of emotions to show it can be acceptable to share personal information and to engage in active listening, questioning, and provide emotional support. In relation to Dylan, he has demonstrated mindful awareness with regard to his recent attitudes, actions and behaviour in the classroom (Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993) which he uses as the basis for modelling his cognitive empathy approach.

In summary, Alan's empathic actions observed in this vignette were: emotional support, sharing feelings, listening, modelling personal experience, and questioning.

T_2 Vignette 2. The next vignette nominated by Alan for analysis illustrates his empathic actions of situation appraisal, emotional support, perspective-taking, and shared experience. A synopsis of the elements observed in the vignette and confirmed by Alan appears in Table 9.8.

Table 9.8

High School Transition

Vignette synopsis
The vignette shows a discussion about going to secondary school. Alan conducts the discussion with the same group as i_2 v_1 to bolster motivation and clarify student thoughts, feelings and concerns. He facilitates the conversation and then steps back to allow the students to express themselves. Dylan articulates his concerns that he will not be able to talk about things he likes there and he will be made to feel bad as people make fun of his interests. "Rebecca" wants to make a new start and reinvent herself. The group discuss personal thoughts, fears, hopes and feelings.

As the group was the same and these discussions all occurred on the same day, Alan wrote his diary entry to reflect all three T_2 vignettes (see i_2 v_1). At interview, Alan stated "Dylan obviously feels at School A that nobody belittles him or makes him feel bad about that. So this is one of his main concerns that people at high school will make fun of him for his interests" (i_2). After this discussion, Alan was able to have a transition meeting with Dylan's secondary school and talk through this issue. In relation to Rebecca stating she wants to reinvent herself, Alan added "she

is the youngest of five kids who have come to our school and she is going to a secondary school that none of her siblings have gone to. It is really insightful and perceptive of her" (i_2).

At interview, Alan was asked about his motivation and to reflect on why he selected this interaction moment,

> The motivation was issues and concerns about transition to secondary school. I think among the students there is quiet optimism with a little apprehension about going. Most of the students look on the positive side. I knew Dylan had real anxiety and negative feelings. Being on the spectrum, any sort of change is confronting for him. He had never articulated this before and it was really good for me to hear. Dylan makes the point that everyone sees the upsides but there are downsides. The downsides he sees are unique to him. (i_2 v_2)

Alan described the empathy shown and its significance in this vignette in the following terms,

> Listening and acting on it. Showing I am engaged through prompting and questioning. Just giving them the opportunity to talk about this stuff and to show it is valued and important. As much as possible, I try to use gentle questioning to extend them and broaden the discussion to help them fill in the gaps. You need to know when to sit back and when to come in. I am glad they felt willing and comfortable to share. (i_2)

Alan is seeking to genuinely access student thoughts, hopes, fears, and concerns and to create a safe space to share. An interesting aspect is Alan's awareness of when to sit back and when to intervene. Within a class, the teacher is actively seeking "to interactively regulate each other's internal states" (Cozolino, 2013, p. 42). Knowing when to sit back and when to step in is a critical skill for educators. Another interesting aspect relates to Alan's follow-up action to address Dylan's concerns about his transition, which shows the useful role empathy plays in student wellbeing.

In summary, Alan's empathic actions observed in this vignette were: providing comfort, active listening, emotional support, following-up, questioning, and facilitation.

T_2 Vignette 3. The final vignette chosen by Alan for analysis illustrates his empathic actions of situation appraisal, reading body language, and modelling empathy to alleviate a student's anxiety. A synopsis of the elements observed in this vignette and confirmed by Alan appears in Table 9.9.

Table 9.9

Positioning in the Family

Vignette synopsis
"Dylan" often arrives late to school due to problems with personal organisation. The group discuss the importance of breakfast and their position in the family. One student relates that he sometimes lies to his mother that he has had breakfast when he has not. Alan shares with the students that he is the youngest in his family and while that was good in some ways, in others he found it difficult to be heard. Dylan on hearing this says to Alan "I know how that feels". Dylan is highly engaged and shares that he is the youngest as well. Alan asks him follow-up questions to clarify aspects of his experience. As Dylan shares, the other three students in the group nod, make eye contact with Dylan, and ask questions.

The group was the same as in i_2 v_1 and i_2 v_2, and all occurred on the same day (see diary entry i_2 v_1). Alan advised that Dylan's parents had told him that Dylan is impossible to get ready for school. Alan is looking to make progress around this issue in preparing him for high school. The first part of the vignette is about what each student does for breakfast, and the second part is about where each student is positioned in the family and how it affects dynamics. At interview, Alan was asked about the group's responses,

> There is some really good discussion around family life and where they fit. The boy in the middle there was saying to his mum before rushing out the door that he has had breakfast even if he has not because he does not want to upset his mum. So then he gets to school and he is hungry. And Dylan is putting his hand up to get involved which is not like him. It is clear he is highly engaged and wanting to be involved. I think a lot of that is because they are talking about their personal experience. (i_2)

Alan described the empathy shown and its significance in this vignette in the following terms,

> Just giving them the opportunity to talk about this stuff. Dylan leans over and says to me "I know how that feels". You can see that while he obviously needs to fidget, he is tuned in. He is carefully following the conversation. As Dylan shares, the three opposite are working very hard to understand and be empathic as well even though they probably do not have that experience or look at things that way. They are trying really hard to listen and engage in understanding with what Dylan is saying which is great. (i_2)

Alan is displaying cognitive empathy through shared discussion. In particular, he is making a conscious effort to focus on the minds of others (Krznaric, 2014). Cognitive empathy is typically operationalised as perspective-taking or role-taking in shaping positive social relationships (Batson, 1991; Eisenberg et al., 1993), and reducing negative behaviour (Galinsky, Ku, & Wang, 2005). Here, he models, discloses personal information, actively listens, shares body language, questions, and takes perspectives.

In summary, Alan's empathic actions observed in this vignette were: discussion, modelling, personal experience, listening, engaging, body language, sharing, and questioning.

9.7 Emotional Support Ratings of Lessons and Empathy Vignettes

Alan's six vignettes were scored for levels of emotional support (Positive climate; Teacher sensitivity; Regard for student perspectives) using the CLASS (Pianta et al., 2012). Four additional live classroom lessons (two at each timepoint) were observed for levels of emotional support and similarly coded (Appendix O). Alan's average ratings across the lessons and vignettes are shown in *Figure 9.3*.

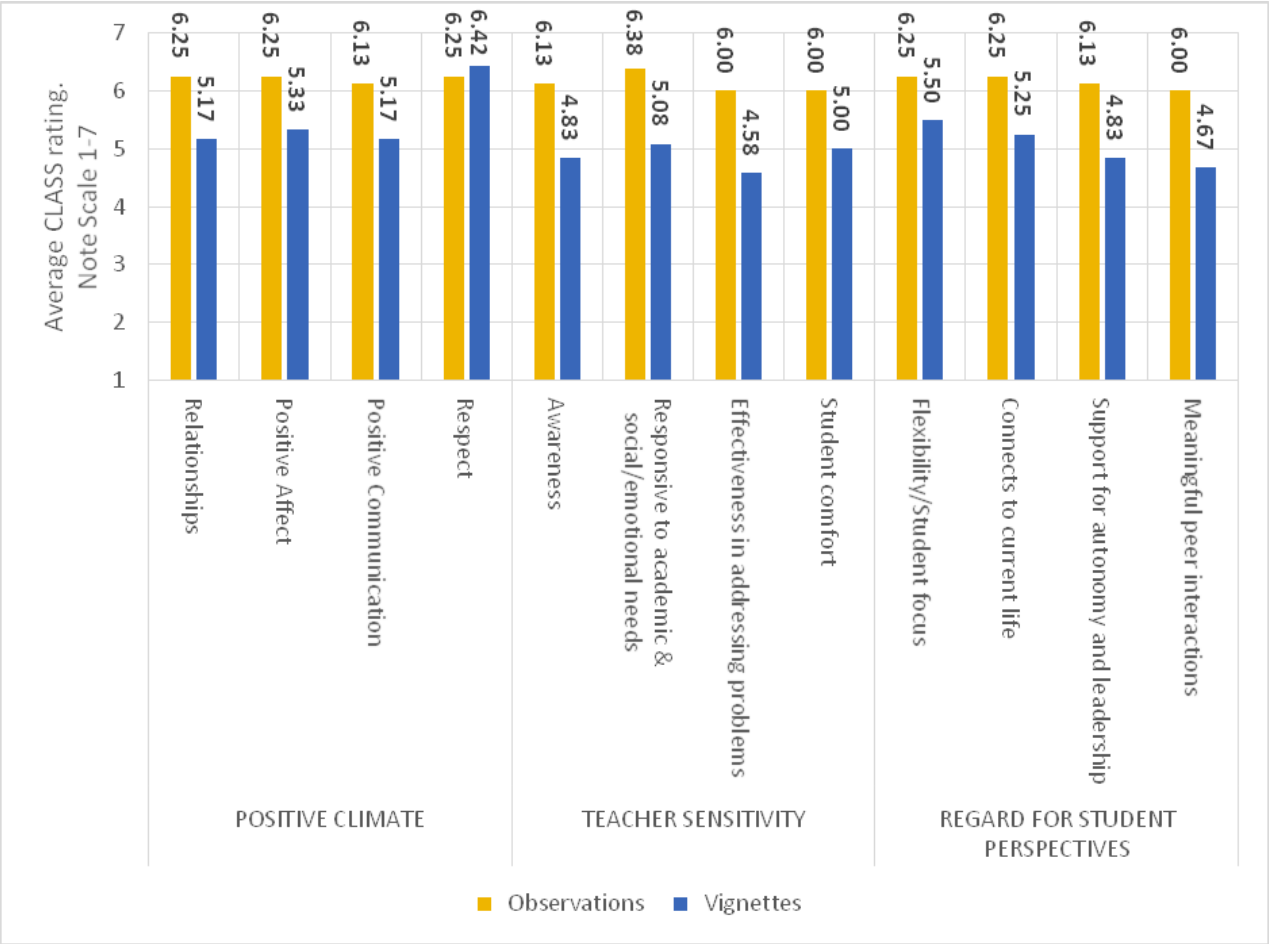


Figure 9.3. Alan's Average Lesson Observation and Vignette Ratings by Emotional Support Dimension. *Note:* 1–2=low quality; 3–5=mid-range quality; and 6–7= high quality.

Alan's emotional support variables at the domain levels of positive climate, teacher sensitivity and regard for student perspectives were within the high range across all lesson observations, and in the high end of the mid-range across Alan's vignettes. At the dimension level respect was rated in the high range, and all other elements in the vignettes were rated at the mid to high end of the mid-range.

9.8 Conclusion

This chapter introduced Alan's personal meaning of empathy and his relational and teacher style goals. His vignettes, diary entries and responses at interview enabled an exploration of the specifics of how Alan demonstrates and experiences empathy in the classroom. A phenomenological research design allowed Alan to voice and show how he experienced empathy in his classroom.

Phenomenological analysis of the transcripts distilled the essence of empathy in Alan's teaching and conveyed what this experience may be like for him. He sees empathy as understanding what students think and feel, and where they are coming from. He takes a personal interest in students and starts from their interests to connect and show he values and cares for them. He gets to know students, to work out how they think, to uncover their motivations and establish what engages them. Alan nurtures a classroom climate where he is open and approachable in a collaborative team environment and where he shows empathy and scaffolds based on genuine interest and shared experiences. He models empathy as something expressed in speech, body language, listening, values, and responses. He shows he is engaged through prompting and questioning and providing support for student situations.

The empathy vignettes and corresponding diary entries show that Alan "enjoys" his relationships with his students, values "the humour and fun we have" and he enjoys "hearing about their lives" and "seeing them flourish" (i_1). His word choices and imagery show that he is aware of the role of empathy in his teaching. His diary entries reveal he often feels "engaged", "pleased", "calm" and "motivated" about his empathic experiences with students. He sees the benefits of an empathic approach to inform his teaching (i_2 v_3). For Alan, his empathy *response* is predominantly cognitive where he identifies social and emotional issues.

Alan values quality relationships with his students. He "works really hard" to engage in an empathic approach: "to show they are really important" (i_1). His focus on scaffolding and modelling is evident in the levels of empathy he works at across each relationship in his classroom. His approach largely derives from cognitive assessments (through "talking to the kids… in the way I approach new concepts and new topics") and is intuitive ("a few children starting to get a 'poor me' kind of attitude" (i_2 v_1). Cognitive empathy enables understanding of the feelings of others without being in a similar affective state yourself (Walter, 2012). Alan recognises the importance of social cognition at the school level and the need to read the subtle and shifting currents to make

sense of social events among students. Finally, a social desirability factor operates due to Alan's responsibilities as lead teacher. "Double-mindedness" can be used to think about how others think or feel, but also to think about how we ourselves are perceived (Baron-Cohen, 2011).

Alan has identified that he cannot reach some students (where his empathic approach fails). At interview, he acknowledged "there may be some individuals in the class who you have to work a little harder with, and there is some you may never get the connection with but who may connect with another teacher". Alan's approach here is to model empathy in his teaching and to consciously model authenticity as a mindful performer of empathy. If his empathic approach fails, Alan's strategy is to "try harder" as shown in his statement "as I said there is probably, you know, a couple of students that it is a bit harder to know but I work really hard to try and know" (i_1). He acknowledges that "I am sure in any group of kids there is some that might not be… you know, willing to share, but the majority of them I hope are" (i_1).

Chapter 10 Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore manifestations of teacher empathy in classrooms. It explored the behavioural elements of teacher empathy displays and how these facilitate a caring, supportive learning environment. In particular, it identified observable teacher behaviour in empathy interaction moments through a qualitative, phenomenological research approach that draws on mixed exploratory methods. The first part of the study used qualitative field research consisting of interviews, classroom filming, teacher diaries, and classroom observations of teachers deemed by principals to be effective empathisers. The second part used quantitative methods consisting of surveys, coding, and observation ratings that were collected and analysed to examine manifestations of empathy, perceptions of classroom environment, and empathy motivation.

Chapter 10 sets out the cross-case analysis and overall findings of the study. It presents a phenomenological analysis of the qualitative data in thematic form, through the use of narratives and tables. The analysis of the quantitative data includes descriptive and frequency statistics, and correlational data from the CLASS (Pianta et al., 2012). The chapter compares teacher and students' perception data, including whether the differences in perceptions are significant. The chapter concludes with the shared essence of how empathy manifests in participants' classrooms.

10.1 Research Questions

The research questions that guided this study were:

1. What is the relationship between mentalizing and teacher empathy? How do teachers "mentalize" to know students' internal states and respond with sensitive care to create positive, empathic classrooms?
2. How does empathy manifest in the behaviour of teachers deemed by principals to be effective empathisers?
3. What are the lived experiences of empathy in the classrooms of these teachers, and how do they establish, build, and maintain student relationships?

The following sections discuss cross-case findings from the study's qualitative and quantitative analyses to address these research questions.

10.2 Mentalizing to Know Students' Internal States and Responding with Care

The concept of empathy has been widely debated. This study adopted a definition of empathy as an ability to access the life of the mind of others in their bodily and behavioural expressions (Chapter 2). Affective empathy involves sharing or mirroring by the teacher of a student's emotional state, while cognitive empathy involves the teacher perceiving and decoding a student's emotional state to infer what s/he is thinking and feeling.

Mentalizing characteristics were assessed in this study as the building blocks to consider the empathy data. As discussed in Chapter 2, mentalization is largely an autonomic process used by effective empathisers in empathic responding. It involves imaginatively perceiving and interpreting the behaviour of oneself and others to conceive mental states as explanations of behaviour in both teachers and students. Assessing mentalizing ability asks participants to draw explicit inferences about the mental states of others and themselves.

In this study, data on mentalizing characteristics were sourced from the participants' diary entries on the filmed vignettes and responses at interview when reviewing the vignettes. Mentalizing behaviour were coded using the Luyten et al. (2012) criteria, and their frequencies tabulated in relation to four types of characteristics: (1) *Student thoughts and feelings*, (2) *Perceptions of own mental functioning*, (3) *Self-representational characteristics*, and (4) *General values and attitudes.* The study observations included:

- Teachers exploring student thoughts and feelings on 3,556 occasions. Of these, teachers most frequently described their own experiences rather than those of others (318 instances). Participants also showed genuine interest in the mental states of self and others and their relationship (296 instances), and an awareness of impact as a relational strength (272 instances).

- Teachers reflecting on their own mental functioning on 939 occasions. Of these, teachers frequently acknowledged their unconscious or preconscious functioning in terms of their underlying motivations (298 instances). Participants also engaged in a developmental perspective (150 instances), and showed an awareness of affect (144 instances).
- Teachers reflecting on their self-representation characteristics on 487 occasions. Of these, the most frequently coded behaviour was advanced explanatory and listening skills (340 instances), followed by teachers displaying a rich internal life (108 instances).
- Teachers displaying mentalization values and attitudes on 839 occasions. Of these, the most frequently coded behaviours were 'give-and-take' (212 instances), showing humility and moderation (182 instances), and reflecting on responsibility and accountability (172 instances).

10.3 Empathy Manifestations in Teacher Behaviour?

Principal perceptions. Teachers were identified for the study by principals completing the QTI (Fisher, Fraser, & Creswell, 1995). Principals rated teacher's interactions with students on a Likert-type 5-point scale (0=Never; 4=Always). Total scores for participants ranged from 154–182 out of 192 points. The mean score for all participants was 3.56 with a standard deviation of .89. In this study, the QTI's *understanding* and *supporting* sectors were used as proxies for empathic interactions in the classroom. For the understanding sector, the mean for all participants was 3.89 with a standard deviation of .32, and for the supporting sector, the mean was 3.94 with a standard deviation of .23.

Phenomenology Superordinate Themes. Phenomenology involves the researcher looking for the essence or core meanings in a shared experience between participants (Patton, 1990). While each individual is unique, the overarching patterns are the focus of the phenomenological approach. In this study, perspectives were grouped and categorised from the perceptions generated in the six

case studies. Using a constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1990), I organised all data (quotations, observations, diary entries, surveys, observation ratings) into themes that were common across participant experiences to identify the *shared essence* at a collective level to describe the phenomena.

Five superordinate themes in the Smith et al. (2009) framework repeatedly emerged from the cross-case comparison of these case studies:

1. Knowing students as individuals/taking a personal interest.
2. Being in tune with what students are thinking and feeling/ the role of awareness.
3. Collaborating and positioning.
4. Modelling "to show I have empathy" with student situations.
5. Following-up to provide social and emotional support.

Table 10.1 lists the five themes and the frequency of occurrences for each participant from the transcripts and vignettes. The themes were examined separately but were not mutually exclusive. These five themes framed the experiences of how empathy manifests in these classrooms.

Table 10.1

Superordinate Themes of Manifestations of Empathy

		Number Mentioned					
	Theme	Sophia	Christine	Emily	Gretyl	Alice	Alan
1.	Knowing students as individuals/taking a personal interest	57	29	18	48	26	30
2.	In tune with student thinking and feeling/role of awareness	98	35	22	-	51	-
3.	Collaborating and teacher positioning	92	-	12	55	8	41
4.	Following-up to provide social and emotional support	14	33	22	44	33	5
5.	Modelling to show I have empathy with student situations	6	18	17	8	26	41

Personal understanding of empathy. Participants had different understandings of the concept of empathy, although their understandings were broadly consistent with the Zahavi and Overgaard (2012) definition (Chapter 2). For example, Alan framed empathy as,

> Me working hard to understand what the children are thinking and where they're coming from and how they are feeling at any point in time, and for me to be able to understand that and modify or change my teaching to make sure I meet those needs.

Gretyl saw empathy as acknowledging things from their point of view (so that) "you know or hopefully have an understanding of where they are coming from", while Sophia defined it as "understanding what students are going through and how they are feeling at particular times of the day". Christine framed empathy as "understanding students as people (and) making sure I adjust the way I see that child based on their situation", while Alice saw it as "objectively trying to imagine and understand a student's feelings and experiences". Finally, Emily saw empathy as a means of displaying care and providing help,

> If they come to me with a problem, I think it is very important I tackle it. If they come and say something has happened and I say "Oh well. You will be fine!" that is not caring! They wouldn't get a sense they can come to me and I will help.

Participants believed they should be able to objectively imagine and project themselves into student states to understand feelings and experiences. For example, Gretyl described this projection as "trying to put myself in their shoes and see", while Alice said,

> It is putting yourself in their place to see it as they would see it, or try and see it as they would see it in the best way you can. If they are going through something hard, you'd say okay, what would it be like if I was going through something like that?

Christine noted that while this is not always possible, "there is a professional responsibility to try".

An issue that emerged in cross-case comparisons was the distinction between a sympathetic ("feeling for") versus an empathic ("feeling with") response (Eisenberg & Strayer, 1987). At interview, Alice discussed her understanding of the difference,

> Empathy differs from sympathy because you're not feeling sorry for someone. You are considering their perspective, taking that on board, and using that in your relationship with them to work through a situation.

Some vignettes nominated by participants contain elements relating to a sympathetic rather than an empathic response (for example, Alice i_1 v_1, Christine i_1 v_3; i_2 v_2). Statements indicating a sympathetic rather than an empathic response included "My heart went out *for* the student as I could see she was clearly distressed" (Alice i_1 v_1), and "I felt a lot *for* her when she was explaining her situation. I felt sad and bad *for* her situation" (Christine, i_1 v_3).

Taking a personal interest. The first superordinate theme identified was knowing students and taking a personal interest. This theme was evident for all six participants with 208 instances coded in transcripts. Participants wanted to get to know students as individuals so they could engage empathically and listen and value their perspectives. Sophia highlighted "the different levels of empathy you have to show in understanding, listening, and getting the most out of someone". Similarly, Gretyl reflected on individual needs in her view that "some students push themselves on you more than others and are needier".

Empathic teachers seek opportunities for personal interaction, display a positive approach, and a willingness to build relationships and show care. Alan said, "Any opportunity I get to sit and talk with students I take. I use questioning to clarify feelings and thoughts, to extend them and help fill in the gaps. I enjoy hearing about their lives". Christine "make(s) sure that I am aware of what is going on in their lives", while Emily "enjoyed hearing their stories and views on different things". Participants noted it is easier with some students than others, and "some students are more challenging" (Alice).

There were diverse views on taking a personal versus a professional interest in building relationships. Sophia considered you have got to take an interest to know students: “I always take opportunities to say ‘Hi, how are you going? What happened on the weekend? Tell me what’s going on in your life?’ Even in Grade 2 they want to share”. Alan “very much (takes) a personal interest” to “try to know about their lives, their family backgrounds, and what they do outside school”, while Alice described herself as “one of those teachers who actually takes an interest not only in school but outside”. Emily finds out what students do on weekends to “acknowledge what they are doing”,

> I think that’s really important to see we share interests and I acknowledge things they are interested in. Being involved in their lives outside of school is really important because I think they get a better understanding that you do care.

While taking a personal interest was valued by participants, not every teacher agreed on the optimum degree. Gretyl “draws a teacher-student boundary line that you don’t want to cross” stressing the need to “not be overly familiar” and noting “some issues are best handled with family”. Similarly, while Christine rated her personal interest as very high, she delineates her interest as professional rather than personal.

A number of the vignettes nominated for analysis related to this superordinate theme of knowing students as individuals and taking a personal interest. For example, Sophia knows that Chloe (i_1 v_3) and Anna (i_2 v_2) need extra support and thinking time to “feel valued” and “experience success”. Similarly, Emily makes additional efforts to ensure Trevor (i_1 v_2) feels comfortable as he is not confident in class. Finally, Gretyl models listening and validating Steven’s opinions (i_1 v_1) to model social acceptance based on her knowledge of the student’s home situation.

In tune with student thinking and feeling/the role of awareness. There were 206 instances coded among four participants, relating to the importance of being in tune with what students are thinking and/or feeling. For example, Christine was “very aware” how nervous Jane was from “how she kept coming up to me to tell me things and how she was acting,” resulting in Christine

encouraging her to talk about what was going on “to put her thoughts at ease” (i_1 v_3). Similarly, Emily was aware that James was “lacking social connections” and “not having a great time outside” after an extended family holiday (i_2 v_2). She listened, asked questions, positioned herself at his level, and read his body language to discern his thoughts and feelings.

Sophia acknowledged students’ feelings and experience and used physical cues in class to heighten her awareness of their states. For example, she asks a student who constantly interrupts to place his hand on her shoulder as a signal so that he knows she will answer his question next to deter him from interrupting. She also uses hand signals and positioning of students with auditory processing problems to check-in with students and assess mental states. She highlighted the role of listening and reading body language,

> Body language gives so much away. You can tell as soon as you see some students that something is not right. I have a chat with them and target those kids. I take the time to say "Oh come and read with me" or "Let’s have a look at this great work", "What’s going on?" and read the facial expressions. I think that makes such a difference.

At interview, participants were asked to reflect on how easy it was to be in tune with student thoughts or feelings. Gretyl found being in tune to be “pretty easy”, citing some sentence starters she uses with students to acknowledge student states such as “I can see that you are feeling…”. Alan stated that, “while it is important, it is not necessarily easy (and) there are probably a couple of students that it is harder to know but I work really hard to try and know”. Alice described it as “something I work on to be in tune with what they are thinking and feeling” but noted it “depends on the student”. Emily said “it is that recognition that someone is acknowledging me. I try really hard to understand where they are coming from, but being able to predict what they’re going to do next is something I think will come with practice and experience”.

In relation to sharing feelings and experiences, Gretyl and Christine found their students to be “very open”, while Emily stated they were “fairly open and confident to talk to me about things

that happen at school and at home". Alan noted that "in any group of kids there is some that mightn't be so willing to share, but the majority I hope are".

Collaborating and teacher positioning. The next theme relates to how participants perceive their role in the learning community based on collaborating, operating as a team, and teacher positioning. This theme occurred for five of the six participants, and 208 instances were coded.

Alan defines himself in the learning community as "a facilitator and learner too", while Sophia positions herself as a member of the team,

> We are doing this together and really building a team environment. It is very collaborative. Me working with them, them working together, me working with them at their tables. It's a point for us to work together. (Alan)

> Students know we are a team. I make that really clear. To make their learning easier, we need to work together. Building that community and reinforcing that positivity about school. We are working at this together. (Sophia)

Vignettes relating to teacher collaboration and positioning included Alan working with a student who is "hypersensitive" about mathematics where he gauges the proximity necessary for this student to be available to provide support (i_1 v_3). In another example, Sophia reminds students about good listening skills and connects the reasoning to give them an opportunity to reflect on their behaviour as "self-managers" and "make connections with the entire learning community and the high expectations we set" (i_2 v_1).

Following up to provide social and emotional support. A theme that emerged across the case studies was the importance of following-up to provide social and emotional support. There were 151 such instances coded across the six participants. Sophia stressed the importance of following-up as soon as possible: "If there is an issue, I sit them down and ask what is going on? What can you tell me?" According to Christine, "I know how the child would feel. I need to

consider their feelings and consider this is a big event for them. Issues can lead to bigger issues and it is vital I deal with it".

A number of participants use restorative justice techniques (Morrison, 2007) and/or Circle Time (Mosley, 1993) to follow-up and resolve their students' social and emotional issues. Alice uses this approach to "ask students how this impacted on you". Emily uses these procedures as "a very empathetic approach of hearing both sides to ensure it is followed through and that the child feels that it has been resolved". Finally, Gretyl stressed the need to follow up more than once "to make sure that when we have an issue it is fully resolved".

Across the cases, a number of vignettes related to following-up on students' social and emotional issues to "build self-esteem and to put students back into social happiness" (Gretyl, i_1 v_2). During breaks, for example, Gretyl goes out to play basketball with her students "to follow-up as that is where social issues arise" (i_2 v_2). Similarly, Christine follows-up on strategies she provided to Oliver on coping with another student (i_2 v_1). Finally, Alan provides social and emotional support to Dylan who is finding the transition to secondary school confronting and follows-up with the secondary school coordinator to address Dylan's concerns (i_2 v_2).

Modelling "to show I have empathy" with student situations. The final theme identified across the cases was the importance of modelling empathy in the classroom. This theme was present for all six participants, with a total of 116 instances coded.

Participants saw the purpose of modelling empathy as being to guide students in treating each other with respect, understanding, and compassion. For example,

> I think that you need to start the year modelling empathy if you expect students to have that idea about how they treat each other. I think that you need to teach them that's what you see as valuable if you want it to be the culture of the classroom. (Christine)

> It's not just me showing the kids empathy but making sure it is an environment where the kids know that we need to be empathetic to others. They show empathy to me, I show empathy to them, and they show empathy to each other. (Sophia)

Participants stressed the need for genuineness and authenticity in modelling empathy with students. Alice spoke of "making sure I am modelling empathy" and being "very explicit on how I am showing this value and how they can be showing it so we show empathy towards one another". Similarly, Alan emphasises the importance of authentically modelling empathy in his classroom,

> You don't want it to be manufactured because the kids pick up on that. I would be wary it didn't become a bit false. I have had colleagues who have really struggled with it. Engaging with the kids on an equal level has been tricky for them. The kids know when you are not really that interested in them. (Alan)

Vignettes relating to this theme include Alice modelling her own reflections of a sad memory, and then dealing with a student who is upset by her own memories, resulting in her showing empathy to talk her through it (i_1 v_1). In another vignette, Alan models his feelings, experience and emotions around the role of gratitude in his life by linking the discussion to mental health. He then listens to student responses and asks questions to provide support and model respect in sharing (i_2 v_1).

Quantitative Findings. The study used high levels of emotional support as a proxy manifestation for teacher empathy. Evaluation across the lesson observations and vignettes show high scores for the emotional support domain of classroom climate as measured by the CLASS instrument (Pianta et al., 2012). Research findings from more than 3,000 classrooms in the United States demonstrate that children in classrooms with higher CLASS ratings—where teachers develop positive relationships with children and are sensitive to children's needs—realize greater gains in social development during the school year (Howes et al., 2008; Mashburn et al., 2008). In this

study, teacher emotional support variables varied within the mid to high range for participants (Table 10.2).

Table 10.2

Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Emotional Support – Teacher Means (Standard Deviations)

CLASS Dimension	Sophia		Christine		Emily		Gretyl		Alice		Alan	
	Obs.	Vig.	Obs.	Vig.	Obs.	Vig.	Obs.	Vig.	Obs.	Vig.	Obs.	Vig.
Positive Climate	6.59	6.15	6.41	5.85	5.66	5.28	6.44	6.34	5.97	4.88	6.19	5.31
	(0.59)	(0.80)	(0.56)	(0.70)	(0.60)	(0.58)	(0.50)	(0.52)	(0.59)	(0.94)	(0.82)	(0.69)
Teacher Sensitivity	6.44	5.93	5.94	5.98	5.63	5.13	6.34	6.08	5.63	4.63	6.16	4.87
	(0.72)	(0.69)	(0.62)	(0.70)	(0.66)	(0.61)	(0.48)	(0.51)	(0.55)	(1.03)	(0.72)	(0.86)
Regard for Student Perspectives	6.34	5.85	6.13	5.80	5.53	4.94	6.25	6.07	5.50	4.63	6.16	5.06
	(0.87)	(0.86)	(0.79)	(0.97)	(0.72)	(0.62)	(0.67)	(0.50)	(0.76)	(0.93)	(0.81)	(1.06)

Note. Range of outcomes on CLASS scale is 1–7. Obs. = Observed lesson, Vig. = Filmed lesson vignettes.

Descriptive statistics for the observed CLASS emotional support elements are set out in Table 10.3 at the dimension and sub-factor levels. The skewness and kurtosis for each CLASS variable were calculated and divided by their standard errors to express each item in standard deviation units. There were no variables for which the absolute values were greater than three, which would indicate statistically significant skewed or kurtosis distribution ($p < .001$). The teacher emotional support dimensions observed are therefore analysed as normally distributed data.

Table 10.3

Descriptive Statistics and Tests of Normality for Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Dimensions and Sub-Factors - Lesson Observations and Vignettes

	Lesson Observations				Vignettes			
CLASS Dimension and Sub-Factors	Mean	SD	Skewness/ SE	Kurtosis/ SE	Mean	SD	Skewness/ SE	Kurtosis/ SE
Positive Climate	6.21	0.35	-0.89	-0.20	5.63	0.57	-0.05	-0.98
1. Relationships	6.08	0.32	-0.83	-0.93	5.53	0.49	0.02	-1.11
2. Positive affect	6.21	0.42	-1.03	0.34	5.50	0.66	-0.15	0.16
3. Positive communications	6.23	0.36	0.30	-0.27	5.59	0.61	0.25	-1.36
4. Respect	6.31	0.39	-0.55	-0.72	5.92	0.55	-0.20	-1.43
Teacher Sensitivity	6.02	0.35	-0.13	-1.20	5.43	0.64	-0.26	-1.47
5. Awareness	5.96	0.47	-1.32	1.07	5.55	0.66	-0.52	-1.15
6. Responsiveness to academic and social/emotional needs	6.06	0.39	-0.55	-0.72	5.52	0.58	-0.12	-1.55
7. Effectiveness in addressing problems	5.98	0.40	-0.39	-0.16	5.18	0.73	0.05	-1.30
8. Student comfort	6.08	0.31	1.35	-0.65	5.50	0.63	-0.08	-1.35
Regard for Student Perspectives	5.98	0.37	-0.93	-1.05	5.39	0.59	-0.18	-1.33
9. Flexibility and student focus	6.17	0.47	-0.46	-0.54	5.61	0.64	-0.64	0.03
10. Connections to current life	5.81	0.49	-0.42	-0.86	5.63	0.52	-0.11	-1.61
11. Support for autonomy and leadership	5.88	0.29	-1.44	0.72	5.16	0.62	-0.06	-1.35
12. Meaningful peer interactions	6.08	0.42	-0.24	-0.60	5.16	0.62	0.01	-1.79

Note. SD, Standard Deviation, *SE,* Standard Error.

Correlations. Spearman's correlation coefficient (2-tailed) was applied to explore the relationships between the factor ratings for the CLASS emotional support dimensions as assessed by the independent raters from both lesson observations and the vignettes (Table 10.4).

Table 10.4

Spearman's Correlations between Ratings of Classroom Assessment Scoring System Emotional Support at the Dimension Level

Variable	Mean	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6
Lesson Observations								
1. Positive Climate	6.21	0.35	—					
2. Teacher Sensitivity	6.02	0.35	**.93****	—				
3. Regard for Student Perspectives	5.98	0.37	**.89***	**.99***	—			
Vignettes								
4. Positive Climate	5.63	0.57	**.89***	**.87***	**.89***	—		
5. Teacher Sensitivity	5.43	0.64	.66	.55	.60	**.89***	—	
6. Regard for Student Perspectives	5.39	0.59	**.89***	**.87***	**.89***	**1.00****	**.89***	—

Note. *SD*, Standard Deviation. ***p* < .01; **p* < .05.

Correlations were generally higher across dimensions assessed by the same modality (r = .89–.99 for observations; r =.89–1.00 for vignettes), than between dimensions assessed by observations against the vignettes (r = .89 for both Positive Climate and Regard for Student Perspectives, no significance for Teacher Sensitivity). This included a correlation of 1.00 between the vignette ratings for Positive Climate and Regard for Student Perspectives signifying a perfect relationship suggesting that the way to create a positive classroom environment is to encourage and show regard for student perspectives or vice versa. Correlations between each sub-factor within each dimension are set out in Table 10.5. The Spearman's coefficient yielded high correlations (r=.87–1) between most CLASS emotional support factors in lesson observations and vignettes. An exception was teacher sensitivity (in the vignettes) that did not significantly correlate with all other factors. All correlations were positive and strong suggesting an underlying professional basis for expressions of classroom empathy as shown in these emotional support factors.

Table 10.5

Spearman's Correlations between Classroom Assessment Scoring System Emotional Support at the Sub-Factor Level

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Positive Climate																									
PC1	Obs	—																							
PC1	Vig	0.70	—																						
PC2	Obs	**0.99****	0.77	—																					
PC2	Vig	**0.87***	**0.94****	**0.91***	—																				
PC3	Obs	0.67	0.60	0.77	0.66	—																			
PC3	Vig	**0.87***	**0.94****	**0.91***	**1.00****	0.66	—																		
PC4	Obs	0.64	0.60	0.74	0.71	**0.89***	0.71	—																	
PC4	Vig	**0.87***	**0.89***	**0.91***	**0.94****	0.77	**0.94****	0.77	—																
Teacher Sensitivity																									
TS1	Obs	**0.97****	0.58	**0.94****	0.75	0.67	0.75	0.55	**0.81***	—															
TS1	Vig	0.70	**1.00****	0.77	**0.94****	0.60	**0.94****	0.60	**0.89***	0.58	—														
TS2	Obs	**0.84***	0.54	0.79	0.71	0.49	0.71	0.54	**0.83***	**0.84***	0.54	—													
TS2	Vig	0.70	**0.94****	0.77	**0.89***	0.71	**0.89***	0.66	**0.94****	0.64	**0.94****	0.66	—												
TS3	Obs	**0.93****	0.77	**0.91***	**0.89***	0.60	**0.89***	0.60	**0.94****	**0.90***	0.77	**0.94****	**0.83***	—											
TS3	Vig	0.41	**0.83***	0.53	0.77	0.60	0.77	0.77	0.71	0.23	**0.83***	0.31	0.77	0.49	—										
TS4	Obs	**0.91***	**0.90***	**0.93****	**0.99****	0.58	**0.99****	0.64	**0.93****	0.81	**0.90***	0.78	**0.84***	**0.93****	0.67	—									
TS4	Vig	0.55	**0.94****	0.65	**0.89***	0.54	**0.89***	0.66	0.77	0.38	**0.94****	0.37	**0.83***	0.60	**0.94****	**0.81***	—								
Regard for Student Perspective																									
RSP1	Obs	**0.97****	0.73	**0.99****	**0.87***	**0.81***	**0.87***	0.75	**0.93****	**0.96****	0.72	**0.84***	0.78	**0.93****	0.49	**0.88***	0.58	—							
RSP1	Vig	0.72	**0.89***	0.79	**0.94****	0.60	**0.94****	0.77	**0.83***	0.55	**0.89***	0.54	0.77	0.71	**0.89***	**0.90***	**0.94****	0.72	—						
RSP2	Obs	**0.90***	0.43	**0.85***	0.66	0.60	0.66	0.60	0.77	**0.93****	0.43	**0.94****	0.54	**0.89***	0.20	0.72	0.26	**0.90***	0.49	—					
RSP2	Vig	0.79	**0.99****	**0.85***	**0.99****	0.64	**0.99****	0.67	**0.93***	0.68	**0.99****	0.64	**0.93****	**0.84***	**0.81***	**0.96****	**0.93****	0.81	**0.93****	0.55	—				
RSP3	Obs	0.81	0.55	0.75	0.75	0.20	0.75	0.41	0.67	0.71	0.55	**0.81***	0.46	**0.81***	0.35	**0.84***	0.49	0.69	0.70	0.75	0.66	—			
RSP3	Vig	0.81	**0.93****	**0.87***	**0.99****	0.64	**0.99****	0.75	**0.90***	0.66	**0.93****	0.64	**0.84***	**0.81***	**0.84***	**0.96****	**0.93****	0.81	**0.99****	0.58	**0.97****	0.74	—		
RSP4	Obs	0.58	0.77	0.68	**0.83***	0.66	**0.83***	**0.89***	0.77	0.41	0.77	0.49	0.71	0.60	**0.94****	0.75	**0.89***	0.64	**0.94****	0.43	**0.81***	0.55	**0.90***	—	
RSP4	Vig	**0.87***	**0.89***	**0.91***	**0.94****	0.77	**0.94****	0.77	**1.00****	**0.81***	**0.89***	**0.83***	**0.94****	**0.94****	0.71	**0.93****	0.77	**0.93****	**0.83***	0.77	**0.93****	0.67	**0.90***	0.77	—

Note. ***p* < .01; **p* < .05 (2-tailed). Obs, observed lesson; Vig, filmed lesson vignettes. PC1, Relationships; PC2, Positive affect; PC3, Positive communications; PC4, Respect; TS1, Awareness; TS2, Responsive to academic and social/emotional needs; TS3, Effectiveness in addressing problems; TS4, Student comfort; RSP1, Flexibility and student focus; RSP2, Connections to current life; RSP3, Support for autonomy and leadership; RSP4, Meaningful peer interaction

Specific actions coded in teacher empathy interactions. This section considers data on the specific empathy actions identified by participants in their practice and observed by the independent raters. Table 10.6 illustrates the actions identified by each participant from the transcripts and diary entries, and the number of mentions for each action. Appendix P includes a full list of empathic actions.

Table 10.6

Actions Identified by Teachers in Empathy Interactions – Interviews and Diaries

Teacher Actions	Instances Mentioned						Totals
	Sophia	Christine	Emily	Gretyl	Alice	Alan	
Modelling, gestures, body language, eye contact	21	29	31	36	46	32	195
Know students, understand, and show interest	30	41	28	27	18	40	184
Encourage, support, instil confidence, respecting	49	35	22	22	23	16	167
Engaging, connecting, welcoming	24	8	20	26	19	41	138
Noticing/Reading student body language	32	29	3	20	20	15	119
Valuing	22	7	9	32	15	20	105
Perspective-taking & acknowledging	12	8	24	34	9	13	100
Following-up	3	25	16	13	3	3	63
Prompting, questioning	9	13	14	8	7	12	63
Listening	14	11	13	13	3	7	61
Positive feedback	16	2	13	10	7	11	59
Sharing yourself	3	0	12	12	13	8	48

The observers viewed and rated “live” lessons and the vignettes using the CLASS protocol (Appendix O) keeping detailed field notes of teachers’ behaviours and actions. Particular attention was paid to actions perceived as empathic. Table 10.7 sets out all actions observed by the raters using the CLASS protocol categorised against the teacher identified actions and showing the relevant teachers who demonstrated it.

Table 10.7

Empathic Actions Noted by Observers – Lesson Observations and Vignettes

Teacher actions observed by raters	Participant						Totals
	Sophia	Christine	Emily	Gretyl	Alice	Alan	
Modelling, gestures, body language, eye contact							
Positive comments and expectations	17	20	8	17	14	11	87
Smiling, laughing, enthusiasm	12	15	12	16	12	14	81
Shared positive affect	5	9	9	14	16	12	65
Models and scaffolds	9	11	8	16	7	12	63
Physical acknowledgement, touch, high fives	13	16	7	4	4	6	50
Eye contact	5	5	7	9	6	7	39
Know students, understand, and show interest							
Proximity	16	17	14	16	15	13	91
Students seek teacher's assistance	4	10	5	13	5	7	44
Individual approach	3	8	5	5	4	5	30
Uses humour	0	0	3	12	2	4	21
Ask about activity outside of school	2	3	3	4	3	4	19
Encourage, support, instil confidence, respecting							
Individual support	17	22	17	23	10	17	106
Open to questions/encourages student ideas	16	22	11	19	7	20	95
Checks-in to see if students need help	17	22	13	15	11	14	92
Reassurance and assistance	15	19	7	17	9	13	80
Gives positive feedback	18	9	5	19	12	9	72
Use student names when addressing them	6	13	5	16	7	11	58
Acknowledges students' strengths	8	7	3	13	6	5	42
Engaging, connecting, welcoming							
Peer sharing/ turn and talk	23	24	16	29	20	25	137
Class activity is relevant/meaningful	11	18	14	17	14	21	95
Gives student choices	17	19	9	18	11	16	90
Warm, calm voice	15	14	13	15	11	17	85
Timely response	11	8	4	14	6	12	55
Noticing/Reading student body language							
Student comfort	4	9	8	19	11	9	60
Notices difficulties	3	9	11	16	10	11	60
Re-engagement	8	9	6	18	8	9	58
Notices student states	6	8	6	12	11	9	52
Perspective-taking & acknowledging							
Respectful in interactions/manner	14	20	15	18	12	16	95
Acknowledges emotions/out of class factors	8	15	11	9	7	14	64
Acknowledges student contributions	4	9	6	9	8	14	50
Following-up							
Student issues resolved	9	11	10	19	8	11	68
Gives criticism/correction in private	4	7	4	5	2	3	25

Teacher actions observed by raters	Participant						Totals
	Sophia	Christine	Emily	Gretyl	Alice	Alan	
Prompting, questioning							
Engaging questions/taking risks	16	13	10	17	12	21	89
Admits mistakes/apologises/humility	4	2	2	5	3	2	18
Listening							
Listens to student opinions	13	17	12	17	9	20	88
Wait time/Think time as needed	12	9	7	13	9	8	58
Sharing yourself							
Social conversation	18	17	10	16	12	18	91
Personal experience	2	0	4	7	6	10	29

Expressions of cognitive and affective empathy. In the study, empathy is comprised of two components: cognitive and affective empathy (Chapter 2). Cognitive empathy is the ability to understand what others are thinking or feeling without necessarily resonating with the feeling state. Affective empathy is the ability to emotionally resonate with other people's feelings while understanding that they are distinct from one's own. Cognitive empathy requires complex cognitive functions including perspective-taking and mentalizing (Shamay-Tsoory et al., 2003, 2009; Shamay-Tsoory, 2011), while affective empathy includes experience sharing of another's internal states (Zaki & Ochsner, 2012). Specific examples of empathy in the vignettes were coded against the Baron-Cohen and Wheelwright (2004) empathy definitions (Chapter 2) as set out in Table 10.8.

Table 10.8

Summary of Cognitive and Affective Empathy Coding

Item Description	Sophia	Christine	Emily	Gretyl	Alice	Alan
Where teachers *recognised* student mental states	27	22	47	59	24	48
- Perspective-taking	14	8	20	29	10	25
- Empathic accuracy (inferring others' feelings from their behaviour)	6	4	14	16	7	7
- Solving interpersonal problems	4	8	11	9	4	9
- Theory of Mind (attributing mental states distinguished from one's own)	3	2	2	5	3	7
Where teachers *responded* with an appropriate emotion based on care	30	28	40	38	24	34
- Basic emotional empathy skills	10	13	19	20	11	18
- Emotional reactivity processes	13	6	9	11	7	9
- Emotional concern	4	7	9	7	4	7
- Personal distress	3	2	3	0	2	0

Note: The numbers reported are instances observed by either of the two raters in reviewing the vignettes. Inter-rater agreement reliability is described in 2.14.

The study observed 227 instances in the vignettes of participants *recognising* student(s) mental states (cognitive empathy), and 194 instances of participants *responding* with an *appropriate* emotion based on care (affective empathy). The emotional response did not need to match the triggering student emotion, but it did need to reflect that the participant cares how the student(s) feel (Baron-Cohen, 2011).

10.4 The Lived Experiences of Empathy in the Classrooms of Teachers

Relational Goals. In the teacher survey (Appendix J), relational goals (Butler, 2012) were collected over time as a proxy for empathy motivation, where relational goals have been found to predict levels of teacher and student social support. Relational goals were measured at two timepoints on a 5-point scale (1=totally disagree; 5=totally agree) using Butler's (2012) criteria. The mean composite score for all goals was 4.57 with a standard deviation of .53. At the first timepoint, the composite mean for all goals was 4.67 with a standard deviation of .48; while the mean was 4.47 with a standard deviation of .56 at the second timepoint.

At the first interview, participants were asked for their perceptions of the importance of teacher-student relationships in their practice. Alan described it as “the most important thing” and an area in which he works “really hard” and derives the “most pride”. Alice said that, “unless you have the relationship built with the student, it is really hard to develop them further where they want to learn”. She nominated interacting with students as her favourite part of the day. Christine and Sophia value teacher-student relationships “very highly”, while Gretyl saw interactions with students as “one of my favourite parts” of the day.

Participants felt most success as a teacher if they saw they were developing closer and better relationships with students (the maximum rating at both timepoints). Perceptions that the main goal of their teaching is to show care were high to very high with a mean of 4.33 and standard deviation of .49 at both timepoints (for Alice, the importance of care grew over time from $4.0_{t1} – 5.0_{t2}$, and for Emily it fell from $5.0_{t1} – 4.0_{t2}$). The importance of developing personal relationships was very high with a mean of 4.25 and standard deviation of .62 and diminished slightly over time ($4.5_{t1} – 4.0_{t2}$), while the importance of building relationships was very high with a mean of 4.5 and standard deviation of .52 and constant ($4.5_{t1, t2}$). Taking care of student problems had a mean of 4.83 with a standard deviation of .39 and fell over time from a very high level ($5.0_{t1} – 4.66_{t2}$), while beliefs about getting to know student situations in and outside school had a mean of 4.5 with a standard deviation of .52 and fell slightly over time ($4.66_{t1} – 4.33_{t2}$). These results may be a product of the timing of data collection, with T_1 (Term 3) and T_2 (Term 4) reflecting the end of the school year.

At interview, all participants self-identified as empathic teachers. But viewpoints differed as to whether participants were more empathic now compared to their first years of teaching. Alan believes empathy led him into teaching, where “he really enjoys the relationships and the connectedness with people”. He described himself as “much more” empathic now compared with the beginning of his career. Alice believes she has better structures in the classroom. She stated “I don’t know if I would say I am more empathic now, but maybe I know how to implement it more. It is how I structure it that has changed with experience”. Gretyl believes she is no more empathic

now than she was as a first year teacher but she “might respond differently to children (and) there may be differences in her reactions”. Sophia considers herself to be more empathic this year than last “because you have other teachers to learn from”. Christine believes there are risks in going beyond the limits of empathy because she “feels too much” in some situations. She has learnt to manage herself as she “can’t necessarily take on the issues of students”. Emily believes you need to manage negative interactions with students and has become better at doing so this year.

Comparison of perceptions of classroom teaching style dimensions. At T_1 and T_2 participants rated their teaching style dimensions using Watt and Richardson’s (2007) instrument (Appendix J) to assess perceptions of the classroom environment on a 7-point Likert-type scale. *Figure 10.1* shows how these perceptions changed between the two timepoints.

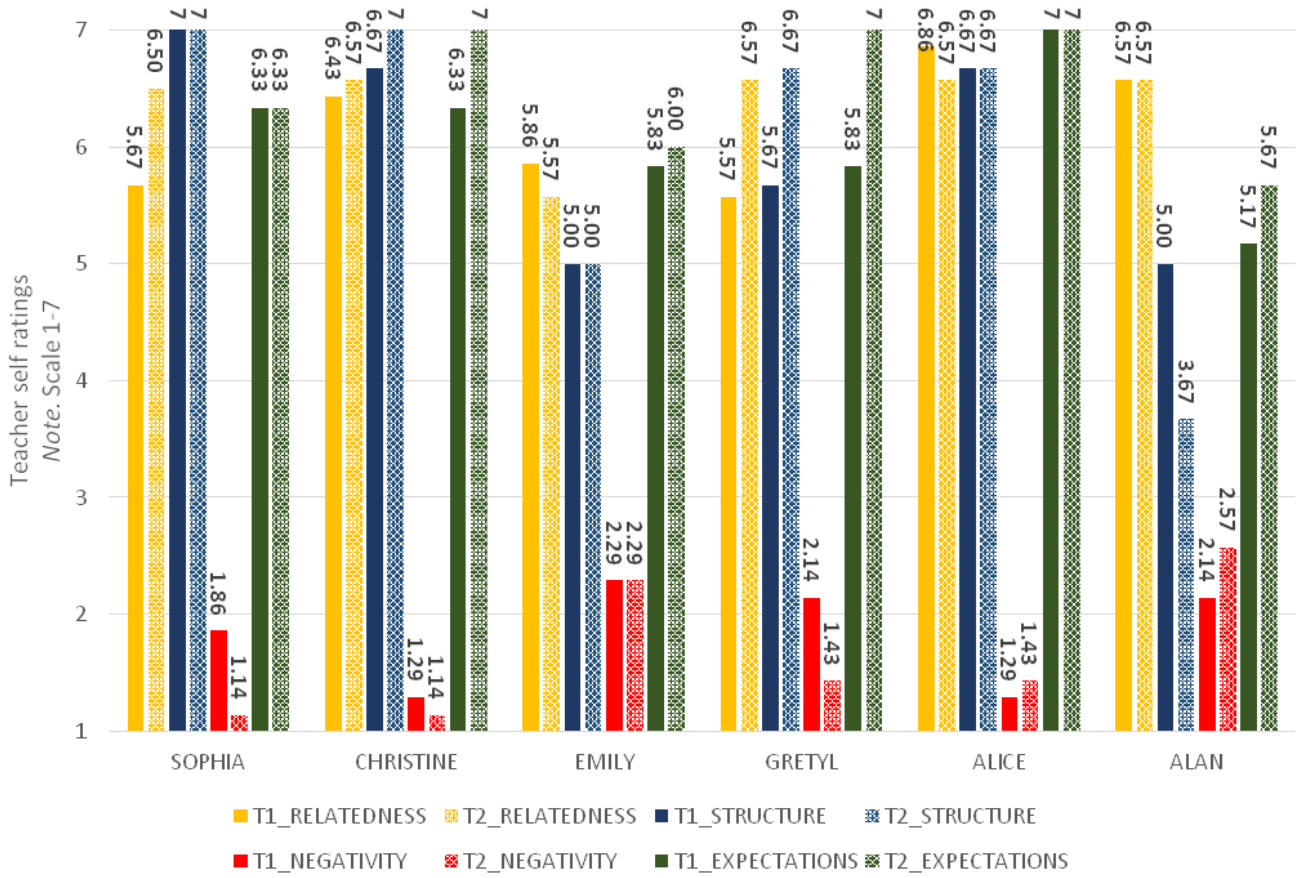


Figure 10.1. Self-Rated Teaching Style Scale factor means for Study Participants. *Note:* 1= Not at all; 7= A lot.

Participants' perceived their *relatedness* to be very high (6.16_{t1} – 6.38_{t2}). It rose between the timepoints for four participants, and the scores for Alice (6.86_{t1} – 6.57_{t2}) and Emily (5.86_{t1} – 5.57_{t2}) were relatively constant. Perceptions of *structure* were high and constant ($6.00_{t1, t2}$), except for Alan, whose structure rating fell within the mid-range (5.00_{t1} – 3.67_{t2}) which may be a product of Grade 6 students being ready for high school. Perceptions of *expectations* were high and rose for all participants (6.08_{t1} – 6.50_{t2}), while perceptions of *negativity* were very low (1.84_{t1} – 1.67_{t2}) and kept falling for four participants, but rose slightly for Alice (1.29_{t1} – 1.43_{t2}) and Alan (2.14_{t1} – 2.57_{t2}) in the low range. The change in perception ratings between the two timepoints may be explained by the time of the year with preparations occurring for transition for next year's grades. Another explanation may involve a demonstration effect between timepoints (similar to the "Hawthorne Effect") where subjects in behavioural studies change their performance in response to

being observed based on experience of the factors being evaluated (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 2003). This research investigated efforts to increase productivity in the Western Electrical Company's Hawthorne Works in Chicago in the 1920s. No matter what change was introduced to working conditions, the result was increased productivity. Increases were subsequently attributed to the psychological stimulus of being singled out and being made to feel important (Franke & Kaul, 1978).

Student participants parallel rated their teacher's teaching style dimensions using Watt and Richardson's (2007) student instrument (Appendix K) to assess the same classroom environment factors on a 7-point Likert-type scale. *Figure 10.2* shows student perceptions per dimension over time.

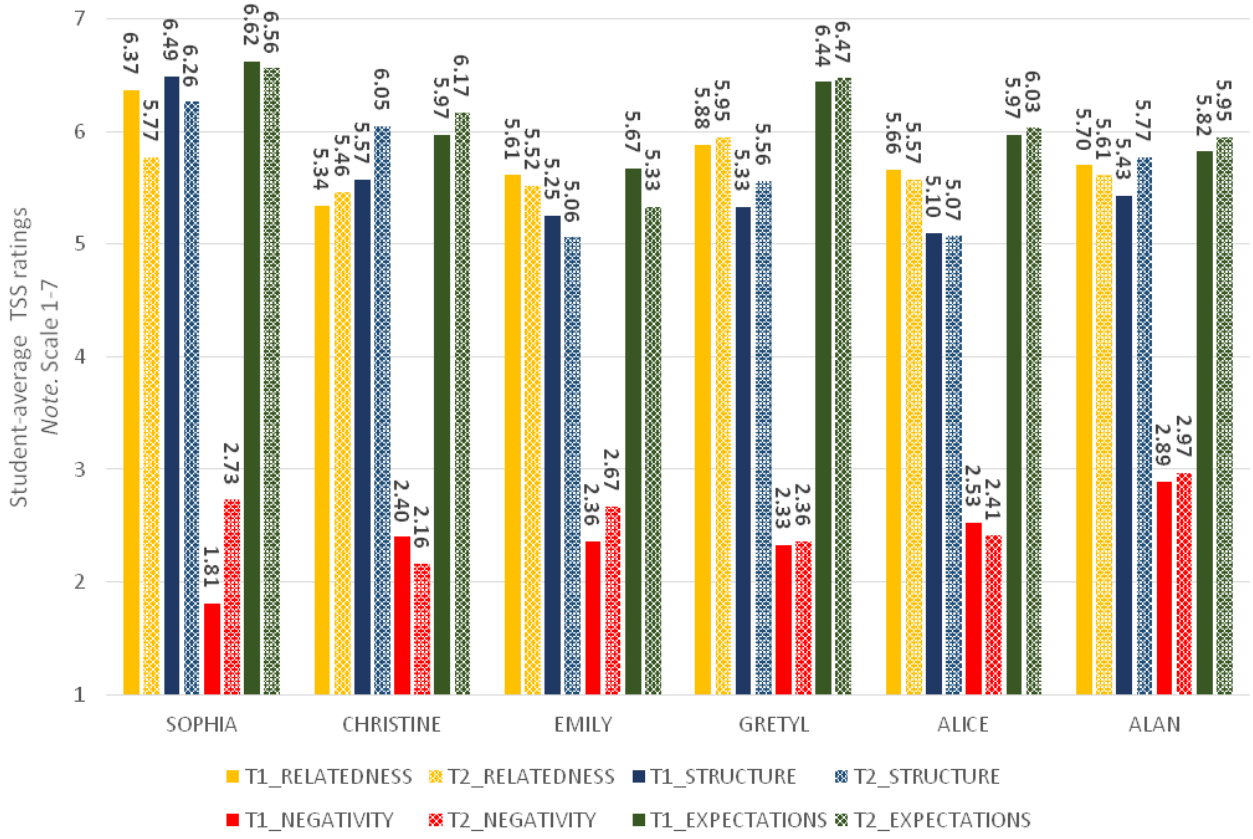


Figure 10.2. Student-Rated Teaching Style Scale factor means for Study Participants. *Note:* 1= Not at all; 7= A lot.

Looking across the cases, the students' perceived relatedness to be high and relatively constant (5.76_{t1} – 5.65_{t2}), with perceptions for Gretyl (5.88_{t1} – 5.95_{t2}) and Christine (5.34_{t1} – 5.46_{t2}) recording a marginal increase between the timepoints. Perceptions of structure were high and grew (5.53_{t1} – 5.63_{t2}), while perceptions of positive expectations were in the high range and steady

(6.08_{t1} – 6.09_{t2}). Finally, perceptions of negativity were low, although they rose slightly over time (2.39_{t1} – 2.55_{t2}) within the low range.

Are Differences in Perceptions of Classroom Environment Significant? The student group mean per factor (Table 10.9) was subtracted from the teacher mean at each timepoint to compare differences in perceptions (*Figure 10.3*). Positive mean differences indicate the teacher perceived the classroom factor more positively than students, while negative values indicate the students' rated the classroom factor more positively.

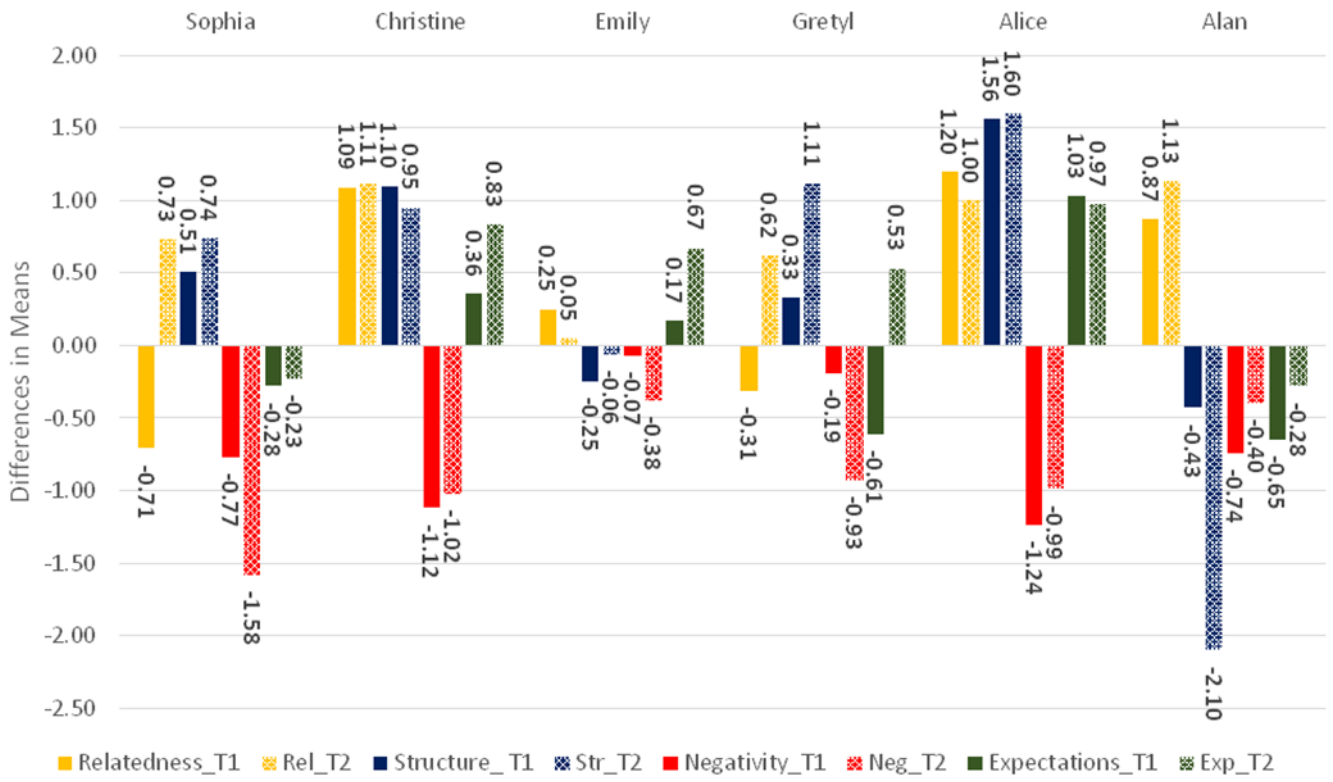


Figure 10.3. Differences between Teacher- and Student-Rated Teaching Style Scale factor means for Study Participants. *Note:* 0= No difference; 7= Maximum difference.

Looking across the cases, teachers tended to rate themselves more highly than their students' for relatedness and structure, while students' rated their teachers as being more negative than the teacher did. Gretyl and Emily had the smallest differences in means across all factors, suggesting the perceptions of these teachers on classroom climate closely align with those of their students. Alan recorded the highest difference in means for perceptions of structure, perceiving lower levels than students (especially at T_2).

Conversely, Alice recorded the highest difference in means on perceptions of structure perceiving higher levels than students. Furthermore, negativity was perceived as higher by students for Alice at both timepoints, and for Sophia at T_2. Christine perceived class relatedness and structure to be higher than her students, and her perceptions of negativity were lower than students' perceived.

This data demonstrates there may be differences in perceptions of classroom environment factors between the teacher and student groups. It is reported for comparative purposes as a cross-check of the reliability of the teacher and student ratings.

One sample *t*-tests. One-sample *t*-tests were applied between teacher perceptions of the classroom environment (TSS) and their students' averaged reports of the same classroom environment factors to determine if the differences between perceptions were significant. Due to the sample size of participants ($N = 6$), $p = .05$ is considered a conservative estimate at which to consider levels of significance.

Table 10.9 shows the mean difference in scores for the student group and teacher and the direction of results.

Table 10.9

One Sample t-tests of Student Means with Teacher Reported Teaching Style Scale

Teacher	Teacher style variable	Time-point	Teacher mean	Student mean	Mean difference	*t*	df	*p*-value
Sophia	Relatedness	1	5.67	6.37	-0.70	1.13	12	**.05***
		2	6.50	5.77	0.73	-2.46	12	**.03***
	Structure	1	7.00	6.49	0.51	-3.55	12	**.00****
		2	7.00	6.26	0.74	-3.42	12	**.01****
	Negativity	1	1.86	1.81	0.05	0.04	12	.80
		2	1.14	2.73	-1.59	4.24	12	**.00****
	Expectations	1	6.33	6.62	-0.29	2.91	12	**.01****
		2	6.33	6.56	-0.23	1.49	12	.16
Christine	Relatedness	1	6.43	5.34	1.09	-4.48	13	**.00****
		2	6.57	5.46	1.11	-3.49	13	**.00****
	Structure	1	6.67	5.57	1.10	-4.99	13	**.00****
		2	7.00	6.05	0.95	-4.49	13	**.00****
	Negativity	1	1.29	2.40	-1.11	4.27	13	**.00****
		2	1.14	2.16	-1.02	2.92	13	**.01****
	Expectations	1	6.33	5.97	0.36	-1.54	13	.15
		2	7.00	6.17	0.83	-3.37	13	**.01****
Emily	Relatedness	1	5.86	5.61	0.25	-0.43	3	.69
		2	5.57	5.52	0.05	-0.11	5	.91
	Structure	1	5.00	5.25	-0.25	0.38	3	.73
		2	5.00	5.06	-0.06	0.10	5	.93
	Negativity	1	2.29	2.36	-0.07	0.12	3	.91
		2	2.29	2.67	-0.38	0.96	5	.38
	Expectations	1	5.83	5.67	0.16	-0.32	3	.77
		2	6.00	5.33	0.67	-1.26	5	.26
Gretyl	Relatedness	1	5.57	5.88	-0.31	0.99	11	.34
		2	6.57	5.95	0.62	-2.99	11	**.01****
	Structure	1	5.67	5.33	0.34	-1.22	11	.25
		2	6.67	5.56	1.11	-2.59	11	**.03***
	Negativity	1	2.14	2.33	-0.19	0.7	11	.50
		2	1.43	2.36	-0.93	2.56	11	**.03***
	Expectations	1	5.83	6.44	-0.61	4.04	11	**.00****
		2	7.00	6.47	0.53	-3.44	11	**.01****
Alice	Relatedness	1	6.86	5.66	1.20	-4.38	9	**.00***
		2	6.57	5.57	1.00	-2.63	9	**.03***
	Structure	1	6.67	5.10	1.57	-9.95	9	**.00****
		2	6.67	5.07	1.60	-5.04	9	**.00****
	Negativity	1	1.29	2.53	-1.24	3.61	9	**.01****
		2	1.43	2.41	-0.98	2.61	9	**.03***
	Expectations	1	7.00	5.97	1.03	-4.18	9	**.00****
		2	7.00	6.03	0.97	-4.25	9	**.00****

Teacher	Teacher style variable	Time-point	Teacher mean	Student mean	Mean difference	*t*	df	*p*-value
Alan	Relatedness	1	6.57	5.70	0.87	-3.23	9	**.01****
		2	6.57	5.61	0.96	-4.49	9	**.00****
	Structure	1	5.00	5.43	-0.43	1.95	9	.08
		2	3.67	5.77	-2.10	7.04	9	**.00****
	Negativity	1	2.14	2.89	-0.75	2.07	9	.07
		2	2.57	2.97	-0.40	1.08	9	.31
	Expectations	1	5.17	5.82	-0.65	3.65	9	**.01****
		2	5.67	5.95	-0.28	1.44	9	.18

Note. $^{**}p < .01$; $^{*}p < .05$.

Teachers often perceived the classroom climate differently from their students. Two student groups perceived a difference in relatedness at the $p = .05$ level (Alice, Sophia); one class believed the classroom environment to exhibit significantly more relatedness than their teacher reported (Sophia $_{t1}$), while two classes believed the classroom environment exhibited significantly less relatedness than their teacher (Sophia $_{t2}$, Alice $_{t1, t2}$). One student group perceived the environment to be significantly less structured than the teacher (Gretyl $_{t2}$). Two groups perceived the environment to be significantly more negative than their teacher reported (Alice $_{t2}$, Gretyl $_{t2}$). For Emily, the results show no significant relationship in perceptions, which may reflect the small student sample size.

10.5 Conclusion – The Essence of Empathy

A phenomenological description of essences involves probing data to search for common themes in how empathy was experienced to provide a sense of what was essential (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). Every individual lends a voice to the phenomenon of empathy in a classroom. While all stories and experiences are unique, the study discovered commonalities across empathy interactions. In summary, the study identified five higher order superordinate themes encapsulating the shared essence of participant experience of empathy: knowing students as individuals and taking a personal interest; being “in tune” with student thinking and/or feeling; collaborating and positioning; modelling to show empathy with student situations; and following-up to provide social and emotional support.

All participants valued empathy as an important element in the culture of their classroom. They sought to model empathy to guide students in how to treat one another with mutual respect, understanding, and compassion. They sought to understand students by taking a personal interest. They try to be aware of what is going on in their students' lives and regulate their approach in interacting with individuals. They ask respectful questions and listen to understand what students are thinking and feeling. They model authenticity and work at "different levels of empathy" in the diverse relationships in a classroom to meet individual needs. They actively work to establish positive relationships and empower students to make decisions through collaboration, negotiation, and positioning. They combine cognitive and affective elements in responding to social and emotional issues and follow-up to know how a child feels and provide social and emotional support.

Chapter 11 links these findings to the literature as a basis for an Empathy Assessment Instrument to embed empathy experiences in primary classrooms.

Chapter 11 Discussion

The study sought to identify and explicate the processes teachers use to “know” students’ internal states and respond with sensitive care, including teachers’ motivations and behaviour in empathy manifestations. Attending to the social and emotional needs of students is an ongoing challenge for teachers. Consciously or not, every teacher interacts with students and manages their classroom in ways that impact on teacher-student relationships.

Empathy is “a crucial source and sustainer of altruistic concern or caring about (the wellbeing of) others” (Slote, 2007, p. 15). Productive teacher-student relationships involve teachers showing students they care about their learning and “can see their perspective and communicate it back to them, so that they have valuable feedback to self-assess, feel safe, and learn to understand others” (Cornelius-White, 2007, p. 12). There are many moments in teaching where students’ describe emotional, personal, and family concerns. Teachers who seek to build on these potential empathic opportunities, communicate their understanding of the student to the student. In working with students with diverse needs, “striving to connect is at the heart of effective teaching” (Butler, 2012, p. 726). If an empathic climate does not exist, the teacher’s ability to meet a student’s needs and provide a secure base is compromised.

This study was based on six phenomenological case studies of manifestations of teacher empathy in Australian primary classrooms. Filmed vignettes identified empathy moments in classroom practice, and interpretative *phenomenology* was used to derive the meanings inherent in participant narratives. The study analysed behavioural expressions of empathy. Teacher *mentalization* involves appreciating a students’ mental state and consciously modifying behaviour in response.

The study found participants were highly motivated to connect with students, and modified their teaching style to meet perceived student needs. Participants took a personal interest in their students, both inside and outside school beyond curriculum demands. They provided social and

emotional support by modelling, collaborating and scaffolding with empathy; in particular through empathic listening. Teachers skilled in empathic responding enhance learning and set the conditions for students to learn best (Pianta, Belsky, Vandergrift, Houts, & Morrison, 2008; Lewis & Riley, 2009).

This discussion chapter is structured in two parts. Part 1 discusses the overarching findings of the six teacher case studies, followed by commentary on the contribution of the study to theory, and consideration of the study's strengths and limitations. Part 2 draws on the findings to propose an Empathy Assessment Instrument for professional learning using mentalization (Fonagy, 2002; 2006; 2012) and empathy (Baron-Cohen, 2004; 2011; 2015) constructs.

11.1 Findings in Relation to the Research Aims

The study distinguished between *cognitive empathy* (perceiving and decoding another's emotional states to infer another's thoughts and feelings) and *affective empathy* (sharing or mirroring students' emotional states with an appropriate emotion based on care). A teacher's empathic response may involve either or both components (Schnell, Bluschke, Konradt, & Walter, 2011). *Mentalization* was used as a construct to measure empathy, which has proven difficult to operationalize in any general sense (Aragona, Kotzalidis, & Puzella, 2013; Dziobek, 2012; Welker, 2005).

The study began with the premise that empathic interactions enhance the quality of teaching. Students respond to both what they learn and from whom they learn it. In this context, the project's aim was to examine how six primary teachers used empathy in their practice. I sought to examine the processes these teachers use to 'know' students' internal states, and how they respond with sensitivity to create positive, productive classrooms.

Research aim 1 – Teacher mentalizing of empathy moments. The study's first aim was to explore how teachers' mentalize to 'know' students' internal states and respond empathically with sensitive care. Explicit mentalizing took the form of teacher's narratives to consider student(s) minds as well as their own. To mentalize explicitly is to do so deliberately where the mind and

meaning that emerge out of experiences of interpersonal relationships is not fixed (Knox, 2004). Through mentalizing, teachers better understand the thoughts and feelings underlying student behaviour resulting in sensitive responding (Fonagy et al., 2002; Slade, 2005). In education, mentalizing draws on cognitive skills to see the world from the child's point of view (Ainsworth & Bell, 1969). While mentalizing and empathy both involve making inferences about the mental states of others, empathy involves the additional step of *understanding* and *feeling* the child's experience and then *responding* to it. That is, the teacher's emotions resonate with those of the student (Völlm et al., 2006).

I applied Fonagy's framework of mentalizing characteristics (Luyten et al., 2012) to consider classroom empathy displays. Teachers were asked to draw explicit inferences about their own and their students' mental states in relation to these events. The study's findings identify key mentalizing characteristics, including advanced explanatory and listening skills, genuine interest in the mental states of self and others, and impact awareness. These characteristics link to a teacher's capacity to regulate affect to create safe and sensitive interpersonal environments (Gergely, 2007). Features of this environment are analogous to secure parenting – the teacher takes an interest in a student's mental states to encourage secure attachment (Sharp, Fonagy, & Goodyer, 2006; Slade, 2005).

Research aim 2 – Empathic behaviour from a range of perspectives. The study's second aim was to explore how teacher empathy is expressed behaviourally. It is acknowledged the empathy moments in the vignettes were selected solely by participants. There may be aspects in some of the footage that may be regarded by others as not specifically empathic. The approach taken in the study was phenomenological. It is their lived experience (not my opinions) that are important. I sought to present participant choices and their justifications for those choices. There was a relatively low number of empathic utterances in vignettes (296 out of 3556). The other utterances were not coded for this thesis whose focus was teacher empathy practice, but will be

examined in future research to determine whether these comments could inform understandings of observed teacher behaviour toward relationships with students. Teachers' reports of their relational goals and teaching style dimensions were compared with parallel ratings by students and systematic observations of lessons and filmed empathy vignettes. The assessments were made by two independent raters (me and another chosen for her extensive early childhood experience), and used the CLASS emotional support domain as a proxy for empathic behaviour.

The study found high correlations between the CLASS dimensions, and strong alignment between teachers' and students' perceptions of teaching style dimensions. Levels of observed emotional support (positive climate, teacher sensitivity, and regard for student perspectives) showed significant correlations (r = .87–1) between factors (with the exception of teacher sensitivity in the vignettes). These correlations suggest that positive climate, regard for student perspectives, and teacher sensitivity (in lesson observations) align with high relational goals for student social support (Butler, 2012). All teacher participants felt more successful if they saw they were developing closer and better relationships with students.

Research aim 3 – Lived experiences of teacher empathy. The study's third aim was to examine lived experiences of teacher empathy in establishing, building, and maintaining student relationships. Measuring the nature and extent of this behaviour required careful attention to the nuances of individual teachers' working style and behaviour.

What does good empathy practice look like? Teacher participants stated that their disposition for empathy rose as they became more aware of the situations their students face. Teachers noted the importance of getting to know their students, and the knowledge and understanding of students' lives in and outside of school. The teachers were highly motivated to connect, took a personal interest in students beyond curriculum demands, displayed high levels of support, and regulated their teaching style to meet needs.

Phenomenological themes in the participants' empathy displays included knowing students, building relationships, taking a personal interest in and outside school, providing and following-up on social and emotional concerns, modelling and scaffolding with empathy, collaborating and positioning, student comfort, shared humour, awareness, and providing acknowledgement in empathic listening. The findings in relation to these themes are considered below.

Knowing students. The teachers in this study conveyed a genuine interest in student's thoughts and feelings to understand them in interpersonal connection. The teachers showed an appreciation that their own (and their students') views can evolve. Teacher's knowledge of students as individuals deepened and become more sophisticated over time (e.g., they acknowledged and worked with student interests to better understand their actions and behaviours). Whilst working to know students as individuals, in empathy events they typically adopted a 'not-knowing' stance and a desire to know and understand student states, personal characteristics, attitudes, motives, and emotions. They represented student experience, and resonated with student feelings to respond in helpful ways.

The teachers' engaged in affect elaboration to explore empathically the feeling states of students. For example, Gretyl picks up that Steven often masks his true feelings and she needs to "dig a bit" to get to the heart of the 'here-and-now' rather than the 'there-and-then' (i_2 v_3). In this study, the teachers encouraged students to reflect on what it feels like in a situation, and they try to learn from the student what needs to happen to allow them to feel differently.

Building relationships. Establishing a safe haven for students is a fluid, dynamic and complex process that involves teachers developing relational empathy and stable valuing of students. There are intrinsic ties between empathy, mentalization, and attachment processes. In teaching, attachment elements of trust, openness, and dependence interact with the caregiving elements of empathy and responsibility. The quality of a teachers' attachment can facilitate the

development of students' social and emotional interpersonal skills that help to create quality relationships.

A classroom is a complex set of social relationships that requires careful attention to building attachment relationships. Teachers build relationships on a number of levels (e.g., "Not just between them and me, but also between the children as well so all the relationships are strong"—Gretyl). They were motivated to deepen relationships, and were quick to reset relationships after negative interactions or behaviour (e.g., Emily, Gretyl). They showed a genuine curiosity about student thoughts and feelings, and often shared themselves to strengthen connections. The teachers modified behaviour (their own and their student's), and self-monitored in response to student cues. They were respectful of student situations, narratives and expressions, and were positive and hopeful in providing support.

Taking a personal interest in and out of school. Participants value the whole child and their relationships with students ("I appreciate all of his qualities"—Gretyl i_2 v_2). They strive to be aware of what is going on in their lives both in and outside of school, and build on that interest in empathic exchanges (Alan, Christine, Emily, Sophia). The teachers were open to discovery, engaging in joint attention with students where their mental states were the subject of attention. Where teachers invoked teacher-student boundaries, they were clear and communicated the nature of these (Gretyl, Christine) in responding with understanding to student positions.

Providing and following-up on social and emotional concerns. Addressing students' social and emotional concerns required taking the time to understand their mental states. For example, a student's anger or stress about a situation dissipates once they understand the teacher is supportive and willing to provide assistance to help them understand why they (or others) acted in a certain way (Christine, Emily, Gretyl, Alice). Accurate empathy (Ickes, 1997) is not the same as agreeing with everything the student says and challenge is an important aspect in mindful awareness to assess student situations. The teachers in this study were open to the situation, sought to get the

student to spell out the emotional impact of the narrative based on their experience, and to help the student explore meanings in these interpersonal events. They did not find fault or attribute blame. Instead, they were flexible (e.g., Gretyl playing basketball), and avoided rigid thinking.

The teachers in this study can be seen to work to help student(s) construct and reconstruct their view of a situation, and help them to apprehend what they feel and experience. They provided support as they explored the student's mind where students were feeling overwhelmed with emotion (e.g., Christine i_1 v_3). They explored motives and (gently) challenged student perspectives, and communicated back their understandings with students (Christine, Alice, Gretyl).

Teachers were cognisant of the importance of following-up to ensure all parties felt a situation was resolved. The vignettes in this study show instances where teachers 'stop, rewind and explore' to understand what was occurring and moderate behaviour. They guided students to understand the impact of their thoughts, feelings, and actions on themselves and others (Alan, Sophia, Christine). Participants were at pains to empower students with strategies to solve interpersonal problems themselves rather than solve it for them based on respect for student autonomy. They sought to increase student responsibility and independent functioning to consolidate and enhance social and emotional stability. The teachers were there for the student but were not acting *for* them—the student retained responsibility. Students required ongoing support and monitoring, and sometimes further negotiation in relation to interpersonal and social problems. Teachers' appraised student gains and continued to monitor for ongoing issues.

Modelling and scaffolding with empathy. Teachers talk about students' beliefs, feelings and motives on a daily basis and often ask students to join them in doing so. The teachers in this study modelled humility to convey a general sense that the reactions of students are predictable given knowledge of what they are thinking and feeling. These teachers modelled multiple perspectives and were not stuck in one view. They encouraged students to experience an array of mental states and to recognise those states to highlight the experience of 'feeling felt' (mentalized affectivity).

The teachers also modelled reflectivity with students to explore understanding of themselves and others. For example, Alan sought to build on a dialogue between students during moments of perceived uncertainty (transition to secondary school) to find commonalities and solutions (i_2 v_2).

Collaborating and positioning. Teachers sought to collaborate with students and create a team environment and model acceptance of alternative perspectives. The goal was not to explicitly mentalize all interactions as attempts to do so would come across as stilted. A number of participants raised this issue—empathy displays need to be authentic and not false. Inaccurate mirroring by the teacher leads to emotional experiences that cannot be experienced as true (Fonagy et al., 2002). In positioning themselves in a team environment, teachers presented themselves as fallible (Alan), and modelled how behaviours also impacted them (Sofia, Christine). Teachers were conscious of issues of power and sought to position themselves at the level of the student using strategies such as wait or thinking time (Sophia), or positioning themselves nearby for a student who needed support in group work (Alan).

Student comfort. Teachers refrain from guessing how students' feel. Instead, they engage in open questioning in providing reassurance. The vignettes in this study were often conducted in breakout spaces to ensure students felt comfortable to engage in conversations around an event (e.g., having lunch with students to engage in a restorative chat). The teacher's aims were to remain alongside the student(s), helping the student to explore areas of uncertainty and develop meaning. Teachers need to keep an image in mind of two people looking at a map trying to decide which way to go. Although both agree on the final destination, there may be many ways to get there.

Empathic statements were a way to deepen rapport between the teacher and student, and clarify student situations (e.g., "I can see that you are feeling...", or "I can see that this is hard for you because...”—Gretyl) to mirror underlying emotional states. Appropriate use of praise was another area that emerged in this theme. For example, Christine uses praise when Oliver uses the strategies they had negotiated in dealing with an interpersonal dispute (i_2 v_1). In contrast, Gretyl

looks for non-mentalizing fillers and trite explanations to go beyond praise in her vignette on student gratitude (i_2 v_2) resulting in a need to revisit the lesson to go deeper and explore feelings that were more authentic.

Shared humour and positivity. Teachers used a strategy of shared humour to make students feel comfortable to share perspectives and explore student situations (Emily, Gretyl, and Alice). Emotional contagion is seen in the literature as a precursor to empathy (e.g., laughing because others are laughing). Gretyl saw the purpose of shared humour as making students "feel comfortable with their thinking". Similarly, Sophia modelled positivity around all aspects of school life in her empathic displays.

Awareness. The teachers in this study expressed the need to engage in mindful awareness as student feelings and behaviour are in flux particularly in regard to social and emotional conflict. They were emotionally aware how affect and mood states can distort a student's understanding of themselves and others in empathy events. Positive and hopeful questioning were used to provide reassurance for students (Christine, Emily, Alan) and demonstrate a desire to know and understand their problems. Teachers also checked their understandings in engaging with student situations—"If I have understood, what you have been saying is…", "Does that sound right?" (Christine, Sophia).

Providing an acknowledgment in empathic listening. Engaging in perspective-taking involves accepting an event can look different depending on the perspective. In demonstrating a genuine attempt to listen non-judgmentally, teachers engaged in expressing an acknowledgment after listening to student perspectives (e.g., a gesture) to show they have heard and understood (Sophia, Christine, Gretyl). They listened for student assumptions about other's thoughts or feelings, refrained from criticism, and worked to explore situations with students. They were patient, available, and modelled a willingness to engage in reflective listening for student mentalizing strengths. In responding to student perspectives about a situation, a quiet nod, a 'high-five', or thumbs up (Emily), or a touch of a student's hat (Christine) may be all that is needed. The

teachers' provide a physical acknowledgment as a form of respect to communicate back their understanding that the student has been heard.

11.2 The Study's Contribution to Theory

A lack of consensus about measurement has hampered the contribution empathy research can make to teaching practice. In the absence of guiding theoretical literature in education, extant theories in psychology were explored within a mentalizing framework (Bateman & Fonagy, 2006; Fonagy & Bateman, 2012) to explore empathy manifestations (Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004). Drawing on Fonagy's mentalization model, the Empathy Assessment Instrument is presented as a tool to catalogue teachers' observation of, and interactions with, students as a measure of empathic awareness and responding. The proposed instrument has the potential to enhance the quality of interactions in classrooms by increasing explicit teacher mentalizing and social understanding in relation to observed empathy events.

Fonagy's framework (2002; 2006; 2012) evolved from research in the 1980s on children's' theory of mind. This research demonstrated that children are able to reason in terms of "false beliefs" at 4-years of age to explain other people's behaviour based on intentions that may or may not correspond with reality (Wellman, 1990). Attachment theory is another founding influence on the theory of mentalization. Fonagy & Bateman (2012) argue the capacity to mentalize develops in the context of attachment relationships; the child "observes, mirrors, and then internalizes his or her attachment figure's ability to represent and reflect on internal mental states" (p. 25). The child's early experiences are important for subsequent metacognitive skills, and early interaction experiences alter a child's mental states (Main, 1991; Sharp & Fonagy, 2008).

Preston and de Waal's (2002) perception-action model of empathy proposed a hierarchy of responses which involve subject-object emotional matching, self-other differentiation and emotion regulation based on a combination of self and other awareness. Allen (2006) found the perception-action model converges with conceptions of mentalization in relation to cognitive empathy displays.

The findings of this study support the development of the Empathy Assessment Instrument of underlying components to assess moments of empathy in classrooms. The prototype Empathy Assessment Instrument contributes to Preston and de Waal's (2002) perception-action model as a phenomenological means to assess emotional matching, differentiation, and emotion regulation based on teacher and student awareness.

Differences in classroom experience. While the study derived phenomenology themes from participants' experiences, the findings differed between graduate and proficient teachers. There is a stereotype that new graduate teachers, particularly those who are young, are at risk of being too friendly with students. Indeed, the graduate teachers in this study were more relaxed in their boundaries for befriending students and connecting with them in taking a personal interest. But more proficient teachers in the study may have benefitted from sustained relationships with students over time. It remains an open question whether graduate teacher attitudes toward empathy expressions and professional boundaries will converge with those of proficient teachers following additional socialisation into the profession. Cross-sectional studies show that experienced teachers are more securely attached, compared with inexperienced teachers (Riley, 2009). This area warrants further research.

Classroom contexts. The relationship between attachment and mentalizing is moderated by the context in which activation takes place (Fonagy & Target, 2000). Being aware, monitoring and responding constructively to students' signals during instruction is an important teaching skill. Primary teachers have been found to better judge their students' behavioural engagement than their students' emotional engagement (Furrer & Skinner, 2003; Skinner & Belmont, 1993). A focus on students' mental states represents a shift in awareness toward more malleable processes that are sensitive to a teacher's day-to-day strategies.

Two teachers in the study (one graduate, one proficient) strongly endorsed the provision of physical support to students— for example, when circumstances merit reassurance or consoling

(Christine) or as an expression of warmth (Emily). Sometimes touching a student may be appropriate, but it can also be misunderstood and inappropriate. The Victorian Code of Conduct, for example, adds the descriptor of a “valid context” or “valid reason” for acceptable use of physical touch (Victorian Institute of Teaching, 2005).

The study corroborated teacher and student perceptions of relatedness and structure within the classroom by using independent observers to rate dimensions of positive climate, regard for student perspectives, and teacher sensitivity (CLASS; Pianta et al., 2012). Intuitively, high levels of teacher sensitivity should correlate positively with high levels of positive climate and regard for student perspectives—but that is not what the study found. Teacher sensitivity as observed in the vignettes did not significantly correlate with the other emotional support factors (positive climate or regard for student perspectives). A possible explanation for this may be differences in observers’ ratings and the difficulties in observing sub-factor elements of teacher sensitivity. These difficulties strengthen the case for developing the proposed Empathy Assessment Instrument.

In this study, teachers’ perceptions of the various dimensions of classroom environment aligned strongly with those of their students. Teachers tended to rate themselves slightly higher than their students on relatedness, structure and expectations, and lower for negativity. These results are consistent with prior research that found teachers generally report more positively than students on a range of classroom dimensions (Dorman, 2008; Fraser, 1982, Raviv, Raviv, & Reisel, 1990). A study in the United States of students’ and teacher perceptions of school climate in 90 elementary classrooms found factors such as classroom management and disruptive behaviour correlated positively with teachers' climate perceptions at the classroom level, whereas factors such as student mobility and student-teacher relationships were associated with students' perceptions at the school level (Mitchell, Bradshaw, & Leaf, 2010). Another study of 59 elementary schools in the United States found a significant, positive relationship between teachers’ perceptions of climate and student achievement at the school mean level. Schools in high socioeconomic communities had a stronger influence of school climate on student achievement than schools in lower socioeconomic

communities (Johnson & Stevens, 2006). Sinclair and Fraser (2002) demonstrated how perception differences can be used to develop more positive, supportive class environments. Teachers were provided with class perception data and given strategies to effect change and boost student perceptions of the environment.

An implication of this study is that teachers have opportunities to synch with students in the dimensions of relatedness, structure, positive expectations, and negativity. Teachers and students are in synch when the two parties form a dialectic relationship in which the actions of one party influence the other and vice versa (Lee & Reeve, 2012). Monitoring student mental states and mentalizing empathy events enhances a teachers' capacity to forge a responsive, dialectical relationship with students.

School contexts. Teacher's work is typically autonomous, and this study has focused on the behaviours and relational goals of individual teachers. However, the effects of school climate and the conditions that give rise to it are deeply interconnected (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Ma, Phelps, Lerner, & Lerner, 2009). Teachers who are supported by school leaders will feel they have a secure base from which to conduct their professional role, and this has been shown to increase empathy and caring behaviours (Mikulincer, Shaver, Gillath, & Nitzberg, 2005; Peterson & Park, 2007). School A in this study established empathy as one of the school's stated core values.

There is growing interest in research-based prosocial educational efforts in schools including character education, social emotional learning, and mental health (Brown, Corrigan, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2012). School climate has been shown to be a powerful influence on the motivation to learn (Eccles et al., 1993), improvements in middle school students' self-esteem (Hoge, Smit, & Hanson, 1990), and students' emotional and mental health outcomes (Kuperminic, Leadbeater, Emmons, & Blatt, 1997; Ruus et al., 2007; Shochet, Dadds, Ham, & Montague, 2006; Way, Reddy, & Rhodes, 2007).

Patterns of interaction shape how connected individuals feel to one another—an essential aspect of school climate. Relationships refer not only to how we feel about and take care of others but also relations with ourselves to feel safe socially, emotionally, intellectually, and physically—a fundamental human need (Maslow, 1943). Where students perceive a better structured school and more positive student-teacher relationships, the probability and frequency of problem behaviours is lower (Gregory & Cornell, 2009; Wang, Selman, Dishion, & Stormshak, 2010). When teachers support and interact positively with students, students are more likely to be engaged and behave appropriately (Skinner & Belmont, 1993). It has been shown that if a teacher-student relationship is negative and conflictual in kindergarten, it is more likely the student will have behavioural and academic problems in later grades (Hamre & Pianta, 2001).

Future research may examine whether in-service teachers differ within and between schools in terms of their displays of empathy in the observable behaviours as measured by the proposed instrument. Some schools allow students to call teachers by their first name and permit students to contact teachers via email in regard to schoolwork or for social and emotional support (Alice). These practices reduce professional distance and may be characteristic of a school climate where boundaries are more relaxed. Prior to being socialised by colleagues in a given workplace, teacher education presents an opportunity to learn and reinforce core skills of empathic behaviour for the profession.

11.3 Strengths and Limitations

This project was innovative in traversing an under-explored area of research, by examining teacher manifestations of empathy in classroom practice focussing on teacher perspectives and their perceptions of student perspectives. This was the first study to use teacher mentalizing to explore empathy events in the classroom in an Australian context. The research design incorporates extant theories from the psychology literature to consider teacher, student, and principal perspectives, and focuses on actual empathy displays in classroom practice. Mixed-methods were employed to

capture the complexities of teacher motivation, feelings, and actions that result in empathic displays, teaching style dimensions and relational goals. Acknowledging the importance of teachers' attitudes and motivations towards empathy in classrooms, a phenomenology approach with a person-centred focus was used to identify and explore teacher experiences. The findings indicate that effective empathisers demonstrate a range of empathic behaviours, with differences in responses between individuals.

Differences in the value placed on personal versus professional interests with students was a surprise, although the litigious framework in which teacher's operate may explain the cautious approach. The ability to mentalize a situation from the student perspective was a reach for some, while others experienced frustration in their inability to access or connect with the inner world of some students. This in many ways reflects the problem empathy researchers face in operationalizing the concept. Confusion between an empathic and sympathetic teacher response in some areas of the vignettes was not unexpected.

The scope of the study was necessarily constrained by the research design, as well as factors outside my control. First, despite contacting 70 primary schools across Melbourne and speaking at principal network meetings to promote the study, only two schools chose to participate. Each school had identified student perceptions of teacher empathy (in their Attitude to Schools survey data) as lower than anticipated, or declining.

Second, as this study used a purposive sample of relationally effective teachers—as deemed by principals—it is not representative of teachers in general. The empathy definition was supplied to guide participants' selection of empathy moments for comparative purposes, although the potential to impact results and influence responses is acknowledged. In attempting to reduce the inherent bias of self-reports, multiple instruments were used to collect data including filming, interviews, diaries, and surveys. The surveys were self-report, and the vignettes self-nominated by teacher participants. It is noted that inherent in self-report data may be social desirability bias,

although the focus was to access each participant's lifeworld through his or her own perceptions of reality.

Student sample data raised other issues. In none of the six case studies was parental approval for an entire class obtained. On average, around 50 per cent of each class participated, causing some restrictions on how students could be surveyed and filmed. However, the student samples are representative of the whole class demographics. Whether participating students and their parents value the skill of empathy more highly than the non-participants or require different levels of empathy is unclear. Similarly, the views of non-participants on the role and significance of teacher empathy remains unknown.

Another limitation of the study is the one-sided focus on teachers' perceptions of empathy moments within teacher-student interactions. This focus was adopted because of its importance in the quality of teacher-student relationships, and to derive phenomenological understanding of its significance. The study does not address students' perceptions and student wellbeing, or the quality of relationships per se. Future research may seek to tap student perspectives. Another possible limitation in interpreting the findings is potential conflation of affective empathy involving an appropriate emotional response, with a caring behavioural response (see discussion in Chapter 2.5). This is due to the difficulty to disentangle either of these forms of response via the use of observational measures.

Perception data. The literature acknowledges discrepancies between the actuality of classrooms, and teachers' and students' perceptions of those classrooms that inform their experiences. In particular, there is considerable variability in students' perceptions of a classroom environment (Wolters, 2004). Goodnow (1988) and Wentzel (1997; 2002) stress the importance of focussing on student perceptions of the teacher and classroom environment, because it is these perceptions that construct the students' reality. Keeping in mind these findings are based on small n's, it is acknowledged that the size and significance of r's may likely be under-estimated.

Empathy is built on notions of connection and understanding, and the accuracy of this understanding is critical (Ickes, 1997). As Rogers (1975) advised physicians, “perhaps if we wish to become a better therapist, we should let our clients tell us whether we are understanding them accurately” (p. 4). In medicine, empathy relates to understanding and communicating emotions in a way that patient’s value. In education, a teacher’s accuracy of understanding depends on the strength of underlying empathic connections and the use of feedback mechanisms. Effective teachers tend to communicate with students to verify the degree to which his or her understanding is accurate.

Given the data collection period commenced midway through a school year where teacher-student relationships were already established, the behaviour in this study is more indicative of ongoing relationship quality rather than the initial establishment of relationships. Teachers with an interest in professional behaviour, or who generally perceive themselves to be empathic, may have self-selected for the study on being approached by their principal. While this may overstate the practice of empathy in the wider teaching population, the study aimed to target effective empathisers. In future research, collecting data in the first week of Term 1 may be useful to study how teacher behaviour initially establishes teacher-student relationships.

11.4 Mentalization – Points of Contact and Departure

Assessing empathy moments in the study involved focusing on teacher embodied mentalizing and the degree to which a teacher’s appreciation of a student’s mental state translates into the teacher modifying behaviour. To interact in a mentalizing mode is to aspire to understand others as individuals, and to influence each other on the basis of that understanding.

Riley (2011) highlighted the importance of a mentalizing model for teachers, arguing the ability to understand one’s internal working model as separate from the internal working model of others is needed. Mentalizing is not “a unitary skill or trait” (Fonagy & Bateman, 2012, p. 19). It is dynamic—to keep our own states, desires and goals in mind as we interpret another’s behaviour. In

education, mentalizing is a capacity for teachers to accurately perceive, anticipate, and act on both their own intentional mental states and those of their students. A limited capacity to mentalize means a teacher cannot see the students' minds clearly, or anticipate their behaviour on the basis of their mental states. Teachers can also read too much into students' postures or comments, resulting in distorted mentalizing.

Focussing on teacher mentalization encourages the development of secure attachment relationships and optimal emotional arousal in classrooms. At low levels of emotional arousal, there are no incentives to mentalize. At moderate levels of arousal, such as when interactions take an unexpected turn, we mentalize more actively and explicitly. If arousal becomes excessive, such as when a teacher becomes angry or overly anxious, it collapses into fight-or-flight (Taylor et al., 2000). To establish secure relationships, the teacher needs to be reliably available and have the students' 'mind in mind' to explore the mind of the self and the other—the basis for creating supportive learning environments.

To draw attention to the implicit in the study, it was necessary to engage explicit mentalizing through the use of video footage and the teacher diary. The vignette footage nominated by teachers had a start, an interpersonal interaction component, and an end point that enabled examination of verbal and non-verbal cues (body language, facial expressions). The diary was used in conjunction with the footage to access the teacher's explicit mentalizing in relation to these moments of empathy to examine mental states (actions, thoughts, intentions, emotions) underlying their and their students' behaviours. Teachers reflected on their actions and motivations, detailing their perspective and understandings of those actions, thoughts and feelings. The diary then asked for their thoughts about student(s) mental states. Fonagy's characteristics of mentalizing (Luyten et al., 2012) were then used to code the diary in the situational accounts.

The diary allowed mentalizing to occur at different timepoints. Teachers could mentalize about current mental states (thinking about what the student feels in the moment) and past mental

states (wondering why a student did something to explain behaviour). An imaginative leap was required to understand (and walk in the shoes of) students' mental states:

> I found my perspective easy because I knew. But then when I had to think about how the student would be feeling and their perspective, it was a bit tricky because I had to predict. I didn't know for sure. I might be saying I think they were feeling really comfortable when in actual fact, they might turn around and say "You know what? I was feeling annoyed!" or "It was frustrating because Emily kept popping up so I didn't feel I had much time". You might have one perspective and think "Yes, I think I managed it really well and I was showing this and doing that" but from their perspective, they might see it differently. (Emily, i_1)

When asked to reflect on the mentalizing experience, Sophia stated "It is really important to reflect and it's really quite good to watch yourself and the way you are behaving in the classroom. I felt that was quite valuable and a useful tool".

Teachers are not psychologists. I have given careful consideration to the most appropriate use of mentalizing in the Empathy Assessment Instrument that would be most effective in the immediacy of the classroom. The instrument does not go as far as proposing the assessment of mentalizing profiles for teachers based on polarities (Luyten et al., 2012) as this would require access to additional information to discern a teacher's early childhood and attachment history. Similarly, coding the diaries for mentalizing characteristics (Luyten et al., 2012) has also been removed from the proposed instrument. Instead, the Empathy Assessment Instrument emphasizes the *process* of interpreting specific empathy events (akin to the diary in this study), followed by the use of a mentalizing and working with current states checklist (Bateman & Fonagy, 2006). This section is for the teacher to complete to document their mentalizing thoughts, feelings, motivations, and experiences as building blocks to consider instances of teacher empathy. The goal is to make sense of the behaviour of self and others where a focus on mentalizing is a focus on relationships and the promise of being understood.

11.5 Empathy – Points of Contact and Departure

As can be seen in this study, empathy spans a broad range of responses from implicit to explicit. While neuroscience has shown the mentalizing network derives from a brain system that is independent from the mirror neuron system, higher forms of cognitive empathy clearly overlap with mentalizing. A resonance with a student's emotions results in a teacher reflecting, offering a response, and conveying a mirroring display toward the student to convey a deep understanding of student experience (Fonagy et al., 2002).

Empathy is a specific component of social cognition used for predicting agentive events (Baron-Cohen, 1995, 2003). It allows us to make sense of the behaviour of others, predict what they might do next, how they feel, to feel connected to another, and respond appropriately to them (Wheelwright & Baron-Cohen, 2011). When teachers' empathise, the student feels comfortable and trusts the teacher is able to understand them as an individual. The student who interacts with the empathic teacher feels confident they will get the social and emotional support they need.

The literature distinguishes between a 'low' and 'high' road to empathic responding (Walter, 2012). The 'low' road involves reading affective states (facial expressions, body language), which prompts an automatic response in a bottom–up approach. Critics argue the low road precludes a reflective phase, instead requiring immediate awareness and correspondence (Allen, 2006). In contrast, the 'high' road involves cognitive processes of inferring thoughts and reading contextual information in a top-down approach. In neuroscience, Shamay-Tsoory et al. (2009) distinguish between a basic emotional contagion system and more advanced cognitive perspective-taking which requires explicit imagination to work with shared experience.

Empathy involves an affective and a cognitive component (Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004). Teacher actions in this study were coded for both elements where teachers' *recognised* a student's mental state and *responded* with an appropriate emotion based on care (Baron-Cohen, 2003). These definitions framed the behaviours observed in the study. The recognition scale is an

ability to attribute mental states to others—an understanding that others have thoughts and feelings, and these may be different to your own (Baron-Cohen, 1995). The response scale relates to an individual providing an appropriate emotional response to those mental states of another based on care. The two components can co-occur, and the multifaceted nature of empathy demands consideration of both (Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004).

11.6 Towards an Empathy Assessment Instrument

Assessments of mentalizing and empathy in teacher-student relationships and teacher practice need sound measures. The *Hogan Empathy Scale* (Hogan, 1969) measures empathy as social self-confidence, even-temperedness, sensitivity, and nonconformity, based on a disposition or personality trait that does not change over time (Johnson, Cheek, & Smither, 1983). The *Emotional Empathy Scale* (Mehrabian & Epstein, 1972) assesses an individual's tendency to emotionally react strongly to another's experience measuring emotional arousal to the environment (Mehrabian, Young, & Sato, 1988). The *Interpersonal Reactivity Index* (Davis, 1983) measures both cognitive and affective empathy, and although these factors may correlate with empathy, they are not empathy itself. Finally, the *Empathy Quotient* (Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004) measures recognising an empathic moment and expressing a response. As a self-report instrument it is not sensitive to changes in states and only measures an individual's beliefs about their own empathy, or how they might like to be seen or think about themselves, which may be different to reality.

Various measures of social cognition are used to measure aspects of mentalizing (Luyten et al., 2012), and it is recognised that an easily applied measure of mentalizing capacity "is urgently needed" (Fonagy, Bateman, & Bateman, 2011, p. 107). A quantitative self-report tool to measure mentalizing is the *Reading the Mind in the Eyes* test (Baron–Cohen, Wheelwright, Hill, Raste, & Plumb, 2001) used to identify the intent behind facial expressions. From a qualitative perspective, Fonagy and Target (1997) explored what it feels like to mentalize (or not) as the basis for a secure attachment response. In their model, interviews were scored for awareness of the nature of mental

states, explicit efforts to tease out mental states underlying behaviour, recognising developmental aspects, and showing awareness of mental states in relation to others.

While these instruments are useful in some applications, none are framed in the context of teacher-student relationships, making their validity in that context questionable. Measures of empathy in student care need to be specific to classroom contexts. A self-report measure by teachers may not be the most reliable due to social desirability. False responses to present a desirable image can bias the data—a common issue in empathy research. This study aimed to access a teacher's explicit mentalizing of empathy events, and independently evaluate actual manifestations of teacher empathy in classrooms.

There are no published scales beyond self-report to measure the relational aspects of teacher-student interactions. This section offers the Empathy Assessment Instrument for teaching as an important direction for future research. Operationalizing empathy in teacher-student interactions is a challenge because professional behaviour is complex. How empathy is defined has implications for what is measured and how. There is no consensus about how to define empathy or the processes and dimensions that underpin its subcomponents: affective and cognitive empathy. Pure definitions of empathy are generally not testable. Applied definitions sometimes fail to distinguish empathy clearly enough amongst a range of other variables, which hinders the application of empathy research to school improvement efforts. The lack of consensus highlights the need for a new approach to examine manifestations of empathy in teaching.

This study used the Zahavi and Overgaard (2012) applied definition— "to access the life of the mind of others in their bodily and behavioural expressions (and) to psychologically project oneself into another in an attempt to understand his/her thinking or feeling". This definition has cognitive and affective elements and is compatible with the notion of a teacher reading and understanding students' (verbal, body language, and behavioural) cues.

The Empathy Assessment Instrument is shown in Table 11.1. It draws on the experiences of participants, the mentalizing work of Fonagy (2002; 2006; 2012), and empathy concepts of Baron-Cohen (2004; 2011; 2015). Classroom observations provide a wealth of information that can be used to support teachers improve all aspects of their relational practice. The proposed instrument is to be used with in-service and pre-service teachers to develop relational skills in coaching relationships as a measure of empathy.

Table 11.1

The Empathy Assessment Instrument

This instrument is for use with teachers to enhance relational skills as a measure of teacher empathy in classrooms. **Teacher empathy** is "to access the life of the mind of students in their bodily and behaviour expressions, and to psychologically project yourself into them in an attempt to understand his/her thinking or feeling" (Zahavi & Overgaard, 2012). The focus is on behaviours expressed and observed in teacher empathy displays. There are two elements:

- **Form 1** (for the teacher to complete) – the teacher's perspective of how they mentalized thoughts, feelings, and actions of themselves ***and*** their students' in identified empathy events to 'know' students' internal states and respond with care.
- **Form 2** (for independent rater use) – (a) assessing behaviours where the teacher *recognises* a student(s) mental states, and (b) *responds* with an appropriate emotion based on care. Observation coding can include verbal (e.g. "Wow! That is great news!") and non-verbal responses (e.g. smiling) to student emotional states.

FORM 1 – Mentalizing the empathy event (For the teacher to complete)

1. **The context** – Where and when did this empathy event take place?_____

   b. Why I chose this?_____

2. **My account of the teacher empathy event**(s) – What happened?_____

3. **My perspective** – What did I do? What actions did I take?_____

   What was I thinking in this moment?_____

   What was I feeling in this moment?_____

4. **What did the student(s) do**/what actions did they take in this event?_____

What were they thinking in this moment?

What were they feeling in this moment?

1B. Self-assessment - Mentalizing and working with current mental states checklist

	Yes/No	For example…
I was taking a genuine stance of 'not-knowing' and attempting to find out		
I asked questions to promote exploration with students		
I asked about students' understanding of motives of others		
I highlighted alternative perspectives and tried not to give my insights		
I challenged unwarranted beliefs about me and students' experiences of self and others		
I didn't present the student(s) with complex mental states		
I avoided simplified historical accounts of current problems		
I avoided confrontation with student(s)		
I considered if the pretend mode of mentalizing was present in the student - where their mental states had little or no connection with actual reality		
I attended to their current emotions		
I focused on appropriate expression of emotions		
I linked feelings with the immediate or recent interpersonal context		
I related understanding of the current interpersonal context to appropriate recent past experiences		

Note. Adapted from "Self rating of MBT adherence" by A. Bateman and P. Fonagy, 2006, *Mentalization-based treatment for borderline personality disorder*, p. 174-175.

FORM 2 – Assessing teacher empathy displays (For independent rater use)

OBSERVATION NOTES This instrument is for use with teachers to enhance relational skills in coaching relationships as a measure of teacher empathy. **Teacher empathy** is "to access the life of the mind of students in their bodily and behaviour expressions, and to psychologically project yourself into them in an attempt to understand his/her thinking or feeling" (Zahavi & Overgaard, 2012). The focus is on behaviours expressed and observed in teacher empathy displays, and the instrument is to be used with the CLASS emotional support domain (Pianta, Hamre, & Mintz, 2012). There are two areas to assess: Part 1 involves assessing cognitive behaviours where the teacher *recognizes* student(s) mental states. Part 2 involves assessing where the teacher *responds* to those mental states with an *appropriate* emotion based on care (Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004). Coding can include verbal ("Wow! That is great news!") *and* non-verbal responses (e.g. smiling) to student states.	
Empathy event(s) observed:	Rater:
Teacher:_____ Context: Lesson/Other (specify): _____	Date and start/end time:
Format: Whole class Group One-on-one	Grade:_____ Students:_____
Observation ratings: (1,2 = Low range; 3, 4, 5 = Mid-range; 6, 7 = High range)	
PART 1 – Does the teacher *RECOGNIZE* a student(s) mental state?	
Noticing - Reads student body language (e.g. can see a student is upset by situation) - Tunes in to how a student is feeling - Picks up if a student says one thing but means another/ masks true feelings - Assesses if appropriate for others to join conversation	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Notes:*
Knowing student(s) and showing interest - Shows curiosity and genuine interest. Is aware of what is going on in student lives (in and out of school) - Student comfort - Sees when a student feels awkward/ uncomfortable - Engaging (connecting, welcoming, approachable, warmth, humour)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Notes:*
Radical, active listening - Spends time listening to student perspectives/ experiences - Treats the situation as important. Focuses attention on the student and is present to find out what is going on (feelings/ needs) - Is open and withholds judgment - Shows patience and tolerance when evaluating the situation including where a student does not understand	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Notes:*

	Perspective-taking & Acknowledging - Sees two (or more) sides. Tries to look at all sides - Seeks to understand the situation by exploring how things look from the student perspective. Puts him/herself in the student's shoes to see things from their point of view. Provides an acknowledgement - Focuses on student's thoughts and feelings, rather than what the teacher might be thinking so the student feels safe - Challenges assumptions/ looks for commonalities. Questioning - Tries to imagine and communicates how they would feel if they were in the student's place	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Notes:*
PART 2 – Does the teacher *RESPOND* with an <u>appropriate</u> emotion based on care?		
	<u>Showing</u> understanding - Engages, shows enthusiasm to student disclosure - Provides encouragement, shows respect - <u>Communicates back</u> understandings of <u>how</u> a student is feeling/<u>what</u> they are thinking (provides statements to validate student feelings) - Makes decisions with reference to student's feelings. Modifies and adjusts teaching to meet student needs - Modelling (gestures, body language, eye contact) - Appreciates and values student viewpoints (even where they don't agree with them)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Notes:*
	Helping behaviours - Predicts what the student might do. Inspires the student to action and effect social change - Shows imagination and provides the student with strategies to assist and problem solve the situation. Is trustworthy - Follows-up to provide social and emotional support - Makes efforts to include students to help them join in/ be inclusive	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Notes:*
	Expressing teacher emotions - Personally giving. Enjoys caring for students. Models positivity - Is sensitive to student states. Shows concern for student situations - Is emotionally involved in problem solving with the student - Shares themselves and reveals own feelings to build understanding - Shares positive affect to motivate/reinforce prosociality	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Notes:*

Note: Scores of 1 or 2=low quality; 3-5 =mid-range quality; and 6 or 7=high quality.

The instrument contains two parts: Form 1 examines a) the teachers' account of an empathy event(s), b) the teacher's mentalizing of their actions, thoughts, and feelings and those of their student(s) in the event, and c) self-ratings of mentalizing practice using Bateman & Fonagy (2006) checklist to provide additional notes and examples. Form 2 contains the observable empathic behaviours where teachers' recognise student mental states, and respond with an emotion based on care. These assessments need to be administered by independent raters in lesson observations or classroom vignettes.

Mentalizing. Form 1 of the Empathy Assessment Instrument asks the teacher to account for empathy event(s), including the context in which interactions take place, and why that event was chosen. The setting in which an event occurs is relevant to interpreting the meaning for participants. The cognitive empathy behaviours observed and rated in Form 2 of the instrument are considered against the account of the teacher's mentalizing of their own actions, thoughts and feelings, as well as those of their student(s). Exploring these accounts enables misunderstandings or areas of sensitivity to be discussed. Form 1 concludes with questions in a checklist of mentalizing and working with current states (Bateman & Fonagy, 2006) for self-assessment by the teacher. The elements highlight competencies and listening for mentalizing strengths.

Empathy. Form 2 of the instrument sets out the empathic behaviours for observation and rating by independent observers. Third party observation tools guard against bias associated with teacher ratings of their own practice. This section largely relates to cognitive empathy practice elements associated with perspective-taking and self-regulation. Affective empathy responses, whilst interesting, are individualistic and cannot be directly taught (Teding van Berkhout & Malouff, 2015). The instrument does not focus on sympathy responses although these can be beneficial in teacher-student interactions up to a point. Beyond that, sympathy—co-joining with a student's emotions—interferes with objectivity and impedes professional effectiveness (Decety & Jackson, 2006). A teacher needs to understand a student's feelings and communicate those

understandings to the student without impeding professional judgment. With empathy, teachers maintain a clear self-other distinction.

The instrument. The Empathy Assessment Instrument is the proposed basis to assess teacher displays of empathy. It is behaviourally anchored in actions and processes that underpin the phenomenological themes of this study— knowing students, building relationships, taking a personal interest in and outside school, providing and following-up on social and emotional concerns, modelling and scaffolding with empathy, collaborating and positioning, student comfort, shared humour, awareness, and providing an acknowledgement in empathic listening. The teachers' behaviours in this study were also coded for cognitive and affective empathy, and considered against the items in the perspective-taking and empathic concern scales of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (Davis, 1983), and recognition and response scales of the Empathy Quotient (Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004). These areas of empathic behaviour observed in the study and presented in the instrument are shown in Form 2 of Table 11.1. These behaviours reflect the participants' motivation to connect, to support, and share.

The Empathy Assessment Instrument is offered as a measure of teacher empathy. The proposed instrument measures the observed empathic behaviours in teacher-student interactions on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1=minimally characteristic; 7=highly characteristic) classified using the Baron-Cohen and Wheelwright (2004) cognitive and affective empathy definitions— where teachers' *recognised* a student's mental state, and *responded* with an appropriate emotion based on care. The instrument is proposed to be used with the CLASS emotional support domain (Appendix O), to support observer assessments of 'shared positive affect' in the relationships dimension of positive climate, and 'responsiveness to social and emotional needs' in the teacher sensitivity domain (CLASS; Pianta et al., 2012). Although this kind of research using the CLASS tool is demanding and labour intensive with regard to data collection, its use in this thesis broadens the application of the findings. In the final chapter, the implications for practice are considered and

recommendations for future research outlined including provisions to validate the Empathy Assessment Instrument in schools.

Chapter 12 Conclusion and Future Directions

The research presented in this thesis contributes to the field of empathy research by identifying skills in professional practice that create positive, supportive learning environments. With teaching under more intense scrutiny, this investigation into effective empathy practice produced useful knowledge that can help the profession better understand how teachers can improve their skills in this area of practice, and so guide professional learning.

In particular, this study investigated how teachers who were deemed effective empathisers by principals used that quality in interactions with students. Investigating the role of empathy in the everyday school experiences of educators and those planning to become teachers has not been widely canvassed in the literature (Barr, 2011). In the absence of guiding theoretical literature, the study drew on extant theories in psychology to apply mentalizing techniques in classroom practice to enhance empathic behaviour.

12.1 Implications for Practice

Teachers in every classroom face the challenge of reading and responding to students' mental and emotional states. They look to make sense of student behaviour, mentalize about themselves and their students, and respond with an appropriate emotion based on care. Some consider behaviour from a range of perspectives, and respond constructively to students' cognitive and affective states. Displays of empathy enhance a teacher's ability to understand, predict and experience student behaviours, feelings, attitudes and intentions. Several reviews (Duan & Hill, 1996; Gladstein & Brennan, 1987; Verducci, 2000) have called for a new approach to exploring empathy which this study sought to address.

The more accurately teachers tease out mental states (their own and their students), the more able they are to respond sensitively to behaviour with an empathy emotion based on care. Enacting timely and appropriate empathic responses to student behaviour requires three elements: (1) *being aware* of and monitoring students' mental states in teacher-student (and peer) relationships,

(2) *responding appropriately* to those signals with strategies that enhance students' behaviour, feelings, thoughts and agency in engagement, and (3) *being motivated* to actively monitor and respond constructively to students' behavioural signals. This study explored these elements for each participant.

Various teaching implications can be discerned from this study. Teachers can gain a deeper understanding of their own empathy processes – cognitive, affective, or both – and how they are communicated and displayed in interactions with students. Empathy is amenable to change. Interventions to enhance teacher-student relationships as a platform in learning improvement can be designed and evaluated. Enhancing levels of empathy through interventions to promote mentalizing enables teachers to learn and grow through relationships. A mentalizing stance enables teachers to be open to the minds of others, to generate multiple perspectives and be amenable to their influence. Teachers take in other perspectives (not stuck in one view), and recognise and experience an array of mental states in deeper levels of thinking, feeling, and engagement.

The teachers in this study feel that empathy is fundamental to the relational context of the classroom. They perceive empathy to be a combination of understanding, experience and imagination that helps them deal with the internal feelings, experiences and emotions of their students. Understanding behaviours associated with cognitive and affective empathy in the context of professional learning can enable schools to successfully adapt interventions that have been shown to promote positive outcomes.

The findings in this study provide support for the development of a new Empathy Assessment Instrument where teacher's explicitly mentalize thoughts, feelings, and actions in empathy events, and consider observed behaviours as assessed by raters. The proposed instrument builds on previous research and the lived experience of relationally effective teachers to provide insights for educators (teachers, principals, universities, policy makers). It is offered as a means for

the profession to develop teacher empathy skills to increase tolerance and promote affectivity—both feeling and *thinking* about feeling simultaneously (Fonagy et al., 2002).

The usefulness of evaluating teachers on the basis of empathy displays is predicated on an assumption that more empathic teachers will provide for better student classroom experiences. The classrooms of teachers with high social-emotional abilities at the beginning of a school year should rate higher in emotional quality at the end of a school year. I intend to explore this contention in my post-doctoral work.

Any interventions in a coaching relationship based on trust should be approached with care and humility. Interventions need to keep the teacher and student's mentalizing capacity in mind. They should be simple and short, focus on a teacher's mind, be affect focussed, relate to current interpersonal interactions, de-emphasise the unconscious in favour of near or conscious content (as seen in this study), and be concerned with the process of what is going on in the teacher's mind through reflection on mental states rather than interpreting content (Bateman & Fonagy, 2006). Within a social cognitive framework, role-taking, perspective-taking, and cognitive flexibility are as important to empathy as emotional sensitivity and responsiveness. The Empathy Assessment Instrument calls for the teacher to consider questions that guide professional understanding and improve relational practice.

12.2 Recommendations for Future Research

These findings show empathic teachers are able to recognise students' behavioural, cognitive and affective signals. Three avenues for future research are suggested; 1) Trialling the Empathy Assessment Instrument, 2) Can empathy and mentalizing skills be taught to teachers?, and 3) Should empathy skills be a basis for pre-service teacher selection.

Trialling the Empathy Assessment Instrument. There are opportunities to expand the scope of this study, including to secondary school settings. For in-service teachers, it may be useful to evaluate the effectiveness of the Empathy Assessment Instrument in conjunction with

intervention research in coaching relationships, where teachers are motivated to improve their relational practice based on genuine empathy displays. Teachers “turn up” or “turn down” mentalizing based on their motivation to understand students’ internal states (Hodges & Wegner, 1997; Ickes, 2011). Alan referred to the experience of colleagues who had struggled to improve relational practice. Students can discern teachers whose displays of empathy are not accompanied by genuine concern (their emotional expression is dishonest). Pseudo-empathy involves a person mistakenly believing their displays provide them access to another’s perspectives when they do not (Coplan, 2011).

Effective empathy practice requires a teacher to moderate behaviour and style to meet student needs. Questions concerning the situational nature, context and optimal amounts of empathy, including appropriate boundaries for teacher-student relationships are pertinent. The Empathy Assessment Instrument offers a springboard for professional learning discussion in coaching relationships about teacher behaviour in student interactions. A professional learning focus to develop teachers’ understandings of student attachment needs (secure, fearful, and disorganised) and how to moderate teaching to meet those needs would be useful. In pre-service teacher education, the instrument could be applied in lesson observations as a basis to discuss the development of relational skills.

The instrument is proposed for trial with a larger sample of teachers over time to promote awareness of empathy skills in teacher-student relationships, and the benefits of a mentalizing stance in these moments to improve affect modulation and problem solving. Trialling the instrument would require additional lesson observations as well as assessments of vignettes to generate data on observed practice, which may result in some factors being modified or new factors being added.

Future development of the instrument needs to consider reliability issues in terms of its ability to generate consistent results when applied under different conditions.

Inter-rater reliability—the degree to which different raters produce the same results when independently rating an individual—and test-retest reliability need to be established to establish predictive validity. Lesson observations or filmed segments of classroom practice in vignettes should be double-coded to ensure reliability of observations, where two observers code the same segment simultaneously and independently. Consistent with CLASS, inter-rater reliability should be assessed as the degree to which two coders are within one point of each other's scores (La Paro, Pianta, & Stuhlman, 2004).

Training observers will be fundamental to inter-rater reliability. Because teaching practice varies, multiple observations per teacher are necessary to discern patterns of behaviour. It is suggested a minimum of four separate observation segments be evaluated as a means to discuss teacher professional behaviour—similar to the recommended observation cycle for assessment contained in CLASS (Pianta et al., 2012). Classes should be observed during times when the composition of a grade is typical. Alternatively, teachers may choose to film their classroom practice and nominate empathy moments for consideration by raters against the instrument.

Following initial training on sample vignettes, it will be important that regular checks on reliability occur to ensure rater reliability. Conducting "double coding" sessions where two observers code the same classroom lesson segment and check their codes for consistency should be implemented. Additionally, focus groups of teachers in the next phase of data collection should be used to code videotaped segments or vignettes to help with consistency. These vignettes could establish a series of classroom studies.

A longitudinal research program would consider how empathy practices change over time. The instrument should be tested in an additional 20+ classrooms in another 3–4 schools. Teachers in Phase 2 should also complete the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (Davis, 1983) as a self-report measure of cognitive and affective empathy to explore felt versus observed behaviour. The instrument may need modifications for working one-on-one, with groups, or the class as a whole.

An independent reference group should be established who already have training with CLASS, and refresher segments accessed prior to analysis of data to ensure a high degree of reliability. To validate the instrument as a measure of empathy, a panel of experimental psychologists working in the field should be asked to rate on a 2 point scale (yes/no) whether each of the observational behaviour items in the instrument relate to the Baron-Cohen and Wheelwright (2004) definitions.

Can empathy and mentalizing skills be taught to teachers? A number of studies have concluded that empathy can be taught. Swick (2005) evaluated a successful programme that taught empathy skills to parents. Similarly, Redman (1977) conducted a ten-week teacher training course that was successful in enhancing empathy shown towards minority students. The training involved large and small group instruction, scenarios, and exposure to different cultures and backgrounds. In nursing, problem based learning and reflective thinking have been shown to be successful to develop empathy and facilitate caring relationships (Crigger, 2001; Mete, 2007).

In medical training, empathy is typically taught as a set of cognitive and behavioural skills (Winefield & Chur-Hansen, 2000). Teding van Berkhout & Malouff (2016) showed a behavioural approach in empathy training can enhance empathic potential. A meta-analysis of 18 randomized controlled trials found medical empathy training programmes were effective with an effect size of .63 (Teding van Berkhout & Malouff, 2016). Targeting cognitive and behavioural empathy skills resulted in higher effect sizes than studies solely targeting cognitive or affective empathy. Interestingly, all studies at least targeted cognitive empathy, reflecting a theory that cognitive empathy processes are more measurable and can be consciously acquired.

There is scope to develop similar programs in teacher education courses to enhance empathy skills. The use of vignettes of filmed practice with accompanying diary entries as shown in Form 1 of the Empathy Assessment Instrument could be used as a medium in educational modules for teacher education on the effective use of empathic actions in teacher-student relationships. Barr (2011) argues enhancing teacher empathy might be a way to improve school culture and that “while

teacher training programmes currently focus on teacher dispositions, such programmes need to focus more on training future teachers to recognise and exercise their cognitive empathic capacities" (p. 367).

For mentalization, the pedagogical focus in the Empathy Assessment Instrument is on alerting teachers of the need to mentalize to reflect on thoughts and feelings in themselves and their students in empathy events. Promoting a mentalizing stance requires curiosity, inquisitiveness, and imagination in relation to students' mental states and an awareness of one's own. When teachers' mentalize, they open themselves to multiple and diverse perspectives and ask questions rather than look for answers to experience an array of mental states. They work on attentiveness, interpretation, reflection, and consideration of emotional responses. This was the experience of participants in this study. Effective empathisers draw on explicit mentalizing in specific interaction moments. While this study shows the benefits of mentalizing in reflection, ultimately teachers should aspire to translate hindsight into foresight—to teach using a student-centred approach, to listen and assess (verbal and non-verbal cues) student states, and respecting student autonomy by being patient, attentive, and learning how and where to ask appropriate questions.

Should empathy skills be a basis for pre-service teacher selection? In Australia (Sautelle, Bowles, Hattie, & Arifin, 2015; Teacher Selector, 2013) and the United Kingdom (Klassen, Durksen, Rowett, & Patterson, 2014; Teacher Selection Project, 2015), some universities are incorporating assessments of non-cognitive traits into their selection of teachers. Policy makers are seeking to adopt a holistic process to teacher selection that may enhance the social accountability of the teaching profession, and reduce student attrition in teacher education degrees, which is as high as 23 percent after the first year in Australia (Weldon, 2015).

Teacher selection on the basis of empathy would be predicated on an assumption that more empathic teachers provide better student experiences. In 2016, the Victorian Minister for Education called for entry into all teaching courses from 2019 to also assess personal attributes for

"leadership, empathy, resilience, passion for teaching, and emotional intelligence" (Anderson, 2016). A valid instrument for use in teacher selection would measure emotional attributes students' value to enhance student satisfaction, wellbeing, learning, and teacher sensitivity that assist in providing care. The aim of the instrument would be to predict how well teachers perform in providing emotional support.

But filtering out unsuitable candidates based on non-cognitive traits (beyond extreme empathy deficits) may be detrimental. The competencies and traits measured at selection may not be indicative of a candidate's empathy potential. The experience of participants in this study show that empathy skills can and are learned, and empathy has trait *and state* elements.

12.3 Final Comment

A teacher's daily work involves close interpersonal relationships with children, parents, and colleagues. The quality of relationships is a powerful determinant of student engagement and learning (Butler, 2007; 2012), and research has largely neglected the *how* of teacher-student relationships. This study aimed to build an understanding of how teachers engage empathy to modify their teaching to meet individual needs. It draws on extant theoretical frameworks in psychology to explore how effective teachers engage in empathy displays. The study adopted a relatively new phenomenological approach of drawing on teacher mentalizing as the means to access the behaviours and meanings in empathy interactions with students.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's Centre for Education Research and Innovation stated "the ultimate goal of education policy makers, teachers, and parents is to help children achieve the highest level of wellbeing possible" (OECD, 2015, p. 1). Both the Melbourne Declaration of Educational Goals (MCEETYA, 2008) and the Australian Curriculum Framework (ACARA, 2014) advocate wellbeing as a central outcome for schools. The 2015 Programme for International Study Assessment (Pisa) report student wellbeing data for Australian students. From 2003 to 2012, Australia had the fifth largest *decline* in school belongingness and

engagement of all OECD countries. Further, the results for the calendar year 2015 showed a rate of decline equivalent in size to the decline over the 2003–2012 decade. The largest declines were in the number of students who feel like an outsider (8.6% more), feel awkward (6.8% more), and have trouble making friends at school (6.1% more). Since 2003, 16% more Australian students now feel they do not belong, 15% more feel like an outsider, 10% more feel lonely at school (PISA, 2015). Teaching regulatory agencies worldwide routinely list providing empathy or care to students as a professional responsibility. This data shows many students would benefit from teachers' engaging in empathy interactions in the classroom.

Safe, caring, participatory climates foster greater attachment to the classroom and provide a secure base for social, emotional, and academic learning (Blum, McNeely, & Rinehart, 2002; Goodenow & Grady, 1993; Lee, Smith, Perry, & Smylie, 1999; Osterman, 2000; Wentzel, 1997). A teacher's positive interactions directly affect students' behavioural and emotional engagement (Skinner & Belmont, 1993). Mentalizing allows teachers to reflect on mental states in themselves and others' as explanations of behaviour, sustain a positive outlook, generate a sense of shared purpose and values, communicate and solve problems, feel connected to give support, provide open expression in sharing feelings, and to see empathy from both their own and the student(s)' perspective. Taking a mentalizing stance helps teachers generate multiple perspectives and frees them from being stuck in one view to recognise and experience an array of mental states. A focus on professional learning in schools can enhance empathy skills through activities that help teachers to explicitly mentalize to better understand the students they work with.

A challenge lies in how to create meaningful and effective change at a systemic level to better support teachers in developing skills in this area. In Australia, the Attitude to School survey data shows that students rate teacher empathy at lower levels than their teachers perceive it to be. Schools are increasingly looking for ways to improve the relational skills of their staff, suggesting there is value in professional development to improve those skills in relational practice.

Rogers (1951) initially described empathy as a skill that can be taught. In later work (1975), he conceded that empathy was not so much a skill, as a way of being. He described being empathic as “complex, demanding, strong, yet subtle” (p. 4). It involves listening attentively, receiving the messages another sends, responding to those messages, and feeling with them to evoke the empathy involved in a caring relationship. When teachers show empathy, they become absorbed in the needs of the student, assessing the feedback and responding to that feedback. Teachers learn about students in multiple ways, and share cognitive and emotional responses with them. When teachers become conscious of making connections to facilitate learning, empathy becomes a valuable tool to respond to student needs and create supportive learning environments.

References

Abele, A. E., & Wojciszke, B. (2007). Agency and communion from the perspective of self versus others. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 93,* 751–763. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.93.5.751

Agne, K. J. (1992). Caring: The expert teacher's edge. *Educational Horizons, 70,* 120–24.

Agosta, L. (2010). *Empathy in the context of philosophy*. New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan.

Ainsworth, M. D. (1982). Attachment: Retrospect and prospect. In C. M. Parkes, & J. Stevenson-Hinde (Eds.), *The place of attachment in human behaviour* (pp. 3–30). London: Tavistock.

Ainsworth, M. D., & Bell, S. M. (1969). Some contemporary patterns of mother-infant interaction in the feeding situation. In A. Ambrose (Ed.), *Stimulation in early infancy* (pp. 169–198). London, UK: Academic Press.

Allen, J. G. (2006). Mentalizing in practice. In J.G. Allen & P. Fonagy (Eds.), *Handbook of mentalization-based treatment* (pp. 3–30). West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons. doi:10.1002/9780470712986.ch1

Allen, J. G., & Fonagy, P. (2006). *Handbook of mentalization-based treatment*. Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons. doi:10.1002/9780470712986

Allen, J. G., & Fonagy, P. (2015). Trauma. In P. Luyten, L. Mayes, P. Fonagy, S. Blatt, & M. Target (Eds.), *Handbook of psychodynamic approaches to psychopathology* (pp. 165–199). New York, NY: The Guildford Press.

Allen, J. P., Hauser, S. T., Bell, K. L., & O'Connor, T. G. (1994). Longitudinal assessment of autonomy and relatedness in adolescent- family interactions as predictors of adolescent ego development and self- esteem. *Child Development*, *65*, 179–194. doi:10.2307/1131374

Allen, J. P., Kuperminc, G., Philliber, S., & Herre, K. (1994). Programmatic prevention of adolescent problem behaviors: The role of autonomy, relatedness, and volunteer service in the Teen Outreach Program. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *22*, 617–638. doi:10.1007/BF02506896

Allen, J. P., Marsh, P., McFarland, C., McElhaney, K. B., Land, D. J., Jodl, K. M., & Peck, S. (2002). Attachment and autonomy as predictors of the development of social skills and delinquency during mid-adolescence. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *70*, 56–66. doi:10.1037/0022-006X.70.1.56

Andersen, P. A. (1998). The cognitive valence theory of intimate communication, *Progress in Communication Sciences*, *14*, 39–72.

Anderson, S. (2016, November 23). Entry scores for teaching courses in Victoria increased to ATAR of 70 by Andrews Government. *ABC News.* Retrieved from http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-11-23/entry-scores-for-teaching-courses-in-victoria-increased/8049360

Appelbaum, S. A. (1973). Psychological-mindedness: Word, concept and essence. *The International Journal of Psycho-analysis*, *54*, 35–47.

Aragona, M., Kotzalidis, G. D., & Puzella, A. (2013). The many faces of empathy, between phenomenology and neuroscience. *Archives of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy*, *4*, 5–12. doi:10.12740/APP/19179

Aring, C. D. (1958). Sympathy and empathy. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, *167*, 448–452. doi:10.1001/jama.1958.02990210034008

Arnold, R. (2005). *Empathic intelligence.* Sydney: University of NSW Press.

Aspy, D. N. (1972). *Toward a technology for humanizing education.* Champaign, Illinois: Illinois Research Press.

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA] (2014). *Australian Curriculum Framework.* Retrieved from http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA] (2015). *ICSEA 2014 Technical Report.* Retrieved from https://www.acara.edu.au/verve/_resources/ICSEA_2014_technical_report.pdf

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership [AITSL] (2011a). *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (previously *National Professional Standards for Teachers*). Retrieved from http://www.aitsl.edu.au/australian-professional-standardsfor-teachers/standards/list

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership [AITSL]. (2011b). *Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework.* Retrieved from http://www.aitsl.edu.au/professional-growth/australian-teacher-performance-and-development-framework

Baron-Cohen, S. (1995). *Mindblindness: An essay on autism and theory of mind.* Boston, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press/Bradford Books.

Baron-Cohen, S. (2003). *The essential difference: The truth about the male and female brain.* London, UK: Penguin.

Baron-Cohen, S. (2011). *Zero degrees of empathy: A new theory of human cruelty.* London, UK: Allen Lane.

Baron-Cohen, S., Knickmeyer, R. C., & Belmonte, M. (2005). Sex differences in the brain: Implications for explaining autism, *Science, 310,* 819–823. doi:10.1126/science.1115455

Baron-Cohen, S., Leslie, A., & Frith, U. (1985). Does the autistic child have a “theory of mind”?, *Cognition, 21,* 37–46. doi:10.1016/0010-0277(85)90022-8

Baron-Cohen, S., & Wheelwright, S. (2004). The Empathy Quotient: An investigation of adults with Asperger Syndrome or high functioning autism, and normal sex differences. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 34,* 163–175. doi:10.1023/B:JADD.0000022607.19833.00

Baron-Cohen, S., Wheelwright, S., Hill, J., Raste, Y., & Plumb, I. (2001). The "Reading the Mind in the Eyes" test revised version: A study with normal adults, and adults with Asperger syndrome or high-functioning autism. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 42,* 241–251. doi:10.1017/s0021963001006643

Barr, J. (2011). The relationship between teachers' empathy and perceptions of school culture. *Educational Studies, 37,* 365–369. doi:10.1080/03055698.2010.506342

Barrett-Lennard, G. T. (1993). The phases and focus of empathy. *British Journal of Medical Psychology, 66,* 3–14. doi:10.1111/j.2044-8341.1993.tb01722.x

Bartels, A., & Zeki, S. (2004). The neural correlates of maternal and romantic love. *Neuroimage, 21,* 1155–1166. doi:10.1016/j.neuroimage.2003.11.003

Basch, M. F. (1983). Empathic understanding: A review of the concept and some theoretical considerations. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytical Association, 31,* 101–126. doi:10.1177/000306518303100104

Bateman, A. W., & Fonagy, P. (2004). Mentalization-based treatment of BPD. *Journal of Personality Disorders, 18,* 36–51. doi:10.1521/pedi.18.1.36.32772

Bateman, A. W. & Fonagy, P. (2006). *Mentalization-based treatment for borderline personality disorder: A practical guide*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. doi:10.1093/med/9780198570905.001.0001

Bateman, A. W., & Fonagy, P. (2012). *Handbook of mentalizing in mental health practice*. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Publishing Inc.

Batson, C. D. (1991). *The altruism question: Toward a social psychological answer*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Batson, C. D. (2009). These things called empathy: Eight related but distinct phenomena. In J. Decety & W. Ickes (Eds.), *The social neuroscience of empathy* (pp. 3–15). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. doi:10.7551/mitpress/9780262012973.003.0002

Batson, C. D. (2011). *Altruism in humans*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Batson, C. D., & Ahmad, N. Y. (2009). Using empathy to improve intergroup attitudes and relations. *Social Issues and Policy Review, 3*, 141–177. doi:10.1111/j.1751-2409.2009.01013.x

Batson, C. D., & Coke, J. S. (1981). Empathy: A source of altruistic motivation for helping? In J. P. Rushton & R. M. Sorrentino (Eds.), *Altruism and helping behavior: Social personality and developmental perspectives* (pp. 167–211). Hillside, NJ: Erlbaum.

Batson, C. D., Early, S., & Salvarani, G. (1997). Perspective-taking: Imagining how another feels versus imagining how you would feel. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 23,* 751–758. doi:10.1177/0146167297237008

Bauman, S., & Del Rio, A. (2006). Preservice teachers' responses to bullying scenarios: Comparing physical, verbal, and relational bullying. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 98,* 219–231. doi:10.1037/0022-0663.98.1.219

Baumrind, D. (1971). Current patterns of parental authority. *Developmental Psychology, 4,* 1–103. doi:10.1037/h0030372

Bayes, M. A. (1972). Behavioral cues of interpersonal warmth. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 39,* 333–339. doi:10.1037/h0033367

Bellet, P. S., & Maloney, M. J. (1991). The importance of empathy as an interviewing skill in medicine. *Journal of the American Medical Association, 266,* 1831–1832. doi:10.1001/jama.1991.03470130111039

Bennett, M. J. (2001). *The empathic healer: An endangered species.* San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Berger, D. M. (1987). *Clinical empathy.* Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson.

Bernstein, M. J., Young, S. G., Brown, C. M., Sacco, D. F., & Claypool, H. M. (2008). Adaptive responses to social exclusion: Social rejection improves detection of real and fake smiles. *Psychological Science, 19,* 981–983. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9280.2008.02187.x

Bieg, S., Backes, S., & Mittag, W. (2011). The role of intrinsic motivation for teaching, teachers' care and autonomy support in students' self-determined motivation. *Journal for Educational Research Online, 3,* 122–140.

Birch, S. H., & Ladd, G. W. (1997). The teacher-child relationship and children’s early school adjustment. *Journal of School Psychology, 35,* 61–79. doi:10.1016/S0022-4405(96)00029-5

Bischof-Köhler, D. (2012). Empathy and self-recognition in phylogenetic and ontogenetic perspective. *Emotion Review, 4,* 40–48. doi:10.1177/1754073911421377

Black, D. M. (2004). Sympathy reconfigured: Some reflections on sympathy, empathy and the discovery of values. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis, 85,* 579–595. doi:10.1516/2A57-EY8X-XEUU-AFPN

Blair, R. (2005). Responding to the emotions of others: Dissociating forms of empathy through the study of typical and psychiatric populations. *Consciousness and Cognition, 14,* 698–718. doi:10.1016/j.concog.2005.06.004

Bloor, M., & Wood, F. (2006). *Keywords in qualitative methods: A vocabulary of research concepts*. London: Sage Publications. doi:10.4135/9781849209403

Blum, R. W., McNeely, C. A., & Rinehart, P. M. (2002). Improving the odds: The untapped power of schools to improve the health of teens. Retrieved from http://www.med.umn.edu/peds/ahm/prod/groups/med/@pub/@med/documents/asset/med_21771.pdf

Bohart, A. C., & Greenberg, L. S. (1997). *Empathy reconsidered: New directions in psychotherapy.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. doi:10.1037/10226-000

Boulton, M. J. (1997). Teachers' views on bullying: Definitions, attitudes and ability to cope. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 67,* 223–233. doi:10.1111/j.2044-8279.1997.tb01239.x

Bowlby, J. (1969). *Attachment and loss: Attachment (Vol.1).* New York: Basic Books

Bowlby, J. (1975). *Separation: Anxiety and anger (Vol. 2).* Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Bowlby, J. (1979). The Bowlby-Ainsworth attachment theory. *Behavioural & Brain Sciences, 2,* 637–638. doi:10.1017/s0140525x00064955

Bowlby, J. (1988). *A secure base: Clinical applications of attachment theory.* London: Routledge.

Branwhite, T. (1988). The PASS survey: School-based preferences of 500+ adolescent consumers. *Educational Studies, 14,* 165–176. doi:10.1080/0305569880140204

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). Contexts of child rearing: Problems and prospects. *American Psychologist, 34,* 844–850. doi:10.1037//0003-066X.34.10.844

Brookhart, S. M., & Loadman, W. E. (1992). Teacher assessment and validity: What do we want to know? *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education, 5,* 347–357. doi:10.1007/BF00126827

Brown, P. M., Corrigan, M. W., & Higgins-D'Alessandro, A. (2012). *Handbook of prosocial education.* Blue Ridge Summit, PA: Rowman and Littlefield Publishing.

Brunel, M. L., Dupuy-Walker, L., & Schleifer, M. (1989). Teachers' predictive capacity and empathy in relation to children's self-concept. *Canadian Journal of Education, 14,* 226–241. doi:10.2307/1495353

Buchheimer, A. (1963). The development of ideas about empathy. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 10,* 61–70. doi:10.1037/h0042088

Butler, R. (2007). Teachers' achievement goal orientations and associations with teachers' help seeking: Examination of a novel approach to teacher motivation. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 99,* 241–252. doi:10.1037/0022-0663.99.2.241

Butler, R. (2012). Striving to connect: Extending an achievement goal approach to teacher motivation to include relational goals for teaching. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 104,* 726–742. doi:10.1037/a0028613

Bylund, C. L., & Makoul, G. (2002). Empathic communication and gender in the physician–patient encounter. *Patient Education and Counseling, 48,* 207–216. doi:10.1016/S0738-3991(02)00173-8

Camodeca, M., & Coppola, G. (2015). Bullying, empathic concern, and internalization of rules among preschool children: The role of emotion understanding. *International Journal of Behavioral Development, 40,* 459–465. doi:10.1177/0165025415607086

Cannon, W. B. (1932). *The wisdom of the body.* New York, NY: Norton.

Carkhuff, R. (1969). *Helping and human relations: Selecting and training*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

CASSE Australia. (2014). *CASSE Peaceful Schools Program.* Retrieved from http://www.casse.org.au

Chan, G. (2015, May 14). Malcom Turnbull urges ‘empathy and concern’ in paid parental leave debate. *The Guardian.* Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/may/14/malcolm-turnbull-urges-empathy-and-concern-in-paid-parental-leave-debate

Chang, L. (2003). Variable effects of children’s aggression, social withdrawal, and prosocial leadership as functions of teacher beliefs and behaviours. *Child Development, 74,* 535–548. doi:10.1111/1467-8624.7402014

Charmaz, K. (2001). Qualitative interviewing and grounded theory analysis. In J. Gubrium & J. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of interview research: Context and method* (pp. 675–694). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. doi:10.4135/9781412973588.n39

Choi-Kain, L. W., & Gunderson, J. G. (2008). Mentalization: Ontogeny, assessment, and application in the treatment of borderline personality disorder. *American Journal of Psychiatry, 165,* 1127–1135. doi:10.1176/appi.ajp.2008.07081360

Claessens, L. C. A., van Tartwijk, J., van der Want, A. C., Pennings, H. J. M., Verloop, N., den Brok, P. J., & Wubbels, T. (2016). Positive teacher–student relationships go beyond the classroom, problematic ones stay inside. *The Journal of Educational Research,* 1–16. doi:10.1080/00220671.2015.1129595

Clark, K. B. (1980). Empathy—A neglected topic in psychological research. *American Psychologist, 35,* 187–190. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.35.2.187

Cohen, S. (2004). Social relationship and health. *American Psychologist, 59,* 676–684. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.59.8.676

Cohn, M. M., & Kottkamp, R. B. (1993). *Teachers: The missing voice in education.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Coke, J. S., Batson, C. D., & McDavis, K. (1978). Empathic mediation of helping: A two-stage model. *Psychosomatic Medicine, 49,* 325–330. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.36.7.752

Colaizzi, P. R. (1978). Psychological research as the phenomenologist views it. In R. Vale & M. King (Eds.) *Existential phenomenological alternatives in psychology* (pp. 48–71). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Collins, W. A., Russell G. (1991). Mother-child and father-child relationships in middle childhood and adolescence: A developmental analysis. *Developmental Review, 11,* 99–136. doi:10.1016/0273-2297(91)90004-8

Compton, B. R., & Galaway, B. (1994). *Social work processes.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Cooper, B. (2011). *Empathy in education: Engagement, values and achievement*. London, UK: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Coplan, A. (2011). Will the real empathy please stand up? A case for a narrow conceptualization. *The Southern Journal of Philosophy, 49,* 40–65. doi:10.1111/j.2041-6962.2011.00056.x

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. L. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications

Cornelius-White, J. (2007). Learner-centered teacher-student relationships are effective: A meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research, 77,* 113–143. doi:10.3102/003465430298563

Cothran, D. J., Kulinna, P. H., & Garrahy, D. A. (2003). “This is kind of giving a secret away...”: Students’ perspectives on effective class management. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 19,* 435–444. doi:10.1016/S0742-051X(03)00027-1

Cotton, K. (2001). Developing empathy in children and youth. School Improvement Research Series Close Up #13. Retrieved from http://educationnorthwest.org/sites/default/files/developing-empathy-in-children-and-youth.pdf

Coulehan, J. L., Platt, F. W., & Enger, B. (2001). "Let me see if I have this right": Words that help build empathy. *Annals of Internal Medicine, 135*, 221–227. doi:10.7326/0003-4819-135-3-200108070-00022

Cozolino, L. (2013). *The social neuroscience of education: Optimizing attachment and learning in the classroom.* New York, NY: WW Norton & Company.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Crigger, N. (2001). Antecedents to engrossment in Noddings' theory of care. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, *35*, 616–623. doi:10.1046/j.1365-2648.2001.01878.x

Crosnoe, R., Cavanagh, S., & Elder, G. H. (2003). Adolescent friendships as academic resources: The intersection of social relationships, social structure, and institutional context. *Sociological Perspectives*, *46*, 331–352. doi:10.1525/sop.2003.46.3.331

Damasio, A. (2003). Feelings of emotion and the self. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, *1001*, 253–261. doi:10.1196/annals.1279.014

Davis, M. H. (1980). A multidimensional approach to individual differences in empathy. *Catalogue of Selected Documents in Psychology, 10,* 1–17. doi:10.1080/00220671.2015.1129595

Davis, M. H. (1983). Measuring individual differences in empathy: Evidence for a multidimensional approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *44*, 113–126. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.44.1.113

Davis, M. H. (1994). *Empathy: A social psychological approach*. New York, NY: Westview Press.

Day, C., Stobart, G., Sammons, P., & Kington, A. (2006). Variations in the work and lives of teachers: Relative and relational effectiveness. *Teachers and Teaching, 12*, 169–192. doi:10.1080/13450600500467381

Decety, J., & Batson, C. D. (2009). Empathy and morality: Integrating social and neuroscience approaches. In J. Decety & T. Wheatley (Eds.), *The moral brain: A multidisciplinary perspective* (pp. 109–127). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. doi:10.1007/978-1-4020-6287-2_5

Decety, J., & Grèzes, J. (2006). The power of simulation: Imagining one's own and other's behavior, *Brain Research, 1079,* 4–14. doi:10.1016/j.brainres.2005.12.115

Decety, J., & Howard, L. H. (2014). Emotion, morality, and the developing brain. In M. Mikulincer & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Mechanisms of social connection: From brain to group,* (pp. 105–122). Washington, DC: American Psychology Association. doi:10.1037/14250-007

Decety, J., & Ickes, W. (2009). *The social neuroscience of empathy.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. doi:10.7551/mitpress/9780262012973.001.0001

Decety, J., & Jackson, P. L. (2004). The functional architecture of human empathy. *Behavioral and Cognitive Neuroscience Reviews, 3,* 71–100. doi:10.1177/1534582304267187

Decety, J., & Jackson, P. L. (2006). A social-neuroscience perspective on empathy. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 15,* 54–58. doi:10.1111/j.0963-7214.2006.00406.x

Decety, J., Jackson, P. L., & Brunet, E. (2007). The cognitive neuropsychology of empathy. In T. Farrow & P. Woodruff (Eds.), *Empathy in mental illness and health* (pp. 239–260). Cambridge, NY: University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511543753.015

Deemer, S. (2004). Classroom goal orientation in high school classrooms: Revealing links between teacher beliefs and classroom environments. *Educational Research, 46,* 73–90. doi:10.1080/0013188042000178836

Deloney, L. A., & Graham, C. J. (2003). Wit: Using drama to teach first-year medical students about empathy and compassion. *Teaching and Learning in Medicine*, *15*, 247–251. doi:10.1207/S15328015TLM1504_06

den Brok, P., Fisher, D., Brekelmans, M., Rickards, T., Wubbels, T., Levy, J., & Waldrip, B. (2003). *Students' perceptions of secondary science teachers' interpersonal style in six countries: A study of the cross national validity of the questionnaire on teacher interaction.* Paper presented at the 2003 AERA conference. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/254808409_Students'_perceptions_of_secondary_science_teachers'_interpersonal_style_in_six_countries_a_study_on_the_cross_national_validity_of_the_Questionnaire_on_Teacher_Interaction

den Brok, P., Fisher, D., Wubbels, T., Brekelmans, M., & Rickards, T. (2006). Secondary teachers' interpersonal behaviour in Singapore, Brunei and Australia: A cross-national comparison. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, *26*, 79–95. doi:10.1080/02188790600608208

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln Y. S. (1994). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2011). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. K. Denton & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (4th ed., pp. 1–19). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Department of Education Victoria [DET, previously DEECD] (2014). *Attitude to Schools Survey.* Retrieved from www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/management/Pages/performsurveyat.aspx

Department of Education Victoria [DET, previously DEECD] (2014). *iLead 360° Survey.* Retrieved from www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/profdev/Pages/devlearningframework.aspx

de Waal, F. B. M. (2008). Putting the altruism back into altruism: The evolution of empathy. *Annual Review of Psychology, 59,* 279–300. doi:10.1146/annurev.psych.59.103006.093625

DiMatteo, M. R. (1979). A social-psychological analysis of physician-patient rapport toward a science of the art of medicine. *Journal of Social Issues, 35,* 12–33. doi:10.1111/j.1540-4560.1979.tb00787.x

Donald, M. (1991). *A mind so rare: The evolution of human consciousness.* New York, NY: WW Norton & Company.

Dorman, J. (2008). Using student perceptions to compare actual and preferred classroom environment in Queensland schools. *Educational Studies, 34,* 299–308. doi:10.1080/03055690802034484

Duan, C., & Hill, C. E. (1996). The current state of empathy research. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 43,* 261–274. doi:10.1037/0022-0167.43.3.261

Dziobeck, I., Rogers, K., Fleck, S., Bahnemann, M., Heekeren, H., Wolf, O., & Convit, A. (2008). Dissociation of cognitive and emotional empathy in adults with Asperger Syndrome using the multifaceted empathy test (MET). *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 38,* 464–473. doi:10.1007/s10803-007-0486-x

Dziobek, I. (2012). Towards a more ecologically valid assessment of empathy. *Emotion Review, 4,* 18–19. doi:10.1177/1754073911421390

Eccles, J. S., Wigfield, A., Midgley, C., Reuman, D., MacIver, D., & Feldlaufer, H. (1993). Negative effects of traditional middle schools on students' motivation. *Elementary School Journal, 93,* 533–574. doi:10.1086/461740

Eisenberg, N. (1989). *Empathy and related emotional responses.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Eisenberg, N. (2010). Empathy-related responding: Links with self-regulation, moral judgment, and moral behavior. *Prosocial motives, emotions, and behavior: The better angels of our nature*, 129–148. doi:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195130430.003.0007

Eisenberg, N., & Fabes, R. A. (1991). Prosocial behavior and empathy: A multimethod developmental perspective. In M. S. Clark (Ed.), *Prosocial behavior: Review of personality and social psychology* (pp. 34–61). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Eisenberg, N., Fabes, R. A., Carlo, G., Speer, A. L., Switzer, G., Karbon, M., & Troyer, D. (1993). The relations of empathy-related emotions and maternal practices to children's comforting behavior. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology, 55*, 131–150. doi:10.1006/jecp.1993.1007

Eisenberg, N., Fabes, R. A., Murphy, B., Karbon, M., Maszk, P., & Smith, M. (1994). The relations of emotionality and regulation to dispositional and situational empathy related responding. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 66*, 776–797. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.66.4.776

Eisenberg, N., & Strayer, J. (1987). Critical issues in the study of empathy. In N. Eisenberg & J. Strayer (Eds.), *Empathy and its development* (pp. 3–13). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Eisenberg, N., Wentzel, M., & Harris, J. D. (1998). The role of emotionality and regulation in empathy-related responding. *School Psychology Review, 27*, 506–521.

Elliot, H. (1997). The use of diaries in social research. *Sociological Research Online, 2.* Retrieved from http://www.socresonline.org.uk/socresonline/2/2/4.html doi:10.5153/sro.38

Elliott, R., Fischer, C., & Rennie, D. (1999). Evolving guidelines for publication of qualitative research studies in psychology and related fields. *British Journal of Clinical Psychology, 38*, 215–229. doi:10.1348/014466599162782

Enfield, N. J., & Levinson, S. C. (2006). Introduction: Human sociality as a new interdisciplinary field. In *Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, Symposium 134* (pp. 1–35). Oxford: Berg.

Epley, N., & Dunning, D. (2000). Feeling “holier than thou”: Are self-serving assessments produced by errors in self- or social prediction? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 79,* 861–875. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.79.6.861

Epley, N., Keysar, B., Van Boven, L., & Gilovich, T. (2004). Perspective taking as egocentric anchoring and adjustment. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 87,* 327–339. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.87.3.327

Farrow, T., & Woodruff, P. (2007). *Empathy in mental illness.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511543753

Ferrari, P. F., Gallese, V., Rizzolatti, G., & Fogassi, L. (2003). Mirror neurons responding to the observation of ingestive and communicative mouth actions in the monkey ventral premotor cortex. *European Journal of Neuroscience, 278,* 1703–1714. doi:10.1046/j.1460-9568.2003.02601.x

Feshbach, N. D. (1989). Empathy training and prosocial behavior. In J. Groebel & R. A. Hinde (Eds.), *Aggression and war: Their biological and social bases* (pp. 101–111). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Feshbach, N. D., & Feshbach, S. (1982). Empathy training and the regulation of aggression: Potentialities and limitations. *Academic Psychology Bulletin, 4,* 399–413. doi:10.1007/978-94-017-0665-0_9

Field, A. (2000). *Discovering statistics using SPSS for windows.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Field, P. A, & Morse, J. (1995). *Nursing research: The application of qualitative approaches.* London: Croom & Helm.

Fisher, D. L., Fraser, B. J, & Creswell, J. (1995). Using the Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction in the professional development of teachers. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 20,* 8–18. doi:10.14221/ajte.1995v20n1.2

Fisher, D. L., Fraser, B. J., Wubbels, T., & Brekelmans, M. (1993). Associations between school learning environment and teacher interpersonal behavior in the classroom. *The Study of Learning Environments, 7,* 32–41.

Fisher, D. L., Henderson, D., & Fraser, B. J. (1995). Interpersonal behaviour in senior high school biology classes. *Research in Science Education, 25,* 125–133. doi:10.1007/BF02356447

Fisher, R. J. (1993). Social desirability bias and the validity of indirect questioning. *Journal of Consumer Research, 20,* 303–315. doi:10.1086/209351

Fiske, S. T., & Taylor, S. E. (2013). *Social cognition: From brains to culture.* London: Sage Publications. doi:10.4135/9781446286395

Fonagy, P. (1991). Thinking about thinking: Some clinical and theoretical considerations in the treatment of a borderline patient. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis, 72,* 639–656.

Fonagy, P. (2006). The mentalization-focused approach to social development. In J.G. Allen & P. Fonagy (Eds.), *Handbook of mentalization-based treatment* (pp. 53–100). West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons Ltd. doi:10.1002/9780470712986.ch3

Fonagy, P., & Bateman, A. W. (2006). Mechanisms of change in mentalization‐based treatment of BPD. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 62,* 411–430. doi:10.1002/jclp.20241

Fonagy, P., & Bateman, A. (2012). *Handbook of mentalizing in mental health practice.* Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Publishing, Inc.

Fonagy, P., Bateman, A., & Bateman, A. (2011). The widening scope of mentalizing: A discussion. *Psychology and Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice*, *84*, 98–110. doi:10.1111/j.2044-8341.2010.02005.x

Fonagy, P., & Bateman, A. W., & Luyten, P. (2012). Introduction and overview. In A. W. Bateman & P. Fonagy (Eds.), *Handbook of Mentalizing in Mental Health Practice* (pp. 3–43). Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Publishing.

Fonagy, P., Gergely, G., Jurist, E. L., & Target, M. (2002). *Affect regulation, mentalization and the development of the self*. New York, NY: Other Press.

Fonagy, P., Steele, M., Steele, H., Moran, G. S., & Higgitt, A. C. (1991). The capacity for understanding mental states: The reflective self in parent and child and its significance for security of attachment. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, *12*, 201–218. doi:10.1002/1097-0355(199123)12:3%3C201::AID-IMHJ2280120307%3E3.0.CO;2-7

Fonagy P., & Target, M. (1997). Attachment and reflective function: Their role in self-organization. *Development and Psychopathology*, *9*, 679–700. doi:10.1017/s0954579497001399

Fonagy P., & Target, M. (1998). Mentalization and the changing aims of child psychoanalysis. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, *8*, 87–114. doi:10.1080/10481889809539235

Fonagy, P., & Target, M. (2000). Playing with reality: III. The persistence of dual psychic reality in borderline patients. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, *81*, 853–873. doi:10.1111/j.1752-0118.2001.tb00619.x

Fonagy, P., & Target, M. (2005). Bridging the transmission gap: An end to an important mystery of attachment research?, *Attachment & Human Development*, *7*, 333–343. doi:10.1080/14616730500269278

Franke, R. H., & Kaul, J. D. (1978). The Hawthorne experiments: First statistical interpretation. *American Sociological Review*, *43*, 623–643. doi:10.2307/2094540

Fraser, B. J. (1982). Differences between student and teacher perceptions of actual and preferred classroom learning environment. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 4,* 511–519. doi:10.3102/01623737004004511

Frelin, A., & Grannäs, J. (2010). Negotiations left behind: in- between spaces of teacher–student negotiation and their significance for education. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 42,* 353–369. doi:10.1080/00220272.2010.485650

Frith, C. D., & Frith, U. (2006). The neural basis of mentalizing. *Neuron, 50,* 531–534. doi:10.1016/j.neuron.2006.05.001

Frith, C. D., & Singer, T. (2008). The role of social cognition in decision making. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London B: Biological Sciences, 363,* 3875–3886. doi:10.1098/rstb.2008.0156

Frith, U., & Frith, C. D. (2001). The biological basis of social interaction. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 10,* 151–155. doi:10.1111/1467-8721.00137

Furrer, C., & Skinner, E. (2003). Sense of relatedness as a factor in children's academic engagement and performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 95,* 148–162. doi:10.1037/0022-0663.95.1.148

Galinsky, A. D., Ku, G., & Wang, C. S. (2005). Perspective-taking: Fostering social bonds and facilitating social coordination. *Group Process and Intergroup Relations, 8,* 109–125. doi:10.1177/1368430205051060

Gallagher, H. L., & Frith, C. D. (2003). Functional imaging of ‘theory of mind’. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences, 7,* 77–83. doi:10.1016/S1364-6613(02)00025-6

Gallese, V. (2001). The ‘shared manifold’ hypothesis: From mirror neurons to empathy. *Journal of Conscious Studies, 8,* 33–50. doi:10.1159/000072786

Gallese, V. (2003). The roots of empathy: The shared manifold hypothesis and the neural basis of intersubjectivity. *Psychopathology, 36,* 171–180. doi:10.1159/000072786

Gallese, V., Fadiga, L., Fogassi, L., & Rizzolatti, G. (1996). Action recognition in the premotor cortex, *Brain, 119,* 593–609. doi:10.1093/brain/119.2.593

Gallese, V., & Goldman, A. (1998). Mirror neurons and the simulation theory of mind-reading. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences, 2,* 493–501. doi:10.1016/S1364-6613(98)01262-5

Garandeau, C. F., Vartio, A., Poskiparta, E., & Salmivalli, C. (2016). School bullies' intention to change behavior following teacher interventions: Effects of empathy arousal, condemning of bullying, and blaming of the perpetrator. *Prevention Science, 17,* 1034–1043. doi:10.1007/s11121-016-0712-x

Gergely, G. (2007). The social construction of the subjective self: The role of affect-mirroring, markedness, and ostensive communication in self-development. In L. Mayes, P. Fonagy, & M. Target (Eds.), *Developmental science and psychoanalysis* (pp. 45–82). London, UK: Karnac.

Gergely, G., & Watson, J. S. (1996). The social biofeedback model of parental affect-mirroring. *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis, 77,* 1181–1213.

Gerhardt, S. (2010). *The selfish society: How we all forgot to love one another and made money instead.* London, UK: Simon and Schuster.

Giorgi, A. (1970). *Psychology as a human science: A phenomenologically based approach*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.

Giorgi, A. (1997). The theory, practice, and evaluation of the phenomenological method as a qualitative research procedure. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology, 28,* 235–261. doi:10.1163/156916297x00103

Gladstein, G. A. (1983). Understanding empathy: Integrating counseling, developmental and social psychology perspectives. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 30*, 467–482. doi:10.1037/0022-0167.30.4.467

Gladstein, G. A., & Brennan, J. (1987). *Empathy and counselling: Explorations in theory and research.* New York, NY: Springer-Verlag.

Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory.* Chicago: Aldine.

Goldberg S., MacKay-Soroka S., & Rochester M. (1994). Affect, attachment, and maternal responsiveness. *Infant Behavior and Development, 17,* 335–339. doi:10.1016/0163-6383(94)90013-2

Goldstein, A. P., & Michaels, G. Y. (1985). *Empathy: Development, training and consequences.* Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than I.Q.* New York, NY: Bantam Books.

Goleman, D. (2006). *Social intelligence: Beyond IQ, beyond emotional intelligence.* New York, NY: Bantam Books.

Good, T. L., & Brophy, J. E. (2000). Motivation. In T. Good & J. Brophy (Eds.), *Looking in classrooms* (pp. 217–267). New York, NY: Longman.

Goodenow, C., & Grady, K. E. (1993). The relationship of school belonging and friends' values to academic motivation among urban adolescent students. *Journal of Experimental Education, 62,* 60–71. doi:10.1080/00220973.1993.9943831

Goodnow, J. J. (1988). Parents' ideas, actions and feelings: Models and methods from developmental and social psychology. *Child Development, 59,* 286–320. doi:10.2307/1130312

Goodwin, J., & Deady, R. (2013). The art of mental health practice: The role of drama in developing empathy. *Perspectives in Psychiatric Care, 49,* 126–134. doi:10.1111/ppc.12004

Gordon, M. (2007). *Roots of empathy: Changing the world child by child.* Toronto: Thomas Allen.

Greenberg, M. T., Weissberg, R. P., O'Brien, M. U., Zins, J. E., Fredericks, L., Resnik, H., & Elias, M. J. (2003). Enhancing school-based prevention and youth development through coordinated social, emotional, and academic learning. *American Psychologist, 58,* 466–474. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.58.6-7.466

Gregory, A., & Cornell, D. (2009). "Tolerating" adolescent needs: Moving beyond zero tolerance policies in high school. *Theory into Practice, 48,* 106–113. doi:10.1080/00405840902776327

Gross, J. J. (1998). The emerging field of emotion regulation: An integrative review. *Review of General Psychology, 2,* 271–299. doi:10.1037/1089-2680.2.3.271

Gruen, R. J., & Mendelsohn, G. (1986). Emotional responses to affective displays in others: The distinction between empathy and sympathy. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 51,* 609–614. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.51.3.609

Guba, E. G. (1981). Criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of naturalistic inquiries. *Educational Communication and Technology Journal: A Journal of Theory, Research, and Development, 29,* 75–91.

Guba, E. G. (1990). The alternative paradigm dialogue. In E. G. Guba (Ed.). *The paradigm dialogue* (pp. 17–30). Newberry Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Gurtman, M. B. (2009). Exploring personality with the interpersonal circumplex. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass, 3,* 601–619. doi:10.1111/j.1751-9004.2009.00172.x

Haft, W. L., & Slade, A. (1989). Affect attunement and maternal attachment: A pilot study. *Infant Mental Health Journal, 10,* 157–172. doi:10.1002/1097-0355(198923)10:3<157:: AID-IMHJ2280100304>3.0.CO;2-3

Halpern, J. (2001). *From detached concern to empathy: Humanizing medical practice.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press. doi:10.1093/acprof:osobl/9780195111194.001.0001

Hamre, B. K., & Pianta, R. C. (2001). Early teacher-child relationships and the trajectory of children's school outcomes through eighth grade. *Child Development, 72,* 625–638. doi:10.1111/1467-8624.00301

Hamre, B. K., & Pianta, R. C. (2006). Student–teacher relationships. In G. C. Bear, & K. M. Minke (Eds.), *Children's needs III: Development, prevention, and intervention* (pp. 59–71). Washington, DC: National Association of School Psychologists.

Hansen, P., & Mulholland, J. A. (2005). Caring and elementary teaching: The concerns of male beginning teachers. *Journal of Teacher Education, 56,* 119–131. doi:10.1177/0022487104273761

Hardee, J. T. (2003). An overview of empathy. *The Permanente Journal, 7,* 51–54.

Hargreaves, A. (1998). The emotional practice of teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 14,* 835–854. doi:10.1016/S0742-051X(98)00025-0

Hargreaves, A. (2000). Mixed emotions: Teachers' perceptions of their interactions with students. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 16,* 811–826. doi:10.1016/S0742-051X(00)00028-7

Hatfield, E., Cacioppo, J., & Rapson, R. (1994). *Emotional contagion.* Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Hattie, J. (2003). *Teachers make a difference: What is the research evidence?* Paper presented at the Australian Council for Educational Research Conference. Retrieved from http://research.acer.edu.au/research_conference_2003/4

Hattie, J. (2009). *Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement.* London: Routledge.

Hazan, C., & Shaver, P. (1987). Romantic love conceptualized as an attachment process. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology, 52,* 511–524. doi:10.1037//00223514.52.3.511

Hepworth, D. H., & Larsen, J. (1993). *Direct social work practice: Theory and skills.* Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Hermann, E., Call, J., Hernández-Lloreda, M. V., Hare, B., & Tomasello, M. (2007). Humans have evolved specialized skills of social cognition: The cultural intelligence hypothesis. *Science, 317,* 1360–1366. doi:10.1126/science.1146282

Hodges, S. D., & Biswas-Diener, R. (2007). Balancing the empathy expense account: Strategies for regulating empathic response. In T. Farrow & P. Woodruff (Eds.), *Empathy in mental illness* (pp. 389–407). London, UK: Cambridge United Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511543753.022

Hodges, S. D., & Wegner, D. M. (1997). Automatic and controlled empathy. In W. Ickes (Ed.), *Empathic accuracy* (pp. 311–339). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Hoffman, M. L. (1981). The development of empathy. In J. Rushton & R. Sorrentino (Eds.), *Altruism and helping behavior: Social personality and developmental perspectives* (pp. 41–63). Hillsdale, NY: Erlbaum.

Hoffman, M. L. (2001). *Empathy and moral development: Implications for caring and justice.* Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Hogan, R. (1969). Development of an empathy scale. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 33,* 307–316. doi:10.1037/h0027580

Hoge, D. R., Smit, E. K., & Hanson, S. L. (1990). School experiences predicting changes in self-esteem of sixth and seventh-grade students. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 82,* 117–127. doi:10.1037//0022-0663.82.1.117

Hojat, M. (2007). *Empathy in patient care: Antecedents, development, measurement, and outcomes.* New York, NY: Springer.

Hollan, D. (2012). Emerging issues in the cross-cultural study of empathy. *Emotion Review, 4,* 70–78. doi:10.1177/1754073911421376

Holmes, J. (2006). Mentalizing from a psychoanalytic perspective: What's new? In J. G. Allen & P. Fonagy (Eds.), *Handbook of mentalization-based treatment* (pp. 31–49). West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons Ltd. doi:10.1002/9780470712986.ch2

Hooker, C. I., Verosky, S. C., Germine, L. T., Knight, R. T., & D'Esposito, M. (2008). Mentalizing about emotion and its relationship to empathy. *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience, 3,* 204–217. doi:10.1093/scan/nsn019

Howe, D. (2008). *The emotionally intelligent social worker.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. doi:10.1007/978-0-230-36521-6

Howes, C., Burchinal, M., Pianta, R. C., Bryant, D., Early, D., Clifford, R., & Barbarin, O. (2008). Ready to learn? Children's pre-academic achievement in pre-kindergarten programs. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 23,* 27–50. doi:10.1016/j.ecresq.2007.05.002

Hughes, J. N., Cavell, T. A., & Jackson, T. (1999). Influence of the teacher-student relationship on childhood conduct problems: A prospective study. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology, 28,* 173–184. doi:10.1207/s15374424jccp2802_5

Hunsdahl, J. B. (1967). Concerning einfühlung (empathy): A concept analysis of its origin and early development. *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences, 3,* 180–191. doi:10.1002/1520-6696(196704)3:2%3C180::AID-JHBS2300030206%3E3.0.CO;2-G

Husserl, E. (1959). Erste Philosophe (1923/24). Zweiter Teil. Theorie der phänomenologischen Reducktion. In R. Boehm (Ed.), *Husserliana* (Vol. 8). Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff.

Husserl, E. (1970/1936). *The crisis of European sciences and transcendental phenomenology: An introduction to phenomenological philosophy* (D. Carr, trans.) Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Ickes, W. (1997). *Empathic accuracy.* New York: Guildford Press.

Ickes, W. (2011). Everyday mind reading is driven by motives and goals. *Psychological Inquiry, 22,* 200–206. doi:10.1080/1047840X.2011.561133

Ilmer, S., Snyder, J. A., Erbaugh, S., & Kurtz, K. (1997). Urban educators' perceptions of successful teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education, 48,* 379–385. doi:10.1177/0022487197048005007

Jackson, P., Brunet, E., Meltzoff, A., & Decety, J. (2006). Empathy examined through the neural mechanisms involved in imagining how I feel versus how you feel pain. *Neuropsychologia, 44,* 752–761. doi:10.1016/j.neuropsychologia.2005.07.015

Jackson, S. W. (1992). The listening healer in the history of psychological healing. *American Journal of Psychiatry, 149,* 1623–1632. doi:10.1176/ajp.149.12.1623

Jacobs, A. M. (2012). Comment on Walter's "Social cognitive neuroscience of empathy: concepts, circuits, and genes". *Emotion Review, 4,* 20–21. doi:10.1177/1754073911421388

Jenkins, N., Bloor, M., Fischer, J., Berney, L., & Neale, J. (2010). Putting it in context: The use of vignettes in qualitative interviewing. *Qualitative Research, 10,* 175–198. doi:10.1177/1468794109356737

Johnson, J., & Bytheway, B. (2001). An evaluation of the use of diaries in a study of medication in later life. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology: Theory & Practice, 4,* 183–204. doi:10.1080/13645570010029467

Johnson, J. A., Cheek, J. M., & Smither, R. (1983). The structure of empathy. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 45,* 1299–1312. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.45.6.1299

Johnson, B., & Stevens, J. J. (2006). Student achievement and elementary teachers' perceptions of school climate. *Learning Environments Research*, *9*, 111–122. doi:10.1007/s10984-006-9007-7

Jones, A. P., Happé, F. G., Gilbert, F., Burnett, S., & Viding, E. (2010). Feeling, caring, knowing: Different types of empathy deficit in boys with psychopathic tendencies and autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, *51*, 1188–1197. doi:10.1111/j.1469-7610.2010.02280.x

Jordon, J. V. (1991). Empathy, mutuality, and therapeutic change: Clinical implications of a relational model. In J. V. Jordan, A. G. Kaplan, J. B. Miller, I. P. Stiver, & J. L. Surrey (Eds.), *Women's growth in connection: Writings from the stone center* (pp. 283–289). New York: Guildford.

Kerns, K. A. (2005). *Attachment in middle childhood.* New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Kerns, K. A., Klepac, L., & Cole, A. (1996). Peer relationships and pre-adolescents' perceptions of security in the child-mother relationship. *Developmental Psychology*, *32*, 457–466. doi:10.1037/0012-1649.32.3.457

Kerns, K. A., Tomich, P. L., & Kim, P. (2006). Normative trends in children's perceptions of availability and utilization of attachment figures in middle school. *Social Development*, *15*, 1–22. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9507.2006.00327.x

Kestenbaum R., Farber E. A., & Sroufe L. A. (1989). Individual differences in empathy among preschoolers: Relation to attachment history. In N. Eisenberg (Ed.), *Empathy and related emotional responses: New directions for child and adolescent development* (pp. 51–64). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. doi:10.1002/cd.23219894405

Keysers, C., & Gazzola, V. (2014). The vicarious brain. In M. Mikulincer & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Mechanisms of social connection: From brain to group*, (pp. 71–88). Washington, DC: American Psychology Association. doi:10.1037/14250-005

Klassen, R., Durksen, T.L., Rowett, E., & Patterson, F. (2014). Applicant reactions to a situational judgment test used for selection into initial teacher training. *International Journal of Educational Psychology, 3*, 104–124. doi:10.4471/ijep.2014.07

Knox, J. (2004). From archetypes to reflective function. *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, *49*, 1–19. doi:10.1111/j.0021-8774.2004.0437.x

Kogler, H. H., & Stueber, K. R. (2000). *Empathy and agency: The problem of understanding in the human sciences.* Boulder, CO: Westview.

Kohn, A. (1996). What to Look for in a Classroom. *Educational Leadership*, *54*, 54–55.

Krasner, M. S., Epstein, R. M., Beckman, H., Suchman, A. L., Chapman, B., Mooney, C. J., & Quill, T. E. (2009). Association of an educational program in mindful communication with burnout, empathy, and attitudes among primary care physicians. *Jama*, *302*, 1284–1293. doi:10.1001/jama.2009.1384

Krohne, H. W., Pieper, M., Knoll, N., & Breimer, N. (2002). The cognitive regulation of emotions: The role of success versus failure experience and coping dispositions. *Cognition & Emotion*, *16*, 217–243. doi:10.1080/02699930143000301

Krznaric, R. (2014). *Empathy: A handbook for revolution.* London: Random House.

Kunter, M., Tsai, Y. M., Klusmann, U., Brunner, M., Krauss, S., & Baumert, J. (2008). Enjoying teaching: Enthusiasm and instructional behaviors of secondary school mathematics teachers. *Learning and Instruction*, *18*, 468–482. doi:10.1016/j.learninstruc.2008.06.008

Kuperminic, G. P., Leadbeater, B. J., Emmons, C., & Blatt, S. J. (1997). Perceived school climate and difficulties in the social adjustment of middle school students. *Applied Developmental Science, 1,* 76–88. doi:10.1207/s1532480xads0102_2

La Paro, K. M., Pianta, R. C., & Stuhlman, M. (2004). The Classroom Assessment Scoring System: Findings from the pre-kindergarten year. *The Elementary School Journal, 104,* 409–426. doi:10.1086/499760

Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). Conceptual metaphor in everyday language. *Journal of Philosophy, 77,* 453–486. doi:10.2307/2025464

Lamm, C., Decety, J., & Singer, T. (2011). Meta-analytic evidence for common and distinct neural networks associated with directly experienced pain and empathy for pain. *Neuroimage, 54,* 2492–2502. doi:10.1016/j.neuroimage.2010.10.014

Lamm, C., Porges, E. C., Cacioppo, J. T., & Decety, J. (2008). Perspective taking is associated with specific facial responses during empathy for pain. *Brain Research, 1227,* 153–161. doi:10.1016/j.brainres.2008.06.066

Lang, P., Best, R., & Lichtenberg, A. (1994). *Caring for children: International perspectives on pastoral care and PSE*. London: Cassell.

Lang, P., Katz, Y. J., & Menezes, I. (1998). *Affective education: A comparative view*. London: Cassell.

Langer, J. A. (2000). Excellence in English in middle and high school: How teachers' professional lives support student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal, 37,* 397–439. doi:10.3102/00028312037002397

Lanzetta, J. T., & Englis, B. G. (1989). Expectations of cooperation and competition and their effects on observers' vicarious emotional responses. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 56,* 543–544. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.56.4.543

Larkin, M., Watts, S., & Clifton, E. (2006). Giving voice and making sense in interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*, 102–120. doi:10.1191/1478088706qp062oa

Lee, V. E., Smith, J. B., Perry, T. E., & Smylie, M. A. (1999). *Social support, academic press, and student achievement: A view from the middle grades in Chicago.* Retrieved from http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/publications/p0e01.pdf

Lee, W., & Reeve, J. (2012). Teachers' estimates of their students' motivation and engagement: Being in synch with students. *Educational Psychology*, *32*, 727–747. doi:/10.1080/01443410.2012.732385

Levasseur, J., & Vance, A. R. (1993). Doctors, nurses, and empathy. In H. M. Spiro, M. G. Mccrea Curnen, E. Peschel, & D. St. James (Eds.), *Empathy and practice of medicine* (pp. 76–84). New Haven: Yale University Press.

Levine, L. J. (1996). The anatomy of disappointment: A naturalistic test of appraisal models of sadness, anger, and hope. *Cognition & Emotion, 10,* 337–359. doi:10.1080/026999396380178

Levy, J. (1997). A note on empathy. *New Ideas in Psychology, 15,* 179–184. doi:10.1016/S0732-118X(97)00007-X

Lewis, R., & Riley, P. (2009). Teacher Misbehaviour. In L. J. Saha and A. G. Dworkin (Eds.), *The international handbook of research on teachers and teaching* (pp. 417–431). Norwell, MA: Springer. doi:10.1007/978-0-387-73317-3_27

Liew, J., Chen, Q., & Hughes, J. N. (2010). Child effortful control, teacher–student relationships, and achievement in academically at-risk children: Additive and interactive effects. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, *25*, 51–64. doi:10.1016/j.ecresq.2009.07.005

Lincoln, Y. S, & Guba, E. A. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Linn, L. S., DiMatteo, M. R., Cope, D. W., & Robbins, A. (1987). Measuring physicians' humanistic attitudes, values, and behaviors. *Medical Care, 25,* 504–515. doi:10.1097/00005650-198706000-00005

Lundgaard Bak, P. (2010). *Thoughts in Mind.* City of Aarhus.

Lundgaard Bak, P. (2013). Thoughts in Mind: Promoting mentalizing communities for children. In N. Midgley & I. Vrouva (Eds.), *Minding the child: Mentalization-based interventions with children, young people and their families* (pp. 202–217). New York, NY: Routledge.

Luyten, P., Fonagy, P., Lowyck, B., & Vermote, R. (2012). Assessment of mentalization. In A. W. Bateman & P. Fonagy (Eds.), *Handbook of mentalizing in mental health practice* (pp. 43–63). Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Publishing.

Luyten, P., Mayes, L. C., Fonagy, P., Target, M., & Blatt, S. J. (2015). *Handbook of psychodynamic approaches to psychopathology*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Luyten, P., Mayes, L. C., Nijssens, L., & Fonagy, P. (2017). The parental reflective functioning questionnaire: Development and preliminary validation. *PloS one, 12,* e0176218. doi :10.1371/journal.pone.0176218

Ma, L., Phelps, E., Lerner, J. V., & Lerner, R. M. (2009). The development of academic competence among adolescents who bully and who are bullied. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 30,* 628–644. doi:10.1016/j.appdev.2009.07.006

MacKay, R., Hughes, J. R., & Carver, E. J. (1990). *Empathy in the helping relationship.* New York: Springer.

Main, M. (1991). Metacognitive knowledge, metacognitive monitoring, and singular (coherent) vs. multiple (incoherent) models of attachment. *Attachment across the Life Cycle*, 127–159. doi:10.4324/9780203132470

Malatesta, C. Z. & Haviland, J. M. (1982) Learning display rules: The socialization of emotional expression in infancy. *Child Development, 53,* 991–1003. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.1982.tb01363.x

Mar, R. A., & Oatley, K. (2008). The function of fiction is the abstraction and simulation of social experience. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 3,* 173–192. doi:10.1111/j.1745-6924.2008.00073.x

Martin, A., & Dowson, M. (2009). Interpersonal relationships, motivation, engagement, and achievement: Yields for theory, current issues and educational practice. *Review of Educational Research, 79,* 327–365. doi:10.3102/0034654308325583

Marx, A., Fuhrer, U., & Hartig, T. (1999). Effects of classroom seating arrangements on children's question-asking. *Learning Environments Research, 2,* 249–263. doi:10.1023/A:1009901922191

Marzano, R. J., Pickering, D., & Pollock, J. E. (2001). *Classroom instruction that works: Research-based strategies for increasing student achievement*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Mashburn, A. J., Hamre, B. K., Downer, J. T., & Pianta, R. C. (2007). Teacher and classroom characteristics associated with teachers' ratings of pre-kindergartners' relationships and behaviors. *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment, 24,* 367–380. doi:10.1177/0734282906290594

Mashburn, A. J., Pianta, R., Hamre, B. K., Downer, J. T., Barbarin, O., Bryant, D., Howes, C. (2008). Measures of classroom quality in pre-kindergarten and children's development of academic, language and social skills. *Child Development, 79,* 732–749. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2008.01154

Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review, 50,* 370–396. doi:10.1037/h0054346

Mathews, D. A., Suchman, A. L., & Branch, W. T. (1993). Making connections: Enhancing the therapeutic potential of patient–clinician relationships. *Annals of Internal Medicine, 118,* 973–977. doi:10.7326/0003-4819-118-12-199306150-00010

Mayseless, O. (2005). Ontogeny of attachment in middle childhood: Conceptualization of normative changes. In K. A. Kerns & R. A. Richardson (Eds.), *Attachment in middle childhood* (pp. 1–23). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

McAllister, G., & Irvine, J. J. (2002). The role of empathy in teaching diverse students: A qualitative study of teachers' beliefs. *Journal of Teacher Education, 53,* 433–443. doi:10.1177/002248702237397

McLeod, J., Fisher, J., & Hoover, G. (2003). *The key elements of classroom management: Managing time and space, student behavior, and instructional strategies*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Mead, G. H. (1934). *Mind, self and society.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mehrabian, A., & Epstein, N. (1972). A measure of emotional empathy. *Journal of Personality, 40,* 525–543. doi:10.1111/j.1467-6494.1972.tb00078.x

Mehrabian, A., Young, A. L., & Sato, S. (1988). Emotional empathy and associated individual differences. *Current Psychology, 7,* 221–240. doi:10.1007/bf02686670

Meissner, W. W. (1996). *The therapeutic alliance.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1956). What is phenomenology?, *Cross Currents, 6,* 59–70.

Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation: Revised and expanded from qualitative research and case study applications in education.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mertens, D. M. (2010). *Research and evaluation in education and psychology: Integrative diversity with quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Mete, S. (2007). The empathic tendencies and skills of nursing students. *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal, 35,* 1181–1188. doi:10.2224/sbp.2007.35.9.1181

Mikulincer, M., Shaver, P. R., Gillath, O., & Nitzberg, R. A. (2005). Attachment, caregiving, and altruism: Boosting attachment security increases compassion and helping. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 89,* 817–839. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.89.5.817

Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs [MCEETYA] (2008). *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians.* Retrieved from http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/National_Declaration_on_the_Educational_Goals_for_Young_Australians.pdf

Mitchell, M. M., Bradshaw, C. P., & Leaf, P. J. (2010). Student and teacher perceptions of school climate: A multilevel exploration of patterns of discrepancy. *Journal of School Health, 80,* 271–279. doi:10.1111/j.1746-1561.2010.00501.x

Moore, D. W. (1984). Variation in question rate as a function in the classroom. *Education Psychology, 4,* 233–248. doi:10.1080/0144341840040304

Morgan, J. D. (2002). *Social support: A reflection of humanity.* Amityville, New York: Baywood Publishing Company.

Morrison, B. (2007). *Restoring safe school communities: A whole school response to bullying, violence and alienation.* Sydney, NSW: Federation Press.

Morse, J. M. (2000). Determining sample size. *Qualitative Health Research, 10,* 3–5. doi:10.1177/104973200129118183

Mosley, J. (1993). *Turn your school around: A circle time approach to developing self-esteem and positive behaviour in the primary classroom*. Cambridge, MA: Learning Development Aids.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. doi:10.4135/9781412995658

Nakamura, I. (2008). Understanding how teacher and student talk with each other: An exploration of how 'repair' displays the co-management of talk-in-interaction. *Language Teaching Research, 12,* 265–283. doi:10.1177/1362168807086295

Nias, J. (1999). Primary teaching as a culture of care. In J. Prosser (Ed.), *School culture* (pp. 66–81). London: Paul Chapman. doi:10.4135/9781446219362.n5

Nightingale, S. D., Yarnold, P. R., & Greenberg, M. S. (1991). Sympathy, empathy, and physician resource utilization. *Journal of General Internal Medicine, 6,* 420–423. doi:10.1007/BF02598163

Noddings, N. (1988). An ethic of caring and its implications for instructional arrangements. *American Journal of Education, 96,* 215–230. doi:10.1086/443894

Noddings, N. (1992). *The challenge to care in schools: An alternative approach to education.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Noddings, N. (2001). The caring teacher. In V. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (4th ed., pp. 99–105). Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.

O'Connor, B. P., & Dyce, J. (1997). Interpersonal rigidity, hostility, and complementarity in musical bands. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 72,* 362–372. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.72.2.362

O'Connor, M. K., Netting, F. E., & Thomas, M. L. (2008). Grounded theory: Managing the challenge for those facing institutional review board oversight. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *14*, 28–45. doi:10.1177/1077800407308907

Obama, B. (2006, June 16). *Northwestern University Commencement Address.* Retrieved from http://www.northbynorthwestern.com/2008/11/13173/barack-obamas-2006-commencement-speech

Obama, B. (2007). *The audacity of hope: Thoughts on reclaiming the American dream*. London: Canongate Books.

Ontario College of Teachers. (2006). *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession.* Retrieved from http://www.oct.ca/public/professional-standards/ethical-standards

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD] (2015). *Skills for social progress: The power of social and emotional skills.* Paris: OECD Publishing. Retrieved from: http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/education/skills-for-social-progress_9789264226159-en#.WMyF-11MQSU

Orwin, R. G. (1994). Evaluating coding decisions. In H. Cooper & L. V. Hedges (Eds.), *Handbook of research synthesis* (pp. 139–162). New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.

Osterman, K. F. (2000). Students' need for belonging in the school community. *Review of Educational Research*, *70*, 323–367. doi:10.3102/00346543070003323

Owens, J. (2016, April 29). Manus Island: Turnbull says NZ asylum 'marketing opportunity for smugglers. *The Weekend Australian.* Retrieved from http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/immigration/albanese-defends-mps-speaking-out-against-shorten-on-boats/news-story/899bbc72fdd83c1cdddfe95731f5fed9

Patrick, H., Ryan, A., & Kaplan, A. (2007). Early adolescents' perceptions of the classroom social environment, motivational beliefs, and engagement. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 99,* 83–98. doi:10.1037/0022-0663.99.1.83;

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2nd Ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Patton, M. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (3rd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: International Educational and Professional Publisher.

Patton, M. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice* (4th Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Peart, N. A., & Campbell, F. A. (1999). At-risk students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness. *Journal for a Just and Caring Education, 5*, 269–284.

Perlman, H. H. (1979). *Relationship: The heart of helping people.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Peterson, C., & Park, N. (2007). Attachment security and its benefits in context. *Psychological Inquiry*, *18*, 172–176. doi:10.1080/10478400701512752

Pianta, R. C., Belsky, J., Vandergrift, N., Houts, R., & Morrison, F. J. (2008). Classroom effects on children's achievement trajectories in elementary school. *American Educational Research Journal*, *45*, 365–397. doi:10.3102/0002831207308230

Pianta, R. C., Hamre, B. K., & Mintz, S. (2012). *The CLASS – Upper elementary manual*. Unpublished measure. University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA.

Pianta, R. C., La Paro, K. M., & Hamre, B. K. (2008). *Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Manual, K-3,* Maryland: Paul H Brookes Publishing Co.

Pianta, R. C., & Stuhlman, M. W. (2004). Teacher-child relationships and children's success in the first years of school. *School Psychology Review*, *33*, 444–458.

Pigman, G. W. (1995). Freud and the history of empathy. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis, 76,* 237–256.

Plummer, K. (1983). *Documents of life: An introduction to the problems and literature of a humanistic method*. London: Allen & Unwin.

Porter, A. C., & Brophy, J. (1988). Synthesis of research on good teaching: Insights from the work of the Institute for Research on Teaching. *Educational Leadership, 45,* 74–85.

Porter, S., & ten Brinke, L. (2008). Reading between the lies identifying concealed and falsified emotions in universal facial expressions. *Psychological Science, 19,* 508–514. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9280.2008.02116.x

Preston, S. D. (2007). A perception-action model for empathy. In T. F. Farrow & P. W. Woodruff (Eds.) *Empathy in mental illness,* (pp. 428–447). London, UK: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511543753.024

Preston, S. D., & de Waal, F. B. M. (2002). Empathy: Its ultimate and proximate bases. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences, 25,* 1–20. doi:10.1017/s0140525x02000018

Preston, S. D., & Hofelich, A. J. (2012). The many faces of empathy: Parsing empathic phenomena through a proximate, dynamic-systems view of representing the other in the self. *Emotion Review, 4,* 24–33. doi:10.1177/1754073911421378

Programme for International Student Assessment [PISA] (2015). *PISA 2015: Reporting Australia's results*. Retrieved from: http://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1023&context=ozpisa&__hstc=227787458.ca8e602141d13ca8dc90a1080fbd234b.1489585544893.1489585544893.1489585544893.1&__hssc=227787458.1.1489585544896&__hsfp=2786701696

Queensland College of Teachers (2011). *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*. Retrieved from http://qct.edu.au/pdf/QCT_AustProfStandards.pdf

Raviv, A., Raviv, A., & Reisel, E. (1990). Teacher and students, Two different perspectives?: Measuring social climate in the classroom. *American Educational Research Journal, 27,* 141–157. doi:10.3102/00028312027001141

Redman, G. L. (1977). Study of the relationship of teacher empathy for minority persons and inservice human relations training. *The Journal of Educational Research, 70,* 205–210. doi:10.1177/002248717702800307

Reik, T. (1948). *Listening with the third ear: The inner experience of a psychoanalyst.* New York: Farrar Straus.

Reniers, R. L., Corcoran, R., Drake, R., Shryane, N. M., & Völlm, B. A. (2011). The QCAE: A questionnaire of cognitive and affective empathy. *Journal of Personality Assessment, 93,* 84–95. doi:10.1080/00223891.2010.528484

Riley, P. (2009). An adult attachment perspective on the student-teacher relationship & classroom management difficulties. *Teaching & Teacher Education, 25,* 626–635. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2008.11.018

Riley, P. (2011). *Attachment theory and the teacher-student relationship: A practical guide for teachers, teacher educators and school leaders.* London: Routledge Publications.

Riley, P. (2013). Attachment theory, teacher motivation & pastoral care: A challenge for teachers and academics. *Pastoral Care in Education, 31,* 112–129. doi:10.1080/02643944.2013.774043

Riley, P., Lewis, R., & Brew, C. (2010). Why did you do that? Teachers explain the use of legal aggression in the classroom. *Teaching & Teacher Education, 26,* 957–964. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2009.10.037

Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., & Elam, G. (2003). Designing and selecting samples. In J. Ritchie & J. Lewis (Eds.), *Qualitative research practice. A guide for social science students and researchers* (pp. 77–108). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Roethlisberger, F. J., & Dickson, W. J. (2003). Management and the Worker. In K. Thompson (Ed.) *The early sociology of management and organizations.* London: Routledge.

Rogers, C. R. (1951). *Client-centered: Its current practice, implications, and theory*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Rogers, C. R. (1957). The necessary and sufficient conditions of therapeutic personality change. *Journal of Consulting Psychology, 21,* 95–103. doi:10.1037/h0045357

Rogers, C. R. (1959). A theory of therapy, personality, and interpersonal relationships as developed in the client-centered framework. In S. Koch (Ed.), *Psychology: A study of science: Foundations of the person and the social context* (pp. 184–256). New York, NY: McGraw Hill.

Rogers, C. R. (1969). *Freedom to learn.* Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill.

Rogers, C. R. (1975). Empathic: An unappreciated way of being. *The Counseling Psychologist, 5,* 2–11. doi:10.1177/001100007500500202

Rogers, D., & Webb, J. (1991). The ethic of caring in teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education, 42,* 173–181. doi:10.1177/002248719104200303

Romi, S., Lewis, R., Roache, J., & Riley, P. (2011). The impact of teachers' aggressive management techniques on students' attitudes to schoolwork. *The Journal of Educational Research, 104,* 231–240. doi:10.1080/00220671003719004

Roorda, D. L., Koomen, H. M. Y., Spilt, J. L., & Oort, F. J. (2011). The influence of affective teacher–student relationships on students' school engagement and achievement: A meta-analytic approach. *Review of Educational Research, 81,* 493–529. doi:10.3102/0034654311421793

Rowe, M. B. (1986). Wait time: Slowing down may be a way of speeding up!. *Journal of Teacher Education, 37,* 43–50. doi:10.1177/002248718603700110

Rueda, P., Fernández-Berrocal, P., & Baron-Cohen, S. (2015). Dissociation between cognitive and affective empathy in youth with Asperger Syndrome. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology, 12,* 85–98. doi:10.1080/17405629.2014.950221

Ruus, V., Veisson, M., Leino, M., Ots, L., Pallas, L., Sarv, E., & Veisson, A. (2007). Students' well-being, coping, academic success, and school climate. *Social Behavior & Personality, 35,* 919–936. doi:10.2224/sbp.2007.35.7.919

Ryan, A. M., Gheen, M. H., & Midgley, C. (1998). Why do some students avoid asking for help? An examination of the interplay among students' academic efficacy, teachers' social–emotional role, and the classroom goal structure. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 90,* 528–535. doi:10.1037/0022-0663.90.3.528

Ryan, A. M., & Patrick, H. (2001). The classroom social environment and changes in adolescents' motivation and engagement during middle school. *American Educational Research Journal, 38,* 437–460. doi:10.3102/00028312038002437

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist, 55,* 68–78. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68

Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. (1990). Emotional intelligence. *Imagination, Cognition, and Personality, 9,* 185–211. doi:10.2190/DUGG-P24E-52WK-6CDG

Sandelowski, M. (1986). The problem of rigor in qualitative research. *Advances in Nursing Science, 8*, 27–37. doi:10.1097/00012272-198604000-00005

Sautelle, E., Bowles, T., Hattie, J., & Arifin, D. N. (2015). Personality, resilience, self-regulation and cognitive ability relevant to teacher selection. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 40*, 54–71. doi:10.14221/ajte.2015v40n4.4

Scheler, M. (1954). *The nature of sympathy.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Schnell, K., Bluschke, S., Konradt, B., & Walter, H. (2011). Functional relations of empathy and mentalizing: An fMRI study on the neural basis of cognitive empathy. *Neuroimage, 54*, 1743–1754. doi:10.1016/j.neuroimage.2010.08.024

Scholz, R. W., & Tietje, O. (2005). *Embedded case study methods: Integrating quantitative and qualitative knowledge.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Schrodt, P., Witt, P. L., Myers, S. A., Turman, P. D., Barton, M. H., & Jernberg, K. A. (2008). Learner empowerment and teacher evaluations as functions of teacher power use in the college classroom. *Communication Education, 57,* 180–200. doi:10.1080/03634520701840303

Schroeder, T. (1925). The psycho-analytic method of observation. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis, 6,* 155–170.

Schutte, N. S., Malouff, J. M., Bobik, C., Coston, T. D., Greeson, C., Jedulicka, C., Rhodes, E., & Wendorf, G. (2001). Emotional intelligence and interpersonal relationships. *Journal of Social Psychology, 141,* 523–536. doi:10.1080/00224540109600569

Sergiovanni, T. (1994). *Building community in schools.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Shai, D., & Fonagy, P. (2014). Beyond words: Parental embodied mentalizing and the parent-infant dance. In M. Mikulincer & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Mechanisms of social connection: From brain to group*, (pp. 185–203). Washington DC: American Psychology Association. doi:10.1037/14250-011

Shamasundar, M. R. C. (1999). Reflections: Understanding empathy and related phenomena. *American Journal of Psychotherapy, 53,* 232–245.

Shamay-Tsoory, S. G. (2011). The neural bases for empathy. *The Neuroscientist, 17,* 18–24. doi:10.1177/1073858410379268

Shamay-Tsoory, S. G., Aharon-Peretz, J., & Perry, D. (2009). Two systems for empathy: A double dissociation between emotional and cognitive empathy in inferior frontal gyrus versus ventromedial prefrontal lesions. *Brain: A Journal of Neurology, 132,* 617–627. doi:10.1093/brain/awn279

Shamay-Tsoory, S. G., Tomer, R., Berger, B. D., & Aharon-Peretz, J. (2003). Characterization of empathy deficits following prefrontal brain damage: The role of the right ventromedial prefrontal cortex. *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience, 15,* 324–337. doi:10.1162/089892903321593063

Sharp, C., & Fonagy, P. (2008). The parent's capacity to treat the child as a psychological agent: Constructs, measures and implications for developmental psychopathology. *Social development, 17,* 737–754. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9507.2007.00457.x

Sharp, C., Fonagy, P., & Goodyer, I. (2006). Imagining your child’s mind: Psychosocial adjustment and mothers’ ability to predict their children’s attributional response styles. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology, 24,* 197–214. doi:10.1348/026151005x82569

Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information, 22,* 63–75. doi:10.3233/efi-2004-22201

Shochet, I. M., Dadds, M. R., Ham, D., & Montague, R. (2006). School connectedness is an underemphasized parameter in adolescent mental health: Results of a community prediction study. *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology, 35,* 170–179. doi:10.1207/s15374424jccp3502_1

Siegel, D. J. (2012). *The developing mind: How relationships and the brain interact to shape who we are.* New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Siegel, D. J. (2013). Introduction. In L. Cozolino (Ed.), *The social neuroscience of education: Optimizing attachment and learning in the classroom* (pp. 6–16). New York, NY: WW Norton & Company.

Sinclair, B. B., & Fraser, B. J. (2002). Changing classroom environments in urban middle schools. *Learning Environments Research, 5,* 301–328. doi:10.1023/A:1021976307020

Singer, T. (2006). The neuronal basis and ontogeny of empathy and mind reading: Review of literature and implications for future research. *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews, 30,* 855–863. doi:10.1016/j.neubiorev.2006.06.011

Singer, T. (2009). Understanding others: Brain mechanisms of theory of mind and empathy. In P. W. Glimcher, E. Fehr, C. Camerer, & R. A. Poldrack (Eds.), *Neuroeconomics: Decision making and the brain* (pp. 251–268). New York, NY: Academic Press. doi:10.1016/B978-0-12-374176-9.00017-8

Singer, T., & Frith, C. (2005). The painful side of empathy. *Nature Neuroscience, 8,* 845–846. doi:10.1038/nn0705-845

Singer, T., & Klimecki, O. M. (2014). Empathy and compassion. *Current Biology, 24,* 875–878. doi:10.1016/j.cub.2014.06.054

Skinner, E., & Belmont, M. (1993). Motivation in the classroom: Reciprocal effects of teacher behavior and student engagement across the school year. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 85,* 571–581. doi:10.1037/0022-0663.85.4.571

Slade, A. (2005). Parental reflective functioning: An introduction. *Attachment and Human Development, 7,* 269–281. doi:10.1080/14616730500245906

Slavin, R. E., Madden, N. A., Dolan, L. J., Wasik, B. A., Ross, S., Smith, L., & Dianda, M. (1996). Success for All: A summary of research. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk, 1,* 41–76. doi:10.1207/s15327671espr0101_6

Slote, M. (2007). *The ethics of care and empathy*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Smith, J. A. (1996). Beyond the divide between cognition and discourse: Using interpretative phenomenological analysis in health psychology. *Psychology and Health, 11,* 261–271. doi:10.1080/08870449608400256

Smith, J. A., Brewer, H. M., Eatough, V., Stanley, C. A., Glendinning, N. W., & Quarrell, O. W. J. (2006). The personal experience of juvenile Huntington's disease: An interpretative phenomenological analysis of parents' accounts of the primary features of a rare genetic condition. *Clinical Genetics, 69,* 486–496. doi:10.1111/j.1399-0004.2006.00624.x

Smith, J. A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretative, phenomenological analysis: Theory, method and research.* London: Sage.

Smith, J. A., Harré, R., & Van Langenhove, L. (1995). *Rethinking methods in psychology*. London: Sage Publications.

Smith, J. A., & Osborn, M. (2003). Interpretative phenomenological analysis. In J. A. Smith (Ed.), *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods* (pp. 51–80). London: Sage.

Solbakken, O. A., Hansen, R. S., Havik, O. E., & Monsen, J. T. (2011). The assessment of affect integration: Validation of the affect consciousness construct. *Journal of Personality Assessment, 93,* 257–265. doi:10.1080/00223891.2011.558874

Southard, E. E. (1918). The empathic index in the diagnosis of mental diseases. *The Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, *13*, 199–214. doi:10.1037/h0072727

Spearman, J., & Watt, H. M. (2013). Perception shapes experience: The influence of actual and perceived classroom environment dimensions on girls' motivations for science. *Learning Environments Research*, *16*, 217–238. doi:10.1007/s10984-013-9129-7

Spilt, J. L., Koomen, H. M., & Thijs, J. T. (2011). Teacher wellbeing: The importance of teacher–student relationships. *Educational Psychology Review*, *23*, 457–477. doi:10.1007/s10648-011-9170-y

Sroufe, L. A. (2005). Attachment and development: A prospective, longitudinal study from birth to adulthood. *Attachment & Human Development*, *7*, 349–367. doi:10.1080/14616730500365928

Stahl, R. J. (1994). Using think-time and wait-time skilfully in the classroom. ERIC Digest. Retrieved from: https://www.ericdigests.org/1995-1/think.htm

Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Stein, E, (1989). *On the problem of empathy.* Washington, DC: ICS Publishers. doi:10.1007/978-94-009-1051-5

Stern, J. A., Borelli, J. L., & Smiley, P. A. (2015). Assessing parental empathy: A role for empathy in child attachment. *Attachment & Human Development*, *17*, 1–22. doi:10.1080/14616734.2014.969749

Stotland, E. (1969). Exploratory investigations of empathy. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, *4*, 271–314. doi:10.1016/S0065-2601(08)60080-5

Strandmark, M., & Hedelin, B. (2002). Phenomenological methods reveal an inside perspective on health and ill health. In R-M. Hallberg (Ed.), *Qualitative methods in public health research* (pp. 71–103). Lund, Sweden: Studentlitteratur.

Strauss, A. L. (1987). *Qualitative analysis for social scientists.* New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511557842

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Streubert, J. H., & Carpenter, D. R. (1999). *Qualitative research in nursing: Advancing the humanistic imperative* (pp. 75–99). Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott.

Stronge, J. H. (2007). *Qualities of effective teachers*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Stueber, K. R. (2006). *Rediscovering empathy: Agency, folk psychology, and the human sciences.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press

Stueber, K. R. (2012). Author reply: Empathy versus narrative: What exactly is the debate about? Response to my critics. *Emotion Review*, *4*, 68–69. doi:10.1177/1754073911421395

Sutton, R. E. (2005). Teachers' emotions and classroom effectiveness: Implications from recent research. *The Clearing House*, *78*, 229–234.

Swan, P., & Riley, P. (2015). Social connection: Empathy and mentalization for teachers. *Pastoral Care in Education*, *33*, 220–233. doi:10.1080/02643944.2015.1094120

Swick, K. (2005). Preventing violence through empathy development in families. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, *33*, 53–59. doi:10.1007/s10643-005-0022-6

Taylor, S. E., & Brown, J. D. (1988). Illusion and well-being: A social psychological perspective on mental health. *Psychological Bulletin*, *103*, 193–210. doi:10.1037/0033-2909.103.2.193

Taylor, S. E., Klein, L. C., Lewis, B. P., Gruenewald, T. L., Gurung, R. A. R., & Updegraff, J. A. (2000). Biobehavioral responses to stress in females: Tend-and-befriend, not fight-or-flight. *Psychological Review, 107*, 411–429. doi:10.1037/0033-295X.107.3.411

Teacher Registration Board of the Northern Territory (2009). *Professional standards and ethics.* Retrieved from http://www.trb.nt.gov.au/professional-standardsand-ethics

Teacher Registration Board Tasmania (2006). *Code of professional ethics for the teaching profession in Tasmania*. Retrieved from https://www.trb.tas.gov.au/Shared%20Documents/Code%20of%20Professional%20Ethics%20for%20the%20Teaching%20Professional%20in%20Tasmania.pdf

Teacher Selection Project. (2015). *Homepage*. Retrieved from http://www.teacherselect.org/

Teacher Selector. (2013). *Homepage*. Retrieved from https://teacherselector.com.au/

Teaching Council of Ireland. (2012). *Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers.* Retrieved from http://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/Publications/Professional-Standards/Code-of-Professional-Conduct-for-Teachers.pdf

Teding van Berkhout, E., & Malouff, J. M. (2016). The efficacy of empathy training: A meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 63*, 32–41. doi:10.1037/cou0000093

Teich, N. (1992). *Rogerian perspectives: Collaborative rhetoric for oral and written communication* (Vol. 23). Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing.

Tettegah, S., & Anderson, C. J. (2007). Pre-service teachers' empathy and cognitions: Statistical analysis of text data by graphical models. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 32,* 48–82. doi:10.1016/j.cedpsych.2006.10.010

Thapa, A., Cohen, J., Guffey, S., & Higgins-D'Alessandro, A. (2013). A review of school climate research. *Review of Educational Research*, *83*, 357–385. doi:10.3102/0034654313483907

The Resilience Project. Retrieved from http://www.theresilienceproject.com.au

Thomas, J. A., & Montgomery, P. (1998). On becoming a good teacher: Reflective practice with regard to children's voices. *Journal of Teacher Education, 49,* 372–373. doi:10.1177/0022487198049005007

Titchener, E. (1909). *Elementary psychology of the thought processes.* New York, NY: Macmillan. doi:10.1037/10877-000

Titchener, E. (1915). *A beginner's psychology*. New York, NY: Macmillan. doi:10.1037/11238-000

Todd, R. M., Cunningham, W. A., Anderson, A. K., & Thompson, E. (2012). Affect-biased attention as emotion regulation. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences, 16,* 365–372. doi:10.1016/j.tics.2012.06.003

Todres, L., & Holloway, I. (2004). Descriptive phenomenology: Life-world as evidence. In F. Rapport (Ed.) *New qualitative methodologies in health and social care research* (pp. 79–98). London: Routledge. doi:10.4324/9780203408643

Tracey, T. J. (2004). Levels of interpersonal complementarity: A simplex representation. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 30,* 1211–1225. doi:10.1177/0146167204264075

Trickett, E. J., & Moos, R. H. (1973). Social environment of junior high and high school classrooms. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 65,* 93–102. doi:10.1037/h0034823

Tronick, E. Z. (1989). Emotions and emotional communication in infants. *American Psychologist, 44,* 112–119. doi:10.1037//0003-066x.44.2.112

Twemlow, S., Fonagy, P., & Sacco, F. C. (2005a). A developmental approach to mentalizing communities: I. A model for social change. *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic, 69,* 265–281. doi:10.1521/bumc.2005.69.4.265

Twemlow, S., Fonagy, P., & Sacco, F. C. (2005b). A developmental approach to mentalizing communities: II. The Peaceful Schools experiment. *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic, 69,* 282–304. doi:10.1521/bumc.2005.69.4.282

Urdan, T., & Schoenfelder, E. (2006). Classroom effects on student motivation: Goal structures, social relationships, and competence beliefs. *Journal of School Psychology, 44*, 331–349. doi:10.1016/j.jsp.2006.04.003

van Manen, M. (1997). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy.* London: The Althouse Press.

Verducci, S. (2000). A conceptual history of empathy and a question it raises for moral education. *Educational Theory, 50,* 63–80. doi:10.1111/j.1741-5446.2000.00063.x

Victorian Institute of Teaching. (2005). *Code of ethics.* Retrieved from http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/professional-responsibilities/conduct-and-ethics

Victorian Institute of Teaching. (2009). *Standards for Graduating Teachers.* Retrieved from http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/PDF/Standards-for-Graduating-Teachers-jan-09.pdf

Völlm, B. A., Taylor, A. N., Richardson, P., Corcoran, R., Stirling, J., McKie, S., Deakin, J. F., & Elliott, R. (2006). Neuronal correlates of theory of mind and empathy: A functional magnetic resonance imaging study in a nonverbal task. *Neuroimage*, *29*, 90–98. doi:10.1016/j.neuroimage.2005.07.022

Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society.* London: Harvard University Press.

Walter, H. (2012). Social cognitive neuroscience of empathy: Concepts, circuits, and genes. *Emotion Review*, *4*, 9–17. doi:10.1177/1754073911421379

Wang, M. C., Haertel, G. D., & Walberg, H. J. (1993). Toward a knowledge base for school learning. *Review of Educational Research*, *63*, 249–294. doi:10.3102/00346543063003249

Wang, M. T., Selman, R. L., Dishion, T. J., & Stormshak, E. A. (2010). A Tobit regression analysis of the covariation between middle school students' perceived school climate and behavioral problems. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 20,* 274–286. doi:10.1111/j.1532-7795.2010.00648.x

Watt, H. M. G., & Richardson, P. W. (2007). *The Teacher Style Scale*. Unpublished measure. Monash University, Melbourne.

Way, N., Reddy, R., & Rhodes, J. (2007). Students' perceptions of school climate during the middle school years: Associations with trajectories of psychological and behavioral adjustment. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 40,* 194–213. doi:10.1007/s10464-007-9143-y

Wayment, H. A. (2006). Attachment style, empathy, and helping following a collective loss: Evidence from the September 11 terrorist attacks. *Attachment & Human Development, 8,* 1–9. doi:10.1080/14616730600585292

Wei, M., Liao, K. Y. H., Ku, T. Y., & Shaffer, P. A. (2011). Attachment, self-compassion, empathy, and subjective well-being among college students and community adults. *Journal of Personality, 79,* 191–221. doi:10.1111/j.1467-6494.2010.00677.x

Weldon, P. R. (2015). The teacher workforce in Australia: supply, demand and data issues. *Policy Insights, 2,* 1–18. Melbourne: ACER. Retrieved from http://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1001&context=policyinsights

Welker, R. L. (2005). The fundamental importance of simple operational definitions of introspection and empathy. *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly, 74,* 767–799. doi:10.1002/j.2167-4086.2005

Wellborn, J., Connell, J., Skinner, E., & Pierson, L. (1992). *TASC: Teacher report.* Rochester, NY: University of Rochester.

Wellman, B. (1998). Social network. In H. S. Friedman (Ed.), *Encyclopaedia of mental health* (pp. 525–544). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Wellman, H. M. (1990). *The child's theory of mind.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Wentzel, K. R. (1994). Relations of social pursuit to social competence, classroom behavior and perceived social support. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 86,* 173–182. doi:10.1037/0022-0663.86.2.173

Wentzel, K. R. (1997). Student motivation in middle school: The role of perceived pedagogical caring. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 89,* 411–419. doi:10.1037/0022-0663.89.3.411

Wentzel, K. R. (2002). Are effective teachers like good parents? Teaching styles and student adjustment in early adolescence. *Child Development, 73,* 287–301. doi:10.1111/1467-8624.00406

Wentzel, K. R. (2004). Understanding classroom competence: The role of socio-motivational and self-processes. In R. V. Kail (Ed.), *Advances in child development and behavior, Vol. 32,* (pp. 213–241). San Diego, CA: Elsevier. doi:10.1016/s0065-2407(04)80008-9

Wentzel, K. R. (2009). Students' relationships with teachers as motivational contexts. In K. Wentzel & A. Wigfield (Eds.), *Handbook of motivation at school* (pp. 301–322). Mahwah, NJ: LEA.

Wheelwright, S., & Baron-Cohen, S. (2011). Systemising and Empathising. In D. A. Fein (Ed.), *The neuropsychology of autism* (pp. 317–338). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Wieder, D., & Zimmerman, D. (1977). The diary: diary interview methods. *Urban Life, 5,* 479–498. doi:10.1177/089124167700500406

Wiemann, J. M. (1977). Explication and test of a model of communicative competence. *Human Communication Research, 3,* 195–213. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2958.1977.tb00518.x

Willig, C. (2001). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology*. Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press.

Willig, C., & Billin, A. (2012). Existentialist- Informed Hermeneutic Phenomenology. In D. Harper & A. R. Thompson (Eds.) *Qualitative research methods in mental health and psychotherapy: A guide for students and practitioners* (pp. 117–130). West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons.

Winefield, H., & Chur-Hansen, A. (2000). Evaluating the outcome of communication skill teaching for entry-level medical students: Does knowledge of empathy increase?, *Medical Education, 34*, 90–94. doi:10.1046/j.1365-2923.2000.00463.x

Wispé, L. (1978). *Altruism, sympathy and helping: Psychological and sociological principles.* New York: Academic Press.

Wispé, L. (1986). The distinction between sympathy and empathy: To call forth a concept, a word is needed. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 50*, 314–321. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.50.2.314

Wispé, L. (1987). History of the concept of empathy. In N. Eisenberg & J. Strayer (Eds.), *Empathy and its development* (pp. 17–37). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Wolf, E. S. (1980). The dutiful physician: The central role of empathy in psychoanalysis, psychotherapy, and medical practice. *Hillside Journal of Clinical Psychiatry, 2,* 41–56.

Wolk, S. (2002). *Being good: Rethinking classroom management and student discipline*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Wolters, C. A. (2004). Advancing achievement goal theory: Using goal structures and goal orientations to predict students' motivation, cognition, and achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 96,* 216–235. doi:10.1037/0022-0663.96.2.236

Wubbels, T., & Brekelmans, M. (2005). Two decades of research on teacher–student relationships in class. *International Journal of Educational Research, 43*, 6–24. doi:10.1016/j.ijer.2006.03.003

Wubbels, T., Brekelmans, M., den Brok, P., Levy, J., Mainhard, T., & van Tartwijk, J. (2012). Let's make things better: Development in research on interpersonal relationships in education. In T. Wubbels, P. den Brok, J. van Tartwijk, & J. Levy (Eds.), *Interpersonal relationships in education: An overview of contemporary research* (pp. 225–250). Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense Publishers.

Wubbels, T., Brekelmans, M., den Brok, P., & van Tartwijk, J. (2006). An interpersonal perspective of classroom management in secondary classrooms in the Netherlands. In C. Evertson & C. Weinstein (Eds.), *Handbook of classroom management: Research, practice, and contemporary issues* (pp. 1161–1193). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Wubbels, T., Brekelmans, M., den Brok, P., Wijsman, L., Mainhard, T., & van Tartwijk, J. (2014). Teacher-student relationships and classroom management. In E. T. Emmer, E. Sabornie, C. Evertson, & C. Weinstein (Eds.). *Handbook of classroom management: Research, practice, and contemporary issues* (2nd ed., pp. 363–386). New York, NY: Routledge.

Wubbels, T., Brekelmans, M., & Hooymayers, H. (1991). Interpersonal teacher behaviour in the classroom. In B. J. Fraser & H. J. Walberg (Eds.), *Educational environments: Evaluation, antecedents and consequences* (pp. 141–160). Oxford, UK: Pergamon Press.

Wubbels, T., Créton, H., & Hooymayers, H. P. (1985, March-April). *Discipline problems of beginning teachers, interactional teacher behavior mapped out.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, Il. Retrieved from http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED260040.pdf

Yardley, L. (2000). Dilemmas in qualitative health research. *Psychology and Health, 15*, 215–228. doi:10.1080/08870440008400302

Yardley, L. (2008). Demonstrating validity in qualitative psychology. In J. A. Smith (Ed.) *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to methods* (2nd ed., pp. 235–251). London: Sage

Yin, R. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Yoon, J. S. (2002). Teacher characteristics as predictors of teacher–student relationships: Stress, negative affect, and self-efficacy. *Social Behavior & Personality: An International Journal, 30,* 485–494. doi:10.2224/sbp.2002.30.5.485

Zahavi, D. (2012). Basic empathy and complex empathy. *Emotion Review, 4,* 81–82. doi:10.1177/1754073911421387

Zahavi, D., & Overgaard, S. (2012). Empathy without isomorphism: A phenomenological account. In J. Decety (Ed.), *Empathy: From bench to bedside* (pp. 3–20). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. doi:10.7551/mitpress/9780262016612.003.0001

Zahavi, D., & Rochat, P. (2015). Empathy≠ sharing: Perspectives from phenomenology and developmental psychology. *Consciousness and Cognition, 36,* 543–553. doi:10.1016/j.concog.2015.05.008

Zaki, J. (2013). Cue integration: A common framework for physical perception and social cognition. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 8,* 296–312. doi:10.1177/1745691613475454

Zaki, J. (2014). Empathy: A motivated account. *Psychological Bulletin, 140,* 1608–1647. doi:10.1037/a0037679

Zaki, J., Bolger, N., & Ochsner, K. (2008). It takes two: The interpersonal nature of empathic accuracy. *Psychological Science, 19,* 399–404. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9280.2008.02099.x

Zaki, J., Hennigan, K., Weber, J., & Ochsner, K. N. (2010). Social cognitive conflict resolution: Contributions of domain-general and domain-specific neural systems. *Journal of Neuroscience, 30,* 8481–8488. doi:10.1523/JNEUROSCI.0382-10.2010

Zaki, J., & Ochsner, K. (2012). The neuroscience of empathy: Progress, pitfalls, and promise. *Nature Neuroscience, 15,* 675–680. doi:10.1038/nn.3085

Zhou, Q., Valiente, C., & Eisenberg, N. (2003). Empathy and its measurement. In S. J. Lopez & C. R. Snyder (Eds.) *Positive psychological assessment: A handbook of models and measures* (pp. 269–284). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. doi:10.1037/10612-017

Zins, J. E., Bloodworth, M. R., Weissberg, R. P., & Walberg, H. J. (2004). The scientific base linking social and emotional learning to school success. In *Building academic success on social and emotional learning: What does the research say* (pp. 3–22). New York: Teachers College Press.

Appendices

Appendix A - A published literature review

Pastoral Care in Education, 2015
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02643944.2015.1094120

Social connection: empathy and mentalization for teachers

Paul Swan[a]* and Philip Riley[b]

[a]*Faculty of Education, Monash University, Clayton, Australia;* [b]*Institute for Positive Psychology and Education, Australian Catholic University, Fitzroy, Australia*

(*Received 26 May 2014; final version received 10 September 2015*)

Attending to the academic and social/emotional developmental needs of students has and continues to be a significant challenge for teachers and relatively little research examining the impact of teacher empathy exists. Empathy is an important skill for educators to facilitate the creation of a positive learning environment with students and professional responsibilities of teachers to be empathic are defined in standards frameworks worldwide. Yet, defining empathy remains somewhat contested in the literature among philosophers, psychologists, anthropologists and neuroscientists. Empathy is not unitary, but rather is composed by experience, sharing, mind perception and mentalization. Simulating the mental states of others, or 'mentalizing', is a necessary component for empathic responding to others. Drawing on Fonagy's mentalization model, we examine the conceptual links between: mentalization and empathy in teachers; whether empathy skills can be taught to teachers; and, implications for classroom practice.

Keywords: empathy; mentalization; relationships

Introduction

Human beings are social animals (Dijksterhuis, 2005). We have a powerful ability to forge and maintain networks of social interdependence characterized by shared goals, joint attention and cooperative behaviour (Herrmann, Call, Hernández-Lloreda, Hare, & Tomasello, 2007). Because we spend our lives in the company of others, social cognition is necessary to make sense of others and ourselves in context (Fiske & Taylor, 2013). Understanding the internal states of others and their intentions toward us are therefore critical skills in recognizing and responding to human behaviour (Baron-Cohen, Knickmeyer, & Belmonte, 2005).

The capacity to empathize is '… the spark of human concern for others … The glue that makes social life possible' (Hoffman, 2001, p. 3). Humans empathize with others (Batson, 1998) and sacrifice their immediate self-interests to promote the overarching interests of the group and communities they belong to (Komorita & Parks, 1995). The field of education is 'an art built upon the social relationship between teacher and student' where interaction directly shapes a student's ability to 'take in new experiences and learn from them' (Siegel, 2013, pp. 11–12). It would therefore seem essential that teachers understand these relational mechanisms which enable them to create the experiential conditions to inspire student learning. Teachers' socio-emotional needs, teacher–student relationships and their association with teacher well-being warrant further

*Corresponding author. Email: paul.s.swan@monash.edu

attention in the study of interpersonal relationships in education. de Jong et al. (2014) found that while the teacher–student relationship is well-documented, few attempts have been made to identify its role and functioning. The increasing influence of psychological theory in educational practice is essential, yet concepts such as 'empathy' remain poorly understood.

A review of the literature reveals three main elements involved in an empathic attempt to enter another's mind. The first is the ability to understand other people's intentions and goals. Second is the ability to understand other people's beliefs and thoughts. This is variously referred to as theory of mind (Premack & Woodruff, 1978), mentalizing (Fonagy, Steele, Moran, & Higgitt, 1991), mind-reading (Baron-Cohen, 1995) or cognitive perspective-taking. Third is the ability to understand other people's feelings, referred to as empathy or emotional perspective taking (Decety & Lamm, 2006; Keysers & Gazzola, 2007; Preston & de Waal, 2002; Singer, 2006). Here we discuss the mentalization path and its role in expressions of empathy in the context of teaching.

The remainder of this article is divided into four sections. First, we look at the theoretical conceptualizations of empathy before looking at mentalization as a subcomponent of empathy. Second, we consider the literature on social intelligence and the role of mirror neurons. Third, we review evidence for individual differences in empathy. Finally, we look at whether empathy can be taught to teachers and its importance for educators highlighting implications for teacher practice.

Conceptualizations

What is empathy?

What is actually meant by 'empathy' is often assumed and regularly not defined. This begs the question: How can we teach a skill, and expect teachers to be familiar with it without clearly defining what it means?

There are almost as many definitions of empathy as there are scientists who study the phenomenon (Wispé, 1986). Empathy has been described as an elusive concept (Basch, 1983), one that is difficult to define and measure (Kestenbaum, Farber, & Sroufe, 1989), and a term with a history marked by ambiguity and discrepancy (Swan & Riley, 2012). Yet, many definitions share important features including the idea that empathy is not unitary (Preston & Hofelich, 2012; Zaki, 2014). Instead empathy is a complex phenomenon composed of a variety of sub-skills and systems. Preston and Hofelich (2012) argue that it is an umbrella term for states of feeling 'with' involving 'processes by which observers come to understand and/or feel the state of another … ' (p. 25).

In the field of psychology, empathy is regarded as an important human characteristic to identify another person's emotions and thoughts, and respond to these with an appropriate emotion: a way to make sense of, and predict another person's behaviour (Baron-Cohen, 2003). Walter (2012) defines empathy as 'the ability to share another's internal world of thoughts and feelings' (p. 9). Krznaric (2014) defines empathy as 'the art of stepping imaginatively into the shoes of another person, understanding their feelings and perspectives, and using that understanding to guide your actions' (p. 10). To most people, empathy therefore consists of feelings or concern for others, a motivational state aimed at improving another's welfare (Decety & Howard, 2014). In essence, empathy is

generally regarded to be an ability to understand others' emotions, perspectives or situations and to resonate with or experience the other's emotional state.

Cognitive and Affective elements

So what are the elements involved in an empathic attempt? While there has been debate over the conceptualization and operationalization of empathy, it is generally agreed to consist of interrelated cognitive and affective components (Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004; Preston & de Waal, 2002; Walter, 2012).

The cognitive component is an ability to perceive and decode another's emotional state (Decety & Jackson, 2006) to accurately infer what others are thinking or feeling. It is the mental activities involved in acquiring and processing information for better understanding. 'Cognitive empathy' allows us to understand the feelings of others without us being in a similar affective state ourselves (Walter, 2012). For example, one can understand that someone is angry, without experiencing a corresponding personal emotion. Cognitive empathy is an ability to accurately perceive and respond to the thoughts and feelings of another based on accurately imagining another's experience (Davis, 1980; Hogan, 1969). It involves suppressing one's own egocentric perspective of events and entertaining someone else's.

The affective component involves an emotional sharing of another's emotional state and does not require cognitive understanding of why a person is suffering (Rankin, Kramer, & Miller, 2005). Eisenberg et al. (1994) and Hoffman (1982, 2001) define affective empathy as a response that stems from recognizing another's emotional state and experienced as similar to what the other person is feeling or would be expected to feel. It is the capacity to perceive, anticipate and respond with care to the unique affective experiences of another (Decety & Batson, 2009).

Empathy – Innate or contextual?

Empathy is often seen as an 'innate ability' with an assumption that a capacity for empathy is only learnt through experience. What is the impact of the context on levels of displayed empathy?

Displays of empathy can be automatic or context dependent (Zaki, 2014). On the one hand, people often take on other's internal states reflexively and outside awareness. Here observers' representations of their own and targets' actions overlap automatically (Niedenthal, Barsalou, Winkielman, Krauth-Gruber, & Ric, 2005). Forms of mimicry often meet criteria for automatic processing (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999). For example, viewing facial expressions may trigger similar expressions on one's own face, even in the absence of conscious recognition of the stimulus (Preston & de Waal, 2002). Evidence for automaticity can be found in the medical literature relating to clinicians taking on their patients' moods. After interacting with depressed or anxious patients, observers reported and displayed negative affect (Howes, Hokanson, & Loewenstein, 1985). Organizational psychologists have also found ripple effects where moods spread through groups (Barsade & Gibson, 2012).

Observers do not always empathize automatically. Instead, empathic processes are deeply contextual where features of observers' situations, experiences and relationships to targets systematically alter the experience of empathy. Expressions of empathy shift with the characteristics of empathizers and the situation and this has profound implications for teachers. Intergroup conflict and the degree of expertise are two contextual

factors in which empathy loses its automaticity (Zaki, 2014). For example, medical practitioners often encounter others in physical and emotional pain. Empathizing with targets at all times could render surgery to be almost impossible. Physicians may respond to this conflict through targeted decreases in empathy by systematically underestimating the amount of pain patients feel (Sloman, Rosen, Rom, & Shir, 2005).

What is teacher empathy?

In education, empathy can be considered to be 'an ability to access the life of the mind of others in their bodily and behavioural expressions' (Zahavi & Overgaard, 2012; p. 10). A behavioural definition is considered appropriate to teaching as demonstrated expressions of empathy are what students see and experience. Empathy is a fundamental component of social cognition – the capacity to think about and understand others (Fonagy, 2012, p. 4). Social cognition allows us to navigate the world of relationships requiring cooperation and reading of the 'subtle and shifting currents … to make sense of social events' (Goleman, 2006, p. 90). Empathy occurs when teachers 'suspend their single-minded focus of attention, and instead adopt a double-minded focus of attention … When empathy is switched off, they think only about their own interests. When empathy is switched on, they focus on other people's interests too' (Baron-Cohen, 2011, p. 10).

Teacher empathy is the ability of the teacher to express concern for, and take the perspective of a student or students, and involves both cognitive and affective elements (Tettegah & Anderson, 2007). As teachers' empathic abilities increase, so too does their abilities to understand and respond to student needs. How do empathic teachers do this? What are the specific skills that enable the teacher to be 'in tune' and hence meet individual student needs? 'Teacher empathy, in general, is an area that 'has not been extensively studied' (Barr, 2010, p. 368).

What is mentalization?

So what is 'mentalization' and what is its relationship to empathy? In this section, we consider the mentalizing concept before discussing in the next section how mentalization and empathy are linked.

Mentalization is an ability to understand the intentions, goals and emotional states of ourselves and others (Bateman & Fonagy, 2004). Mentalizing, as pioneered by Fonagy, Steele, Moran, and Higgitt (1991), allows us to differentiate between ourselves and others to regulate affect based on implicit mental models. These models organize and give a pattern to our experiences and allow us to identify and label feelings. Fonagy and colleagues (1991) introduced the concept of an ability to mentalize emotionally to think and feel about feeling at the same time. Thinking about our feelings while we are feeling them is essential to regulate and control our emotional states. Ideally, we learn to identify our emotional states, to control their intensity and duration, and to express our feelings effectively to others and to ourselves. Holmes (2001) states: 'There is always another to whom the self is telling his or her story, even if in adults this takes the form of an internal dialogue' (p. 85). Mentalizing (Fonagy et al., 1991) is a form of 'emotional knowing' (Nussbaum, 2001) and for teachers, is a tool to make sense of students as well as their own mental states simultaneously.

Teacher mentalization is the process by which teachers know students' minds and reflect on their own and these processes underpin demonstrated displays of teacher

empathy. Teachers 'turn up' or 'turn down' mentalizing based on their motives to understand or not understand student internal states (Ickes, 2011; Smith, Ickes, Hall, & Hodges, 2011). Identifying the processes whereby teachers engage in sense-making and come to know the internal states of students and respond with sensitive care, is essential to effective interaction in the classroom.

Mentalization and empathy combined

How is the capacity to mentalize and to show empathy linked? Mentalizing and empathy both require an understanding of someone else's mental or emotional state, but empathy additionally requires sharing the emotional experience of another (Decety & Jackson, 2004; Singer, 2006). Empathy is therefore primarily focused on the other rather than the self and is focused on affect rather than cognition. Mentalizing has been found to positively influence two dimensions of cognitive empathy: perspective taking and levels of personal distress (Hooker, Verosky, Germine, Knight, & D'Esposito, 2008; Krasner et al., 2009).

Mentalization seeks to understand how others think and feel requiring an ability to look inside ourselves to get access to our inner life, whereas another's behaviour is based on mental states that are always in flux. We mentalize consciously when we are puzzled about another's actions. 'Why was she so abrupt with me? Is she upset because I didn't respond?' We also mentalize consciously about our own actions – 'How could I have eaten that chocolate when I am on a diet?' It is what we do and why, and what they do and why. It requires self-awareness as well as awareness of the mental states of others on a personal and interpersonal level to make the moment-to-moment adjustments to verbal and emotional signals read in others. Mentalizing results in a sense of responsibility for our actions, rather than feeling our behaviour just 'happens.' Empathy in a sense is one facet of mentalizing. If the concept of empathy was extended to include empathy for ourselves, mentalization and empathy would be virtually synonymous.

The ability to mentalize and to empathize is mostly used in concert when we try to understand other people's intentions, beliefs, desires and feelings. Preliminary evidence from studies of populations with marked social deficiencies, such as those with autism or psychopathy, suggest that mentalizing and empathizing are actually distinct abilities, each with dedicated neural circuitry (Singer, 2006). Including mentalizing abilities in definitions of empathy likens the construct to 'Theory of Mind' – the metacognitive capacity to explain, predict and interpret behaviour by attributing mental states (desires, beliefs, intentions and emotions) to ourselves and to others (Decety & Howard, 2014). The flexible interplay of circuits within the brain associated with attention, cognitive control and mentalizing allow us to feel and empathize with the inner lives of others (Keysers & Gazzola, 2014).

Understanding another's thinking or feeling allows us to empathically 'get under other people's skin', a skill fundamental to 'social intelligence'. Social intelligence, popularized by Goleman (2006), may explain the variance in interpersonal functioning not accounted for by intelligence or other constructs. He argued that social awareness, or sensing another's inner state of feeling and thought, includes empathy, attunement, empathic accuracy and social cognition.

Social intelligence and the role of mirror neurons

Theory of mind research focuses on our ability to understand other people's goals and intentions by observing their actions. This research originated in Italy with the discovery that neurons in the premotor cortex of the brains of macaque monkeys were firing both when a monkey performed hand movements and when it merely observed another monkey or human performing the same action (Ferrari, Gallese, Rizzolatti, & Fogassi, 2003; Gallese, Fadiga, Fogassi, & Rizzolatti, 1996). These 'mirror neurons', as they came to be known, are evidence for a brain mechanism which represents the subject's own world and that of others. It was suggested by Gallese et al. (1996) that mirror neurons were the basis for imitation. When imitating another's actions, we first have to transform what we see (action perception) into our own motor programme to allow us to generate an action sequence. Since the discovery of mirror neurons, several studies have demonstrated a similar coding of the perception and generation of motor actions in the human brain (Decety & Grèzes, 2006).

Debate about the exact function of the mirror neuron system and its role in social cognition continues. Fogassi et al. (2005) suggest the mirror neuron system might play a general role in understanding other people's intentions by providing an automatic simulation of their actions. Simulation extends the role of mirror neurons from an understanding of other's motor actions and action-related intentions into the domain of feelings. To understand what other people are feeling, we simulate their feelings using our own affective programmes (Keysers & Gazzola, 2007). In turn, Iacoboni and colleagues (Carr, Iacoboni, Dubeau, Mazziotta, & Lenzi, 2003; Iacoboni & Dapretto, 2006) have suggested a motor theory of empathy where mirror neurons have a broader role in social cognition beyond understanding action to understanding others' emotions and predicting their behaviour. Thus, the ability to empathize may have evolved from a system which represents our own internal feeling states and allows us to predict the affective outcomes of an event for ourselves and for others (Singer et al., 2004). These imitative behaviours start motor programmes that make us feel we are linked to the minds of others (Rizzolatti, Fadiga, Fogassi, & Gallese, 1999). Critics of this broad interpretation of the role of the mirror neuron systems believe it overemphasizes its role in social cognition (Jacob & Jeannerod, 2005). They argue mirror neurons may help us understand other's simple, observable action goals, but not their abstract beliefs as conceptualized in theory of mind tasks.

While both mentalizing and empathizing represent two different capacities that rely on different circuitries, both result in a better understanding of other's minds and usually work together.

Individual differences in empathy

Do some people naturally have empathy abilities while others don't? People are not equally empathic. Scientifically, individual differences in empathic capacity can be assessed using standard empathy questionnaires, such as the Empathy Quotient (Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004), and Empathic Concern Scale of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (Davis, 1980). These scales measure psychological traits which are conceptualized as personality dispositions that are relatively stable over a person's lifetime. Earlier measures including the Hogan Empathy Scale (Hogan, 1969) measured empathy as a disposition or personality trait that did not change over time. Concerns were raised about its continued use, with the literature now considering empathy as

having state as well as trait elements (Froman & Peloquin, 2001); other researchers challenged the practice of studying empathy as a unidimensional phenomenon (Davis, 1994; Decety & Jackson, 2004). A number of reviews concluded a new approach to the study of empathy is needed (Duan & Hill, 1996; Gladstein & Brennan, 1987; Verducci, 2000).

Individual differences with respect to empathy and the degree to which we have empathic feelings will vary as a function of context and situational factors. In the case of schools, there will be a range of factors that may promote or hinder the conditions necessary for empathy to occur. Further investigation of the factors and pre-conditions that modulate empathic responses are important for a better understanding of the conditions where prosocial behaviour, on the one hand, and egoistic behaviour, on the other, are likely to occur. An interesting question for future research is to determine the relative importance of the ability to empathize and to mentalize for the prediction of others' motives and actions in different situations, and to determine in which situations one is interfering with or even facilitating the other.

Why is empathy important for educators?

In teaching, a model suggesting that the representation of one's own feeling states is necessary for empathy to arise leads to two possible predictions. First, that enhancing the capacity to understand one's own feelings would also enhance the capacity for empathy. Second, deficits in understanding one's own emotions would be associated with empathy deficits. While evidence for the first hypothesis is still at an early stage, evidence for the second hypothesis is accumulating (Singer, 2009).

To be effective, teachers need to understand how students' experiences inside classrooms shape the changes that are going on in their minds (Nuthall, 2007). In a synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses addressing student achievement, Hattie (2009) found that cultivating teacher–student relationships is a key factor to improving student learning with an average effect size of .72 across 229 studies. Similarly, Cornelius-White (2007) in a meta-analysis of 119 studies found person-centred teacher variables, such as honouring student voice, and adapting to individual and cultural differences to be positively correlated with improved student outcomes with mean correlations of .31.

Teaching regulatory agencies worldwide routinely list providing empathy or care to students as a professional responsibility. For example, in Ireland and Ontario, Canada teachers are required to show care 'through empathy in practice'. New Zealand and countries of the South Pacific require 'responsible care'. In Australia, the National Professional Standards for Principals endorse empathy as a personal quality (AITSL, 2011, p. 7) and state registration boards require empathy (Tasmania, Northern Territory) or care (Queensland). Despite these requirements, 'cognitive and emotional misunderstandings [are] chronic features of many schools and classrooms' (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 839).

Teaching is an interpersonal endeavour (Butler, 2012; Riley, 2013). Teacher–student relationships require attention from teachers in the classroom, and are an important source of teacher concern and happiness (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Day, Stobart, Sammons, & Kington, 2006). Positive relationships with students are central to teachers' self-efficacy and professional identity in all phases of a teaching career (Day et al., 2006). It is common for many beginning and veteran teachers to experience problems in the domain of interpersonal relationships and classroom management (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006). Problematic teacher–student relationships seem to be an important reason for teacher attrition early in a career (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003).

Teacher interpersonal competence is therefore an important factor in creating and maintaining positive relationships with students and enhancing the quality of a teaching career (Wubbels & Brekelmans, 2006). Teachers with healthy teacher–student relationships are better able to teach effectively and motivate their students (Cornelius-White, 2007).

Empathy, mentalization built from attachment

So from where do mentalization abilities originate? Maslow (1967) argued that 'Beloved people can be incorporated into the self… ' (p. 103). Most research on attachment has focused on the parent–child bond, a relationship that is particularly relevant to teachers. McCall (1974) defines 'attachment' as the 'incorporation of… [the other's] actions and reactions … into the content of one's various conceptions of the self' (p. 219). Parents shape the attachment schemas, or inner working models of their children, subconsciously guiding feelings, attitudes and behaviours toward adults in authority. Teachers follow parents as authority figures as a central source of nurturance and safety and become the first 'secure base' (Bowlby, 1988) outside the family (Riley, 2013). From attachment theory, it follows that the mentalizing capacity of teachers as 'significant other' for the students is important for healthy student development (Swan & Riley, 2012). While children project their schema onto teachers, as members of the class, teachers have the power to regulate or modify their projections through empathic understanding of the child's motives. Even minor changes in teacher mentalization about children might have a significant impact on the child's emerging mind through interactions with a responsive, mentalizing caregiver such as a teacher (Shai & Fonagy, 2014). Increasing teachers' awareness of the importance of mentalizing holds great promise.

Teachers and parents play important complementary roles in a child's development. Ideally, both enhance a child's emotional regulation by providing a safe haven that supports the learning process, but this is not always the case (Lewis & Riley, 2009; Romi, Lewis, Roache, & Riley, 2011; Riley, 2013). A key component of empathy and mentalization therefore is the teacher's ability to mirror the mind of the child. Mirroring is 'the process by which a person attunes to a child's inner world and provides the child with the words and behaviours for self-expression' (Cozolino, 2013, p. 52). Teacher–student attunement therefore isn't a 'nice addition' for learning, but a core requirement. Ways to improve the quality of teachers' mentalizing capacities therefore requires serious investigation.

Can empathy skills be taught to teachers?

In medical training, empathy is typically taught as a set of cognitive and behavioural skills (Winefield & Chur-Hansen, 2000). Should empathy skills also be taught to teachers?

Within classrooms, one sees a range of empathy practices depending on the importance placed on empathy by the teacher involved and empathic teachers regulate their teaching to meet student needs (Siegel, 2012). The process of assessing teacher-embodied mentalization involves focusing on moments of empathy in the classroom and examining the degree to which a teacher's ability to appreciate his/her student's mental states translates into regulating behaviour. Without empathy, teachers are teaching content instead of teaching students.

Rogers (1951) initially described empathy as a skill that can be taught. In his later work (1975), he conceded that empathy was not so much a skill, as a way of being. Is empathy a skill that can be taught as a 'competency' or is it something fuller, something

more persistent? While the process of empathy can be facilitated to occur, affective elements – teaching teachers how to feel if you like – cannot be directly taught as this element is considered to be somewhat autonomic (van Berkhout & Maloof, 2015). The authors however do believe that behavioural empathy elements (occurring in response to affective or cognitive empathy processes) can and should be taught to teachers.

Empathy training has been shown to be successful in improving empathic potential in other fields. For example, for health professionals, a 2015 meta-analysis of 18 randomized controlled trials evaluating empathy training found training programmes are efficacious with a moderate effect size of .63 (van Berkhout & Maloof, 2015). Further, this meta-analysis found that studies that targeted cognitive and behavioural, or cognitive, affective and behavioural empathy together, had higher effect sizes than studies that targeted cognitive or affective empathy elements only. Interestingly, all studies targeted at least cognitive empathy based on a view that cognitive empathy involves processes that can be consciously acquired. The study concluded that further research is needed on types of assessment which is often hampered by the lack of an agreed-upon method of measuring empathy. Difficulties in measurement may lead to devaluation and neglect of important aspects of training.

We hypothesize that, just as with the medical practitioners, cognitive and behavioural empathy elements can be taught to teachers to improve their relational practices. While there is no one process for empathy to be taught, there are a range of strategies that seem to work and teachers can improve their skills in this area. Empathy skills can be learned by teachers if they have access to the right strategies. Teachers can enhance or strengthen their empathy skills through experiences that increase self-awareness, listening, awareness of commonalities, and respect and tolerance for others. Promoting attitudes and behaviours such as self-awareness, positive regard for others, good listening skills, and respect are important in developing teachers who are motivated to demonstrate empathic capacity.

Conclusion – towards an operational measure of empathy for educators

Empathy is an important skill as it represents the very foundations for student care. As in medicine, it has always been and always will be among a teacher's most essential tools of practice. Simulating the mental states of others, or 'mentalizing', is a necessary precondition for empathic responding to others (Frith & Frith, 2003; Preston & de Waal, 2002). Examining the process of teacher mentalization is an important component of the teacher empathy process (Fonagy, Steele, Moran, & Higgitt, 1991; Hogan, 1969) and there is a need for robust, workable taxonomies for this domain of professional competence mandated in standards frameworks.

Human beings take into account both what we learn and from whom we are learning it. Mentalizing for teachers involves the capacity to consider and treat a child as a psychological agent motivated by mental states (Fonagy, Gergely, Jurist, & Target, 2002).

> A teacher can see a child's history reflected in his or her postures, attitudes, words and spirit, and by the end of the first day of the new school year, has a pretty good idea of the challenges that lie ahead. (Cozolino, 2013, p. 23)

Within a class, the teacher actively seeks to 'interactively regulate each other's internal states' (Siegel, 2012).

Classrooms are complex social settings characterized by social interactions between teachers and students, and among students. Empirical work over the past decade supports the view that the form interactions take between teachers and students are important in student learning (Lewis & Riley, 2009; Pianta, Belsky, Vandergrift, Houts, & Morrison, 2008). Successful teachers establish, enhance and maintain healthy relationships with students, and stimulate students' motivation for learning and this is in part achieved through mentalization. The question is to what extent? This requires us to pay attention to the nuances of teachers' work, to understand and explore what their success tells us about how children learn. If the quality of teacher–student relationships underpins educational experiences for children, then we need to investigate this area more rigorously.

The process of assessing teacher-embodied mentalization involves focusing precisely on moments of empathy in the classroom and examining the degree to which a teacher's ability to appreciate his/her student's mental states is translated into modifying behaviour to meet student needs. Fonagy's concept of mentalization involves interpersonally complex understandings of ourselves and others, reflecting abilities that enable us to navigate the social world and develop an enriched, stable sense of self. Considering the affective, cognitive and behavioural effects of teacher–student interactions to enhance teacher empathy skills is therefore an area ripe for future research.

ORCID

Paul Swan http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4764-8026
Philip Riley http://orcid.org/0000-0002-3323-5805

References

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL). (2011). *Australian professional standards for principals*. Retrieved 28 July, 2015 from http://www.aitsl.edu.au/australian-professional-standard-for-principals

Bargh, J. A., & Chartrand, T. L. (1999). The unbearable automaticity of being. *American Psychologist, 54*, 462 479. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.54.7.462

Baron-Cohen, S. (1995). *Mindblindness: An essay on autism and theory of mind*. Boston, MA: MIT Press/Bradford Books.

Baron-Cohen, S. (2003). *The essential difference: Men, women and the extreme male brain*. London: Penguin Books.

Baron-Cohen, S. (2011). *Zero degrees of empathy: A new theory of human cruelty*. London: Allen Lane.

Baron-Cohen, S., & Wheelwright, S. (2004). The empathy quotient: An investigation of adults with Asperger syndrome or high functioning autism, and normal sex differences. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 34*, 163 175. doi:10.1023/B:JADD.0000022607.19833.00

Baron-Cohen, S., Knickmeyer, R. C., & Belmonte, M. K. (2005). Sex differences in the brain: Implications for explaining autism. *Science, 310*, 819 823. doi:10.1126/science.1115455

Barr, J. (2010). The relationship between teachers' empathy and perceptions of school culture. *Educational Studies, 37*, 365 369. doi:10.1080/03055698.2010.506342

Barsade, S. G., & Gibson, D. E. (2012). Group affect: Its influence on individual and group outcomes. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 21*, 119 123. doi:10.1177/0963721412438352

Basch, M. F. (1983). Empathic understanding: A review of the concept and some theoretical considerations. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, 31*, 101 126. doi:10.1177/000306518303100104

Bateman, A. W., & Fonagy, P. (2004). Mentalization-based treatment of BPD. *Journal of Personality Disorders, 18*, 36 51. doi:10.1521/pedi.18.1.36.32772

Batson, C. D. (1998). Altruism and prosocial behavior. In D. T. Gilbert, S. T. Fiske, & G. Lindzey (Ed.), *The handbook of social psychology* (Vol. 2, pp. 282 316). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Beijaard, D., Meijer, P. C., & Verloop, N. (2004). Reconsidering research on teachers' professional identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 20*, 107 128. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2003.07.001

Bowlby, J. (1988). *A secure base: Clinical applications of attachment theory*. London: Routledge.

Butler, R. (2012). Striving to connect: Extending an achievement goal approach to teacher motivation to include relational goals for teaching. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 104*, 726 742. doi:10.1037/a0028613

Carr, L., Iacoboni, M., Dubeau, M. C., Mazziotta, J. C., & Lenzi, G. L. (2003). Neural mechanisms of empathy in humans: A relay from neural systems for imitation to limbic areas. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, 100*, 5497 5502. doi:10.1073/pnas.0935845100

Cornelius-White, J. (2007). Learner-centered teacher student relationships are effective: A meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research, 77*, 113 143. doi:10.3102/003465430298563

Cozolino, L. (2013). *The social neuroscience of education: Optimizing attachment and learning in the classroom*. New York, NY: WW Norton & Company.

Davis, M. H. (1980). A multidimensional approach to individual differences in empathy. *Catalogue of Selected Documents in Psychology, 10*, 1 17.

Davis, M. H. (1994). *Empathy: A social psychological approach*. New York, NY: Westview Press.

Day, C., Stobart, G., Sammons, P., & Kington, A. (2006). Variations in the work and lives of teachers: Relative and relational effectiveness. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice, 12*, 169 192. doi:10.1080/13450600500467381

Decety, J., & Batson, C. D. (2009). Empathy and morality: Integrating social and neuroscience approaches. In J. Verplaetse, J. Braeckman, & J. De Schrijver (Eds.), *The moral brain: Essays on the evolutionary and neuroscientific aspects of morality* (pp. 109 127). Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer. doi:10.1007/978-1-4020-6287-2_5

Decety, J., & Grèzes, J. (2006). The power of simulation: Imagining one's own and other's behavior. *Brain Research, 1079*, 4 14. doi:10.1016/j.brainres.2005.12.115

Decety, J., & Howard, L. H. (2014). Emotion, morality, and the developing brain. In M. Mikulincer & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Mechanisms of social connection: From brain to group* (pp. 105 122). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. doi:10.1037/14250-007

Decety, J., & Jackson, P. L. (2004). The functional architecture of human empathy. *Behavioral and Cognitive Neuroscience Reviews, 3*, 71 100. doi:10.1177/1534582304267187

Decety, J., & Jackson, P. L. (2006). A social-neuroscience perspective on empathy. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 15*, 54 58. doi:10.1111/j.0963-7214.2006.00406.x

Decety, J., & Lamm, C. (2006). Human empathy through the lens of social neuroscience. *The Scientific World Journal, 6*, 1146 1163. doi:10.1100/tsw.2006.221

de Jong, R., Mainhard, T., van Tartwijk, J., Veldman, I., Verloop, N., & Wubbels, T. (2014). How pre-service teachers' personality traits, self-efficacy, and discipline strategies contribute to the teacher student relationship, *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 84*, 294 310.

Dijksterhuis, A. (2005). Why we are social animals: The high road to imitation as social glue. *Perspectives on Imitation: From Neuroscience to Social Science, 2*, 207 220.

Duan, C., & Hill, C. E. (1996). The current state of empathy research. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 43*, 261 274. doi:10.1037/0022-0167.43.3.261

Eisenberg, N., Fabes, R. A., Murphy, B., Karbon, M., Maszk, P., & Smith, M. (1994). The relations of emotionality and regulation to dispositional and situational empathy-related responding. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 66*, 776 797. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.66.4.776

Evertson, C. M., & Weinstein, C. S. (2006). Classroom management as a field of inquiry. In C. Evertson & C. Weinstein (Eds.), *Handbook of classroom management: Research, practice, and contemporary issues* (pp. 3 15). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Ferrari, P. F., Gallese, V., Rizzolatti, G., & Fogassi, L. (2003). Mirror neurons responding to the observation of ingestive and communicative mouth actions in the monkey ventral premotor cortex. *European Journal of Neuroscience, 17*, 1703 1714. doi:10.1046/j.1460-9568.2003.02601.x

Fiske, S. T., & Taylor, S. E. (2013). *Social cognition: From brains to culture*. London: Sage.
Fogassi, L., Ferrari, P. F., Gesierich, B., Rozzi, S., Chersi, F., & Rizzolatti, G. (2005). Parietal lobe: From action organization to intention understanding. *Science, 308*, 662 667. doi:10.1126/science.1106138
Fonagy, P. (2012). Introduction and overview. In A. W. Bateman & P. Fonagy (Eds.), *Handbook of mentalizing in mental health practice* (pp. 3 43). Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Publishing.
Fonagy, P., Gergely, G., Jurist, E. L., & Target, M. (2002). *Affect regulation, mentalization, and the development of the self*. London: Karnac.
Fonagy, P., Steele, H., Moran, G., & Higgitt, A. (1991). The capacity for understanding mental states: The reflective self in parent and child and its significance for security of attachment. *Infant Mental Health Journal, 12*, 201 218. doi:10.1002/1097-0355(199123)12:3%3C201:AID-IMHJ2280120307%3E3.0.CO;2-7
Frith, U., & Frith, C. D. (2003). Development and neurophysiology of mentalizing. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences, 358*, 459 473. doi:10.1098/rstb.2002.1218
Froman, R. D., & Peloquin, S. M. (2001). Rethinking the use of the Hogan empathy scale: A critical psychometric analysis. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy, 55*, 566 572. doi:10.5014/ajot.55.5.566
Gallese, V., Fadiga, L., Fogassi, L., & Rizzolatti, G. (1996). Action recognition in the premotor cortex. *Brain, 119*, 593 609. doi:10.1093/brain/119.2.593
Gladstein, G. A., & Brennan, J. (1987). *Empathy and counselling: Explorations in theory and research*. New York, NY: Springer-Verlag.
Goleman, D. (2006). *Social intelligence: Beyond IQ, beyond emotional intelligence*. New York, NY: Bantam.
Hargreaves, A. (1998). The emotional practice of teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 14*, 835 854. doi:10.1016/S0742-051X(98)00025-0
Hattie, J. (2009). *Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*. London: Routledge.
Herrmann, E., Call, J., Hernández-Lloreda, M. V., Hare, B., & Tomasello, M. (2007). Humans have evolved specialized skills of social cognition: The cultural intelligence hypothesis. *Science, 317*, 1360 1366. doi:10.1126/science.1146282
Hoffman, M. L. (1982). Development of prosocial motivation: Empathy and guilt. In N. Eisenberg (Ed.), *The Development of Prosocial Behaviour* (pp. 281 313). New York, NY: Academic Press. doi:10.1016/B978-0-12-234980-5.50016-X
Hoffman, M. L. (2001). *Empathy and moral development: Implications for caring and justice*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
Hogan, R. (1969). Development of an empathy scale. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 33*, 307 316. doi:10.1037/h0027580
Holmes, J. (2001). *The search for the secure base: Attachment theory and psychotherapy*. London: Brunner-Routledge.
Hooker, C. I., Verosky, S. C., Germine, L. T., Knight, R. T., & D'Esposito, M. (2008). Mentalizing about emotion and its relationship to empathy. *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience, 3*, 204 217. doi:10.1093/scan/nsn019
Howes, M. J., Hokanson, J. E., & Loewenstein, D. A. (1985). Induction of depressive affect after prolonged exposure to a mildly depressed individual. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 49*, 1110 1113. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.49.4.1110
Iacoboni, M., & Dapretto, M. (2006). The mirror neuron system and the consequences of its dysfunction. *Nature Reviews Neuroscience, 7*, 942 951. doi:10.1038/nrn2024
Ickes, W. (2011). Everyday mind reading is driven by motives and goals. *Psychological Inquiry, 22*, 200 206. doi:10.1080/1047840X.2011.561133
Ingersoll, R. M., & Smith, T. M. (2003). The wrong solution to the teacher shortage. *Educational Leadership, 60*, 30 33.
Jacob, P., & Jeannerod, M. (2005). The motor theory of social cognition: A critique. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences, 9*, 21 25. doi:10.1016/j.tics.2004.11.003
Kestenbaum, R., Farber, E. A., & Sroufe, L. A. (1989). Individual differences in empathy among preschoolers: Relation to attachment history. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development, 1989*, 51 64. doi:10.1002/cd.23219894405

Keysers, C., & Gazzola, V. (2007). Integrating simulation and theory of mind: From self to social cognition. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences, 11*, 194 196. doi:10.1016/j.tics.2007.02.002

Keysers, C., & Gazzola, V. (2014). The vicarious brain. In M. Mikulincer & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Mechanisms of social connection: From brain to group* (pp. 71 88). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. doi:10.1037/14250-005

Komorita, S. S., & Parks, C. D. (1995). Interpersonal relations: Mixed-motive interaction. *Annual Review of Psychology, 46*, 183 207. doi:10.1146/annurev.ps.46.020195.001151

Krasner, M. S., Epstein, R. M., Beckman, H., Suchman, A. L., Chapman, B., Mooney, C. J., & Quill, T. E. (2009). Association of an educational program in mindful communication with burnout, empathy, and attitudes among primary care physicians. *JAMA, 302*, 1284 1293. doi:10.1001/jama.2009.1384

Krznaric, R. (2014). *Empathy: A handbook for revolution*. London: Random House.

Lewis, R., & Riley, P. (2009). Teacher misbehaviour. In L. J. Saha & A. G. Dworkin (Eds.), *The international handbook of research on teachers and teaching* (pp. 417 431). Norwell, MA: Springer. doi:10.1007/978-0-387-73317-3_27

Maslow, A. H. (1967). A theory of metamotivation: The biological rooting of the value-life. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 7*, 93 127. doi:10.1177/002216786700700201

McCall, R. B. (1974). Exploratory manipulation and play in the human infant. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development, 39*, 1 88. doi:10.2307/1166007

Niedenthal, P. M., Barsalou, L. W., Winkielman, P., Krauth-Gruber, S., & Ric, F. (2005). Embodiment in attitudes, social perception, and emotion. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 9*, 184 211. doi:10.1207/s15327957pspr0903_1

Nussbaum, M. C. (2001). *Upheavals of thought: The intelligence of the emotions*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511840715

Nuthall, G. (2007). *The hidden lives of learners*. Auckland: NZCER Press.

Pianta, R. C., Belsky, J., Vandergrift, N., Houts, R., & Morrison, F. J. (2008). Classroom effects on children's achievement trajectories in elementary school. *American Educational Research Journal, 45*, 365 397. doi:10.3102/0002831207308230

Premack, D., & Woodruff, G. (1978). Does the chimpanzee have a theory of mind? *Behavioral and Brain Sciences, 1*, 515 526. doi:10.1017/S0140525X00076512

Preston, S. D., & de Waal, F. B. M. (2002). Empathy: Its ultimate and proximal bases. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences, 25*, 1 20. doi:10.1017/S0140525X02000018

Preston, S., & Hofelich, A. (2012). The many faces of empathy: Parsing empathic phenomena through a proximate, dynamic-systems view of representing the other in the self. *Emotion Review, 4*, 24 33. doi:10.1177/1754073911421378

Rankin, K. P., Kramer, J. H., & Miller, B. L. (2005). Patterns of cognitive and emotional empathy in frontotemporal lobar degeneration. *Cognitive and Behavioral Neurology, 18*, 28 36. doi:10.1097/01.wnn.0000152225.05377.ab

Riley, P. (2013). Attachment theory, teacher motivation & pastoral care: A challenge for teachers and academics. *Pastoral Care in Education, 31*, 112 129. doi:10.1080/02643944.2013.774043

Rizzolatti, G., Fadiga, L., Fogassi, L., & Gallese, V. (1999). Resonance behaviors and mirror neurons. *Archives Italiennes de Biologie, 237*, 85 100.

Rogers, C. R. (1951). *Client-centered therapy: Its current practice, implications and theory*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Rogers, C. R. (1975). Empathic: An unappreciated way of being. *The Counseling Psychologist, 5*, 2 10.

Romi, S., Lewis, R., Roache, J., & Riley, P. (2011). The impact of teachers aggressive management techniques on students' attitudes to schoolwork, *The Journal of Educational Research, 104*, 231 240. doi:10.1080/00220671003719004

Shai, D., & Fonagy, P. (2014). Beyond words: Parental embodied mentalizing and the parent infant dance. In M. Mikulincer & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Mechanisms of social connection: From brain to group* (pp. 185 203). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. doi:10.1037/14250-011

Siegel, D. J. (2012). *The developing mind: How relationships and the brain interact to shape who we are*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Siegel, D. J. (2013). Introduction. In L. Cozolino (Ed.), *The social neuroscience of education: Optimizing attachment and learning in the classroom* (pp. 6 16). New York, NY: WW Norton & Company.

Singer, T. (2006). The neural basis and ontogeny of empathy and mind reading: Review of literature and implications for future research. *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews, 30*, 855 863. doi:10.1016/j.neubiorev.2006.06.011

Singer, T. (2009). Understanding others: Brain mechanisms of theory of mind and empathy. In P. W. Glimcher, E. Fehr, C. Camerer, & R. A. Poldrack (Eds.), *Neuroeconomics: Decision making and the brain* (pp. 251 268). New York, NY: Academic Press. doi:10.1016/B978-0-12-374176-9.00017-8

Singer, T., Seymour, B., O'doherty, J., Kaube, H., Dolan, R. J., & Frith, C. D. (2004). Empathy for pain involves the affective but not sensory components of pain. *Science, 303*, 1157 1162. doi:10.1126/science.1093535

Sloman, R., Rosen, G., Rom, M., & Shir, Y. (2005). Nurses' assessment of pain in surgical patients. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 52*, 125 132. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2648.2005.03573.x

Smith, J., Ickes, W., Hall, J., & Hodges, S. (2011). *Managing interpersonal sensitivity: Knowing when and when not to understand others*. New York, NY: NOVA Science.

Swan, P., & Riley, P. (2012). *Mentalization: A tool to measure teacher empathy in primary school teachers*. Paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education/APERA Conference, Sydney. Retrieved 2 December, 2014 from http://www.aare.edu.au/data/publications/2012/Swan12.pdf

Tettegah, S., & Anderson, C. J. (2007). Pre-service teachers' empathy and cognitions: Statistical analysis of text data by graphical models. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 32*, 48 82. doi:10.1016/j.cedpsych.2006.10.010

van Berkhout, E. T., & Malouff, J. M. (2015). The Efficacy of Empathy Training: A Meta-Analysis of Randomized Controlled Trials. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*. Online First Publication July 20, 1 10. doi:org/10.1037/cou0000093

Verducci, S. (2000). A conceptual history of empathy and a question it raises for moral education. *Educational Theory, 50*, 63 80. doi:10.1111/j.1741-5446.2000.00063.x

Walter, H. (2012). Social cognitive neuroscience of empathy: Concepts, circuits, and genes. *Emotion Review, 4*, 9 17. doi:10.3102/00346543054002143

Winefield, H., & Chur-Hansen, A. (2000). Evaluating the outcome of communication skill teaching for entry-level medical students: Does knowledge of empathy increase? *Medical Education, 34*, 90 94. doi:10.1046/j.1365-2923.2000.00463.x

Wispé, L. (1986). History of the concept of empathy. In N. Eisenberg & J. Strayer (Eds.), *Empathy and its development: Cambridge studies in social and developmental development* (pp. 17 37). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Wubbels, T., & Brekelmans, M. (2006). Two decades of research on teacher student relationships in class. *International Journal of Educational Research, 43*, 6 24. doi:10.1016/j.ijer.2006.03.003

Zahavi, D., & Overgaard, S. (2012). Empathy without isomorphism: A phenomenological account. In J. Decety (Ed.), *Empathy: From bench to bedside* (pp. 3 20). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. doi:10.7551/mitpress/9780262016612.003.0001

Zaki, J. (2014). Empathy: A motivated account. *Psychological Bulletin, 140*, 1608 1647. doi:10.1037/a0037679

Appendix B - Human ethics certificate of approval Monash University

MONASH University

Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)
Research Office

Human Ethics Certificate of Approval

This is to certify that the project below was considered by the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee. The Committee was satisfied that the proposal meets the requirements of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* and has granted approval.

Project Number:	**CF13/3167 - 2013001687**
Project Title:	**Mentalization and empathy in primary school teachers**
Chief Investigator:	**Dr Philip Riley**
Approved:	**From: 30 January 2014 to 30 January 2019**

Terms of approval - ***Failure to comply with the terms below is in breach of your approval and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.***

1. The Chief investigator is responsible for ensuring that permission letters are obtained, if relevant, and a copy forwarded to MUHREC before any data collection can occur at the specified organisation.
2. Approval is only valid whilst you hold a position at Monash University.
3. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all investigators are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure the project is conducted as approved by MUHREC.
4. You should notify MUHREC immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.
5. The Explanatory Statement must be on Monash University letterhead and the Monash University complaints clause must include your project number.
6. **Amendments to the approved project (including changes in personnel):** Require the submission of a Request for Amendment form to MUHREC and must not begin without written approval from MUHREC. Substantial variations may require a new application.
7. **Future correspondence:** Please quote the project number and project title above in any further correspondence.
8. **Annual reports:** Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an Annual Report. This is determined by the date of your letter of approval.
9. **Final report:** A Final Report should be provided at the conclusion of the project. MUHREC should be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.
10. **Monitoring:** Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by MUHREC at any time.
11. **Retention and storage of data:** The Chief Investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project for a minimum period of five years.

[redacted]

Professor Nip Thomson
Chair, MUHREC

cc: Mr Paul Swan

Postal – Monash University, Vic 3800, Australia
Building 3E, Room 111, Clayton Campus, Wellington Road, Clayton
Telephone +61 3 9905 5490 Facsimile +61 3 9905 3831
Email muhrec@monash.edu http://www.monash.edu.au/researchoffice/human/
ABN 12 377 614 012 CRICOS Provider #00008C

Appendix C - Human ethics certificate of approval Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Strategy and Review Group

2 Treasury Place
East Melbourne, Victoria 3002
Telephone: +61 3 9637 2000
DX 210083
GPO Box 4367
Melbourne, Victoria 3001

2013_002197

Mr Paul Swan
Monash University
Wellington Road
CLAYTON 3800

Dear Mr Swan

Thank you for your application of 23 October 2013 in which you request permission to conduct research in Victorian government schools and/or early childhood settings titled *Mentalization and empathy in primary school teachers.*

I am pleased to advise that on the basis of the information you have provided your research proposal is approved in principle subject to the conditions detailed below.

1. The research is conducted in accordance with the final documentation you provided to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

2. Separate approval for the research needs to be sought from school principals and/or centre directors. This is to be supported by the DEECD approved documentation and, if applicable, the letter of approval from a relevant and formally constituted Human Research Ethics Committee.

3. The project is commenced within 12 months of this approval letter and any extensions or variations to your study, including those requested by an ethics committee must be submitted to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development for its consideration before you proceed.

4. As a matter of courtesy, you advise the relevant Regional Director of the schools or governing body of the early childhood settings that you intend to approach. An outline of your research and a copy of this letter should be provided to the Regional Director or governing body.

5. You acknowledge the support of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development in any publications arising from the research.

6. The Research Agreement conditions, which include the reporting requirements at the conclusion of your study, are upheld. A reminder will be sent for reports not submitted by the study's indicative completion date.

7. If DEECD has commissioned you to undertake this research, the responsible Branch/Division will need to approve any material you provide for publication on the Department's Research Register.

State Government Victoria

2

I wish you well with your research study. Should you have further enquiries on this matter, please contact Youla Michaels, Project Support Officer, Research, Evaluation and Analytics Branch, by telephone on (03) 9637 2707 or by email at michaels.youla.y@edumail.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

Joyce Cleary
Director
Research, Evaluation and Analytics Branch

18/12/2013

enc

Appendix D - Teacher interaction questionnaire for principals

CONFIDENTIAL

Principal Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction (QTI)

You can rate teachers on the QTI (Wubbels, Brekelmans, & Hooyamers, 1991) which assesses teacher's interpersonal behaviour in the classroom. This questionnaire asks you to describe the behaviour of a teacher you perceive to be high in teacher-student relationships. Your opinion is what is wanted. This questionnaire has 48 sentences about the teacher. For each sentence, circle the number corresponding to your response. For example:

	Never				Always
This teacher expresses himself/herself clearly.	0	1	2	3	4

If you think that your teacher always expresses himself/herself clearly, circle the 4. If you think your teacher never expresses himself/herself clearly, circle the O. You also can choose the numbers 1, 2 and 3 which are in-between. The QTI will then be used as a means for you to:

1. Identify possible teacher participants and;

2. To forward particulars of the study and invite these staff members to contact me directly should they wish to participate.

Teacher Name_____ **Class (Grade 2-6 only)** _____

Please highlight the appropriate response:

Years of teaching experience: 1-6 6-10 10+ Gender: Female/Male

The teacher…						
		NEVER				**ALWAYS**
1.	**talks enthusiastically about the content**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
2.	**trusts the students**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
3.	**seems uncertain**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
4.	**gets angry unexpectedly**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
5.	**explains things clearly**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
6.	**If students don't agree with them, they could talk about it**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
7.	**Seems hesitant**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
8.	**Gets angry easily**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
9.	**Holds the students' attention**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
10.	**Is willing to explain things again.**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
11.	**Acts as if they don't know what to do.**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
12.	**Is too quick to correct students when they break a rule**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
13.	**Knows everything that goes on in the classroom**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
14.	**If students say something, they will listen**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
15.	**Let's students boss them around.**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
16.	**Is impatient**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**

CONFIDENTIAL

The teacher…						
		NEVER				ALWAYS
17.	Is a good leader	0	1	2	3	4
18.	Realizes when students don't understand	0	1	2	3	4
19.	Is not sure what to do when students fool around.	0	1	2	3	4
20.	Is easy for students to pick a fight with.	0	1	2	3	4
21.	Acts confidently.	0	1	2	3	4
22.	Is patient.	0	1	2	3	4
23.	Is easy to make a fool out of.	0	1	2	3	4
24.	Is sarcastic.	0	1	2	3	4
25.	Helps students with their work.	0	1	2	3	4
26.	Students can decide some things in their class.	0	1	2	3	4
27.	Think that students cheat.	0	1	2	3	4
28.	Is strict.	0	1	2	3	4
29.	Is friendly.	0	1	2	3	4
30.	Students can influence them.	0	1	2	3	4
31.	Thinks that students don't know anything.	0	1	2	3	4
32.	Students have to be silent in their class.	0	1	2	3	4
33.	Is someone students can depend on.	0	1	2	3	4
34.	Let's students fool around in class.	0	1	2	3	4
35.	Puts students down.	0	1	2	3	4
36.	Tests are hard	0	1	2	3	4
37.	Has a sense of humour.	0	1	2	3	4
38.	Let's students get away with a lot in class	0	1	2	3	4
39.	Thinks that students can't do things well	0	1	2	3	4
40.	Standards are very high	0	1	2	3	4
41.	Can take a joke	0	1	2	3	4
42.	Gives students a lot of free time in class	0	1	2	3	4
43.	Seems dissatisfied	0	1	2	3	4
44.	Is severe when marking papers	0	1	2	3	4
45.	Class is pleasant	0	1	2	3	4
46.	Is lenient	0	1	2	3	4
47.	Is suspicious	0	1	2	3	4
48.	Students are afraid of this teacher.	0	1	2	3	4
	TOTAL					

Appendix E - Consent form for teachers

MONASH University
Education

Title: Mentalization and Empathy in Primary School Teachers

Name of Teacher Participant:

DEECD Email Address:

Teaching Experience (Please highlight): Leading Teacher Expert Accomplished Graduate

Name of investigator(s): Paul Swan, Professor Dennis Moore, Dr. Angelika Anderson, and Dr. Philip Riley

NOTE: **I understand that after I sign and return this consent form it will be retained by the researcher. Participants will be given a photocopy of this consent form after it has been signed. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research project you should contact the Human Ethics Officer, Standing Committee on Ethics in Research Involving Humans (SCERH), Monash University, Ph: 9905 2052 Fax: 9905 1420**

I agree to take part in this Monash University Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) research project as specified above. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the **Explanatory Statement**, which I keep for my records, which outlines the aims and the ways in which data will be kept and confidentiality maintained.

Research Elements

There are **two Phases** in the project. You may nominate to be considered for either Phase 1 or Phase 2 or both. **For comparison purposes all participants need to be teaching in grades 2-6.**

- In Phase 1, I am seeking to work with 5-10 classroom teachers only for case study analysis across the 2014 teaching year to identify the key elements of practice. To minimise intrusion, data will be collected in 2 x one week periods (in term 3 (T1), and end year in term 4 (T2)).
- In Phase 2, I am seeking 20+ teachers to test the new scale to be developed.

You may choose to participate in some or all of the elements. You should be aware that you are able to withdraw from participation at any time and have all your information removed from the project.

Phase 1:

Should you wish to participate in Phase 1, these are the elements required of you:

- I agree to complete a **Teach Style Scale survey** (Watt and Richardson, 2007) on 2 separate occasions (5-10 minutes each time).

  ☐ Yes ☐ No

- I agree to distribute to my students **student consent forms and an explanatory statement** to be sent home seeking parental permission for students to participate in data collection. Specifically, to complete a student-report Teacher style survey (Watt and

Richardson, 2007), and participate in a student focus group on the empathy moment footage.

☐ Yes ☐ No

- I agree to allow continuous **videotaping of 2 x 1 full weeks of normal classroom practice** (this is a key component of Phase 1). From the footage, I understand that I will nominate up to 3 key empathy moments at each timepoint for analysis. I understand the footage of the 3 moments will also be viewed by a student focus group (where consent has been obtained). All videos will then be kept on a confidential basis.

  ☐ Yes ☐ No

- I agree that during the filming weeks that I will maintain a **teacher diary** to share my thoughts and opinions on my empathy practice (my perspective) to help identify the empathy moments from the footage and for use in the semi-structured interviews.

  ☐ Yes ☐ No

- I agree that at a pre-agreed time, two researchers can conduct **2 independent lesson observations** of 20 minutes each to assess the emotional support classroom climate using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) subscales of positive climate, teacher sensitivity, and regard for student perspectives (Pianta et al., 2012).

  ☐ Yes ☐ No

- I agree to **2 semi-structured interviews** with the researcher following the week of filming (T1 and T2) to identify the elements of practice in the video footage. I agree that the researcher may use the results as described in the Explanatory Statement.

  ☐ Yes ☐ No

- I agree to allow the **interview to be audio-taped** ☐ Yes ☐ No

- I agree to make myself available for a **further interview** (if required) ☐ Yes ☐ No

Phase 2:

Should you wish to participate in Phase 2, these are the elements required of you:

- I agree to **two classroom observations** to test the new scale in my normal classroom practice.

  ☐ Yes ☐ No

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

I understand that any data that the researcher extracts from the videos/ teacher diary/ interviews / focus groups / questionnaire / surveys for use in reports or published findings will not, under any circumstances, contain names or identifying characteristics.

I understand that I will be given a transcript of data concerning me for my approval before it is included in the write up of the research and I will be able to delete any sections that I do not want to be included in publications.

I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party.

I understand that all data will be kept in a secure storage and will be accessible only to the research team. I also understand that the data will be destroyed after a 5 year period unless I consent to it being used in future research.

Should participation in this research cause me any distress I can seek individual help such as counselling to address this. If this is the case my employer, The DEECD, has an Employee Assistance Program which can be contacted on (03) 9637 2395. Alternatively the Chief Investigator (Professor Dennis Moore) can arrange individual assistance, which may involve some cost to you. He can be contacted [redacted] or via email at [redacted]

I am also aware that the researcher will provide me with a copy of the research report upon request after December 2016.

I wish to participate in (please highlight response):

Phase 1 only **Phase 2 only** **Either Phase 1 or 2**

Name: _____

Email: _____

Mobile: _____

Signed: _____ Date_____

Responsible Researcher:	***Student Researcher:***
Professor Dennis Moore & Dr. Angelika Anderson Krongold Centre, Clayton Campus, Monash University, Clayton, Victoria 3800 [redacted]	Mr. Paul Swan PhD Student Faculty of Education Monash University [redacted]

Appendix F - Explanatory statement for teachers

MONASH University
Education

Explanatory Statement for Teachers

This information sheet is for you to keep.

My name is Paul Swan and I am a primary school leading teacher with 10 years' experience in Western and Northern Region schools. I currently am conducting research with Professor Dennis Moore, Dr. Angelika Anderson and Dr. Philip Riley in the Faculty of Education towards a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree at Monash University. This means that I will be writing a thesis which is the equivalent of a 300 page book.

I would like to invite you to participate in my Research Project, entitled:

'Mentalization' and empathy in primary school teachers

Please read this Explanatory Statement in full before making a decision. The project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee (CF13/3167 - 2013001687). I have also received approval to undertake the project from the Department of Education and Early Childhood (2013_002197) and the principal of your school.

Project Rationale

Your Principal has nominated you as a skilled practitioner and has undertaken to forward this explanatory statement to you as a person who might be interested to participate in this study. The aim of this study is *to examine what teachers do to build, develop and maintain relationships with students across a school year. I am conducting this research to explore the concept of teacher empathy and 'mentalization' - how teachers know students' minds and reflect on their own.*

Possible benefits to you from participating in the study include the provision of an opportunity to share your experience, to learn from and with others in a similar position, and contribute to the development of a new observation protocol based on the elements of practice observed. Possible benefits to society could include an enhanced appreciation of the value of relationships alongside content in teaching, to measure teacher empathy along a continuum, and as a possible way to improve mentalization practices among teachers.

If you agree to take part in the research, your participation will involve the following:

Phase 1 Case Study Group

- Phase 1 is designed to follow your normal classroom program with students in one week at three time points: term 3 2014 (T1) and end year 2014 (T2).
- I will ask you to fill out a Teach Style Scale survey (Watt and Richardson, 2007) to find out your perceptions of your teacher style at each time point. The questionnaire should not take longer than about 10 minutes to complete.
    - Participating students (where consent has been obtained) from your grade will also complete a student version of the questionnaire at each time point to assess student perceptions (10-15 minutes to complete).

- A series of teaching vignettes will be video recorded in your primary classroom during typical weeks of teaching. I will install Monash University video capture technology in your classroom for 1 week at T1 and T2.

- During the week of filming, I will ask you to complete a teacher diary of "mentalization moments" where you elaborate on instances of classroom interactions where empathy was demonstrated to enable all empathy moments to be identified and your thinking about the incidents to be recorded.

    - By noting the approximate time the empathy moment occurred in real time, the relevant video footage can be easily found and identified.
    - These vignettes will establish a series of cases that will be co-analysed by you, the independent observers, and student focus group to identify the elements of empathy practice present.

- At a pre-agreed time, classroom climate will be measured with regard to the domain of emotional support by 2 independent observers (myself and 1 other) using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) (Pianta et al., 2012) for 2x20 minute observations.

- I will ask you to participate in an interview that will take about 20-30 minutes based on up to 3 agreed key moments/short video clips of your choosing cross analysed with your teacher diary, your teacher reflection, and independent observation.

    - If you agree to be interviewed, I will be interested to find out what you were thinking, what you noticed, and what you did during these moments (and why) to identify good practice elements.

- I will also show the 3 agreed vignettes to consenting students in a focus group to obtain their perceptions of the elements of practice displayed.

Phase 2 Group

- Once analysis of the Phase 1 data has occurred and the factors for the new observation protocol identified, I am looking for 20+ teachers in another 3-4 schools to test the new scale of high, neutral and low classroom interaction elements and confirm the elements identified.

    - This would involve two classroom lesson observations using the new tool.

- Teachers in Phase 2 will also complete an empathy questionnaire – the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI; Davis, 1983) - to compare with the new tool. Teachers who have been measured as high in observed empathy and mentalization levels using the instrument should also rate highly on the Davis IRI measure.

Privacy and Confidentiality:

All information you supply will be kept in the strictest confidence. Your name and contact details will be kept in a separate, password-protected computer file from any data concerning you. In the final report, you will be referred to by a pseudonym. We will remove any references to personal information that might allow someone to guess your identity. Any information used for publication, including reporting to the DEECD will be de-identified or disguised to preserve your anonymity.

Storage of data and Invitation to Participate

Storage of the data collected will adhere to the University regulations and kept in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet for 5 years. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

Please be advised that your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Should you wish to withdraw at any stage, or to withdraw any unprocessed data you have supplied, you are free to do so without prejudice.

If you decided you would like to participate and that you have sufficient information to make this decision, please indicate that you have read and understood this information by signing the accompanying consent form and returning it by return post to the address noted below.

Contact Information:

If you would like to contact the researchers about any aspect of this study, please contact the Student Investigator:	If you have any concerns regarding the manner in which this research is being conducted, please contact:
Mr. Paul Swan c/o- Professor Dennis Moore & Dr. Angelika Anderson, Krongold Centre, Clayton Campus, Monash University, Clayton, Victoria 3800 [redacted]	Human Ethics Officer Standing Committee on Ethics in Research Involving Humans (SCERH) Building 3d, Research Office Monash University Victoria 3800 [redacted]

Thank you for considering this invitation.

Appendix G - Explanatory statement for parents

MONASH University
Education

Explanatory Statement: Parents/Guardians

Project title: 'Mentalization' and empathy in primary school teachers

June 2014

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Thank you for taking the time to consider this invitation. My name is Paul Swan and I am a primary school leading teacher with 10 years' experience in Western and Northern Region schools. I am currently conducting research with Professor Dennis Moore, Dr. Angelika Anderson and Dr. Philip Riley in the Faculty of Education towards a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree at Monash University. I am writing seeking permission to undertake research in your child's classroom. I will be in [*insert name of teacher*]'s classroom for 2 weeks during the 2014 school year.

You are receiving this letter because I would like to invite your child to take part in this study. I have received approval to conduct research from [*insert name of child's principal*], [*insert name of child's teacher*], Monash University's human ethics approval committee and the DEECD (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development). In this letter, I describe the research project, including how the research data will be managed, explain confidentiality/anonymity procedures, how I will manage any potential risks and the procedure for participation. Before any child can participate, I must obtain fully informed consent of parents or guardians, hence this letter to you. Attached to this information sheet is a consent form, which I ask you to complete if you give your consent for your child to participate in my study. I have also prepared an age-appropriate information sheet (entitled Consent Form: Students) that I attach that here as well. Please read this Explanatory Statement in full before making a decision.

What's the study about?

The aim of this study is to examine what teachers do to build, develop and maintain professional relationships with students across a school year. I plan to study 5-10 teachers to explore the concept of teacher 'mentalization' – how teachers know students' minds and reflect on their own minds. I propose to film classroom interactions across 1 week in term 3 (T1), and end year in term 4 (T2). Teachers will then be asked to identify up to 3 key empathy moments that occurred during the week of filming to analyze their thoughts and actions during each of the moments (called *vignettes*). Each vignette will focus on an empathy moment in the class and will be selected by the teacher's themselves from the week of practice.

Upon completing the week's filming and identifying the empathy moments to analyze, I plan to conduct a student focus group at [insert school name], to obtain student opinion on what they notice in the moments of practice shown in the videos. Each session will last thirty to forty minutes. The research will be conducted with a small group of consenting children immediately following filming at T1 and T2. I will meet with each group in an area in the school, suggested by the classroom teacher. The time to research (time of day and day of the week) will be completely at the teacher's discretion, in order to reduce absence from time in the classroom. As a former primary school teacher myself, I understand the importance of honoring vital instruction time and I aim for minimal disruption to conduct this research.

Please note that children will not be asked specifically about their own personal experiences but rather will be discussing the teacher's practice only. This project's aims are to draw upon their perceptions from the vignettes and not upon any personal experiences. However, if a child brings up an issue that has affected them personally and indicates that they would like to discuss it, then I would allow them to do so.

I also wish to ask participating grade 2-6 students to complete a student version of a teacher style questionnaire at T1 and T2 to obtain student perceptions of their teacher. It should take 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The Student Report Teacher Style survey (Watt and Richardson, 2007) is attached for your information.

In addition to these small group discussions, I and 1 other researcher will be spending some time in the classroom during the week of filming to directly observe the classroom emotional support climate and to rate aspects of practice. The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) (Pianta et al., 2012) will be used to measure aspects of positive climate, teacher sensitivity and regard for student perspectives. The goal here is to assess how the teacher interacts with the students. I will not be focusing on any specific child or looking out for inappropriate behaviour. Instead, I will be examining patterns of relationship development among teachers, watching to see if distinct elements of practice can be distilled in terms of high, neutral and low interactions.

Possible benefits from the project include allowing your child's teacher the opportunity to share their experience, to learn from and with others, and to contribute to the development of a new observation instrument based on the elements of practice demonstrated. The objective is to develop an enhanced appreciation of the value of relationships alongside content in teaching, to measure teacher empathy along a continuum, and as a possible way to improve practice among teachers and empathy in classrooms.

How will I collect and manage the research data?
The main data for this project are the responses received from the teacher (a diary, a reflection, filming, independent observation) and students (student questionnaire, focus group responses to vignettes). I will collect this data by video-recording the week of regular classroom practice, audio-recording our small group discussions, and taking notes during and after the discussions. After the research sessions are finished, I will analyse the responses for use in my doctoral thesis and other related publications.

How will I manage any potential risks?
Children's well-being is central to the practice of ethical research. Before every research session, children will be reminded that participation and sharing opinions is always voluntary and that they can withdraw at any time. Children will be assured that they do not need to share any information if they do not wish to do so. They will be reminded regularly of their right to withdraw from the study at any time, without any consequences. If you wish, you can request that no unprocessed data in relation to your child will be used in the research. Participation in the research project is not connected in any way to your child's formal curriculum and assessment at school and participation in this study is completely voluntary.

[*Insert name of school*]'s Principal is fully aware of this research project. It is unlikely but if a child does become upset in the course of listening to or discussing one of the vignettes or at any time, I would immediately stop the activity, in order to take time out to console the distressed child. Additionally, I will communicate the incident to both [*insert the name of child's teacher*] and [*insert name of school's Principal*]. As the focus is on aspects of positive teacher practice this is highly unlikely.

What about confidentiality and anonymity?
Participant privacy and security regarding data (both published and unpublished) is of utmost importance. None of the research participants, nor your child's school or teaching staff, will be identified. In any publications arising from the study, including my doctoral thesis, all participants and the school will be referred to using pseudonyms (false names). I intend to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of your school, students and staff to the fullest possible extent, within the limits of the law. Names and contact details will be kept in a password-protected computer file and separate from any data that is supplied by participants: the research material will be used in ways that respects confidentiality and anonymity by keeping the raw research materials in a secure and confidential form. I will aim to remove any references to personal and contextual information that might allow someone to guess the school or individuals.

Participants will not be made identifiable through unique descriptions, quotes, etc. However, while it is highly unlikely, it is possible, because of the relatively small number of people involved, that some comments could be recognised by other participants as belonging to specific individuals.

Storing the research data at the end of the study
All data will be stored under secure conditions. Hard data (notes, printed transcripts, audio tape, etc.) will be stored under lock and key. Any electronic data will be password-protected on my personal computers. Data will only be accessible by my supervisor and myself.

All data associated with this research will be retained securely for a minimum of five years, per Monash University regulations. After this time, all data will be destroyed.

I would like my child to participate in the study. What do I need to do next?
If you agree to your child participating in the study, and if your child is also willing to participate, first and foremost, thank you! I invite you now to complete the consent form by signing it and returning it to me via your child's classroom teacher. The signed consent form for parents/guardians and the signed consent form for the participant (both attached to this letter) must be returned to me. Your child can give their classroom teacher this form and s/he will return it to me. I *cannot* and *will not* collect or publish any data without parent/guardian and child consent. You may keep this form (the Explanatory Statement) and a copy of your child's consent form, for your records.

If you give consent for your child to participate and you or your child decide at *any* stage in the project to withdraw participation, this may be done without consequence and all data generated by your child for the project will be withdrawn.

Further information

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the research project, please do not hesitate to contact my supervisors or myself. I am happy to connect with you via email, phone or in person. Contact details:

Paul Swan: [redacted]
Professor Dennis Moore: [redacted]
Dr Angelika Anderson: [redacted]
Dr Philip Riley: [redacted]
If at any time you have concerns about the conduct of this research project, you may contact the Human Ethics Officer of the Standing Committee on Ethics in Research at Monash University [redacted]

Thank you again for taking the time to learn about my project and for your consideration of my request for your child's participation.

Kind Regards,

Mr Paul Swan
PhD Student
Krongold centre, Monash University, Clayton Campus
Wellington Road, Clayton, Victoria 3800 Australia
Email paswa1@student.monash.edu

Appendix H - Consent form for parents

MONASH University
Education

PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

Title: Mentalization and Empathy in Primary School Teachers

Name of Student: _____

Classroom Teacher: _____

Grade: _____

Name of investigator(s): Paul Swan, Professor Dennis Moore, Dr. Angelika Anderson and Dr. Philip Riley

NOTE: **I understand that after I sign and return this consent form it will be retained by the researcher. If I have any concerns about the conduct of this research project I can contact the Human Ethics Officer, Standing Committee on Ethics in Research Involving Humans (SCERH), Monash University, Ph: 9905 2052 Fax: 9905 1420**

I agree to my child, _____taking part in this Monash University Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) research project. I have read the **Parent Plain Language Statement**, which I keep for my records, which outlines the aims and the ways in which data will be kept and confidentiality maintained.

- I give permission for my child to participate in data collection specifically to complete a student-report Teacher style survey (Watt and Richardson, 2007) on 2 occasions and participate in 1 student focus group on the empathy movie footage.

  ☐ Yes ☐ No

- I agree to allow continuous **videotaping of 2 x 1 full weeks of normal classroom practice**. I understand the footage will be strictly kept on a confidential basis for use by the researcher only.

  ☐ Yes ☐ No

I understand that my child's participation is voluntary, and that they can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

I understand that any data that the researcher collects for use in reports or published findings will not, under any circumstances, contain names or identifying characteristics. Any information that my child provides is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party.

I understand that all data will be kept in a secure storage and will be accessible only to the research team. I also understand that the data will be destroyed after a 5 year period unless I consent to it being used in future research. I am also aware that the researcher will provide me with a copy of the research report upon request after December 2016.

Signed: _____Date_____

Appendix I - Consent form for students

MONASH University
Education

Title: Mentalization and Empathy in Primary School Teachers

CONSENT FORM: STUDENTS

Name of Student: _____

Classroom Teacher: _____

Grade: _____

Name of investigator(s): Paul Swan, Professor Dennis Moore, Dr. Angelika Anderson, and Dr. Philip Riley

1. I have had a chat with Paul and the project aims have been explained to me.

☐ Yes

☐ No

2. I understand that even if I say YES now, I can always change my mind.

☐ Yes

☐ No

3. I agree to complete a **student questionnaire** on 2 separate occasions (10-15 minutes each time).

☐ Yes

☐ No

4. I agree to participate in a student focus group on the empathy movies and the data will be kept confidential.

☐ Yes

☐ No

I agree to take part in this Monash University research project!

Student Signature: _____Date:_____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP IN MY RESEARCH!

Appendix J - Teacher questionnaire

MONASH University
Education

Teacher Questionnaire

Name_____

School_____

Please answer these questions openly and honestly. All your responses will remain confidential. Highlight the number on the ratings scale which best shows how you feel in relation to your grade.

Relational Goals Scale (Butler, 2012)		Totally disagree				Totally agree
1	I would feel most successful as a teacher if I saw that I was developing closer and better relationships with students in my class.	1	2	3	4	5
2	My main goal as a teacher is to show my students that I care about them.	1	2	3	4	5
3	More than anything, I aspire to create deep personal relationships with each and every student.	1	2	3	4	5
4	As a teacher building relationships with students is most important for me.	1	2	3	4	5
5	I take care of my students if they have problems.	1	2	3	4	5
6	I take time to get to know my students and to know what is happening with them in school and at home.	1	2	3	4	5

The Teacher Style Scale (TSS) (Watt & Richardson, 2007)

To what extent do students in your class feel ...

		not at all					a lot	
TS1.	...they get to have a say in how lessons run?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS2.	... worried you might react negatively if they don't understand?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS3.	... they enjoy interacting with you?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS4.	... there are clear expectations about student behaviour?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS5.	... they are all treated fairly?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS6.	... you take a personal interest in them?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS7.	... you deliberately embarrass students who misbehave?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS8.	... they like you for who you are?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS9.	... they have an explicit set of class rules to follow?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS10.	...they are not allowed to make fun of others in class?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS11.	... feedback they get from you is sometimes too negative?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS12.	... you are interested in hearing their ideas about classwork?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS13.	... no-one gets preferential treatment?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS14.	... you really care about them?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

CONFIDENTIAL

TS15.	... you yell angrily at students who misbehave?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS16.	... they know what will happen if they break a class rule?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS17.	... you won't allow them to say negative things about each other?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS18.	... you might react negatively towards their mistakes?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS19.	... positively towards you?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS20.	... you make sarcastic comments to misbehaving students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS21.	... you want all students to feel respected by each other?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS22.	... you consider their feelings?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS23.	... some students are treated better than others?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

To what extent do students in <u>your</u> class feel that you expect them to ...

		not at all						a lot
TS24.	... act in a mature way?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS25.	... try to do their very best?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS26.	... be self-controlled?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS27.	... give nothing less than their full effort?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS28.	... be self-reliant?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS29.	... work hard to achieve their potential?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

30.	How much do you enjoy teaching this class?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

What are the aspects you enjoy the most?

What are the aspects you find the most challenging?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

My research would not be possible without you.

Appendix K - Student questionnaire

Grade_____ Boy/Girl Date_____

The Student- Reported Teacher Style (SRTS) Survey (Watt & Richardson, 2007)

In this class, to what extent do you feel ...

		not at all (1)						Applies to me a lot (7)
TS1.	... you get to have a say in how lessons are run?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS2.	... worried your teacher might react negatively if you don't understand?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS3.	... that you enjoy interacting with your teacher?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS4.	... there are clear expectations about your behaviour?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS5.	... that you are treated fairly?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS6.	... your teacher takes a personal interest in you?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS7.	... your teacher deliberately embarrasses students who misbehave?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS8.	... that your teacher likes you for who you are?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS9.	... that you have a clear set of class rules to follow?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS10.	...you are allowed to make fun of others?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS11.	...the feedback you get from your teacher is sometimes too negative?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS12.	... your teacher is interested in hearing your ideas about classwork?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS13.	...no one gets better treatment than others?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS14.	... your teacher really cares about you?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS15.	... your teacher yells angrily at students who misbehave?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS16.	... that you know what will happen if you break a class rule?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS17.	...that your teacher will not allow the class to say negative things about each other?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS18.	... your teacher might react negatively towards your mistakes?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS19.	... positive towards your teacher?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS20.	... your teacher makes sarcastic comments to misbehaving students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS21.	...your teacher wants all students to feel respected by each other?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS22.	... your teacher considers your feelings?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS23.	... some students are treated better than others?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Please turn over...

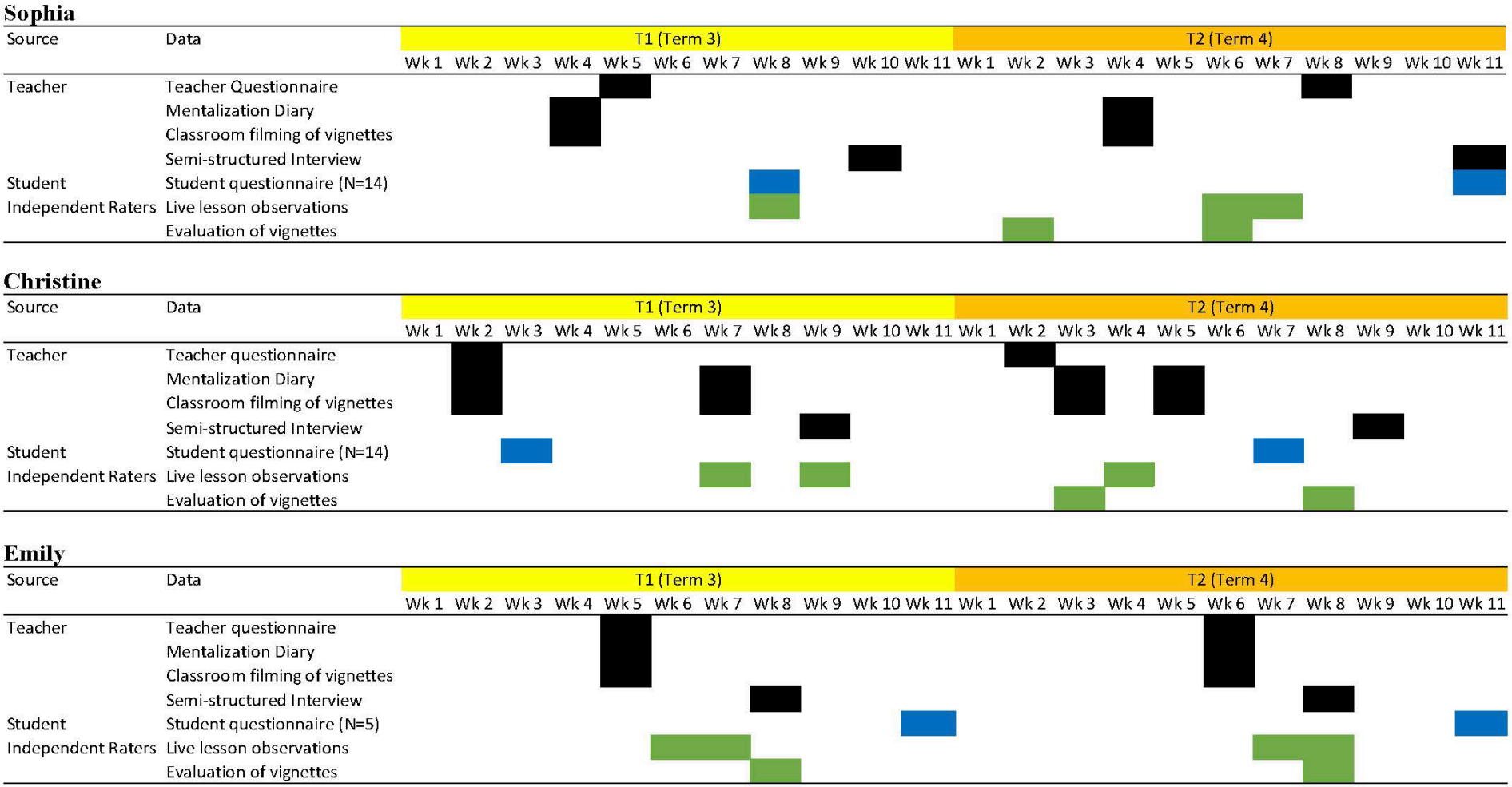
In this class, to what extent do <u>you</u> feel the teacher expects you to ...

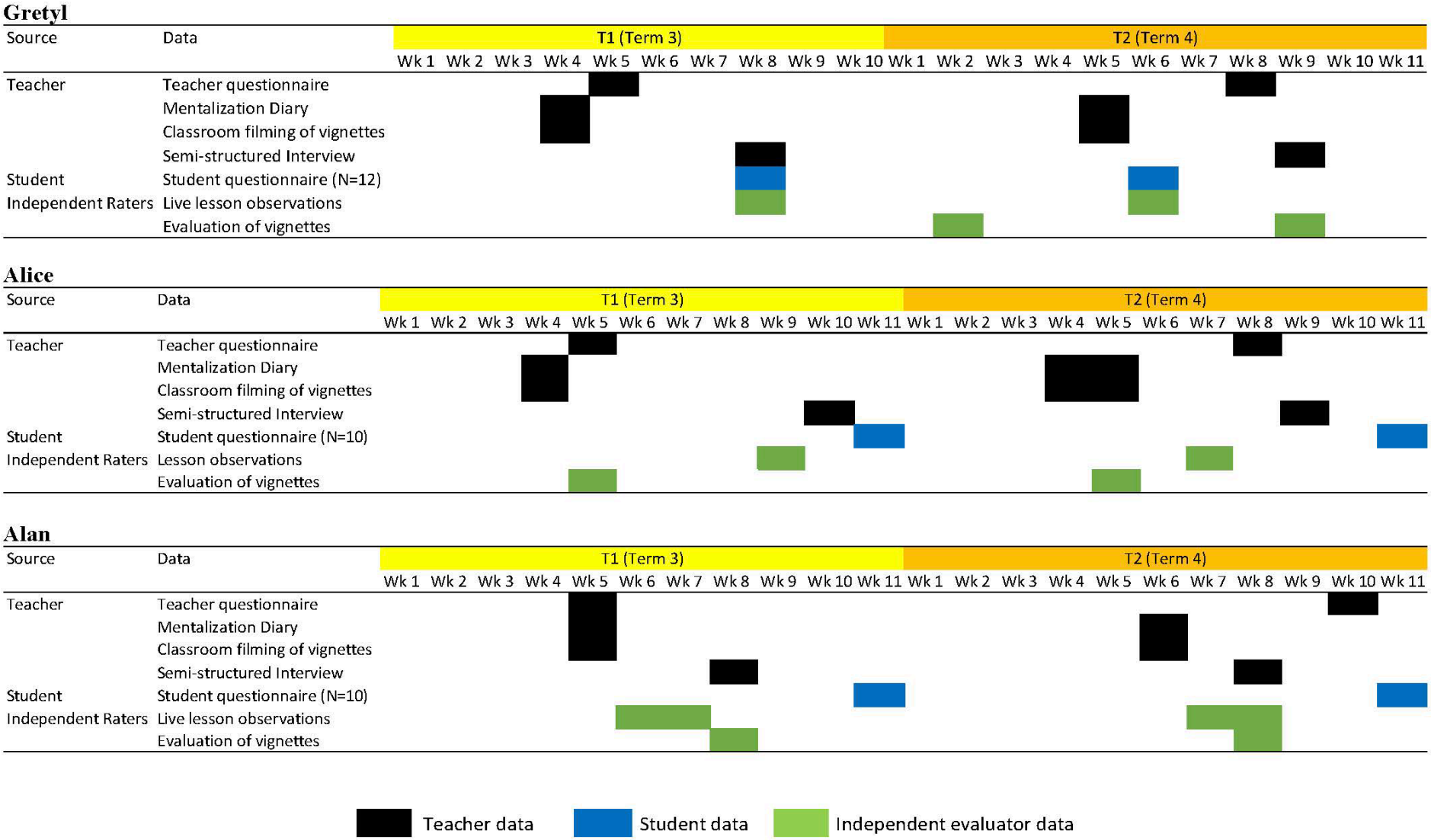
		not at all (1)					Applies to me a lot (7)
TE24.	... act in a mature way?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TE25.	... try to do your very best?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TE26.	... be self-controlled?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TE27.	... give nothing less than your full effort?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TE28.	...be self-reliant?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TE29.	... work hard to achieve your potential?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TS30.	... How would you rate your relationship with your teacher?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

My research would not be possible without you.

Appendix L - Timeline of data collection by participant




Gretyl
Source
Data
T1 (Term 3)
T2 (Term 4)
Wk 1 Wk 2 Wk 3 Wk 4 Wk 5 Wk 6 Wk 7 Wk 8 Wk 9 Wk 10 Wk 1 Wk 2 Wk 3 Wk 4 Wk 5 Wk 6 Wk 7 Wk 8 Wk 9 Wk 10 Wk 11
Teacher
Teacher questionnaire
Mentalization Diary
Classroom filming of vignettes
Semi-structured Interview
Student
Student questionnaire (N=12)
Independent Raters
Live lesson observations
Evaluation of vignettes
Alice
Source
Data
T1 (Term 3)
T2 (Term 4)
Wk 1 Wk 2 Wk 3 Wk 4 Wk 5 Wk 6 Wk 7 Wk 8 Wk 9 Wk 10 Wk 11 Wk 1 Wk 2 Wk 3 Wk 4 Wk 5 Wk 6 Wk 7 Wk 8 Wk 9 Wk 10 Wk 11
Teacher
Teacher questionnaire
Mentalization Diary
Classroom filming of vignettes
Semi-structured Interview
Student
Student questionnaire (N=10)
Independent Raters
Lesson observations
Evaluation of vignettes
Alan
Source
Data
T1 (Term 3)
T2 (Term 4)
Wk 1 Wk 2 Wk 3 Wk 4 Wk 5 Wk 6 Wk 7 Wk 8 Wk 9 Wk 10 Wk 11 Wk 1 Wk 2 Wk 3 Wk 4 Wk 5 Wk 6 Wk 7 Wk 8 Wk 9 Wk 10 Wk 11
Teacher
Teacher questionnaire
Mentalization Diary
Classroom filming of vignettes
Semi-structured Interview
Student
Student questionnaire (N=10)
Independent Raters
Live lesson observations
Evaluation of vignettes
Teacher data
Student data
Independent evaluator data

Appendix M - Teacher mentalization diary

Mentalization and Empathy Project – Teacher Diary

Teacher's Name:		**Grade:**	
Week and dates:			

The aims of this research are to examine what effective teacher practitioners do to build, develop and maintain relationships with students across a school year. The study explores **teacher 'mentalization' - how teachers know student's minds and reflect on their own.**

I am seeking to understand your and your student(s)' state(s) of mind in relation to the empathy moments you identify for analysis during the week of filming.

Specifically, what are your actions – what did you do, your thoughts and feelings, as well as your interpretation of your student's thoughts, feelings and actions in the moments identified?

Upon completing this 5 day diary, I would like you to look back and pick 3 key empathy moments for further analysis.

The diary has three primary purposes:

1. To provide a record of your account of significant empathy moments that take place over a week of normal classroom practice.

2. For you to point out why the moment was chosen and what you were thinking and feeling at the time and the reasons for your actions. I would like you to share your experience in the moments. What do you want me to notice?

3. To provide you with an opportunity to reflect and record your thoughts and feelings in a personal and dynamic way about what happened (thoughts, feelings, actions) in the moment for you AND for your students.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE:

This 5 day time diary is designed for you to complete daily during the week of filming.

- At the end of each day, I would like you to **take 10-15 minutes** to complete a **daily entry** of the date and time (hour/minute) of any significant empathy moment you engaged in with a student(s)
    - By identifying the specific date and time I will be able to isolate the moment you have identified on the film footage for further analysis.
- For each moment you identify, I would like you to **give it a number** (1, 2, 3 etc.). It is possible on some days you may identify more than one moment to reflect on.
- There are no right or wrong answers. I encourage you to be honest and open in what you record (all diary entries will be treated as confidential).
- I will analyse a cross-section of your diary and refer to aspects of your entries alongside the film footage when we sit down to interview. I will pick up your diary after filming when I pick up the camera if you like or you can email it to me at paswa1@student.monash.edu
- You can write as much or as little as you feel comfortable sharing.

DAY ONE: MONDAY **DATE:** _____

MY PERSPECTIVE

This section is about the moment you have identified to reflect upon. Please number each one.

The moment – My recount of what happened….
Approximate time of this incident: _____
Approximate length of time of this incident: _____

YOUR RESPONSE:
#1.

Why I chose this? – What I would like you to notice is…

YOUR RESPONSE:

Context – Any relevant background that led up to this particular moment happening (e.g. events prior to)? How would you describe your relationship with this/these student(s)?

YOUR RESPONSE:

Your Actions – What did you do during this moment?

YOUR RESPONSE:

Your Thoughts – What were you thinking during this moment?

YOUR RESPONSE:

Your Feelings – How were you feeling at the time this moment occurred?

YOUR RESPONSE:

Looking back what I know think – Final thoughts. Practical things I did to establish/maintain this relationship?

YOUR RESPONSE:

THE STUDENT(S) PERSPECTIVE

This section is your perceptions of what the student experienced in this moment.

Context – Any relevant background from the student perspective leading up to this moment?

YOUR RESPONSE:

Their Actions – What did you observe the student(s) doing during this moment? Why were they doing that? Is this typical behaviour for this/these student(s)?

YOUR RESPONSE:

Their Thinking – What do you think the student(s) were thinking as this moment played out? What was their state of mind?

YOUR RESPONSE:

Their Feelings – What do you think these student(s) were feeling as this moment played out? How do you know that?

YOUR RESPONSE:

DAY TWO: TUESDAY **DATE:_____**

MY PERSPECTIVE

This section is about the moment you have identified to reflect upon. Please number each one.

The moment – My recount of what happened….

Approximate time of this incident:_____

Approximate length of time of this incident:_____

YOUR RESPONSE:

#1.

Why I chose this? – What I would like you to notice is…

YOUR RESPONSE:

Context – Any relevant background that led up to this particular moment happening (e.g. events prior to)? How would you describe your relationship with this/these student(s)?

YOUR RESPONSE:

Your Actions – What did you do during this moment?

YOUR RESPONSE:

Your Thoughts – What were you thinking during this moment?

YOUR RESPONSE:

Your Feelings – How were you feeling at the time this moment occurred?

YOUR RESPONSE:

Looking back what I know think – Final thoughts. Practical things I did to establish/maintain this relationship?

YOUR RESPONSE:

THE STUDENT(S) PERSPECTIVE

This section is your perceptions of what the student experienced in this moment.

Context – Any relevant background from the student perspective leading up to this moment?

YOUR RESPONSE:

Their Actions – What did you observe the student(s) doing during this moment? Why were they doing that? Is this typical behaviour for this/these student(s)?

YOUR RESPONSE:

Their Thinking – What do you think the student(s) were thinking as this moment played out? What was their state of mind?

YOUR RESPONSE:

Their Feelings – What do you think these student(s) were feeling as this moment played out? How do you know that?

YOUR RESPONSE:

DAY THREE: WEDNESDAY **DATE:** _____

MY PERSPECTIVE

This section is about the moment you have identified to reflect upon. Please number each one.

The moment – My recount of what happened….

Approximate time of this incident: _____

Approximate length of time of this incident: _____

YOUR RESPONSE:

#1.

Why I chose this? – What I would like you to notice is…

YOUR RESPONSE:

Context – Any relevant background that led up to this particular moment happening (e.g. events prior to)? How would you describe your relationship with this/these student(s)?

YOUR RESPONSE:

Your Actions – What did you do during this moment?

YOUR RESPONSE:

Your Thoughts – What were you thinking during this moment?

YOUR RESPONSE:

Your Feelings – How were you feeling at the time this moment occurred?

YOUR RESPONSE:

Looking back what I know think – Final thoughts. Practical things I did to establish/maintain this relationship?

YOUR RESPONSE:

THE STUDENT(S) PERSPECTIVE

This section is your perceptions of what the student experienced in this moment.

Context – Any relevant background from the student perspective leading up to this moment?

YOUR RESPONSE:

Their Actions – What did you observe the student(s) doing during this moment? Why were they doing that? Is this typical behaviour for this/these student(s)?

YOUR RESPONSE:

Their Thinking – What do you think the student(s) were thinking as this moment played out? What was their state of mind?

YOUR RESPONSE:

Their Feelings – What do you think these student(s) were feeling as this moment played out? How do you know that?

YOUR RESPONSE:

DAY FOUR: THURSDAY **DATE:** _____

MY PERSPECTIVE

This section is about the moment you have identified to reflect upon. Please number each one.

The moment – My recount of what happened….
Approximate time of this incident: _____
Approximate length of time of this incident: _____

YOUR RESPONSE:
#1.

Why I chose this? – What I would like you to notice is…

YOUR RESPONSE:

Context – Any relevant background that led up to this particular moment happening (e.g. events prior to)? How would you describe your relationship with this/these student(s)?

YOUR RESPONSE:

Your Actions – What did you do during this moment?

YOUR RESPONSE:

Your Thoughts – What were you thinking during this moment?

YOUR RESPONSE:

Your Feelings – How were you feeling at the time this moment occurred?

YOUR RESPONSE:

Looking back what I know think – Final thoughts. Practical things I did to establish/maintain this relationship?

YOUR RESPONSE:

THE STUDENT(S) PERSPECTIVE

This section is your perceptions of what the student experienced in this moment.

Context – Any relevant background from the student perspective leading up to this moment?

YOUR RESPONSE:

Their Actions – What did you observe the student(s) doing during this moment? Why were they doing that? Is this typical behaviour for this/these student(s)?

YOUR RESPONSE:

Their Thinking – What do you think the student(s) were thinking as this moment played out? What was their state of mind?

YOUR RESPONSE:

Their Feelings – What do you think these student(s) were feeling as this moment played out? How do you know that?

YOUR RESPONSE:

DAY FIVE: FRIDAY **DATE:** _____

MY PERSPECTIVE

This section is about the moment you have identified to reflect upon. Please number each one.

The moment – My recount of what happened….

Approximate time of this incident: _____

Approximate length of time of this incident: _____

YOUR RESPONSE:

#1.

Why I chose this? – What I would like you to notice is…

YOUR RESPONSE:

Context – Any relevant background that led up to this particular moment happening (e.g. events prior to)? How would you describe your relationship with this/these student(s)?

YOUR RESPONSE:

Your Actions – What did you do during this moment?

YOUR RESPONSE:

Your Thoughts – What were you thinking during this moment?

YOUR RESPONSE:

Your Feelings – How were you feeling at the time this moment occurred?

YOUR RESPONSE:

Looking back what I know think – Final thoughts. Practical things I did to establish/maintain this relationship?

YOUR RESPONSE:

THE STUDENT(S) PERSPECTIVE

This section is your perceptions of what the student experienced in this moment.

Context – Any relevant background from the student perspective leading up to this moment?

YOUR RESPONSE:

Their Actions – What did you observe the student(s) doing during this moment? Why were they doing that? Is this typical behaviour for this/these student(s)?

YOUR RESPONSE:

Their Thinking – What do you think the student(s) were thinking as this moment played out? What was their state of mind?

YOUR RESPONSE:

Their Feelings – What do you think these student(s) were feeling as this moment played out? How do you know that?

YOUR RESPONSE:

Thank you for sharing your thoughts, feelings and actions with me about the empathy moments identified in your practice during the week of filming. Your input is critical to the development of a new scale to measure teacher-student relationships along a continuum. Your input and time is very greatly appreciated.

IN CONCLUSION… From this diary, the 3 key empathy moments in order of importance (with 1 the most important) I would like to focus on for further unpacking are… (moment numbers are fine)

1.

2.

3.

Appendix N - Teacher interview guide

MONASH University
Education

Interview Guide for Participant Teachers

Research title: 'Mentalization' and empathy in primary school teachers

1. This interview is designed to explore your thoughts and perspectives about teacher-student relationships in the classroom. Your responses to this interview will help me better understand the development of relationships including your perceptions about teacher practices that demonstrate empathy with students. These interviews, along with other methods of data collection, will help to answer the broad research question, "what are the roles and functions of empathy in the classroom?" and "What do skilled teacher practitioners do to demonstrate empathy with students? In particular, I want to explore the concept of 'mentalization' - how do teachers know students' minds and reflect on their own.

2. This interview will ask you to elaborate on some of the responses demonstrated in the empathy moment videos and in your mentalization diary completed for the week of filming. Your opinions, thoughts and beliefs is what is wanted.

Introduction:

Hello, my name is Paul Swan from Monash University and I'm here to interview you in regard to up to 3 empathy practice moments you have identified for further analysis from the week of classroom footage. I also wish to discuss your entries in your teacher diary completed for the same week of practice. You indicated on the consent form that you would be willing to participate in an interview. Can I now ask you to answer a few questions?

For ease of transcribing this interview, I wish to record the audio of this interview. As confidentiality and anonymity shall still be preserved, do you have any objections to my recording this interview? [**Yes / No**]

Name of Teacher Interviewee: _____

Class: _____

Number of students in this class: _____

Date of interview _____/_____/_____ Duration _____

End of Interview Schedule

MONASH University
Education

Section 1 – The Teacher's Experience and Perceptions of Empathy in the Classroom (T1 only) This section asks questions about your experiences of empathy in the classroom.

1. Can you describe for me the classroom you are working in this year and how working in this classroom makes you feel?
2. How would you rate the area of teacher-student relationships in your practice?
3. How highly do you value your relationship with your students?
4. To what extent do you enjoy interacting with your students?
5. How easy is it for you to be in tune with what your students are thinking or feeling?
6. How open are your students in sharing their feelings and experiences with you?
7. To what extent do you take a personal interest in them?
8. How do you demonstrate empathy and go about establishing or maintaining the relationships with your students across the school year? What do you do?
   A. In Term 1, what sort of things do you do to build empathy and build those relationships?
   B. And to maintain/strengthen relationships across the rest of the year?
9. What does empathy mean to you in the classroom? How important is it in your practice?
10. Using a Y-chart concept, what does empathy look like, feel like, and sound like in your classroom?
11. In your opinion, are there any preconditions necessary for empathy to occur?
12. Would you describe yourself as an empathic person?
    A. Has this always been the case?
    B. Do you think you have evolved to become more empathic as part of your professional practice? Compared to your first year?
13. Empathy – Is it something you feel or something you express? Can you express it if you don't feel it?
14. Is there a process do you think to establish and demonstrate empathy in the classroom and what might that be?
    A. At the end of the school year, the Principal comes to you and says "I have employed a new graduate and they are going to be at the opposite end of the room from you". Next year begins and this teacher comes up to you and says "I really like what you have done here with the relationships in your room. How can I get that to happen in my room?" What would you tell them?

Section 2 – The Empathy Vignettes (T1 and T2)
This section asks questions about the content of the empathy vignettes you nominated for analysis.

For each vignette, I will read out what you wrote in your teacher diary and then play you the clip of the empathy moment in the vignette. After watching the clip, I would like to discuss your thoughts, your motivation, and what actions you notice. Be as specific as you can be.

15. Why did you chose this moment?
16. What do you notice that you were doing in this moment? How are you showing empathy?
17. Your thoughts/feelings at the time?
18. What is going on for the student(s)? What were they thinking and feeling?
19. Why is this important do you think?

End of Interview Schedule

Appendix O - CLASS - Elementary emotional support observation protocol

OBSERVATION NOTES FOR EMOTIONAL SUPPORT DOMAIN (Upper Primary CLASS) **Emotional support** refers to specific teacher behaviours that promote students' academic achievement and engagement by fostering positive relationships and motivation. Teachers motivate students to learn by providing activities focused on students' interests and ideas. Students who experience supportive relationships with teachers feel comfortable reaching out for academic and emotional guidance and support and demonstrate greater effort in approaching challenging tasks.			
Teacher:		**Empathy vignette 1/2/3 or Observation 1/2**	
Format: whole group Individual **Small group Transition**		**Date and start/end time:**	
Content (circle): Maths Reading **Writing Inquiry Other**		**Year Level:** Number of students ____	
POSITIVE CLIMATE	Relationships (PC1) - Physical proximity - Peer interactions - Shared positive affect - Social conversation	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
	Positive affect (PC2) - Smiling - Laughter - Enthusiasm	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
	Positive communications (PC3) - Positive comments - Positive expectations	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
	Respect (PC4) - Respectful language - Use each other's name - Warm, calm voice - Listening to each other - Cooperation	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
TEACHER SENSITIVITY	Awareness (TS1) - Checks in with students - Anticipates problems - Notices difficulties	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
	Responsive to academic & social/emotional needs (TS2) - Individualized support - Reassurance and assistance - Adjusts pacing wait time as needed - Re-engagement - Acknowledgement of emotions and out of class factors - Timely response	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	

	Effectiveness in addressing problems (TS3) - Student issues questions resolved - Follow up	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Student comfort (TS4) - Seeks support and guidance - Take risks - Participate freely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
REGARD FOR STUDENT PERSPECTIVES	Flexibility and Student Focus (SP1) - Shows flexibility - Follows students' lead - Encourages student ideas and opinions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Connections to current life (SP2) - Connects content to student life - Communicates usefulness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Support for autonomy and leadership (SP3) - Allows choice - Chances for leadership - Gives students responsibility - Relaxed structure for movement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Meaningful peer interactions (SP4) - Peer sharing and group work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

General Comments (Any other observation notes):

Lesson Observed by: Researcher	Associate
Signature:	Date: / /2014

Appendix P - Empathic and caring actions identified by teachers in the classroom

Greets students as they enter the classroom.

Gives a physical acknowledgment such as a touch, a high five, a pat on the back.

Uses student names when addressing them.

Asks about activities outside of school to know and understand, and seek to connect with individuals.

Gives encouragement and positive feedback and seeks to help.

Gives corrections or criticism in private.

Listens and values student opinions.

Students seek teacher assistance and support.

Teacher is open to questions.

Teacher checks-in to see if students need help.

Teacher acknowledges students' strengths.

Teacher notices when the student seems upset or ill and reads body language to gauge student states.

Teacher admits his/her own mistakes and apologises.

Teachers negotiate with students as facilitators and are respectful in interactions.

Teacher plan meaningful, relevant lessons and engage with them positively.

The teacher actively listens, empowers, and respects students and provides an acknowledgement.

The teacher shows interest, positive body language, proximity, eye contact.

Following-up student issues, welfare concerns, and student states to resolve situations.

The teacher considers and seeks to maximise student comfort.

The teacher models with empathy.

The teacher creates a welcoming inclusive environment e.g. smiling, warmth, laughter

The teacher seeks to understand and take student perspectives.

The teacher promotes sharing and discussion, including techniques such as Circle time.