Early Childhood Teacher Preparation: A comparative Study between Two Courses in Australia and China

by

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The research associated with this thesis abides by the international and Australian codes on human and animal experimentation, as approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania) Network–Social Sciences, Ethics Reference No. H0015809.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Explanation
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACARA	Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority
ACECQA	Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority
AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
ATAR	Australian Tertiary Admission Rank
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
CA	Constructive alignment
CAE	Colleges of Advanced Education
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CUMU	Catalogue of Undergraduate Majors for University (MoE, 2012a).
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
DET	Australian Government Department of Education and Training
EC	Early Childhood
ECEC	Early Childhood Education and Care
ELDG	Early Learning and Development Guideline for Children Aged 3 to 6 Years (MoE, 2012d)
EYLF	Belonging, Being & Becoming： The Early Years Learning Framework (DEEWR, 2009）
HES	Higher Education Standards
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
MCEEDYA	Ministerial Council for Education Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs
MoE	Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China
MoPS	Ministry of Public Security of the People's Republic of China
NSAU	National Southwest Associated University
NQF	National Quality Framework
NUEE	National University Entrance Examination
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development
PE	Professional Experience
REUMU	Regulations on the Establishment of Undergraduate Majors in University (MoE, 2012b)
TEMAG	Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TEQSA	Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency
TRB	Teachers Registration Board [of Tasmania]

ABSTRACT

This is a cross-national comparative case study, conducted in Australia and China, exploring the current Early Childhood (EC) Initial Teacher Education (ITE) course in the different contexts. The importance of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) provided by qualified EC educators who provide a strong foundation for children's physical and cognitive development and produce a positive influence on their future lives has been acknowledged in many countries. EC teacher preparation plays a significant role in educating and training these skilled educators to work closely with young children. Both Australian and Chinese policy-makers have recognised these concerns and seen them in the wider context of social and human capital issues. That is, that the provision of care and education at an early stage of a child's development has important consequences for the nation in the future as well as the well-being of the individual. It is possible to see how these concerns are reflected in early years educational policy and practice. The present study sought to better understand the policies and processes for preparing EC teachers in the two countries through comparing and contrasting two ITE bachelor's degree courses.

This research addressed the broad question: *Are graduating EC students in Australia and China perceived as suitably prepared for teaching in a diverse range of ECEC contexts by the time they finish their course*? To address this broad question, four sub-research questions were proposed to deepen understanding of the similarities and differences between two EC ITE courses in two universities (Case Study 1 and Case Study 2).

This research undertook a document analysis of relevant policy documents and course information. It adopted a mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) research

approach and utilised a cross-national comparative case study method (Yin, 2014). The use of a triangulation technique (Denzin, 2009) for data collection involved a largely quantitative questionnaire and qualitative instruments consisting of document analysis, free-text responses in the questionnaire, and semi-structured in-depth interviews with participants representing key stakeholder groups. The combination of an *opportunity sampling* and *purposeful sampling* strategy recruited participants from four groups of stakeholders, including: 4th-year students, graduates, academics, and employers from four sites (two universities and different ECEC places from Tasmania, Australia and Yunnan, China). The data sources were analysed using a thematic analysis and content analysis (Denscombe, 2010), and comparisons made between stakeholder groups both within a case study and between the two case studies.

The unique data in this research captured participants' perceptions of the EC ITE courses in Australia and China. This attempted to fill a significant gap in the literature as there is little known in this field from a comparative aspect. The study provides an understanding and knowledge of key policies regarding the regulation of EC ITE courses in Australia and China, and procedures and regulations for their quality assurance. The study also provides suggestions for course improvement based on an understanding of the different stakeholder groups' perceptions of the two courses.

The findings of this research revealed some commonalities and many differences between the two courses, including education and course philosophy, course structure and content, teaching modes, the nature and assessment of professional experience, and general stakeholder satisfaction with the preparatory courses. Of particular note were firstly, there was a discernible, but slow, convergence in the purpose and nature of EC ITE education where the more recent Chinese policy documents appeared to

reflect many of the Western strategies, although the case site institutions reflected differences in their historical-political-cultural systems. Secondly, the role of a national, centralised approach to student selection and recruitment, course content and teaching modes in China was sharply different from Australia's multiple entry pathways and input from national and jurisdictional bodies. Finally, there were important commonalities across all stakeholders on the central question of the quality of professional preparation of their respective bachelor's degree EC course; e.g., both countries' stakeholder representatives agreed that the courses met the present professional standards. There were significant differences in the perceptions between the Australian and Chinese stakeholders regarding the course content, the linking of materials to the actual classroom and the nature and supervision of the professional experience.

This research will be of interest to national and international ECEC and EC ITE policymakers, university administrators, ECEC employers, and teacher educators who are concerned with solving practical challenges arising from this important professional preparation.

CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

1.1 Introduction

Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) provides an important opportunity to influence a child's future. Early Childhood (EC) educators work closely with children, their families, and communities to ensure that the ECEC context provides a strong foundation for these children's lives in learning and cognitive development, creation of social and emotional skills, and strong physical growth. With a heightened awareness of these considerations and of the importance of ECEC, the demand for teachers to work in a wide range of childhood education contexts, including early childcare centres, kindergartens, and schools has increased. It is essential that EC teachers are appropriately prepared for this important role.

This research compared and contrasted the processes for preparing EC teachers through an examination of a preparatory course, that is, a designated bachelor's degree, from Australia and China. This research investigated two particular EC Initial Teacher Education (ITE) courses—one at the University of Tasmania (UTAS), Tasmania, Australia, and the other Yunnan Normal University (YNNU), Yunnan, China—as well as key stakeholders' perceptions of their respective courses.

Chapter 1: Background and Context provides an overview of the current research, which includes the general background of the research topic and a brief description of the locations where the study was conducted. It addresses the importance of the research, as well as its aim, research questions, and scope. The research methodology and significance of the current study are described briefly, and the thesis structure is outlined.

1.2 Research Background

This research focused on two countries: Australia and China. It is relevant to provide some general information concerning the geography and population of these countries, including the locations of Tasmania and Yunnan where the research was conducted. A brief history of the two case study universities, UTAS and YNNU, also needs to be presented to understand the local context. A broad picture of the respective ITE models of the two countries is essential to help the reader locate and understand this research within the wider national policy context. The participants of ECEC in both countries is described. The information about the two courses is outlined in alphabetical order, with Australia followed by China throughout this thesis.

1.2.1 Australia

1.2.1.1 Overview of Australia and Tasmania.

The Commonwealth of Australia, a federal parliamentary constitutional monarchy, was founded in 1901 as an entirely new country when the first federal elections were held. Australia is comprised of the mainland of the Australian continent, the island of Tasmania, and numerous smaller islands. There are approximately 25 million people (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2019), including Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders, who live within the 7,617,930 square kilometre landmass that makes Australia the world's sixth-largest country. It has six states, namely, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, and Western Australia, as well as two major mainland territories, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory. The capital city of Australia is Canberra.

Tasmania is the only island state of Australia; it is separated from the mainland by Bass Strait and has a population of approximately 530,000 (ABS, 2019). It is a mountainous state that spans approximately 65,000 square kilometres, and it has a cool temperate climate with four distinct seasons. Hobart is the state capital and the largest metropolitan area in Tasmania.

A key role of the Australian government is to provide national leadership across policy areas, including quality teaching and boosting learning outcomes; however, each state and territory is primarily responsible for its education system under the Australian Constitution for the provision of Education (Australian Government, n.d.a.). Moreover, the taxation system is predominantly a federal responsibility, and while the Commonwealth does not run any universities, it provides the majority of funds for them. This implies that the Commonwealth's policies have a significant impact within the federal system.

1.2.1.2 History of the University of Tasmania.

UTAS, founded in 1890, was the fourth university to be established in Australia and remains the only statutorily appointed university in the state of Tasmania (*University of Tasmania Act* 1992). UTAS has three main campuses: Sandy Bay, Hobart; Newnham, Launceston; and the Cradle Coast, Bernie—as well as several satellite campuses that are distributed in different parts of the state and mainland Australia. The headquarters are located at the Sandy Bay campus in Hobart. The university comprises five colleges and three specialist institutions. Education is offered by the College of Arts, Law, and Education, which combined the previously separate Faculties of the Arts, Law, and Education into a single entity in 2017.

The Faculty of Education at UTAS has a long history prior to the shift to a University-based course that can be traced to 1948, when Charles Hardie was nominated as the foundation Professor of Education (Williamson, 2015). Later, in the mid-1980s, the university merged with the Hobart College of Advanced Education, and most of its courses were moved to Launceston, which was the second-largest city in Tasmania and where most of the university's Faculty of Education staff and courses were located. A full UTAS Bachelor of Education degree course was offered for EC and primary, and a Master of Education degree course offered for secondary, from the early 1990s.

1.2.1.3   Overview of the initial teacher education model in Australia.

All higher education providers are required to be registered with the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA; Australian Government, n.d.b.) in Australia. TEQSA is Australia's independent national quality assurance and regulatory agency that manages the register of higher education providers, which works to ensure that higher education providers and their courses adhere to the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015* (HES Framework). TEQSA provides the specifications and guidelines for following the *Australian Qualifications Framework* (AQF). The AQF is a national framework that covers the essential specifications for regulated qualifications in Australia. It has 10 levels linking various education and training providers (e.g., schools, vocational education and training organisations, universities) and qualifications into a complete national system, allowing transparent transition from one level of study to another and between different providers (Australian Qualifications Framework Council, 2013). Higher education qualification awards span AQF Levels 5–10, in which a bachelor's degree is equivalent to Level 7, for example. TEQSA is also responsible for regulating courses

that are included in the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for

Overseas Students (CRICOS) and ensures that these internationally available courses

are of high quality (TEQSA, 2018).

The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) is also a

main regulatory body in Australia. The ACECQA's role is to guide the implementation

and administration of the National Quality Framework (NQF). The NQF is a national

system for regulating ECEC and setting safety and quality standards to enable high-

quality education for children so they are provided the best start in life (ACECQA,

2018). There are two approved national learning frameworks under the NQF that

outline the practices for supporting and promoting children's learning:

Belonging, Being & Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia

(*EYLF*; Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations [DEEWR],

2009) is aimed at educators of younger children from birth to five years old; while

My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia (DEEWR, 2011) is

aimed at educators of school-aged children. The latter is linked to the *EYLF*, and

extends the principles, practices, and outcomes to a wide range of settings and age

ranges of children who attend school.

Three key components regarding the ITE model in Australia are presented in the

following subsection: (i) selection and recruitment of entrants; (ii) accreditation of ITE

courses; and (iii) teacher registration. The delivery mode is also described.

1.2.1.3.1   *Selection and recruitment of entrants.*

The demand-driven system of Australia (Kemp & Norton, 2014) allowed applicants to

enter higher education via alternative pathways. The university selection procedure,

therefore, is not always easy to describe. However, all pathways and their subsequent requirements were available on each university's website to facilitate the application process for domestic and international applicants (Williamson et al., 2017). There were approximately 400,000 overseas students enrolled with higher education providers in 2018 (Australian Government Department of Education and Training [DET], 2019). These providers, including universities, were all registered by CRICOS and could recruit and teach international students (TEQSA, 2018).

Generally, bachelor's degree admission for domestic students occurred through the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) for students in Year 12 or via an alternative pathway for mature-age candidates able to provide evidence of their academic capabilities. The ATAR is a percentile ranking (from 30 to 99.95) of overall school achievement that is used nationally in all Australian states and territories. This ranking indicates a Year 12 student's overall position relative to other students in the same state or territory. Different methods were employed to calculate ATARs in different states or territories and they varied according to the features and requirements of each state or territory's curriculum and assessment system (e.g., Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre [QTAC], 2018; Universities Admissions Centre [UAC], 2018; University of Tasmania [UTAS], 2017a; Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre [VTAC], 2018). Additionally, mature-age candidates (i.e., post-25 years old) may apply through the following options:

- A vocational education and training (VET) qualification, such as Certificate III [3] or IV [4];

- Tertiary education preparatory short courses;

- Additional requirements such as an interview, portfolio of work, prerequisite courses, and/or work experience relevant to the study course;

- Based on their [the individuals'] relevant work experience, an entrance examination, or a demonstrated aptitude for study [e.g., portfolio of work] (DET, 2015, p. 13).

1.2.1.3.2   *Accreditation of initial teacher education courses.*

There are 42 registered universities in Australia that have the authority to self-accredit one or more courses of study that align with the requirements of the HES Framework to remain registered with TEQSA (2017). Meanwhile, TEQSA calls on external professional bodies to supervise and assess the outcomes of a course cooperatively, sharing some of TEQSA's responsibilities and providing relevant information to ensure a consistent and aligned approach to accreditation and regulation. For example, TEQSA and the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) discuss and share relevant documentation and reports with each other for an ITE course at a university. AITSL is the national body that publishes the professional standards against which all ITE courses in Australia are assessed during accreditation and re-accreditation by the regulatory authorities. Sharing the responsibility between agencies results in a nationally consistent, efficient, and effective approach to accredit ITE courses, as well as in the alignment between the requirements of TEQSA, AITSL, and all states' and territories' teacher regulation authorities (TRAs). Moreover, the ACECQA engages with AITSL to ensure qualified EC graduates who are trained in quality ITE courses and are eligible to work with children. Accredited ITE courses are available at most universities, over half of which provide an EC ITE course for undergraduates as well (AITSL, 2019).

1.2.1.3.3   *Teacher registration.*

While registration is compulsory for all teachers throughout Australia, the process is different in each state and territory. Queensland was the first state to implement mandatory registration for teachers in 1975 (Queensland College of Teachers, 2018). The first Teachers Registration Board (TRB) of Tasmania began functioning in 2001 under the *Teachers Registration Act 2000* (TRB Tasmania, n.d.). All Australian jurisdictions required teacher registration when the national *Framework for Teacher Registration* was implemented in 2011 (AITSL, 2018a). Teacher registration was made compulsory to teach in all primary and secondary schools in all states and territories, and for most EC teachers in Australia. EC teachers were required to hold teacher registration as kindergartens were classified as part of primary schools in Tasmania (ACECQA, n.d.). AITSL (2018a) reviewed Australian teacher registration requirements and recommended that "all early childhood teachers in Australia, regardless of their employment setting, be required to be registered by teacher regulatory authorities, under a consistent national approach" in 2018 (p. 28). Teacher registration remains somewhat complicated and diverse in Australia because there is not yet a unified or single procedure at the national level. Registration varied in different states and territories due to historical socio-political factors. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to explore these differences further as it focuses only on the UTAS course in Australia.

There are two forms of teacher registration in Australia: Provisional Registration and Full Registration. Students graduating from accredited ITE courses are initially granted Provisional Registration in the *Graduate* career stage. To obtain full Registration, evidence of performance must be provided at the *Proficient* career stage, and teachers

must meet the requirements within a certain period of time. Usually, the maximum period for this transition from *Graduate* to *Proficient* is five years, with provisions for an extension on a case-by-case basis. In-service teachers may upgrade their level during each stage of their career to *Highly Accomplished* or *Lead* based on their professional competency with reference to the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (AITSL, 2011).

1.2.1.3.4   *Delivery mode.*

There are various pathways for applicants to participate in higher education including ITE courses in the policy context of "the demand-driven system" (Kemp & Norton, 2014). Not all students attend campus to study because of personal factors (e.g., carer commitments; full- or part-time work schedules) or contextual limitations (e.g., living in remote areas; travel). The delivery model of a blended learning environment including both online and face-to-face modes has been introduced and widely applied in universities around Australia.

1.2.1.4   Overview of the early childhood education and care system in Australia.

There are a variety types of ECEC settings widely recognised as catering for children from birth to eight years old in Australia. The NQF defined EC education as beginning at birth and included long day care, family day care, preschools, kindergarten, and outside-school-hours care services (ACECQA, 2018). ECEC providers differed in their services; for example, the provision of kindergarten depended on which state or territory the child was in, and the child's age. In Victoria, for example, the year before children started preparatory school (usually when they were four years old), was referred to as kindergarten (State of Victoria, 2015). Similarly, in Tasmania, children

who were four years old by 1 January attended kindergarten, and the following year they attended preparatory school (Tasmanian Government, n.d.). Meanwhile, in New South Wales, children attended kindergarten at the beginning of the school year (NSW Government, 2019).

The organisational structure of ECEC was strongly impacted by the EC ITE model in Australia. Watson and Axford (2008) identified that most bachelor's-level courses in EC prepared initial teachers to work in diverse ECEC contexts with children in the following age ranges:

- Babies and toddlers (zero-three years);

- Children aged four in preschools (also called kindergartens in some states [e.g., Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales]);

- Aged five in pre-Year one settings (also called kindergartens or preparatory classes); and

- Aged five–eight in Years one and two at schools (Watson & Axford, 2008 p. 7).

The quality-reform agenda had a profound impact on ITE courses and especially on ECEC programs where it was important to increase the number of degree-qualified EC teachers in diverse ECEC contexts to improve educational outcomes for children (Council of Australian Governments [COAG], 2008a; 2009). All Australian children enrolled in ECEC programs were expected to be taught by degree-qualified EC teachers before they began formal education (COAG, 2008b). National policy required that employing qualified EC teachers be compulsory for accredited centre-based services since 2014 (MCEEDYA, 2011) and, in particular, the providers of early education and care for children from birth to five years (ACECQA, 2017b).

1.2.1.5 Overview of early childhood initial teacher education courses in Australia.

The formalisation of EC ITE dates back to the mid-19th century in Australia with the development of state-based Kindergarten Teacher Colleges (Trethewey & Whitehead, 2003). These colleges were neither managed nor regulated by the state educational authority and received minimal government funding (Brennan, 1994). The Australian federal government created the "binary" tertiary (higher) education system of universities and Colleges of Advanced Education (CAE) with a "formalised distinction between those who were 'intellectually trained' [in university] and the 'manually trained workers' in the CAEs" (Dyson, 2005, p. 42) in the 1960s. EC teacher education was often regarded as practical and "hands-on" with few theoretical and intellectual requirements when the binary system of higher education was created (Dyson, 2005). CAE became increasingly engaged in higher education, and the federal government funded their development in each state and territory (Krieg, 2010). This system survived until the late 1980s, when the binary system was replaced with the Unified National System (Beddie, 2014). At that time, EC teacher colleges were merged into the higher education system (Zollo, 2017). Consequently, the Kindergarten Teacher Colleges became "embedded within a wider system of Advanced Education" (Dyson, 2005, p. 42).

Students of EC education were expected to be involved in the intellectual demands of university learning (Krieg, 2010) within this changing policy context during 1990/1991. The government's goal with the abolition of the binary system and its replacement with the Unified National System was to gain more effective control over higher education (Beddie, 2014). One major change was the shift from a three-year EC

diploma to a four-year degree (Ebbeck, 1993). Universities in Australia that were involved in the provision of EC courses were reviewed and subsequently re-accredited their degree courses as a result of the government legislation (AITSL, 2018b).

EC courses are generally taught by two main providers in Australia: the universities and Technical and Further Education (TAFE); and private providers are also in the market. TAFE is a government-owned provider of vocational education and training courses. TAFE courses are typically more hands-on and provide students with significant practical opportunities through work experience compared to university courses, which tend to have an academic focus. Moreover, TAFE graduates can obtain different types of AQF qualifications spanning Levels 1 to 6 (i.e., Certificate 1–4, Diploma, Advanced Diploma, Associate Degree). In contrast, universities usually only provide graduates with higher-level AQF qualifications (AQF 7–10).

1.2.2 China

1.2.2.1 Overview of China and Yunnan Province.

The People's Republic of China was founded in 1949 by the Communist Party of China, who controlled most of China when Hong Kong and Macau were colonies of Britain and Portugal respectively. Sovereignty over Hong Kong and Macau was transferred to China in 1997 (Hong Kong) and 1999 (Macau) respectively, and these former colonies are currently Special Administrative Regions (SARs) with executive, legislative, and judicial powers derived from the central government. This means some policies issued from the central government do not apply to these two regions, for example, the National University Entrance Examination (NUEE). Beijing is the capital city of China. The population of mainland China was approaching 1.4 billion in 2018

(National Bureau of Statistics of the People's Republic of China, 2019), representing 56 ethnic groups (55 ethnic minority groups and the Han majority group) from 34 provincial administrative regions that include 23 provinces, five autonomous regions, four municipalities, and two SARs.

Yunnan, located in the southwest part of China and bordered by Myanmar, Laos, and Vietnam, is one of the least developed provinces in China (The World Bank, 2016). Most of its landmass is mountainous and people live in a few areas ill-served by public transport. It is a medium-sized province by Chinese standards, that spans approximately 394,000 square kilometres and has a population of 48 million (Yunnan Provincial Bureau of Statistics, 2019). It is about 90 times the population of the comparator state, Tasmania. Yunnan is unique in China in that one-third of the population consists of 25 ethnic minority groups, approaching half the total number of ethnic groups in China.

China is governed by the Communist Party of China, which has jurisdiction over the provincial administrative regions. Under this system, although each individual province is mainly responsible for its local education ranging from kindergarten to university, the management of education is regulated by the central and local governments at all levels. The funding and implementation of educational policies issued by the central government form a strict agreed-upon framework for implementation; all engaged entities must align with the centrally-determined framework. For example, the provincial Department of Education must negotiate with and obtain permission from the central Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (MoE) to facilitate university development and provide funding, while the provincial government regulates this process.

1.2.2.2 History of Yunnan Normal University.

The concept of "normal" is used widely in China to describe higher education providers who prepare their graduates to be teachers (Gu, 1998). It is a specific type of university in China that differs slightly from other so-called comprehensive universities (Ye, 2015) because it has a focus on teacher training (Ji, 2014).

The term *normal*, in relation to schooling, originated in the French Ecole Normale Supérieure, in other words, a school that presented instruction in "standard practices", or *normal* practices of teaching. A description of a "normal school" from the Online Oxford English Dictionary (2020, March) stated "in America, [normal schools] were for training primary school teachers. In Continental Europe, different normal schools also trained teachers at secondary and tertiary levels". China has adopted the term *normal* to apply to certain higher education institutions. For example, a *normal* university is a higher education provider, known as *Shifan*, and these were founded to cultivate or train teacher candidates: (i) in different subjects, (e.g., Chinese, mathematics, music); (ii) in teaching levels (e.g., EC, primary schools, secondary schools); and (iii) with necessary pedagogical content knowledge that aligned with specific areas of teaching (e.g., mathematics, science, history).

YNNU, located in Kunming, the capital city of Yunnan Province, fell under the category of *normal* universities with a long, distinguished history. It was created during the Second Sino–Japanese War (1937–1945) through the National Southwest Associated University (NSAU) which comprised three universities: Peking; Tsinghua; and Nankai (Wang, 1998). At the time of the War, the three universities could not operate in their home provinces, and were forced to move to safer circumstances in Yunnan to continue operation in 1937. By 1946, when the war had ended with a

Chinese victory over the Japanese, the northern universities returned to their original cities. NSAU, however, was maintained as a gift for the city of Kunming in recognition for hosting the combined institutions during the war. Since its establishment as a separate institution, YNNU has continued NSAU's traditions and has evolved over time to meet the needs of society and to respond to national and provincial policy changes.

Typically, there are different faculties within Chinese universities, and undergraduates who plan to teach in formal schools at the primary or middle school levels attend a specific faculty that teaches a variety of subjects (e.g., the Faculty of Chinese Language and Literature for undergraduates who will teach Chinese). EC teacher education is generally provided by the Faculty of Education Science and Management to prepare students to be EC teachers. There are 26 faculties currently at the Kunming NSAU and Chenggong campuses. YNNU has recently developed as a comprehensive university, which allows it a broader scope to implement policies from the central or provincial government and to offer a range of non-ITE courses. Several new schools have been recently established, such as the Pan-Asia Business School.

1.2.2.3 Overview of the initial teacher education model in China.

China implemented the *Opening Up Policy* (Shi, 2000) to open its door to the outside world in 1978 (Shi & Englert, 2008). This was followed by the *Decision on the Reform of the Education System* (Chinese Government, 1985), implemented by MoE, which suggested that the development of ITE should be a core strategic measure to promote national education quality (Chinese Government, 1985). At the beginning of the 21st century, the State Council released an executive circular, *Decision about Reform and Development of Basic Education* (State Council of China, 2001), in which the concept

of "teacher education" was adopted for the first time to replace the time-honoured term of "normal education" that described the ITE model for teacher training. This move did not merely focus on the wording change but also meant that comprehensive universities could engage in ITE to prepare teacher candidates, in addition to the traditional providers of teacher education (i.e., normal universities). More ITE providers were established or authorised to meet the needs of a growing society that lacked sufficient qualified teachers (Zhong & Wang, 2013). The monopoly period of those *normal* providers for ITE was ended. The ITE courses in comprehensive universities are accredited by MoE, and the same recruitment requirements apply for students to enter either these new ITE course providers or the traditional/normal teacher education universities.

Section 1.2.2.3.1 (this page) outlines: (i) the recruitment processes of teacher education candidates; (ii) the accreditation for ITE courses; and (iii) teacher registration. The delivery mode at universities implemented in China is also described.

1.2.2.3.1   *Selection and recruitment of entrants.*

China's higher education system is presented briefly in this section, before the recruitment and selection processes in China are introduced, as the approach of student recruitment depends on candidates' status, including domestic Year 12 students, mature-aged students, and international students.

There are two types of tertiary education providers comprising "regular" (i.e., universities) and "irregular" (e.g., adult education institutions) higher education providers in China. The adult education institution is a significant component of tertiary education, in which the provision of courses, including teacher education, is quite similar to that of universities. The adult higher education institutions differ from

universities in several respects: (i) different policies and requirements for admission (e.g., education experience is equivalent to formal schooling); (ii) different course delivery modes (e.g., distance or online learning, completion of a series of subject-matter examinations by independent learning, part-time, after-work campus study); and (iii) the nomenclature, or standing, of outcomes, or qualifications, obtained in China.

The key factor relating to mature-age students entering either a university or an adult education institution lies in whether or not they have passed the NUEE. The NUEE tests a person's academic capabilities in formal education (Year 10–12) that is taken once and provides the basis for admission to university education in mainland China. If mature-age people and Year 12 students take and qualify in the NUEE, then they have a chance to attend university. Otherwise, people who do not hold a NUEE qualification may take the alternate pathway of attending an adult education institution for their higher education study.

The recruitment and enrolment quotas for the university or course are centrally regulated by MoE. This follows a negotiation between MoE and the provincial education authorities to determine the prescribed threshold entry score for each course. A few universities have recently been granted admission autonomy within centrally-mandated frameworks to admit candidates based on alternative criteria (in addition to the main pathway of the NUEE to university) moving toward a system that is more similar to that of the West. These universities were authorised by MoE to formulate and implement their admission requirements to select prospective Year 12 students who aligned with the MoE's core principles and aims. Several universities, such as Peking University and Tongji University, have admission autonomy to select students

for certain courses (e.g., ethics, geographical sciences) by considering several factors, for example, outstanding Year 12 students with high academic capabilities in their formal schooling (Years 10–12) who receive exemption from the NUEE, or those who have specific skills that satisfy the requirements of certain courses (Yi, 2019). However, an EC ITE course at university is not usually regarded as special, so all candidates (Year 12 students) are presently enrolled based on their NUEE results.

In terms of international student recruitment, universities that enrol and teach overseas students must be authorised to do so by MoE. Once they obtain approval, these universities devise and plan their admission requirements for international students that align with the *Regulations for Providers of Recruitment and Education to Overseas Students* (MoE, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China [MoFA] & Ministry of Public Security of the People's Republic of China [MoPS], 2017). This provides a national code for the management of overseas students studying in China. Since there is no single or unified requirement for universities to select overseas students, the requirements vary across specific universities and courses.

1.2.2.3.2   *Accreditation of initial teacher education courses.*

MoE is the only authority that regulates and accredits all courses provided in universities in China. This means there is no other external authority supervising ITE courses, in particular, EC ITE courses. Universities obtain approval for accredited courses from MoE based on two documents, the *Catalogue of Undergraduate Majors for Universities* (*CUMU*; MoE, 2012a) and the *Regulations on the Establishment of Undergraduate Majors in University* (*REUMU*; MoE, 2012b). MoE issued another document in 2017—the *Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Courses for Higher Education Providers in China–Level and Field (Trial Version)* (MoE, 2017)—which

focused on ITE courses. This accreditation process aims to be implemented for all ITE courses, including those that are in the *normal* universities, and for all prospective ITE courses and provided some assurance that ITE courses were accredited in a more rigorous way than other university courses. Universities must offer, for example, a variety of facilities and resources that meet different course and unit needs such as a science room for practical science activity or an equipped music room if there are practical musical units. The skill training in the arts is a key component in Chinese EC ITE courses. Thus, the course provider must offer the necessary instruments (e.g., piano) and training rooms (e.g., music studio, dance training room), where students can learn and practise their artistic skills. At the time of writing this thesis, the principles and intents of the MoE (2017) had not yet been implemented widely, and a definitive statement cannot be made regarding implementation and outcomes. There were only 60 ITE courses in normal universities by the end of 2019, including four EC ITE courses (there are 370 current EC ITE courses in total) (China Higher Education Student Information and Career Center, 2019) that obtained accreditation at Level Two. It means that the courses' graduates were exempt from an interview but were required to take the written test for teacher registration. Only two ITE courses had the accreditation at Level Three, indicating that their graduates would be registered teachers who were not required to take the *National Teacher Registration Examination* (MoE, 2019). The EC ITE course at YNUU was a Level One ITE course provider (neither Level Two nor Level Three) at the time of writing.

1.2.2.3.3   *Teacher registration.*

Teacher registration to certify teachers in China was introduced in 1993 through the enactment of the *Teacher Law 1993* (Shi & Englert, 2008). Teacher registration is compulsory for all teachers across all education levels: kindergarten, primary school,

secondary school, and higher education; and in different subjects, such as Chinese language, science, and arts (e.g., music, fine arts). In the past, graduates of accredited ITE courses were automatically registered as teachers once they attained the required level of Chinese language proficiency during their study. Since 2015, a new system for teacher registration has been implemented that requires all prospective teachers to take a *National Teacher Registration Examination* that is conducted by MoE (2013) and demonstrate teaching capabilities through interview, supervised by the individual provincial education bodies. This means that graduation from an ITE course no longer results in an automatic right to register as a teacher.

The implementation of the new MoE ITE course accreditation in 2017 means that graduates from ITE courses achieving Level Three do not have to take the *National Teacher Registration Examination*, including a written test and a teaching interview, for registration. Graduates from ITE providers that attained Level Two status are exempt from the teaching interview but need to sit the written test, and graduates who are from ITE providers that are granted Level One must successfully complete both components of the national examination (MoE, 2019). As YNNU is a Level One ITE course provider, its EC ITE graduates must take all components of the *National Teacher Registration Examination*.

1.2.2.3.4   *Delivery mode.*

At the time of writing, the main delivery mode for university study was face-to-face lectures with slideshow presentations coupled with some web-based teaching platforms. Students of universities in China are required to study on campus, and it is strongly suggested that they live with their classmates in university-regulated dormitories. In addition, an appropriate physical learning environment is a major

component of universities to maintain and enhance their reputation. The physical campus must, therefore, be well maintained over time in terms of the amenities and facilities. This is perhaps why the face-to-face teaching format still plays a dominant role in the delivery mode in China.

1.2.2.4 Overview of the early childhood education and care system in China.

There is considerable variation in the definition of ECEC in China. Generally, it refers to kindergartens where full-day services are provided for children between three and six years old (Guo & Qu, 2012). Kindergarten is usually divided into three levels, depending on the age group, with Level One for three-to-four-year-old children, Level Two for four-to-five-year-old children, and Level Three for five-to-six-year-old children. Some mixed-age or "vertically grouped" classes have recently been offered, in which younger and older children play and learn together. To accommodate social and family changes (such as both parents or carers working), some kindergartens also offer care for children at two years of age, who are enrolled in a special program called *preparatory* or *nursery class*. Children younger than three years are usually cared for by family members in their homes, however, family are not considered to be education providers (Zhu & Zhang, 2008). As a consequence, kindergarten is primarily regarded as a service for educating children between three and six years old, and it has recently been accommodating children under three years (Liu, 2016; Xu, 2003).

The EC workforce in China, like Australia, has become increasingly professionalised. The qualification requirements for EC teachers in China are currently being upgraded, that is, the expectation is a bachelor's-level degree before being able to register as an EC teacher. China's central government has emphasised both physical and cognitive

development of children, including those in their early years, thereby creating the expectation for more qualified EC teachers with relevant higher qualifications to engage in ECEC programs. The government's initiatives are aimed at ensuring qualified educators are engaged in ECEC and that they gain a solid theoretical foundation with practical skills from their formal training.

Two national policies emphasising the significance of high quality ECEC for children's futures and the importance of qualified EC teachers for providing a better education for children have been issued. The *National Plan for Medium- and Long-Term Education Reform and Development (2010–2020)* (State Council of China, 2010a) was China's first national plan of this kind (Yue, Zhang, Wu, & Zhao, 2010), and the State Council of China launched their *State Council's Opinions on the Current Development of Preschool Education* (2010b).

1.2.2.5 Overview of early childhood initial teacher education courses in China

There is a long history in the development of ITE in China. The first national government-dominated *normal* university, Imperial University of Peking, known as "Jingshi Da Xuetang", was founded in 1902 by the Qing Government (the Qing Dynasty 1644–1911; Morgan, Gu, & Li, 2017). This university was the predecessor of Beijing Normal University. Similarly, EC ITE also can be traced to the Qing Government. At the end of the 19th century, China was facing challenging internal and external problems. On the one hand, the Chinese people launched a series of revolutions to overthrow the feudal system (i.e., Qing Dynasty) and to democratise the country's government (convergence with the Western system). On the other hand, some foreign countries (e.g., Great Britain, Japan, the United States) invaded China

creating several EC institutions in cities located along China's east coast (e.g., Fuzhou, Ningbo, Suzhou). The first child carers training *class* was established at a women's middle school in Suzhou in 1889 to focus on children's physical development, alongside the creation of ECEC programs. The first *school* to prepare nursery teachers was founded by American missionaries in Shanghai a few years later in 1892 (Tang & Kou, 2003). There were EC educator training institutions that focused on the physical health and well-being of children in the first few decades of the 20th century, while lacking knowledge and practical teaching awareness regarding children's cognitive development, learning capability, and communication skills, among others (He & Zheng, 2019; Xu, 2019). These educators had not typically completed a formal teacher preparation course. This changed in 1940, when the first government-regulated EC teacher training institution was established—Jiangxi Provincial Experimental Kindergarten Teacher Training School (Liu, 1987). This school was structured to prepare graduates to be teachers for children younger than six years in general (Tang, 2015). After the foundation of the People's Republic of China, in 1952, Beijing Normal University and Nanjing Normal University commenced EC ITE courses at the bachelor's degree level (Ma, 2003). Since 1978, EC ITE courses in the higher education sector have grown dramatically with the implementation of the *Opening Up Policy* (Shi, 2000) which aimed to better understand the Chinese and integration with the world.

1.3 Intention of this Research

There are several drivers for conducting this research that involved both subjective reasons (personal interest and experience) and modern society's objective needs and demands (concerns from governments).

1.3.1   Personal experience.

As a researcher from China, I have noticed that the changing nature of Chinese society has reflected the increasing importance of ECEC in my country. The younger generation is more educated and draws on ideas and opinions from all over the world, especially from developed countries including the United States, Great Britain, and Australia. The parents and carers of this generation live in cities and are informed about the importance of the early years' education. Some may have experienced good parenting or were educated in formal ECEC programs like kindergarten with qualified EC teachers when they were young. This experience helped them realise that ECEC ultimately benefited them in their current stage of life. EC has been dramatically transformed since its conception, from simple care-focused services to the combination of care-centred and education-focused services for children. Consequently, these parents not only care for their children's health and well-being, but also have concerns about their future capabilities and life-long outcomes. Most parents choose to send their children to kindergarten for formal education and to support and develop their cognitive, creative, and emotional capabilities. This created a sound academic foundation for literacy and numeracy, which might not have occurred if children were placed with extended family members or grandparents. Parents therefore expected high quality child learning which fuelled the need for more skilled EC teachers.

Even though the importance of ITE has been recognised in China for a long time, and it has undergone several reforms, there are still challenges yet to be resolved. When I was an ITE student majoring in Chinese Language and Literature, I found that there were limited opportunities for my classmates and I to apply knowledge gained from classes. There were several similar challenges, such as the discrepancy between

teacher candidates' expectations and the reality of EC work because of a lack of opportunities to practise in real settings when I was engaged in the professional training of ITE students.

1.3.2   Government initiatives.

Both Australia and China prioritised ECEC and have placed its development near the top of their respective national education agendas.

The rhetorical question of "Why EC is important?" was proposed in the report entitled *Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth* (Moore, 2006). Moore's (2006) research answered this question from three key perspectives— "ecological, life course, and economic" (p. 4)—and stated that more investment was needed for supporting EC development. A later document—*Investing in the Early Years: A National Early Childhood Development Strategy* (COAG, 2009)—examined a similar question, concluding that "the early years of a child's life have a profound impact on their future health, development, learning and wellbeing" (p. 6).

Concerns about social and cultural capital were acknowledged in China (Li, 2012; Li & Feng, 2013; Li & Xia, 2013). The former Deputy Director-General of the Department of Basic Education under MoE, Tianshun Li (2012), argued that quality EC could prepare children to grow up with improved levels of well-being and education that would assist them—and the nation—in their future lives. From this perspective, she further emphasised the importance of the three-year formal EC provision (i.e., children between three and six years old) for children's future success in learning and life.

Moreover, in both Australia and China, initiatives to reform EC have shifted from the primary focus of enabling a family's participation in the workforce through providing child care to one that aims to offer access to quality education for all children for the personal and societal reasons outlined above. With the increasing demand for quality ECEC and higher-skilled EC teachers, more attention has been paid to the teacher preparation process. Both countries have expressed concerns about the quality of EC teaching that relates to the development of children and their ability to achieve their full potential. It has been argued in both countries, that high quality EC ITE is essential for promoting Social and Human capital.

1.4 Research Aim and Questions

1.4.1 Research aim.

This research aims to contribute to the circumscribed but ever-increasing knowledge and understanding of current EC ITE courses in the different contexts of Australia and China. This will be achieved by investigating current policies and documents concerning the courses' outcomes, respecting external (e.g., selection and recruitment of entrants, accreditation of ITE courses, teacher registration) and internal (e.g., course structure, theory content, PE placement) factors and exploring participants' perceptions of how EC ITE courses prepare graduates to be qualified EC teachers, in regards to the professional standards for this workforce.

1.4.2 Research questions.

This research investigated how current EC ITE courses met the professional demands of governmental policies and how the key stakeholders understood and perceived the

course outcomes regarding the preparation of qualified EC teachers. The study compared two EC ITE courses delivered at two universities, one in Australia and the other in China. The broad research question was:

Are graduating EC students in Australia and China perceived as suitably prepared for teaching in a diverse range of ECEC contexts by the time they finish their course?

There were four research sub-questions that covered three areas with two levels–national and sub-national. Table 1.1 demonstrates the corresponding relationship between these sub-questions and areas.

Table 1.1

The relationship between research sub-questions and corresponding levels and areas

Sub-question	Level	Area
1. What are the EC ITE models regarding selection and recruitment, accreditation of ITE courses, and teacher registration in Australia and China?	National level	There are three key stages that a student must successfully complete: (i) application and recruitment; (ii) completion of an accredited ITE course; and (iii) teacher registration, in order to become a qualified EC teacher.
2. What are the similarities and differences between the EC ITE courses in Australia and China?		
3. How do the key stakeholders perceive EC graduates' teaching preparedness after they completed the two EC ITE courses?		The current internal components in EC ITE courses, including course design, delivery, and assessments in the two different contexts, where the similarities and differences are explored in depth. This research considers different perceptions of the EC ITE courses from the four stakeholder groups of the two countries.
4. How might the EC ITE courses be developed to meet the needs of stakeholders?	Sub-national level	This research investigated stakeholders' perceptions of whether or not graduates of the courses were "classroom-ready" EC teachers in a real-classroom context. This cross-national comparative case study aims to provide some suggestions and recommendations to promote outcomes of the courses to better meet the separate requirements of the ECEC profession, the needs of initial EC teachers, and employers' demands. It seeks to achieve this by comparing Case Studies 1 and 2 and referring to the extant literature.

1.4.3   *Participants in the research.*

The four stakeholder groups in the research were defined as: 4th-year students; graduates who had experienced the courses; university-based academics (academics); and employers of graduates (employers). The stakeholder groups in the research were identified by reviewing related practical and theoretical literature that concerned EC and ITE course outcomes in each country. It is acknowledged that there are significant differences in the individual education systems under the two cultural contexts and that stakeholders may have various roles.

This comparison involved two countries; thus, the work needed to maintain a sense of coherence when comparing subjects and content. The focus of this research was concentrated on EC ITE courses provided by the two universities, that is, the Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) awarded by the Faculty of Education, UTAS (Case Study 1), and the Bachelor of Education degree awarded by the Faculty of Education, Science and Management, YNNU (Case Study 2). Although there are other higher education institutions and programs that prepare candidates to be EC educators in both countries (e.g., TAFE in Australia, or adult education in China), they were intentionally excluded from this research.

1.5 Research Approach

A mixed methods approach captured quantitative (closed-ended) and qualitative (open-ended) data in this research. The qualitative research approach was guided by an interpretive or constructivist epistemology. A case study method (Yin, 2014) was adopted. Thematic analysis and content analysis were employed, to further enhance

understanding of policies and documents and also to establish individual accounts of a holistic phenomenon in the EC ITE courses in the different contexts.

1.5.1 Research design.

This research is classified as a cross-national comparative case study of EC ITE courses in two different contexts. The data collection and analysis were in accordance with a mixed methods research approach. A case study methodology was adopted to discuss core contemporary phenomenon as well as to guide the study design for obtaining rich data. A range of diverse data sources provided a solid foundation for understanding ITE, comprehending the requirements for the creation of the EC ITE courses in different contexts, and capturing stakeholders' perceptions of the two EC ITE courses.

1.5.2 Data collection and data analysis methods.

The mixed data collection method utilised closed quantitative and open qualitative approaches. Data collection and analysis were characterised by a triangulation technique (Denzin, 2009). Data were collected using three main instruments: document analysis reviewing key policies (e.g., course curricula, national and other regulations and standards); questionnaire forms; and semi-structured in-depth interviews that accorded with the interpretive or constructivist paradigm. The questionnaires and interviews were conducted both at UTAS, Australia, and YNNU, China.

The data were analysed using appropriate methods for different instruments and data sets, including document analysis, questionnaires, and semi-structured in-depth interviews. The quantitative data from response items (collected from the

questionnaires) were subject to descriptive statistical tests. Qualitative data, gathered by a document analysis, open-ended responses from questionnaires, and interviews, were examined using thematic analysis and content analysis approaches (Denscombe, 2010). The analysis captured the participants' opinions of graduates' achievements from the courses. The descriptive and interpretive explanation of the expectation of the current EC ITE courses' outcome fit with a qualitative research approach (Stake, 2000).

This method considered the information accounts of holistic phenomena in each particular area, and also the exploration of valid and reliable findings through alternative sources (Patton, 2014). A better understanding of the research area was determined to enable more detailed accounts of the current EC ITE courses implemented in the two countries and stakeholders' perceptions. Triangulated data collection was employed, that is, a broad survey of relevant policies was performed, and four different groups of stakeholders from universities and ECEC contexts were surveyed and interviewed.

1.6 Significance of the Research

This cross-cultural study addressed a need for further international research in teacher education (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016; Zajda & Rust, 2016; Zhu, 2019). There is little known about teacher preparation for ECEC in different countries and contexts, which hindered comparison. The present study investigated how EC ITE courses were run in the contexts of a state from Australia and a province from China to make a valuable contribution to the extant literature. It has the potential to advise policymakers, ITE providers, practitioners, and employers regarding better practice and outcomes in both countries.

A scan of the literature provided little similar research. The literature was rich in studies on EC ITE courses in the Australia and China separately, but none had specifically investigated, identified, or demonstrated a comparison of the two. This research provided empirical findings for Australian and Chinese literature-based knowledge to facilitate researchers' understanding of the contemporary phenomenon of the EC ITE courses in the different contexts.

Additionally, this research may: (i) assist policymakers in decision-making that concerns the EC ITE model; (ii) assist university administrators and academics in solving practical problems related to their course's delivery; (iii) support officials and administrators from ECEC contexts when they need to make decisions about the ongoing professional development of their in-service teachers; (iv) assist students of the courses to complete a quality learning experience in order to meet the needs of the professional workforce; and (v) provide teacher education researchers with a deeper understanding of the implementation of the EC ITE courses regarding the two different cultural countries involved.

There have been investigations concerning the capacity of the two countries courses' graduates to assist in the holistic development of young children; however, research had paid little attention to the contributions made by people who occupied key roles in EC ITE courses or related matters (e.g., assessment, PE placement).

The question of how well current EC students in ITE courses are prepared for their profession would be an invaluable contribution to the literature. It is important to develop an EC ITE course in the different sociohistorical-political contexts to meet stakeholders' needs. An approachable way to do this within a PhD is by comparing two ITE courses and capturing the key stakeholders' perceptions. This approach also

allowed for possible further investigation and discussion regarding each country's characteristics, and contributed to better meeting the needs of the professional workforce for the benefit of society.

1.7   Structure of the Thesis

This thesis has six chapters. *Chapter 1: Background and Context* has introduced the research and has provided a brief overview of the study's design and significance. *Chapter 2: Literature Review* considers extant literature on EC ITE course creation and outcomes. *Chapter 3: Methodology* describes the research approach employed in this research. It demonstrates how data were collected, categorised, and analysed. *Chapter 4: Findings from the Document Analysis and Chapter 5: Findings from the Questionnaire and Interviews* present the data as they relate to the data gathering method (e.g., document analysis) and stakeholders' perceptions, which are aligned with the data to support each research sub-question. *Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusion* draws together the findings in the context of the literature. The discussion is structured to highlight the similarities/differences between and advantages/shortcomings of each case study. In addition, recommendations concerning the quality of the EC ITE courses are provided. Finally, the thesis concludes by providing several suggestions for future research in this area.

1.8   Summary

Chapter 1: Background and Context provided an introduction to this research. First, a general description and background were provided, which pertained to the two case study sites—the Faculty of Education, UTAS, Australia (Case Study 1) and the Faculty of Education Science and Management, YNNU, the province of Yunnan, China (Case

Study 2). This was followed by a brief introduction to the ITE models and ECEC services in each country. The implementation of EC ITE courses in each case study was demonstrated as well. Chapter 1 also offered an outline of the research topic by demonstrating the aims and scope of the study and addressing the research approach. Furthermore, it presented the research questions and explained the area of study involved. Moreover, the study's significance was identified through a description of the study in the context of the extant literature and the status quo in practice. Finally, the structure of this thesis was outlined.

CHAPTER 2: LITURATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 2: Literature Review critically reviewed the existing literature to better understand the research status of ITE and EC ITE concerning the past and current status of the research on EC ITE courses, as well as key concepts in order to provide a framework for this comparative and contrasting study. The review starts by demonstrating the research status and trends of ITE in Australia and China individually, followed by a critique of the current literature related to EC ITE, which is the most relevant to this research.

Chapter 2 is divided into five sections. Section 2.2 (page 55) presents the general national trends in ITE research in Australia and China. Section 2.3 (page 63) reviews the significance of EC teachers, including: (i) the relationship between child development and the quality of ECEC places; and (ii) the relationship between skilled, qualified EC teachers and the EC teacher preparation courses that they undergo. Section 2.4 (page 667) reviews the literature concerning why EC teachers are important to children's learning and growth and what key components they need to acquire in their training (e.g., course structure, content knowledge, and PE placement). Section 2.5 (page 83) reviews the effectiveness of the delivery modes employed for course delivery. Finally, Section 2.6 (page 88) describes the outcomes-based teaching and learning model critically and how it prepares EC ITE students.

2.2 Trends in Initial Teacher Education Research in Australia and China

Section 2.2 presents trends in research on teacher preparation in Australia and China, providing a broad picture of the increasing attention that is now being paid to the quality of ITE in the two countries. Literature regarding ECEC will be looked at in later sections. Academic databases including Scopus and Google Scholar were employed to search for English and Chinese references. The researcher accessed literature that discussed Western and Eastern ITE practices. Given that English is not the official language of China, not all the sources were available in English; hence, the researcher also searched for Chinese literature with the help of the academic database, China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI). The CNKI (2012) is the most authoritative Chinese archive of academic journals, Master degree dissertations, PhD theses, conference papers, and various scholarly publications.

2.2.1 Initial teacher education research trends in Australia.

The initial search results from the Scopus database suggested that research on teacher education in Australia has flourished in recent years. The Australian Government had initiated a series of important educational reforms in the past decade, and the research trend reflected these initiatives as the government policy factors were likely to have prompted stakeholders and scholars to focus attention on Australian ITE. For example, a key education reform of national-level policies in education, the *2008 Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (*Melbourne Declaration*; Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs [MCEETYA], 2008), was signed by the eight federal, state, and territorial education ministers. The effects of this policy were significant in influencing and focusing

research on teaching quality issues in Australia (Burns & McIntyre, 2017). The introduction and implementation of *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (AITSL, 2011) with its Graduate Teacher Standards was a driver that had major implications for every aspect of the preparation of EC teachers. AITSL also developed the *Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures* in 2011 (revised in 2015 and in 2018, AITSL (2018b)) to advise and guide education providers.

AITSL's (2018b) requirements included strict examination and certification of Australian institutions providing ITE courses which ensured that the professional knowledge, skills, and engagement of graduate teachers met the standards of the AITSL *Graduate* career stage (2011). There were a range of projects related to initial teacher preparation, such as:

One Teaching Profession: Teacher Registration in Australia (AITSL, 2018a) regarding proposals for modernising teacher registration; *Action Now: Selection of Entrants into Initial Teacher Education* (AITSL, 2015) to improve teacher candidate selection procedures; and

Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers (Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group [TEMAG], 2014) issued for quality assurance of ITE in Australia.

The following literature signposting the increased concern for the quality of ITE in teacher education in Australia was identified starting from the signing of the *Melbourne Declaration* (MCEETYA, 2008). The literature has been categorised into seven broad areas.

- Different teaching and learning disciplines, such as:

    o physical education (e.g., Buabeng, Conner, & Winter, 2016; Mooney, Moncrieff, & Hickey, 2018); and

    o English language teaching (e.g., Ollerhead, 2018).

- Capabilities necessary for teacher graduates, such as:

    o assessment of children's competence in the classroom (e.g., Charteris & Dargusch, 2018; Wyatt-Smith, Alexander, Fishburn, & McMahon, 2017); and

    o capability for transition into the formal classroom and classroom readiness (e.g., Knipe & Fitzgerald, 2017; Miles & Knipe, 2018).

- Delivery mode in online mode (e.g., Dyment & Downing, 2018; Edwards & Weldon, 2017; Lang, 2016).

- Responsibilities and challenges of supervising teachers (e.g., Allen, White, & Sim, 2017; Clarke, Triggs, & Nielson, 2014; Nielsen et al., 2017).

- Assessment of teaching practices used in ITE, such as:

    o formative assessment (e.g., Dann & O'Nell, 2017);

    o assessment task (e.g., Harte & Reitano, 2016); and

    o using portfolio as an assessment instrument (e.g., Morrison, Masters, & Quentin-Baxter, 2018).

- Quality assurance of PE placement (e.g., Grimmett, Forgasz, Williams, & White, 2018; Larsen, 2017; Lemon, Wilson, Oxworth, Zavros-Orr, & Wood, 2018; Sharplin, Peden, & Marais, 2016).

- Entry requirements for ITE (e.g., McGraw & Fish, 2018).

Two research teams conducted specific reviews of the quality and effectiveness of ITE in Australia for the Australian Council for Educational Research under the auspices of TEMAG. The first, Ingvarson, Reid, Buckley, Leinhenz, and Masters (2014), investigated the characteristics of five international teacher education courses (Canada, Germany, Finland, Singapore, and Chinese Taipei) regarding best practices for design, delivery, and assessment against the current Australian ITE standards. They reported that the current Australian ITE courses were at least equal to or better than those identified as involving the best practices. Mayer et al. (2015) supported Ingvarson et al.'s (2014) findings in a study that was the first Australian large-scale, mixed-method, longitudinal study designed to explore the effectiveness of ITE courses in Australia. The researchers adopted a "black box" approach suggested by Darling-Hammond (2006a) to explore ITE courses and the impact of these courses in terms of graduates and their employers' perceptions of their preparedness and effectiveness (Mayer et al., 2015). This research revealed two key challenges identified by both graduates and employers: classroom management, and engagement of and with parents and carers of school students. Additionally, most employers perceived teacher preparedness as a continuing process that lasted well into first employment, which was in line with an earlier study from Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) that identified "teacher learning takes place over time rather than in isolated moments" (p. 258).

These two empirical, evidence-based studies originated from different perspectives and adopted different research approaches and data collection instruments, however, both focused on the quality and effectiveness of Australian ITE courses. The former mainly reviewed existing authoritative reports of research on teacher education, which was mostly implemented in the United States, while the latter involved Australian key stakeholders, graduate teachers and school principals, in Queensland and Victoria who

were surveyed and interviewed in diverse school settings. Both studies adopted the definition of effective ITE courses proposed by Darling-Hammond (2006a, 2006b) and reflected on course effectiveness with reference to that definition.

TEMAG was convened to make recommendations on how ITE could be improved and subsequently released the report titled *Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers* (2014). This report highlighted the importance of educators and ITE courses, articulating that: action to improve the quality of teachers in Australia's schools must begin where they are first prepared for the profession. It was clear that there was public concern about the quality of teacher education. To address this, the standard across all programs must be lifted. How programs were developed and assessed and how entrants to programs were selected were perceived as two key determinants of the quality of teacher education in Australia (2014, p. 7).

Given that the principles of this report aligned with suggestions for improving the quality of teacher education courses proposed by Ingvarson et al.'s (2014) study, it was evident that the status of ITE in Australia was significant, but there was a lack of a specific explanation and investigation of the characteristics of the ideal or expected EC ITE. For example, only a few EC teachers were invited to take Mayer et al.'s (2015) survey, and the smallest group of graduate teachers (8%) were those in the ECEC area. It seemed that Australian experts were increasingly concerned about the quality of teacher education and teacher preparation, yet they paid little attention to ITE for EC teachers. A recent review regarding teacher registration (AITSL, 2018a) provided several recommendations for EC teachers, although the two recommendations were not closely related to preparation courses. One focused on EC teachers' registration, and the other on amending the relevance and applicability to EC teachers of the

Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2011). From this literature it may be concluded that government concern about the quality of EC ITE was increasing and had become more focused.

2.2.2 *Initial teacher education research trends in China.*

The current research found few publications on China's teacher education in English-edited journals, most of which were in relation to English-language teaching. Using the search string of "teacher education in China", for example, identified 24 articles from Scopus, which ranged from 1985 to 2018. This was consistent with a report from Guo (2005) who found it very difficult to obtain literature in English about teacher education and training in China. It was thus essential that the CNKI was used to access a broader scope of literature.

The Chinese publications could be categorised into the following seven broad areas with illustrative examples, which were similar to those of the Australian publications.

- Different teaching and learning disciplines, such as:

    o English teacher education (e.g., Feng, 2016);

    o Chinese language teacher education (e.g., Li, 2014);

    o physical teacher education (e.g., Li, 2016); and

    o chemistry teacher education (e.g., Liu et al., 2015).

- Capabilities necessary for ITE graduates (e.g., Chen, 2018; Kang & Liu, 2018; Ma, Zhao, & Han, 2010; Qi & Wang, 2012; Wang, Lin, Ma, & Hu, 2012; Wu & Rao, 2018a, 2018b).

- Quality assurance of PE placement (e.g., Chen & Zhao, 2009; Liu, 2010; Sang, 2011; Yao, Li, & Zhang, 2012).

- ITE course structure (e.g., Ding, 2018; Liu & Yu, 2010; Ni, 2010; Zhou, Tang, & Gong, 2011).

- Development and reform of ITE (e.g., Ding, Chen, & Sun, 2011; Jiang & Li, 2018; Jin & Xiao, 2014; Yu, Lian, & Hong, 2013; Zhong, 2010).

- Issues concerning teacher registration (e.g., Chen, 2008; Chen & Yu, 2015; Wang & Wang, 2012; Zhu, 2009).

- Research on other countries ITE studies, such as:

  o Accreditation for ITE in Australia (e.g., Deng & Wang, 2018) and in the United States (e.g., Wang, 2018);

  o Characteristics of ITE courses in the United States (e.g., Guo, 2018; Wang & Ding, 2010), in Finland (e.g., Wei, 2018), and in Britain (e.g., Ning, 2018); and

  o Quality assurance mechanisms for ITE in Finland (e.g., Li & Zhou, 2018) and in Germany (e.g., Wang & Zou, 2018).

The literature also revealed that Chinese scholars conducted a broader range of research in both the areas of ITE and EC ITE in the last decade. Some ITE studies were investigations of other countries, especially developed countries. It seemed that this phenomenon was not accidental but inevitable, as over the last decade, the Chinese national government placed ECEC and EC ITE as important policies for the assurance of education quality. This initiative was similar to the trend in Australia.

The announcement and implementation of the *National Plan for Medium- and Long-Term Education Reform and Development (2010–2020)* (The State Council of China,

2010a) and *The State Council's Opinions on the Current Development of Preschool Education* (The State Council of China, 2010b) reflected the importance of ECEC services and the quality of EC teachers. At the same time, two standards for ITE course creation and for EC teacher outcomes were issued by the Ministry of Education (MoE): *Curriculum Standards of Teacher Education (Trial Version)* (MoE, 2011); and *China's Professional Standards for Kindergarten Teachers (Trial Version)* (*Standards*; MoE, 2012c). Teacher education scholars and educators investigated how these requirements and expectations were being implemented in practice with an impetus and new perspective (e.g., Chen, Wang, & Xiong, 2018; Guo & Xie, 2013; Wang, 2011; Wang, 2015; Xu, 2013; Zhang, 2018). Chen et al. (2018) captured kindergarten teachers' perceptions of how they put the *Standards* (MoE, 2012c) into practice by using a questionnaire survey focusing on the time these in-service teachers were in teacher education and training. The findings indicated that the in-service teachers had a poor understanding of the *Standards* when they were in the process of becoming EC teachers (MoE, 2012c), and the researchers offered suggestions to overcome this problem. For example, they recommended that EC ITE courses should explore how the *Standards* (MoE, 2012c) could be applied in teaching, and that course providers should conduct a range of standard-based teaching and learning activities for students. The focus areas of the *Standards* (MoE, 2012c) should be employed as assessment criteria to guide and evaluate ITE students' learning performance and professional capabilities.

After analysing the status of the ITE research from Australia and China, it was evident that governments and researchers from the two countries had increased their attention on teacher training and EC teacher preparation because the importance of the teaching quality to support children's development had been recognised and accepted. That is,

the significance of the quality of EC teachers and their preparation was now considered important.

The remaining four sections in *Chapter 2: Literature Review* address the literature on the significance of EC teachers, the essential components of EC ITE courses, and how EC students can prepare to graduate as skilled teachers of the profession.

2.3   The Significance of Early Childhood Teachers and Teaching

2.3.1   *The role of the early childhood teacher.*

"Teachers' work today is arguably more complex, challenging and difficult than at any other time" (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 29), and globally, a large percentage of people were increasingly recognising that working with children was a very challenging, demanding, complicated, yet a rewarding career (Baum & King, 2006; Early & Winton, 2001; Mueller & File, 2015; Pianta & Hamre, 2009). In ECEC places, there were possibly even higher expectations of teachers (Agbenyega, 2012) that coincided with increasingly dynamic and complex societal changes. This conclusion aligned with Sims's (2010) argument that EC teachers of the next decade would meet different challenges than those of current teachers. An EC teacher needed to have decision-making capabilities, including the capacity to make decisions that ensured that the needs of young children (Baum & King, 2006; Bucci, 2000) and their parents (Mueller & File, 2015) were met; select appropriate teaching strategies using appropriate pedagogical knowledge and skills (Agbenyega, 2012; Hoffman et al., 2019); and master learning and teaching through self-reflection (AI-Hassan, 2019); self-awareness (Baum & King, 2006); and self-assessment (Agbenyega, 2012).

2.3.2 The importance of the development of early learners.

It has been widely established internationally that the EC environment was a major contributor to a child's subsequent learning and socio-emotional skills (DEEWR, 2009; Garvis & Manning, 2015; MoE, 2012d; Muennig, Schweinhart, Montie, & Neidell, 2009; Yan, 2018; Zhang & Yan, 2018). The early years stage was significant in influencing a child's development physically and emotionally for future success in education, work, and life (Kayili & Ari, 2011; Song, 2017; Wang, 2005; Winter, 2010). A contemporary perspective of children's learning, whose development occurs in a range of socio-cultural environments (Alexander, Doddington, Grey, Hargreaves, & Kershner, 2010), was that the ECEC setting was created by traditions, social and economic status, and people's behaviour. The EC stage was also important as children developed the capacity to create relationships, solve problems, and build communication skills. It is also a key period when children developed a foundation for cognitive development and the control of emotions (Britto, 2017).

2.3.3 Relationship between children's development and early childhood education and care quality.

A high-quality ECEC environment could lead to a variety of positive achievements for children (NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 2002); a strong EC experience could improve physical and cognitive outcomes (Donoghue, 2017; Zhao, 2014) and provide better measures of social, language, and cognitive abilities (Clarke-Stewart & Allhusen, 2002). High-quality interactions between EC teachers and children facilitated children's capabilities in academic and socio-emotional progression (Burchinal, Zaslow, & Tarullo, 2016; Yoshikawa et al., 2013) and allowed children to

actively engage in discussions and communication (Sylva, Ereky-Stevens, Pastori, Slot, & Lerkkanen, 2016). EC teachers played a critical role in determining the quality of ECEC (Barnett et al., 2017; Manning, Garvis, Fleming, & Wong, 2017).

The association between EC teachers' qualifications and teacher-child interaction had been a focus in some European countries and the United States. Research indicated a strong relationship between EC teachers' qualifications and teacher-child interaction for very young children from birth to two year-of-age (e.g., Barros et al., 2016; Castle et al., 2016; Slot, Leseman, Verhagen, & Mulder, 2015; Vogel et al., 2015; Vogel et al., 2015). A review conducted by Manning et al. (2017) examined the empirical evidence revealed that higher EC teacher qualifications were significantly positively correlated with higher quality in ECEC, including seven factor subscales. Four relationships between teachers' qualifications were positive and statistically significant: (i) EC program structure design; (ii) curriculum activities conduction; (iii) development of children's language and reasoning skills; and (iv) the provisions for parents/carers and professional needs of staff.

With challenged evidence to support the argument that teachers with higher levels of education were linked to better classroom quality (Early et al., 2006; Mashburn et al., 2008) and children's higher achievement (Institute of Medicine and National Research Council, 2015), the relationship between EC teachers' qualifications and children's outcomes was by no means simple and direct (Early et al., 2007; Lin & Magnuson, 2018; Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development [OECD], 2012; Productivity Commission, 2015). Previous research had observed that teaching quality and teacher quality constituted a reciprocal relationship (Churchill et al., 2018; Sims, 2010), which had also been affirmed by Agbenyega (2012), who stated that EC

teachers "need to understand the interrelationship between teaching and learning theories in order to personalise teaching within a supportive early childhood environment, implement theoretically relevant curriculum" (p. 141). There was evidence that a better EC program depended on well-trained (qualified) EC teachers (Barnett, 2003; Manning et al., 2017; Saracho & Spodek, 2007; Schilder, 2016; Zhang, 2018), where children were taught and behaved using easy-to-follow directions and motivated by challenging activities (De Kruif, McWilliam, Ridley, & Wakely, 2000). It was found that children developed language skills faster if they learned from better qualified EC teachers (Burchinal et al., 2000; Norris, 2010), and children taught by these teachers attained a higher educational level and had better social, language, and cognitive development (Dwyer, Chait, & McKee, 2000; Fu, 2011; National Research Council, 2000).

2.3.4   Relationship between early childhood quality and early childhood teacher's qualifications.

The quality of EC ITE is vital in promoting a high-quality EC program (Ackerman, 2005; Garvis, Lemon, Pendergast, & Yim, 2013; Garvis & Manning, 2015; Tayler et al., 2016). Research indicated that if a positive learning environment was created and quality pedagogy was fostered by skilled and qualified EC teachers, this would lead to better learning outcomes for children (Litjens & Taguma, 2010). However, several studies regarding the relationship between the EC teachers' qualification and the quality of the EC program suggested that the link was weak (e.g., Early et al., 2007; Lin & Magnuson, 2018; OECD, 2012). A growing body of research showed that a teacher's higher qualification could mean better outcomes for children (Barnett, 2003; Kelley & Camilli, 2007; Manning et al., 2017; Manning, Wong, Fleming, & Garvis,

2019; Whitebook, 2003b), particularly if the teacher had a at least a bachelor's-level degree in EC development (Saracho & Spodek, 2007). Howes, James, and Ritchie's (2003) study agreed with this idea and suggested that an EC teacher with a bachelor's degree had a positive effect on the quality of an EC program, and that he or she was considered a better qualified EC teacher (Barnett, 2003; Whitebook, 2003a, 2003b). Some research explored the idea that EC teachers with a bachelor's degree in EC education might create a better learning atmosphere, leading to superior outcomes for children (e.g., Austin et al., 2015; Barnett, 2003; Whitebook, 2003a, 2003b). Whitebook (2003a) considered that requiring EC teachers to have a bachelor's degree with a deeper understanding of childhood development was essential. As to what extent EC educators with professional knowledge and skills could be regarded as qualified teachers, and how they should be prepared, was still widely debated (Schilder, 2016; Zhu, 2019).

2.4 Components of Early Childhood Initial Teacher Education Courses

2.4.1 Traditional teacher preparation courses.

The complex work of teachers required specialised education, as teaching was considered a "professional rather than technical practice" (Mayer et al., 2017, p. 53). Korthagen and Kessels (1999) noted that theoretical knowledge could be very helpful to the practitioner. Lectures were usually regarded as a suitable delivery method for teaching-related content in a traditional model, and teaching practice was viewed as the opportunity to apply what the ITE students learned from lectures. The traditional model had often emphasised the transfer of psychology and sociology content to students in the form of lectures (Ben-Peretz, 1995).

Bullough and Gitlin (2001) noted there were very few advantages in this "theory-into-practice" model because when people "first worked together [it] was disjointed, fragmented and confusing for methods courses were disconnected from curriculum courses, and both were disconnected from practice teaching" (p. 1). Similarly, Willingham (2018) asserted that current ITE courses emphasised abstract theory at the expense of practical knowledge. It was evident from the research that when the traditional model of the theory-practice divide was implemented in teacher training courses, graduates perceived the theory 'preparations' as irrelevant to the reality of everyday working conditions in real working contexts (Darling-Hammond, 2006a; Hynds & McDonald, 2010; Kennedy & Heineke, 2014; Korthagen, Loughran, & Russell, 2006; Liu & Li, 2014; Zeichner, 2010). Adoniou (2013) and Nahal (2010) observed that graduates might have a "reality shock" when they began their teaching journey. Le Cornu (2015) challenged the notion of the theory-practice divide and argued for "an integrated approach to content, pedagogy, students learning and professional experience" (p. 7). PE placement has been regarded theoretically and practically as core to successful work-integrated learning and a solution to the theory-practice divide in many ITE courses.

The influence of the theory-practice divide on students and the EC profession was widely recognised (Jackson & Burch, 2016; McConney, Price, & Woods-McConney, 2012; Nahal, 2010), and its prevalence within ITE a perennial concern (Beck, Kosnik, & Rowsell, 2007; Korthagen et al., 2006; Mason, 2013; Taylor, Kelein, & Abrams, 2014; Mayer, 2014). It was necessary to build a *new* link between theory and practice to promote quality in teacher preparation (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2006a; Grossman & Loeb, 2008).

2.4.2   Contemporary teacher preparation courses.

Policymakers and teacher educators were focusing more on what teachers should learn and how to provide teacher education support to ensure that teacher candidates were "classroom ready" (Cao, 2015; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Ingvarson et al., 2014; Moon, 2016; Jenset, Klette, & Hammerness, 2018; Zhang & Zhong, 2013). Moon (2016) suggested that teacher education in universities needed to highlight the importance of practice and promote quality. Likewise, Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) reviewed case studies on teacher education in different countries and contexts (Australia, Canada, China, Finland, Japan, Singapore, and the United States) and found that the lack of a close connection between theory and practice was a core concern across the identified high-performing jurisdictions regarding student achievements.

2.4.2.1   External factors affecting the quality of initial teacher education courses.

Conclusions drawn from the empirical research on teacher education courses in different countries have indicated significantly similar broad policy contexts in which they operated (e.g., Ingvarson & Rowley, 2017; Ingvarson et al., 2014; Zhang & Zhong, 2013). The literature reported that promoting teacher and teaching quality depended on a range of policy requirements at the national level (Beauchamp, Clarke, Hulme, & Murray, 2013; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; OECD, 2013). Standards and regulations for registration ensured that providers had prepared their students to be knowledgeable and skilled teachers (Ingvarson & Rowley, 2017). Australia's courses were found to have "stable and effective policies and mechanisms in place to assure the quality" (p. xi) of ITE entrants by comparing in-country with other high-achieving countries (Ingvarson et al., 2014). This was not a single act in the West; for example,

Ingvarson and Rowley (2017) identified "policies for assuring the quality of beginning teachers cover three main stages" (p. 177). The stages were recruitment and selection (the quality of teacher entrants), accreditation (the quality of the ITE courses), and registration (the quality of prospective practitioners).

Policy-makers and scholars in China have tended to introduce ITE regulation systems and curricula created externally (in other countries) to improve the ITE course's teaching quality (Zhang & Zhong, 2013). Buchanan (2017) indicated that national standards for teachers "do not primarily define teaching quality. They constitute essentially a framework of assessable outcomes, that is, measures of teacher professional expertise, knowledge, learning, and development" (p. 116). This meant that local institutional action must be taken as well as having the national policy.

2.4.2.2 Internal factors affecting the quality of initial teacher education courses.

Educators have become increasingly concerned with the internal components inherent in the courses themselves. The course content and knowledge, as well as the PE placements, are all components of the course design that enable students to gain professional knowledge and skills that determine how the teacher performs in the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 2006a). Darling-Hammond highlighted "knowledge for teaching" (the "what" of teacher education) and "program designs and pedagogies" (the "how" of teacher education) with seven characteristics of a powerful teacher education: (i) a coherence set of learning experiences; (ii) well-defined standards of professional knowledge and practice; (iii) a strong core curriculum; (iv) extended clinical experiences; (v) extensive use of appropriate evaluation; (vi) explicit strategies; and (vii) a strong school-university partnerships (p. 305). Additionally,

Darling-Hammond emphasised three principles for powerful ITE courses: (i) "coherence and integration" (p. 306); (ii) "extensive, well-supervised clinical experience linked to course work using pedagogies that link theory and practice" (p. 307); and (iii) "new relationships with schools" (p. 308). These features have been introduced, accepted, and applied in Australia (e.g., Ingvarson et al., 2014; Lynch, 2015; Mayer et al., 2015; Mayer et al., 2017) and China (e.g., Lei & Huang, 2017; Wu & Rao, 2018b).

Empirical evidence demonstrated that the contemporary teacher education courses (combining theoretical knowledge, professional teaching skills and pedagogical strategies, and field experiences) had a positive influence on the thoughts and practices of ITE students (Darling-Hammond, 2006a, 2006b; Koppich, 2000; Merseth & Koppich, 2000; Snyder, 2000; Zeichner, 2000). Tatto (1996) emphasised that the more coherent the teacher education course, the more effective and positive its influence in supporting future teachers and helping them understand and master the nature of teaching. Consequently, an ITE course needed to be conceptually and structurally coherent and integrated into the PE (Boyd et al., 2009; Canrinus, Bergem, Klette, & Hammerness, 2017).

Pedagogy was essential in teaching and learning; teacher preparation should provide ITE students with a solid understanding of pedagogical content knowledge for the different subjects they would teach. Shulman (1987) highlighted the importance of the pedagogical knowledge and skills for teacher education, saying that pedagogical content knowledge was "that special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers, their own special form of professional understanding" (Shulman, 1987, p. 8). Cochrane (1991) also stated that pedagogy

"concerns the manner in which teachers relate their pedagogical knowledge (what they know about teaching) to their subject matter knowledge (what they know about what they teach), in the school context, for the teaching of specific students" (p. 5).

PE placement was a vital component of ITE as it provided students practice and engagement in real-world educational settings (Curtis, Martin, & Broadley, 2019; Le Cornu, 2015). Several authors highlighted PE as the venue in which students had the chance to construct and reconstruct their understanding of teaching (Carr, 1986; Elliot, 1991; Schön, 1983). Empirical studies revealed that student teachers perceived PE placement in their ITE courses to be the most influential component of their preparation (e.g., Allen & Wright, 2014; Cheng, Xu, & Wang, 2016; Li & Zeng, 2018; Mayer et al., 2015; White & Forgasz, 2016; Zhuang, 2015). Grounding teacher education in practice had become a growing concern in many countries (Conway & Munthe, 2015; Jenset et al., 2018; Moon, 2016). Moon (2016) indicated that delivering ITE within universities had reinforced the divide between theory and practice, and teacher training needed to emphasise practice to promote its status in society. Similar concerns had been expressed as a result of research from the United States which reported that the education of teachers "must move to programs that are fully grounded in clinical practice and interwoven with academic content and professional courses" (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2010, p. 2). Policymakers and educators from both Australia and China have strongly agreed with these concerns and argued that well-structured and supervised PE placements that fully align with the theory delivery were vital for accredited ITE courses (AITSL, 2018b; MoE, 2011; MoE, 2012c, 2012d; TEMAG, 2014).

A well-constructed PE placement aligned with the theory units presented in the university classroom was found to support student learning better than the traditional model with theory-practice division and characterised by a less-directed placement disconnected from real-world teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2006b; Le Cornu, 2015; Zeichner, 2010). Jenset et al. (2018) conducted multiple case studies across different national contexts and found eight dimensions of how ITE had been integrated into PE. This was consistent with an earlier study by Darling-Hammond (2010) that identified that "learning to practice in practice, with expert guidance, is essential to becoming a great teacher of students with a wide range of needs" (p. 40).

Ingvarson et al. (2014) reported that the ITE courses in Australia were coherent and well-structured and integrated theory and practice. However, Chinese scholars (e.g., Liu & Hai, 2016; Xu, 2015) found areas for concern and identified differences in their examination of Chinese ITE courses, such as a lack of a strong course structure that was integrated and aligned with content knowledge and teaching practice. This lack of integration and alignment was considered to be one of the common challenges of ITE courses in China; in particular, that there was too much theory and not enough practice (Liu & Luo, 2016; Liu & Hai, 2016; Xu, 2015). Liu and Luo's (2016) large-scale study across 30 Chinese universities investigated EC ITE courses using document analysis and interviews and found this to be true. Ding (2013) and Wu (2011) proposed the concept of "full-course practice" in an attempt to solve the problem and asserted that students' professional teaching capabilities would improve because the different challenges that they faced would be identified and solved in this process. PE placement should be aligned with the academic course content in a range of different teaching practices to achieve this aim; the degree of teaching challenges should be increased over time, and a range of diverse placements must be provided as well as appropriate

guidance and feedback to students from university-based academics and real-classroom kindergarten teachers supervising ITE students (supervising classroom teachers) (Ding, 2013; Wu, 2011). This plan for action in China was in-line with the requirements of accreditation for Australian ITE courses the principle of coherent ITE courses (Darling-Hammond, 2006a, 2006b; Ingvarson et al., 2014; Mayer et al., 2015; Mayer et al., 2017).

2.4.3   *Characteristics of early childhood teacher preparation courses.*

A review of different countries' core policies (e.g., professional standards for EC teachers, EC curricula, ITE course accreditation) provided a framework for identifying the key curriculum content for EC ITE courses in Australia and China. The following review discusses these in terms of the quality of ECEC, the current status of EC teaching education and training within each course, and the potential influence of those factors on childhood outcomes while integrating the policies of different countries and extant literature. Five elements were reviewed in regards to the capabilities with which EC ITE students should be equipped: (i) understanding childhood development; (ii) creating the learning environment; (iii) teaching with appropriate pedagogy and curricula; (iv) engagement with parents/carers; and (v) assessing children's performance.

2.4.3.1   Understanding childhood development.

Research has suggested that EC teachers need more childhood development training (using better learning materials that cover appropriate activities) to improve language

development (Shu & Li, 2014), and provide emotional and cognitive stimulation (Manning et al., 2019; Raikes, Raikes, & Wilcox, 2005; Zhang & Yan, 2018).

EC teachers' understanding of the social and emotional development of children is a core part of ECEC (Denham, Bassett, & Zinsser, 2012; Yan, 2018; Zhang & Yan, 2018), and the courses should prepare students to be aware of and understand theories regarding young children's social and emotional learning (Bowman et al., 2000; Feng, 2012; Manning et al., 2019). This solid foundation is necessary as studies have indicated that children's development with regard to their social and emotional learning was critical to their later academic achievement and social competence (Denham et al., 2012).

2.4.3.2   Creating the learning environment.

EC teachers need to be able to create safe and supportive learning environments where they can conduct a range of diverse curriculum activities and manage the classroom to support children's learning and shape appropriate behaviour (Carter & Doyle, 2006; DEEWR, 2009; Liu, 2017; MoE, 2012c, 2012d; Zhang, 2018). EC teachers are required to adopt and use suitable materials (along with learning environment creation) to maintain a supportive learning atmosphere and conduct appropriate curriculum activities that challenge and strengthen children's growth (AITSL, 2011; DEEWR, 2009; Liu, 2012; Maxwell, 2007; MoE, 2012c, 2012d).

Several studies have reported on the integration of physical health services (e.g., hygiene, nutritious meals, snacks) and safety issues (e.g., emergency plans, electrical safety) into day-to-day activities (Feng, 2012; Liu, 2012) and argued these as requirements for an EC graduate (MoE, 2012c, 2012d) in the Chinese context. Similarly, ECEC researchers from other countries reported that the physical

environment (e.g., space for different activities, furnishings, classroom decoration) affected the quality of the ECEC context (Buettner et al., 2016; Ishimine, 2011; Manning et al., 2019).

2.4.3.3   Teaching with appropriate pedagogy and curricula.

EC teachers are expected to employ easy-to-follow instructions and conduct innovative and high-level curriculum activities to motivate children (De Kruif et al., 2000; Liu, 2017) and enable them to effectively work with children (McMullen & Alat, 2002). Knowledge of pedagogy is critical for EC teachers, and they must put it into practice when conducting sessions or lessons (AITSL, 2018b; MoE, 2012c, 2012d). With the increasing demand in expectations and high requirements for applying governmental-mandated EC curricula in ECEC settings, EC teachers need to become familiar with and practice EC curricular content using appropriate pedagogy skills to meet and positively support children's development.

2.4.3.3.1   *Pedagogy use in the early childhood education and care context.*

Pedagogy is a significant element of teaching, including planning, conducting teachings, and organizing activities (Shulman, 2005). Preparing children to become active learners with a wide range of knowledge and social skills requires EC teachers who understand how pedagogy influences teaching and its outcomes. When EC teachers use responsive pedagogical strategies in "active, engaged, constructive and interactive environments" (Weisberg, Hirsh-Pasekk, & Golinkoff, 2013, p. 108), they can accommodate the informal and day-to-day knowledge that children use to create their conceptions and more formal knowledge (Hedges & Cullen, 2012), which benefits their cognitive and socio-emotional outcomes (Feng, 2012; Zhang, 2018). Alexander (2014) called upon EC practitioners to "develop a pedagogy of repertoire,

evidence and principle, rather than mere compliance with habit or official fiat" (p. 161).

Some contemporary studies have focused on the kind of pedagogy that should be used in the ECEC context. Research has offered different perspectives on pedagogical focuses (e.g., Alexander, 2015; Laevers, 2011) and has illustrated that teacher-focused and learner-initiated education and practices consist of ingredients that can be employed to create quality ECEC programs (Andreas, 2019).

Alexander (2015) emphasised the teachers' role in facilitating learning, noting "what the teacher needs to know in order to make valid effective and defensible classroom decisions" (p. 253). Others have observed pedagogy as an association between teaching and learning but with a focus on the learner-initiated format (e.g., Bishop, Ladwig, & Berryman, 2014; Harris, 2015; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009). For example, individualised teaching and learning could directly meet learners' unique needs and capabilities rather than employing a one-size-fits-all model (Harris, 2015). This would allow children to actively engage in the learning process (Hargreaves & Shirley 2009), during which teachers could understand and shape children's specific abilities (Bishop et al., 2014). In this view, pedagogy is regarded as a process of co-developing models of interactions between teachers and children, which also aligned with Bielaczyc, Kapur, and Collins (2013)'s view of pedagogy as a collective construction.

An Australian EYLF curriculum (DEEWR, 2009), defined pedagogy in the context of ECEC as "early childhood educators' professional practice, especially those aspects that involve building and nurturing relationships, curriculum decision making, teaching and learning" (DEEWR, 2009, p. 49). This view accorded with China's mandated curriculum for children, *Early Learning and Development Guideline for*

Children Aged 3–6 Years (MoE, 2012d). The curricula for ECEC programs in Australia and China were holistic and child-centred and acknowledged that children learned through play (DEEWR, 2010; MoE, 2012d). Curricula from both countries clarified what was expected of and valued in EC, the learning objectives and aims, content, teaching and learning materials, assessment, and the pedagogy appropriate for early learners.

The variety of pedagogical perspectives systematised above illustrate a comprehensive and agreed-upon aim for the teaching and learning process—to facilitate learning—for which pedagogy is "the silent partner in early years learning" (Stephen, 2010, p. 15). The term pedagogy is broad, and ECEC programs sometimes differ in emphasis (Andreas, 2019). Alexander (2004) expressed concern about the absence of systematic, appropriate pedagogy in practice in the context of EC learning. Flückiger, Dunn, and Wheeley (2016) identified that some EC teachers may feel unprepared for the role of the pedagogue.

2.4.3.3.2   Integration of appropriate pedagogy and early childhood curricula.

From the different perspectives on pedagogy from contemporary literature and the policies of the two case study countries, EC teachers were required to support children's active learning toward their construction of understanding by using EC curricula and employing appropriate pedagogy. However, there was still a debate about what pedagogy, and particular, curricula were appropriate for younger children (Chazan-Cohen et al., 2017; Sylva et al., 2016). Notwithstanding this debate, similar child-centred and age-appropriate principles of EC curricula were being implemented in the two countries, in agreement with what Andreas (2019) espoused "age-appropriate practice needs to be considered as curricula converge across levels" (p.

51). In this ECEC context, teachers needed to have the capability to select and use suitable teaching approaches for children.

A pedagogy program concerning age-appropriate practices for young children was commissioned in Australia that employed "an innovative research-informed and research-led design" (Flückiger et al., 2016; Flückiger, Dunn, Stinson, & Wheeley, 2017, p. 66) to develop a foundational paper of age-appropriate pedagogies for the early years of schooling. The paper identified ten key teaching and learning messages for children across pedagogical principles, approaches, and practice after reviewing and analysing ten large-scale international research studies. It reported that selecting and using age-appropriate pedagogies was complicated but essential. The characteristics of age-appropriate pedagogies were summarised regarding their effective use with younger children, but this pedagogy is an ongoing question for EC teachers. These principles were later put into practice in a range of diverse settings across the state of Queensland in the pilot phase, and the action research obtained positive effects (Flückiger et al., 2017; Queensland Government, 2016).

Although some of the positive influence of age-appropriate pedagogies was evident in the findings from the pilot project conducted by Flückiger et al. (2017), a variety of pedagogical skills still needed to be explored, identified, and practised based on particular circumstances. As a statement from the foundation paper illustrated "age-appropriate pedagogies are necessary in the early years of schooling to engage young learners, achieve effective learning outcomes, and set children up for long-term success" (Flückiger et al., 2016, p. 31). For example, Luke (2013) highlighted that there was no single effective teaching approach because teachers faced a range of differences in children, cultures, and communities. Additionally, Ang (2014) suggested

that EC teachers needed to work closely with children so they could identify their various skills and capabilities, and use suitable pedagogical strategies that supported their learning.

Studies found that students of EC courses had solid content knowledge about pedagogy but lacked practical experience. One Chinese study (Liu, 2016) reported that EC students had a sound theoretical knowledge of pedagogical content in different subjects but were challenged putting these into practice. The research identified that this was because the students were focused on each child's characteristics at the theoretical level rather than selecting what skills were appropriate for certain situations or the child's practical needs. Dahlberg, Moss, and Pence (2007) observed a similar phenomenon, arguing that EC teachers tended to have an interest in a child's psychological development while overlooking the effects that their pedagogical decision-making had on children's learning.

Literacy and numeracy were subjects that must be practised and taught in ECEC programs in both Australia and China. EC teachers in China were required to teach arts in kindergartens in a way that was consistent with the EC curriculum and China's cultural and educational traditions (MoE, 2012d). EC ITE courses required pedagogical content knowledge and the opportunity for practising pedagogical skills (AITSL, 2018b; MoE, 2011) so that students attained strong pedagogical content knowledge and attained knowledge of literacy, numeracy, and the arts (particularly in China).

EC ITE courses in China highly valued delivering knowledge of the arts and teaching students to play instruments (MoE, 2011; MoE, 2017). Many empirical studies had indicated that students' perceptions of their artistic skills affected their confidence in

relation to conducting artistic activities in the classroom because of a lack of opportunities for training and practice on campus (e.g., Liu, 2016; Zhang, 2013). Education in the arts for EC teachers' preparation seemed less important in Australia than in China. EC teachers in Australia were not required to master any musical instruments or become an "expert" in any art form (e.g., music, painting), and researchers suggested that appropriate skills could support EC teachers' confidence in conducting a music program for children, for example (Ehrlin, 2015; Ehrlin & Wallerstedt, 2014; Gruenhagen, 2012).

The role of an EC teacher changed in terms of the various pedagogical strategies and skills needed and according to the balance between either a teacher-focused or children-centred learning environment, or a combination of both. An EC teacher's capability for developing the appropriate pedagogical skills that aligned with EC curricula for children of a particular age and supported children's learning experiences was essential, as was applying pedagogy strategies and characteristics in real-life settings (AITSL, 2018b; Flückiger et al., 2017; MoE, 2011).

2.4.3.4 Engagement with parents/carers.

Family engagement in children's education was associated with positive development in academic achievement (Lee & Bowen, 2006; Li, 2018; Park & Holloway, 2017). Development of social skills and emotional adjustment (Barger, Kim, Kuncel, & Pomerantz, 2019), motivation to learn (Arnold, Zeljo, Doctoroff, & Ortiz, 2008), and literacy and math skills (Van Voorhis, Maier, Epstein, & Lloyd, 2013) could be achieved through engagement with family members during daily activity. It was important for EC teachers to develop professional engagement with parents and/or their carers (parents) to create a supportive and responsive relationship, and to involve

them in their children's education (Arnold et al., 2008; Barger et al., 2019; Fantuzzo, Tighe, & Childs, 2000; Wang, 2010). This idea aligned with government and regulatory authority expectations in both Australia and China (AITSL, 2011; AITSL, 2018b; DEEWR, 2009; MoE, 2012c, 2012d). With the increasing diversity in families (e.g., race, social-economic status, and educational background of parents), the more EC teachers who engaged with and comprehend a child's family background, the more they were able to invite parents or carers to participate in their children's learning. This supported their children's cognitive development and socio-emotional capabilities (Arnold et al., 2008; Van Voorhis et al., 2013; Wang, 2010) and helped children, families, and classrooms succeed (Sanders, 2009).

2.4.3.5   Assessing children's performance.

EC teachers' knowledge and capabilities of the observation and assessment of children's learning performance was significant in relation to promoting learning outcomes (Banerjee & Luckner, 2013). Assessment capability was required for EC teachers to evaluate and adjust activities using appropriate pedagogical skills in order to adapt to the changing contextual environment (Andreas, 2019; Flückiger et al., 2016; Zhang, 2018). They needed to understand and be aware of each child as a unique being to support learning, identify children with particular needs (Agbenyega, 2012; Liu, 2019), and monitor and track children's progress (Liu, 2015). EC teachers should be competent to report and discuss children's performance in ECEC settings with parents/carers and related professionals in an appropriate way (AITSL, 2011; MoE, 2012c, 2012d).

Five elements regarding the capabilities with which EC students should be equipped were reviewed from extant literature, as well as the requirements of their preparation in

Australia and China in this section. How to prepare EC teachers to be knowledgeable practitioners through formal training that aligned learning outcomes, learning and teaching activities, and assessment, is addressed in the next two sections: Section 2.5 reviews how the coherence of the learning activity is informed by an appropriate course delivery mode; and Section 2.6 (page 88) interprets and analyses learning and teaching models for EC ITE students, focusing on how these models can support their development into knowledgeable and skilled practitioners through content knowledge delivery and teaching practice.

2.5 Delivery Modes in Initial Teacher Education Courses

A sound learning and teaching environment with a well-structured course design were essential for course quality (Soffer & Nachmias, 2018) and course design had improved over the years. Many studies argued that it was now necessary to provide alternative modes and approaches for content delivery through synchronous face-to-face and synchronous and asynchronous online classes (Swan et al., 2000; Young & Norgard, 2006).

2.5.1 Face-to-face and online education.

Two traditional delivery modes for teaching and learning at university are face-to-face classroom teaching and distance education which is typified today by online instruction. In the face-to-face learning environment content is delivered in a traditional physical classroom and school students have various chances to engage holistically as part of the learning process. Online education took advantage of new communication and information technologies, and was increasingly important for universities and other ITE providers (Angiello, 2010; Dixon & Pelliccione, 2004;

Garbett, 2011). A shift towards online educational delivery has been driven by societal needs and by universities' internal dynamics. Online education provides flexible educational opportunities for people who choose to study online and/or may be restricted by, for example, geography or time (see below). Online social networks established the ability to communicate with people around the world. Choy, McNickle, and Clayton (2002) found that students could engage socially with the online learning experience, as they developed communities both within the confines of the online material and beyond.

2.5.2   Blended learning environment.

Blended learning, the "thoughtful integration of classroom face-to-face learning experiences with online learning experiences" (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004, p. 96), provided flexibility and more opportunities for choice in learning activities throughout the world (Gu, 2016; Horn & Staker, 2014; McGuinness & Fulton, 2019; Reeve & Tseng, 2011). The combination of synchronous (face-to-face and online) and asynchronous (primarily online) learning provided learners with more control over the time, place, and pace of individual learning for their convenience (Horn & Staker, 2014; Osguthorpe & Graham, 2003).

While some research found no significant differences in learning outcomes between the different approaches to course delivery (e.g., Lim, Morris, & Kupritz, 2007; Neuhauser, 2002), others argued that students achieved better performance in online learning (e.g., Burkhardt, Kinnie, & Cournoyer, 2008; Lim, Kim, Chen, & Ryder, 2008). Some studies found that positive learning outcomes arose from blended learning courses (e.g., Reasons, Valadares, & Slavkin, 2005; Riffell, & Sibley, 2004).

An early meta-analysis by Zhao, Lei, Yan, Lai, and Tan (2005) demonstrated that instructor involvement had a singular important impact, and they concluded that using a combination of online and face-to-face modes produced higher positive outcomes, although there was relatively "limited evidence as to what particular methods of blending impact academic achievements" (Siemens, Gašević, & Dawson, 2015, p. 83). Meng's (2018) study in a Chinese context reported that students' outcomes should improve if interaction between academics and students increased. The present research was conducted in an institution where online delivery was widely used but not in the other, therefore student outcome data were not readily comparable on this delivery mode.

Engagement and interaction were considered as part of the blended learning environment employed by universities. Student engagement was demonstrated to be connected to learning outcomes (Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie, & Gonyea, 2008; Manwaring, Larsen, Graham, & Henrie, 2017; Robinson & Hullinger, 2008). Blended learning facilitated engagement because of its flexibility (Manwaring et al., 2017), as it offered personalised and adaptive guidance to meet diverse students' learning capabilities (Boelens, Wever, & Voet, 2017; Downes, 2005). Research found that attracting and improving student engagement was a critical consideration in blended learning course design (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004; Graham & Robison, 2007; Spring, Graham, & Hadlock, 2016). Some of this research involved factors impacting student attendance with respect to cognitive, emotional, and behavioural characteristics (Fredricks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004; Janosz, 2012), while other studies explored contextual influences, such as class size and type of activities (e.g., Gleason, 2012; Shernoff, 2013). Other studies demonstrated that students might be more satisfied in an online course when it came to instructional aspects, including: (i) providing clear

requirements; (ii) creating a collaborative learning environment; (iii) developing an interaction between lecturers and students; and (iv) offering timely and quality feedback (e.g., Lao & Gonzales, 2005; Swan et al., 2000; Soffer & Nachmias, 2018; Toven-lindsey, Rhoads, & Lozano, 2015). Blended learning supported students' achievement of the course outcomes because of its flexibility and delivery strategies. Researchers suggested that students should be able to choose the balance between online and face-to-face instruction (Bonk, Kim, & Zeng, 2006; De George-Walker & Keeffe, 2010; Owston, York, & Murtha, 2013) to further increase students' engagement and reduce negative online learning outcomes (Baker, Hunter, & Thomas, 2016).

Researchers also noted that social interaction was an important factor impacting student engagement in a blended learning environment (Boelens et al., 2017; Manwaring et al., 2017). Researchers recommended that the online teaching model should develop lecturer–student and student–student social and course interactions to promote student engagement (e.g., Dixson, 2012; Maki & Maki, 2007; Swan et al., 2000; Young & Norgard, 2006).

Online interaction has been considered somewhat less spontaneous than face-to-face communication (McDonald, 2014), with delayed responses and less supportive comments from students (Chen, Wang, & Chen, 2014). A lack of physical contact (Graham, 2006) also led to students feeling isolated (McDonald, 2014; Norberg, Dziuban, & Moskal, 2011; Osguthorpe & Graham, 2003; Song, Singleton, Hill, & Koh, 2004). Gedik, Kiraz, and Ozden (2013) argued that academics who prefered to share their experiences in a face-to-face classroom provided students with more

opportunity to ask and discuss clarification questions, in line with other findings (e.g., Cooner, 2010; Galway, Corbett, Takaro, Tairyan, & Frank, 2014).

Online discussion boards created a space where students could share information, ideas, and experiences and discuss misunderstandings with each other and teaching staff (Moore, 1993). Some studies demonstrated that students participating online had a better understanding of course structure and content, and their communication skills were also better (e.g., Lao & Gonzales, 2005; Soffer & Nachmias, 2018; Swan et al., 2000; Toven-lindsey et al., 2015).

2.5.3   *Course delivery modes in initial teacher education.*

A small number of studies found that the course delivery mode was not an essential factor for ITE graduates' achievement (e.g., Martin, 2010; McMahon & Thompson, 2014; Mollenkopf, Vu, Crow, & Black, 2017). Mollenkopf et al. (2017) indicated that there was no significant difference in learning outcomes between ITE students participating in an online course compared with the face-to-face mode. This finding was in-line with several studies from Australia (Martin, 2010; McMahon & Thompson, 2014) and China (Li, 2010). Martin (2010) further found that there was no connection between the delivery mode and ITE students' performance in assessment. Conversely, Meng's (2018) study suggested that student outcomes improved because of increased interaction between academics and students in a blended course delivery mode.

It was not easy to evaluate which delivery mode was best for student outcomes among the face-to-face, online, or blended modes, as each had advantages and limitations. The appropriate delivery mode was dependent on individual circumstances and needs, and

should be tailored enabling learners to flexibly switch between delivery modes, if possible. Engagement and interaction were important for students to succeed.

2.6   Preparation Process in Initial Teacher Education Courses

University courses typically comprise content delivery, learning activities, and assessment presented against defined student learning outcomes, and there is an increasing body of research focusing on the relationship between teaching and learning (Conrad, Johnson, & Gupta, 2007). Biggs (1996) advanced an integrative concept, termed constructive alignment, to ensure and improve the quality of teaching and learning where the content, learning activities, and assessment must be aligned to enable students who engaged in the learning activities to achieve the intended learning outcomes (Biggs & Tang, 2011). CA could be applied to ITE courses as they included both theory and PE.

Section 2.6.1 (page 89) reviews the CA model (Biggs, 1996) content and knowledge delivery, followed by how students are supported in their courses regarding delivery of three aspects of the learning and teaching model: (i) deep and surface learning; (ii) formative and summative assessment approach; and (iii) criterion- and norm-referenced grading methods. The CA model's implementation and effectiveness in practice is described. Four core considerations shaping students' professional capability in PE placements namely: (i) time investment; (ii) placement sites; (iii) preparations for their PE; and (iv) supervision and assessment are discussed in Section 2.6.2 (page 97).

2.6.1 Theory and knowledge delivery.

All EC ITE course teaching and learning elements should be informed by learning theory and must be consistent with the course outcomes, the mandated government policies, and the expectation of the EC profession and the wider community.

2.6.1.1 Constructive alignment.

The concept of CA was formulated by Biggs and based on several earlier studies (Biggs, 1996). Cohen (1987) worked on an instructional design that facilitated development of a concept for curriculum integration. Marton and Säljö (1976) constructed the criteria for understanding student learning that was further discussed in Entwistle and Entwistle's (1992) research regarding the production of "forms of understanding" concerning either deep or surface approaches to learning. Accordingly, it can be conceived as learners' own understanding or knowledge foundation as constructed from activities during which new and old information are combined, systemised, and created. The key to achieving this aim is that all components in the teaching system—the curriculum and its intended outcomes, the teaching methods used, the assessment tasks—are aligned with each other (Biggs, 2014). The CA model (Biggs, 1996) shifted understanding of learning from being teacher-dominated to student-focused (Kinash & Knight, 2013; Tran, Nguyen, & Nguyen, 2010), consistent with the ideas that "what the student does is actually more important in determining what is learned than what the teacher does" (Shuell, 1986, p. 429) and "learning takes place through the active behaviour of the student" (Tyler, 1949, p. 63). In other words, the "constructive" view regarded that knowledge was constructed by the students, not simply transmitted from teachers to students.

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University was an early adopter of CA into its courses. The process was led by Biggs and Tang in 2002 (Ruge, Tokede, & Tivendale, 2019). There existed several big differences in university education between mainland China and Hong Kong, where the teaching format in Hong Kong was more similar to that in the West, on account of its former status as a British colony. Teaching quality and institutional support were essential to improve student learning outcomes in the CA approach (Biggs, 2001; Fransson & Friberg, 2015; Trigwell & Prosser, 2014). A review of the extant literature indicated that CA (Biggs, 1996) was widely implemented in curriculum design with the aim of supporting students in achieving intended learning outcomes, including in Asia (Biggs, 2014; Wang, Su, Cheung, Wong, & Kwong, 2013), Europe (Fransson & Friberg, 2015), the United States (Blumberg, 2009; Borrego & Cutler, 2010), and Australia (Mills, Tivendale, Chan, & Liu, 2013; Ruge & McCormack, 2017).

These international investigations of CA implementation focus more on individual universities (e.g., Wang et al., 2013) and programs (e.g., Ruge & McCormack, 2017) with fewer explorations of CA applied to teacher education, particularly EC ITE in the Australian and mainland Chinese contexts.

CA (Biggs, 1996) has expanded from a teaching for learning approach to a teaching and learning management process at the university level and has incorporated cultural and academic factors to increase its successful application. CA was introduced and employed in course design at many Australian universities (for example, UTAS and Bond University). There were very few studies on the application of CA in the Chinese context, particularly in mainland China, other than a few from Hong Kong.

Design at the unit level should incorporate the following key components (according to the CA model): intended learning outcomes, teaching and learning activities, assessment tasks, and unit results (Biggs, 2014; Biggs & Tang, 2011). Teaching content and strategies as well as assessment tasks and grading methods needed to be carefully designed and adopted to maintain "alignment". This integration, it was argued, would encourage students to plan their own learning progress through self-regulation and self-assessment and, therefore, better understand what and how they should learn. Students should engage in deep/meaningful learning (Marton & Säljö, 1997; Ramsden, 2003) to achieve high-quality learning outcomes (Bloxham & Boyd, 2007) rather than surface/rote learning (Marton & Säljö, 1997; Ramsden, 2003), which was likely to lead to poor-quality outcomes (Entwistle & Entwistle, 1992). This conclusion agreed with Biggs and Tang's (2011) view that CA could encourage students to engage in deep learning activities and discourage them from learning through a surface approach.

A review of research on university-applied CA identified the extent of its introduction and application (Ruge et al., 2019); key CA-related factors (e.g., surface or deep learning approach) and their effects concerning the design and development of contemporary curricula. Wang et al. (2013) undertook a comparative study to determine whether or not instructors' adoption of CA impacted student learning; i.e., if students could regulate their learning to promote "a more deep situational learning" (Marton & Säljö, 1997, p. 487). Wang et al.'s (2013) exploration not only reinforced CA's aim (Biggs & Tang, 2011) but was also consistent with findings from other studies (e.g., Blumberg, 2009; Thota & Whitfield, 2010). There were no research studies specifically exploring CA for EC ITE students. The impact of CA in EC ITE was considered in the present study.

2.6.1.2 Deep learning and surface learning.

Some early research (Marton, Dall'Alba, & Beaty, 1993; Marton & Säljö, 1976; Säljö, 1979) introduced, identified, and categorised deep and surface approaches to learning in higher education. Marton, Hounsell, and Entwistle (1984) proposed various features of deep and surface approaches to learning based on content and assessment. Several years later, Entwistle and Entwistle (1992) conducted exploratory research to investigate the nature of understanding and how "forms of understanding" were yielded. These included:

- Reproducing content from lecture notes without a clear structure;

- Reproducing content and logical framework from lecture notes;

- Using their own structure for individual topics, mainly from lecture notes;

- Adjusting structures from strategic reading to meet exam requirements; and

- Developing an individual conception of the discipline from extensive reading (p. 14).

The forms demonstrated that not only had students' experiences of understanding been developed but that this bridged the gap between experience and hidden cognitive processes. The forms suggested how teachers designed and delivered content and assessment in order to support students to effectively create their own understanding and conceptions. The factors of learning should be pulled into a coherent whole with the CA model in order to accelerate students' learning achievements. Several practitioners examined Biggs and Tang's (2011) view that courses incorporating CA encouraged students to engage in deep learning in an active teaching environment

(e.g., Blumberg, 2009; Walsh, 2007; Wang et al., 2013). Walsh (2007) presented CA as useful for work-based learning, and Wang et al. (2013) reported that students in CA courses (studied in the classroom) were "more likely to adopt deep learning approaches and less likely to use surface learning approaches" (p. 477).

2.6.1.3 Formative assessment and summative assessment.

Formative assessment is generally discussed with regards to its partnership with summative assessment (Bloom, Hastings, & Madus, 1971; Black & Wiliam, 2009; Lok, McNaught, & Young, 2016). The key distinction between formative and summative assessment is whether information for diagnostic or ongoing learning is provided or not. The aim of formative assessment was to contribute to student learning by providing quality feedback on particular activities and projects (Black & Wiliam, 1998b; Yorke, 2003), and aligning this with learning and assessment (Biggs, 1996; Biggs, 2014; Lok et al., 2016). The typical practice in summative assessment was to offer a grade with limited information given to learners about how to improve their performance (Bloom et al., 1971). Formative assessment was also concerned with mutual communication processes between teachers and students during the entire teaching and learning process (Biggs, 2014; Lok et al., 2016; Yorke, 2003), while the final grade determined the extent to which a student has achieved the intended learning outcomes in summative assessment. This meant formative assessment was a process-oriented instrument, while summative assessment was a results-focused tool.

Formative assessment is aimed at developing an opportunity for feedback during learning activities. Black and Wiliam (1998a, 1998b) stated that effective formative assessment could enhance students' learning in a wide range of educational circumstances by offering high-quality and valid feedback for learners early in the

process. A significant determinant of good formative assessment was the quality of the feedback obtained by students and the time, means, and how long it took for students to receive comments after being submitted (Gibbs & Simpson, 2004; Yorke, 2003).

Learning is an ongoing process that allows reflection, the processing of opinions, and the construction of one's own understanding. High-quality and timely feedback is essential in the CA model, as it produces positive short-term effects, and continues to yield these effects for undergraduates in the longer term or even lifelong (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Boud, 1995). Formative feedback is so significant that the effectiveness of any particular teaching and learning activity could be assessed by how well it allowed students to provide feedback to teachers and from teachers to students as they learned (Biggs, 2014). Meanwhile, other studies indicated that students needed more opportunities to obtain informal feedback to promote their understanding before formal feedback was provided, such as through discussion with peers or tutors (Nicol & Milligan, 2006) and reference to clearly-stated criteria of each assessment task (Stevens & Levi, 2005). Complicated and difficult to decode feedback comments could result in students not understanding their own performance (Baume & Yorke, 2002; Higgins, Hartley & Skelton, 2001).

2.6.1.4 Criterion-referenced and norm-referenced grading models.

Criterion-referenced and norm-referenced assessment measurements are two foundational models that are widely used in higher education institutions. The former places more emphasis on the importance of clear and detailed criteria or grading schemes where each student is judged without regard to other students (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Glaser, 1963). Norm-referenced assessment strongly depends on consideration of the statistical normal distribution of students' grades.

Generally, they are both objective, but the "standard" is different. The criterion-referenced model is more clearly linked to assessable criteria. Biggs and Tang (2011) rejected using the norm-referenced model to value the achievements of students, deeming it unsustainable and dependent on a bell curve distribution. Burton and Cuffe (2005) reinforced this notion and claimed that students' achievements did not demonstrate whether the teaching and learning activities were successful. Intended learning outcomes were key to outcome-based courses and drove students' learning according to the CA model (Biggs, 1996), therefore the criterion-referenced grading model was the most valid way to assess students (Lok et al., 2016). With clearly stated criteria for the desired learning outcomes, students could clearly understand whether their performance met the expectations (Biggs & Tang, 2011).

2.6.1.5 Implementation of the constructive alignment model in a real-life teaching environment.

Biggs (1996) provided a CA model in the university context, discussing its impact on students' learning approaches in deep or surface learning. The question of whether courses using the CA model could positively influence student learning in real-life teaching environments remains largely unanswered (Wang et al., 2013). However, Biggs (2014) reviewed the evaluations of the model based on empirical research and concluded that the use of CA in relation to outcomes produced "high-quality learning outcomes, constructively aligned teaching seems to produce high-quality learning outcomes and student satisfaction" (p. 14), although a few scholars have questioned its effectiveness in teaching (e.g., Hil, 2012; Jervis & Jervis, 2005).

The CA model was applied in course design at the UTAS, by focusing on the teaching and learning process that led to outcome achievements (Biggs, 2014; UTAS, 2018),

but it has not been introduced at YNNU. It seems that Biggs' (1996) theory has only recently been introduced to mainland China and acknowledged by educators and scholars working in higher education.

The CA model may have a significant impact on mainland China's higher education reform to implement student-centred and outcomes-based learning and particularly in an ITE EC course. The core of the EC teacher preparation courses is to support students to clearly understand and practice what they should know and be able to perform, with an emphasis on offering a set of well-structured outcomes-based assignments to achieve fit-for-purpose assessment (Brown, 2004; Juwah et al., 2004). Feedback from lecturers about students' learning aids students in achieving course-specific goals and meeting professional standards, allowing for formative assessment (Black & Wiliam, 1998a, 1998b; Black & Wiliam, 2009). Lecturers and students then cooperatively work to produce better learning achievement by actively offering timely feedback (Lok et al., 2016; Yorke, 2003).

With the CA model effective teaching encourages and allows students to actively engage in learning to achieve intended learning outcomes (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Wang et al., 2013). The published studies suggested that both the assessment style and how the assessment was applied had a direct effect on students' learning and achievements and align intended learning outcomes with teaching and learning activities. This research used this information to understand and explore, using the CA model, the current ITE courses at UTAS and YNNU in meeting stakeholders' expectations.

2.6.2   *Professional experience.*

The provision of PE is critical to ensure the quality of PE in supporting students to be "classroom-ready" teachers. Its structure comprises time, patterns, and placement sites. A sound PE preparation includes explicit and clear-stated descriptions, requirements and expectations, and appropriate supervision consisting of university-based supervisors and real-setting supervising (classroom) teachers. Both Australia and China have developed accredited EC ITE courses to provide students with a structured and supervised PE placement that is aligned with the pace of delivery of campus-based content. The objective is to prepare their graduates to be knowledgeable and skilled teachers meeting national professional standards (AITSL, 2018b; MoE, 2011; MoE, 2012c, 2012d). This section refers to relevant policies from Australia and China and extant literature regarding these concerns of PE placements.

2.6.2.1   Time allocated to professional experience.

The significance of PE is evidenced by the increased time and allocation of PE in ITE courses with different patterns of guided and supervised teaching experiences (Mayer et al., 2015; Mayer et al., 2017; Ralph, Walker & Wimmer, 2008; Xiao & Zhou, 2013) in supporting beginning teachers to gain confidence from real working environments (Ingvarson et al., 2014; Mayer et al., 2015). Relevant policies in terms of ITE course quality highlighted the time invested in real settings (AITSL, 2011; AITSL, 2018b; MoE, 2011; MoE, 2012c, 2012d). Professor Williamson, former Dean of the Faculty of Education, UTAS, argued that "the opportunity for education students to work closely with skilled school-based practitioners is an excellent way to ensure the integration of the best relevant research and the necessary classroom skills to promote students' learning" (UTAS, 2016, New Teacher Intern Placement Program, para. 11).

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It is mandatory for all Australian accredited ITE bachelor's degree courses to provide students with a minimum of 80 days of placements in a range of classroom settings (AITSL, 2018b). Similarly, China requires an 18-week placement comprising different practicum patterns, including university-based micro-teaching and kindergarten visits (MoE, 2011). Research has demonstrated that ITE students in both countries indicated that their courses would have been enhanced by more time spent in real settings with more time spent on teaching strategies and less time on campus-based theory content (Cheng et al., 2016; Li & Zeng, 2018; Mayer et al., 2015).

Similarly, Xiao and Zhou (2013) found students of EC ITE in China should understand the EC curriculum and use principles for intentional observation while they are in a PE placement and requested more time for professional practice. Different PE placement patterns (e.g., classroom observation, university-based micro-teaching) were required, particularly in the Chinese context, to provide a comprehensive teaching practice, but not all of them took place in children's learning environments. Insufficient total time for teaching practice and exposure to a range of classroom settings was also often a complaint from students (Cheng et al., 2016; Li & Zeng, 2018).

2.6.2.2   Placement sites.

Providing EC students with appropriate placement sites is also important. Studies advised that EC ITE courses should prepare students to teach for various age groups (Knipe, 2016; White, Peter, Sims, Rockel, & Kumeroa, 2016; Zhang, 2011) so that students could understand and experience childhood development in its diverse stages. These students may also be able to integrate a deeper understanding of different stages of development with teaching and learning theories (Beck, 2013). Lemon et al. (2018) noted that "observation of practice in and across a variety of classrooms and hearing

the teacher voice was imperative" (p. 94). This was supported by the accreditation processes for ITE courses in Australia; i.e., graduating students from EC ITE courses were required to complete their PE in a range of diverse settings with children ranging from new-borns to children aged eight years old (AITSL, 2018b). There was no explicit requirement in China for ITE courses to provide their EC students with opportunities to work with children of different ages, but different patterns of educational setting placements (e.g., kindergarten visit, university-based micro-teaching) were offered (MoE, 2011). This lack of age consideration in PE placement not only went against the principles of the national EC curriculum (MoE, 2012d) but also rejected the idea that pedagogy should depend on age (Andreas, 2019; Flückiger et al., 2016).

2.6.2.3 Preparations for professional experience placements.

EC teacher preparation provides a way for students to practice their understanding in a real setting; thus, pre-placement activities in ITE courses are required for students. Careful student preparations prior to starting placements were necessary to enable the completion of challenging and rigorous teaching practices and productive learning activities (Le Cornu & Ewing, 2008; Orrell, 2011). Le Cornu (2015) asserted that an explicit PE placement guide and clear responsibilities for all participants involved in PE placement must be available in order to maximise practice-connectedness. This view accorded with Darling-Hammond (2006a, 2006b) and was consistent with known effective ITE course characteristics. Offering and using agreed professional standards that reflected and assessed students' teaching performance were necessary (Ingvarson et al., 2014). AITSL requires accredited ITE courses to use the Graduate Teacher Standards of the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (AITSL, 2011) to

assess students' real-setting performance in PE. There was no similar requirement for using external professional standards for kindergarten teachers as a key assessment instrument in China. Some evidence-based studies (e.g., Liu, 2016; Nan, 2015) reported that placement logbooks were employed to gauge students' teaching performance in real settings rather than reflecting a governmental requirement or external agreed-upon standards for the profession.

2.6.2.4 Supervision and assessment.

The quality of supervision of students in ITE courses and the cooperation between university and PE placement sites is another concern reported in the literature (e.g., Cohen, Hoz, & Kaplan, 2013; TEMAG, 2014). Grudnoff (2011) and Le Cornu (2015) argued that shared individual responsibility among participants involved in teaching practice could support students successfully completing PE. It appeared that the increased emphasis of PE in ITE courses has led to challenges relating to the roles and responsibilities in PE supervision. A review of PE placement empirical studies (Cohen et al., 2013) concluded that there were challenges and conflicts between the aims and action for the university and placement sites, particularly in the main roles involved in supporting students' learning during the practice—university-based supervisors and supervising teachers approached the task from different perspectives. Universities were usually concerned with their students' academic growth from the PE, while classroom teachers favoured their children's achievements. Curtis et al. (2019) noted that courses should encourage a broader context for being a teacher, which aligned with an Australian government report requiring beginning teachers to be "classroom ready" (TEMAG, 2014). Policymakers and educators in China expressed the same

requirement but it has not been implemented so comprehensively (Liu, 2015; Liu & Hai, 2016; MoE, 2011; MoE, 2012c).

2.6.2.4.1   *Supervision and instruction.*

The supervision team for students in PE placement usually includes university-based academics and real-setting supervising teachers. Several studies investigated how supervisors from universities impacted students' learning in PE, emphasising their role in supporting students to complete their placements by addressing students' needs, responding to questions, and sharing in their experiences (Cohen et al., 2013; Huang, 2013; Richards & Brumfield, 2003; Sienert, Clark, Kilbridge, & Peterson, 2006; Zhou, Lan, & Liu, 2020). Although university academics provided limited support for placements, their role cannot be ignored (Darling-Hammond, 2009; White, Bloomfield, & Le Cornu, 2010; Zeichner, Payne, & Brayko 2015). The phenomenon occurred in Australia where "a range of practices has consequently been implemented, ranging from a complete withdrawal of school visits from a university-based teacher educator to a 'troubleshooting' role only, to regular planned visits to schools throughout the duration of the placement" (Le Cornu 2015, p. 9). Leonard (2012) indicated that PE placement was "an opportunity for professional learning by all involved" (p. 47) including university-based academics, classroom-based teachers, and extended experts. This opinion was shared with Chinese scholars (e.g., Chen, 2019; Zhang, 2017). Every person involved in placement is essential to providing students with a quality practicum experience, which also strongly depends on the integration of all elements from different people's roles and their cooperation. Instructions from different aspects can directly shape and adjust EC students' practice capabilities and ensure they are on target.

Investing more time in real-setting PE placement with practicing EC teachers rather than in university-based training might better meet the aim of preparing skilled teachers. However, just offering more time in classrooms might not lead to any skill development; prompt feedback and good supervision were also needed (Mayer et al., 2015; Mayer et al., 2017; Ralph, Walker, & Wimmer, 2008; Xiao & Zhou, 2013). Supervising teachers managed teaching practise for students in real-classroom contexts (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011), and had extensive influence on students' learning (Brett et al., 2018; Izadinia, 2015; Le Cornu, 2016; Zeichner, 1990). The dual role of a supervising teacher as an instructor (nurturer) and assessor (gatekeeper) (Tillema, Smith, & Lesham, 2011) ensured a quality learning experience for students (Cohen et al., 2013; Hudson & Hudson, 2012). The adoption of appropriate assessment and timely feedback meant instruction was also important (AI-Hassan, 2019; Biggs & Tang, 2011).

Agbenyega (2012) asserted EC ITE needed more engagement and a sound relationship with supervising teachers with a good understanding of education knowledge in a classroom context. The opportunity for students to observe good EC classroom practice and the role of their personal history in shaping these educational environments was stated by Baum & King (2006).

2.6.2.4.2 *Assessment and instruction.*

Providing timely feedback as instruction for either teaching plans or practice of supervised students was recommended to support their growth and shape professional capabilities (AI-Hassan, 2019). Loughland and Ellis (2016) indicated that the use of clear and measurable criteria (e.g., *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*) could offer an explicit outline for teaching. Employing professional standards for

supervising classroom teachers provided them with an agent to counter accusations of substandard preparation of skilled teachers (Sachs, 2016). Furthermore, Adoniou and Gallagher (2017) argued that graduate teachers, supervising classroom teachers and employers should support the standards used for guiding professional learning and development.

Several studies have suggested that professional standards for teachers could be employed as an assessment instrument in EC ITE courses because using professional standards is critical to ensuring graduates satisfy workforce expectations. Allard, Mayer, and Moss (2014) emphasised how standards were a core component in determining students' preparedness. Some researchers pointed out that a technical view of teaching and teacher education that used the agreed-upon professional standards for assessment may result in an increasingly structured approach (Biesta, 2009; Burn, Hagger, & Mutton, 2003; Loughran, 2007; Loughran, 2010), ignoring individual students' unique circumstances and particular learning styles in favour of so-called "objective" standards. Boyle and Charles (2010) indicated that there was a growing dependence on policy-driven requirements and the application of professional standards for teaching and teacher education to assess EC ITE students' professional capabilities. This development was similar to recent developments in the Chinese context (Zhou, 2019).

In the recent move towards this technical view of teaching, some researchers had argued that the professional standards used to assess students' knowledge, skills, and engagement still did not capture or assess professional dispositions or personal characteristics (e.g., kindness or sense of humour) regarded as essential for quality teaching (e.g., Bahr & Mellor, 2016; Lanas & Kelchtermans, 2015; Xie, 2016; Zhou,

Lan, & Liu, 2020). Sheridan, and Tindall-Ford (2018) found that supervising classroom teachers placed the highest importance on students' personal qualities when they mentored them in PE placements.

Several studies demonstrated that some students did not believe that they obtained effective instruction from supervising classroom teachers while they were in their PE placements (e.g., Brett et al., 2018; Li & Zeng, 2018; Nan, 2015; Xu, 2013). The findings of Brett et al. (2018) demonstrated that comments of students' performance from supervising classroom teachers were often ambiguous and did not refer to student knowledge; and could be generalised and overarching, failing to inform students whether they had met teaching standards. The studies of Nan (2015) and Xu (2013) explored similar challenges in ITE courses in China, in which students were given vague and overly generalised feedback, but these studies did not investigate what assessment instrument was employed to gauge students' performance. Some empirical studies revealed that students generally did not apply theory and pedagogical skills to practice in less-positive environments, which resulted in them feeling less satisfied with their EC ITE courses (e.g., Garvis, Twing, & Pendergast, 2011; Li & Yu, 2009).

Teaching practice was an integral component that accompanied theory delivery in a cooperative and appropriate manner. The literature emphasised its importance in different aspects, including structure and supervision to shape EC teachers' professional capabilities. The literature had a focus on structural aspects related to time, and placement sites, and also considered necessary preparations including supervision and assessment.

2.7 Summary

Chapter 2: Literature Review has reported a review of the literature that was systematic, focused in scope and critical. Two well-known and reputable databases, Scopus and CNKI, were used to identify relevant existing literature, in conjunction with Google Scholar.

Chapter 2 was structured to focus on the issues outlined in Section 1.6 (page 50), the significance of the research, and it presented the important trends and concerns in EC ITE research in Australia and China. Among these trends and themes were:

- How the two national governments highlighted a concern about the quality of their EC ITE provision and the need for improved quality graduates;

- The importance of the development and need to support children in their educational environment with qualified EC teachers; and

- That the EC ITE courses should better reflect the government's goals and the best evidence research.

A highlighted component was the need to strengthen the PE placement and EC ITE student skill development and its linking to the course theory. The shift from solely face-to-face university instruction to more blended or hybrid pedagogical approaches was reviewed as all institutions grapple with changes in their delivery modes. The literature highlighted issues such as: the importance of having a clear alignment of course aims and outcomes, the need for assessments that were more formative than summative, and the integrative experiences. These issues will be addressed in the study's research question and sub-questions.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

An appropriate methodology is an essential element for any research project relating to the credibility (validity) and transferability (reliability) of a study (Denscombe, 2010). *Chapter 3: Methodology* describes the research approach selected for this study to address the broad research question and specific research sub-questions. This research investigated the similarities and differences of EC ITE courses of two selected universities from Australia and China, and explored how the courses were perceived to prepare their graduating teachers for the profession.

Chapter 3 is structured in six sections. Section 3.2 (page 107) presents the research approach used to design and plan the study. Case study is presented as the appropriate method for this research along with the sampling strategies utilised in Section 3.3 (page 108). The consideration of Ethics for human participation are presented. Section 3.4 (page 114) outlines the research timetable for this research. The instruments employed to collect the data, namely the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview scripts are described in Section 3.5 (page 116). In Section 3.6 (page 1288) the quantitative and qualitative methods employed to analyse the data are presented. Section 3.6 also describes the triangulating technique of data collection from document analysis, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The credibility and transferability of the methodology adopted for this research is presented in Section 3.7 (page 136).

3.2 Research Approach

It is important to choose an appropriate research approach to navigate and lead the research activities, to fit the unique aims of an individual study. The approach employed depends on theoretical and practical considerations. Theoretically, the research approach adopted guides the researcher's preferences, curiosity, and motivation. In terms of practicality, it is important to choose suitable instruments that align with the research approach to address the study's aims and objectives and to do so credibly and in a trustworthy manner.

There are two prominent research approaches in the Social Sciences field: quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative research approach sits within the positivist paradigm (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015) and this is used to explore broad phenomena, while the qualitative research approach concerns the interpretivist or constructivist paradigm (Bryman & Burgess, 1994; Yin, 2014) to investigate in-depth human experience.

The qualitative research approach was adopted as this research focused on understanding EC ITE in Australia and China, based on core documents and stakeholders' perceptions and knowledge of a range of matters relating to the EC ITE courses at two universities. Interpretive and causal-analytic (Manzon, 2007) were commonly applied in comparative education analysis to examine educational phenomena in different locations. This research was designed as a descriptive qualitative case study (Stake, 2000) in order to capture stakeholders' perceptions. The research explored information obtained from people regarding individual opinions, feelings and experiences (Burns, 2000; Corbin & Strauss, 2015). This research was conducted to make comparisons between the courses in two different cultural contexts. The approach was in line with qualitative methods described in

Bereday's (1964) model of comparative analysis and Ragin's (1987) comparative method used for case-orientated studies.

3.3   Research Method (Case Study)

Qualitative research approaches consist of research methods such as ethnography, interpretative practices, grounded theory, historical, clinical research, and case study. Scholars have organised and classified the different methodologies of research (e.g., Creswell, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2017; Miller & Crabtree, 1992; Tesch, 1990). Identifying a suitable research method is dependent on the study's design, research objectives and the anticipated results. This research sought to identify and investigate the similarities and differences of two EC ITE courses, each within a culturally "bounded system", based on the policy contexts and perceptions of comparable stakeholder groups from UTAS and YNNU in Australia and China respectively, in order to investigate the research question.

A comparative case study research method was chosen to understand the education phenomena of the current EC ITE courses in Australia and China (Yin, 2014) which also meets the criteria of the Bereday's (1964) comparison model in education. Yin (2014) defined case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (p. 43–44). A cross-national design was inherent due to the multi-national context.

3.3.1 Cross-national comparative case study.

Comparison is one of the prominent and widely applied methods in many areas, including social sciences. Ragin (1987) argued that investigating a limited number of country comparisons allowed a closer interaction with the data and promoted an in-depth understanding of those countries. This was supported by Landman (2008) who identified that the comparison of a small number of countries had been described as being "more intensive than extensive" (p. 63). Novak (1977) suggested that country comparison was conducted at two levels: (i) the national level; and (ii) the sub-national level; which was supported by Landman (2008). Landman (2008) emphasised the second level as follows "…at a lower level of abstraction in which concepts and ideas are operationalized in ways that fit more closely with the contextual specificities of the countries used in the comparison" (p.63).

The two levels involved in this research (see Table 1.1) were: (i) national, which included government policies, regulations and curricula from Australia and China; and (ii) sub-national, which were the EC ITE courses at UTAS and YNNU. This research attempted to explore how key stakeholders perceived a range of aspects relating to the EC ITE courses of both countries at the two universities utilising these two levels. The emergent advantages and challenges of each examination may yield advice and possible borrowings from each other, so that each individual course would better meet the needs of the EC teacher profession and reflect the workforce's actual needs.

3.3.2 Number of cases.

The number of cases selected for the cross-national comparative case study design was two case studies—Case Study 1 and Case Study 2—in Australia and China

respectively, in line with the literature recommendations. The few countries-comparisons and qualitative case-oriented methods found in the literature suggested that the number of cases to be employed for examination in a 'multiple case study' could be as few as two (Landman, 2008; Ragin, 1987) while Burns (2000) argued that the number of participants was of little significance as it was "representativeness" that was crucial to address the research question and sub-questions. A subsidiary practical reason for two case studies and the case method selected was because this PhD research was doable in a reasonable time and the institutions provided a suitable "opportunity" sample (Denscombe, 2010) as both were experiencing changes in policies and regulations.

3.3.3   Sampling strategies.

Sampling strategies for this research agreed with case study procedures recommended in the literature (e.g., Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007; Teddlie & Yu, 2007). This research utilised an opportunity sampling combined with purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2014; Seidman, 2006) to target participants within the four key stakeholder groups: 4th-year students, graduates of the current courses, university-based academics involved in the teaching of EC courses, and the employers of graduates.

Opportunity sampling is a sampling strategy to access and gain data in convenience, and it depends on the knowledge and attributes of the researcher to identify a sample. It is also regarded as convenience sampling, which "is likely to enter into sampling procedures of most research" and "is quick, cheap and easy" (Denscombe 2010, p. 37–38). Purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2013; Denscombe, 2010; Patton, 2014; Seidman,

2006) was commonly applied in the qualitative social sciences study, because a sample was "hand-picked for the topic" (Denscombe, 2010, p. 34), could "purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon" (Creswell, 2013, p. 159) and "be used as a way of getting the best information by selecting items or people most likely to have the experience or expertise to provide quality information and valuable insights" (Denscombe, 2010, p. 35).

Multiple factors can influence sample sizes for the best number of participants in a qualitative study (Mason, 2002; Mason, 2010). Charmaz (2006), for example, advised that "25 participants are adequate for small projects" (p. 114), Bertaux (1981) stated that "15 is the smallest quantity of acceptable samples" (p. 35). Burns (2000) argued that the number of participants has little significance other than "representativeness".

Opportunity sampling was selected because the researcher had previously been employed at YNNU and was conducting the PhD study at UTAS. This meant that a wealth of information about the current EC ITE courses from the two universities was available. Opportunity sampling and purposeful sampling is where a sample is "hand-picked for the topic" (Denscombe, 2010, p.34) and available to the researcher, to achieve the depth of the "interpretive understanding of human experience" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p.3). As this was a "bounded" study, the content and context of the case studies and their outcomes were able to be considered in the context of relevant documents (e.g., policies, standards, curricula). The people invited to participate would be able to provide detailed knowledge that others perhaps might not have. Given the opportunity to be deeply immersed in the two case study sites with multiple informants it was decided to proceed with Burns' (2000) argument in mind. It was important that

the researcher was mindful of the limits to confidence in describing transferability of findings at the conclusion of the study.

The sample of stakeholders who participated in this research is displayed in Table 3.1. The sample sizes for the two main data gathering instruments in the study were different, as the number of possible respondents to the questionnaire were more than those who could be interviewed. This issue of potential respondent numbers applied particularly to the 4th-year students, as there were many more students who completed the questionnaire in China. The number of participants of each country met the minimum expectations. A total sample of 109 stakeholders' participants completed the questionnaire, 28 of whom also participated in the subsequent semi-structured interview.

Table 3.1

Stakeholder groups participating in this research

Case	Site	Stakeholder	Number of Participants		Criterion
			Questionnaire	Interview	
Australia (Case Study 1)	UTAS	4th-year student	13	4	Were in the final-year study of this course Completed required PE placements
	ECEC contexts	Graduate	4	4	Graduated from this course Were working in the relevant context relating to the course qualification
	UTAS	Academic	3	3	Were lecturing EC focus units of this course
	ECEC contexts	Employer	3	3	Had supervisory role of students in PE placements Employed graduates or had supervisory role of students of this course

Case	Site	Stakeholder	Number of Participants		Criterion
			Questionnaire	Interview	
China (Case Study 2)	YNNU	4th-year student	63	4	Were in the final-year study of this course
					Completed required PE placements
	ECEC contexts (kindergarten)	Graduate	8	4	Graduated from this course
					Were working in the relevant context relating to the course qualification
	YNNU	Academic	11	3	Were lecturing EC focus units of this course
	ECEC contexts (kindergarten)	Employer	4	3	Had a supervisory role of students in PE placements
					Employed graduates or had supervisory role of students of this course

3.3.4   Ethics considerations.

Ethics is an essential consideration for any research project and particularly the one involving human participation. Data were not gathered from participants until the formal approval (*H0015809 Early Childhood Teacher Preparation: A Comparative Study Between two Courses in Australia and China*) from the Tasmanian Social Science Human Research Ethics Committee was received (see Appendix A). No ethics application and approval was needed in China. While the researcher has been employed as a lecturer at YNNU for several years, she was not in a senior administrative position and nor a line manager to any of the academic participants. She had not taught the EC ITE students. She ensured that the data were collected anonymously or the respondents were informed that they would not be identifiable in any reporting of the data. In short, the researcher applied the same ethical standards in both countries.

All participants' confidentiality was protected, and their information was maintained safely. All participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without needing to provide reasons. Any data, such as interviewing and note-taking, were gathered with participants' permission. All electronic data were stored on the hard drive of the researcher's password protected laptop, while hard copies of data were kept in a locked file draw, which will be shredded after five years from completion of the study.

3.4   Research Timetable

A suitable plan to design and complete any research is essential. Figure 3.1 presents the schedule for the major research activities in this research.

Figure 3.1

Research timetable

Activities	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019–2020
Study design: developed initial literature search; preliminary visits to various types of child educational settings in the two countries to understand their operation; designed and planned appropriate research approach for this study.	▬				
Data collection instruments design: developed initial instruments in English version; both English-version questionnaire and interview questions which were translated into Chinese.		▬			
Ethics application: design, submission and approval.		▬			
Data collection in the two countries: distributed and collected questionnaires followed by conducting individual interviews. Chinese data were gathered first.		▬			
The Australian data were collected after the Chinese data.			▬		
Transcription of interviews: Chinese interviews were transcribed and translated into English; transcribed Australian interviews.			▬		
Document selection and analysis: scope and boundary; preliminary identification of main codes.		▬	▬	▬	
Quantitative and qualitative data were extracted and separated from questionnaire and were entered to appropriate programs for analysis.			▬	▬	
Qualitative data including interviews and data from the questionnaire were sorted and analysed.			▬	▬	
Writing-up of thesis.			▬	▬	▬

3.5   Data Collection Methods

There are several subjective variables that could possibly influence the choice of data collection approaches, including personal preference, attitudes and experiences. The choice of the suitable data collection methods was based on the needs of the study, the research questions, evidence from the literature, and the resources that were available. The triangulation technique in the data gathering allowed for the use of quantitative and multiple qualitative methods in parallel for the study of the same phenomenon (Denzin, 2009; Hantrais, 2009) in order to ensure higher levels of confidence in the credibility, transferability and trustworthiness of the research (Creswell, 2013; Creswell, 2014; Denscombe, 2010; Patton, 2014). The present study employed the triangulation of data collection methods, including document analysis, questionnaires, and semi-structured in-depth interviews. These triangulated data were obtained from different sites (universities and ECEC contexts in Australia and China) and from various stakeholders (4th-year students, graduates, academics and employers).

3.5.1   Document collection.

Relevant public documents regarding the particular EC ITE course's quality and development (such as existing implemented policies, frameworks, curricula, standards, etc.) were gathered during the study (between 2015 and 2020). The document analysis assisted in planning the questionnaire and the interview questions. Printed or electronic documents can provide a wealth of information relating to social facts (Atkinson & Coffey, 2011) representing the research contexts (Bowen, 2009). Examining and interpreting documents can yield meaning, provide understanding, and create empirical

knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Both Stake (2000) and Yin (2014) stated that document analysis could provide rich descriptions of a complicated phenomenon.

Document analysis was an essential instrument for this research and a necessary data source for an interpretive paradigm (Bowen, 2009). The process of qualitative data collection is both "flexible and sensitive" (Mason, 2002, p. 3) to real contexts.

3.5.2   Questionnaire.

The use of blended learning meant that geographically dispersed 4th-year students at UTAS were provided with both online (web) and paper-based versions of the questionnaire; while in China, where the dominant institutional mode of contact is face-to-face, the paper-based questionnaire was distributed at the end of a class to maximise participation by having the 4th-year students complete this survey. For the groups of 4th-year students in Australia, the course implementation at UTAS involved blended learning, a widely used strategy that employs technology for general communication and content delivery. For the other three stakeholder groups in Tasmania and Yunnan, the researcher telephoned potential respondents with an invitation to participate prior to posting them a paper-based questionnaire with an information sheet and consent form.

The questionnaire is a method widely used to collect data for "describing a population too large to observe directly" (Babbie, 2011, p. 270). The reason for collecting data from respondents in UTAS and YNNU was to capture more people's perceptions of the current EC ITE courses in each case-country at a reasonable cost and within time constraints. Participants in the four different stakeholder groups were invited to

participate in the research as they were knowledgeable of the arrangements and outcomes of the current EC ITE courses and the achievements of graduates.

There were different mechanisms employed in the questionnaire administration in the two countries because of their separate and unique contexts, history, culture, etc.

3.5.3 Semi-structured interview.

The interview was used in this study to capture more detailed information about the concerns noted in the questionnaire. It assisted in the exploration and explanation of the key stakeholders' perceptions of the EC ITE courses in the two universities. Additionally, interviewees were able to follow a sequence of questions to provide base-line information and they expressed their opinions and ideas about the EC ITE courses while offering deeper meanings and understandings in the semi-structured interviews (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Interviewing is perhaps the most common method to gather qualitative data in social science research. The semi-structured interview is often employed in qualitative research to collect "straightforward factual information" (Denscombe, 2010, p. 173). It allowed for open and flexible communication between the researcher and stakeholders, and enabled a deeper discussion about participants' experience (Burns, 2000).

3.5.4 Design of the research instruments.

The questionnaire and interview questions were based on initial document analysis relating to outcomes of the EC ITE courses, graduates' achievements, the literature, and the requirements and expectations of the courses (see *Chapter 2: Literature Review*). The two instruments, questionnaire and semi-structured interview, were to be

used in two different languages and this could impact on the study's validity or accuracy because of slightly different wording in the languages used by participants. It was decided, therefore, to employ a *back translation* technique (Brislin, 1970; Harkness & Schoua-Glusberg, 1998) to lessen the possibility of misunderstandings and to maintain the consistency of the two instruments to maximise confidence in subsequent comparison of the courses.

3.5.4.1 Translation validation.

Translation validation is essential for cross-country research in which different languages are used (Brislin, 1970; Harkness & Schoua-Glusberg, 1998). For the present study, Chinese (Mandarin) is an official language in China, while Australia is an English-speaking country. The adoption of back translation therefore would help ensure equivalent and accurate data from the two locations with different languages. Following Brislin (1970), the basic steps of back translation were applied to this research. This involved:

1. Step 1: Both questionnaires and interview questions were designed and created in an English version (EV1) by the researcher and reviewed by the researcher's supervisors (i.e., the instruments are developed in the source language) and submitted for ethics approval. EV1 of the questionnaire was translated into a Chinese version by the researcher;

2. Step 2: the Chinese version was translated back to an English version by an independent person whose expertise was in translating English into Chinese. The second translation, the back translation, was produced in English (EV2);

3. Step 3: the EV1 of the researcher was compared with the back-translated EV2 by the researcher; and

4. Step 4: on the basis of similarities or differences between EV1 and EV2, conclusions were drawn about the equivalence of the Chinese version and EV1, and modifications made to improve the alignment, where possible.

After this strict translation procedure, the final version in Chinese not only provided a valid and reliable English-equivalent language instrument to be used in China, but one that was also fit for the Chinese context.

3.5.4.2 Questionnaire.

A questionnaire can be used to collect data, address the research question and sub-questions, achieve the research aim, ensure a desirable response rate (Burns, 2000; Rowley, 2014), and by having a larger respondent base may reduce the outlier effect of case study research (Yin, 2014).

A self-administered questionnaire delivered on paper and online (web) forms was designed and adopted for this research. The nature of this research and a scan of the literature suggested there was no existing validated instrument that could be used; therefore, an instrument was developed within a consideration of fidelity to the national standards of the two countries. The main objective of this questionnaire was to understand the key stakeholders' perceptions relating to EC ITE course outcomes and graduates' achievement in relation to agreed professional standards.

The questionnaire aimed to gather quantitative and qualitative data to address the research question and sub-question. The four key stakeholder groups (4th-year students; graduates; academics; and employers of graduates) would provide multiple information from alternative perspectives to obtain the voice of the respondent.

The questionnaire comprised five sections employing both closed-ended and open-ended questions for the four stakeholder groups with slightly different wording of particular items for a specific group in "instruction" and "role" of this study. Items in Section A varied, depending on the stakeholder, i.e., 4th-year students, graduates, academics and employers. Section A was used to collect biographical information of the four stakeholder groups in the two countries, items included gender, age, learning or workplaces. Some questions were specific (e.g., the highest qualification and the year the qualification was awarded) and applied to academics and employers, but not to the 4th-year students or graduates.

Sections B to E were focused on capturing perceptions across the evaluation of EC students' professional capabilities, comprising: (i) knowledge, practice and engagement; (ii) support and help from the faculty; and (iii) comments and suggestions for the courses. The questionnaires for both 4th-year students and graduates from EC ITE courses were the same.

Section B of the questionnaire consisted of those focus areas in governmental teacher standards documents from both countries, including Graduate Teacher Standards (AITSL, 2011) in Australia and *China's Professional Standards for Kindergarten Teachers* (MoE, 2012c) in China. Twenty-three items in Section B were formulated with careful consideration of the two countries' requirements and expectations of competent teachers, with these ranging across professional knowledge, professional practice, and professional engagement (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2

Items in Section B of the questionnaire referring to the professional standards for teachers from both Australia and China

Content	Professional knowledge	Professional practice			Professional engagement
		Implement teaching	**Create environment**	**Assessment**	
Item number	2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8	1, 6, 9, 10,11, 18,19, 20	12, 13, 14	15, 16, 17	21, 22, 23

The three domains of Section B (professional knowledge, professional practice (and its three sub-domains), and professional engagement) were in line with the two regulatory professional standards for teachers (AITSL, 2011; MoE, 2012c) from each country, and detailed items were developed on the basis of a content analysis of each country document. Considering the equivalence of the comparison, several "unique" issues related to national specific concerns were deliberately excluded. For example, the awareness of Indigenous people in Australia does not have a mirror item in the Chinese professional standards and so this was excluded. Issues relating to the Communist Party on items such as moral education was a distinctive feature in the Chinese education agenda and there was no equivalence in the Australian standards. The similar concerns in the two countries were collected systematically. As the participants in the research were either enrolled in an EC course (i.e., 4th-year students) or recent graduates of an EC course now employed and working with children, the language of items in Section B of the questionnaire (which were based on the national standards), was amended to use the term "children" rather than "students".

The four items in Section C focused on 1. Support strategies from the current EC ITE courses that helped 4th-year students to complete their course successfully (including feedback provision, knowledge delivery and practice); and 2. stakeholders' perceptions

of the evaluation of the results of the current course. Each item of sections B and C were responded to on a 5-point Likert Scale (Likert, 1932), which allowed participants to rate their perceptions on the scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". The scale was coded using ordinal values 1-5 respectively in order to perform statistical analysis.

Section D was intended to collect open-ended comments, suggestions or reflections on the current EC ITE course from a larger number of key stakeholders. Section E asked respondents to select from 15 personal characteristics related to an EC teacher's professional dispositions which provided the respondents the chance to express their opinions on the characteristics that an EC teacher should possess.

A web-based version of the questionnaire (Appendix D1) was created in Qualtrics, with details of the research (information sheet, see Appendix B) and embedded consent form, for administration via a link emailed to blended and online learning students.

The complete questionnaires of both English and Chinese language versions for different stakeholder groups are presented in Appendices, namely: D1, E1, and F1 for the English versions; and D2, E2, and F2 for the Chinese versions.

3.5.4.3 Interview questions.

The interview questions were designed to capture stakeholders' in-depth perceptions of the current EC ITE courses in Australia and China, from four stakeholder perspectives: 4th-year students, graduates, academics, and employers, across all elements involved in the courses, including knowledge delivery and PE placement. The interview questions were slightly different because of the role of different stakeholders, but the key

principles and questions were similar. The same interview schedule was used for the 4th-year students and graduates.

The design and planning of this instrument to understand the four stakeholder groups' perceptions of the two courses used the same concepts and constructs. This deliberative approach was intended to yield findings or results that may be combined or differentiated but would allow for a comparative data analysis. There were three key topics across two components: theory, knowledge delivery, and PE placement to investigate how these elements could support students to be qualified EC graduated teachers. These were: (i) course structure; (ii) content; (iii) assessment for students' performance; and (iv) delivery mode. The nature of the data sought meant that the interviews allowed for more free-flowing conversation as semi-structured interview, while the interview schedule was designed to ensure common areas were covered.

The different interview schedules of both English and Chinese language versions for the different stakeholder groups are presented in the appendices, namely: Appendices G1, H1, and I1 are the English versions; and Appendices G2, H2, and I2 are the Chinese versions.

3.5.5   *Data collection process.*

The quantitative and qualitative data for this research were collected after ethics approval was received. The same ethical manner was adopted and maintained to gather the data in the two countries. Policy and other relevant documents relating to this research were collected in addition to conducting the questionnaire surveys and interviews in the two locations.

3.5.5.1 Gaining access to participants/stakeholder groups.

Permission and support for the research was obtained from deans/course coordinators at Faculty of Education, UTAS, Australia, and Faculty of Education Science and Management, YNNU, China, who also provided information about potential participant groups. After gaining potential participants' contact information, an information sheet explaining this research (Appendix B), consent form (Appendix C) and questionnaire (Appendices E1, E2, F1, F2), were posted to three participant groups in pre-paid envelopes with the researcher's postal address (apart from 4th-year students, see below). Telephone discussions identified who would participate in this research. This approach also facilitated the return of the completed surveys to the researcher. The 4th-year EC ITE students at YNNU were invited to participate in the current study and to complete the questionnaire (Appendix D2) voluntarily in a face-to-face contact session following a lecture. The questionnaires (Appendix D1) were firstly distributed in a face-to-face class at UTAS, however, only a few 4th-year students were in attendance because of the blended learning mode of delivery. The link to a web-based version of the questionnaire with consent information was emailed to all 4th-year EC ITE students at UTAS to complete.

A specific area at the end of the paper/web-based consent form, asked for contact information for participants who consented to a follow-up face-to-face interview. The researcher and interviewees discussed interview logistics (e.g., time, place) by email or text to arrange the interview conversation.

3.5.5.2 Document and data collection procedure.

Documents about the EC ITE courses (e.g., policies, curricula, standards) were gathered as a continuing process throughout the whole progress of the study which

helped to ensure the currency of the information sought. A broad range of documents were collected in preparation for developing the research framework which meant it was difficult to identify exactly when the document collecting began and ended. The questionnaire and interview data for the study were collected between late-August 2016 and February 2017. It was important that the different commencement and ending dates of the academic semester in each country were taken into account in the collection of data, including the university, ECEC contexts, and the time of the ethics approval.

The summer break is in June at UTAS and the 2nd semester starts in mid-July. In China, the summer vacation is from July to August for universities and kindergartens. The researcher personally collected data in China and then returned to Australia to collect the comparative data. June would have been an appropriate time for the researcher to collect data in China, but the ethics approval was received in late-August 2016. The researcher was able to collect the Australian data as scheduled and conduct the survey for 4th-year students in October 2016 followed by the interview.

Figure 3.2 illustrates the timeline of the survey and interview data gathering, reporting activities of data collection and when those activities were completed.

Figure 3.2

The timeline of survey and interview data collection.

Activities	Late-August 2016	September 2016	October 2016	November 2016	December 2017	January 2017	February 2017
The data were collected when ethics approval was received.	23rd of August						
Conducting the questionnaire survey in China: (i) it was done in a face-to-face classroom for the 4th-year students; (ii) survey documents were posted to other three stakeholder groups for completion.	▓						
Preparation for interview in China: the collection and organisation of completed questionnaire forms was to identify interviewees from the four stakeholder groups with negotiation for matters of convenience.		▓					
Conducting interviews in China: the semi-structured interview was used to collect four groups of stakeholders' perceptions.		▓	▓				
Conducting the questionnaire survey in Australia (i): it was done in a face-to-face classroom for the available 4th-year students and a link of the survey web-based was sent to all 4th-year students for participation and completion; (ii) survey documents were posted to other three stakeholder groups for completion.			▓	▓			
Preparation for interview in Australia: the strategy employed was same as that used in China.				▓	▓	▓	
Conducting interviews in Australia: The method used was same as that applied in China.				▓	▓	▓	▓

The researcher was available to introduce the study to the 4th-year students in China, to facilitate a face-to-face completion of the questionnaire forms while identifying potential interviewees for the following in-depth interviews. It took more time to collect the Australian data because: (i) of the need to gather completed consent forms and questionnaires by post; and (ii) undertaking in-depth interviews as participants were widely distributed in Tasmania. Potential interviewees were identified after completed questionnaires were received. The researcher contacted participants for their consent to an interview where they indicated willingness to be interviewed.

3.6   Data Analysis Process and Methods

Data analysis involved identifying, systematising and coding; a recursive process of back-and-forward checking and classifying, rechecking and reclassifying (it is not a linear process). A comprehensive plan was needed, so that the researcher could convert raw data into meaningful findings to address the research question and sub-questions (Creswell, 2014).

The data analysis for this study combined the quantitative (sections B and C in questionnaire) and qualitative data (document analysis, Section D and E in the questionnaire and semi-structured interview), which contributed to "verification and validation of qualitative analysis" (Burns, 2000, p. 491). It was possible to select and develop an appropriate approach to analyse different perspectives drawn from quantitative and qualitative data in order to "have a more complete understanding" (Creswell, 2014, p. 306) of the research question and sub-questions.

The convergent mixed-method is commonly applied in analysing data in qualitative research, which was designed to converge qualitative and quantitative data. The data

were analysed separately and then brought together. Data analysis demonstrated and explored resources or information obtained in identifying, classifying and sorting, but the side-by-side approach was maintained at description of similarities and differences (May, 2011) to answer the research questions and accomplish the aim of the study.

There were three main phases of data analysis in this research. First, reading and re-reading collected data was to assist the researcher be familiar with the entire data set (i.e., document analysis, questionnaire and interviews), and to better understand the depth and breadth of the raw data. Second, initial codes from the nominated and selected documents were systematized and identified. All data from questionnaire and interview collected from participating people were re-identified, namely, *Q* stood for questionnaire and *I* stood for interview data. Participating stakeholders' identifiers were removed and replaced by specific codes that varied depending on their different roles: 4th-year student were labelled as *F*, graduates labelled as *G*, academics labelled as *A*, and employers labelled as *E*. Their locations were also identified: Australia was labelled as *A* and China labelled as *C*. The different numbers in a code depended on the number of participating stakeholders in different groups. For example, the code "QAF2", meant the second *Australian 4th-year student* of *questionnaire* instrument; and "ICG1", represented the first *Chinese graduate* from *interview*, etc.

Quantitative and qualitative data from the questionnaire were uploaded into analysis software such as *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* (SPSS) and Excel. Finally, with organising and analysing initial codes and grounded data, themes were available to be defined and named; and reviewing and refining the emerged themes was to make sure they adhered to the overarching aims and research question and sub-questions of this study.

The SPSS program was employed to analyse the quantitative data to generate a general description of the research samples, using several descriptive statistical tests such as frequency, arithmetic mean and standard deviation. In descriptive statistics, *mean* is most commonly used and readily understood as the central value of a discrete set of numbers, where specifically, there is the sum of the values divided by the number of values (Anderson, Sweeney, Williams, Camm, & Cochran, 2017; Goos & Meintrup, 2015). The mean can inform the average value of this set, while the *standard deviation* is a measure that is used to quantify the amount of variation or dispersion of a set of data values. A low standard deviation indicates that the data points tend to be close to the mean of the set and vice versa. The two measures, mean and standard deviation, were employed to understand the perceptions of the key stakeholders of the students' achievements from the EC ITE courses. In addition, the open-ended data were sorted and represented in Excel. Following the coding of the questionnaire data it was combined with the other data sources to make a single data set.

A concept map was created with entire data from the two instruments—questionnaire and semi-structured interview. This allowed for conducting, retrieving and uniting and collating codes with documents analysis identified.

3.6.1   *Bereday's model.*

This cross-national comparative case study research method employed Bereday's *four steps of comparison* model (1964), combining the framework of thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Roulston, 2001) and content analysis (Denscombe, 2010).

Bereday's model has four steps: description, interpretation, juxtaposition, and comparison. Description is used to collect data systematically and separately for each country; interpretation relates to analysis in terms of the extant themes and issues; juxtaposition and comparison allows for continuous and simultaneous data considerations; and reviews of existing literature and education systems in the two countries. This determines the themes to compare.

3.6.2 Content analysis for documents.

The content analysis method provided useful documentary data for the study. Content analysis can be used on any text "whether it is in the form of writing, sounds or pictures" (Denscombe, 2010. p. 281). This method of analysis is an objective way of describing and identifying events and phenomena thoroughly (Krippendorff, 2019).

Combining the literature and the content analysis of current policy documents concerning outcomes of ITE courses from the two countries, two data catalogues were identified: national level (external factors) and course level (internal components) (Landman, 2008; Novak, 1977). Analysis of a variety of documents was used to develop initial questionnaire and interview questions for subsequent data collection in addition to the explanation and discussion of findings of the research. The document data analysis was used particularly to concentrate on the content of key documents that related to EC ITE course creation, including the external quality assurance mechanism and the core internal components of the courses. National and course level policies, curricula descriptions, standards and unit outlines, were collected and analysed for survey instrument design.

External factors for quality assurance of both courses comprising: recruitment and selection of students, accreditation of ITE courses, and teacher registration were examined. The internal components of the EC ITE course were classified into two main categories—content knowledge and PE placements. Content knowledge was split into four units: (i) course structure; (ii) content; (iii) delivery mode; (iv) assessment of content knowledge. PE placement was split into two components: (i) PE placement arrangement; and (ii) supervision and assessment. These data items were combined with other data sets from the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews for subsequent inductive development of the themes of the study.

3.6.3   Questionnaire analysis.

The quantitative and qualitative data from the questionnaire were uploaded into the appropriate programs for analysis: closed-ended data (sections B and C) were analysed using the academic statistical software SPSS version 20.0, while the open-ended data (sections D and E) were represented in the Excel version 2016.

The demographic information of the Australian and Chinese participating stakeholders was collected in Section A of the questionnaire and reported in Appendices J and N.

3.6.3.1   Participants.

The demographic information of the Australian and Chinese participants was illustrated separately in Tables J1, J2, J3, and J4 in Appendix J and Tables N1, N2, N3, and N4 in Appendix N. The tables reflected the participants' different roles and demographic data, as follows.

Case study 1: Australia

- The variation of the ages of each stakeholder group was from 17 to 59 years in four age ranges: (i) eight 4th-year students were aged 21 years or less; three were aged between 22–26 and two were older than 27; (ii) three of the four graduates were aged between 22–26 and one was older than 32 years; (iii) two academics were older than 40 years, and one was younger; and (iv) all of the employers were older than 40 years.

- The majority of the participants were female, but one 4th-year student and one graduate were male.

- Most academics and employers held tertiary education qualifications: (i) all EC academics were holders of higher degrees (i.e., Master degree or PhD) and (ii) two of the three employers had a bachelor's degree, and one had a Diploma.

- The majority of the academics and employers had engaged in their current work for more than ten years, one administrative employer had more than 20 years' experience, and one academic had less than nine years' work experience.

Case study 2: China

The variation of the age range of each stakeholder group was from 17 to 59 years in the four age groups: (i) all 4th-year students were aged 21 or less; (ii) six out of the eight graduates were aged between 22–26, and two were older than 27 years; (iii) most of the academics were older than 30 years; and (iv) three of the four employers were older than 40 years.

- Most participants were female, although five 4th-year students, one graduate, and one academic were male.

- All academics and employers held tertiary education qualifications: (i) most of the EC academics had higher degrees (i.e., master's degree or PhD), and two had a bachelor's degree; and (ii) all employers had a bachelor's degree.

- A majority of the academics and employers had engaged in their current work for more than ten years, with two academics and two employers each having more than 20 years' work experience.

3.6.4   Interview analysis.

Individual interviews were recorded digitally then transcribed into a written version for coding and analysis. The transcription was "a key phase of data analysis" (Bird, 2005, p. 227) and was fit for the purpose of practical analysis (Edwards, 2014). The Australian interviews were transcribed verbatim while the Chinese interviews were recorded in Chinese at first and then translated into English. The translation technique employed in the interview analysis back translation (Brislin, 1970; Harkness & Schoua-Glusberg, 1998), (see Section 3.5.4.1, page 119) was used for the development of the data collection instruments, but in reverse (Chinese into English and back into Chinese).

A mixed approach was employed to analyse the interview data set. This included thematic analysis and content analysis (Denscombe, 2010). The interview data were coded with the categories and items, as defined by the combination of recent literature and the content analysis of current policy documents (see Section 3.6.2, page 131).

The use of content analysis for interview transcriptions was to select and identify relevant items relating to the research question and sub-questions "the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way" (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 63). These were coded and collated with the document analysis by the means of an inductive or bottom-up approach to emerge overarching themes.

Grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) is widely used for qualitative data analysis with other methods (Charmaz, 2006; Denscombe, 2010; Yin, 2014). In this approach, emerging theories should be "grounded", and the researcher should be engaged with fieldwork as "the fundamental part of the work they do" (Denscombe, 2010, p. 107). This method is based on a systematic inductive approach to data analysis. The researcher gained an understanding of participants' experience in relation to the research question and sub-questions through the means of constant learning and studying the research data, or "constant comparisons" (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 30). This approach captured meanings rather than make assumptions about what the respondents acknowledged. It allowed for an interactive procedure, moving back-and-forth between reading and learning data and of analysis to avoid using previous speculations or theories to understand the new data.

The analytical approaches were all performed manually. Data consisted of written notes on paper-based documents annotated using various coloured pen-highlighters to indicate potential extracts in particular categories and "post-it" notes to identify sections of interviews and open-ended items of questionnaire. These data were divided into responses from the two countries and split into four groups based on the four participants' attributes.

3.7   Credibility and Transferability

In any sort of qualitative research, the adoption of the appropriate approaches, methods and strategies need to be justified as being credible and transferable. This is a particular challenge for a study such as this, as a depiction of the possibly unique and specific situation, involving two countries, translated data gathering instruments and translated results. These challenges were addressed as described in the following.

3.7.1   Credibility.

The credibility of the data collection and analysis was dependent on several strategies appropriate to the research approach selected. Triangulation (Denscombe, 2010) was applied in this cross-national comparative case study to offer corroborating evidence from different individuals (4th-year students, graduates, academics and employers), the sources of data (documents analysis, questionnaires and interviews), and methods of data collection (documents; self-administered questionnaires and semi-structured interviews) (Creswell & Guetterman, 2018; Denscombe, 2010).

In the data collection stage triangulation was sought by the use of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews in the two countries, in order to obtain appropriate and accurate data for credibility (Denscombe, 2010). The self-administered questionnaires and interview questions were very much in line with the document analysis, as well as that being combined with data from interviews to "minimise bias and establish credibility" (Bowen, 2009, p. 38). The use of the back translation (Brislin, 1970; Harkness & Schoua-Glusberg, 1998) of the Chinese language version instruments and

analysis of the interview results aimed to ensure the "equivalent instruments" applying for the two countries to collect valuable, trustworthy and credible data.

The convergent mixed method was used to separately analyse the quantitative data and qualitative data from each university at the data analysis stage, and then they were brought together. Transcribing and translating all data into English meant that categories were united and classified under one scheme. Transcription quality of the interviews can promote the reliability (Creswell, 2013) of the research. The emerging themes were derived from the different sources of data and the triangulating information also helped to ensure its validity (Creswell, 2013). The aim was to reduce the impact of potential biases through corroborating evidence across various data collection instruments, via adopting appropriate methods for data analysis (Bowen, 2009). Furthermore, the application of Bereday's model assisted the process of valid analysis through the establishment of the "tertium comparisons" (Bereday, 1964, p. 9) at the juxtaposition phase (the third step) where data of description and interpretation were integrated. The comparison of the two EC ITE case study courses will be discussed not only in the context of the study's stakeholder data but also from the relevant policy document analysis and the literature review. The credible comparison thus can be made.

3.7.2   Transferability.

Transferability of the research was carefully considered and addressed in several ways, even though this is a small-scale qualitative research study. The adoption of appropriate data collection instruments shared the concern of their capability to produce the "same" findings when applied again in a similar context or conditions

(Field, 2009; Groth-Marnat, 2009; Silverman, 2010). The self-administered questionnaire quantitative results were assessed using Cronbach's alpha for the reliability of the item's scales of the questionnaire ($\alpha=0.9$) (Pallant, 2016).

Both credibility and transferability of the research design were assessed using triangulation in collecting data and analysing data. Obtaining data from different but equivalent instruments and pathways in the two countries, and the three sets (document, questionnaire, and interview) of data offered a chance for triangulation of findings within each data set. As well, the different groups of stakeholders relating to the EC ITE courses from different research sites in the two countries could promote, with some higher level of confidence, both the credibility and transferability of the findings.

3.8 Summary

Chapter 3: Methodology has explained why the qualitative research approach was employed for the research and why the adoption of the case study method for this research was appropriate. The importance of the data triangulation technique for collection and analysis in the research design was reported. The process of data collection and analysis from document analysis, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews was elaborated. Details of the data gathering methods were described and an overview of the methods for analysis were presented. It is believed that enough detail has been provided to allow for a replication of the study's data gathering and analysis methods by a reader.

The next two chapters present the findings that emerged from the data analysis and related to the research question and sub-questions. Findings from document analysis,

Chapter 4: Findings from the Document Analysis, was structured to answer the first two research sub-questions regarding the similarities and differences of the EC ITE course in the two countries. *Chapter 5: Findings from the Questionnaire and Interviews* demonstrates four stakeholder groups' perceptions of the current courses by synthesising questionnaire and interviews to respond the rest of research sub-questions.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS FROM THE DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This is the first of two chapters (Chapters 4 and 5) presenting results data from this study. The findings relate to the broad research question and four sub-questions presented in 1.4   Research Aim and Questions on page 41 of *Chapter 1: Background and Context*. The broad research question for this study is:

Are graduating EC students in Australia and China perceived as suitably prepared for teaching in a diverse range of ECEC contexts by the time they finish their courses?

The two EC ITE case studies for investigation are: (i) the Faculty of Education of the UTAS, Australia (Case Study 1); and (ii) the Faculty of Education Science and Management of YNNU, China (Case Study 2). The findings from the data analysis presented in Chapter 4 addressed research sub-questions 1 and 2:

1. What are the EC ITE models regarding selection and recruitment, accreditation of ITE courses, and teacher registration in Australia and China?

2. What are the similarities and differences between the EC ITE courses in Australia and China?

Chapter 4: Findings from the Document Analysis is divided into four sections. Sections 4.2 (page 141) and Section 4.3 (page 151) outline the EC ITE models in the respective sites in Australia and China, addressing the first research sub-question, while Sections 4.4 (page 158) and Section 4.5 (page 179) address the second research sub-question. Both sections draw from key policy documents to understand the EC

ITE course philosophy and development and to demonstrate the characteristics of the case studies in their national contexts. To conclude Chapter 4, Section 4.5 (page 179) describes key similarities and differences between the two courses. The cases are presented in alphabetical order: Australia (Case Study 1), followed by China (Case Study 2).

4.2   The Early Childhood Initial Teacher Education Model in Australia and China

Section 4.2 presents information from key national policies and guidelines, as follows:

1.   Selection and recruitment requirements;

2.   Accreditation model for ITE courses, including requirements and procedures; and

3.   Registration of graduates as teachers.

4.2.1   Case Study 1: Australia.

UTAS is a registered Australian public university that is accredited by TEQSA to award degrees in alignment with government and professional requirements. The Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) meets the Level 7 qualification descriptor under the requirements of the *Australian Qualifications Framework* (AQF; Australian Qualifications Framework Council, 2013). Students' progress through three coursework stages.

4.2.1.1   Selection and recruitment requirements.

A brief overview of the Australian tertiary institution admission system was outlined in *Chapter 1: Background and Context* (see Section 1.2.1.3.1, page 25). Australian state and territory governments have established and legislated universities and their policies, including the power to determine their own admission requirements. Each state and territory regulatory agency encourages universities to identify and promote their own characteristics as a part of their distinct identities (DET, 2015). These diverse pathways mean that Australian higher education, including EC ITE providers, has no single selection method; nevertheless, alternative pathways can be systematised as meeting one or more of four approved pathways. Section 1.2.1.3.1 (page 25) describes the key factors of the recruitment and selection requirements for the EC ITE course at UTAS.

The distinctive selection requirements for UTAS ITE courses are implemented within the various policy frameworks, such as the *Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs in Australia*: *Standards and Procedures* (AITSL, 2018b), comprising both academic and non-academic components.

The EC ITE course at UTAS meets the AITSL accreditation standards and is also regulated by the ACECQA. In line with these requirements, and in recognition of the alternative entry pathways, entry is open to: (i) Year 12 school students who achieved an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) score of 65 or higher; and (ii) mature student applications without an ATAR who must prove their academic capabilities through alternative certificates, work experience, etc. All applicants are required to complete UTAS's online Non-Academic Capability Assessment Tool with a 1000-word personal statement (UTAS, 2017c). This course has been registered by the

CRICOS, which allows the institution to recruit and teach overseas students. International students must also provide evidence of their achievement in English language proficiency (AITSL, 2018b; UTAS, 2017b).

4.2.1.2   Accreditation of initial teacher education courses.

A rigorous system for ITE course accreditation operates in Australia. All ITE providers are required to align their courses with AITSL's eight principles, namely, "Impact; Evidence-based; Rigor; Continuous Improvement; Flexibility, Diversity and Innovation; Partnerships; Transparency; and Research" (AITSL, 2018b, p. 3). AITSL (2018b) lists the following components of national policy for ITE course accreditation: (i) National Program Standards of the *Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures* (AITSL, 2018b); (ii) the Graduate Teacher Standards of the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (AITSL, 2011); and (iii) national Accreditation Standards and Procedures, (now also incorporated into AITSL (2018b)). These standards and procedures ensure that all Australian ITE courses meet the mandated national level and that all graduates meet these professional standards upon graduation (AITSL, 2018b).

The three components fulfil specific roles in terms of underpinning and ensuring the quality of accredited ITE courses. First, the six standards of the National Program Standards are split into 27 focus areas, which prescribe the required content and skill areas covered by ITE courses. Second, the Graduate Teacher Standards (AITSL, 2011) address the professional behaviour and goals of recent graduates according to their career stage in the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (AITSL, 2011), which separates teaching professionals into four levels: *Graduate*, *Proficient*, *Highly Accomplished* and *Lead*. The final component outlines the accreditation procedure

including the articulation of the accreditation process, the duration of the accreditation, the process for appeals, the nature of accreditation panels, the process for course reporting to the authority, and other relevant information.

The national accreditation system comprises two stages that focus on ITE course development, delivery, outcomes, and planned improvement. Stage one applies to all new courses entering the accreditation system and focuses on applicants' submission plan in terms of demonstrating the impact on both the ITE students and school/centre learners. In addition, evidence must be provided to demonstrate how courses fully satisfy the National Program Standards (AITSL, 2018b). All accredited course providers must participate in stage two, in which they provide an annual report of their course outcomes and continuous improvement, to secure a five-year accreditation. At the time of this study, the current EC ITE course at UTAS is professionally accredited by AITSL, which means that this course has passed both stages in securing their legitimacy of provision, like most Australian ITE providers.

4.2.1.3 Teacher registration.

There is no unified or single national procedure for teacher registration in Australia (see Section 1.2.1.3.3, page 288), but each state and territory follow the standards published by AITSL for Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead. The TRB of Tasmania is UTAS's local regulatory authority for teacher registration, and all teacher candidates intending to teach in this state must be registered by this board. Graduates of accredited EC ITE courses are granted provisional registration, as the course is recognised by the TRB to meet the *Teachers Registration Act 2000* (TRB, n.d.).

Figure 4.1 illustrates the three external components of the EC ITE model and presents the key stages in students' progress from recruitment to registration at UTAS.

Figure 4.1

Three key stages of EC ITE students' progress from recruitment to registration in Australia (UTAS).
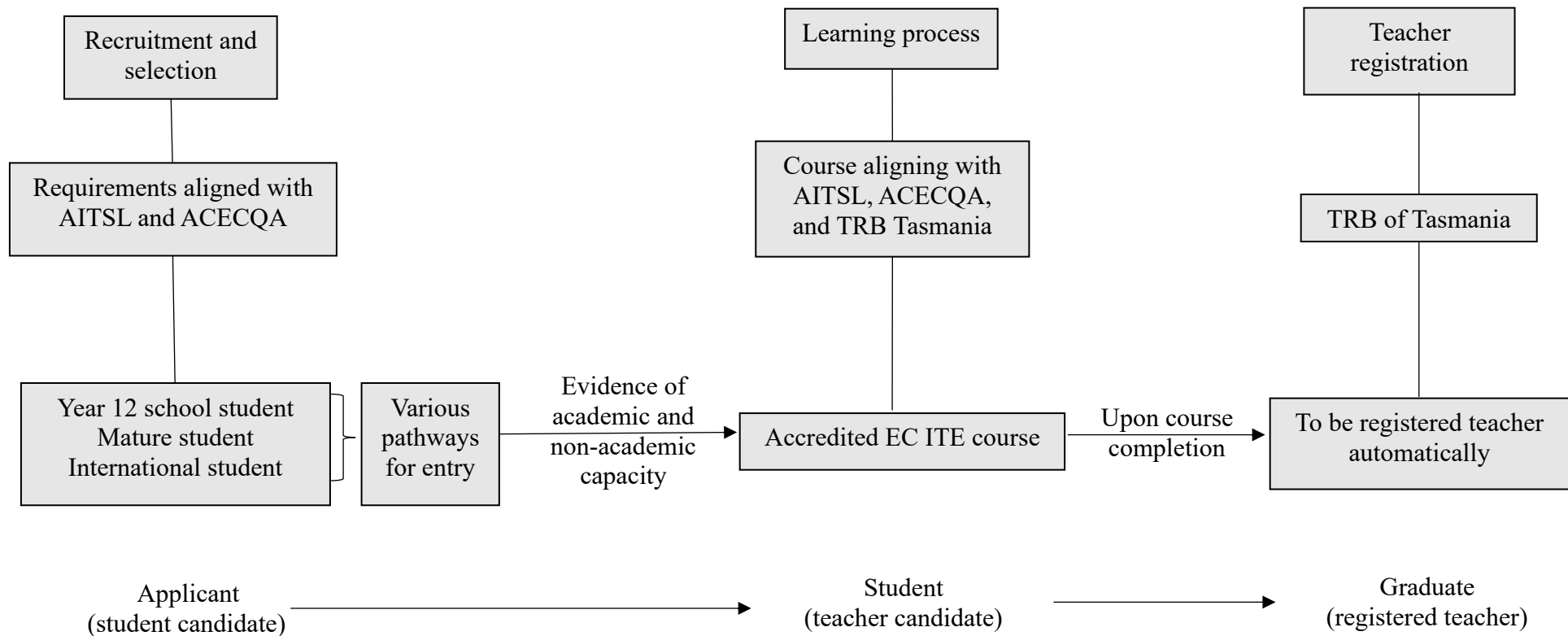
4.2.2   Case Study 2: China

All university courses in China are centrally accredited by the Ministry of Education (MoE). Successful EC ITE graduates at YNNU are awarded the Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) degree in accordance with the *Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Academic Degrees* (Committee of the National People's Congress, 2004).

4.2.2.1   Selection and recruitment requirements.

MoE regulates university selection and recruitment procedures in China, and information concerning institutional admission was presented in Section 1.2.2.3.1 (page 36). YNNU fits the pattern, in that it recruits an EC ITE student mainly based on candidates' NUEE results and whether they meet the prescribed threshold entry score for various universities and particular courses. YNNU is authorised to recruit overseas students in accordance with the *Regulations for Schools Recruitment and Education on Overseas Students* (MoE, MoFA, & MoPS, 2017). At the time of this study, no international students were enrolled in the EC ITE course at YNNU, probably because candidates would need to attain registration in their own countries on completion.

4.2.2.2   Accreditation of initial teacher education courses.

MoE is the sole national agency that accredits all courses in China's universities. The *Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Courses for Higher Education Providers in China—Level and Field (Trial Version)* (MoE, 2017) was issued in 2017. Such a policy document would generally suggest clarity and consistency in the ITE accreditation system. However, its principles and concerns have not yet been fully implemented across all ITE courses. It clearly emphasises the relationship between the

three accreditation levels and graduates' teacher registration requirement. An ITE course of Level One is accredited to provide teacher training; Level Two indicates that its graduates are exempt from the teacher registration's teaching demonstration interview but the written test must be completed successfully; and Level Three indicates that its graduates are exempt from both components of the *National Teacher Registration Examination*. These assessments will be indicated in detail in Section 4.2.2.3 (page 14848). Currently, two documents remain central to the accreditation of all courses—*Regulations on the Establishment of Undergraduate Majors in University (REUMU*; MoE, 2012b) and the *Catalogue of Undergraduate Majors for University (CUMU*; MoE, 2012a). The ITE course accreditation document (MoE, 2017) is based on the implementation of the *REUMU* and *CUMU*.

The *REUMU* (MoE, 2012b) consists of seven sections with 29 items relating to: (i) the development of new courses; (ii) changes to existing courses (e.g., name, content delivery); (iii) accreditation panels; and (iv) supervision, inspection, and evaluation of accredited courses. Six items in section three of *REUMU* address course accreditation, covering requirements such as the physical condition of universities' infrastructure for educational and research purposes, accommodations for teaching and learning activities (e.g., EC ITE course must provide students with different instruments for arts education, like piano), and qualifications of academics (e.g., the expected ratio for different degree levels awarded by the university among bachelor's, master's and doctorate).

Two pathways exist for a university that wishes to have course accreditation, and the process for both requires *CUMU* recognition (MoE, 2012a). The MoE has currently authorised 587 courses to be recognised and implemented in the university sector. If a

proposed course has been listed within the existing 587 courses, the applying university can complete a conventional process for accreditation. On the other hand, any applicant university which applies for a course not currently listed in *CUMU* (MoE, 2012a) is required to submit a plan to demonstrate its impact and study-based evidence supporting the assessment that course outcomes fully align with profession-specific standards.

Once a university obtains course accreditation from the MoE, these courses can be made available for prospective enrolees. The quality of the courses in terms of graduate outcomes and achievements are supervised and assessed. Typically, aligning with the new ITE course accreditation, the valid period for approved courses is six years. However, there is no stated period for accreditation of approved courses for other subjects except for ITE, but, if there are no enrolments in a course for five consecutive years, its accreditation is withdrawn.

The EC ITE course at YNNU has met the conventional process for accreditation with no additional requirements (although has not yet been accredited by the new ITE course accreditation) and is regulated and audited by MoE.

4.2.2.3 Teacher registration.

To become a registered teacher in China, all ITE graduates must complete two assessments: (i) the *National Teacher Registration Examination* composed of a written exam and an interview for teaching capability demonstration; and (ii) the *Mandarin Proficiency Test*. Success in both components renders applicants eligible to apply for teacher registration according to the *Application of the Regulations on the Qualification of Teachers* (MoE, 2000). The assessment tasks for the teacher registration examination vary depending on the proposed employment level (e.g.,

kindergarten, primary school, middle school, or higher education). Once candidates pass the written test, they are permitted to present a simulated teaching episode on a prescribed topic within a given learning situation. This practical demonstration is considered part of the teaching interview and is observed by an expert panel to assess the candidate's teaching capacity, with the candidate graded as either pass or fail. The required pass level in the Mandarin Proficiency Test varies depending on the candidates' major subjects. For example, an applicant whose major is Chinese Language Teaching must achieve Level 2, Grade A, while the minimum for other majors is Level 2, Grade B (MoE, 2000).

Graduates from the YNNU EC ITE are required to complete components i and ii prior to their registration as EC teachers; they then proceed to complete the accredited course before graduating as an EC teacher. The three core components of the EC ITE model for EC at YNNU are outlined in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2

Three key stages for EC ITE students' progress from recruitment to registration in China (YNNU).
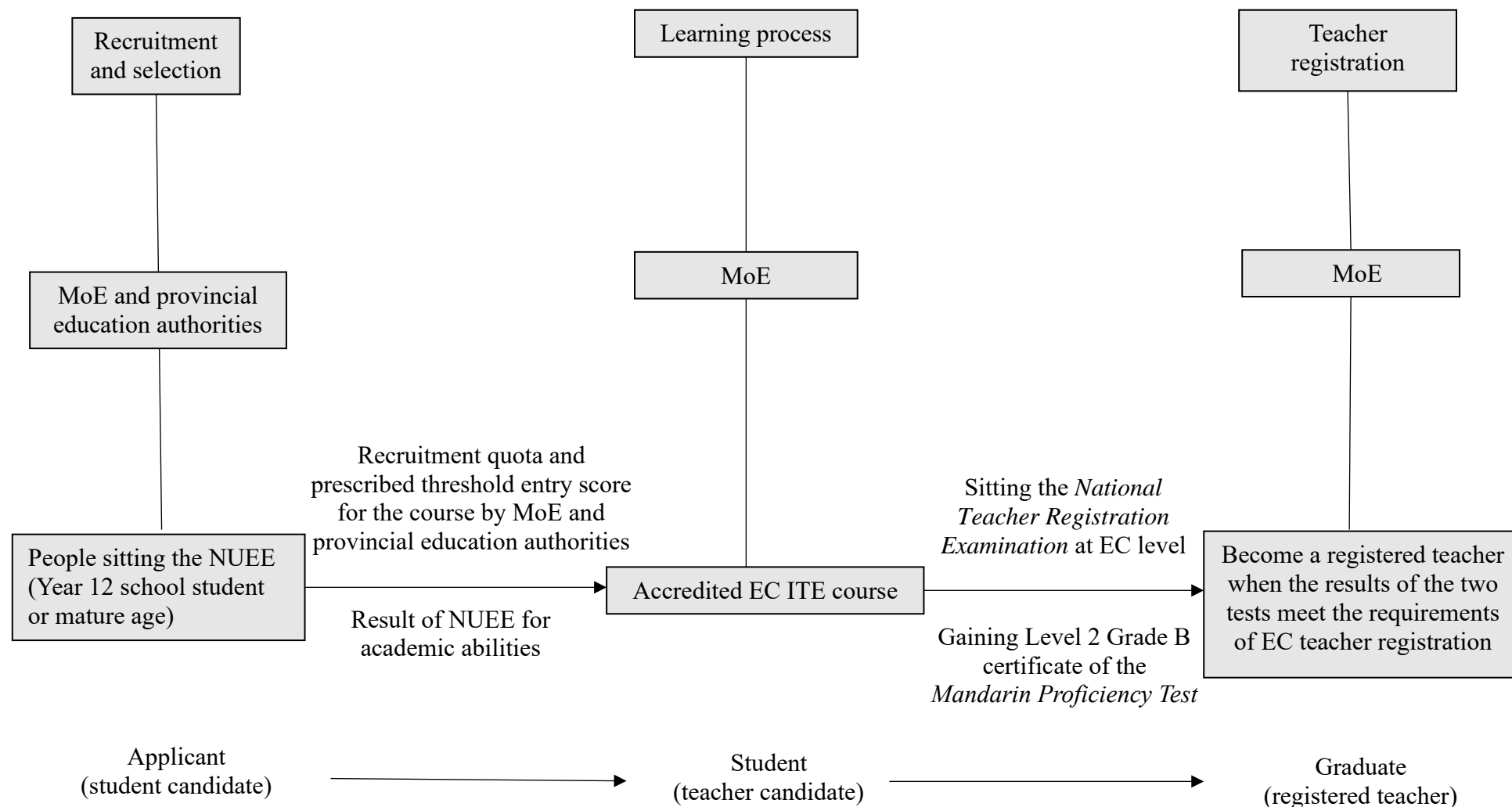
4.3 Core Policy Documents Relating to Early Childhood Initial Teacher Education Courses in Australia and China

The dynamic needs of society are the top priority in both Australia and China where a range of policy documents to guide the development and implementation of ITE courses and the process of auditing their outcomes. All documents indicate that the demand for skilled EC teachers is growing in both countries. Section 4.3 (page 151) outlines key national policies to assure the quality of EC ITE courses.

4.3.1 Case Study 1: Australia.

The UTAS EC ITE course meets the two essential components regulated by the relevant authorities. It is accredited by the TRB of Tasmania against the AITSL program standards *Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs in Australia* (AITSL, 2018b). The EC components of the course, including the practicum, are regulated by ACECQA to ensure that the required EC curricula are taught and assessed.

There are two key early childhood curriculum documents in Australia, with different scopes and aims based on children's ages. The first is *EYLF* (DEEWR, 2009), which presents detailed services for children from birth to five years old. The second is the *Australian Curriculum (Foundation–Grade 2)* (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2015), which describes content relevant to children younger than eight years. These two documents provide the mandated framework for all EC ITE courses concerning the ECEC age range from birth to eight years.

Figure 4.3 presents the EC ITE positioning within the broader ITE framework in Australia. Figure 4.4 maps the quality assurance mechanism for EC ITE courses respecting specific regulators with necessary documents.

Figure 4.3

Positioning the EC ITE course within the broader ITE framework in Australia

Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures (AITSL, 2018b):
1. National Program Standards;
2. Graduate Teacher Standards (AITSL, 2011); and
3. National Accreditation Procedures

ITE course

EC ITE course

ECEC
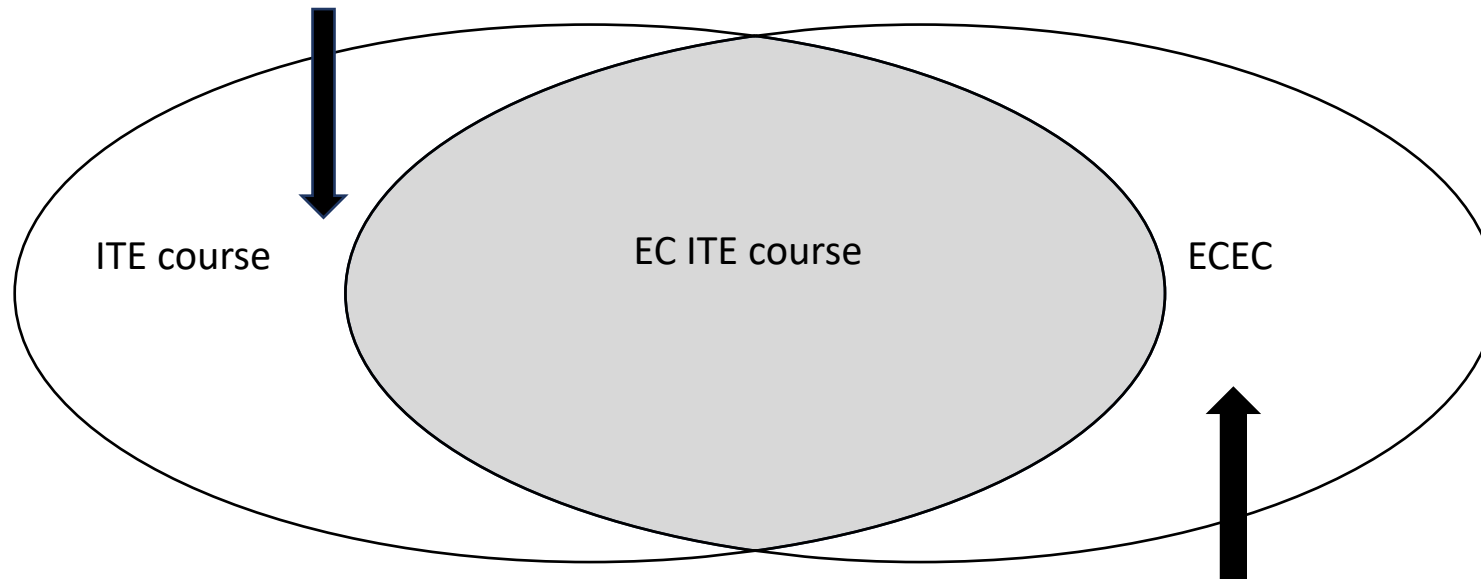
Belonging, Being & Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (DEEWR, 2009) and *Australian Curriculum (Foundation–Grade 2)* (ACARA, 2015)

Figure 4.4

External factors for the development of an EC ITE course in Australia (UTAS)
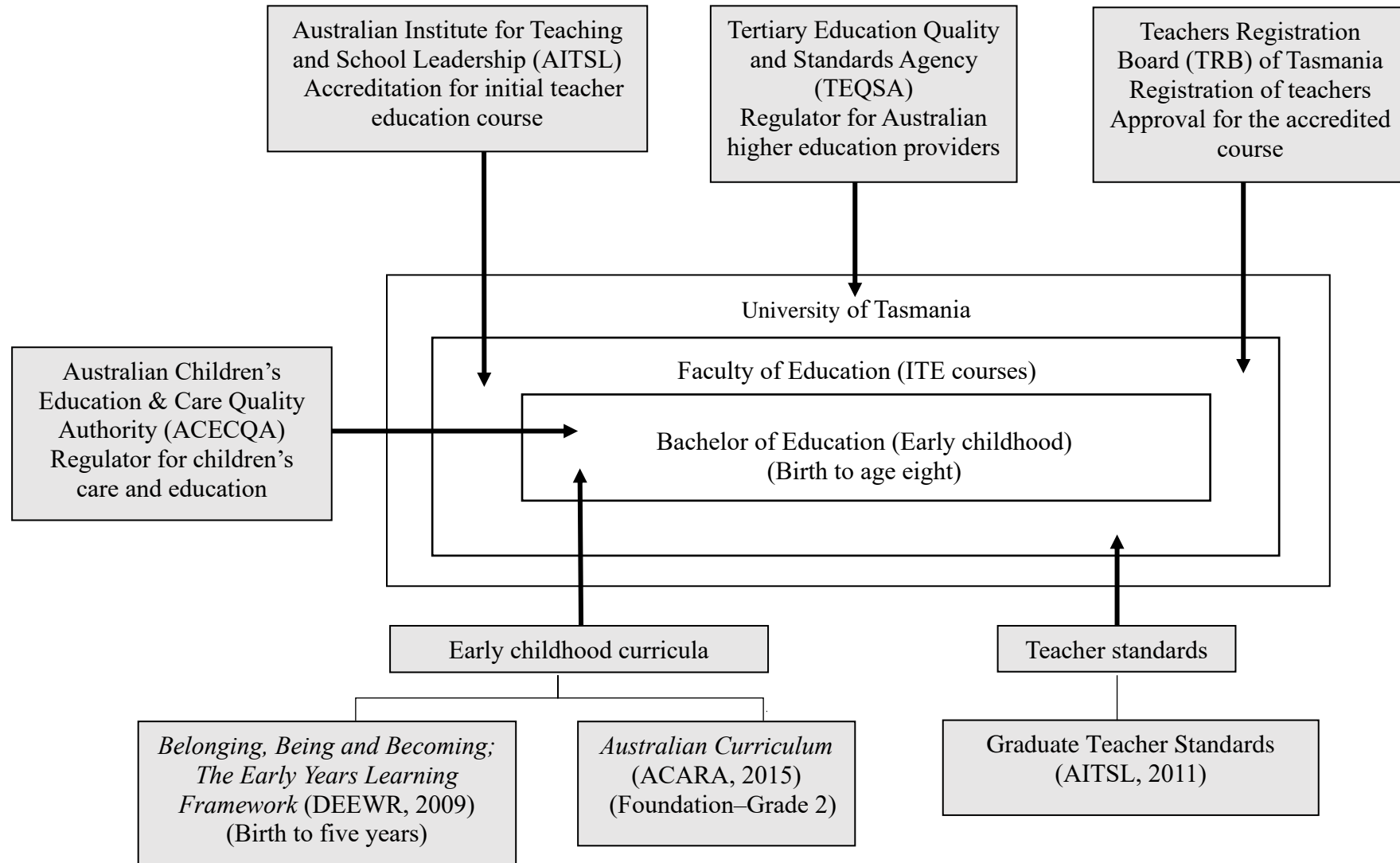
4.3.2 Case Study 2: China.

As outlined in Section 4.2.2.2 (page 146), MoE centrally accredits all courses in China's universities, and there are currently no specific regulations relating to China's ITE courses. While a document relating to ITE course accreditation was issued in 2017, its principles have not yet been fully put into practice. The *REUMU* (MoE, 2012b) and the *CUMU* (MoE, 2012a) policies provide the requisite details for creating and accrediting all university courses.

There are two documents, however, that direct how to develop EC ITE courses—*Curriculum Standards of Teacher Education (Trial Version)* (MoE, 2011) and *China's Professional Standards for Kindergarten Teachers (Trial Version)* (MoE, 2012c). Both documents are key to ensuring ITE course outcomes and students' professional capabilities for the workforce. In addition, the national EC curriculum, *Early Learning and Development Guidelines for Children Aged 3 to 6 Years* (*ELDG*; MoE, 2012d), describes and outlines the psychological and other relevant theories and skills required by a graduate EC teacher.

Figure 4.5 presents the positioning of the EC ITE course within the broader ITE framework in China, while Figure 4.6 illustrates the quality assurance mechanism for this course.

Figure 4.5

Positioning of the EC ITE course within the broader ITE framework in China

Regulations on the Establishment of Undergraduate Majors in University (MoE, 2012b)

Catalogue of Undergraduate Majors for University (MoE, 2012a)

All university courses

ITE courses

EC ITE course

Curriculum Standards of Teacher Education (Trial Version) (MoE, 2011)

Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Courses for Higher Education Providers in China—Level and Field (Trial Version) (MoE, 2017)

ECEC

Early Learning and Development Guideline for Children Aged 3 to 6 Years (MoE, 2012d)

Note. The shape ⟶ means this document has been issued, but to date its principles have not been put into practice across all current ITE.

Figure 4.6

External factors for the development of an EC ITE course in China (YNNU)
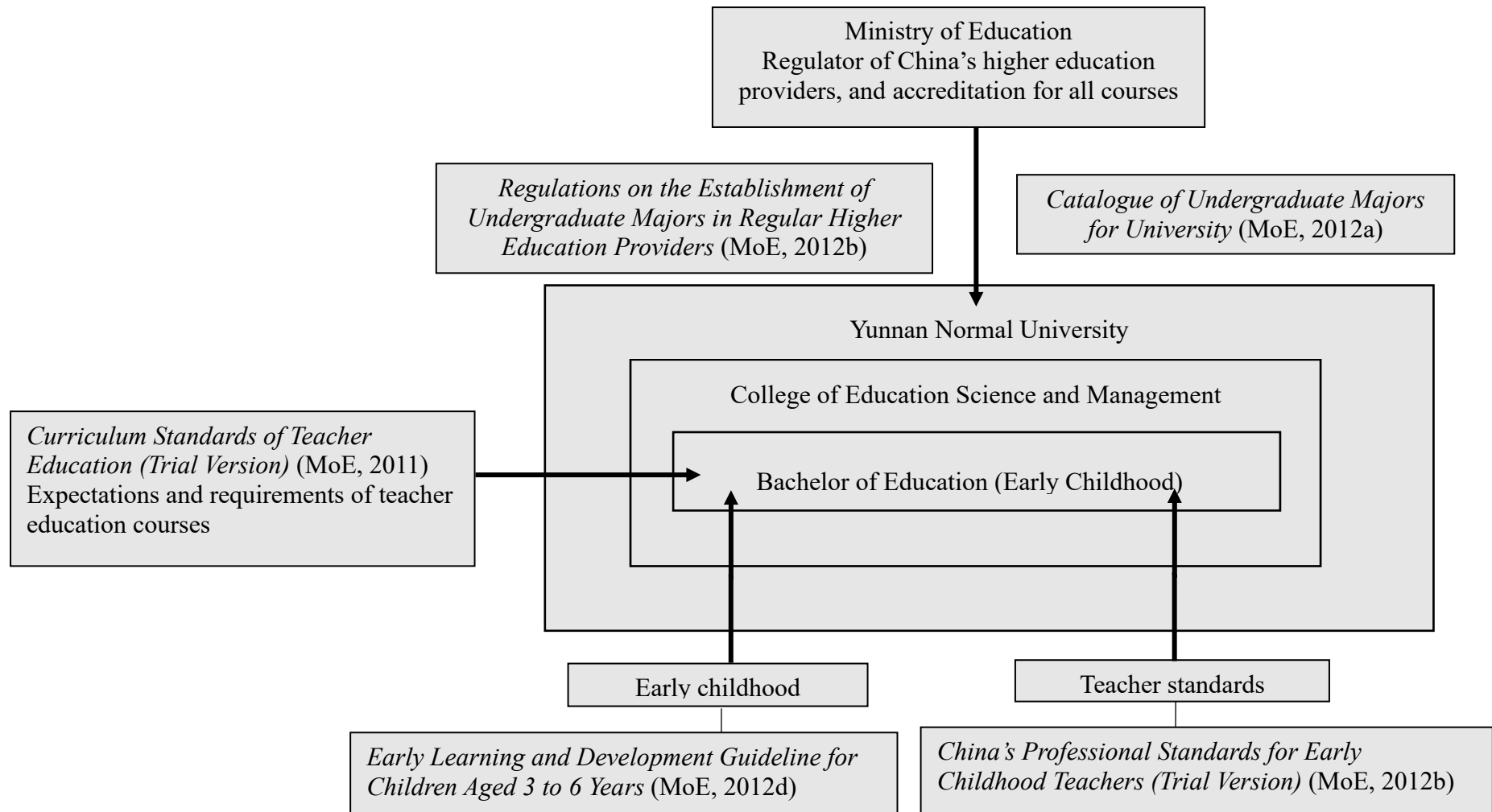
4.4 Characteristics of Early Childhood Initial Teacher Education Courses in Australia and China

Section 4.4 describes each case study and their EC ITE courses to address the second research sub-question: *What are the similarities and differences between the EC ITE courses in Australia and China?*

4.4.1 Case Study 1: Australia.

The UTAS EC ITE course conforms to AITSL course accreditation requirements and is regulated by the TRB of Tasmania and ACECQA to ensure its early childhood focus. The TRB of Tasmania registers graduate teachers upon course completion.

4.4.1.1 Early childhood initial teacher education course requirements.

The EC ITE course at UTAS integrates content, pedagogy, and a range of diverse PE placement sessions in a structured and systematic way to enable its students to meet the Graduate Teacher Standards (AITSL, 2011).

The National Program Standards (AITSL, 2018b) include two standards that relate particularly to the ITE course content and structure. Standard 4 requires ITE courses to provide prospective teachers with a coherent and integrated course involving "discipline studies and professional studies" (AITSL, 2018b, p. 13), which prepares them for multiple educational contexts, curricula, and learning areas of children at designated ages. Standard 5 indicates that ITE providers must offer undergraduate students no fewer than 80 days of well-structured, supervised, and assessed teaching practice in a range of real-classroom contexts, with identified the responsibilities of real-classroom teaching and care of students. This means that the ITE course students

gain experience with children of different ages during their PE placements, where the supervising classroom teachers instruct, supervise, and assess their performance, including against the Graduate Teacher Standards (AITSL, 2011).

The Graduate Teacher Standards (AITSL, 2011) serve as a guide for the ITE course as an authentic assessment standard against which to gauge students' learning performances in both coursework and teaching practice. ITE courses must prepare their graduates to meet the Graduate Teacher Standards in focus areas across the three domains of teaching: professional knowledge, professional practice (and its three sub-domains), and professional engagement.

The ACECQA's involvement requires that EC ITE courses integrate the advice in the *Guide to the National Quality Standard* (ACECQA, 2017a) for children and provide supervised PE placements of no fewer than 80 days. This placement sequence must cover children from birth to eight years. A minimum of 10 days must be spent with children aged from birth to two years, a substantial number of days are spent in PE placement with children aged two to five years, and the remaining days are assumed to be with children aged five to eight years (ACECQA, 2017b). Students of the UTAS EC ITE course must complete additional 10 days teaching practice in these required classrooms. Overall, the course offers a 90-day PE placement, comprised of the mandated 80 days and the additional 10 days.

4.4.1.2 Structure and content of the early childhood initial teacher education course.

The UTAS EC ITE course conforms with the requirements of AITSL and ACECQA. It consists of 32 units distributed over the four years of the course with an average of four units per semester (see Appendix R for the official schedule). The 32 units can be

categorised by two attributes—course structure and curriculum. There are three levels: the introductory level includes eight units (yellow font); the intermediate level includes six units (red font); and the advanced level includes 18 units (blue font). The overall course includes three domains: professional studies (blue box); curriculum (purple box); and core specialist early childhood education focus (green box). The four-block 90-day PE placement integrated with theory-lecturing units is also shown.

4.4.1.3 Delivery mode—blended learning.

A blended learning approach is widely used in higher education institutions to meet students' needs in Australia (see Section 1.2.1.3.4, page 160). Although there is no explicit instruction regarding the course delivery mode in the revised National Program Standards (AITSL, 2018b), one of the principles asserted the need for flexibility, diversity, and innovation. This statement suggested that ITE course providers should adopt delivery modes that utilise information technology.

The blended learning mode varies depending on the learning environment, drawing from three modes: face-to-face on-campus, fully online, and a mixture of the two (blended). In addition to the face-to-face classroom learning mode, a companion online learning management system, My Learning Online (MyLO), has been developed and applied at UTAS for all teaching courses. This online delivery of content allows students to engage in learning based on individual convenience, instead of always attending the physical campus for lectures or tutorials at a fixed time.

The EC ITE course at UTAS is a typical combination of theory instruction and practice. It not only delivers content knowledge but also offers supportive practice for EC ITE students. UTAS offers this course by means of video-recorded lectures with either face-to-face or online tutorials. Students have independent learning opportunities

to access knowledge, such as lectures, extended readings, via MyLO. In addition, tutorials provide students with opportunities for interaction that encourages them to communicate with academics and other students. Some units in the EC ITE courses have online tutorials only, and others require students to choose between online or face-to-face tutorials. Students have the opportunity for both face-to-face interaction and online communication.

4.4.1.4   Assessment in content knowledge delivery.

The outcomes of accredited ITE courses must meet the National Program Standards (AITSL, 2018b), and students' professional capabilities must be assessed against the Graduate Teacher Standards (AITSL, 2011) by the time they graduate. The assessment tasks of each unit are mapped onto areas of the standards with clear, measurable, and justifiable criteria, to ensure students understand the requirements in terms of knowledge and practical activities.

A range of assessment tasks are employed, including: (i) different forms of written assignments, such as (e)-portfolios, observation notes, lesson planning, and various reports comprising reflection, personal statement, investigation, assessment, and analysis; (ii) final-term examinations, which are used in several units; and (iii) video files and visual materials.

Considering the unit-specific factors and course-level outcomes, academics select a variety of systematic and consistent assessment tasks with clear and measurable descriptions to support students' completion of each assignment. In relation to the sequenced nature of assessment, students are encouraged to collect, identify, and explore relevant literature to develop their understanding and to evaluate or criticise the learning philosophy of the required task. Typically, tasks are sequenced so that

practice-oriented assignments are used to test the argument provided in the previous task.

The EC ITE course at UTAS employed a mix of formative and summative assessment approaches. Through these, students engage in the learning and assessment process to develop their professional capabilities based on feedback provided for each assignment and also understand the volume of knowledge and skills they have mastered as reflected in the summative score. Students also obtain a summative score for each assessment task to demonstrate how well they have learned or mastered the completed unit's material. The summative result of a student's performance is based on a criteria-referenced grading system that ties the tasks and outcomes to the Graduate Teacher Standards (AITSL, 2011).

4.4.1.5 Requirements for the professional experience placement.

The PE placement is an essential component of the UTAS's ITE course, interwoven with content knowledge throughout the four-years. These components overlap and reinforce each other and strongly facilitate the transfer of content to practice, as well as application that reinforces practical theory learning in-situ. Four blocks of PE occur at a range of sites in the UTAS course to enable students to become more skilled and familiar with various ECEC contexts. They do this by observing, participating, and engaging in various age-appropriate activities for children of the target age groups. This model is also advocated by the TRB of Tasmania and ACECQA (2017a).

Students of the EC ITE course at UTAS are usually assigned to different ECEC contexts around Tasmania for 90 days, where they can work with young children ranging from birth to eight years (Table 4.1). This course also allows students to complete the PE at interstate or international places, where the same assessment

criteria are maintained. The arrangement of each placement is presented on the course schedule (see Appendix R). Two important compliances are necessary prior to conducting PE placements: first, students must complete the *Student Good Character Determination* survey which assesses whether teacher candidates are of good character and suited to the professional workforce; and second, they must meet the requirements of the *Registration to Work with Vulnerable People* (UTAS, n.d). Students must also successfully complete the *Literacy and Numeracy Tests for Initial Teacher Education Students* to demonstrate that their literacy and numeracy skills are equivalent to the top 30% of the Australian adult population prior to undertaking their final PE placement (AITSL, 2018b; UTAS, n.d).

4.4.1.6 Structure and content of the professional experience placement.

The PE component comprises four supervised placement blocks occurring at various ECEC contexts. In the first two placements, which are slightly shorter than the following two placements, students are distributed to childcare centres for children aged from birth to two years, and to ECEC contexts for children aged three to five years for observation and practice. The third and fourth blocks are regarded as advanced stages, in which students assume more of the supervising/teaching workload to demonstrate cooperative and independent teaching for approximately 75%–80% of the class time. All information relating to PE placements are supported by the *Professional Experience Guidelines* (UTAS, n.d.) that are publicly available online.

4.4.1.7 Supervision and assessment in professional experience placement.

The current EC ITE course at UTAS developed and utilised *Professional Experience Guidelines* (UTAS, n.d.) for supervision and assessment instruments. The *Professional Experience at the UTAS Guide to Expectations* (Appendix U) and *Assessment Form*

(Appendix V) are key to articulating the assessment tasks and expectations of each

placement, which are in line with Standard 5 of the National Program Standards

(AITSL, 2018b). The *Guide to Expectations* describes weekly tasks to be fulfilled in

each placement and identifies all participants' work and responsibility for completion

of placements, including student, university-based supervisor and supervising

classroom teacher. The Assessment Form refers to the Graduate Teacher Standards

(AITSL, 2011), which are used to assess a student's capabilities across professional

knowledge, practice, and engagement throughout the PE process. Although assessment

tasks vary depending on the placement, the same criteria are adopted to assess

students' capabilities.

Table 4.1 shows the arrangement of PE placement (i.e., duration and sites of each

placement) and assessment tasks (i.e., overall expectations and weekly task) of the PE

placements. Copies of these key documents regarding PE placement from UTAS are

attached as Appendices U and V.

Table 4.1

Arrangement of the PE placements at UTAS

	Time	Duration	Sites	Expectations	Assessment tasks
1	Sem 2 Year 1	10 days (2 weeks)	Birth–2 years Child-care centres	Observation and creation of a professional planning file	Week 1: Becoming familiar with the setting Week 2: Observation of teaching and learning
2	Sem 1 Year 2	15 days (3 weeks)	3–5 years ECEC settings	New addition: Teaching and planning	Week 1: Observation/ collaborative teaching and planning Week 2: Collaborative teaching and planning Week 3: Independent teaching

	Time	Duration	Sites	Expectations	Assessment tasks
3	Sem 1 Year 3	30 days (6 weeks)	4 years school site	New addition: 1. English and Mathematics focus, integrating ICT into teaching 2. Demonstration of capacity to assume responsibility for approx. 75% of teaching load.	Week 1: Observation/ collaborative teaching Weeks 2–6: Planning and independent teaching
4	Sem 2 Year 4	35 days (7 weeks)	5–8 years school site	New addition: 1. All learning focus areas 2. Demonstration of capacity to assume responsibility for approx. 80% of teaching load.	Weeks 1–2: Observation/ collaborative teaching Weeks 3–7: Planning and collaborative/ independent teaching

Note. Sem = semester.

The four placements provide students with the opportunity to move from being active observers in the first few days to practitioners engaged in cooperative teaching with real-classroom teachers, ultimately leading them to conduct independent teaching. The expectations of each placement are sequenced so that an increased number of assessment tasks are gradually and systematically introduced in the structured PE placements. Prior to practising any teaching or implementing curriculum activities, the students' lesson plans must be shared and discussed with the supervising classroom teachers for feedback and permission to proceed.

In the UTAS EC ITE students are required to develop portfolio of evidence while in real-classroom contexts. These artefacts include records of the supervising classroom teachers' and their educational philosophy, descriptions and reflections of teaching plans and curriculum activities, and a collection of materials, such as lesson plans and daily logs. Students are also encouraged to maintain contact with their university-based supervisors to share and discuss their experiences or understandings regarding

teachings via MyLO, or via an alternative means of communication including email, telephone call, or video conferencing.

4.4.2 Case Study 2: China.

The YNNU EC ITE course is centrally accredited by the MoE, aligning with conventional Chinese Government processes (see Section 4.2.2.2, page 146). The *Curriculum Standards of Teacher Education (Trial Version)* (MoE, 2011) and *China's Professional Standards for Kindergarten Teachers (Trial Version)* (MoE, 2012c) are essential to creating EC ITE courses. Unlike Australia, there is no external independent professional authority to monitor and regulate the ITE courses in ECEC in China.

4.4.2.1 Requirements for the early childhood initial teacher education course.

Since the issuing of the *Decision on the Reform of the Education System* (MoE, 1985), Chinese university courses comprise both compulsory and elective units, with *normal* universities (see Section 1.2.2.2, page 34) being no exception. MoE (1985) allows for students to choose elective units in ITE courses based on their individual preferences. The provision of elective units varies depending on factors such as course and faculty availability; however, compulsory units are the dominant component and are divided into the following four categories:

- Comprehensive knowledge units (e.g., political and moral education units; physical education);

- Professional foundational knowledge units;

- Professional specific knowledge units; and

- PE units, comprising PE placements and graduation thesis (Liu, 2015).

YNNU follows these guidelines and, where applicable, has modified this structure to adapt to its circumstances and needs. For example, it has combined the professional foundational knowledge units and professional specific knowledge units into professional education units. The three components of the ITE course are divided into compulsory and elective domains, with comprehensive education and professional education comprising compulsory and elective units, while the PE placements and graduation thesis are compulsory units in the PE component. Each unit has two identities based on three components: comprehensive knowledge units, professional education units, and PE; and two domains: compulsory or elective. For example, the Early Childhood Theories of Teaching and Learning unit is regarded as a compulsory professional education unit. Several "special" units from elective domains are called "restricted" elective units, as these units are the focus of ECEC and their attributes are equivalent to compulsory units—that is, students are strongly encouraged by course coordinators to take these units.

The EC ITE course at YNNU conforms to the national requirements in terms of providing: (i) comprehensive knowledge; (ii) professional knowledge and skills; and (iii) PE. Comprehensive knowledge is regarded as comprehensive education with some extensive subjects (e.g., Foundation of English, Physical Education); the latter two areas have an ECEC focus with content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and necessary practice. PE at YNNU comprises PE placement either on campus or in real-classroom contexts, and a graduation thesis that is an independent essay assignment for the 4th-year students to examine their research capability regarding the

EC ITE context. The information and data collected may be from their real-classroom placement or the YNNU micro-teaching activity on campus.

Several documents underpin the course development while addressing specific concerns and expectations. The MoE (2011) is used to design ITE courses' teaching resources, learning artefacts, etc. and it aims to delineate the criteria with which to assess the outcomes of the accredited courses. It requires ITE courses to prepare their graduates with a sound achievement across the stated three domains: (i) professional dispositions and morality; (ii) professional knowledge and capabilities; and (iii) PE and teaching practice. It also describes course structure with some suggestions regarding knowledge delivery across six focus areas: (i) fundamental education study; (ii) professional study; (iii) discipline-specific curriculum learning; (iv) moral education; (v) professional ethics and development; and (vi) PE placements. This policy document requires that ITE courses provide a total of 18 weeks of various forms of assessment tasks in PE placements. This principle is highlighted in *Opinion on Strengthening Initial Teachers' Placement and Support for Their Teaching* (MoE, 2016), which has a specific focus on the PE placements during the ITE course, offering diverse forms for teaching skill development, such as classroom observation, simulated teaching, and real-classroom practice. It also suggests that the current assessment tasks and instruments for students' performance should be identified and greatly modified to improve the quality of supervision and instruction including explicit description of each task and concise and easy-understanding comments on each activity.

Two policy documents regarding the children's service are essential for all EC ITE courses—the early childhood education curriculum and the professional standards for kindergarten teachers. The *ELDG* (MoE, 2012d) is a national early childhood

education curriculum which details expectations and educational suggestions for the learning and development of children aged three to six years in five areas with corresponding educational practice suggestions on: (i) health; (ii) language and literacy; (iii) social development; (iv) science and mathematics; and (v) the arts. The principles and content of this curriculum do not differ greatly from the much earlier policy document, *Tentative Teaching Outline of Kindergarten (Draft Version)* (MoE, 1952). This earlier policy document regarding kindergarten teachers' work and responsibilities for children was issued in 1952. Its principles and content are strongly impacted by the Soviet Union's kindergarten education model: (i) physical education; (ii) language learning (literacy); (iii) understanding of circumstances; (iv) fine arts and handcraft-making; (v) music; and (vi) numeracy (Tang & Feng, 2003). These principles continue to exert a far-reaching impact on the current EC ITE course design as this model is still widely applied in China's kindergartens.

China's Professional Standards for Kindergarten Teachers (Trial Version) (MoE, 2012c) is a foundational benchmark for EC education in China, setting out the achievements necessary for EC teachers in three domains: (i) professional dispositions and morality; (ii) professional knowledge and capabilities; and (iii) PE and teaching practice. These three domains are further split into 14 areas comprising 62 standards.

4.4.2.2 Structure and content of the early childhood initial teacher education course.

The structure and content of the YNNU EC ITE course mixes theory delivery and PE placements in line with the requirements of national policies and standards. The English-translated version of the official EC ITE course schedule is attached as Appendix S. The full-time four-year undergraduate course consists of 58 units

covering comprehensive knowledge (shown in blue box), professional knowledge (red box), and PE (green box). The decision regarding what and how many units are provided per semester varies depending on the negotiation between the faculty and university to ensure a good balance between the university-dominated comprehensive knowledge units (e.g., units regarding political issues, Foundation of English) and course-specific units. The agreed-upon, structured course enables students not only to access broad interdisciplinary knowledge but also to gain a deep understanding of professional content in the ECEC area.

This schedule shows the course structure across compulsory and "restricted" elective and free elective units. The two right-hand columns of the table present the number of elective units, with "C" standing for elective units from the comprehensive knowledge areas, all of which are free elective units from the six dominant areas consisting of: (i) educational philosophy; (ii) social science; (iii) science; (iv) arts and sports; (v) foreign language learning; and (vi) advanced mathematics study. These units are coordinated and provided by the university. In the identification of the units "P" means the units are in the professional area of the ECEC, which includes five "restricted" elective units ("RP"). During their course students could select one "RP" unit per semester commencing in second semester first year and before the end of third year. Students must complete these "so-called" elective professional units as their attributes are equivalent to compulsory units. Appendix T shows all of the professional units, and the restricted "RP" units in red font. Other elective units in this professional area are allowed because their attributes are similar to those of the free elective units in the comprehensive knowledge areas.

The ITE course prepares students to be knowledgeable and skilled EC teachers with strong professional knowledge and the ability to work with children, while utilising the current early childhood education curriculum (i.e., *ELDG*; MoE, 2012d). The YNNU EC ITE course provides a unique package of learning-practice units to bridge content knowledge and practice with pedagogical skills, namely, the *seven units for five areas* (see Appendix T). These seven practical units fully align with the five areas of the *ELDG*—health, language and literacy, social development, sciences and mathematics, and the arts (MoE, 2012d). These units are intended to support students' comprehension of theories and practice in these curriculum areas. A component of the PE placement is the university-based micro-teaching practice that aims to provide students with a practical opportunity to apply their learning in a classroom environment while receiving appropriate instruction and feedback from academics.

A significant component of the YNNU course are the artistic skills units. EC teachers must be equipped with skills in various art forms (e.g., paper-cutting, drawing, dancing) and instruments (e.g., piano) that conform to MoE (1952) and *ELDG* (MoE, 2012d), and also meet the needs of the current ECEC workforce. The current course provides some units that are strongly related to certain artistic skills training with necessary content knowledge and suitable pedagogical knowledge. For example, four units of arts education comprise the compulsory professional education component: (i) music theories and practice: (ii) fine arts; (iii) dance; and (iv) playing piano. In these units, students learn and master certain basic skills in the different art forms, develop their aesthetic awareness, distinguish and appreciate music and fine arts, and develop their understanding of teaching in arts education, which supports them to teach and assist in the development of these attributes in the children they are teaching.

4.4.2.3 Delivery mode (face-to-face).

While no special delivery modes are stipulated in the YNNU EC ITE course compared with other courses in China that are described in *Chapter 1: Background and Context* (see Section 1.2.2.3.4, page 40), the face-to-face delivery mode is used, meaning that both students and lecturers are required to attend classrooms at assigned times. The typical model is for the lecturer to present a slideshow presentation on specific aspects of theory/knowledge and to facilitate various teaching activities that encourage students to be active learners through group discussion, case study and poster presentation. All teaching and learning activities are conducted in lecture presentations, and no tutorials are provided for students to practise or deconstruct the lecture material with an academic after the lectures.

4.4.2.4 Assessment in content knowledge delivery.

The assessment approach at YNNU is used to ensure that the outcomes of the EC ITE course align with the relevant requirements and expectations from government and education authorities. Students' assessment results can also reflect their learning achievements according to specific criteria with unit-specific, course objectives, and national standards for this profession. Assessment tasks and approaches vary depending on the aims and content of the different units, comprising theoretical knowledge, a mix of theoretical knowledge and practice, and practical skills training. Two main assessment tasks are employed to assess students' learning performance: a final-term exam and an essay assignment; coupled with classroom attendance and a variety of small tasks in the classroom during the lecture, such as mid-term exam, random informal quiz and group report.

Most units of the YNNU EC ITE course adopt the form of final-term, paper-and-pen, and timed, invigilated exams. Units relating to the required political content are scheduled for teaching and the teaching mode are controlled by the university. Several professional areas (e.g., arts education) use a "one-off", end-of-semester essay assignment in which students are required to demonstrate their mastery of the content. In the typical face-to-face course delivery then class attendance, student in-class contributions and engagement (e.g., taking and asking questions, etc.) are tasks that the teacher can monitor relatively easily.

Most but not all units use a mix of formative and summative assessment approaches. Assessment tasks typically comprise either a final-term exam or essay assignment, and while there may be some ad-hoc formative assessment, this is generally absent. Some arts education units adopt the mixed assessment approach, where students are required to present their artistic skills weekly (e.g., playing piano, paper-cutting). Timely formative feedback is required to guide their capabilities throughout the learning process, but even in such cases the summative score on the essay assignment is seen as reflecting their academic ability in the arts.

Norm-referenced grading is employed rather than criteria-referenced grading at YNNU. Academics have autonomy to allocate marks to different assessment activities and tasks, but the summative grade of a unit must conform to an agreed-upon statistical normal distribution. In this way, the result is not fully based on the prescribed assessment criteria, but it is dependent rather on the quota of a certain grade range in which a student's final results are compared with the results of other students.

4.4.2.5 Requirements for the professional experience placement.

The YNNU EC ITE course implements an integrated practical ITE course for students by providing various forms of PE placement in line with the expectations of the teaching workforce. The arrangement is closely associated with content knowledge delivery throughout the course in order to support students to become skilled teachers by graduation.

China's Professional Standards for Kindergarten Teachers (Trial Version) (MoE, 2012c) stipulates that an EC ITE course should provide more opportunities for teaching practice with an explicit PE placement scheme to ensure and promote students' teaching skills and capabilities building on established policy documents (MoE, 2011; MoE, 2016) which emphasise time allocation and various forms of PE placement. These documents highlight the number of days and variety of the PE placement. The relationship between occasions, different forms, and focus-age of children is not articulated, namely, there is no guidance regarding the minimum or maximum amount of time that might be spent at each age level, nor is students' professional performance intentionally monitored.

4.4.2.6 Structure and content of the professional experience placement.

The YNNU EC ITE course meets the requirements of the policy documents and offers four more practical teaching opportunities than the mandated 18 weeks: (i) kindergarten visit; (ii) kindergarten observation; (iii) university-based micro-teaching; and (iv) real-classroom placement. These PE placement sessions are distributed over different stages of the course and aligned with content knowledge delivery and students' understandings of the ECEC, to enable students to digest theory and practise classroom skills simultaneously.

4.4.2.7 Supervision and assessment in professional experience placement.

The policy documents state that a sound placement scheme must be provided, but there is no advice on what assessment may be used for students in supervision and instruction. Neither descriptions of assessment tasks, instruments, nor criteria are suggested. No specific assessment descriptions or requirements are provided for students to conduct their teaching practice throughout the four-year study at YNNU. The university provided some documents for the PE placement sessions: (i) an observation logbook for kindergarten observation; (ii) a micro-teaching learning/training booklet for university-based micro-teaching; and (iii) a placement logbook and an investigation report for real-classroom placement (Appendix W). These documents aimed to guide students as they complete all PE placements while also recording their activities and reflecting on their teaching and daily work. Furthermore, these documents are important assessment instruments that students must complete for each PE placement session they undertake, but they are also considered as somewhat professional files in which students record their teaching progress. Consequently, these documents are both a guide and an assessment instrument employed in PE placements.

Table 4.2 shows the arrangement outlining the duration and sites of each placement, and assessment tasks, including overall expectation and weekly task of the PE placements in YNNU. A copy of these documents with English-language translation is attached in Appendix W.

Table 4.2

Arrangement of PE placements at YNNU

	Time	**Duration**	**Sites**	**Expectation**	**Assessment tasks**
1	Sem 1 Year 2	1 week (5 days)	4–5 kindergartens	Observation	Becoming familiar with environment and teaching activities in kindergartens.
2	Sem 2 Year 2	2 weeks (10 days)	One kindergarten	Observation/ practice/ reflection	Classroom observation, conducting a supervised small activity. Completion of the *Observation Logbook*.
3	Sem 1 Year 3	25mins/p× 4 times (equivalent of 4 weeks)	University	Teaching plan/ micro-teaching/ reflection	Conducting curriculum teachings with well-designed planning, supervised by academics offering feedback. Completion of the *Micro-teaching Logbook*.
4	Sem 1 Year 4	12 weeks (60 days)	One kindergarten	Observation/ teaching plan/ classroom management/ teaching practice/ reflection	Conducting appropriate curriculum activities, classes with approved planning and classroom management are supervised by classroom teachers. Completion of the *Placement Logbook* and *Investigation Report*.

Note. Sem = semester. Examples of forms are in Appendix W.

The different forms of PE placement at YNNU provide students with the opportunity to develop and practice their teaching philosophy and to increase their familiarity and comfort with the ECEC contexts in a coherent and systematic manner.

A one-week kindergarten visit enables students to understand and comprehend different ECEC contexts, and students generally audit several well-prepared teaching demonstration lessons with a specific age group. Students conduct a small activity with children using an approved teaching plan under the supervising classroom teachers' supervision in the second week during the two-week classroom observation. The university-based micro-teaching tasks enable students to practise their capabilities in designing lesson plans and conducting curriculum teaching with feedback from academics. The final real-classroom PE placement is regarded as the most crucial

component. This comprises a 12-week work opportunity with kindergarten teachers and children, where students are supervised by their supervising classroom teachers who focus on instruction, classroom management and other teaching duties.

The university-based micro-teaching section of the Logbook differed from the other three components of the PE placements. This opportunity to practise teaching is regarded as a form of group study, where six students and one academic work and plan cooperatively to complete a range of simulated teachings in university context where no children are involved. This means that the arrangements including time, sites, and period of each activity are relatively flexible so long as each student completes four teaching demonstrations over the course of the semester. This section is seen as equivalent to a four-week teaching practice because it is difficult to calculate the number of days it takes for students to complete. The component focuses on assisting students to conduct curriculum lessons on campus, providing them with the opportunity to practise what they have learned from the unique package of *seven units for five areas*, which is part of the planning they undergo for the final real-classroom placement as well. All participants in a group engage in discussion to comment and reflect on their presentation and lesson plan after each 25-minute teaching demonstration.

Completion of university-designed documents is a key assessment task for students' professional capability in teaching and researching. There is no assessment task in the first PE placement, kindergarten visit, only a formal communication session that all students must attend. Students can share their perceptions and experiences with professionals such as kindergarten teachers and academics with an EC focus from other universities. In the remaining three components of the PE placement, the key

participants cooperatively complete required documents. Students must provide documents to reflect their professional capabilities as the primary practitioners. Other key participants vary in terms of supervision types (university-based academic or supervising classroom teacher) and sites (university or kindergarten) to complete the documents. University-based academics typically supervise the same group of students in the micro-teaching and real-classroom placements, but the supervision responsibilities differ significantly in the two sections. In micro-teaching, academics played the main role in terms of observing and assessing students' teaching performances, whereas in the real-classroom placement, they monitored and checked students' progress through a web-based platform—the *Learning-Teaching Resource Management Platform*—where students submitted their teaching plans for kindergarten. This work is done cooperatively with kindergarten classroom teachers to successfully complete the placement. The components of the assessment work completed by various key participants were as follows.

Students record four main components of their professional capabilities: (i) curriculum teaching practice; (ii) classroom management; (iii) education investigation; and (iv) self-reflection on teaching.

1. Supervising classroom teachers are responsible for commenting on students' performances in terms of lesson plan design, teaching performance, and classroom management; provide summative suggestions for improvement; and offer suggestions regarding whether students will pass or fail the placement.

2. University-based academics provide guidance under the following two conditions:

   o Micro-teaching: academics supervise, provide timely feedback on each teaching plan and lesson demonstration, assess students' performances,

provide suggestions for promotion, and provide a summative score for teaching practice; and

- o Real-classroom placement: academics provide a summative result with consideration of the supervising classroom teachers' suggestions and supervised experience in micro-teaching.

3. The PE placement office provides a summative comment for each student combining all information submitted by participants on individual teaching performance with an official stamp, which indicates that a student has completed the whole PE practice and his or her professional capability has satisfied the office as meeting the requirements.

4.5 Similarities and Differences in the Policy Documents of Early Childhood Initial Teacher Education Courses in Australia and China

The similarities and differences between the two courses are presented in summary in Tables 4.3 and 4.4. The implications and significance of comparison will be discussed in *Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusion*. An analysis of policy documents relating to both EC ITE courses in Australia and China demonstrates that external factors (recruitment and selection, accreditation of ITE courses, and teacher registration) and internal components (content knowledge and teaching practice) are evident in both countries in terms of preparing graduates to work in a range of ECEC contexts. Section 4.5 (page 179) focuses specifically on the factors that impact the quality of the current EC ITE courses. This is completed in two parts: (i) the external mechanism for the quality of the courses; and (ii) the internal components of the courses for graduates' achievements to present the similarities and differences between the two case studies.

The documents show both Australia and China are concerned about the preparation and quality of EC teachers and have recognised that policies should be put in place to promote teacher quality and quality teaching for children. Given their different contextual factors, the two countries have established robust and rigorous mechanisms with specific policy documents to ensure the quality of novice teachers within their individual national characteristics. Table 4.3 compares the two countries in terms of three main external components: recruitment and selection; accreditation of ITE course; and teacher registration.

Table 4.3

Similarities and differences among external factors of the EC ITE courses in Australia and China

	UTAS	YNNU
	1. Selection and recruitment	
Similarity	Year 12 students are to present an academic score.	
Differences	Alternative pathways for candidates to EC ITE courses	Two components of university recruitment: (i) result of individual NUEE; and (ii) prescribed threshold entry score of this course.
	The EC ITE course sets its own selection requirements in considering different applicants' capabilities in both academic and non-academic elements.	Successfully completing the NUEE is the main pathway for both mature students and Year 12 leavers to attend university.
	2. Accreditation for ITE courses	
Similarity	Both EC ITE courses are accredited and audited by national regulators with a rigorous process and policy documents.	
Differences	A suite of documents (ACECQA, 2017a; AITSL, 2018b) guides ITE course accreditation.	A policy document for ITE course accreditation was issued in 2017, but its principles and intents have not been put into practice for this case-course at YNNU.
	More education authorities cooperatively regulate the EC ITE courses regarding teacher education and children's services.	MoE centrally supervises all university courses; no other institutions involved regulate the EC ITE courses.

	UTAS	YNNU
	The Graduate Teacher Standards (AITSL, 2011) is essential for ITE course accreditation, but its scope is not specific to EC teachers.	China's Professional Standards for Kindergarten Teachers (Trial Version) (MoE, 2012c) is a specific professional document for EC ITE course's delivery, but it is not essential for their accreditation.
	3. Teacher registration	
Similarity	All graduates of EC ITE courses are eligible to become registered EC teachers.	
Differences	Graduates of the EC ITE are provisionally registered as teachers automatically and have a time-limit for full registration.	After completing this EC ITE course, graduates must pass the two mandated tests before registration.

Table 4.4 compares the UTAS and YNNU case-courses across structure and content,

delivery mode, and assessment tasks and approaches, as well as matters of PE

placement, including arrangement, supervision, and assessment.

Table 4.4

Comparison of internal components of the EC ITE courses in Australia and China

	UTAS	YNNU
Similarities	1. Key impact factors of the EC ITE course development and implementation satisfy the respective requirements and expectations of all authorities and regulations in each country.	
	2. Both courses have integrated content knowledge and PE placements in the full-time four-year study.	
	3. Both courses' content delivery and teaching practice cover all focus areas an EC teacher should know and needs to practice.	
	4. Both courses adopt appropriate assessment tasks and approaches to assess students' learning performance.	
	5. The structured and distributed four-block supervised PE placements are integrated with theory delivery.	
Differences	1. Number of total units differs between the two courses	
	32	58
	2. Distribution of units differs between the two courses	
	Four units per semester averagely.	Number of units varies depending on the negotiation between the university and the EC ITE course.

	UTAS	YNNU
	3. Special units offered are unique to each country	
	A unit relates to the cultural awareness aspect of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.	Several units of comprehensive knowledge regarding political issues.
	No artistic skills training in arts education.	Units of arts education provide both content knowledge and artistic skills trainings.
		Completion of a graduation thesis is a unit in PE.
	4. The delivery mode for content knowledge differs for each course	
	Blended learning is employed to provide online lectures and either online or/and face-to face tutorials for students.	Face-to-face lectures are the only learning opportunity for students to access learning resources and practise theories in the classroom.
	The range of tutorial tasks is very much in line with lectures.	The tutorial system has not yet been introduced in the course.
	5. The assessment in content knowledge differs between the two courses.	
	Multiple assignments are adopted, making students engage in the whole learning and assessment process.	The one-off final-term exam is the key assessment instrument to assess students' learning performance.
	Clear and transparent descriptions of each task map with criteria referring to the focus areas of the Graduate Teacher Standards (AITSL, 2011)	Students have limited access to and understanding of information relating to each assessment task and its criteria.
	The mixed assessment approach, formative and summative, is adopted by course lecturers.	Students rarely receive feedback on their assignments and receive only summative results.
	A criteria-referenced grading system is employed to fully assess students' performance, based on prescribed criteria and teacher standards.	A norm-referenced grading system is adopted to gauge students' performances, with individual performance gauged compared with that of other students.
	6. The arrangement of PE placement differs for each course	
	The emphasis on "age focus" or "children's age settings" ensures that students complete PE placements with children aged from birth to eight in a range of ECEC contexts.	The emphasis on different forms of PE placement and various aims and placement sites vary depending on different forms.
	Students' exposure to real-classroom contexts is ensured through PE placements with children and classroom teachers.	Three of the four PE placements occur in kindergartens, while the micro-teaching occurs on campus.

	UTAS	YNNU
	7. Supervision and assessment in PE placement differ in the two courses	
	Specific weekly tasks are provided, together with the general expectations of each placement, to ensure necessary activities are conducted with classroom teachers' supervision and instruction.	Various documents of PE placements with general information guide students to conduct and complete different forms of PE placement and record their experience.
	The use of the same assessment criteria assesses students' performance against all focus areas of the Graduate Teacher Standards (AITSL, 2011).	No explicit assessment criteria are employed to supervise and assess students' performance; instead, reporting of students' performance mainly depends on their completion of various documents and on comments from kindergartens.

4.6 Summary

Chapter 4: Findings from the Document Analysis presented findings that address research sub-questions 1 and 2 presented on page 46 of Chapter 1. The EC ITE model of Australia and China, relating to recruitment and selection, accreditation for ITE courses, and teacher registration, as well as some key policy documents of ITE courses' creation and quality assurance have been reported in response to the first research sub-question. Key characterises of the UTAS and YNNU case study courses and the similarities and differences between the two have been analysed to address the second research sub-question.

Chapter 5: Findings from the Questionnaire and Interviews addresses the remaining two research sub-questions, utilising questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to capture participants perceptions regarding whether the two EC ITE courses prepare teachers to be classroom ready.

CHAPTER 5. FINDINGS FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE AND INTERVIEWS

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 5: Findings from the Questionnaire and Interviews presents data from each of the four stakeholder groups, namely, the 4th-year students ITE EC students, recent EC ITE course graduates, academics who provided the students' EC education, and the employers of the graduates. The findings from the two data-gathering instruments, the questionnaire (see Appendices D, E, and F), and the semi-structured interview (see Appendices G, H, and I) are examined to address research sub-questions 3 and 4:

3. How do the key stakeholders perceive EC graduates' teaching preparedness after they completed the two EC ITE courses?

4. How might the EC ITE courses be developed to meet the needs of stakeholders?

Chapter 5: Findings from the Questionnaire and Interviews has two main sections. Section 5.2 (page 1844) presents the data from the questionnaire, and Section 5.3 (page 201) reports the findings from the semi-structured interviews. The data from each case study are presented separately in the respective sections, with Case Study 1, Australia, being presented before Case Study 2, China.

5.2 Results From the Questionnaire

The structure and content of the questionnaire and the data collection approaches were presented in *Chapter 3: Methodology*. All stakeholders were invited to complete a questionnaire, either via email or in person, with some differences for each stakeholder

group; that is, the wording of the questions varied slightly depending on the role. The questionnaire was completed either web-based or paper-based according to the stakeholder's availability and convenience and, on average, took 12 minutes to complete. The data from the questionnaires are included in the Appendices; details and relevant data from Australia are shown in Appendices J, K, L, and M, and data from China are presented in Appendices N, O, P, and Q.

There were five sections (A-E) in the questionnaire. Section A explored the participants' demographic information. Section B captured their attitudes toward the outcomes of the course and the achievements of the students, with reference to relevant teaching standards across the three areas: professional knowledge, professional practice, and professional engagement. The professional practice domain comprised three sub-domains: (i) sub-domain 1 planning and implementing effective teaching and learning (implement teaching); (ii) sub-domain 2 creating and maintaining a supportive learning environment (create environment); and (iii) sub-domain 3 assessing and reporting on the children's performance (assessment). Section C asked for participants' views on the support that the EC ITE students received in their course and to give an overall evaluation of the course's results. Free text suggestions or comments on the course were obtained in Section D. Finally, in Section E, the participants were asked to identify their preferences for the ideal or necessary personal characteristics and professional dispositions of an EC teacher by selecting from provided items or adding more characteristics or dispositions if they wished.

These data were analysed using the same measures across each set and demonstrated the participants' perceptions of professional practice. To maintain consistency, data from each case study are presented in the same order as the questionnaire.

5.2.1 Case Study 1: Australia

From the four stakeholder groups in Australia, there were 23 respondents to the questionnaire (participants): (i) 13 4th-year students; (ii) four graduates; (iii) three academics; and (iv) three employers. The question responses were categorised according to Table 3.2.

5.2.1.1 Demographic information (Section A).

The demographic information of the Australian participants is illustrated separately in Appendix J in Tables J1, J2, J3, and J4. The tables reflect the participants' different roles and demographic data. The information has been presented in *Chapter 3: Methodology* (see Section 3.6.3.1 on page 132).

5.2.1.2 Perceptions of the course (Section B)

The four Australian stakeholder groups with their different backgrounds and experiences generally held a positive view of the outcomes of the current UTAS EC ITE course and the achievements of its students. The data suggested a broad overall satisfaction with the 4th-year teachers' knowledge, skills, and capabilities. Table 5.1 presents the overall responses to Section B of the questionnaire, which asked participants to express their perceptions of the EC ITE course across the three main domains: professional knowledge; professional practice (including its three sub-domains); and professional engagement.

Table 5.1

Australian participants' overall perceptions of the capacity of the EC ITE students across three domains and three sub-domains [n=4th-year students 13; graduates 4; academics 3; and employers 3]

Group	Professional knowledge		Professional practice								Professional engagement		Total	
			Sub-domain 1 Implement teaching		Sub-domain 2 Create environment		Sub-domain 3 Assessment							
Question Items	2,3,4,5,7,8		1,6,9,10,11, 18,19,20		12,13,14		15,16,17				21,22,23			
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD			M	SD	M	SD
4th-year students	4.27	0.57	4.18	0.70	4.28	0.75	4.26	0.59			4.23	0.66	4.25	0.66
			M = 4.24 SD = 0.69											
Graduates	4.17	0.69	4.28	0.72	4.58	0.43	4.42	0.49			4.75	0.43	4.45	0.66
			M = 4.43 SD = 0.65											
Academics	4.39	0.49	4.13	0.67	4.22	0.63	4.11	0.57			4.22	0.42	4.25	0.59
			M = 4.15 SD = 0.64											
Employers	4.28	0.56	4.25	0.66	4.78	0.42	4.78	0.42			4.22	1.23	4.37	0.73
			M = 4.60 S D = 0.63											
All groups	4.28	0.58	4.21	0.67	4.47	0.69	4.47	0.58			4.36	0.73	4.34	0.66
			M = 4.38 SD = 0.67											

Note. M = mean score; SD = standard deviation. Minimum score=1 and maximum score=5.

Overall, the data suggested:

- The overall satisfaction levels of the four groups varied only slightly across the three domains;

- Participants agreed that the students of this course had mastered the requisite professional knowledge and were equipped with the skills necessary to be classroom-ready teachers;

- Graduates appeared to have a higher overall positive view of the three domains than the other three groups; however, they did not maintain this attitude across each of the separate three domains;

- Graduates were the least positive about the professional knowledge component, while the academics had the highest mean score; while the 4th-year students and employers had a similar opinion, located in the middle;

- Both the graduates and employers had higher positive views of the students' professional practice capabilities than the 4th-year students and academics; and

- Of the four groups, the graduates had the most positive view of professional engagement. Although academics and employers shared the same mean, the dispersion of the employers' perceptions was relatively high, which suggested that the three employers did not agree on this domain.

5.2.1.2.1   Attitudes towards professional knowledge (domain 1).

Australian participants had a relatively high positive view (M = 4.28, SD = 0.58; out of 5) of the EC graduates' competence in the broad area of professional knowledge covering the understanding of children, EC curriculum, and teaching strategies (see Appendix K). The data indicated:

- Three of the stakeholder groups reported a high positive view that the EC graduates could plan lessons and teach children, incorporating both literacy and numeracy strategies; while the employers had a mixed perception and considered that the students were using the literacy strategies better than the numeracy strategies;

- The 4th-year students and academics had a more positive view of the students' understanding of the EC curriculum than the graduates and employers;

- With a small amount of variance across the four groups, all participants had a highly positive view of the graduates' capabilities of conducting inclusive classes by adopting appropriate teaching strategies for children with a range of different abilities and from different family backgrounds; and

- The employers had a typically high positive view of the EC ITE students' capability of understanding the different stages of children's physical and intellectual development.

5.2.1.2.2   Attitudes towards professional practice (domain 2).

Australian participants had a predominantly high positive view of the EC ITE students' competence in professional practice (the overall mean score for this domain $M = 4.38$, $SD = 0.67$). The three sub-domains of the professional practice questionnaire items are illustrated separately in Tables K2, K3, and K4 in Appendix K.

Data from sub-domain 1 reported that the participants' perceptions of the EC graduates' capabilities in planning and implementing effective teaching and learning (implement teaching) were:

- Participants had a high positive view of the capabilities of the EC students in planning and conducting appropriate teaching activities by selecting suitable teaching strategies and adopting professional learning resources and approaches with an arts component;

- Participants had a mixed and relatively less positive view of the EC students' capabilities in using the EC curriculum in their teaching. The 4th-year students had a relatively more positive view (M = 4.62, SD = 0.62) than the other three groups, and the academics had the lowest score (M = 3.33, SD = 0.47); and

- Except for the 4th-year students, the groups had a typically high positive attitude regarding the capabilities of the EC ITE students in helping children transition successfully from kindergarten to formal schooling.

Data from sub-domain 2 indicated the participants' perceptions of the EC ITE students' capabilities in creating and maintaining a supportive learning environment (create environment). The participants generally had a highly positive view, except for the item regarding the students' abilities to "implement appropriate behaviour management", which varied widely between different groups. All employers had a highly positive view and stated that they "strongly agree" that the students could adopt and use suitable strategies of behaviour management for children; the academics, meanwhile, ranked this item the lowest.

Sub-domain 3 demonstrated that all participants had a typically highly positive view on the EC ITE students' capabilities both in recording and reporting children's performance (assessment) externally and in providing suitable feedback for children's learning promotion, with only a slight variance.

5.2.1.2.3   *Attitudes towards professional engagement (domain 3).*

Table K5 illustrates that the Australian participants had a high positive view of the EC ITE students' competence in the broad area of professional engagement (M = 4.36, SD = 0.73). Graduates had the highest positive view; academics and employers had a

similar opinion, located in the middle. However, there were mixed opinions among the four groups on the EC ITE students' ability to promote their teaching through the explanation of the children's assessment, with graduates (M = 4.75, SD = 0.43) and employers (M = 3.33, SD = 1.7).

5.2.1.3   Support provided for students (Section C)

Table L1 in Appendix L suggested that Australian participants, primarily the 4th-year students and graduates, had a complicated and somewhat less positive view that this EC ITE course provided students with adequate support to complete their teacher preparation. The 4th-year students had the least positive attitude on whether this EC ITE course provided a satisfactory level of support for their learning and teaching. In particular, they rated two items the lowest "appropriate instructions and feedback" (M = 3.69, SD = .91), and "many opportunities to apply their knowledge" (M = 3.69, SD = .61). Both the academics and employers had a relatively higher positive view of these issues than the 4th-year students or graduates. The academics and employers had a highly positive attitude to this course had provided "appropriate instructions" and many practice chances for students to "apply theoretical knowledge and understandings".

Table L2 indicates that Australian participants had a somewhat higher positive view of the results of the EC ITE course, that is, "this course has prepared the students to teach in real-classroom contexts" (M = 4.36, SD = 0.72). However, while graduates had the lowest score on the view of "developed theoretical knowledge for their teaching" (M = 3.75, SD = 1.09), academics and employers had a relatively higher positive attitude to this item than 4th-year students or graduates.

5.2.1.4 Open-ended responses (Section D)

Section D of the questionnaire provided an opportunity for the participants to offer free-text open-ended comments about the course, allowing them to identify key issues they believed were important. Some of the topics that arose included: (i) time invested in PE placements; (ii) the focus areas of EC units; and (iii) delivery mode.

Several participants commented that more PE placement opportunities would strengthen the course. Graduate QAG3 reflected "I do not think that the current Bachelor of Education [Early Childhood] gave them [EC students] enough practical experience and opportunities to put the theory they had learnt into practice". This was reinforced by a 4th-year student who said that more classroom placement would be welcomed and that this experience would be an indicator of "how confident and capable I really was" (QAF11). Another 4th-year student said "I need more time for professional experience during the four years" (QAF8). Meanwhile, two graduates had somewhat different opinions, exhibiting a high positive view of the outcomes of the EC ITE course's practical placement offering "I did the most learning and have developed my teaching skills on 'pracs' and while being a teacher" (QAG1) and "the course gave me a wide range of experience to be prepared for the profession" (QAG4).

A few participants stated that "the course needs to be more early childhood focused," which a 4th-year student QAF2 suggested could help her feel more "confident of my teaching skills for ECE [ECEC]". QAF6 agreed, requesting "more practical classroom [sic] on how to teach reading, spelling etc. to lower primary (kindergarten to grade two)". Significantly, one academic worried about the delivery mode of the current EC ITE course "this course has been pathetically run, with no face-to-face contact (tutorials, lectures, etc.) being provided to students, and teacher support has been

minimal" (QAA2). Nevertheless, 4th-year student QAF9 challenged this perspective "the course provided a wide network of both people and resources that I have been able to access and investigate".

5.2.1.5 Dispositions and personal qualities of an early childhood teacher (Section E)

Data from Section E (see Appendix M) suggested that the different stakeholder groups had varying views of the personal features and professional dispositions that an EC teacher should possess. Terms such as "caring" and "positive" were noted by the majority of participants, while "humble" had a relatively lower response. Meanwhile, the 4th-year students offered additional characteristics they considered EC teachers should be (e.g., "good listener", "resilient", and "confident"). Some of these qualities were reinforced by the other three groups.

5.2.2 Case Study 2: China

From the four stakeholder groups in China, there were 86 respondents to the questionnaire, as follows: (i) 63 4th-year students; (ii) eight graduates; (iii) 11 academics; and (iv) four employers.

5.2.2.1 Demographic information (Section A).

The demographic information of the Chinese participants is illustrated separately in Tables N1, N2, N3, and N4 in Appendix N. The tables reflect their different roles and demographic data. The information has been summarised in *Chapter 3: Methodology*

5.2.2.2 Perceptions of the course (Section B).

The data suggested that the Chinese participants' views of the EC ITE students' capabilities across the three domains varied. Table 5.2 illustrates the overall responses to Section B of the questionnaire regarding the three main domains and the three sub-domains of professional practice.

Table 5.2

Chinese participants' overall perceptions of the capacity of the EC ITE students across three domains and three sub-domains [n=4th-year students 63; graduates 8; academics 11; and employers 4]

Group	Professional knowledge		Professional practice						Professional engagement		Total	
			Sub-domain 1 Implement teaching		Sub-domain 2 Create Environment		Sub-domain 3 Assessment					
Question Items	2,3,4,5,7,8		1,6,9,10,11, 18,19,20		12,13,14		15,16,17		21,22,23			
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
4th-year students	3.86	0.89	3.89	0.71	4.01	0.65	3.89	0.67	4.00	0.66	3.93	0.77
			M = 3.93 SD = .69									
Graduates	4.00	0.68	4.30	0.52	4.21	0.64	4.13	0.53	4.29	0.54	4.17	0.60
			M = 4.21 SD = 0.55									
Academics	3.70	0.83	3.95	0.67	4.12	0.69	3.85	0.70	3.87	0.81	3.85	0.75
			M = 3.97 SD = 0.69									
Employers	3.21	0.08	3.63	0.93	3.75	1.01	3.33	0.94	4.08	0.76	3.62	1.00
			M = 3.57 SD = 0.96									
All groups	3.69	0.89	3.94	0.72	4.02	0.69	3.8	0.71	4.05	0.69	3.89	0.78
			M = 3.92 SD = 0.71									

Note. M = mean score; SD = standard deviation. Minimum score=1 and maximum score=5.

Overall, the data suggested that:

- The overall level of satisfaction of the four groups varied across the three domains of professional capacity. The graduates retained a more positive attitude across all three domains than the other three groups;

- All participants agreed that the students of this EC ITE course had mastered the professional capabilities necessary to be skilled and knowledgeable teachers.

- The professional knowledge of the EC ITE students was given the lowest rating (M = 3.69, SD = 0.89) of the three domains, and the employers had the least positive attitude to this;

- All participants had a slightly positive view (M = 3.92, SD = 0.71) on the capabilities of the EC ITE students in professional practice across the three sub-domains, although this capability was given the highest rating by the graduates; and

- All participants had a highly positive view of the capabilities of the EC ITE students in professional engagement, although the academics had the least positive attitude. Both the 4th-year students and employers had a similar attitude that was located between the ratings of academics and graduates.

5.2.2.2.1   Attitudes towards professional knowledge (domain 1).

The Chinese participants had a less positive attitude towards the EC ITE students' professional knowledge capabilities (M = 3.69, SD = 0.89), and details of this are illustrated in Appendix O. The data indicated:

- Participants had a slightly negative opinion of how well the EC ITE students had accrued the professional knowledge necessary for the inclusive teaching of children from different family backgrounds or with a range of specific learning needs;

- The issue of the EC ITE students' understanding of the EC curriculum was low overall, but the graduates were slightly more positive than the other three groups; and

- The four groups had mixed perceptions of the EC ITE students' understanding of children, with employers demonstrating only a moderately positive view while the other three groups typically had a highly positive attitude to this.

5.2.2.2.2   Attitudes towards professional practice (domain 2).

The Chinese participants had somewhat higher positive views of the EC ITE students' competence in professional practice (the total mean score for this domain was M = 3.92, SD = 0.71). The three professional practice sub-domains of the questionnaire items are illustrated in Tables O2, O3, and O4 in Appendix O.

Data from sub-domain 1 concerned the participants' perceptions of the EC ITE students' capabilities in planning and implementing effective teaching and learning, (implement teaching):

- The employers gave the lowest scores on almost all items in sub-domain 1, while conversely, the graduates had a high positive view;

- The opinions on the EC ITE students' capabilities in designing and planning appropriate lessons for children, integrating the EC curriculum, and selecting

suitable teaching strategies and artefacts for curriculum teaching, was seen positively by all groups but the employers and the 4^{1}-years students were more critical than the graduates and the academics; and

- There was a slightly positive view from participants on the EC ITE students' capabilities in creating rapport with children and developing a supportive learning environment in sub-domain 2. A comparison of the three items in sub-domain 2 showed that these participants had a less positive opinion of their practice ability in applying "appropriate behaviour management strategies" as it had an overall mean score of 3.87 (SD = 0.71) than "create rapport with children" (M = 4.11, SD = .64). Just as in sub-domain 1, the employers had the least positive attitude towards all items here, in which the "creation of a secure learning environment" was typically viewed less positively (M = 3.5, SD = 1.12) than graduates (M =4.5, SD = 0.5).

In sub-domain 3 (see Table O4), the participants had a slightly negative view on the EC ITE students' capabilities in recording and reporting on the children's performance externally; however, the graduates and academics had a little higher positive perception of this than the employers and 4th-year students. Three stakeholder groups had a less positive attitude towards these students who can "select and apply appropriate comments and feedback to promote children's learning", but graduates had the highest opinion on this capability, with the mean score was 4.13 (SD = .33).

5.2.2.2.3 *Attitudes towards professional engagement (domain 3).*

Table O5 illustrates that the Chinese participants had a typically positive, although slightly varying, view among the four groups on the EC ITE students' professional

engagement capabilities (M = 4.05, SD = .69), with the academics demonstrating a less positive view of this domain.

5.2.2.3   Support provided for students (Section C).

Table P1 indicates that the Chinese participants generally held positive views (M = 4.24, SD = .81) that the EC ITE course provided its students with sufficient support to complete their studies. The academics and employers had a highly positive opinion that the course offered "appropriate instruction and opportunities" for the students to practice. Particularly, employers had the highest positive view on the course that had provided many chances for students to apply theoretical knowledge (M = 4.75, SD = .43) among the four groups. Even so, the 4th-year students demonstrated less positive attitude on the course that had offered "appropriate instruction, suggestions and feedback" (M = 3.82, SD = 1.17) and many opportunities to practice "theoretical knowledge and understandings" (M = 3.87, SD = 1.18).

Table P2 suggests that participants had a positive view on the outcomes of the EC ITE course. They had a positive view on the students who could develop theoretical knowledge for teaching in real classrooms. Particularly, graduates and employers rated relatively higher scores. Furthermore, these two groups also had a highly positive opinion that this course had prepared students to be classroom-ready teachers, but 4th-year students and academics had a less positive view that the students had been "effectively prepared to teach in real classrooms".

5.2.2.4   Open-ended responses (Section D).

Only the 4th-year students from the course responded to the open-ended section D: 58 statements were collected in the Chinese context, other groups, however, did not

contribute. These responses were summarised and categorised systematically into ten

suggestions, based on the frequency of the comments. The data in Table 5.3 indicates

that the students were particularly concerned with artistic skills training and PE

placements.

Table 5.3

YNNU 4th-year student participants' comments on the EC ITE (frequency and
percentage)

Rank	Item	N	R	%
1	More opportunities for real-classroom placements		47	81
2	More varieties of artistic skills training		39	67
3	More opportunities for classroom observation		38	66
4	Specific instructions for individual artistic skills practice		32	55
5	More opportunities for artistic skills training		32	55
6	More practical units (e.g., a unique package of *seven units for five areas*) to practise content knowledge and pedagogical skills	58	27	47
7	Academics should provide state-of-the-art knowledge aligned with the dynamic needs of the profession		22	38
8	More studios allowing individuals to practise artistic skills after class		18	31
9	More teaching and learning opportunities in the university-based micro-teaching		16	28
10	More information regarding teaching and classroom management from kindergarten teachers		13	22

Note. N = the number of participants who filled out section D; R= the number of participants who
mentioned the relevant items.

5.2.2.5 Dispositions and personal qualities of an early childhood teacher (Section E).

Appendix Q illustrates the Chinese participants' perceptions of the professional

dispositions or personal characteristics an EC teacher should possess. The data

indicated all participants believed that "patient", "accountable", "accessible", and

"positive" were crucial, while "humble" was regarded as insignificant. There was a small variance among different stakeholder groups on the importance of "compassionate" and "positive". Additional character traits, for example, "loving" and "[good and effective] communication skills," were added by the 4th-year students, and "social responsibility" was added by the employers.

5.2.3   Summary of results from the questionnaires

The similarities and comparison/differences between the perceptions from two courses are presented in summary in Table 5.4, as well as, the demographic information of these participants. The significance of comparison will be discussed in *Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusion*. Table 5.4 compares five components that were in-line with the items of the questionnaire.

Table 5.4

Comparison of the participants' perceptions of the EC ITE courses in Australia and China

	UTAS	YNNU
1. Demographic information—those responding to the questionnaire		
Similarity	Most EC students were Year 12 graduates from the two courses.	
	Most academics and employers of EC were female from both countries.	
	Most academics and employers had earned a higher education qualification.	
Differences	Several EC students at UTAS were mature students.	All EC students at YNNU were Year 12 graduates.
	All academics were holders of higher degrees, including master's degrees and/or PhD.	One academic had a master's degree, one was holder of PhD, and two had bachelor's degrees.
2. The perceptions of the EC ITE students' achievement		
Similarity	Participants from both countries had a positive view of the current courses' outcomes and students' achievements.	
	Graduates of the courses in both countries had a relatively higher positive opinion of the range of capabilities that EC students were equipped with than the other three stakeholder groups.	

	UTAS	YNNU
	Both the Australian and Chinese academics groups' somewhat positive opinions were located at "neutral" within the spread of the stakeholder groups.	
Comparison /differences	Overall, Australian participants had a more positive view than those from China. Particularly, Australian participants were positive that the EC students had sufficient capabilities across professional knowledge, practice, and engagement to become knowledgeable and skilled EC teachers.	
	The Australian employers of the EC ITE courses were more satisfied with how the formal training and education afforded its students' broad professional skills.	
	The Australian employers held somewhat higher positive opinions of the students' professional capabilities than the Chinese employers.	
3. The perception of the supports or assistance provided by the EC ITE courses		
Similarity	4th-year students had somewhat less positive views than those of the academics and employers in both countries.	
Comparison /differences	The Chinese participants had a relatively higher positive view than the Australian ones.	
4. Comments given provided suggestions and satisfaction levels with the EC ITE courses		
Similarity	Students from the two courses generally asked for more PE placement opportunities in classroom contexts.	
Comparison /differences	A few Australian participants suggested the EC ITE course should be more EC focused. Chinese students were more concerned about the artistic skill training.	
5. The perceptions of an EC teachers' ideal professional disposition and character		
Similarity	"Patient" and "positive" had a high frequency and "humble" had a relatively lower response in both countries.	
Comparison /differences	"Accountable" and "accessible" had a relatively higher response from Chinese participants than Australian ones. However, Australian participants believed "caring" was more crucial than the Chinese responses.	

5.3   Results From the Semi-structured Interviews

As presented in the *Chapter 3: Methodology*, the semi-structured interview was

employed to capture and examine: (i) the participants' in-depth perceptions of how the

course enabled EC ITE students to become knowledgeable and skilled teachers (this

information was synthesised and in line with the document analysis and both the

quantitative and the qualitative data from the questionnaires); and (ii) the four

stakeholder groups' perspectives of how the courses might be developed to better meet the needs of the profession.

The semi-structured interview was comprised of the content knowledge delivery and PE placement which aligned with the data sought from the document analysis and perceptions of the current implementation of the EC ITE courses. Part 1 investigated: (i) course structure; (ii) content of the course; (iii) delivery mode including blended learning and tutorials; and (iv) assessment, comprised of tasks and approach. Part 2 covered: (i) the arrangement and allocation of the different PE placements; and (ii) supervision and assessment.

5.3.1   Case Study 1: Australia

The EC ITE course at UTAS offers a mix of theory and professional experience to prepare its students with the professional skills to meet the expectations and requirements of the workforce. Section 5.3.1 (page 202) presents interview data which are divided into two parts—content knowledge and PE.

Part 1 Content knowledge

Four components constituted this part of the semi-structured interview, which focused on content knowledge delivery.

5.3.1.1   Course structure.

All Australian participants were satisfied with how the UTAS EC ITE course integrated theory and practice to meet students with different needs. A 4th-year student believed the current arrangement ensured that "I could undertake a quality placement and reduce my anxiety because of my mastery of the theories" (IAF4). Another stated

that "some things from the practice could be then identified and understood in certain units" (IAF1), while a graduate added that "it made me a knowledgeable person regarding theory learning and teaching practice" (IAG1).

Fourth-year students and graduates commented that this course structure was "coordinated and coherent" (IAF1, IAF4, IAG1) with a "step-by-step" (IAF2). IAF1 added "those units were arranged … not too easy and not too hard … so that we could learn gradually". This sentiment was supported by graduates such as IAG1, who also mentioned that the course allowed her to follow her "own learning rhythm to accommodate my family, study, and work when I had a full-time job". IAG4 indicated "all matters of teaching and learning were mixed well according to the expectations of this practical profession".

The academics provided their opinions that the course purposely designed to enable this confidence, such as, "we built each unit gradually and structured it logically", IAA1 said "the students must complete the relevant prerequisites before they could take a progressive unit". IAA2 noted "it was a well-structured and well-designed course. It was a systematic program, which the students took from introduction to advanced level progressively towards the theory, with suitable placements allowing for content application". The Australian employers also were positive. A typical comment was offered by IAE1:

> I thought this was a great training for the students, as it provided them with a good combination of content and practice. For example, the behaviour management unit was allocated after the first placement, when people went back to campus with some information that they had absorbed from the classroom, from which they could better understand what they had learned.

Participants in Australia generally were satisfied the coherent and structured course help students completing this EC preparation successfully.

5.3.1.2 Content of the course.

The Australian participants had three main concerns about the EC ITE course content's impact on the students' professional capacity: (i) allocation of the ECEC focus units; (ii) capability in practising teaching; and (iii) capability in integrating arts in curriculum activities. The collected data does not present employers' perceptions of all the factors discussed in Section 5.3.1.2 (page 204) since they did not directly engage in the teaching and learning process of knowledge delivery.

5.3.1.2.1 *Perceptions of the arrangement of the early childhood education and care focus units.*

One-third of the participants from three groups had just a marginally positive view that the course taught adequate theories on the education of younger children.

A 4th-year student commented "some examples or cases regarding teaching practice were from the primary teacher education context that the lectures offered, which hardly connected to younger children's care and education" (IAF2). Graduate IAG1 reinforced this view:

> I found many units were not for younger child education, but children from kindergarten or lower primary, grade two, for example. Further, limited content or practice was about teaching children to spell, read, and similar, and few teaching skills for younger children were taught.

Academic IAA3 had a similar concern "there was a small group of EC focus units and some content relating to older children rather than younger children". IAA1 highlighted that "lectures were the same for all students enrolled in this Faculty and

studying a wide age range of children, but particular tutorials were provided for EC students with course-specific considerations and early childhood curricula". Students and academics were somewhat worried about the limited units focused on education for young children, though tutorials were specific for EC students.

5.3.1.2.2   *Perceptions of students' capability in teaching practice.*

The participants held positive opinions that the EC ITE students had a solid knowledge base, but they did not believe they could practice these principles in classrooms. Theories of positive behaviour management and psychology and understanding and applying the EC curricula were discussed and emphasised in particular by the participants.

The 4th-year students believed that they had sound theory, for example, IAF1said "I did well in some units, for example, behaviour management, both written assignments and tutorial tasks. Completion of some assignments required referencing some essential documents, including EC curricula. Usually, I incorporated these principles into my teaching plan". IAF4 noted "I went through a great learning process at university. I shared my philosophy about behaviour management and how to create a positive learning environment for children with others in tutorials". The graduates' views on what they had learnt were similar. IAG2 said "I reviewed what I had done while I was on campus, as I achieved a considerable amount in this course". And IAG3 said "the UTAS course helped me develop my understanding in a range of areas regarding childhood education theoretically".

But IAF1 did not think they could put that content into practice "it was completely the opposite. I could not manage children with disruptive behaviour with an appropriate strategy", echoing IAF2, who recalled "I thought I could discipline children while with

them, but events did not unfold as I would have wanted". Graduates also worried about how to apply these theories in the ECEC sites. IAG3 offered an example:

> I brought my own theory of psychology into practice in my current work. Still, I could not handle what I thought were somewhat strange issues. I did not know what was wrong with certain children sometimes until my colleagues gave me some hints, and I adopted appropriate methods to correct my behaviour and manage the children. Knowing and understanding every child's difference challenged me all the time. Perhaps, theoretically, I recognised what the crux of the matter was, and I knew in theory how to handle it, but in practice, it was another thing.

IAF3 agreed with IAG3, and worried that "these so-called well-designed plans were barely applied in real classrooms". IAF4 had a similar concern, noting that "some assignments or projects I did well on campus, but I failed to use them in my teaching plan in the PE placements". The graduates had similar experiences of "a lack of working and learning experiences with children" (IAG2). One comment from graduate IAG1 summarised these issues:

> I applied several of my assignments from UTAS in practice with positive feedback. Such tasks were well-integrated expectations of the EC curriculum, but, in the classroom, I failed. I supposed these assignments only demonstrated that I had a good understanding of the theories and content of the curriculum, but my plans were impractical to some extent. The root of these ill-designed plans was perhaps a lack of consideration for the needs of children.

The academics asserted that the units provided students not only theoretical knowledge but also the necessary practice:

> The [Planning for Positive Behaviour] unit was particularly aimed at helping our students understand how to select supportive strategies to address the different needs of individuals and develop a positive learning

environment for children. Both the tutors and I provided them with various opportunities for discussion and practice in given environments where they could apply their philosophy, with comments to promote their abilities to adopt appropriate strategies to address the different needs of children, such as discipline responses for disruptive student behaviour, and help them develop a secure learning environment and supportive climate for children. (IAA1)

Academic IAA2 explained "some skills can only be formulated by cumulating rich experiences over time", she still "worried about students' capabilities in integrating these principles from EC curricula into lesson plans that could work for the children".

The employers had mixed views of students' capabilities in selecting and applying appropriate strategies for children with different needs, across three topics: (i) content knowledge; (ii) practice; and (iii) understanding of children.

For example, "those students had developed a strong understanding of positive behaviour management", said IAE1, while IAE2 noted "I found they understood how to deal with those problems [discipline children's behaviour] theoretically". These statements were very much in-line with employer IAE3 "many students of the course could demonstrate theories in psychology regarding child development clearly, and well understanding of the EC curricula". However, in terms of application in classrooms, the employers had a somewhat negative view. According to IAE1 "It was difficult for EC students to apply their philosophy in real-classroom contexts. They could not get on top of behaviour management, and that made them feel stressed about teaching". IAE2 agreed, observing "many students often failed to teach children as they could not adopt suitable strategies to develop a supportive learning environment based on the needs of children. They often did not do well when they got into the real

situation", while IAE3 stated that "when they met a real case, many found it difficult to link reality with their understanding".

Employers reported that the students "had knowledge about children but did not comprehend real children" (IAE2), suggesting that students of the course "needed more time to play with, observe, and get to know children. For this, the course should offer more experiences for students in real classrooms so they can conduct teaching in a better learning environment". IAE3 supported IAE2, saying "by observing and studying the way children behave to reinforce students' mastery of course content, they were able to deduce what was going on in the children's actions. It was necessary for the students to spend substantial time observing and playing with children. Students would learn more about psychology, integrating the various theory cases from the real classroom".

Fourth-year students and graduates similarly declared they required more time in real ECEC contexts to observe and understand children (IAF1, IAF2, IAF3, IAG2, IAG3). "Observing and learning about children was essential for us [as EC teachers]" (IAG3) said "needed for good teaching" (IAF1), and essential "to undertake proper planning and apply it better" (IAF3).

Although academics believed this course provided students with both knowledge and chances for content application, students and employers expected more time offered for these students to work with children.

Most Australian participants had a positive view that arts education in the current EC ITE course supported students to integrate arts strategies into literacy and numeracy curriculum teaching.

IAF1 (4th-year student) reported "we learned how to mix certain art forms into our curriculum activities, in which I guided children to improve their understanding in ways that connected to their own world". IAF3 noted "we got some fresh teaching concepts and new elements that could be added to curriculum activities that helped me better conduct numeracy teaching". Graduates reinforced this view. IAG2 offered, for example, "I incorporated music into my numeracy teaching, where I was singing simple tunes, and the children followed and repeated what I sang. Children learned numeracy skills in such an enjoyable and comfortable environment".

This course certainly encouraged students out more element into teaching activities, for example, IAA1 stated "literacy and numeracy teaching currently tend to be aided by the integration of music or visual arts".

An opinion from the employers was in-line with IAE1, saying "these students could well incorporate appropriate arts in their daily activities and curriculum teachings".

A few participants among the four stakeholder groups suggested mastery of certain artistic skills or instruments would strengthen EC teachers' confidence in their teaching (IAF2, IAF4, IAG1, IAG4, IAA3, IAE2). For example, "the mastery of a certain instrument might promote their [students'] confidence in teaching. To some degree, their singing and dancing were good enough for EC teachers to conduct some

curriculum activities" (IAE2). Graduate IAG1 also suggested "people with various skills in arts, we could share and teach each other in a workshop … which would benefit my teaching … and confidence … when facing children".

The Australian participants noted that the use of arts incorporated into literacy and numeracy teaching was especially important as, in the role of an EC teacher, helping children enjoy the class and have fun was essential. They also believed that mastery of artistic skills would strengthen these EC students' confidence in their teaching.

5.3.1.3 Delivery mode (blended learning).

Section 5.3.1.3 presents the participants' perceptions of the blended learning approach. Two topics: (i) interaction; and (ii) coherence were discussed.

5.3.1.3.1 *Perceptions of interaction in the delivery mode.*

The participants had a mixed view of the blended learning delivery mode in terms of the interaction provided during the students' learning and teaching. Most participants had a highly positive view of the online delivery of lectures for "flexibility and convenience" (IAF3) and "comfort" (IAG1). For tutorials, direct and face-to-face communication was viewed most positively (IAF1, IAF2, IAF3, IAF4, IAG1, IAG4, IAA3). A 4th-year student commented "taking the face-to-face tutorial gave us a good opportunity to share ideas and experiences informally but directly, and prompt feedback and responses were obtained efficiently" (IAF1). IAF3 supported this statement, saying that "the tutorials were more interactive activities to share ideas and hands-on experiences in a face-to-face environment".

Online learning was convenient for more students to be engaged with learning. Several challenges hindered their communication, such as delayed responses. Students had

somewhat negative opinions regarding the delayed and infrequent communication responses in the online format. Online learning was convenient for more students to be engaged into learning. Several challenges hindered their communication, such as delayed responses. For example, IAF1 reported that "I was strongly encouraged to post my ideas on the discussion board, but I was so upset because I rarely received the answers that I was looking for and no one responded in time". This was reinforced by IAF2, who said that "I spent much time typing but received only a few responses or delayed answers".

Graduates did have a few positive opinions of the course's online discussion, as offered by IAG1 and IAG4. "The online tutorials forced me to do some research to post some deliberated, interesting questions and reasonable, quality comments for others" (IAG1). IAG4 added "online tutorials gave me a chance to search and explore more information to support what I had discussed, rather than people discussing something in the classroom with little evidence, mainly based on individual experiences".

Academic IAA3 was concerned about the effectiveness of tutorial interactions in the online approach "some activities were hard to demonstrate on the website, such as handy teaching materials for children. I could present various resources and teaching artefacts with necessary explanations and share my stories with the students". She experienced challenges with students' engagement with online learning "a number of students did not turn up to online tutorials or did not engage with discussion boards".

Given the convenience and interaction, advantages and limitations of blended learning, several students suggested that this course should provide two tutorial patterns for the students to choose from (IAF2, IAF3, IAG1, IAG3, IAG4). IAF3 recommended that

"face-to-face tutorials should be provided for every unit, so we could decide to undertake either online or face-to-face tutorials".

5.3.1.3.2   *Perceptions of the coherence of tasks between tutorials and lectures.*

Participants expressed a positive view that the unity and coherence between the tutorials and lectures supported the students practically in applying the content knowledge that they learned. A 4th-year student (IAF3) reported how practically-centred tutorial tasks were aligned with the lectures "in the tutorial, there was a wide range of teaching and learning activities to help us to create and formulate individual understandings through discussions, role play, oral presentation, and so on".

The graduates typically made similar remarks, such as, "the lectures were more theoretical, but there were lots of activities in the tutorials. I was sure that both would contribute to the reinforcement of the theory and the practical capabilities shaped during the course" (IAG2). Academic, IAA1 emphasised the course made a coherence between lectures and tutorials:

> The tutorial was so incredibly important in supporting the students to
> unpack theories and put them into practice. Offering a wide diversity of
> tasks allowed students to develop their own understanding or philosophy
> through cooperative learning and sharing opinions, which then helped
> with their assessment tasks. Such these tutorial activities were fully in-
> line with my lectures.

Participants were satisfied the current course provided lectures with necessary tutorials were sound for students to develop their capabilities in both content and practice. The lectures offered foundational content and guidance, and the tutorials provided students with practice opportunities.

5.3.1.4   Assessment of content knowledge.

Three issues regarding the assessment of the course's units for building students'
professional capability were concerns of the three stakeholder groups: (i) the coherence
of the assessment tasks; (ii) the descriptions and requirements of the assessment tasks;
and (iii) the adoption of the assessment approach for the tasks. Although these
concerns did not apply to the employer group since they did not engage in the learning
and teaching processes, their perceptions of the outcomes of EC ITE students were
captured and are presented at the end of this section.

5.3.1.4.1   *Perceptions of the coherence of the assessment tasks.*

The majority of the participants had a positive attitudes towards the assessment and
believed students' understanding could be constructed by completing every required
assignment of the EC ITE course since "all tasks in a unit were presented as a whole,
rather than fragmented" (IAF2), in order to "develop my theoretical understanding
gradually" (IAG2). Fourth-year student IAF3 detailed these unit tasks:

> I wrote down what I learned from the lectures, tutorials, and research,
> which allowed me to seek and identify valid references to support my
> statements. … the first assignment required much reading to know and
> understand the relevant theories … to then identify what … to consider
> and explore, while the second made me apply my opinions in a certain
> prescribed situation.

Graduate IAG3 further explained the relationship between the two tasks in a unit "the
first assignment emphasised content learning. The second was more practical,
investigating and explaining several issues to reinforce and clarify my understandings
of certain content". Academic IAA3 clarified the theory behind the allocation these
assessment tasks:

> All assessment tasks were incorporated as-a-whole and the second built on the first. The two assignments were coherent enough that the students could develop their learning and teaching philosophy simultaneously. All tasks allowed the students to formulate their understanding by integrating theory and practice.

Students were satisfied with the coherent assessment tasks in a unit. Because this might help students develop their understanding by completion of every task.

5.3.1.4.2 *Perceptions of the descriptions and requirements of the assessment tasks.*

Three stakeholder groups had a highly positive view of the clear descriptions offered for each assignment, which were also mapped against their core assessment instrument, the Graduate Teacher Standards (AITSL, 2011)*,* for students to develop a professional capability that met the expectations of the workforce.

The 4th-year students had a positive view of the specific task descriptions provided for successful assessment completion, as which were "recipe" (IAF4). IAF1 stated "completing the assignments step by step using the detailed descriptions … guided me on what mattered and what I needed to pay attention to". Graduate IAG2 noted "keeping the descriptions in my mind allowed me to learn from the lectures and tutorials as intended".

This point of view was agreed by nearly all graduates, however, one graduate, IAG4, had a somewhat negative view of the information provided in assessment tasks due to a lack of supplementary case studies "several assignments were quite hard to understand, offering samples would be better".

IAF2 noted that "the aims of each task were mapped to specific focus areas of teacher standards, so I could self-assess my capability during the assignment against the requirements of the profession". IAF4 added "I was so convinced that I would be a qualified graduate teacher when I completed all the units and PE [placements] because of the expectations of the teacher standards that these tasks referred to".

Academics believed that the descriptions of the assessment tasks were mapped to the professional standards, and could support students to create their understanding:

> The descriptions of each assessment task were explained, with which the students could complete a good assignment independently. What they learned, the tasks, and the teacher standards of the course had been cross-referenced to define the outline of each unit so that the students could understand and assess this by themselves and to make them more confidence. (IAA1)

Students and academics believed that specific descriptions of assessments mapped against the Graduate Teacher Standards (AITSL, 2011) not only helped completing their assessment tasks, but also strengthening their confidence in professional capabilities development.

5.3.1.4.3   *Perceptions of the assessment approach.*

Three of the stakeholder groups had a positive view of the assessment approach this course adopted in terms of how it helped students develop their understanding of the content and evaluated the achievements of the EC ITE students. The employer group, however, had mixed opinions. Feedback was cited as an essential element of the assessment approach to help students formulate their understanding, although this did not improve their practical skills directly (IAE2, IAE3).

Fourth-year students and graduates typically had a highly positive view that the feedback shaped their capabilities in professional knowledge "in addition to receiving formal feedback on a particular piece of work, several tips and suggestions from the tutorials were useful in completing the tasks, as well as for developing my teaching philosophy" (IAF2). Graduate IAG1 agreed, highlighting the point that "my teaching and learning philosophy was formulated through the instruction of the lecturer and timely feedback from each task". IAA2 (academic) explained the course's mixed assessment approach:

> The mixture of the formative and summative measurements, with timely feedback to inform them how to improve their work, helped the students comprehend how and what they understood about certain topics. The summative result then to demonstrate their overall learning performance.

IAA3 noted "most students had a strong desire to receive feedback on their first task just to improve the second one and were only concerned about the summative result of the second task". Academics emphasised the importance of the tutorials in the completion of the assessment task in addition to providing feedback for each assignment:

> It was probable that the more times the students engaged in the tutorial, the higher the score they would obtain. Sometimes people did not engage in the tutorial at all. Sometimes they succeeded without tutorial assistance, but often they did not. They failed on this, and they failed the unit. (IAA3)

Providing proper feedback for students to complete each assignment was well received by students, and tutorials were also good chances for their learning.

Part 2 professional experience placement

This section describes the participants' perceptions of the following two concerns: PE placement arrangement and allocation of the different sections in this course, namely, placement sites; and supervision and assessment in terms of four components: (i) assessment tasks; (ii) assessment instruments; (iii) instruction and assessment; and (iv) a communication session. In addition, one notable challenge emerged from the PE placement that is reported at the end of this part.

5.3.1.5   Arrangement of professional experience placement (placement sites).

Section 5.3.1.5 discusses participants' opinions on the arrangement of placement sites in PE placements.

All participant groups were quite satisfied with the allocation of the placements and the diverse range of ECEC contexts, which helped students develop their professional skills through work with children aged from birth to eight years. For example, 4th-year student IAF2 said that "this arrangement was good for me to become familiar with different educational environments with children from birth to age eight". This was reinforced by graduates like IAG4, who said "the separate practice sites with different aged children were great. I could learn about children of different ages with classroom teachers in early childhood centres, kindergartens, or school sites".

Academic IAA2 noted a common understanding among her colleagues "Our students worked with a diversity of age groups, and the course was designed to enable them to learn how to conduct appropriate lessons for children with specific physical, mental development, and individual needs". The employers also supported this view. IAE2

indicated "placing students in separate practice sites was a valuable chance for them to understand the different needs of children within a range of ages, especially younger kids".

The participants were satisfied the EC students were assigned to the variety PE sites to well understand children of different ages. As well as this was fully in-line with the regulatory requirement for this course.

5.3.1.6   Supervision and assessment.

Four topics and one challenge were discussed by participants regarding the supervision and assessment of students during their PE placements.

5.3.1.6.1   *Perceptions of the professional experience placement assessment tasks.*

All Australian participants were satisfied with the clear requirements of each PE placement and easy-to-follow descriptions of the weekly tasks, which were given to allow students to develop their professional skills within a range of ECEC contexts and to complete their PE placements with carefully chosen children and classroom teachers. Better preparation, afforded by the clear task descriptions, was a benefit highlighted by the 4th-year students and graduates because "good" (IAF2), "solid" (IAF3) preparation (supported by IAG1 and IAG4) based on "the prescribed information" (IAF2) that was "obtained before beginning my practicum" (IAG2) which reported "what tasks I should complete and what requirements I needed to meet". Therefore "I was never confused or lost when I was in the classroom and conducting curriculum teaching" (IAF3), because of these descriptions. IAF1, IAF4, IAG1, and IAG3 reinforced this statement.

Academic IAA2 pointed out that "all information regarding the PE was on the website, and the students could access this to understand what they should do and how they should do it". Employers also expressed satisfaction with the provision of the explicit descriptions of each assessment task provided for "guiding colleagues who supervised and assessed the students' performance. It was particularly helpful in articulating the cooperation between students and my teachers by identifying each of their responsibilities" (IAE1).

Given the information on the website, the participants were satisfied how the students would prepare for the PE independently and in advance. Both classroom teachers and students could understand their responsibilities in the PE.

5.3.1.6.2 *Perceptions of the assessment instruments.*

The same *Assessment Form*, which referenced the Graduate Teacher Standards (AITSL, 2011), was applied to all four blocks of the PE placements to allow classroom teachers to "supervise and assess and report on" the students' performance. The participants generally had a positive view of the use of this instrument to measure student performance.

The 4th-year students and graduates had a similarly positive view of using the professional standards to assess their capabilities and were convinced they would be "competent" (IAF2), and "classroom-ready" (IAG3) teachers as their performance "was supervised and assessed fully against the professional standards" (IAG2). These views were reinforced by IAF3, IAG, and IAG4.

The academics were confident that this course could prepare students to be qualified graduates, saying:

> Using the Graduate Teacher Standards to assess our students' teaching practice in schools was in line with AITSL and ACECQA. If a student was successful in completing the PE placement, we believed that their capabilities had achieved the national standards across professional knowledge, professional practice, and professional engagement. (IAA2)

The employers had a positive view overall of the PE assessment instrument, although with one concern that the standards were high as they were based on the national requirements and that some students' practical experiences in general might indicate that several focus areas in the national standard were difficult to attain (IAE2, IAE3).

> Some items from the professional standards were so rigorous that only a few students were successful. My experienced teachers often helped the students develop quality teachings for the children using the standards. Sometimes, however, we had to negotiate or accommodate the students' performance to what the standards required in order to ensure the students could complete their practice successfully. (IAE1)

Fourth-year student IAF2 believed they could "go through all of the required tasks with help from the classroom teachers and complete all the required tasks by referring to the professional standards". IAF1, IAF3, IAG2, and IAG3 agreed. The participants had a positive view that the course employed the Graduate Teacher Standards for the PE's assessment instrument, but a few employers express some requirements from this Standards were too difficult for students to obtain in a short time.

5.3.1.6.3 *Perceptions of professional experience placement instruction and assessment.*

All 4th-year students and graduates stated that they could implement and apply their understanding of the content knowledge and required tasks from the *Expectation Sheet* thanks to the range of different ECEC contexts and appropriate instruction and feedback from experienced classroom teachers.

Timely, positive instruction was emphasised by 4th-year students and graduates. For example, IAF3 said that "the classroom teachers provided me with much appropriate instruction and prompt feedback, which supported me in practising what I had learned". Graduate IAG3 added "timely feedback was essential for my placements, including feedback on the lesson plan design and teaching". Fourth-year student IAF2 gave a typical example of PE instruction:

> I consulted with the supportive teacher for my lesson plans, teaching demonstrations, and how to adopt appropriate strategies for children with different needs to ensure that the children could acquire the intended learning outcomes. We also did talk about lots of things that had happened in or out of the classroom.

A graduate, IAG4 also provided a good example of the relationship between students and the classroom teachers:

> My classroom teacher and I created a good circle of learning and reflecting to support my quality placement. Namely, I presented a prepared lesson plan to my classroom teacher for feedback at the commencement of my teaching, I prepared a teaching curriculum using her feedback, and then she observed and recorded my performance.

The academics had a positive view of the PE supervision given by classroom teachers. IAA1 stated "the most important contribution was the provision of an appropriate

mentor and quality feedback from the school". IAA3 reinforced this opinion saying "these experienced classroom teachers provided incredible feedback and appropriate guidance for our students through alternative, indirect means".

All employers were confident that their colleagues could provide timely and instructive feedback for their supervised students and help them successfully complete the placements. IAE1 said:

> Our teachers could share their experiences of teaching and management, like how to discipline children in an appropriate way, and offered sound feedback and appropriate suggestions for their supervised students in order to ensure that these students went through the PE successfully.

IAE2 agreed "our teachers and I provided the students with practical feedback on their teaching, referring to the assessment form that they carried with them".

All 4th-year students and graduates believed that it was somewhat unnecessary to maintain contact with the university while undertaking PE placements because most suggestions and instructions came from the classroom teachers with whom they were working. Two typical comments were given by a 4th-year student and a graduate:

> I spent most of the time with my classroom teachers while conducting teaching practice, and they knew what I did so they could give me useful instructions and feedback based on my performance and real needs. I rarely contacted my university academics or lecturers, or the educators from the PE office (IAF2);

and:

> I needed to work with them [classroom teachers], know how they work, and understand the children in real situations by myself, rather than from what I heard at university. I did not contact the university during the teaching practice for support at all. (IAG2)

Academic IAA2 expressed a similar opinion to the students "our students enjoyed their practice with their classroom teachers. Certainly, I was happy to hear and share their experiences by email or phone if they wanted".

The practical feedback provided for EC students could help them better complete the PE, and they rarely contact university lecturers for suggestion of teachings in classrooms.

5.3.1.6.4   *Perceptions of the communication sessions.*

Coordinators and university-based supervisors of the course were also important in the students' successful completion of their PE placement. A communication session allocated halfway through each teaching placement provided students with an important opportunity to learn from peers and other experts (e.g., classroom teachers, EC educators). Students brought and shared new principles to this session, describing hands-on experience, and providing tried-and-tested lessons to help other students successfully complete the remaining placements. All students undertaking the same block of PE were strongly recommended to attend either online or in person. All participants had a positive view of this interaction for sharing experience and opinions. Fourth-year student IAF4 provided a typical comment:

> The communication session developed my teaching capabilities and skills through the sharing of experiences that had happened in a range of educational environments. I learned a lot from others on many of the topics we discussed.

The graduates supported this view. IAG1 described the session as "a lovely chance to learn from others' experiences". Academic IAA3 said "this session provided the students with a fantastic opportunity to explore information from various people from with different perspectives so that they could self-reflect on their teaching" (IAA3).

The communication session in the middle of the PE (which students could share different challenges they encountered in classrooms that might be figured-out in these discussions) obtained a positive view from participants generally.

5.3.1.6.5 *One challenge.*

One challenge of the PE emerged from the interview data, namely, professional engagement with the children's parents, which was mentioned by IAF1, IAF2, IAF4, IAG1, IAG3, IAE1, and IAE2. The EC ITE students' capacity to establish sound relationships with parents elicited a mixed opinion from the four stakeholder groups. Fourth-year students and graduates noted it was hard for them due to a lack of practical and communication skills. IAF2 commented "theoretically, I knew how to have a good conversation with the parents and how to talk about their child's performance with them, but in practice, I failed. I could not express what I was thinking". IAG3 added "usually, my preparation allowed me to inform the parents about their child's performance, but I could not respond to their questions promptly in an appropriate way or develop an effective conversion between us".

In contrast, academics challenged the students' statements:

> Our students worked very hard and really well. I thought they were able to develop a good relationship between themselves and the parents to discuss the children's activities in an appropriate way. Because we provided the students with various chances to transit their knowledge to practice in a supportive learning environment, including communication skills. They probably underestimated their own ability in building relationships with the parents. (IAA1)

Employers agreed somewhat with the academics on this issue, rather than the students, whose reported issues they believe stemmed from a lack of confidence (IAE1, IAE2).

"I observed that students could report their children's work in the classroom well to parents or other extended experts, although they often had less confidence in these communications" (IAE2).

Fourth-year students and graduates felt they did not have enough capabilities in communicating with children's parents, but academics and employers believed their professional capability had been good enough. The EC students should be given much more time to work with parents in the classroom.

5.3.2   Case Study 2: China

The EC ITE course at YNNU offered a coherent and consistent course that equipped students with the skills to become knowledgeable and effective kindergarten teachers after four years of full-time study. For consistency with Case Study 1 from Australia, the data are presented in two parts with six components. Part 1 comprised: (i) the course structure; (ii) the content of the course; (iii) the delivery mode; and (iv) the assessment. Part 2 covered: (i) the arrangement and allocation of the different PE placements; and (ii) supervision and assessment.

Part 1 Content knowledge

The four components constituting this section are focused on content knowledge delivery.

5.3.2.1   Course structure.

The provision of integrated and structured content knowledge occurs through a range of units spanning diverse areas that can be divided into two Fields, comprehensive and professional (see Section 4.4.2.1, page 166). Emphasis was on providing a consistent

vision of the quality delivery of theoretical knowledge that enabled students to become knowledgeable EC teachers with a professional disposition and specific artistic skills by the time they graduate from YNNU's EC ITE course.

Participants were satisfied with the current course structure, despite some mixed opinions regarding the arrangement of the various forms of PE placement, which were strongly associated with progress in terms of content knowledge delivery. Such comments included "the structured arrangement between content and PE benefited me in terms of fostering my understanding of knowledge and skills" (ICF1). "These various forms of placement were distributed over the various stages of the learning period, which was strongly consistent with the course's aim and conveyance of content knowledge" (ICA2).

Academics had a confidence that the structure of the current EC ITE provided "a sound opportunity for students to increase their familiarity with and explore their interests in the EC teachers' work in real classrooms" (ICA2). This opinion was supported by 4th-year students and graduates. For example: "before I dropped by the authentic children's educational sites offered by the course, I had no idea what a kindergarten was, such as, what curriculum activities children undertook" (ICF2); while during the kindergarten visit "some vivid examples showed me how to be a skilled EC teacher" (ICF3); and "I was watching children's behaviours and teacher's conduct and manners in the classroom" (ICG1).

Most participants had a positive attitude towards the relationship between content learning and skill practice as reinforcing each other. A 4th-year student gave a typical reply "the two-week kindergarten observation was a good chance to apply further what I had learned from the university. I brought back these opinions and resources to

support my content learning" (ICF3). And another stated "I had a clear aim in terms of conducting my theory learning from this course after the completion of my first kindergarten visit" (ICF2). These views were supported by the graduates, for example, ICG4 added "this knowledge guided me regarding what to observe in children and how which was the specific aim of the kindergarten observation". Academics stated that "several short-term real classroom PE opportunities were available early for students to explore what the teaching profession comprised and help them forge their understandings with a mix of content and their own experience" (ICA1). An employer, ICE1, indicated that "the kindergarten visit took place so early those students of the course could learn what knowledge and skills they should master, which was likely to trigger and promote their learning motivation".

Several 4th-year students had a mildly negative attitude towards the arrangement of units in the PEs. A comment from 4th-year student was:

> The course was somewhat of a mismatch between the theory and PE. Several units in relation to psychology, for example, were set quite early, some in the first semester of the second year, and might not be closely connected with PE placements in an appropriate way. When I was in the three-month real classroom placements … I did not remember what I had learned. (ICF4)

The academics provided a deeper insight regarding the arrangement:

> There was a challenge for the arrangement of course-specific units, as several units were designed by the university. The EC focus units were allocated when university-dominated units released, meaning that the arrangement of faculty-conducted units should reflect obedience to the university. Therefore, several units we had to rearrange. (ICA1)

One employer, ICE3, however, supported the 4th-year students' view of a "mismatch" and provided an explanation "the kindergarten observation was set so early that few students could apply their knowledge to practise well in real-classroom contexts".

After the completion of several forms of PE placement, attention was paid to the three-month real-classroom practicum where all participants reported students could conduct planned and agreed lessons. Reasons for this were provided by 4th-year students, such as, "I understood well how to design appropriate teaching that aligned with the EC curriculum by practising several well-designed plans in previous PEs" (ICF2), and "theory and pedagogical knowledge and necessary teaching strategies I had learned and mastered" (ICF3).

Graduate ICG3 similarly reported "I appreciated the three-month real-classroom placement scheduled in the final year, which was structured to test and practise my understanding of content knowledge and pedagogy with appropriate teaching strategies".

Academics believed "students had digested the relevant knowledge well and accomplished several different forms of PE in kindergartens or university. These students' capabilities in terms of designing and conducting appropriate curriculum teaching were sufficiently good for the real-classroom placement.

Participants were generally satisfied with the structure of this course, although several units or PE placements were preformed less well. Students and employers were concerned that a few PE activities mismatched the theory with the delivery.

5.3.2.2 Course content.

Most participants had positive views regarding the content delivery of the course. Three concerns were discussed regarding the professional capabilities of the EC students: (i) the integration of content knowledge and pedagogy in teaching practice; (ii) the incorporation of arts in curriculum activities; and (iii) the presentation of art skills. The group of employers did not engage fully on this issue; however, opinions from the other three stakeholder groups were obtained.

5.3.2.2.1 *Perceptions of students' capabilities in integrating content knowledge and pedagogy knowledge in practice.*

Participants had a somewhat positive view of students' capabilities in selecting appropriate teaching strategies. The 4th-year students highlighted the integration of content knowledge and EC curriculum in the unique package of units, saying "I understood how to design a prepared teaching plan linked to the five areas of the EC curriculum with appropriate pedagogy skills. Further, I accumulated more practical experience in both the design and practice of teaching plans" (ICF1).

Graduates underpinned this comment. ICG2 added "it [the unique package] produced more positive influences and benefits on my current work for curriculum activities … sound plans were created through group study … discussed and revised the plan together many times", and ICG3 "we were allowed to apply content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge in demonstrating teaching that aligned with the EC curriculum … after countless discussion".

Academics were confident that this unique package of units benefited students' professional practice. ICA3 said "Those units mainly concentrated on aiding students

to design teaching plans that integrate the EC curriculum with necessary pedagogies, such as, numeracy teaching aimed to support students to master the knowledge of numeracy and pedagogies linked to mathematical learning of the EC curriculum".

Most 4th-year students believed that "I knew the comprehensive content of the EC curriculum" (ICF1) and were "confident that I had a sound understanding of its content" (ICF2). Graduates had similar opinions. An employer commented that "they did well in presenting the content of the EC curriculum". However, ICF4 stated "I failed to conduct these well-prepared plans with the EC curriculum".

The students reported the potential reasons for this gap between knowledge and implementation "lack of understanding of the children's needs" (ICF2), "I scarcely applied those recommended educational suggestions in the well-designed plans and practised in actual curriculum activities" (ICF3). Graduates highlighted the value of "learning from practice" (ICG1, ICG3). ICG3 stated that "every week, I prepared three formal lessons … I learned actively and gradually came to understand the curriculum as repeated teaching plans and written applications that were strongly associated with those expectations of the EC curriculum substantial teaching experience". ICG1 reinforced this view and added that "the real classroom teaching was a great way to apply the EC curriculum, and repeating the design of teaching plans and applying them in the real contexts with full reference to the curriculum".

These views were supported by employers. ICE3 stated that "although at the beginning of students' work, they could not implement the curriculum well in their teaching, they gave sound teaching through ongoing teaching plans with written reference to the curriculum that they applied gradually".

Alternatively, academics had a somewhat positive view from other groups of students' capabilities in terms of practising the EC curriculum that the course provided:

> The course provided a special package of units for application of the curriculum, *seven units for five areas* and the micro-teaching projects that were used to cooperatively support students to design sound teaching plans with a sound understanding of the EC curriculum, integrating relevant theories and pedagogies. This curriculum was essential in our teaching. I offered more opportunities for them to practise. I did not think they could apply it sufficiently well during the course, but they would practise better once they were in the classroom. (ICA1)

The Chinese participants believed EC students of the course had a sound understanding of content but not practice, such as applying EC curriculum. For this concern, several students expected more time for them to work with children.

5.3.2.2.2 *Perception of students' capabilities in integrating arts in curriculum activities.*

Participants held a somewhat negative view of students' abilities in terms of integrating arts, content knowledge and pedagogies for practical work. Most 4th-year students and graduates were worried about their lack of pedagogical skills to conduct appropriate lessons. On integrating arts in arts education for children, ICF4 stated "I repeated the words of the song many times, but many children completely ignored me, I had mastered how to play the piano but lacked pedagogical skills". Several graduates had a similar experience. ICG1 indicated "I was still not confident that I had sufficient capabilities for my teaching in terms of mixing theoretical and pedagogical knowledge".

Fourth-year students also had a negative opinion about integrating the arts in a broad curriculum activity. ICF1 said "I did not think I could integrate arts well into

curriculum activities in other areas, such as numeracy". In contrast, graduate ICG4 said "I could incorporate limited artistic skills into various curricula teaching for my children … to add artistic skills to curriculum teaching, like literacy or science, because of pedagogical delivery". This opinion was supported by an academic ICA1 "we did deliver adequate pedagogies to mix arts instruments into curriculum teaching … relevant pedagogical knowledge connected with relevant art forms". And she followed up "as far as I observed, only a small minority of students were very concerned about the pedagogies", which was perhaps evidenced by the small number of opinions offered by either 4th-year students or graduates. For instance, only graduate, ICG3 stated this directly; "if I did not know how to use the art skills with appropriate pedagogical skills to support my teaching, then those capabilities could be regarded as rubbish".

Employers reported a slightly negative attitude towards the students' capabilities in applying pedagogical skills in their work. A typical comment was "students could present perfect artistic skills, like playing the piano beautifully, but they had difficulty making the children follow their instructions. Students were unable to apply artistic skills appropriately to support their teaching, neither in arts nor other areas" (ICE2).

The Chinese participants were worried about EC students who could not apply arts skills into art education or other areas. Academics and a few students noticed this might be from a lack of pedagogical skills.

5.3.2.2.3   *Perceptions of students' capabilities in presenting arts skills.*

Some 4th-year students and graduates believed that artistic skill training was somewhat more important than content knowledge learning in arts. For example, ICF3 said "playing a sophisticated work was considered solid evidence to demonstrate my

teaching capabilities". ICF4 agreed with this and believed "the support and help the classroom teacher provided during my placements were possibly due to the favourable impression she had of my artistic skills". Similarly, graduates found that "applying artistic skills must play the first role in kindergarten" (ICG2). Academics had an opposite view emphasising "our students who were going to become EC teachers, rather than professional dancers, singers, or pianists … were regarded as aids" (ICA1), which was strongly agreed upon by employers; "EC students' work was to teach children music, painting, or such arts rather than to become professional artists" (ICE3), though ICE1 noted "sometimes I highlighted the significance of arts capabilities for an EC teacher".

In this aspect some students held slightly negative views regarding the current skills training, including: (i) no instructions on how to implement the skills, such as, one-week of independent practice without handy instructions (ICF3); (ii) limited training time, like ICG3 said "playing piano was one of the compulsory units in arts education, lasting two semesters. I needed to continue practising, keeping my hand in even by the time the unit was completed"; and (iii) limited training content, including the "the various art forms" graduate ICG1 reported.

Academics argued that the current provision of artistic skills training was adequate for students to master foundational capabilities in the arts area. A typical comment was "the basic skills mastered from the course were sufficient to support their ongoing learning by themselves" (ICA1).

The employers also strongly agreed with the opinion of academics. ICE3 stated "I was pleased with … demonstrate artistic skills well … not proficient in certain art forms,

but the course had prepared students to continue learning deeply in various artistic skills through independent learning capability from work".

Chinese participants generally agreed that the significance of arts capabilities for an EC teacher, and most of them believed students of this course had mastered enough artistic skills for teaching children.

5.3.2.3 Delivery mode.

Students were predominantly taught using a face-to-face approach from the beginning of their formal schooling. As a result, participants very rarely discussed the impact of this approach on students' achievements.

5.3.2.4 Assessment of content knowledge.

The broad assessment tasks were developed to provide units with different aims and specific characteristics. Three assessment tasks regarding students' professional capability development were discussed by participants: (i) a final-term examination; (ii) essay assignment; and (iii) performance of artistic skills.

5.3.2.4.1 *Perceptions of the final-term examination.*

Participants had a slightly positive view that the final-term examination could support students to develop their professional capabilities.

Most 4th-year students and graduates held somewhat negative views that the final-term examination could help them develop an understanding of content knowledge for professional capability. A typical comment from a graduate was "the more content I remembered, the higher the score I attained. It hardly assessed whether I would apply this knowledge in practice because of rote learning" (ICG3).

Academics' opinion was more nuanced "many students spent one or two weeks studying and remembering as much of the unit contents as they could before sitting for an exam. Furthermore, they notably digested some knowledge by intensive memory" (ICA2).

5.3.2.4.2 *Perceptions of the essay assignment.*

Participants had a slightly positive view that the essay assignment could support students to develop their professional capabilities due to the comprehensive task descriptions.

The majority of 4th-year students and graduates argued that the preparation of the essay did not support students in developing their understanding or practical learning skills. Fourth-year student ICF2 stated that because "the general descriptions of the essay, it was not much of a challenge for me to complete it". ICF4 reinforced this restricted view of the learning "rewriting the opinions of others rather than demonstrating my own opinions. It could not help me create my teaching philosophy". Graduates strongly supported this negative opinion. ICG2 explained this issue with a typical example that was in arts education:

> I received a high score on an essay in a unit in arts education, but I had no knowledge of all the things relating to the matter of arts, as general topic, comprehensive descriptions allowed me just to spend little time searching, collecting, exploring, identifying and synthesising a so-called paper. But I still questioned what I should learn from the assessment task.

Academics conversely held an opposite view regarding the comprehensive task descriptions. The reasons given included "the essay students were allowed to complete was based on what they had learned from my unit" (ICA1). ICA1 further clarified:

> It was a sound chance for the students to extend their learning scope and explore more content closely associated with their previous knowledge. The task required them to write up an academic essay by exploring and investigating extended resources, summarising and comparing different opinions from the same area to create their understandings.

Both 4th-year students and graduates did not think the assessment tasks could develop their professional knowledge, neither sitting the final-term examination nor the completion of the essay, as rote learning in an intensive learning period and vague descriptions for essay assignment.

5.3.2.4.3 *Perceptions of the assessment for the performance of artistic skills.*

The majority of participants had a positive view of the assessment task in artistic skills training, arguing that timely feedback on students' performance could help them gradually improve their skills.

A typical comment from the 4th-year students was made by ICF2 "some suggestions, I understood well how to purposefully strengthen my skills in the following individual practice". Graduates reinforced this where ICG2 added "weekly assessment [artistic skill demonstration] in a classroom was a chance to learn from peers as well … learn others' conceptions of creation and skills in cutting and drawing … present different arts work using similar skills". While ICG4 had a somewhat negative view due to getting "nothing more than vague feedback about individual artworks, rather than specific suggestions".

Academics believed the suggestions they gave promoted students' art skills training. ICA2 gave a typical statement "I provided advice commenting on how to improve my students' artistic skills and I encouraged them to learn from peers in or after class and to share and teach their skills".

Though some comments of students' performance provided timely feedback after an artistic skills demonstration, a few students raised concerns that it was hard for them to improve their artistic skills efficiently.

Part 2 professional experience placement

This section discusses participants' opinions on the remaining two components: (i) the arrangement and allocation of the different PE placements (forms of PE); and (ii) supervision and assessment at the placements.

Four forms of PE placements are adopted in the YNNU EC ITE course: a one-week kindergarten visit, a two-week kindergarten observation, a university-based micro-teaching, and a PE placement in real classrooms. Each activity was related to different tasks and assessments. Therefore, participants' opinions of the PE placements were aligned with all four forms, comprising PE placement arrangement, that is, forms of placement, and supervision and assessment comprising: (i) assessment tasks; (ii) assessment instrument; (iii) instruction and assessment; and (iv) one concern arising in real-classroom placements. The employer stakeholder group did not participate in the university micro-teaching while the views of the other three stakeholder groups are presented.

5.3.2.5 Arrangement and allocation of the different professional experience placements.

Participants had a positive view of the different forms of placement with specific aims, and that these activities could help students shape their teaching capabilities and to coherently and systematically increase their familiarity with the ECEC contexts (see

the comments on course structure in Section 5.3.2.1 (page 225) for stakeholder perceptions regarding this issue).

5.3.2.6 Supervision and assessment.

Participants had mixed perceptions and a wide range of opinions about the tasks that were meant to shape students' capabilities in professional practice at each form of placement.

5.3.2.6.1 *Perceptions of assessment tasks.*

One-week kindergarten visit

The 4th-year students held somewhat negative views of the activity, due to limited preparation and very reduced supporting information, which resulted in "rushing with poor preparation for the visit" (ICF1), and "I had no idea what details I should notice while visiting the kindergarten" (ICF4). Graduates reinforced this view and ICG2 added that "I wandered around the kindergarten with my classmates … without any easily understandable instruction to follow".

Academics, however, had an opposite opinion "oral instructions and information were given" (ICA1). ICA3 also clarified that "as this was the first visit for students to engage in ECEC context, there was no need to offer a strict guide". The employers did not agree with the academics' views and were instead highly supportive of the students' opinions regarding the visit, ICE1's indication "the kindergarten visit produced little positive influence on students' learning as no specific instructions were given in advance from the university".

Two-week kindergarten observation

Fourth-year students had a somewhat negative view of the two-week kindergarten observational experience, which could have helped them become more familiar with ECEC contexts by using the *Observation Logbook.* It was reported that no specific instructions or guidance on how to conduct the assessment tasks was provided.

A specific comment from a 4th-year student "the use of the logbook could not guide my observation because of the broad requirements and vague tasks' descriptions. I often felt confused about what I should observe" (ICF1). Graduates reinforced this view. ICG2 said "no specific instruction to tell me what I needed to pay attention to and record … without intention". ICG3 added "I struggled to understand what I should write down … due to the lack of specific task descriptions".

Those opinions regarding requirements for the two-week session were not agreed with by the academics who had a positive view regarding teaching practice arrangement and supervising classroom teachers' support from kindergarten. ICA2 said:

> We highly respected every kindergarten's culture, education conception,
> and arrangement of curriculum activities. Those kindergartens developed
> and offered unique guidelines for students. We did not make any trouble
> by hindering the normal operations of the kindergarten due to the
> practicum as well. Thus, we rarely provide specific information for both
> our cooperative kindergartens and students.

Employers also had a rather negative view of the observation task and offered similar arguments to students. ICE1 stated "it was difficult for those students to complete a high-quality observation … without any handy guide. Some just sat in the corner of the classroom. It was also difficult for my kindergarten teachers to offer necessary and appropriate support". ICE3 reinforced this view and added several disadvantages due

to the lack of specific tasks to be completed by the students "students were confused regarding what they should know and understand in the observation and put our kindergarten teachers in an awkward situation without explicit aims or objectives".

University-based micro-teaching

The 4th-year students had highly positive views of the assessment tasks in micro-teaching, regarding timely instruction for lesson plan and teaching demonstration from either academics or groupmates and more chances for content practice, yet they rarely mentioned using the *Micro-teaching Logbook* (Appendix W) for guidance. ICF2 said "designed teaching plans were applied in a given situation … also applied what I had learned from the *seven units for five areas* … at least four chances … to acquire and practise teaching skills … under lecturer's feedback and my groupmates' advice, … regarding teaching plan design and practice". ICF4 fully agreed with this view and highlighted that the academic responsible provided flexibility for task completion with instruction such as "selection of a focus area from the EC curriculum, the target age group of children, teaching materials and teaching approaches were fully depended on individual preference, but … share our plans in the group discussion".

All graduates supported this approach. ICG2 summed it up:

> It provided a sound opportunity for me to conduct curriculum teaching on various subjects individually with a university-based supervisor in a supportive environment. The assessment tasks allowed us to conduct curriculum activities within five areas aligning with the EC curriculum, in which good preparation was necessary, lesson plans were mandatory.

Academic ICA3 stated "although the required document for this section lacked specific description, students had understood well what they should prepare and complete for teaching under my instruction". ICA1 was in-line with ICG2's opinion

"every person in this group could well understand each other's plan in order to support individuals to plan and design vivid teaching demonstrations".

Three-month real-classroom placement

The final PE placement was regarded as the most important by all participants. Students were assigned to different cooperative kindergartens to assume their three-month real-classroom placements with the *Placement Logbook* (Appendix W) to guide activities and tasks. Participants had a generally negative opinion that using the *Placement Logbook* (Appendix W) could efficiently support their PE, which paralleled comments about the two-week observation (the lack of a concise guide). A 4th-year student commented "the logbook was used for self-assessment and reflection by handy recording. And the lack of explicit tasks to complete in the kindergarten sometimes made me confused" (ICF3).

Graduate ICG2 stated that "these general guidelines were difficult to follow in conducting the PE". ICG3 added that "the main advantage [of using the *Logbook*] was in pushing me to record what I watched".

A 4th-year student (ICF4) held a more positive view:

> The broad expectations regarding what I should conduct in the placement could orient me towards conducting a quality practicum with classroom teachers. Writing it up deepened my understanding of the relevant pedagogical knowledge and allowed me to review how to connect the content knowledge and expectations of the curriculum for teaching.

Academics shared ICF4's view; for example, ICA1 added that "what students filled out in the *Logbook* might inform and illuminate their understandings regarding how to link content knowledge with appropriate pedagogical skills to design and conduct

curriculum activities for children". ICA3 further clarified the efficiency of using the

Logbook for students "which might be attributed to students keeping a record with

self-reflection and assessment". The employers supported this view as well recording

"students' growth in teaching and classroom management" (ICE2).

There was little information that helped students conduct sound PE placements,

although there were different assessment documents that students must complete. Both

4th-year students and graduates noted the main role of these written documents was for

record rather than provided specific assessment tasks.

5.3.2.6.2   *Perceptions of the assessment instrument.*

One-week kindergarten visit (communication session)

There was no assessment task, such as a written document for students in this visit

session, but all students were involved in attending a formal communication section.

Both 4th-year students and graduates had a slightly negative view of the effectiveness

of the one-week kindergarten visit, saying there was "nothing special from this so-

called communication" (ICG4). A 4th-year student ICF3 comment was representative:

> This further appeared to create a single line presentation rather than a
> sharing meeting, with no discussion or interaction. Although a few
> kindergarten teachers commented on our kindergarten visit and provided
> suggestions for learning and teaching, there was still no interaction.

Academics had a relatively different view than students about the effectiveness of the

communication. In the context of the "big population of students" (ICA1) ICA3 noted

"it hardly allowed every student to share their experiences. The session was structured

to students to capture opinions of EC teachers' responsibilities from different aspects,

which might be consistent with what they had learned from kindergarten".

Two-week kindergarten observation

Some participants did not think the completion of the *Observation Logbook* as an assessment instrument could reflect students' capabilities. Two topics were raised: (i) "[it gets you to] write 'overwhelming' words with a little practice" (ICF2); and (ii) "similar and positive comments" (ICG2) for students' performances were usually provided from kindergarten teachers.

The 4th-year students typically reported that "writing down four observation records with self-reflection and providing a conclusion to the project could potentially not relate my learning performance" (ICF2). ICF3 supported this "I did not think I conducted sound observations of children and teachings in kindergarten, but I did gain an expected score due to the submission of a well-written document". Similar perceptions were captured from all graduates. ICG1 gave an example "I was good at searching and writing about the teaching observation, and what I wrote down was quite different from what I observed, nevertheless I obtained a sound grade".

The academics had a relatively different view concerning the use of the document for students' performance. A typical view was offered by ICA3 "if students could provide a sound observation record, it could provide some evidence that they had understood the teaching and children's behaviours well through individual observation".

Employers reflected this, referring to "positive comments" (ICF3, ICG2, ICG4) about students' completion, highlighting there was "no specific assessment requirement to measure whether students had the professional capability in terms of observing children and our teaching" (ICE1) but it did illustrate "their hard work" (ICE2).

University-based micro-teaching

All 4th-year students and graduates were satisfied with the reporting method for students' teaching performance in the micro-teaching sessions. A graduate reported:

> Completion of this assessment document where I wrote down my every lesson plan in detail for the following teaching presentation. The lecturer might provide some comments on my written document, and we then discussed my teaching. Finally, I needed to reflect on the whole process. this could present my all-round professional capabilities in teaching. (ICG1)

Academics had confidence in this assessment process, as ICA2 stated "I assessed my supervised students' performances not only focusing on a certain plan or performance; I was more concerned about their development process of teaching in the project".

Three-month real-classroom placement

Most participants did not have a positive opinion of the use of the logbook to capture students' real performance capabilities. This view was somewhat similar to the comments presented above. Several comments from 4th-year students and graduates were related to the transparency of evaluation of the performance.

A 4th-year student, ICF1, stated that "the general evaluation of my placement was negative since the *Placement Logbook* did not provide any information". Another graduate, ICG3, experienced a similar situation:

> I worked hard to assume one teacher's workload. However, I obtained a result was similar to others who did quite little. The possibility was because of the ability to produce the perfect logbook … as some of them just attended kindergartens for attendance of the placement rather than doing better work.

Academics believed that the completion of the logbook could indicate students' professional capabilities in practice (ICA1, ICA3). ICA1 clarified "to avoid being subjective and biased, I carefully considered three main factors for the summative score: my own experience of micro-teaching in supervising, students' written documents, and comments from the kindergarten". ICA3 explained that "the score mainly considered the comments from kindergarten. However, this was not the only component of the result … students' growth in teaching from different perspectives were involved to consider".

All employers had a positive view of providing supportive comments for students' teaching capabilities, the main reason was no specific requirement for instruction and insufficient teaching experiences with children (ICE2, ICE3). ICE2 explained:

> I was more concerned about students' learning disposition and attitude, active learning or slacking off all day. Furthermore, we did not have any criteria with which to measure students' performance, which resulted broad and positive comments for each student we offered.

ICE3 highlighted how "several poor-performance students were disciplined and punished by their classroom teachers for being less-prepared".

Students believed the completion of written documents could not reflect their performance, as the notation differed from teaching capabilities in practice. Academics believed they assessed students' performance from different aspects. Employers often offered positive words about the supervised students where there were no specific assessment requirements.

5.3.2.6.3 *Perceptions of the instruction and assessment.*

One-week kindergarten visit

All comments on the supervision and instruction in relation to the one-week kindergarten visit were similar to comments on its assessment instruments in Section 5.3.2.6.2 (page 242).

Two-week kindergarten observation

Most participants had a complex perception of the kindergarten teachers' supervision. The 4th-year students' and graduates' comments identified two aspects: (i) the professional dispositions of classroom teachers; and (ii) interaction between classroom teachers. Students stated that "they obtained sound outcomes from this observation experience thanks to the caring and highly responsible" (ICF1), noting the "supportive" (ICF3) and "nice, experienced classroom teacher with a high professional disposition" (ICG1) that they met. Information about the practicum was provided by the supervising classroom teachers. ICF1 (4th-year student) indicated "classroom teachers introduced the general background to the class, such as the age of the children in this class, weekly teaching plan, daily routine". Graduate ICG2 expanded:

> Classroom teachers provided us with their designed tasks for our observation. For example, carefully watching how EC teachers created a supportive and safe learning environment, how these teachers disciplined children's manners selecting appropriate strategies, children's behaviours, what teaching tools or skills these teachers used for teaching.

ICF3 had a similar experience and said "my classroom teachers gave me more chances to observe the children to understand their needs, rather than focusing solely on teaching". These students reported that they worked with "competent" classroom

teachers, and they believed they gained sound instruction by discussing matters interactively between them. ICF1 noted that "all details recorded inside or outside of the classroom were discussed with my classroom teachers after class". Graduate ICG4 stated "I shared my draft teaching plan with my classroom teacher for timely feedback and plan with explanations".

A 4th-year student, ICF2, reported a "poor experience in observation", and stated "the teacher did not instruct me on what I was assigned to do, she let me sink or swim. Although I shared my teaching plan with her, she just gave me few useful suggestions, and there was little interaction between us".

Academics had a positive view of the supervision and instruction from the kindergarten on students' observations. ICA1 noted that "this kindergarten placement has cooperated with my course for several years, and the teachers there were relatively familiar with our requirements for the PEs".

Employers commented on their supervision both critically in terms of the lack of institutional advice and their work to make it successful. For example, ICE2 stated "there was no specific information for instruction, but I was willing to support these students to complete this observation as possible as I could. I provided background about my class … suggestions for observation offered". ICE3 reinforced this view "I was happy to help students conduct quality observation in my class if they learned actively".

University-based micro-teaching

All participants held positive views of the supervision and instruction of the micro-teaching activities to improve students' professional capabilities. The range of

feedback included: "timely feedback" (ICF1, ICG2); more "theory focus" (ICF2, ICG1, ICG2) received from academic supervisor; "having many practical chances" (ICF1) to "obtain more advice" (ICG2, ICG3); "capture new opinions" (ICF2, ICF4, ICG2, ICG3); and "well understand the philosophy of the lesson from my teammates during the discussion" (ICF2, ICG4). The 4th-year students and graduates were concerned to improve their professional capability in lesson planning and practice. A typical comment was from 4th-year student ICF2 "the supervisor provided some theory-focussed feedback that may help me design stronger plans mixed with different considerations, such as teaching philosophy, EC curriculum, and children's needs and characteristics". Several students mentioned that the feedback from the project was more theoretical than practical, which meant "I barely put these plans into practice when I was in real classroom placements" (ICF3). Graduate ICG3 reinforced this view:

> I captured several supportive suggestions from my university-based
> supervisor and obtained most of the instructions focused on planning
> design linked to focus areas of the EC curriculum theoretically. These
> suggestions were rarely based on real cases in the classroom.

A possible reason of the theoretical suggestions for students' teaching performance was given by ICG4 "University academics who were adept at theoretical research in children's education that I needed to focus more on educational principles for children rather than on my teaching practice". Several 4th-year students (ICF2, ICF3) and graduates (ICG3, ICG4) commented that having no actual children involved might also lessen the value and outcome of this PE, with "perfect" teachings during this project with instruction from the university-based supervisors. It meant that they "needed not to consider employing appropriate strategies for real children" (ICF2); and "the

teaching was demonstrated in an ideal educational situation in the context of working with peers rather than with children" (ICG3).

Academics accepted these views that the activity was more theoretical and less practical; however, they held a positive view of their supervision. ICA1 responded:

> It was a good opportunity for our students to reinforce their understanding of content knowledge from us [university-based teachers]. I did offer some advice and feedback regarding academic focus, such as content knowledge and principles of a curriculum lesson with a few suitable suggestions. To some degree, I commented on their performance mixed with what I had learned from real-classroom contexts.

Though employers did not directly participate in this section, in terms of the academic feedback on students' capabilities in practice, ICE3 had a slightly negative view:

> Students of this course should gain more practical approaches from experienced kindergarten teachers rather than university-based lecturers. Teaching experiences seemed the best way to teach students how to practise in real-classroom contexts, coupled with the fact that kindergarten teachers were likely to play an important role in teaching students how to conduct real teaching for children. Furthermore, the provision of timely feedback regarding teaching from classroom teachers would be better than what the university-based lecturers offered. Certainly, the necessary theory was essential but in terms of supervising students' teaching practice, classroom teachers would be better.

Three-month real-classroom placement

Participants had a complex view of the supervision and instruction in the three-month real-classroom placement based on their individual experience of whom they met in the observation session described. Two ends-of-continuum positions were demonstrated in the responses.

Some 4th-year students and graduates had a positive view regarding their practice experiences and noted supportive instruction. For example, "I was always encouraged to practise my teaching [with] children" (ICF1). ICF4 agreed "my classroom teacher encouraged me to practise as much as I wanted to". Graduates ICG2 and ICG3 had similarly positive experiences and ICG2 added how the teacher she met was responsive and qualified. Besides being given the chance to practise, she was asked to:

> Conduct several teachings fully based on a classroom teacher's plans near the very beginning of the placement … to help me understand well how to apply planning for children and have me actively explore the differences between my plan and hers in order to promote my design skills through vivid cases. (ICG2)

Fourth-year student ICF1 indicated a lot of support from the kindergarten experience, such as "she [the teacher] tended to require me to define my teaching goals, teaching process, and practise these well-designed plans … much supportive feedback on both lesson plan and practice" (ICF2).

Graduate ICG4 supported this view and spoke about the advantages she gained from the PE "my classroom teacher gave me several useful tips and presented basic tactics and teaching strategies for maintaining order. Those hints and tips provided me with beneficial feedback and helped deepen my professional knowledge". On the other hand, several students reported that they had not obtained sufficient instructions or feedback from kindergarten teachers and they were critical of this activity. For example, a 4th-year student commented:

> I was just allowed to conduct two formal teaching sessions for children when I engaged in this project. I had informed my classroom teacher of my plans to conduct a teaching episode with planning at first, and I

> obtained a few comments regarding the plan. After my teaching, we
> rarely discussed my performance. (ICF3)

One graduate reported a similar experience "my kindergarten teacher did not comment on my teaching at all unless I asked her" (ICG2).

Academics generally held positive views regarding the supervision and instruction from kindergartens, which were similar to the comments above on the observation session. Typically, they saw it could help students to shape their teaching practice:

> I fully respected and trusted that the kindergartens' arrangement was
> enough for our students to practise and promote their teaching skills.
> Usually, I visited the kindergartens and discussed my students'
> performance with the teachers to understand their learning progress, and I
> also discussed the practice with my students. (ICA3)

Employer ICE3 generally agreed with the view from academics, indicating that "there was no prescribed instructions from the university for our teachers to supervise these students. Our teachers were supportive to help students complete this teaching experience. As well as teachers had to design their mentoring plan, this could prevent any trouble or bother in terms of normal teaching for our children".

However, employers, ICE1 and ICE2, held a mixed view of their supervision. For example, ICE1 stated:

> All my colleagues were supposed to be very responsible people to help
> students conduct the placement for sound outcomes. We could provide
> suitable suggestion for students based on their needs, but there were no
> prescribed standards for the PE placements. it was hard for us to offer
> appropriate instructions. Thus, specific information regarding the
> teaching practice should be provided by the EC ITE course to inform us
> of our responsibilities in the placement. This is helped both students and
> teachers have agreed tasks for completion.

Employer ICE2 stated "I did question whether the current placement could help students' complete quality PE that met the expectations of this profession because of no clear requirements".

Most 4th-year students and graduates did not feel the need to make close contact with the university for supervision. A typical comment from ICG2 captured this "I rarely contacted university [academic] supervisors for consultation regarding the teaching of the material when I was on placements. I thought I should learn about teaching experiences from kindergarten teachers rather than lecturers".

Academics generally agreed, where ICA2 indicated that "I did not think I needed to engage in co-working with students during the PE. But I was happy to share my experience and my opinions if students asked for it". Furthermore, ICE1 and ICE2 stated that they had more chances to understand matters in kindergartens, as "we warmly invited those students to engage in close dialogue with more experienced kindergarten teachers in our weekly teaching and learning meetings".

Given the vague requirements for both students and classroom teachers, both roles questioned whether the current PE placements could help students' completion of quality teaching practice that met the expectations of this profession. Students were also concerned the quality of the PE placements somewhat depended what classroom teachers they met. Even so, academics had confidence that quality supervision could be offered from cooperative kindergartens.

5.3.2.6.4   *A concern arising from real-classroom placements.*

Chinese participants were concerned with the allocation patterns of students in kindergartens, given the absence of clear task descriptions, and identified assessment

instruments for kindergartens to help students complete their PEs. Some participants recommended that the placement should provide students with the opportunity to access different classrooms with children of various ages and experienced teachers. Students' personal preferences and needs and the kindergarten's real situation had to be considered in this regard.

Fourth-year student ICF2 and graduate ICG3 actively sought their placement because of their graduation thesis. For example, "spending three months working with 5-year-old children to observe and explore their development and growth both emotionally and physically" (ICF2), while she still "strongly suggested students should work with children of different ages". ICG3 reported that she "[passively] accepted the kindergarten's decision regarding the classroom arrangement in different classrooms", but she was pleased with two advantages—understanding children belonging to ages between three to six, and working with and learning from more kindergarten teachers:

> Every two or three weeks, observing and co-working with different classroom teachers for a range of age groups of children … apply my content knowledge and pedagogies to different age groups of children … and learn various teaching styles and methods from more than one experienced kindergarten teacher. (ICG3)

Other graduates also typically supported how this arrangement of age-focus was structured to "help us understand various teaching styles for children of different ages, with the adoption of relevant content knowledge in different learning atmospheres" (ICG1), and it "would be a benefit for the job following graduation" (ICG2). ICG4 agreed and specified that "it was difficult to anticipate which age group we would teach when we took up employment. Being assigned to work with children of different age ranges would be better for our job interviews and current work".

A typical statement came from academic ICA1 for this concern:

> I hoped the kindergartens could arrange for our students to visit more
> than one classroom, which could support them to understand the content
> knowledge and pedagogical linking to the needs of different age groups
> of children well; as well having more opportunities to learn from more
> experienced teachers.

ICA2's view was similar to that of ICA1 and she highlighted that "this would allow our students to gain more benefits, observing and understanding a range of different aged children from three to six with different needs and learning from more experienced teachers with widely varying teaching styles".

Employers also supported this approach. "Students completed their teaching with more teachers and various age groups of children if they did not have particular demands, with one classroom per month. Namely, they would visit three different classes over the three-month real-classroom placement to completion" (ICE1). ICE3 agreed with the value of the range but added the caution that "teaching for children came first, I didn't want the placement to bother my normal operations. Therefore, I wanted to assign students to fixed classrooms for three months".

The Chinese stakeholder expected EC ITE course could provide students with a range of contexts to observe and understand different ages of children, with the consideration of the kindergartens' normal operation.

5.3.3 Summary of Interview Data Results

Perceptions of how the course prepared students to be knowledgeable and skilled EC graduate teachers from the perspective of four stakeholder groups from the two countries were presented after analysing the interview data. The summary perceptions

of this course's outcomes and students' achievements are demonstrated from the perspectives of the different participant roles: the 4th-year students and graduates who experienced the EC teacher training process, academics, and employers.

5.3.3.1 Case Study 1: Australia.

The perceptions concerning how well the EC ITE course prepared students for teaching in the classroom from the perspective of 4th-year students and graduates who experienced the EC teacher training process, including "positive" and "less positive" perceptions, are reported below. Positive opinions included:

- The integration of content knowledge delivery and PE placement supported students in acquiring knowledge ranging from learning theory at university to knowledge application in real-classroom contexts;

- The current course provided students with a blended learning environment to meet diverse individual needs for the successful completion of the bachelor's degree course;

- The creation of personal understanding and educational philosophy with a solid content knowledge foundation and necessary practice were based on the use of systematic assessment tasks and a mixed formative and summative assessment approach for tracking and gauging the learning performance of students;

- The mandated EC education curricula made up a large part of the course, which helped students not only to understand the content adequately, but also made them able to integrate their principles and expectations into curriculum lesson plans for teaching in real classrooms;

- The distributed supervised PE placements in a range of children's education contexts were highly valuable;

- Students felt confident although planning and preparation for the class while on PE were challenging. The provision of timely instruction and the necessary support (with clear weekly task descriptions) guided students to conduct curriculum teachings and offset unexpected incidents in real teaching settings. Supervising classroom teachers could support students to conduct quality teaching in line with the governmental professional standards as well; and

- The use of the Graduate Teacher Standards (AITSL, 2011) to assess students' teaching performance was critical for students' perception of how well prepared they were.

Less positive perceptions included:

- The limited number of units offered that focused solely on EC did little to give students a deep understanding of younger children;

- Online tutorials had limited interaction, and there were some delayed responses due to students' engagement and the technology;

- Students were given insufficient time in PE placements and they felt somewhat unprepared. The theoretical knowledge (e.g., positive behaviour management, psychology) learned at university could not be applied easily in real-classroom contexts because they had no access to children in their daily university activities; and

- Professional engagement with parents/carers was reported as a big challenge, and students did not feel they were adequately prepared for it.

Perceptions of how well this course prepared students for the classroom from the perspective of the academics.

An analysis of the interview data from the academics' perspectives showed a typically strong positive view of the EC ITE course, which prepared its graduates to teach children from birth to age eight in a range of ECEC contexts. Academics pointed out that blended learning met the different needs of all students, although a few doubted the effectiveness and usefulness of interaction in the online tutorials. The coherence of the lectures and tutorial tasks helped students to learn theory from lectures and then to apply what they learned in tutorials. Students also developed their solid theoretical base by means of completing well-structured assessment tasks with timely feedback. Employing the Graduate Teacher Standards (AITSL, 2011) as the assessment instrument to measure students' professional performance in content knowledge and practice made students understand well what they should know and how to apply it.

Perceptions of how well this course prepares students to be ready for the classroom from the perspective of the employers.

The analysis of Australian employers' interview data suggested that students of the EC ITE course had gained a solid theoretical foundation and were adequately equipped with the professional capabilities expected and required by this workforce, for example, a sound lesson plan design, linking focus areas of the EC curricula, and a good understanding of children at the theoretical level. In terms of practical capabilities, however, employers had only a moderately positive view that students would be ready for the job of classroom management, including adopting appropriate

strategies for creating a positive learning environment and applying well-designed lessons for children, considering children with different needs. Professional engagement with parents also worried employers. The qualitative data indicated that if the EC ITE course had increased the time and opportunities for students to engage with ECEC contexts, those challenges more than likely would have been overcome. The more time and opportunities there were for students to practise working with children and parents in a real-life context, the more they would benefit from transferring their knowledge into practice.

5.3.3.2 Case Study 2: China.

The perceptions concerning how well this course prepared students to teach in the classroom from the perspective of the 4th-year students and graduates who experienced the EC teacher training process, including "positive" and "less-positive" perceptions, are reported below. Positive opinions included:

- The structured arrangement of content delivery and diverse forms of teaching placements permeated the four-year study in order to ensure students' learning of theoretical knowledge and their practise of it simultaneously, and they became increasingly familiar with kindergarten teachers' work;

- The unique package of practical units *seven units for five areas* was designed to support students to understand and practise teaching the EC curriculum.

- Training in a variety of artistic skills was offered; and

- University-based micro-teaching provided sound opportunities for students to demonstrate their teaching, using their lesson plans in different simulated

teaching environments for feedback from academics, which might strengthen students' confidence in undertaking the final real-classroom placements.

Less-positive perceptions included the following:

- A lack of content pedagogical knowledge with practical teaching practice, particularly for units in arts education;

- Insufficient time for artistic training and useful and timely instructions for daily individual practice after class;

- The use of once-off final-term (summative) assessment tasks (exam and essay assignment) measured student's professional capabilities in knowledge and practice in a way that made it harder for them to construct their own understanding by the time they completed the units; and

- Ambiguous and vague descriptions of assessment tasks with no specific requirements for the distributed real-classroom practicum in kindergartens might result in students having varied assistance and teaching opportunities according to which classroom teachers and kindergartens they were assigned to.

Perceptions of how well this course prepared students to be ready for the classroom from the perspective of the academics.

Interview data suggested that academics who educated and trained students in this course had highly positive views of how prepared their graduates were for the EC profession. The unique package *seven units for five areas* provided students with practical opportunities to link content knowledge and content pedagogical knowledge with practice, particularly with university-based micro-teaching, offering opportunities

to conduct their teaching in two different environments. Academics believed that the existing training format and content were appropriate for students to master basic skills in arts practice. The one-off assessment task was insufficient to support students to fully develop their understanding of content knowledge. The vague tasks and requirements for PE placement made it difficult to measure students' teaching performance in kindergartens. They retained a positive and optimistic attitude about how completing the various documents in different forms of PE placement helped students record their own teaching and learning progress for reflection.

Perceptions of how well this course prepares students to be ready for the classroom from the perspective of the employers.

The Chinese employers' interview data indicated that students had a strong content knowledge base, but they did not typically transfer what they learned in the theory part of their course to the real-classroom contexts. Students could typically present their sound professional capabilities in teaching plan design and did well in mixing the necessary content knowledge and focus areas of the EC curriculum, as well as exhibiting their artistic skills in certain art forms. Content pedagogical knowledge was considered a factor where a lack of professional capabilities in providing quality teaching were observed. Employers stated that vague and ambiguous assessment tasks and requirements were the key challenges for them in supervising students, resulting in these students very rarely getting appropriate support for their PE. Employers suggested that this course should consequently provide explicit assessment tasks and determine what standards and requirements were involved when instructing students and assessing their performance.

Overall, the four stakeholder groups from both countries had a positive perception that the current EC ITE courses could prepare students to be "classroom ready", but with a typical challenge—the professional practice capabilities in real ECEC contexts.

5.4 Summary

Chapter 5: Findings from the Questionnaire and Interviews presented the findings related to research sub-questions 3 and 4 on page 46 of Chapter 1. Chapter 5 presented findings from the survey questionnaire and semi-structured interviews conducted with participants from UTAS and YNNU in Australia and China.

Section 5.2 (page184) reported data and analysis from the questionnaire from the UTAS and YNNU courses and whether they supported students to become skilled and knowledgeable EC teachers, referring to the synthesis of standards for teachers from both countries. It also indicated that the majority of participants in each country held positive attitudes towards the respective current course for EC students, although in the open-ended section, a number of comments were offered regarding how to improve the course. Participants in both instances offered distinctive responses connected to policy difference, as well as culture and tradition regarding the most important professional dispositions and personal characteristics of early childhood teachers.

Section 5.3 (page 201) presented the findings of the semi-structured interviews from participants' representing the four stakeholder groups regarding the overarching research question and research sub-questions 3 and 4. The data also showed how the courses might be developed to meet the needs of key stakeholders. The data were aimed at participants' perceptions of the two main components of the course; content delivery and PE placement.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusion discusses the results of the data and applies them to address this study's broad research question and four sub-questions in the context of the extant literature. The discussion highlights comparative issues from the two case-courses at the UTAS, Australia, and YNNU, China. It also indicates the implications for the two participating universities and even for the national educational authorities of the two countries, by learning from each other.

Chapter 6 is divided into two main sections. The data results are firstly used to address each sub-question described in Chapters 4 and 5 in the context of the literature review presented in *Chapter 2: Literature Review*. The quality outcomes within EC ITE that were supervised and regulated by external factors of quality assurance at the government level are discussed, evaluating the internal components of the two university case study courses. The case analyses are compared, and suggestions are provided to improve each course based on its contextual factors and participants' opinions. This leads to a summary of the new knowledge uncovered by this study. Section 5.3 (page 201) provides suggestions for further research and practice at the conclusion of this study.

6.2 The Four Sub-Questions' Main Findings

The broad research question was addressed through four research sub-questions. The broad research question was:

> Are graduating EC students in Australia and China perceived as suitably prepared for teaching in a range of diverse ECEC contexts by the time they finish their courses?

The four sub-questions were:

1. What are the EC ITE models regarding selection and recruitment, accreditation of ITE courses, and teacher registration in Australia and China?

2. What are the similarities and differences between EC ITE courses in Australia and China?

3. How do the key stakeholders perceive EC graduates' teaching preparedness after they completed the two EC ITE courses?

4. How might the EC ITE courses be developed to meet the needs of stakeholders?

These four sub-questions will be addressed in turn.

6.2.1 What are the early childhood initial teacher education models regarding selection and recruitment, accreditation of ITE courses, and teacher registration in Australia and China?

Data from the key national-level policy documents regarding EC ITE course creation and outcome assurance were investigated to address this sub-question. This data strongly suggested that rigorous and robust mechanisms exist in both Australia and China to ensure that the quality of EC ITE courses is maintained in relation to their external requirements, which are selection and recruitment, accreditation for ITE courses, and teacher registration (see Figures 4.4 and 4.6). The document analysis conducted for this study showed that both Australia and China had processes and procedures that reflected their broader socio-cultural and political systems, including political environment, social development, regulatory measures and mechanisms, culture and traditions.

Australia is a federated country with each state and territory governed by elected representatives in addition to legislated national laws and standards. Education systems may vary depending on location as each system reflects the legacy of the political representatives who developed and implemented their "model". For example, teacher registration systems may change from state to state in Australia due to the ideology of the political party in power. This does not result in a great deal of continuous, turbulent change in practice, but it does suggest an evolution of practice to fit the prevailing state or territory ethos.

These policy findings indicated that the TEQSA worked closely with other professional bodies to supervise and assess the outcomes of a course cooperatively by sharing responsibilities and providing relevant information to ensure a consistent and aligned approach to accreditation and regulation. The bodies relevant to this study comprised the AITSL, responsible for publishing and maintaining the national regulatory standards; the ACECQA, which cooperatively monitored EC teacher preparation for children's education and care; and the TRB of Tasmania, which (in the context of the AITSL standards) which supervised and regulated teacher education, and oversaw graduate teacher registration. Under this framework, an accredited EC ITE course could conduct the selection and enrolment of entrants, depending on its requirements, and graduates of the course from UTAS might be registered EC teachers at the *Graduate* career stage.

In contrast, China is a socialist country with strong, centralised mandates that result in a normalised, standardised style of governance. All educational matters in the country are coordinated and supervised centrally by the Ministry of Education (MoE). For example, the *National Teacher Registration Examination* is a requirement for potential teachers in China, which is an approach reflecting a "one size fits all" model.

MoE is also the sole national body in China that governs all educational matters. No other agencies exercise this power, specifically regarding matters that relate to ITE or EC ITE courses. Recruitment and enrolment quotas for the university and the course in question are centrally regulated by MoE after a negotiation with the provincial education authorities to determine the prescribed threshold entry score for each course. The accreditation of EC ITE course and teacher registration are similarly both approved and regulated by MoE. The EC ITE course fits within this framework, which

meant that students from the YNNU EC ITE course are required to sit the NUEE to be eligible for enrolment and teacher registration upon its completion. While this centralised control offers a standardised national approach, it does mean that provincial differences are not considered in student intake, course structure, and graduation. Several of the provinces featuring large ethnic constituencies, such as Yunnan, may not find this ethnic/racial/community mix represented in their student enrolment.

The data showed that both Australia and China maintained rigorous mechanisms for recruitment and selection, accreditation for ITE courses, and teacher registration through government and professional bodies. This ensured the high quality of their courses and provided reassurance that EC ITE graduates were sufficiently skilled to meet the teaching profession's requirements (see Figures 4.1 and 4.2). These similarities regarding the expectation of quality outcomes for ITE were supported by previous Australian and Chinese studies (e.g., Ingvarson & Rowley, 2017; Ingvarson et al., 2014; Zhang & Zhong, 2013). The current study also confirmed Ingvarson and Rowley's report that "policies for assuring the quality of beginning teachers cover three main stages" (2017, p. 177) of recruitment and selection, accreditation for ITE courses, and teacher registration. Both case-courses indicated that the development of high-quality training was strongly impacted by the expectations and requirements of educational authorities within the broad external environment.

The disparate qualitative documentary data collected from the Chinese and Australian contexts indicated a broad finding within the cultural dimension (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede, 1993; Hofetede et al., 2010) regarding the society's power distance. A higher power distance (meaning a single-side, top-down decision-making structure), indicated an unequally distributed, centralised authority hierarchy like that of China

(Hofstede, 1980). Document data reported that at YNNU, the course structure arrangement (regarding what and how many units were provided per semester) varied depending on the negotiation between the faculty and university. The faculty usually reflected "obedience" to the higher power—the university. However, Australia is regarded as a low power-distance society, and different state governments and related authorities tend to supervise targeted projects by sharing leadership equally. The UTAS faculty had more autonomy to design and deliver its EC ITE course based on the needs and expectations of students, the university and the state, along with accreditation requirements. They did not have to prioritise other factors, such as tasks designed by the university, over professional concerns. The Chinese interview data confirmed strongly the existing authority hierarchy. For example, when Chinese participants in this study commented on the structure of the EC ITE course at YNNU, some 4th-year students complained that several theoretical learning units were arranged inappropriately, such as units regarding psychology (ICF4). Meanwhile, the academics explained that "the arrangement of faculty-conducted units should reflect obedience to the university … several [EC focus] units we had to rearrange" (ICA1). The integration of document and interview data supported the cultural value differences identified by Hofstede (1980).

Key Australian policy documents showed that there were several pathways for entering EC ITE courses, which was reported in *Chapter 4: Findings from the Document Analysis*. The data from the document analysis showed that academic and non-academic capability were essential components for entrants' selection in Australia. Enrolment depended on only the applicant's academic qualification as measured by the NUEE in China. This was because recruitment was regulated by MoE and carried out by the provincial educational authority in the different geographical and discipline

areas. ITE course generally did not have the ability to consider any non-academic qualifications (e.g., personal statements) when considering applicants (although several major universities had the autonomy to select a few outstanding students for some courses with more considerations). The Australian requirement of academic plus personal and professional requirements suggested a broader community consideration than in China.

The research literature (e.g., Garvis & Manning, 2015; Manning et al., 2017; MoE, 2012d; Muennig et al., 2009; Yan, 2018; Zhang & Yan, 2018), including literature on physical and cognitive development, suggested that in addition to satisfaction of the children's diverse developmental needs and the teachers' academic strength, a strong relationship between learners and teachers is needed and vital (Donoghue, 2017; Zhao, 2014). It followed that considering students' non-academic capabilities could be a component in the application process to the EC ITE course in China. MoE should perhaps delegate some autonomy to ITE providers in the selection of suitable prospective students who demonstrate non-academic capabilities in addition to their academic NUEE results. For example, potential Australian applicants were required to submit a written statement about their perceptions of the teaching profession, including motivation to be a teacher/understanding of teachers' role, when they applied for enrolment in ITE courses. China might consider this approach on a trial basis.

6.2.2   What are the similarities and differences between early childhood initial teacher education courses in Australia and China?

This sub-question was addressed by analysing key policies regarding the creation and quality assurance of EC ITE courses in Australia and China. The similarities and characteristics of the respective countries' courses were investigated by examining the internal components of two case-courses from UTAS and YNNU (see Table 4.4), as well as the official course schedules attached in Appendix R (UTAS) and an English translation of YNNU's schedule (Appendix S and Appendix T).

Contextual differences between the two countries affected various components in the case studies, which were demonstrated in *Chapter 4: Findings from the Document Analysis*, including: (i) the total number of units and their distribution in each semester, and the arrangement of PE placements; (ii) the unique units that were offered strongly depended on the perceived societal and social needs, cultural influence, and country's traditional education principles; (iii) the adoption of different assessments for the two courses that align with their learning outcomes in both content knowledge units and PE placements, respectively; and (iv) the delivery mode with blended learning at UTAS and a face-to-face model at YNNU. The document analysis reported in Chapter 4 showed that both courses were coherent and well-structured, integrating content knowledge and supervised PE placement to prepare graduates for work in a range of ECEC contexts such as EC centres, kindergartens, and schools.

The document analysis reported that these two case-courses were accredited EC ITE providers that awarded a bachelor's-level degree (AQF 7 in Australia). Both courses met the integrated content delivery and practicum provision needs of ECEC settings in

terms of what students of EC ITE should learn and be able to do, and they also satisfied the requirements for qualified teachers in both countries (AITSL, 2018b; MoE, 2012a, 2012b).

This study found that for the two case-courses to prepare qualified EC teachers, a coherent, structured ITE course was necessary. The integration of theory delivery with practical opportunities was an integral factor that could lead to successful outcomes, as it reinforced learning through practice. This finding supported Australian and international studies (e.g., Darling-Hammond, 2006a; Ingvarson et al., 2014; Mayer et al., 2015). The course design was undertaken with consideration for the requirements and expectations of different policies (e.g., accreditation for ITE courses, professional standards for teachers) in Australia and China (AITSL, 2011; AITSL, 2018b; MoE, 2012c).

The findings of these similarities in the EC ITE courses not only pertained to the broad findings from previous studies (e.g., Ingvarson et al., 2014; Lei & Huang, 2017; Lynch, 2015; Mayer et al., 2015; Mayer et al., 2017) regarding the physical, emotional, and cognitive development of children (Donoghue, 2017; Kayili & Ari, 2011; Song, 2017; Wang, 2005; Winter, 2010; Zhao, 2014); these data were also consistent with Darling-Hammond's research (2006a), which identified the seven characteristics of powerful teacher education. In short, the content analysis of the national policies revealed that formal teacher preparation training in the two countries provided EC students with the "what" and "how" of teacher education as described by Darling-Hammond (2006a).

Both courses attempted to provide better structured and sequenced practical EC teacher preparation, a focus agreeing with Moon's (2016) call for a "significant"

school practice along with university ITE content. This finding accorded with the contemporary view that ITE courses should be conceptually and structurally coherent and integrated into the PE component (Boyd et al., 2009, Canrinus et al., 2017). Qualitative data in the current study's questionnaire and interview data (that obtained participants' opinions about the courses) indicated that both Australian and Chinese participants did not agree regarding the practice opportunities. Fourth-year students and graduates, in particular, provided a complex and varied set of comments. On the positive side, EC graduates of the two countries expressed that their course provided "a wide range of experience to be prepared for the profession" (QAG4), and that PE placement "benefited me [and other EC students] in terms of applying what we had learned from some relating to the early year focus" (ICG4). However, Australian 4th-year students expected "more time for PE" (QAF8), a suggestion shared by many Chinese participants, indicating that their course should offer more practice opportunities, such as classroom observation and micro-teaching, and Chinese graduate ICG2 negatively reported the "lack of practicum opportunities", a view which was shared by other Chinese interviewees. These data were collected from 4th-year students and graduates to elucidate these practitioners' opinions from both countries, and the findings provided empirical evidence indicating that more practical opportunities were required. This request for more practical experience is supported by the literature, which reported that the most influential component of the teacher preparation was PE placement (e.g., Allen & Wright, 2014; Cheng, Xu, & Wang, 2016; Li & Zeng, 2018; Mayer et al., 2015; White & Forgasz, 2016; Zhuang, 2015).

For EC teachers working with younger children, several distinct features must be incorporated (AI-Hassan, 2019; Bowman, 2011; Bowman et al., 2000; Liu, 2019) and must conform with the relevant particular policies in Australia and China (ACECQA,

2017b; AITSL, 2018b; DEEWR, 2009; MoE, 2012c, 2012d). Generally, the findings of these similarities from the document analysis of both case-courses addressed the key focus areas of EC and affirmed that the current issues regarding the EC education were common in both countries and were concerned with five areas: (i) understanding childhood development (Bowman et al., 2000; Feng, 2012; Manning et al, 2019; Swartz & McElwain, 2012); (ii) creating the learning environment (Carter & Doyle, 2006; Liu, 2017; Zhang, 2018); (iii) curriculum teaching with appropriate pedagogy (De Kruif et al., 2000; Flückiger et al., 2016; Liu, 2017); (iv) engagement with parents (Fantuzzo et al., 2000; Mueller & File, 2015; Wang, 2010); and (v) assessing children's performance (Agbenyega, 2012; Banerjee & Luckner, 2013; Liu, 2015).

6.2.3 *How do the key stakeholders perceive early childhood graduates' preparedness after they completed the two early childhood initial teacher education courses?*

The findings presented in *Chapter 5: Findings from the Questionnaire and Interviews* related to three defined professional capabilities: knowledge, practice, and engagement in response to the third research sub-question regarding how participants perceived the EC graduates' teaching preparedness when they finished their formal education.

The four stakeholder groups' perceptions of EC graduates' professional capabilities were discussed based on their responses to the 23 items in the questionnaires. In both Australia and China, the four stakeholder groups had different roles in the current study: 4th-year students and graduates who experienced the complete training course; university-based academics who planned and conducted the courses; and the employers of graduates. This section focused on the degree to which the responses

reflected the four groups' satisfaction with the graduates' perceived capabilities and their alignment with governmental teacher standards. Chapter 5 showed that there were differences in mean scores with standard deviations varying across each group and country.

The analysis of quantitative data from the questionnaires and qualitative data from the interviews and free-text responses to the questionnaires in Chapter 5 revealed that the four stakeholder groups generally held a positive attitude towards the current EC ITE courses for students' preparation in both countries. The participants reported that both courses adequately prepared students to become knowledgeable, skilled teachers across the three domains of professional capability: professional knowledge; professional practice (including its three sub-domains); and professional engagement. The four stakeholder groups from Australia generally looked to provide more positive responses (M = 4.34, SD = 0.66) than those of the Chinese participants (M = 3.89, SD = 0.78) across the three domains.

Data drawn from the questionnaire indicated that participants from the Australian stakeholder groups were more likely to offer positive opinions on EC students' overall professional capabilities with only slight variation. The Chinese graduates, on the other hand, reported the highest positive feedback (M = 4.17, SD = .60) among the Chinese groups, suggesting that they were more satisfied than other respondents with the current EC ITE course in terms of developing their capabilities as skilled teachers. Australian and Chinese participants in this study had significant differences between groups of graduates of the two countries. Australian graduates reported the least positive responses to those questionnaire items, while graduates provided the most positive views among the four groups in China. For example, Australian graduates

rated the lowest mean score (M = 3.75) on Item 5, which involved their understanding of the EYLF (DEEWR, 2009), a core Australian EC curriculum, with a high standard deviation of 1.09, meaning that their responses spread widely. However, Chinese graduates provided the highest positive opinion (M = 4.13) regarding the demonstration of the Chinese EC curriculum, with more consistent answers (SD = .60). The results of the quantitative data showed that despite the differences between Australian and Chinese graduates, interview data from other groups, including graduates, were similar. For example, Australian 4th-year student IAF1 stated that "I was familiar with the content of the EC curricula", and IAG1 agreed that "tasks were well-integrated expectations of the *EYLF*". Academics and employers also had positive views, such as the view that "students could become familiar with and understand the content [of the curricula]" (IAA2). Chinese 4th-year student ICF1 said "I knew the comprehensive content of the EC curriculum", and "I understood well how to design a well-prepared teaching plan linked to the five areas of the EC curriculum" (ICF4). Academic ICA2 concurred that the curriculum "supports students master the knowledge of numeracy and pedagogies linked to mathematical learning of the EC curriculum".

The discussion in this section: (i) promotes better understanding of theory than application; (ii) suggests that PE placement in an EC ITE course should enable working with children in a range of different ECEC contexts for a greater amount of time; and (iii) argues for increased support from the faculty, in accord with the research sub-question.

6.2.3.1 Better understanding of theory than application.

This study's interview data indicated that participants provided more information in terms of a solid knowledge base and a lack of actual practice. Australian respondents were more concerned about two aspects that may influence appropriate instruction for children, namely, positive behaviour management and psychology, while Chinese participants emphasized the pedagogical skills for teaching the arts and integrating appropriate arts into a broad curriculum teaching. Regardless of participants' differences of opinion on EC students' professional capability, they felt similarly about weak and limited application capabilities. Most participants in this study expected the current EC ITE course to provide more PE placement in real-classroom contexts, which corresponded with previous international and Chinese studies in which real-classroom teaching practicums were perceived to be the most influential component of teachers' preparation (e.g., Allen & Wright, 2014; Cheng et al., 2016; Li & Zeng, 2018; Mayer et al., 2015; White & Forgasz, 2016; Zhuang, 2015).

Interview data regarding the application of the EC curricula indicated that participants from both countries held more positive views of students to understand the content and principles of EC curricula than their practical application in the learning context. The quantitative data revealed similar concerns regarding EC students' ability to apply core elements from the EC ITE courses. For example, Item 1 "Select appropriate teaching strategies to support the learning of children", Item 9 "Integrate music, visual art and dance in curriculum activities", Item 11 "Plan appropriate learning activities/ experiences for children", and Item 20 "Select relevant and appropriate sources of professional learning develop to support children's learning", all indicated capabilities for which EC students had obtained higher positive views from Australian participants

than from Chinese participants. The data showed that opinions from the employers of the two countries on these statements were significantly different, suggesting that Australian employers tended to provide more positive responses of all groups (the mean scores were 4.67 and 5.0 for Items 1 and 20 separately), while Chinese employers, by contrast, reported the lowest scores for the same items (the same mean scores of 3.5 was for Items 1 and 20 separately). Despite the differences between employers from China and Australia, the other three groups from the two countries exemplified a relatively positive attitude toward EC students who had these capabilities.

All four Australian stakeholder groups positively viewed EC students' ability to incorporate literacy and numeracy strategies in planning and teaching with regard to professional knowledge. The values for the standard deviation for these two items, 7 and 8, were relatively small, indicating that Australian participants' responses were consistent. In contrast, Chinese participants did not agree, presenting widely spread responses on the two items and indicating less positive views regarding EC students' capability of this integration; employers in particular offered the lowest score, below 3 on the 5-point Likert scale. The qualitative interview data from this study demonstrated a difference between Australian and Chinese 4th-year students and graduates. For example, most Australian participants tended to provide a more positive view of their EC students' understanding of the integration of literacy and numeracy teachings than their Chinese counterparts did. The main reason for Australian students' positive attitude was that they could get "some fresh teaching concepts and new elements that could be added to curriculum activities that helped me better conduct numeracy teaching" (IAF3). Meanwhile, Chinese participants were more worried about students' lack of pedagogical skills for appropriate lessons. For example,

graduate ICG1 suggested that "yet I was still not confident that I had sufficient capabilities for my teaching in terms of mixing theoretical and pedagogical knowledge". This concern was previously observed by Liu (2016), who found that EC students in China lacked practical experience in terms of applying pedagogical knowledge.

Participants were asked to rate their perceptions of EC students' capability in professional practice in all 14 items as divided into the three sub-domains. There were significant differences between employers from the two culturally different countries. Australian employers had a more positive view on items across the three sub-domains, Chinese employers reported the lowest response score, and Chinese 4th-year students and academics reported mid-level opinions.

Participants were asked to rate their perceptions of their EC students' professional practice sub-domain 1: planning and implementing effective learning and teaching (eight question items). Data demonstrated that Australian participants had more positive views of their EC students, who were more knowledgeable about EC curriculum than practice capability, with mean scores on Items 3 and 6 of 4.39 and 3.93, respectively. Academics rated the highest score for Item 3 but were less positive regarding students' practical application of understanding of the EC curriculum. In contrast, Chinese participants were not satisfied by EC students' professional capabilities for understanding or application of the EC curriculum, with mean scores on Items 3 and 6 of 3.75 and 3.97, respectively.

6.2.3.2 PE placement in the early childhood initial teacher education course should work with children in a range of different early childhood education and care contexts and more time spent.

Most participants in this study were satisfied with the EC students' professional practice capabilities regarding planning and implementing effective learning and teaching. The documentary analysis also revealed that the two case-courses provided students with many application opportunities to practise their understanding either on campus or in real-classroom contexts, thereby meeting the ITE course accreditation mandates.

Interview data indicated that both courses provided students with opportunity to practise their theory in different simulated teaching and learning environments, including various tutorial tasks at UTAS and the university-based micro-teaching at YNNU. But the lack of real children being involved and a theoretical focus were concerns raised by most participants in this study, and these concerns might hinder EC students to shape their adaptive capability when they were in real classrooms. For example, Australian employer IAE3 suggested that "EC teaching is a practical profession, for which students deserve more opportunities to apply theory in real classrooms" rather than completing "a sort of academic paper" (IAE2); the implication here was that students merely write several papers (i.e., do academic work that has only some superficial connection with the real world) rather than actually putting knowledge and skills to use. Students could "consult with the teacher for my [a student's] lesson plans, teaching demonstrations, and how to adopt appropriate strategies for children with different needs to ensure that the children could acquire the intended learning outcomes" in real classrooms (Australian 4th-year student IAF2).

These perceptions somewhat aligned with several conceptions regarding the traditional teacher preparation courses, in addition to enriching data-based evidence regarding graduates' opinions of the courses' relevance to the reality of everyday working conditions in real classrooms (e.g., Darling-Hammond, 2006a; Kennedy & Heineke, 2014; Liu & Li, 2014). For example, the notion that theoretical knowledge could only be helpful to teachers technically underpins the theory–practice divide (Korthagen & Kessels, 1999). Chinese 4th-year students and graduates commented that they should work with children, or else the outcomes of this course would be lessened when they were in university-based micro-teaching; for example, several 4th-year students and graduates were worried about their lack of artistic performance skills and relevant pedagogical skills (Ang, 2014) to support their effective teaching in classrooms. This was previously identified by Chinese academic Liu (2016), who stated that EC ITE students were focusing on children's characteristics at the theoretical level rather than the children's practical needs. This view appeared to be tentatively confirmed by the current study; Chinese academic ICA1 stated that students should have the opportunity to reinforce and apply their understanding of content knowledge from university-based lecturers' instructions in classrooms. Meanwhile, employer ICE3 indicated that "the necessary theory was essential but in terms of supervising students' teaching practice, classroom teachers would be better".

The document analysis suggested that PE placements of the Australian EC ITE course were in a range of different ECEC contexts with differently-aged children, students had opportunities to work with different children and the opportunity to understand children in classrooms. Australian interview data provided evidence to support the advantages of this PE placement arrangement in the diverse range of ECEC contexts, such as for the importance of the age-appropriate pedagogies (Flückiger et al., 2016).

For example, IAF2 said that "this arrangement was good for me to become familiar with different educational environments with children from birth to eight". However, in the Chinese context, teaching practice in ITE courses focused on its forms rather than the needs and differences of children (Baum & King, 2006; Flückiger et al., 2016), which meant that EC ITE students typically could not understand the range of children they would teach. This difference was likely to influence the participants' perceptions of EC ITE students' capabilities regarding children's care and education, such as the remaining two sub-domains in the professional practice—create and maintain a supportive learning environment; and assess and report on children's performance—as indicated on the questionnaire. While no t-tests were performed, the data suggested Australian participants provided an overall higher positive view than that of the Chinese participants based on a visual comparison of the mean scores (see K3, K4, O3, and O4 in Appendices K and O). Importantly, a concern arising from Chinese real-classroom placements was the provision of opportunities for students to access different classrooms with children of various ages and experienced teachers, as Chinese graduate ICG3 stated:

> Every two or three weeks, observing and co-working with different classroom teachers for a range of age groups of children … apply my content knowledge and pedagogies to different age groups of children and learn various teaching styles and methods from more than one experienced kindergarten teacher.

Interview data from both countries suggested that the more time in real ECEC contexts, the better for students to apply their knowledge. However, one challenge of the Australian PE placement that emerged was the lack of professional engagement with children's parents, which was observed by a previous Australian study (Mayer et al., 2015). This study also included 4th-year students and academics, extending the

scope of Meyer et al. (2015) who reported the opinions only from graduates and employers. Both 4th-year students and graduates had somewhat negative views of their capability regarding building the relationship with parents and having sound communication skills because of a lack of practical opportunities. As Australian employer IAE2 suggested they "did not have much time to work with parents". Academics and employers had positive views of EC students' capability in this professional engagement. Quantitative data from the questionnaire regarding Australian participants' perceptions of EC students' professional engagement (see Table K5 in Appendix K) indicated that an overall mean score 4.5 (SD = 0.64) on Item 23 "Create rapport with children's parents and external experts to support initial early childhood teachers' professional development". Chinese respondents had a much weaker sense of their professional engagement with parents with little information provided. Open-ended qualitative data from Section D of the questionnaire captured two suggestions from 4th-year students for EC ITE course improvement. These indicated that EC students needed more opportunities in kindergartens, more real-classroom placements, and more practice in structured classroom observations (see Table 5.3).

6.2.3.3 Supports from the faculty.

Data suggested that Australian and Chinese participants' sense of EC students' preparedness upon EC ITE course completion was related to the degree to which satisfaction of the formal courses supported their learning practice, particularly in terms of appropriate instruction and practice opportunities. For example, all Chinese participants provided more positive responses to Item 24 "Had appropriate instruction, suggestions, and feedback from academics in the Faculty of Education," and Item 26

"Had many opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge and understandings". L1 and P1 in Appendices L and P show that the mean scores for these two items ($M = 4.07$, $SD = 0.88$ & $M = 4.03$, $SD = 0.74$; $N = 23$) from Australia and ($M = 4.20$, $SD = 0.66$ & $M = 4.28$, $SD = 0.91$; $N = 86$) from China were above 3 on the 5-point Likert scale, indicating that participants provided highly positive opinions, and that Chinese participants tended to express more highly positive views regarding faculty support than Australian participants. However, the standard deviation in Chinese 4th-year students' responses for the two items and Australian graduates for Item 26 were relatively large, meaning that their responses were widespread. For employers' responses from both countries, the standard deviation for Item 26 was below .50, indicating that their responses were slightly more consistent and in agreement.

6.2.4 *How might the early childhood initial teacher education courses be developed to meet the needs of stakeholders?*

The participants provided advice and suggestions for improving the current EC ITE courses to meet the needs of the two countries, along with their perceptions of how both courses prepared students for the classroom. Qualitative data gathered from the participants' free-text responses to the questionnaire and interviews were analysed and presented in *Chapter 5: Findings from the Questionnaire and Interviews*.

Several data-led suggestions and lessons were collected and analysed concerning the improvement of these two EC ITE courses, which may better meet the particular needs of the participants. The details included: (i) offering more learning and practice opportunities with clear content that focused on the education and care of younger children; (ii) providing more opportunities for teaching practice in a range of ECEC

places; and (iii) reinforcing the relationship and interaction between academics and students in the process of teaching, learning, and sharing information and experiences. These messages emerged from how participants perceived EC students' professional capabilities and were reported in full in Chapter 5.

6.2.4.1 Offering more learning and practice opportunities with clear content that focuses on the education and care of younger children.

6.2.4.1.1 *Early childhood focused content.*

The document analysis reported in *Chapter 4: Findings from the Document Analysis* indicated that the EC ITE courses from UTAS and YNNU provided sufficient theoretical knowledge to prepare students for becoming successful EC teachers. This was in accordance with existing research (e.g., AI-Hassan, 2019; Bowman, 2011; Bowman et al., 2000; Perry, 2004) on the fulfilment of requirements for ITE course accreditation (AITSL, 2015a; MoE, 2012a, 2012b) and the expectations of the ECEC (e.g., ACECQA). EC units were taught in classes attended by all ITE majors at UTAS rather than particularly for students of EC ITE (China). When considered together the data from the questionnaires and interviews indicated that several Australian participants were concerned about the EC ITE students' capabilities with younger children, as well as some confusion whether content delivered was for older children. Academic IAA3 argued "EC students sat together with students of primary teacher education in some units, where they felt confused and depressed as they were delivered some content relating to older children rather than younger children". Fourth-year students mentioned that "the course needs to be more EC focused" (QAF2) and with a stress on "lower primary (kindergarten to grade 2)" education (AQF6). It should also be noted that although the lectures were more general in order to cover the EC through

the primary years, the tutorials and activities for EC students dealt specifically with EC ITE, as Australian academic IAA1 stated. Academics could consider offering more instruction and material on young children's education in particular units and perhaps provide these separately to meet students' course expectations to concentrate more on knowledge and skills delivery in the ECEC area. Consequently, academics at UTAS could attempt to provide more teaching content and practice related to children's learning not only in tutorials but also in broader lectures.

6.2.4.1.2 *Artistic skills training.*

The interview data revealed that several Australian participants mentioned the desire for arts training within the EC ITE course. While artistic skills were not strictly essential for EC teacher preparation in Australia (ACARA, 2015; AITSL, 2018b; DEEWR, 2009), this was very different from the expectation of Chinese EC students (MoE, 1952; MoE, 2012c, 2012d). Both the extant literature (e.g., Ehrlin, 2015; Ehrlin & Wallerstedt, 2014; Gruenhagen, 2012) and the Australian findings from this present study indicated that mastering certain artistic skills provided student teachers with more confidence. A few handy artistic skills including cutting and drawing could be offered in the course training that might strengthen EC students' confidence in their classroom teaching. By contrast, EC teachers in China were already expected to master numerous artistic skills. This expectation of the arts' instrumental use is based on Chinese cultural and educational tradition and manifested itself in course requirements (MoE, 1952; MoE, 2012c, 2012d). It seemed that the necessary informal art training workshops should be provided, although this requirement might put too much pressure on EC teachers in practice. Students, academics, and relevant external parties can share and teach easy-to-learn and useful skills with specific student learning aims. This

arrangement may also allow students to learn more interesting curriculum-based activities that incorporate various art forms found in the Australian curriculum.

6.2.4.2 Providing more opportunities for teaching practice in early childhood education and care places.

The findings from the two EC ITE case studies revealed three components of PE placement that concerned participants. The participants reported that more time should be allocated to ensure that students could practise in real-classroom contexts where they worked with children and classroom teachers. Students also needed to observe and understand children in ECEC contexts where pedagogical knowledge of curriculum teaching practice and observation performance should be improved. This section explored these three components and their relationship to each other.

6.2.4.2.1 *The allocation of time for professional experience placement.*

The request for more practical teaching opportunities has been a longstanding concern in most ITE courses (e.g., Agbenyega, 2012; Baum & King, 2006; Beauchamp et al., 2013). Agbenyega (2012) and other researchers (e.g., Baum & King 2006; Cheng et al., 2016; Li & Zeng, 2018; Xiao & Zhou 2013) have argued that more time should be allocated for students to experience a range of real ECEC contexts. In the literature, practical placements were viewed as the key facet of teacher education for preparing students to become skilled and knowledgeable teachers (e.g., Ingvarson, 2014; Mayer et al., 2017; Xiao & Zhou, 2013). The respondents in this study argued the courses should provide more PE placements for students. The time investment of PE placement was sufficient, based on the document analysis reported in *Chapter 4: Findings from the Document Analysis*, which aligned with the quality requirements of the two countries (ACECQA, 2017a; AITSL, 2018b; MoE, 2012c, 2012d). The

document analysis indicated that both EC ITE courses had allocated more than the minimum required time stated in accreditation requirements and professional standards for students to conduct and complete their teaching practice. The 90-day real-classroom context placement of the UTAS course exceeded the recommended Australian provision of 80 days (AITSL, 2018b) where the additional 10 days were with children aged birth to three years (ACECQA, 2017b). The offering of various 18-week PE placements by YNNU also satisfied the requirements of ITE courses in China (MoE, 2011; MoE, 2016). This was, however, insufficient and not adequate to meet all participants' expectations regarding the practice activity in Australia or China, as some findings from the qualitative data in the questionnaire stated that more time should be allocated in PE placement in a broad ECEC context.

The call for more PE placements is often combined with the request for higher quality supervised teaching placements from both national policies (AITSL, 2011; AITSL, 2018b; MoE, 2011; MoE, 2012c, 2012d) and also the use of specific assessment tasks and criteria to measure teaching performance relevant to reported research (Mayer et al., 2015; Mayer et al., 2017; Ralph et al., 2008; Xiao & Zhou, 2013). Three Chinese stakeholder groups reported that the lack of explicit criteria for PE placement would lessen students' practice of their professional capabilities and hinder supervising classroom teachers from providing appropriate instruction. This study found that the case studies at UTAS and YNNU provided well-structured teaching practice opportunities that combined coursework with practice, which corresponded to previous studies (e.g., Boyd et al., 2009; Canrinus et al., 2017; Darling-Hammond, 2006a, 2006b). This study's statistical data somewhat confirmed this issue by reporting that Chinese 4th-year students (M = 3.93, SD = 0.69) and employers (M = 3.57, SD = 0.96) gave low scores on the 14 items regarding the EC students' capability in professional

practice. Graduates of YNNU maintained a higher opinion of how it developed professional capabilities, however, with a mean score was 4.21 (SD = 0.55). This view challenged the opinions from the YNNU's academics in this study. This concern had been identified in a previous study from a Chinese research group (Chen et al., 2016), who reported that in-service kindergarten teachers had a poor understanding of the *China's Professional Standards for Kindergarten Teachers (Trial Version)* (MoE, 2012c) when they were in the EC ITE course. To rectify this, these researchers suggested that EC ITE courses could employ items from this standard to guide and assess students' learning performance. Australian students were pleased that using the governmental teacher standards for their learning could strengthen their confidence to be EC teachers. IAF4 stated "I was so convinced that I would be a qualified graduate teacher when I completed all the units and PE placements because of the expectations of the teacher standards that these tasks referred to". This finding aligns with Allard, Mayer, and Moss's (2014) claim that standards are a core component in determining students' preparedness.

6.2.4.2.2 *Understanding children in early childhood education and care contexts.*

Learning about and understanding children allows an EC teacher to develop a more complete picture of young children and build a bridge between understanding new and previously learned information (Manning-Morton,2006; Perry, 2004). This principle has been integrated in the two case-courses document analysis indicated regarding the course structure and content. Empirical studies have emphasised the importance of teaching children self-respect, as a child who is viewed as an individual not only has a better sense of identity and well-being but also becomes a more active learner (Muenning et al., 2009; Yan, 2018). Teachers should also learn that always listening to

children is an essential duty in an EC teacher's role (Agbenyega, 2012; Bowman, 2011; Bowman et al., 2000; DEEWR, 2009; MoE, 2012d; Perry, 2004). EC students should observe and try to understand what children are demonstrating to them in order to conduct efficient and successful lessons (Liu, 2019; Manning et al., 2019; Raikes et al., 2005; Yan, 2018; Zhang & Yan, 2018). Both quantitative and qualitative data from the current study confirmed these concerns. The relatively higher scores on the EC ITE students' capability in the professional engagement regarding the development and modification of the teaching activities were rated by the Australian (M = 4.36, SD = 0.73) and Chinese (M = 4.05, SD = 0.69) participants. Meanwhile, opinions obtained from these participants provided a wealth of valuable insights. For example, Australian and Chinese employers suggested the EC ITE courses should provide more opportunities for students in classroom to: "understand real children" (IAE2); "reinforce students' mastery of course content" (IAE3); and "further acknowledge the particular profession of kindergarten teachers and watch children's behaviours" (ICE3). Such opportunities may provide further support for EC ITE students as they develop into accomplished teachers.

It is difficult for students to develop an understanding of children, as the time allocation for ITE students to spend in real-classroom contexts did not meet participants' needs, and this issue has been explored by previous studies (Dahlberg et al., 2007; Liu 2016). The current study provided similar broad empirical information regarding the participants' opinions on the EC students' understating of children. Participants from the two countries agreed that students in the case studies had a strong theoretical foundation in children's teaching but a lack of practical application in observing and understanding children.

Findings from the document analysis suggested that both EC ITE courses had offered more opportunities for students to observe and understand children in "real-life" ECEC contexts when compared to course requirements. Classroom observation was a key element of PE placement in the Australian and Chinese course standards for EC teacher education, and it highlighted the importance of children being at the core of the placements (Almy & Greenberg, 2000). According to the document analysis, the first task of each UTAS PE was observation. This was an observation of the placement environment, the teacher's routines, and the children's performance in an emotional, social, and physical context. Similarly, students in the YNNU's course went on kindergarten visits, and observations were regarded as essential to these visits.

Participants from the two case studies reported that learning to practise what they gained from knowledge of children's development and well-being in the classroom provided a challenge for students, which helped to shape their professional skills. They also believed that both courses encouraged students to develop a strong educational philosophy based on their experiences with children. These opinions suggest that children could be understood from a real-life perspective (Manning-Morton, 2006). Findings from the Australian case study further illustrated four classroom placements for students in diverse contexts with children of different ages (ACECQA, 2017b; AITSL, 2018b). This variety of placement settings is beneficial to students, as noted by numerous scholars (e.g., Knipe, 2016; Lemon et al., 2018; White et al., 2016) who stated that working with children at different stages required different theoretical understanding as well as adoption of appropriate-age pedagogy (Flückiger et al., 2016). Findings from the Chinese case indicated that some Chinese participants agreed with arranging real-classroom context placements that covered different ages, education levels and classroom teachers, such as the arrangement of age-focus, in a

structured way to "help us understand various teaching styles for children of different ages, with the adoption of relevant content knowledge in different learning atmospheres" (ICG1). On the basis of the evidence, the YNNU course should move more directly to create strong and sound relationships between university and kindergartens so that students can be assigned to different classrooms within cooperating ECEC locations. This will ensure that students can observe and better understand children at different stages of development.

6.2.4.2.3   *Making use of pedagogical knowledge.*

Pedagogical knowledge must be applied to real situations and developed through observation, as Shulman (1987) proposed when emphasising "learners" and "educational contexts". Stephen (2010) stated that pedagogy is the "silent partner in early years learning" (p.15) in that it supported EC students in developing a sound relationship with children and coming to understand their specific needs and capabilities (Bishop et al., 2014). The time spent practising teaching in "real-life" settings must involve the study of intentions, teaching methods, and strategies that lead to an in-depth understanding of children and educational sites (Alexander, 2013). The focus of EC education courses should be on understanding the subjects, and preparing students to apply the appropriate pedagogies (Andreas, 2019) in practical settings in order to ensure their teaching and activities were suited to the various stages of child development. The present study suggested that applying students' solid knowledge base regarding children's overall development was quite "strange" for some students when they worked with children. Australian 4th-year students and graduates said of their experiences that they "could not manage children with disruptive behaviour with an appropriate strategy" (IAF1), that "events in classroom did not unfold as I would have wanted" (IAF2), and that they "could not handle what I thought were somewhat

strange issues" (IAG3). Chinese 4th-year students and graduates similarly experienced the challenge of applying the EC curriculum for these younger children. For example, they indicated that they "failed to conduct these well-prepared plans with the EC curriculum" (ICF4) and that "real classroom teaching was a great way to apply the EC curriculum" (ICG1). These opinions indicated that some students were less adept at applying their understanding to different age groups in classroom settings.

Given that the time spent in practical settings did not meet the participants' needs, it seemed that few opportunities were presented to develop pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1987). The document analysis indicated that both courses offered diverse units relating to pedagogical knowledge and provided students various chances to apply and practice this knowledge under university-based instructions in their coursework, including tutorials at UTAS and micro-teaching at YNNU. However, EC students did not sufficiently participate in lessons that practically adopted the appropriate pedagogies when they engaged in a "real-life" environment with different age group children. Both Australian and Chinese 4th-year students and graduates reported having difficulty transferring their understanding to the classroom. "I did not know what was wrong with certain children sometimes until my colleagues gave me some hints, and I adopted appropriate methods to correct my behaviour and manage the children", UTAS graduate IAG3 reported. YNNU 4th-year student ICF4 described that she could not provide a music class for children with necessary pedagogical skills "I played a nursery rhyme beautifully on the piano and I repeated the words of the song many times, but many children completely ignored me. I had mastered how to play the piano but lacked pedagogical skills". Employers from both countries also had a similar concern. IAE3 indicated that "students had understood the content and principles of the curriculum and their plans were very much in-line, but those plans

were hard to use with children". In the Chinese context "students could present perfect artistic skills, but they were unable to apply artistic skills appropriately to support their teaching, neither in arts nor other areas" (ICE2). Graduate ICG3 particularly worried that "if I did not know how to use the art skills with appropriate pedagogical skills to support my teaching, then those capabilities could be regarded as rubbish". The data suggested that ensuring that more time was spent on practical ECEC experiences with structured feedback in close contact with children and supervising classroom teachers was likely to support students in improving their understanding of children and allow them to develop their professional skills.

This study's findings suggested that three components—spending more time in real ECEC contexts, observing children in these settings, and adopting appropriate pedagogical knowledge—should be combined to ensure a successful experience for students and would both enhance students' familiarity with the teaching profession and develop their professional skills. These experiences will ensure that graduating teachers can conduct a range of lessons to suit the diverse needs of children when coupled with the appropriate pedagogical knowledge and skills from their coursework, involving understanding every child's capabilities and supporting their learning by using proper pedagogical strategies (Ang, 2014). These broad conclusions accord with children's development and will better equip those that enter the workforce. Figure 6.1 demonstrates the relationship between the three components.

Figure 6.1.

The relationship between the three components of successful EC ITE development.

ITEs.
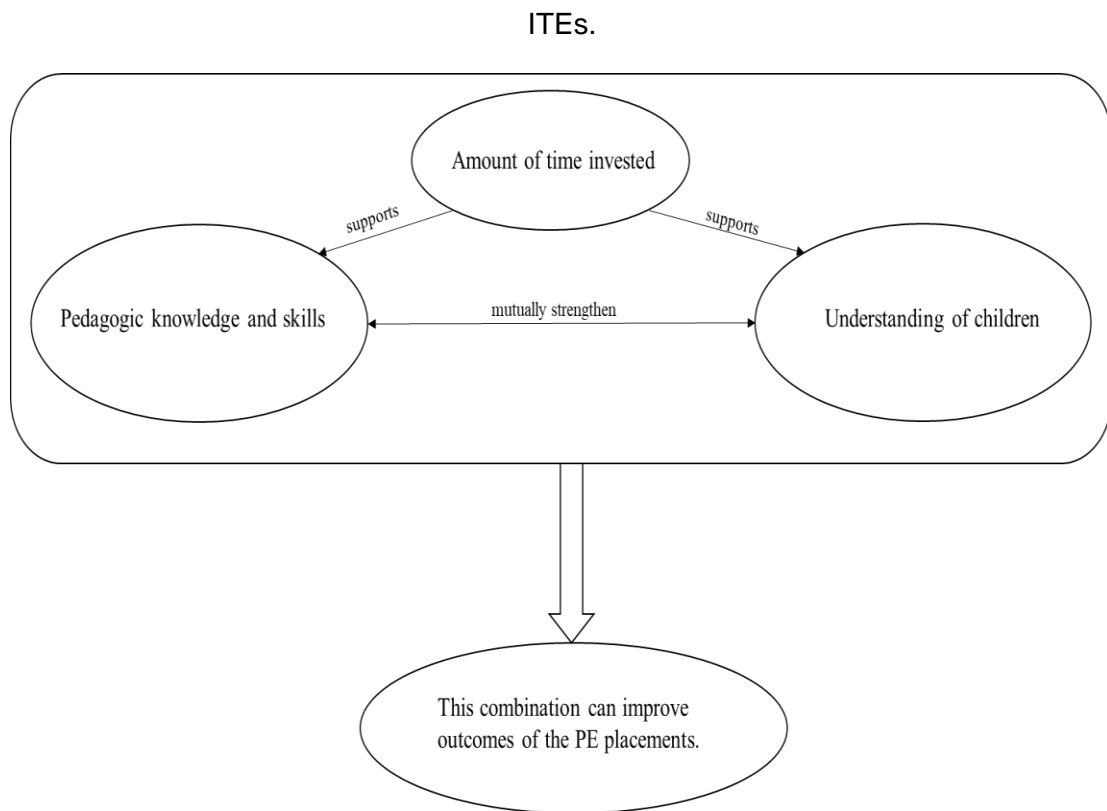
Investing an appropriate amount of time is an essential cornerstone of effective EC

ITE, where the two components of pedagogic knowledge and skills and understanding

of children mutually strengthen each other to ensure a successful approach to teaching

practice. The more time ITE students spent in real-classroom contexts, the more

pedagogical content was solidified which was confirmed by employers who agreed

that students should spend more time with children. Once students have experienced

more complex conditions and the challenges that arise in a range of real teaching

settings, they gain more confidence, as supported by research (e.g., Invargsen et al.,

2014; Mayer et al., 2015). This sort of pedagogical skill (Alexander, 2015; Shulman,

1987; Stephen, 2010) can be shaped through teaching experiences over time, such as,

in EC students' post-graduation service (Cochran-Smith & lytle, 1999; Liu, 2019;

Mayer et al., 2015).

This pattern of continued learning was supported and confirmed by academics and employers from both countries. An Australian academic (IAA2) stated that "our students were well-prepared and had adequate professional knowledge and professional practice, as some skills can only be formulated by accumulating rich experience over time". ICE3, a Chinese employer, said that "the course had prepared [students] to continue learning deeply in various artistic skills through independent learning capability from work".

Classroom challenges can also potentially help students learn and develop insight. They explore the power of observation through teaching practice and learn how effective it is in moving them toward a better understanding and knowledge of children's needs and capabilities. For example, both Australian and Chinese employers reported that students could not "handle children with different needs" (IAE3) because of a lack of understanding of children (IAE2, IAE3, ICE2). Australian graduate IAG2 shared her experience "I was struggling to create a supportive and positive learning environment for the children regarding their development emotionally and physically". Chinese graduates meanwhile emphasised the importance of "learning from practice" in real classrooms (ICG1, ICG3). Australian employer IAE3 stated "by observing and studying the way children behave to reinforce students' mastery of course content, they were able to deduce what was going on in the children's actions". Students could experience significant insights when their observational powers helped them to understand the fundamental, unique ways that children present themselves as having powerful social identities (Almy & Greenberg, 2000; Lemon et al., 2018; Manning-Morton, 2006; Muenning et al., 2009; Perry, 2004; Yan, 2018).

6.2.4.3 Teaching and learning process.

What content the courses included, and how they were designed and developed has been discussed above. How well the outcome-based courses were met the specifics of the teaching profession (e.g., expectations and requirements from the country's professional standards) was seen as essential, through ensuring the CA of learning and teaching activities and assessments (Biggs, 1996). Teaching content, teaching strategies, and assessments need to be carefully considered in the CA model (Biggs, 1996), and designed to maintain the three key alignment components that students needed to access: intended learning outcomes, teaching and learning activities, and assessment tasks (Biggs, 2014; Biggs & Tang, 2011). Appropriate grading systems are also required for this model (Biggs, 2014).

The current study found that participants were competent in reporting what factors could support EC students to be classroom-ready teachers by the time they finished the courses, in response to the three elements of CA discussed from the literature.

The findings provided some evidence to indicate where the students' achievement was determined by whether or not the course adopted the CA framework. The UTAS EC ITE course had used the CA, while the YNNU course did not. An examination of the data found that the differences made by adopting the CA model were evident between what the literature described as key attributes of effective teaching and learning models for students' achievement, and what the responses from this study reported them to be. The document analysis and interview data both individually and together suggested that the outcome-based teaching and learning approach applied by the Australian EC ITE course was beneficial to students and enhanced their ability to formulate an

individual, theoretical understanding that could subsequently be practiced in real-classroom contexts.

6.2.4.3.1 *Make course information more public.*

Accessing and obtaining comprehensive information regarding a course and each unit in a course was the first factor of CA—that is, students could access and understand intended learning outcomes, teaching and learning activities, and assessment tasks (Biggs, 2014; Biggs & Tang, 2011). The document analysis together with interviews showed that UTAS's EC ITE students could easily access course information via university websites. Students could also obtain more specific details on each unit including objectives, modules, assessment tasks, and criteria via MyLO, the learning management system that UTAS adopted for teaching and learning. Detailed teaching activities and assessment tasks for each unit and PE placement were provided, comprising criteria linking to the appropriate focus areas of the Graduate Teacher Standards (AITSL, 2011). Reports of access to information were significantly different—and much less evident—in China. It was reported that specific outlines of each unit were often discussed (and rarely shared with learners) by academics and extended professionals in faculty and university-dominated formal sessions, or by professional committees responsible for different courses (e.g., the Learning and Teaching Committee of Early Childhood Education which oversees the EC ITE course). Students who attended YNNU's EC ITE course seldom accessed or obtained any online information about the course teaching process or learning outcomes. The lack of information sharing as a community of practice in the learning process fundamentally challenges the CA model presented by Biggs (1996). It meant that students were not well-acquainted with what they were expected to learn in each unit and then to demonstrate practically while on PE.

Interview data along with document analysis also revealed that the Australian participants felt more positive perceptions regarding preparation for PE placement than Chinese participants because the course from UTAS provided students with comprehensive documents—an expectation/information sheet and an assessment form. These documents included statements: (i) of the explicit aims and expectations of each placement (the intended learning outcomes); (ii) the appropriate supervision and instruction based on the task description and requirements (the teaching and learning activities); and (iii) the specific tasks students were required to conduct and complete (the assessment tasks). This format aligned with the principles of the CA model (Biggs, 1996). Australian students tended to be more willing to undertake some preparations to complete each placement in a range of ECEC contexts, as they understood "what tasks EC students should complete and what requirements they needed to meet" (IAG2). As a result, they were more confident in teaching. The findings from China reported that YNNU's EC ITC course provided students with several ambiguous and generalised requirements in placement logbooks that were intended to guide and judge student performance when students were in different stages of their PE placements. These logbooks usually provided guidance for students to prepare their prospective teaching materials and record their performance, and for classroom teachers to supervise, when students were in real classrooms for observation and placement. Interview data indicated that 4th-year students, graduates, and employers' negative opinions of the absence of clear descriptions and requirements of each PE placement that might produce "little positive influence on students' learning," (Chinese employer ICE1). Those participants suggested the course should offer more specific information for PE placement.

The combination of the document analysis and perceptions of the EC ITE courses from UTAS and YNNU indicated that UTAS students were more able to fully understand the essential aims and objectives of their course. This indicates the importance of making public all information and resources (e.g., the outlines of each unit) that are aligned with the principles of the CA model (Biggs, 1996). The data strongly suggested that YNNU should follow the Australian example by adopting the CA approach and providing information on the university website and/or handing out hard copies to the enrolled students.

6.2.4.3.2   *Assessments with clear task descriptions and their criteria.*

Detailed descriptions of the assessment tasks and the criteria for meeting professional teaching standards are presently missing in China. In Australia, however, learners can achieve the intended learning aims if they can access and understand these objectives and use them to guide and gauge their learning process.

Teaching content and strategies as well as assessment tasks and grading methods need to be carefully designed and adopted to maintain alignment in the CA model (Biggs, 1996). Providing appropriate assessments with clear task descriptions and their criteria to students could enable them to plan and design deep/meaningful learning process and achieve high-quality learning outcomes (Bloxham & Boyd, 2007; Marton & Säljö, 1997; Ramsden, 2003). Assessment of student's assignments in the two courses aimed to support students in mastering the necessary theories, skills, and capabilities for EC education. Recalling and applying knowledge within practical situations was an effective method for ensuring that students retained the content, and helped them to transfer this knowledge to teaching activities in real classrooms. The findings from the document analysis indicated that the two EC ITE courses provided students with

practical opportunities, including tutorials at UTAS and several practical units (i.e., *seven units for five areas*) at YNNU, to construct their unique educational philosophy by collecting, analysing, and conducting various teaching resources. This process of generating and investigating learning materials meant that students were able to create their own skyscrapers of knowledge. However, interview data reflected strongly differing opinions about this between participants in the two courses.

Assessment task descriptions.

Data from interviews suggested that UTAS students had somewhat more positive views regarding clear task descriptions and their criteria for the coherent assessment tasks than that of Chinese students. "Completing the assignments step by step by using the detailed descriptions … guided me on what mattered and what I needed to pay attention to", IAF1 stated. This statement was supported by graduate IAG2 and stressed the importance of assessment task descriptions, such as "keeping [the descriptions] in my mind allowed me to learn from the lectures and tutorials as intended". Chinese students were dissatisfied with the final-term exams and the essay tasks for understanding practice in real contexts because of poor or missing descriptions and detailed assignment prompts. ICG3 reported that "the more content I remembered, the higher the score I attained. Such one-off exams hardly helped me create a solid enough content base for practice", and ICF2 said that "the general descriptions of the essay" allowed students to rewrite "the opinions of others rather than demonstrating my own opinions".

Using the final-term exam or essay as the main assessment task in the YNNU EC ITE course did not constitute a sufficient learning/teaching process, because one assessment does not engender a steady process in which students could create their

own educational philosophy or develop understanding of how the course content might be demonstrated in practice. UTAS's EC ITE course employed a wide range of written assignments to constitute the main assessment (e.g., portfolio, report) which supported students in constructing their individual educational philosophies. The document analysis suggested the main assessment in the UTAS's EC ITE course comprised a range of written assignments (e.g., portfolios, observation notes, reports) for a coherent assessment. Academics at UTAS reported that each unit consisted of systematic tasks with clear descriptions that allowed students to conduct active learning and combine their learning resources with their personal opinions. This process led them to have unique experiences that would help them produce high-quality written assignments. The Australian students typically suggested that "all tasks in a unit were presented as a whole" (IAF2), and to "develop my theoretical understanding gradually" (IAG2), because the EC students could regulate their learning process that could promote "a more deep situational learning approach" (Marton & Säljö, 1984).

Specific descriptions for each section of PE placement were offered for UTAS's students, supervising classroom teachers, and all participants involved to ensure that they understood well their different responsibilities and supported students' completing the quality PE through better preparation and cooperative work. The YNNU EC ITE course also required students to complete required written documents such as logbooks by recording their performance in each PE section. Because explicit tasks descriptions and requirements were rarely stated and shared with all participants, including students, supervising classroom teachers and university-based supervisors engaging in PE placement, the students' logbooks and PE records produced little benefit for the YNNU students. Interview data showed that 4th-year students and graduates had negative opinions of using the university-designed placement logbooks

for the completion of the PE; similarly, employers had a critical view similar to that stated by ICE1 "the visit produced little positive influence on students' learning because they came here for a visit without any specific instructions in advance from the university". Fourth-year students and graduates could not be aware of what tasks they would undertake and what they should prepare before they started their PE placements, and they spent much time in real classrooms engaging in such activities as "sitting back in the classroom" (ICG3) and "wandering around the kindergarten" (ICF4) without intentions.

These reports were at odds with the concept of "full-course practice" proposed by Chinese educators Ding (2013) and Wu (2011), in which placements must provide appropriate guidance and feedback to students from university-based academics and kindergarten teachers. With the limited sharing of information and agreed guidance using structured observation in PE placement, other factors also changed, for example, kindergarten culture, arrangement of curriculum activities, classroom teachers' teaching or mentoring experience, and their professional disposition. Chinese 4th-year students, graduates and employers were in broad agreement regarding the inadequate practice task descriptions and, hence, the available materials could not support a sustained high quality of practicum instruction. Interview data showed that YNNU students felt confused and passively annotated their reports without a real understanding of what behaviour was being observed; employers and kindergarten teachers were both in an awkward situation because they did not know what tasks students should introduce or conduct. The academics still believed these kindergarten experiences could help students complete a quality placement as explained by ICA2 "we highly respected every kindergarten's culture, education conception, and arrangement of curriculum activities". Employers and students wanted more direction

while academics embraced the open-endedness of allowing the students to fit the local context.

Interview data provided more insight into the four stakeholder groups' cultural context within each case study. The questionnaire findings concerning the YNNU EC ITE course found that support from the faculty was somewhat more positive than equivalent responses obtained from Australian counterparts. Australian participants expressed their satisfaction with the EC ITE course that provided EC students with opportunities to engage with children by offering assessment tasks, descriptions, and criteria.

Assessment criteria.

Detailed teaching activities and assessment tasks for each unit UTAS were provided, including criteria linking to the appropriate focus areas of the governmental teacher standards. The document analysis indicated that the teacher standards had been made explicit in the course, particularly the Graduate Teacher Standards (AITSL, 2011) which were essential for UTAS' ITE course accreditation (AITSL, 2018b) and course delivery. This study also found that the unit objectives, the aims of each assessment assignment, and each assessment assignment's criteria, had been integrated and implemented in the EC ITE course at UTAS and, secondly, were cross-referenced based on the focus areas of each of the Graduate Teacher Standards (AITSL, 2011). The data also suggested that some respondents thought the Australian teacher standards were not specific enough for ECEC teachers, as they were concerned about being appropriately credentialed for the Australian teacher registration process requiring that "teacher standards should be amended to ensure their relevance and applicability to early childhood teachers" (AITSL, 2018b, p. 7). The lesson from the

authorities was that all unit design should align with all focus areas of the current teacher standards. China has published and implemented *China's Professional Standards for Kindergarten Teachers* (MoE, 2012c) an official, specialised document for EC teachers. The interview data echoed Chen et al. (2018) who suggested that students could not understand what assessment tasks or teaching activities fitted or were applicable to which focus areas of the standards.

The reports from the Australian interviews showed that using the Graduate Teacher Standards (AITSL, 2011) to underpin assessment instruments was successful since the requirements and expectations of the workforce were not only met but led to more a confident beginning practitioner. The Australian 4th-year students and graduates in this study were convinced that by using the standards to assess students' capabilities they would be "competent" (IAF2) and "classroom-ready" (IAG3) teachers, as their performance "was supervised and assessed fully against the professional standards" (IAG2) and "the expectations of the teacher standards that these tasks referred to" (IAF4). These very positive views were confirmed by the academics. Several employers were concerned that some standards were so rigorous that only a few students would be able to meet them.

The participants in China, on the other hand, had a limited and rather naive view regarding using their kindergarten teacher standards (MoE, 2012c) to design the assessment tasks in both theoretical units and PE placement. Document analysis combined with interview data suggested that the EC ITE course at YNNU did not employ the standards nor were they used to design agreed-upon criteria to supervise or gauge students' practice performance. This confirmed a finding by Chen et al. (2018) who indicated that the *China's Professional Standards for Kindergarten Teachers*

(Trial Version) (MoE, 2012c) was seldom used—or in this study's case appeared completely unused—as a means of designing and implementing an assessment instrument. Interviews did not capture Chinese participants' view of the use of standards for students' practical capabilities, as this professional document had not yet been involved in the assessment of the YNNU EC ITE. The 4th-year students and graduates from YNNU questioned whether their performance in a real classroom could be better examined when the EC students completed all required written documents such as logbooks. For example, 4th-year student ICF3 stated she "did gain an expected score in PE placement due to the submission of a well-written document". Supervising classroom teachers tended to provide positive comments for their supervised students, because there was "no specific assessment requirement to measure whether students had the professional capability" (ICE1). This challenge was identified by previous studies in the Chinese context (e.g., Nan, 2015; Xu, 2013). It seems that clear assessment task descriptions and specific criteria provided the foundation for students to engage the learning process through interaction between academics at university or classroom teachers at ECEC contexts.

Formative assessment.

The interview data reported that the UTAS 4th-year students, graduates, and academics had a positive view of the systemic assessments for students. In the first written assessment, students could develop their personal philosophy and understanding by exploring theories presented in lectures and in the extended readings. Australian graduate IAG1 said "my teaching and learning philosophy was formulated through the instruction of the lecturer and timely feedback from each task". This strongly aligns with the CA model's concern that the mutual communication process between teacher

and students during the entire teaching and learning process to contribute to the students' learning (Biggs, 2014; Black & Wiliam, 1998b; Lok et al., 2016; Yorke, 2003). In the second assessment task, the students incorporated their individual understanding with the feedback they had received from the academics. This coherent assessment prepared students to develop their "theoretical understanding gradually" (IAG2). Graduate IAG4 was more willing to obtain case studies or relevant samples to more deeply understand an assessment requirement when supplied easy-to-understand descriptions. In YNNU's EC ITE course the final-term examination was the key threshold assessment for students. Most students had a slightly positive opinion that this assessment task could support them to develop their professional capabilities. For example, some Chinese students claimed they only focussed on memorising content for the final examinations immediately before the examination, which means that they had poor content engagement and understanding of this in practice. ICG3 indicated they "spent a lot of time boning-up on specific units in an intensive learning period". This was supported by ICA2 who said that "many students spent one or two weeks studying and remembering as much of the unit contents as they could before sitting an exam". This implied that more students simply memorised the unit content in a short time rather than seeking deeper meaning and incorporating it into a wider understanding of the practical and professional issues. This practice of rote memorisation may lead to surface learning and poor-quality learning outcomes (Entwistle & Entwistle,1992). While rote learning did help students obtain good scores for each unit, it was unhelpful concerning their understanding of the construction and practice of the content, academic ICA2 reported. The use of written assignments, including essays (another main assessment task), meant it was hard to make decisions about each student's classroom performance.

Formative assessment provides students with a concise understanding and guidance on particular areas in need of improvement. Quality and timely feedback on each assessment task combined with a unit-specific focus on professional standards assists students in reflecting on their achievements, especially concerning what they already needed to learn and how to improve for the next task under the comments from academics. Document analysis along with interview data reported that UTAS EC ITE had appropriately implemented the policy on formative assessment, indicating that providing each student with prompt feedback for every task constituted substantive support as they built subject matter understanding. This strongly aligned with the argument of Black and Wiliam (1998a, 1998b) indicating that effective formative assessment could enhance students' learning. Participants were positive about this approach. Several academics noted that students tended to be more concerned about the feedback from the first or former assignments than the final assignment (IAA2, IAA3). This view was affirmed by UTAS 4th-year students and graduates, who indicated that feedback could be useful for modifying and improving the following and final assessment task. This approach entails that feedback identifies what specific steps the students need to take to improve, along with respecting and considering students' individual differences. This can significantly cultivate a student's independent learning capability, both implicitly and explicitly, by providing an opportunity for self-reflection on their learning progress (Biggs & Tang, 2011). The aim is not only to encourage them by praising their existing achievements but also to give them confidence to face new challenges. The UTAS EC ITE course had implemented these principles, which were tested by analysing the interview data. Students could monitor their engagement with learning and assess the development of their professional skills to achieve high-quality learning outcomes (Bloxham & Boyd, 2007) and also engage

in a deeper approach that discouraged them from surface-learning activities (Marton & Säljö, 1997; Ramsden, 2003).

Offering prompts and feedback plays an important role in the learning process in the scholarly literature (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Gibbs & Simpson, 2004). Timely feedback within this formative approach ensured that students achieved "a continuum of knowledge acquisition" (Glaser, 1963, p. 519), which concentrated on the development of individual learning. This study found UTAS EC students would engage in deep/meaningful learning processes by examining and reflecting on their professional capabilities in the context of the formative feedback. This active, outcome-based learning process aligned with the approach of various scholars (Biggs, 1996; Marton & Säljö, 1997; Ramsden, 2003), and it resulted in the achievement of successful learning outcomes (Bloxham & Boyd, 2007). The "learner arrives at meaning by actively selecting, and cumulatively constructing, their own knowledge, through both individual and social activity" (Biggs, 1996, p. 348). Students typically did not engage with the learning process by using the two main assessments at YNNU, and they very seldomly obtained feedback from lecturers. The document analysis indicated that there were no principles or mechanism to guide either academics or students at YNNU to assist the learning process by adopting a formative assessment approach. The summative assessment approach did not include feedback to inform students of their level of content mastery in relation to their grade in the YNNU EC course. Neither did the students receive comments on their examinations, which was a lost opportunity to construct their personal knowledge foundations. This situation fostered passive learning, where students uncritically followed instructions and completed the assessments through rote learning. Chinese 4th-year student ICF1 commented "I remembered more content, but I forgot a great deal after the exam".

This challenge that students faced was at odds with the CA principle of encouraging students to create their own active understanding, rather than passively accepting information delivered by their own teachers (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Tran et al., 2010). This situation led to what Marton and Säljö (1997) and Ramsden (2003) previously argued was, i.e., a closed-book examination completed under time constraints and used to measure student performance without the provision of any feedback typically led to students engaging in surface learning.

Carefully considering the findings from the Australian document analysis in Chapter 4 and the Australian participants' positive perceptions, a combination of mixed, formative, and summative assessments constituted an ideal approach for ensuring students' understanding and development (see the findings in Chapter 5). Thus, the adoption of a "formative use of summative tests" (Black & Wiliam, 2009) with feedback for students would be appropriate for the YNNU EC course. Designing a structured feedback form or framework where information regarding students' current learning performance and intended learning outcomes would align with a formative assessment that would meet this requirement.

6.2.4.3.3   *Grading system.*

The third component of the CA model advocated for the implementation of a criteria-referenced grading system for securing transparent and valid results, instead of a norm-referenced grading system (Biggs, 1996). In norm-referencing, students' learning performance is compared to other students rather than independent learning outcomes criteria (see page 94). The criteria-referenced grading system was used in UTAS (which was positively viewed by the students for enabling the development of their capabilities) while the norm-referenced grading system was adopted in YNNU.

It is possible that YNNU could attempt to exchange the norm-referenced grading system for a criteria-referenced grading system for its EC ITE course.

6.2.4.3.4   Delivery mode.

Online and face-to-face tutorials in Australia provided students with opportunities to practice what they had learned, in addition to lectures that ensured content delivery. Students could discuss their understanding or assessment of information with others either orally or via an online discussion board, enabling them to share their opinions and experiences. This style of learning and teaching aligns with Biggs' CA model (1996). Australian findings suggested that students were able to formulate their understanding and develop their practice in a blended learning environment. There were positive learning outcomes from this delivery mode where face-to-face and online tutorials provided flexibility and convenience (Reasons et al., 2005; Riffell & Sibley, 2004). This is corroborated by Australian participants, and it aligned with the results of Horn and Staker (2014) and Manwaring et al. (2017). This study may provide empirical evidence to support the argument that a blended teaching and learning approach may improve ITE students' outcomes. The interaction between students and academics in the overall learning and teaching process of UTAS's EC course was fairly consistent although the level of engagement and interaction within these tutorials was a cause for concern among some Australian academics. Several 4th-year students and graduates worried that delayed comments and feedback from academics or peers or through an asynchronous online discussion board could lessen the effectiveness of their learning activities. UTAS graduate IAG3 stated "I rarely got timely feedback from either the tutor or my peer on the online discussion board. When I did get a few comments, it took so long that I forgot what I had asked". This may challenge studies that claimed there were no significant factors regarding the delivery

method that impacted students' achievement (e.g., Martin, 2010; McMahon & Thompson, 2014; Mollenkopf et al., 2017)—particularly Mollenkopf et al. (2017), who stated there was no direct evidence to identify which delivery mode could enhance ITE students' learning outcomes.

There was "limited evidence as to what particular methods of blending impact [on] academic achievements" (Siemens et al., 2015, p. 83), however, several Western scholars have suggested that the blended delivery mode may instigate positive student learning outcomes (e.g., Lim et al., 2007; Neuhauser, 2002; Reasons et al., 2005; Riffell & Sibley, 2004). The importance of engagement with a blended learning approach has been a concern of stakeholders for some time (e.g., Al-Khanjarti, 2014; Boelens et al., 2017; Downes, 2005; Manwaring et al., 2017). Australian participants generally believed that the use of a blended teaching and learning mode could adequately support students' different needs, available time, and physical location, including "flexibility and convenience" (IAF3) and "comfort" (IAG1), in order to complete their education effectively and successfully. However, delayed responses through the online discussion board were mentioned as a concern by several students (e.g., IAF1, IAF2, and IAG3), similar to the findings of Chen et al. (2014). The decrease in the social interaction of the online communication compared with a face-to-face environment was in line with the findings of previous studies (e.g., Graham, 2006; McDonald, 2014; Norberg et al., 2011; Song et al., 2004). Online learning was not widely used in China and face-to-face lectures in the classroom were viewed as the primary opportunities for students to study and learn. Chinese participants in this study had few concerns regarding this traditional mode for content delivery which continues to predominate in formal schooling from primary school through university. Findings from the qualitative interview data and the extant literature (e.g., Bonk et al., 2006; De

George-Walker & Keeffe, 2010; Owston et al., 2013) underscored the notion that maintaining a balance between online and face-to-face learning was imperative in creating a better environment for learning and communication so that sound lecturer-student and student-student interactions could be developed (e.g., Dixson, 2012; Maki & Maki, 2007; Swan et al., 2000, Young & Norgard, 2006). The "balanced" mode attracted students who were willing to participate in online tutorials and simulated teaching activities in Australia. Several units in the YNNU EC course have indicated they are in the process of designing online tutorials that will provide students an alternative learning approach.

6.3 Conclusion

The cross-national comparative case study was comprised of two individual case studies—Case Study 1 and Case Study 2—in the Faculty of Education, UTAS, Australia, and the Faculty of Education Science and Management of YNNU, China respectively. This study had its genesis in the researcher's concern for the provision and nature of ECEC in China given the changing family dynamics and the stated government goal of improving the educational outcomes of this sector. The opportunity to consider this in a cross-cultural comparative context was seen as a way to make a significant contribution to knowledge. While there are separate national studies of EC ITE courses there were no similar studies identified in the literature.

Chapter 6 Discussion and Conclusion has brought together the findings from multiple data gathering approaches—document analysis, questionnaire and interviews—provided by multiple participants of four stakeholder groups, namely, current final year students, recent graduates, academic teachers and employers of the graduates. This study is unique in breadth of data and of participants. Of particular note are the

data gathering instruments that have been provided in both English and Chinese as these will allow for studies to replicate and build on the findings in multiple contexts.

The findings include some surprises, such as both sets of governments' policy frameworks in Australia and China showing a degree of congruence in course requirements and content, and being outcomes-focused in meeting employment needs. The Chinese central government through MoE (2017) has a tight control of student entry and EC ITE course content in China, while AITSL performs a similar national role through its requirements for professional standards and course accreditation to be met in the different states in Australia (AITSL, 2011, 2018b).

Not surprisingly, there were some strong differences, such as an absence of course and unit outlines and details of assessment tasks including assessment criteria, and a requirement for relatively high performance in the arts skills area in China compared to the Australian course. The Chinese data suggested no current connection with the use of the national professional standards (MoE, 2011, 2012c) to design practical assessment tasks for students while on PE, compared with a close monitoring and linking through the course accreditation process for Australian students. The wide-spread use in Australia of blended learning or hybrid approaches to course delivery is also different to the typical face-to-face mode of delivery in China.

All stakeholder groups thought that their particular approach was producing graduates who possessed the necessary knowledge, competencies and dispositions to enable then to be successful in their chosen career. However, in both countries the participants' responses could be seen to favourably view their own stakeholder contribution to the EC students' training and careers. This meant, for example, that students were more

critical of the course content than the academics or the graduates and the employers were more critical of the academics and the students (than themselves).

6.3.1   New contribution to knowledge.

This study has presented several new findings which contributed to the understanding of this important field and have broad implications for the two countries and beyond.

The approach and nature of the training of EC ITE teachers in Australia and China was different, but indications of a convergence was discerned. The system in China is presently highly centralised while that in Australia uses a federated model with diverse providers and regulators (Table 4.3 on page 180). The style of curriculum design, student selection and recruitment, course content and teaching modes at the case study institutions reflected differences in their historical-political-cultural systems. The emerging evolutionary rather than revolutionary convergence in the purpose and nature of EC ITE education was reflected through recent Chinese policy documents as they now reflect many of the Western strategies. The language is increasingly similar and becoming more so over time.

The data from the UTAS case study showed a transparent and clear alignment of content, roles and responsibilities from the lecturing staff to the students to the employers, particularly around standards and assessments. The data from the YNUU course showed there was no publicly available course and unit material available for the students or employers. This meant, for instance, the assessment tasks and standards on the final professional experience session were not clear to the supervising teachers assessing the students and they were likely to be using idiosyncratic or centre-specific criteria frameworks to evaluate the student's readiness for the life of a classroom

teacher. This lack of a "joined-up approach" involving all participants meant that the goals of the MoE to raise national standards were unlikely to be met soon. This thesis described how the CA model (Biggs, 1996) worked in the UTAS case study. CA is suggested as an approach for addressing curriculum modernisation in YNNU.

The extensive literature review did not identify other Chinese studies that encompassed the gold standard methodology of Qualitative Research, namely, "multi-site, multi-method and multi-person" data collection. In seeking information from all key stakeholder groups from two separate institutions, using a range of data gathering tools, this study has provided a new methodological contribution to deepening our knowledge of EC teacher preparation. For example, making the questionnaire items designed for this study (that reflected the national professional standards in both Australia and China) available to other researchers to use to "test", through replication or validation, these reported findings in other studies and so add to our comparative knowledge of EC teacher preparation.

6.3.2   *Suggestions for future research.*

The suggestion for potential future research is based on the methodological considerations. Although there have been few large-scale studies that compare the particular components of EC teachers' preparation in different countries, research of this kind is complicated and necessarily time-consuming. The consideration of cross-cultural measurement equivalence is essential as there may be language sensitiveness that should be considered when analysing the data. This study employed the *back translation* method (Brislin, 1970; Harkness & Schoua-Glusberg, 1998) to ensure the validity and reliability in the equivalence of meanings of both data collection

instruments and data analysis. It is suggested that further consideration be given to increasing the validity and the transferability in the equivalent of instruments by using a strict and suitable translation procedure. Validation could occur by adopting a comparison of item response theory statistics on the performance of individuals of the target language with those of individuals of the source version. Comparing separate samples for each language version could establish item equivalence across different language versions (Hambleton, 2004). The use of a Rasch model, a type of item response theory, would enable testing for the assurance instruments' equivalence and might enable more rigorous analysis overall in future studies in countries in which languages other than English or Chinese.

Data had been obtained and investigated to address the research questions and sub-questions in this study, but other possible research questions have not been discussed. Data about participants' demographic information and their views of what personal features and professional dispositions an EC teacher should graduate with came from the questionnaire's section A and E respectively. Data indicated that participants engaging in EC ITE education and ECEC programs from the two countries either obtained or expected to obtain higher education qualifications. However, this study did not deeply investigate the relationship between their education background and their perspectives about the EC ITE courses and EC students' achievements. These data may have an impact upon the outcomes of both EC ITE courses and ECEC programs. The findings revealed that participants in the two case studies held slightly different opinions regarding what constituted professional character in an EC teacher. This study has not explored what factors brought about these distinctions. It is suggested that future studies explore these concerns by referencing the data that this study obtained regarding EC educators' personal features.

6.3.3 Suggestions for future practice.

One of the significant aspects of this study was the detailed investigation of two EC ITE courses through a comparison of the two case studies. Policymakers and extended professionals may design an improved EC ITE curriculum that contains a substantial mix three components: (i) content knowledge; (ii) PE placement in real ECEC contexts; and (iii) a suite of learning and teaching modes and approaches. Providing more variation in course content and structure, adapting the development of the faculty is expected to support students and so be better prepared. This considered approach will better meet the needs of a dynamic society while accommodating the country's unique conditions and features. International research, particularly joint comparative studies, allows experts from different countries to cooperate in order to enhance their understanding and comprehension of different contexts and backgrounds. It is possible to enrich the field of education with better understanding of the nature of the socio-political contexts, the prevailing economic conditions, and historical educational tradition.

6.4 Summary

Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusion discussed the findings this cross-national comparative case study comparing Case Study 1 and Case Study 2 EC ITE courses in Australia and China. The study explored the relationship of the findings with each of the research sub-questions through analysis of documentation and capturing different participants' perceptions of the courses through qualitative research methods.

The study examined participants' perceptions of current EC ITE courses outcomes in the two countries separately. It identified the similarities and differences in the EC ITE

courses in different cultural contexts and provided an understanding and knowledge of key policies regarding the regulation of EC ITE courses (in Australia and China), procedures for their quality assurance and details of the courses themselves including PE placement in ECEC. The external and internal factors and components that influence current EC ITE course outcomes and graduate achievement were discussed by comparing the findings from the two case studies and relating them to the extant literature. Several recommendations to improve both EC ITE courses were offered by discussing the courses' individual advantages and shortcomings on the basis of the data gathered the country context. Several suggestions for future comparative research were presented.

The findings are important for governments and participants wanting to improve the EC ITE courses to enhance graduates' professional capabilities. The quality of the EC ITE courses is closely linked to the satisfaction level of a broad range of stakeholders, including ECEC and EC ITE policymakers, university administrators, ECEC employers, and teacher educators. The promotion and development of the current EC ITE in both countries through the utilisation of published research, including from this study, will assist graduates to be "classroom ready" teachers. Finally, highly trained EC teachers with the appropriate professional knowledge, skills and understandings, working with young children will lead to significant gains for children and their families and, in turn, will be beneficial for all of society.

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APPENDIX A

Ethics Approval

Social Science Ethics Officer
Private Bag 01 Hobart
Tasmania 7001 Australia
Tel: (03) 6226 2763
Fax: (03) 6226 7148
Katherine.Shaw@utas.edu.au

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (TASMANIA) NETWORK

UTAS
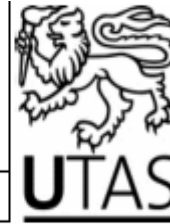
23 August 2016

Professor John Williamson
Faculty of Education
University of Tasmania

Student Researcher: Yixian Zhang

Sent via email

Dear Professor Williamson

Re: FULL ETHICS APPLICATION APPROVAL
Ethics Ref: H0015809 - Early Childhood Teacher Preparation: A Comparative Study
between two courses in Australia and China

We are pleased to advise that the Tasmania Social Sciences Human Research Ethics
Committee approved the above project on 22 August 2016.

This approval constitutes ethical clearance by the Tasmania Social Sciences Human
Research Ethics Committee. The decision and authority to commence the associated
research may be dependent on factors beyond the remit of the ethics review process. For
example, your research may need ethics clearance from other organisations or review by
your research governance coordinator or Head of Department. It is your responsibility to
find out if the approval of other bodies or authorities is required. It is recommended that the
proposed research should not commence until you have satisfied these requirements.

Please note that this approval is for four years and is conditional upon receipt of an annual
Progress Report. Ethics approval for this project will lapse if a Progress Report is not
submitted.

The following conditions apply to this approval. Failure to abide by these conditions may
result in suspension or discontinuation of approval.

1. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all investigators are aware
   of the terms of approval, to ensure the project is conducted as approved by the Ethics
   Committee, and to notify the Committee if any investigators are added to, or cease
   involvement with, the project.

A PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

2. Complaints: If any complaints are received or ethical issues arise during the course of the project, investigators should advise the Executive Officer of the Ethics Committee on 03 6226 7479 or human.ethics@utas.edu.au.

3. Incidents or adverse effects: Investigators should notify the Ethics Committee immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.

4. Amendments to Project: Modifications to the project must not proceed until approval is obtained from the Ethics Committee. Please submit an Amendment Form (available on our website) to notify the Ethics Committee of the proposed modifications.

5. Annual Report: Continued approval for this project is dependent on the submission of a Progress Report by the anniversary date of your approval. You will be sent a courtesy reminder closer to this date. **Failure to submit a Progress Report will mean that ethics approval for this project will lapse.**

6. Final Report: A Final Report and a copy of any published material arising from the project, either in full or abstract, must be provided at the end of the project.

Yours sincerely

Katherine Shaw
Executive Officer
Tasmania Social Sciences HREC

APPENDIX B

Information Sheet

Early Childhood Teacher Preparation:
A Comparative Study between Australia and China
Information Sheet for Deans / Course Coordinators

Invitation

This is a comparative study on the processes of preparing early childhood teachers in Australia and China. This study will respond the broad research question that is: Are pre-service early childhood teachers in Australia and China perceived as being suitably prepared for teaching in early childhood settings by the time they finish their course? This study is being conducted in partial fulfilment of a PhD degree for Yixian Zhang under the supervision of Professor John Williamson and Dr Jennifer Masters of the University of Tasmania, Australia.

Your 4th-year Early Childhood Education students and academics who are teaching in the Early Childhood Education course will be invited to participate in this study.

What is the purpose of this study?

This study will investigate how the key stakeholders, including the 4th-year students, academics, graduates from early childhood teacher education course, and employers from early childhood settings, perceive the Bachelor of Early Childhood Education courses undertaken by students in the University of Tasmania, Australia, and Yunnan Normal University, China. This study will also to investigate the course structure and design in different country contexts.

The research sub-questions are:

1. What are the early childhood teacher education requirements for Australia and China?

2. What are the similarities and differences between early childhood teacher education courses in Australia and China?

3. Do the key stakeholders perceive that early childhood education students are prepared for teaching by the time they finish their course?

4. How might early childhood education teacher preparation courses be developed to support the needs of stakeholders?

What will students and academics be asked to do?

If you approve of your students and academics participating in this study, the student investigator will seek the consent of the Course Coordinator of Early Childhood Education to obtain the contact information of the fourth year pre-service students, academics, and graduates of this course, and then she will contact them via email to introduce herself and this research with Information Sheet and Consent Form.

For the 4th-year students, they would be asked to participate in the following ways:

1. Complete a survey at the beginning or end of a class, as arranged by the lecturer. It will take 20- 30 minutes.

2. Four of the 4th-year students will be recruited to be interviewed by the student investigator. They will be asked questions about their learning experience and opinions will be sought about their course.

For academics, they would be asked to participate in the following ways:

1. Allow the student investigator to hand out questionnaires for the 4th-year students to complete the survey in his or her class.

2. Complete a short survey, which will take 20-30 minutes.

3. Four of the academics will be recruited to be interviewed by the student investigator. They will be asked some questions about their teaching and working experience and some suggestions and comments about the course.

The participants will choose convenient date to participate interview. Each interview will be conducted with a maximum of 40 minutes in a comfortable and quiet place. Audio-recordings of each interview will be made the permission of the participants. The interviews will be transcribed, and participants will have the right to read the transcriptions to ensure their opinions are captured correctly.

Are there any possible benefits from participation in this study?

It is hoped that this study will develop a bridge to collaborate with both Faculty in the two universities. It is beneficial for students and academics to understand different leaning style or teaching methods and approaches, and culture in other country to enrich their experience and to take a significant role in contributions to promote this course quality to support the needs of stakeholders.

There will be no costs involved with your students and academics' participation, and no payment is available to participants.

Are there any possible risks from participation in this study?

The student investigator does not foresee any potential risks to the participants. However, during the interview process, if the students or academics feel stressful and wish to quit this study, they will be free to do so.

What will happen to the information when this study is over?

The survey, audio-recording of the interviews and the written transcripts will remain confidential and be securely locked away at the office. They will not be seen or heard by any person rather than the research team. The electronic data will be kept for 5 years, under secure lock at the University of Tasmania, after that time they will be permanently destroyed.

Part of data collection will take place in China, as this is a comparative study between Australia and China. Hard copies of data will be kept in a locked filing draws at home of the student investigator and/or at the office of Yunnan Normal University, before the student investigator return to Australia.

How will the results of the study be published?

After the completion of the data collection at the end of 2016, the student investigator will prepare a summary report of the data. At that time, the summary report will be hand delivered to you. When the thesis is completed, your Faculty will be provided with a copy of this report.

Participants will be anonymous in all publications of those results. Nobody will be able to identify the students and academics in the publication.

What if you have questions about this study?

If you have any questions about the research, please feel free to contact the research team. The contact details for each of the researchers are:

Professor John Williamson, Faculty of Education, University of Tasmania
Email: John.Williamson@utas.edu.au
Work phone: 03 6324 3339

Dr Jennifer Masters, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Education, University of Tasmania
Email: Jennifer.Masters@utas.edu.au
Work phone: 03 6324 3022

Yixian Zhang, PhD student, Faculty of Education, University of Tasmania
Email: Yixian.Zhang@utas.edu.au
Phone: 03 4........

"This study has been approved by the Tasmanian Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study, please contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) Network on +61 3 6226 6254 or email human.ethics@utas.edu.au. The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants. The ethics reference number H0015809.

Finally, this Information Sheet is for you to keep. If after consideration of the information provided on this sheet, you decide to allow your students and academics to participate in the study, there is a Consent Form which will need to be signed. Your students and academics will be provided with their own Information Sheet and their own Consent Form.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this research invitation.

Early Childhood Teacher Preparation:
A Comparative Study between Australia and China
Information Sheet for Students/ Academics / Graduates/ Employers

Invitation

This is a comparative study on the processes of preparing early childhood teachers in Australia and China. This study will respond the broad research question that is: Are pre-service early childhood teachers in Australia and China perceived as being suitably prepared for teaching in early childhood settings by the time they finish their course? This study is being conducted in partial fulfilment of a PhD degree for Yixian Zhang under the supervision of Professor John Williamson and Dr Jennifer Masters of the University of Tasmania, Australia.

You have been invited to participate in this study.

What is the purpose of this study?

This study will investigate how the key stakeholders perceive the Bachelor of Early Childhood Education courses at the University of Tasmania, Australia, and Yunnan Normal University, China. This study will also to investigate the course structure and design in different country contexts.

There are four sub-questions for the study:

1. What are the early childhood teacher education requirements for Australia and China?

2. What are the similarities and differences between early childhood teacher education courses in Australia and China?

3. Do the key stakeholders perceive that early childhood education students are prepared for teaching by the time they finish their course?

4. How might early childhood education teacher preparation courses be developed to support the needs of stakeholders?

The four cohorts of stakeholders are:

5. Fourth year students from the two early childhood teacher education courses

6. Academics teaching in the courses

7. Graduates from each course

8. Employers from early childhood settings who have employed the graduates

Why have you been invited to participate?

The student investigator has invited you to participate in the study. The focus of the study is comparing early childhood education teacher preparation in two universities. The research aims to capture your perception and understanding of the courses from your perspective. Involvement in this study is totally voluntary. There are no consequences if you decide not to participate. If that is what you decide, this will in no

way affect your status with the university or your results, if you are a student, or an academic. It also will not affect your relationship with the university or your reputation, if you are a graduate or an employer.

What will you be asked to do?

The participants would be asked to complete two sections: 1. Survey; 2. Semi-structured interview (if some participants will be willing to interview later)

For the 4th-year student:

You would be asked to participate in the following ways:

1. Complete a survey at the beginning or end of the lecture, as arranged by the lecturer. It will take 20-30 minutes.

2. Be interviewed by the student investigator. You will get the interview questions in another piece of paper.

For the academics, graduates and employers:

9. Complete a survey, which will take 20-30 minutes.

10. Be interviewed by the student investigator. You will get the interview questions in another piece of paper.

You will choose convenient date to participate in an interview. Each interview will be conducted with a maximum of 40 minutes in a comfortable and quiet place. Audio-recordings of each interview will be made the permission of the participants. The interviews will be transcribed, and participants will have the right to read the transcriptions to ensure your opinions are captured correctly.

Are there any possible benefits from participation in this study?

1. **For the 4th-year student:**

You will have the opportunity to discuss your opinions about the course and reflect on and examine your own learning and practice, including teaching techniques, tutor assistance, curriculum arrangement and professional experience. You can discuss how you overcome challenges and how you are developing the capability and confidence to solve real problems by yourselves in early childhood settings before graduating. This research will also give you a chance to identify aspects of the course that particularly helped you with your learning.

2. **For the academics:**

You will have an opportunity to share your teaching experiences and reflect on your teaching outcomes in order to promote teaching efficiency. You will also benefit from new ideas suggested by stakeholders of the industry. This study will provide you a summary report relating to the outcomes and achievements of your respective courses. Further, you will be able to reflect on the teaching concepts and methods from the other country to support and improve the learning outcome of your students.

1. **For the graduates:**

You will be able to discuss how the Bachelor of Early Childhood Education course prepared you for the current work. This research will give you a chance to reflect on, value and discuss your own practice in early childhood settings. Further, they may be able to provide some suggestions to improve the quality of the course, thus ensuring that the course meets the early childhood teachers' real needs. You will also have a chance to learn about the current situation of early childhood teachers in Australia and China.

1. **For the employers:**

You will have an opportunity to discuss and share your experiences and reflect on your management. You are having input in to teacher preparation for your workplace. This study will also provide you with a summary report to learn about, explore and share strategies related to the current status of Early Childhood Education in Australia and China.

There will be no costs involved with your participation, and no payment is available to participants.

Are there any possible risks from participation in this study?

The student investigator does not foresee any potential risks to the participants. However, during the interview process, if you feel stressful and wish to quit this study, you will be free to do so.

What if you change my mind during or after the study?

You are free to withdraw your participation from the study at any time. You do not need to provide any explanations.

What will happen to the information when this study is over?

The survey, audio-recording of the interviews and the written transcripts will remain confidential and be securely locked away at the office. They will not be seen or heard by any person other than the researcher. The electronic data will be kept for 5 years, under secure lock at the University of Tasmania, after that time they will be permanently destroyed.

Part of data collection will take place in China, as this is a comparative study between Australia and China. Hard copies of data will be kept in a locked filing draws at home of the student investigator and/or at the office of Yunnan Normal University, before the student investigator returns to Australia.

How will the results of the study be published?

After the completion of the data collection at the end of 2016, the student investigator will prepare a summary report of the data. At that time, the summary report will be sent to you for your information. When the thesis is completed, you will be given electronic access to this document.

Participants will be anonymous in all publications of those results. Nobody will be able to identify you in the publication.

What if I have questions about this study?

If you have any questions about the research, please feel free to contact the research team. The contact details for each of the researchers are:

Professor John Williamson, Faculty of Education, University of Tasmania
Email: John.Williamson@utas.edu.au
Work phone: 03 6324 3339

Dr Jennifer Masters, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Education, University of Tasmania
Email: Jennifer.Masters@utas.edu.au
Work phone: 03 6324 3022

Yixian Zhang, PhD student, Faculty of Education, University of Tasmania
Email: Yixian.Zhang@utas.edu.au
Phone: 03 4.........

"This study has been approved by the Tasmanian Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study, please contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) Network on +61 3 6226 6254 or email human.ethics@utas.edu.au. The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants. The ethics reference number H0015809.

Finally, this Information Sheet is for you to keep, but you will also be given a Consent Form to sign and return to the student investigator to show that you consent to participating in the research.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this research invitation.

APPENDIX C

Consent Form

Early Childhood Teacher Preparation:
A Comparative Study between Australia and China
Consent Form for Deans/ Course Coordinators

1. I have read and understood the Information Sheet for this study.

2. The nature and possible effects of the study have been explained to me.

3. I agree to the researcher collecting data from my Faculty through the following means (tick all those you agree to):

   i. Your students and academics will complete a survey

   ii. Interviews, including students and academics, which will be audiotaped and transcribed

4. I understand that their participation involves no foreseeable risk.

5. I understand that all research data will be securely stored on the University of Tasmania premises for five years from the publication of the study results, and will then be destroyed.

6. Any questions that I have asked to have been answered to my satisfaction.

7. I understand that the researcher(s) will maintain confidentiality and that any information my students and academics supply to the researcher(s) will be used only for the purposes of the research.

8. I understand that the results of the study will be published and the participants will not be identified.

9. I understand that my students and academics participation are voluntary and that they may withdraw at any time without any effect.

10. If I so wish, I may request that any data the students and academics have supplied be withdrawn from the research until 30th of November, 2016.

Participant's name:

_____

Participant's signature:

_____

Date: _____

Statement by Investigator

☐   I have explained the project and the implications of participation in it to this volunteer and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation.

If the Investigator has not had an opportunity to talk to participants prior to them participating, the following must be ticked.

☐   The participant has received the Information Sheet where my details have been provided so participants have had the opportunity to contact me prior to consenting to participate in this project.

Investigator's name:

_____

Investigator's signature:

_____

Date: _____

Early Childhood Teacher Preparation:
A Comparative Study between Australia and China
Consent Form for Students/ Academics/ Graduates/ Employers

1. I agree to take part in the research study named above.

2. I have read and understood the Information Sheet for this study.

3. The nature and possible effects of the study have been explained to me.

4. I agree to the researcher collecting data from me through the following means (tick all those you agree to):

☐ Completing a survey

☐ Participating in an Interview

5. I understand that participation involves no foreseeable risk.

6. I understand that all research data will be securely stored on the University of Tasmania premises for five years from the publication of the study results, and will then be destroyed.

7. I agree to have my study data archived.

Yes ☐   No ☐

8. Any questions that I have asked to have been answered to my satisfaction.

9. I understand that the researcher(s) will maintain confidentiality and that any information I supply to the researcher(s) will be used only for the purposes of the research.

10. I understand that the results of the study will be published in a form that I cannot be identified as a participant.

11. I understand that my participation are voluntary and that they may withdraw at any time without any effect.

12. If I so wish, I may request that any data I have supplied be withdrawn from the research until 30th of November,2016, after viewing and checking the accuracy of my interview transcripts and other contributions to the data.

Participant's name:
_____

Participant's signature:
_____

Date: _____

If you agree to be interviewed (4b), please provide the following information:

Email:

Phone number:

Statement by Investigator

☐ I have explained the project and the implications of participation in it to this volunteer and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation.

If the Investigator has not had an opportunity to talk to participants prior to them participating, the following must be ticked.

☐ The participant has received the Information Sheet where my details have been provided so participants have had the opportunity to contact me prior to consenting to participate in this project.

Investigator's name:

_____

Investigator's signature:

_____

Date: _____

APPENDIX D1

Questionnaire for Students (English Version)

Early Childhood Teacher Preparation:
A Comparative Study between Australia and China
Survey Question for Students

This survey has been approved by the Tasmanian Social Science Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). The Ethics reference number is H0015809.

By completing this questionnaire you will provide general opinions about Early Childhood Education course from your perspective in order to support this research and offer some information to promote the course quality to meet the pre-service teachers' needs and the societal requirements.

The survey is 100% anonymous. Your responses to this online/ face-to-face survey will be entered directly into our database and treated as completely confidential. Your individual answers will not be shared with your lecturers, classmates or other related person. Any data will only be used in aggregate form that cannot be used to discern the identity of any survey participant in any reports or presentations concerning the survey or in the public use file that be made available to the public at the conclusion of this study.

Your participation is voluntary. You may refuse to answer any question or discontinue participation at any time. There is no consequence if you decide not to participate or continue.

The questions are in the following order:

1. Section A: Demographic Data

2. Section B, C: Perception of course Questions

3. Section D: Open-ended Question

4. Section E: List of characteristics

Thank you for taking time to fill in this survey. It is greatly appreciated.

Section A:

Instruction: Please tick (√) the items representing the correct response.

What is your gender?

☐   Male   ☐   Female

What is your age?

☐ 17-21   ☐ 22-26   ☐ 27-31   ☐ 32-36   ☐ 37-45   ☐ 46 or older

In which university are you enrolled?

☐ The University of Tasmania   ☐ Yunnan Normal University

Instruction: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with following statements by circling the appropriate response to the right of each statement. (Section B and C)

Key: SA = Strongly agree   A = Agree   N = Neutral   D = Disagree
SD = Strongly Disagree

Section B:

On successful completion of my Early Childhood Education course, I am confident in my ability to:

1. Select appropriate teaching strategies to support the learning of children.	SA	A	N	D	SD
2. Understand children's characteristics and physical, social and intellectual progress.	SA	A	N	D	SD
3. Demonstrate knowledge of teaching strategies that will support learning strengths and demands of children from various families' backgrounds.	SA	A	N	D	SD
4. Use different kinds of teaching strategies to meet the specific learning needs of children across the full range of abilities.	SA	A	N	D	SD

5. Demonstrate knowledge of content and requirements of Belonging, being and becoming: Early years learning framework for Australia (Australia)/Guide for year 3-6 aged child's learning and development (China).	SA	A	N	D	SD
6. Design lessons and activities that meet the requirements of the Belonging, being and becoming: Early years learning framework for Australia (Australia)/ Guide for year 3-6 aged Child's learning and development (China).	SA	A	N	D	SD
7. Incorporate literacy strategies in planning and teaching.	SA	A	N	D	SD
8. Incorporate numeracy strategies in planning and teaching.	SA	A	N	D	SD
9. Integrate music, visual art and dance in curriculum activities.	SA	A	N	D	SD
10. Integrate ICT into teaching practice.	SA	A	N	D	SD
11. Plan appropriate learning activities/ experiences for children.	SA	A	N	D	SD
12. Create rapport with children.	SA	A	N	D	SD
13. Implement appropriate behaviour management strategies.	SA	A	N	D	SD
14. Create a secure learning setting to promote children's health and well-being.	SA	A	N	D	SD
15. Record children's daily learning and activities in portfolios for parents and external authorities.	SA	A	N	D	SD

16. Provide regular feedback to parents.	SA	A	N	D	SD
17. Select and apply appropriate comments and feedback to promote children's learning.	SA	A	N	D	SD
18. Support children in their transition between year levels from kindergartens/preschools to primary school.	SA	A	N	D	SD
19. Implement learning programs that demonstrate real-world connections.	SA	A	N	D	SD
20. Select relevant and appropriate sources of professional learning develop to support children's learning.	SA	A	N	D	SD
21. Explain a variety of assessment tasks for children in order to modify my teaching practice.	SA	A	N	D	SD
22. Reflect on my teaching practices and learning outcomes.	SA	A	N	D	SD
23. Create rapport with children's parents and external experts to support my professional development.	SA	A	N	D	SD

Section C:

As a result of my course I am *confident* that I have:

24. Had appropriate instruction, suggestions and feedback from academics in the Faculty of Education.	SA	A	N	D	SD
25. Developed theoretical knowledge for teaching in the early childhood education setting.	SA	A	N	D	SD

26. Had many opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge and understandings.	SA A N D SD
27. Been effectively prepared to teach in early childhood settings.	SA A N D SD

Section D:

Please comment on any additional aspects about your early childhood course, for example, teaching skills, self-confidence, etc.

_____

_____

_____

Section E:

What important personal qualities/ characteristics do you think you need to have when you are an early childhood teacher? Please tick those that apply.

☐ Adaptable

☐ Cooperative

☐ Creative

☐ Passionate

☐ Accountable

☐ Compassionate

☐ Caring

☐ Positive

☐ Accessible

☐ Warm

☐ Humble

☐ Patient

☐ Respectful

☐ Kind

☐ Enthusiastic

☐ Other ————————————————

Thank you for completing this survey.

APPENDIX D2

Questionnaire for Students (Chinese Version)

学前教育师资培养
澳中对比研究问卷调查·学生版 (Chinese Version)

本份问卷调查旨在调查了解您对学前教师教育课程的看法，为研究和提高该课程质量提供相关信息，以提升和满足职前学前教育教师自身需求及社会需求。

本份问卷调查 **100%** 匿名。无论是网络或是面对面调查，您的回答都将绝对保密，您的答复会直接进入我的数据库。您的个人问卷结果也不会被您的同事或其他相关人员得知。
本次调查问卷属于自愿参与。如果您决定不参与或中止本次调查问卷活动，将不会产生任何后果。

问题的顺序如下：

第一部分：基本信息

第二、三部分：对课程问题的看法及满意度调查

第四部分：一个开放式问题

第五部分：一个补充表述

感谢您在百忙之中接受我的问卷调查。

第一部分

说明：请在符合您自身情况的选项前打钩(√)。

您的性别是？

☐　　男性　　　　　　　　　　　　　☐　　女性

您的年龄？

☐ 17-21　　☐ 22-26　　☐ 27-31　　☐ 32-36　　☐ 37-45　　☐ 46 及以上

您就读（毕业）的大学？

☐　　塔斯马尼亚大学　　　　　　☐　云南师范大学

第二部分

说明：请在下列陈述中圈出您的看法。

SA ：强烈赞同　A: 赞同　N：中立　　D：不赞同　　　SD：绝对不赞同

在圆满完成学前教育课程之后，我相信我能够：

1. 为儿童学习选择恰当的教学策略	SA	A	N	D	SD
2. 了解儿童的性格，知道他们身体、社交技能及智力上的变化。	SA	A	N	D	SD
3. 展示我有足够的教学技能并能支持我的教学工作，以满足来自不同家庭背景的儿童的学习需求。	SA	A	N	D	SD
4. 采用不同的教学技能，以满足儿童各项学习能力的具体要求。	SA	A	N	D	SD
5. 描述《3-6 岁儿童学习与发展指南》中的内容及要求。	SA	A	N	D	SD
6. 在我的教学活动中设计符合《3-6 岁儿童学习与发展指南》中内容及要求的课程。	SA	A	N	D	SD

7. 在我的教学课程中采用读写能力策略。	SA	A	N	D	SD
8. 在我的教学课程中采用数学（数字教学）能力策略。	SA	A	N	D	SD
9. 在教学中融入音乐、美术及舞蹈等活动。	SA	A	N	D	SD
10. 把现代教育技术融入教学实践中。	SA	A	N	D	SD
11. 为儿童设计恰当的学习活动及体验活动。	SA	A	N	D	SD
12. 与儿童建立良好的师生关系。	SA	A	N	D	SD
13. 实行恰当的行为管理策略。	SA	A	N	D	SD
14. 为儿童的健康快乐成长营造安全的学习环境。	SA	A	N	D	SD
15. 记录儿童的日常学习活动，以与家长或其他外部机构进行良好的沟通。	SA	A	N	D	SD
16. 定期向父母反馈儿童在幼儿园的学习情况。	SA	A	N	D	SD
17. 选用恰当的评价和反馈手段以提高儿童的学习能力。	SA	A	N	D	SD
18. 帮助儿童顺利从幼儿园过渡到小学学习。	SA	A	N	D	SD
19. 为儿童展示真实的生活。	SA	A	N	D	SD
20. 选用恰当的专业学习资源促进儿童的学习。	SA	A	N	D	SD
21. 通过对儿童的不同评价工作，以提高我的教学实践能力。	SA	A	N	D	SD

22. 反思我的教学实践及成果。	SA	A	N	D	SD
23. 与家长和外部专家建立良好的关系，以支持我的专业发展。	SA	A	N	D	SD

第三部分：

完成学前教育课程的学习，我很有自信成为一名合格的幼儿教师，因为我：

24. 从任课教师那里得到了恰当的指导、建议及反馈。	SA	A	N	D	SD
25. 学习了学前教育的相关理论知识。	SA	A	N	D	SD
26. 有很多机会能够将所学到的理论知识以及我自己的见解运用到实践中。	SA	A	N	D	SD
27. 已经准备好在幼儿园任教。	SA	A	N	D	SD

第四部分：

通过四年的本科学习，您对学前教育专业课程还有什么补充意见及看法？比如：教师的教学技能、教育实践安排等方面。

_____

_____

_____

第五部分：

在您看来，一名合格的幼儿教师最重要的个人品质是什么？请在下列选项中打钩。

☐ Adaptable 随机应变

☐ Cooperative 合作

☐ Creative 有创造力

☐ Passionate 热情

☐ Accountable 有责任心

☐ Compassionate 富有同情心

☐ Caring 关心他人

☐ Positive 积极向上

☐ Accessible 亲和力

☐ Warm 亲切

☐ Humble 谦逊

☐ Patient 耐心

☐ Respectful 有礼貌

☐ Kind 善良

☐ Enthusiastic 充满热情

☐ Other 其他　＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

感谢您完成本次调查问卷。

APPENDIX E1

Questionnaire for Academics (English Version)

**Early Childhood Teacher Preparation:
A Comparative Study between Australia and China
Survey question for Academics**

This survey has been approved by the Tasmanian Social Science Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). The Ethics reference number is H0015809.

By completing this questionnaire you will provide general opinions about Early Childhood Education course from your perspective in order to support this research and offer some information to promote the course quality to meet the pre-service teachers' needs and the society requirements.

The survey is 100% anonymous. Your responses to this online/ face-to-face survey will be entered directly into our database and treated as completely confidential. Your individual answers will not be shared with your faculty, administrators or other related person. Any data will only be used in aggregate form that cannot be used to discern the identity of any survey participant in any reports or presentations concerning the survey or in the public use file that be made available to the public at the conclusion of this study.

Your participation is voluntary. You may refuse to answer any question or discontinue participation at any time. There is no consequence if you decide not to participate or continue.

The questions are in the following order:

1. Section A: Demographic Data

2. Section B, C: Perception of course Questions

3. Section D: Open-ended Question

4. Section E: List of characteristics

Thank you for taking time to fill in this survey. It is greatly appreciated.

Note: The awards of Diploma and Graduate Diploma are used in this study to indicate two separate courses. It is suggested that the appropriate instrument be used to investigate each separate course; i.e., the Diploma designated instrument for Diploma students.

Section A:

Instruction: Please tick (√) the items representing the correct response or write the response in the appropriate spaces.

What is your gender?

☐ Male   ☐ Female

What is your age?

☐ Younger than 30   ☐ 30-39   ☐ 40-49   ☐ 50-59
☐ 60 or older

Which is your specialized area:

☐ Professional studies   ☐ Curriculum area   ☐ Early childhood studies

☐ Other _____

Please list your present teaching units.

_____

How many years have you been teaching the unit?

☐ 1-3 years   ☐ 4-9 years   ☐ 10-15 years   ☐ 16-20 years
☐ more than 20 years

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

☐ Certificate

☐ Diploma/ Graduate Diploma

☐ Bachelor's Degree

☐ Master's Degree

☐ Doctoral Degree

☐ Other _____

When did you obtain your highest level of education? (Year) _____

What is your current academic level?

☐ Lecturer   ☐ Senior Lecturer   ☐ Associate Professor   ☐ Professor

☐ Other _____

At which university are you employed?

☐ The University of Tasmania   ☐ Yunnan Normal University

Instruction: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with following statements by circling the appropriate response to the right of each statement. (Section B and C)

Key: SA = Strongly agree   A = Agree   N = Neutral   D = Disagree
SD = Strongly Disagree

Section B:

After the students' last Early Childhood Education professional experience I am confident in their ability to:

1. Select appropriate teaching strategies to support the learning of children.	SA	A	N	D	SD
2. Understand children's characteristics and physical, social and intellectual progress.	SA	A	N	D	SD
3. Demonstrate knowledge of teaching strategies that will support learning strengths and demands of children from various families' backgrounds.	SA	A	N	D	SD
4. Use different kinds of teaching strategies to meet the specific learning needs of children across the full range of abilities.	SA	A	N	D	SD
5. Demonstrate knowledge of content and requirements of Belonging, being and becoming: Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (Australia)/Guide for year 3-6 aged child's learning and development (China).	SA	A	N	D	SD
6. Design lessons and activities that are met the requirements of the Belonging, being and becoming: Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (Australia)/ Guide for Year 3-6 Aged Child's Learning and Development (China).	SA	A	N	D	SD
7. Incorporate literacy strategies in planning and teaching.	SA	A	N	D	SD
8. Incorporate numeracy strategies in planning and teaching.	SA	A	N	D	SD
9. Integrate music, visual art and dance in curriculum activities for creative.	SA	A	N	D	SD

10. Use ICT integration into teaching practice.	SA	A	N	D	SD
11. Plan appropriate learning activities/ experiences for children.	SA	A	N	D	SD
12. Create rapport with children.	SA	A	N	D	SD
13. Implement appropriate behaviour management strategies.	SA	A	N	D	SD
14. Create a secure learning setting to promote children's health and well-being.	SA	A	N	D	SD
15. Record children's daily learning and activities in portfolios for parents and external authorities.	SA	A	N	D	SD
16. Provide regular feedback to parents.	SA	A	N	D	SD
17. Select and apply appropriate comments and feedbacks to promote children's learning.	SA	A	N	D	SD
18. Support children in their transition between year levels from kindergartens/preschools to primary schools.	SA	A	N	D	SD
19. Implement learning programs that demonstrate real-world connections.	SA	A	N	D	SD
20. Select relevant and appropriate sources of professional learning develop to support children's learning.	SA	A	N	D	SD
21. Explain a variety of assessment tasks for children in order to modifying pre-service teachers' teaching practice.	SA	A	N	D	SD
22. Reflect on pre-service teachers' teaching practices and learning outcomes.	SA	A	N	D	SD
23. Create rapport with children's parents and external experts to support pre-service teachers' professional development.	SA	A	N	D	SD

Section C:

As a result of the early childhood education course I am confident the fourth-year students have:

24. Had appropriate instructions, suggestions and feedback from academics in the Faculty of Education.	SA A N D SD
25. Developed theoretical knowledge for teaching in the early childhood education course.	SA A N D SD
26. Had many opportunities to apply the theoretical knowledge and understandings.	SA A N D SD
27. Been effectively prepared to teach in early childhood settings.	SA A N D SD

Section D:

Please comment on any other aspects about your students what knowledge and skills you expect they might understand and practice besides the requirements of the Australia Professional Standard for Teachers?

_____

_____

_____

Section E:

What important personal qualities/ characteristics do you think you need to have when you are an early childhood teacher? Please tick those that apply.

☐ Adaptable

☐ Cooperative

☐ Creative

☐ Passionate

☐ Accountable

☐ Compassionate

☐ Caring

☐ Positive

☐ Accessible

☐ Warm

☐ Humble

☐ Patient

☐ Respectful

☐ Kind

☐ Enthusiastic

☐ Other ───────────────────────

Thank you for completing this survey!

APPENDIX E2

Questionnaire for Academics (Chinese Version)

学前教育师资培养

澳中对比研究问卷调查·教师版 (Chinese Version)

本份问卷调查旨在调查了解您对学前教师教育课程的看法，为研究和提高该课程质量提供相关信息，以提升和满足职前学前教育教师自身需求及社会需求。

本份问卷调查 100% 匿名。无论是网络或是面对面调查，您的回答都将绝对保密，您的答复会直接进入我的数据库。您的个人问卷结果也不会被您的同事或其他相关人员得知。

本次调查问卷属于自愿参与。如果您决定不参与或中止本次调查问卷活动，将不会产生任何后果。

问题的顺序如下：

第一部分：基本信息

第二、三部分：对课程问题的看法及满意度调查

第四部分：一个开放式问题

第五部分：一个补充表述

感谢您在百忙之中接受我的问卷调查。

说明：请在符合您自身情况的选项前打钩(√)。

您的性别是？

□　男性　　　　　　　　　　　　　□　女性

您的年龄？

□ 小于 30 岁　　□ 30-39　　　　□ 40-49　　　□ 50-59　　　□ 大于 60 岁

您所从事的教学领域是？（可根据《大纲》的五大领域来划分，填写在"其它"处）

□ 专业背景知识　　　□ 课程论　　　　　□ 学前教育专业知识

□ 其它　_____

请列出您所教授课程的名称

_____

您教授这门课多少年？

□ 1-3 年　　　□ 4-9 年　　　□ 10-15 年　　□ 16-20 年　　□ 超过 20 年

您的最高学位是什么？

□ 本科同等学历

□ 本科学位

□ 硕士学位

□ 博士学位

□ 其它　_____

您是什么时候取得最高学历的？（年）_____

您现在的职称是什么？

□ 助教　　　　□ 讲师　　　　□ 副教授　　　□ 教授

□ 其它　_____

第一部分

您在哪个大学任教？

☐ 塔斯马尼亚大学　　　　☐ 云南师范大学

第二部分

说明：请在下列陈述中圈出您的看法。

SA ：强烈赞同　A：赞同　N：中立　　D：不赞同　　SD：绝对不赞同

在圆满完成学前教育课程之后，我相信我的学生能够：

1. 为儿童学习选择恰当的教学策略	SA	A	N	D	SD
2. 了解儿童的性格，知道他们身体、社交技能及智力上的变化。	SA	A	N	D	SD
3. 展示他（她）有足够的教学技能支持他（她）的教学工作，以满足来自不同家庭背景儿童学习的需求。	SA	A	N	D	SD
4. 采用不同的教学技能，以满足儿童各项学习能力的具体要求。	SA	A	N	D	SD
5. 描述《3-6 岁儿童学习与发展指南》中的内容及要求。	SA	A	N	D	SD
6. 在他（她）的教学活动中设计符合《3-6 岁儿童学习发展与指南》中内容及要求的课程。	SA	A	N	D	SD
7. 在教学实践中采用识字能力策略。	SA	A	N	D	SD
8. 在教学实践中采用数学（数字教学）能力策略。	SA	A	N	D	SD
9. 在教学中融入音乐、美术及舞蹈等活动。	SA	A	N	D	SD
10. 把现代教育技术融入到教学实践中。	SA	A	N	D	SD

11. 为儿童设计恰当的学习活动及体验。	SA	A	N	D	SD
12. 与儿童建立良好的师生关系。	SA	A	N	D	SD
13. 实行恰当的行为管理策略。	SA	A	N	D	SD
14. 为儿童的健康快乐成长营造安全的学习环境。	SA	A	N	D	SD
15. 记录儿童的日常学习活动，以与家长或其他外部机构进行良好的沟通。	SA	A	N	D	SD
16. 定期向父母反馈儿童在幼儿园的学习情况。	SA	A	N	D	SD
17. 选用恰当的评价和反馈手段以提高儿童的学习能力。	SA	A	N	D	SD
18. 帮助儿童顺利从幼儿园过渡到小学学习。	SA	A	N	D	SD
19. 为儿童展示真实的生活。	SA	A	N	D	SD
20. 选用恰当的专业学习资源促进儿童的学习	SA	A	N	D	SD
21. 通过对儿童的不同的评价工作，从而提高他（她）的教学实践能力。	SA	A	N	D	SD
22. 对自己的教学实践及成果进行反思。	SA	A	N	D	SD
23. 与家长和外部专家建立良好的关系，以支持他（她）的专业发展。	SA	A	N	D	SD

第三部分：

完成学前教育课程的学习，我很有自信我的大四即将毕业的幼儿教师已经在大学学习中：

24. 从任课教师那里得到了恰当的指导、建议及反馈。	SA	A	N	D	SD
25. 学习了学前教育的相关理论知识。	SA	A	N	D	SD
26. 有很多机会能够将所学到的理论知识以及他们自己的见解运用到实践中。	SA	A	N	D	SD
27. 已经准备好在幼儿园任教。	SA	A	N	D	SD

第四部分：

除了国家颁布的《幼儿园教师专业标准（试行）》对幼儿教师的要求以外，您认为成为一名合格的幼儿教师还需要具备哪些技能和能力（包括理论知识和实践技能）？

_____

_____

_____

第五部分：

在您看来，一名合格的幼儿教师最重要的个人品质是什么？请在下列选项中打钩。

☐ Adaptable 随机应变

☐ Cooperative 合作

☐ Creative 有创造力

☐ Passionate 热情

☐ Accountable 有责任心

☐ Compassionate 富有同情心

☐ Caring 关心他人

☐ Positive 积极向上

☐ Accessible 亲和力

☐ Warm 亲切

☐ Humble 谦逊

☐ Patient 耐心

☐ Respectful 有礼貌

☐ Kind 善良

☐ Enthusiastic 充满热情

☐ Other 其他 _____

感谢您完成本次调查!

APPENDIX F1

Questionnaire for Employers (English Version)

**Early Childhood Teacher Preparation:
A Comparative Study between Australia and China
Survey question for Employers**

This survey has been approved by the Tasmanian Social Science Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). The ethics reference number is H0015809.

By completing this questionnaire you will demonstrate general information about Early Childhood Education course effectiveness from employers' perspectives in order to provide some suggestions to promote the course quality to meet the society needs.

The survey is 100% anonymous. Your responses to this online/ face-to-face survey will be entered directly into our database and treated as completely confidential. Your individual answers will not be shared with your teachers, children or children's parents. Any data will only be used in aggregate form that cannot be used to discern the identity of any survey participants in any reports or presentations concerning the survey or in the public use file that be made available to the public at the conclusion of this study.

Your participation is voluntary. You may refuse to answer any question or discontinue participation at any time. There is no consequence if you decide not to participate or continue.

The questions are in the following order:

1. Section A: demographic Data

2. Section B, C: Perception of course Questions

3. Section D: Open-ended Question

4. Section E: List of characteristics

Thank you for taking time to fill in this survey. It is greatly appreciated.

Note: The awards of Diploma and Graduate Diploma are used in this study to indicate two separate courses. It is suggested that the appropriate instrument be used to investigate each separate course; i.e., the Diploma designated instrument for Diploma students.

Section A:

Instruction: Please tick (√) the items representing the correct response or write the response in the appropriate spaces.

What is your gender?

☐   Male   ☐   Female

What is your age?

☐ Younger than 30   ☐ 30-39   ☐ 40-49   ☐ 50-59   ☐ 60 or older

How many years have you been working in early childhood settings as an administrator?

☐ 1-3 years   ☐ 4-9 years   ☐ 10-15 years   ☐ 16-20 years

☐ more than 20 years

What types of early childhood settings you have ever worked as an administrator?

☐ Kindergarten

☐ Pre-school

☐ Child care centre

☐ Other _____

What is your highest level of education you have completed?

☐ Certificate

☐ Diploma/ Graduate Diploma

☐ Bachelor's Degree

☐ Master's Degree

☐ Doctoral Degree

☐ Other _____

When did you obtain the highest level of education? (Year) _____

In which province/ state are you employed?

☐ Tasmania, Australia   ☐ Yunnan, China

Instruction: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with following statements by circling the appropriate response to the right of each statement. (Section B and C)

Key: SA = Strongly agree   A = Agree   N = Neutral   D = Disagree
SD = Strongly Disagree

Section B:

On successful completion of Early Childhood Education course, to what extend do you agree or disagree that pre-service teachers who have the following capabilities to:

1.	Select appropriate teaching strategies to support the learning of children.	SA	A	N	D	SD
2.	Understand children's characteristics and physical, social and intellectual progress.	SA	A	N	D	SD
3.	Demonstrate knowledge of teaching strategies that will support learning strengths and demands of children from various families' backgrounds.	SA	A	N	D	SD
4.	Use different kinds of teaching strategies to meet the specific learning needs of children across the full range of abilities.	SA	A	N	D	SD
5.	Demonstrate knowledge of content and requirements of Belonging, being and becoming: Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (Australia)/Guide for year 3-6 aged child's learning and development (China).	SA	A	N	D	SD
6.	Design lessons and activities that meet the requirements of the Belonging, being and becoming: Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (Australia)/ Guide for year 3-6 aged Child's learning and development (China).	SA	A	N	D	SD
7.	Incorporate literacy strategies in planning and teaching.	SA	A	N	D	SD
8.	Incorporate numeracy strategies in planning and teaching.	SA	A	N	D	SD
9.	Integrate music, visual art and dance in curriculum activities.	SA	A	N	D	SD

10. Integrate ICT into teaching practice.	SA	A	N	D	SD
11. Plan appropriate learning activities/ experiences for children.	SA	A	N	D	SD
12. Create rapport with children.	SA	A	N	D	SD
13. Implement appropriate behaviour management strategies.	SA	A	N	D	SD
14. Create a secure learning setting to promote children's health and well-being.	SA	A	N	D	SD
15. Record children's daily learning and activities in portfolios for parents and external authorities.	SA	A	N	D	SD
16. Provide regular feedback to parents.	SA	A	N	D	SD
17. Select and apply appropriate comments and feedback to promote children's learning.	SA	A	N	D	SD
18. Support children in their transition between year levels from kindergartens/preschools to primary school.	SA	A	N	D	SD
19. Implement learning programs that demonstrate real-world connections.	SA	A	N	D	SD
20. Select relevant and appropriate sources of professional learning develop to support children's learning.	SA	A	N	D	SD
21. Explain a variety of assessment tasks for children in order to modify their teaching practice.	SA	A	N	D	SD
22. Reflect on the teaching practices and learning outcomes.	SA	A	N	D	SD
23. Create rapport with children's parents and external experts to support their professional development.	SA	A	N	D	SD

Section C:

At the end of their early childhood education course I hope the fourth year students have:

24. Had appropriate instruction, suggestions and feedback from academics in the Faculty of Education.	SA	A	N	D	SD
25. Developed theoretical knowledge for teaching in the early childhood education setting.	SA	A	N	D	SD
26. Had many opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge and understandings.	SA	A	N	D	SD
27. Been effectively prepared to teach in early childhood settings.	SA	A	N	D	SD

Section D:

Please comment on any other aspects about your early childhood teachers what knowledge and skills you expect they might have besides the requirements of the Australia Professional Standard for Teachers?

_____

_____

_____

Section E:

What important personal qualities/ characteristics do you think you need to have when you are an early childhood teacher? Please tick those that apply.

☐ Adaptable

☐ Cooperative

☐ Creative

☐ Passionate

☐ Accountable

☐ Compassionate

☐ Caring

☐ Positive

☐ Accessible

☐ Warm

☐ Humble

☐ Patient

☐ Respectful

☐ Kind

☐ Enthusiastic

☐ Other _____

Thank you for competing this survey.

APPENDIX F2

Questionnaire for Employers (Chinese Version)

学前教育师资培养
澳中对比研究问卷调查·幼儿园园长(雇主)版 (Chinese Version)

本份问卷调查旨在调查了解您对学前教师教育课程的看法，为研究和提高该课程质量提供相关信息，以提升和满足职前学前教育教师自身需求及社会需求。

本份问卷调查 100% 匿名。无论是网络或是面对面调查，您的回答都将绝对保密，您的答复会直接进入我的数据库。您的个人问卷结果也不会被您的同事或其他相关人员得知。

本次调查问卷属于自愿参与。如果您决定不参与或中止本次调查问卷活动，将不会产生任何后果。

问题的顺序如下：

第一部分：基本信息

第二、三部分：对课程问题的看法及满意度调查

第四部分：一个开放式问题

第五部分：一个补充表述

感谢您在百忙之中接受我的问卷调查。

第一部分

说明：请在符合您自身情况的选项前打钩(√)。

您的性别是？

☐　　男性　　　　　　　　　　　☐　　女性

您的年龄？

☐ 小于 30 岁　　　☐ 30-39　　　☐ 40-49　　　☐ 50-59　☐　大于 60 岁

您在幼儿园从事教学工作多少年了？

☐ 1-3 年　　　　☐ 4-9 年　　　☐10-15 年　☐16-20 年　☐超过 20 年

您所工作的幼儿园类型

□ 公立幼儿园　□民办幼儿园　□ 其它 _____

您的最高学位是什么？

□　本科同等学历

□　本科学位

□　硕士学位

□　博士学位

□　其它 _____

您是什么时候取得最高学历的？（年）_____

您在哪个城市工作？

□　塔斯马尼亚，澳大利亚　　　　□　云南，中国

第二部分

说明：请在下列陈述中圈出您的看法。
SA：强烈赞同　A：赞同　N：中立　　D：不赞同　　SD：绝对不赞同
在圆满完成本科学前教育课程之后，我认为新近的青年教师能够：

1. 为儿童学习选择恰当的教学策略	SA	A	N	D	SD
2. 了解儿童的性格，知道他们身体、社交技能及智力上的变化。	SA	A	N	D	SD
3. 展示出他（她）有足够的教学技能并能支持他（她）的教学工作，以满足来自不同家庭背景儿童学习的需求。	SA	A	N	D	SD
4. 采用不同的教学技能，以满足儿童各项学习能力的具体要求。	SA	A	N	D	SD
5. 描述《3-6 岁儿童学习与发展指南》中的内容及要求。	SA	A	N	D	SD

6. 在他（她）的教学活动中设计符合《3-6 岁儿童学习发展与指南》中内容及要求的课程。	SA	A	N	D	SD
7. 在教学实践中采用识字能力策略。	SA	A	N	D	SD
8. 在教学实践中采用数学（数字教学）能力策略。	SA	A	N	D	SD
9. 在教学中融入音乐、美术及舞蹈等活动。	SA	A	N	D	SD
10. 把现代教育技术融入教学实践中。	SA	A	N	D	SD
11. 为儿童设计恰当的学习活动及体验活动。	SA	A	N	D	SD
12. 与儿童建立良好的师生关系。	SA	A	N	D	SD
13. 实行恰当的行为管理策略。	SA	A	N	D	SD
14. 为儿童的健康快乐成长营造安全的学习环境。	SA	A	N	D	SD
15. 记录儿童的日常学习活动，以与家长或其他外部机构进行良好的沟通。	SA	A	N	D	SD
16. 定期向父母反馈儿童在幼儿园的学习情况。	SA	A	N	D	SD
17. 选用恰当的评价和反馈手段以提高儿童的学习能力。	SA	A	N	D	SD
18. 帮助儿童顺利从幼儿园过渡到小学学习。	SA	A	N	D	SD
19. 为儿童展示真实的生活。	SA	A	N	D	SD

20. 选用恰当的专业学习资源促进儿童的学习	SA	A	N	D	SD
21. 通过对儿童的不同的评价工作，从而提高他（她）的教学实践能力。	SA	A	N	D	SD
22. 对自己的教学实践及成果进行反思。	SA	A	N	D	SD
23. 与家长和外部专家建立良好的关系，以支持他（她）的专业发展。	SA	A	N	D	SD

第三部分：

完成学前教育课程的学习，我希望大四即将毕业的幼儿教师已经在大学学习中：

24. 从任课教师那里得到了恰当的指导、建议及反馈。	SA	A	N	D	SD
25. 学习了学前教育的相关理论知识。	SA	A	N	D	SD
26. 有很多机会能够所学到的理论知识以及他们自己的见解运用到实践中。	SA	A	N	D	SD
27. 已经准备好在幼儿园任教。	SA	A	N	D	SD

第四部分：

除了国家颁布的《幼儿园教师专业标准》（试行）对幼儿教师的要求以外，您认为成为一名合格的幼儿教师还需要具备哪些技能和能力（包括理论知识和实践技能）？

_____

_____

_____

第五部分：

在您看来，一名合格的幼儿教师最重要的个人品质是什么？请在下列选项中打钩。

☐ Adaptable 随机应变

☐ Cooperative 合作

☐ Creative 有创造力

☐ Passionate 热情

☐ Accountable 有责任心

☐ Compassionate 富有同情心

☐ Caring 关心他人

☐ Positive 积极向上

☐ Accessible 亲和力

☐ Warm 亲切

☐ Humble 谦逊

☐ Patient 耐心

☐ Respectful 有礼貌

☐ Kind 善良

☐ Enthusiastic 充满热情

☐ Other 其他　　＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

感谢您完成本次调查！

第五部分：

APPENDIX G1

Interview Schedule for Students (English Version)

**Early Childhood Teacher Preparation:
A Comparative Study between Australia and China
Interview Schedule for Students**

This will be used when the student researcher visits the individual participant and conducts semi-structured interviews with the participant.

Name of Interviewer: _____

Name of interviewee: _____

Place of Interview: _____

Date of Interview: _____

Time started _____ Time finished _____

1. What are the three most important features of the early childhood teacher education course that you are enrolled in (fourth year students)/graduated from (graduates)?

2. Can comment on the structure of your course and the content that you covered across the program?

3. What teaching strategies or methods were used in your course to help you meet the learning outcomes?

4. What kind of tasks were used to assess your learning performance and achievements in the course?

5. How did the professional experience in your course help you to connect with theoretical knowledge and early childhood curriculum? Can you provide an example where you applied these principles during your professional experience (fourth year students)/ in your daily teaching (graduates)?

6. The Professional Standards are used to accredit teacher education courses and to register teachers. Were you aware of the standards during your course? If so, how did you apply them for your learning?

7. Do you have any further comments or suggestions about your course?

Thanks for your time!

APPENDIX G2

Interview Schedule for Students (Chinese Version)

学前教育师资培养
澳中对比研究访谈问题·学生版 (Chinese Version)

该半结构化访谈内容用于学生研究员访问参与者时使用。

访问者姓名: _____

被访问者姓名: _____

访谈地点: _____

访谈日期: _____

开始时间: _____ 结束时间: _____

1. 你所就读的学前教师教育课程（四年级学生）/毕业的学前教师教育课程（毕业生）最重要的三个特点是什么？

2. 你能谈谈该课程结构和内容吗？

3. 该课程采用了哪些教学策略或教学方法来帮助您达到学习效果？

4. 该课程采用了什么样的教学任务来评估您的学习表现和取得的成绩？

5. 该课程中的教学实践活动如何帮助您实践学前教师教育课程的理论知识的？您能举例说明您在教学实践（四年级学生）/现在的日常教学（毕业生）中如何应用这些技巧的情况吗？

6. 《幼儿园教师专业标准（试行）》用于认证教师教育课程和注册教师的重要文件。在该课程中您知道此《标准》吗？如果知道的话，您是如何将该《标准》中的原则应用到您的学习的？

7. 您对该课程还有什么意见或建议吗？

谢谢您的参与!

APPENDIX H1

Interview Schedule for Academics (English Version)

**Early Childhood Teacher Preparation:
A Comparative Study between Australia and China
Interview Schedule for Academics**

This will be used when the student researcher visits the individual participant and conducts semi-structured interviews with the participant.

Name of Interviewer: _____

Name of interviewee: _____

Place of Interview: _____

Date of Interview: _____

Time started _____ Time finished _____

1. What are the three most important features of the early childhood teacher education course that you coordinate/teach in?

2. Can comment on the structure of your course and the content that you taught in the program? Do you discuss the content of the course with your colleagues?

3. What teaching strategies or methods have you been using to help your students meet the learning outcomes?

4. What kind of tasks were used to assess your students learning performance and achievements in the course?

5. How does the professional experience help your students to apply the theoretical knowledge and early childhood curriculum in the early childhood settings? Can you provide an example where you supervised or observed?

6. The Professional Standards are used to accredit teacher education courses and to register teachers.   Have you introduced the standards during the course? If so, how did you deliver them to your students?

7. Do you have any further comments or suggestions about your course?

Thanks for your time!

APPENDIX H2

Interview Schedule for Academics (Chinese Version)

学前教育师资培养
澳中对比研究访谈问题·教师版 (Chinese Version)

该半结构化访谈内容用于学生研究员访问参与者时使用。

访问者姓名: _____

被访问者姓名: _____

访谈地点: _____

访谈日期: _____

开始时间： _____ 结束时间： _____

1. 您教授的学前教师教育课程的三个最重要特点是什么？

2. 你能谈谈该课程的结构和内容吗？您会和您的同事讨论该课程的内容吗？

3. 您采用了哪些教学策略或教学方法来帮助您的学生达到学习效果？

4. 您采用了什么样的教学任务来评估您学生的学习表现和取得的成绩？

5. 教学实践活动如何帮助您的学生在幼儿学习、生活环境中应用课堂上所学的理论知识？你能举一个您监督或观察到的例子吗？

6. 《幼儿园教师专业标准（试行）》用于认证教师教育课程和注册教师的重要文件。您在您的教学过程中是否介绍过该《标准》？如果介绍过，您是如何解说和讲解的？

7. 您对该课程还有什么意见或建议吗？

谢谢您的参与!

APPENDIX I1

Interview Schedule for Employers (English Version)

**Early Childhood Teacher Preparation:
A Comparative Study between Australia and China
Interview Schedule for Employers**

This will be used when the student researcher visits the individual participant and conducts semi-structured interviews with the participant.

Name of Interviewer: _____

Name of interviewee: _____

Place of Interview: _____

Date of Interview: _____

Time started _____ Time finished _____

1. What are the three most important features of an early childhood teacher education course for teachers that you might consider employing?

2. Do you consider graduates from the course have covered all the relevant content?

3. From your experience as an administrator, what kind of tasks were used to capture the pre-service teachers' learning performance and achievements from the formal course?

4. Do you think the professional experience requirements are adequate for pre-service teachers to know the early childhood settings and practice? If so, can you provide an example where you observed?

5. Do you contact the Faculty of Education to discuss early childhood teachers of the course performance? If you do, what issues will you discuss?

6. How do you train the new pre-service early childhood education teachers? What particular material may you use to train them?

7. Do you have any further comments or suggestions about early childhood education course?

Thanks for your time!

APPENDIX I2

Interview Schedule for Employers (Chinese Version)

<div align="center">

学前教育师资培养

澳中对比研究访谈问题·幼儿园园长（雇主版）**(Chinese Version)**

</div>

该半结构化访谈内容用于学生研究员访问参与者时使用。

访问者姓名: _____

被访问者姓名: _____

访谈地点: _____

访谈日期: _____

开始时间： _____ 结束时间： _____

1. 您会考虑学前教师教育课程哪三个最重要的特点对毕业生有利，且作为您聘用他们的依据？

2. 您认为该课程的毕业生所学内容是否涵盖了所有与儿童成长相关内容？

3. 从您作为管理者的经验来看，该课程应使用哪些教学任务去说明师范生的学习能力和成绩？

4. 您认为师范生的教学实践活动任务和要求是否足以让他们了解学前教育的环境和实操？如果是的话，您能举一个例子吗？

5. 您是否与教育学院的老师讨论该学院师范生的实践能力？如果您这样做了，一般您会讨论什么问题？

6. 您如何培训刚入职的学前教育教师？采用什么方法来去培训他们？

7. 您对该学前教育教师课程还有什么意见或建议吗？

<div align="center">

谢谢您的参与!

</div>

APPENDIX J

Australian Stakeholders' Demographic Information

Table J1

4th-year students

4th year students		
Total	13	%
Gender		
Male	1	7.7
Female	12	92.3
Age group (years)		
17-21	8	61.5
22-26	3	23.1
27-31	1	7.7
32-36	1	7.7

Table J2

Graduates

Graduates		
Total	4	%
Gender		
Male	1	25
Female	3	75
Age group		
17-21		
22-26	3	75
27-31		
32-36	1	25

Table J3

Academics

Academics		
Total	3	%
Gender		
Male		
Female	3	100
Age group		
30-39	1	33.3
40-49	2	66.6
Education Qualification		
BA		
Med	1	33.3
PhD	2	66.6
Academic rank		
Lecturer	2	66.6
Tutor	1	33.3
University teaching experience (years)		
4-9	1	33.3
10-15	1	33.3
16-20	1	33.3

Table J4

Employers

Employers		
Total	3	%
Gender		
Male		
Female	3	100
Age group (years)		
40-49	2	33.3
50-59	1	66.6
Education Qualification		
GradDip	1	33.3
BA	2	66.6
Years as an employer		
10-15	1	33.3
16-20	1	33.3
≥20	1	33.3

APPENDIX K

Australian Stakeholders' Perception of the Early Childhood Initial Teacher Education Course

Table K1

Stakeholders' perceptions on the capacities of EC ITE students in the professional knowledge domain

Group	Item	N	M	SD
4th-year students		13	4.31	.83
Graduates	2. Understand children's characteristics and	4	4	.71
Academics	physical, social and intellectual progress	3	4.3	.47
Employers		3	4.67	.47
Overall		23	4.32	.75
4th year students	3. Demonstrate knowledge of teaching	13	4.08	.47
Graduates	strategies that will support learning strengths	4	4.5	.5
Academics	and demands of children from various	3	4.33	.47
Employers	families' background	3	4.67	.47
Overall		23	4.39	.53
4th-year students	4. Use different kinds of teaching strategies	13	4.08	.47
Graduates	to meet the specific learning needs of	4	4.25	.43
Academics	children across the full range of abilities	3	4.67	.47
Employers		3	4	0
Overall		23	4.25	.48
4th-year students	5. Demonstrate knowledge of content and	13	4.62	.46
Graduates	requirements of *Belonging, being and*	4	3.75	1.09
Academics	*becoming: Early years learning framework*	3	4.33	.47
Employers	*for Australia*	3	4	.82
Overall		23	4.18	.77
4th-year students		13	4.23	.42
Graduates	7. Incorporate literacy strategies in planning	4	4.25	.43
Academics	and teaching	3	4.33	.47
Employers		3	4.33	.47
Overall		23	4.29	.44
4th-year students		13	4.23	.42
Graduates	8. Incorporate numeracy strategies in	4	4.25	.43
Academics	planning and teaching	3	4.33	.47
Employers		3	4	0
Overall		23	4.20	.41
Total			4.28	.58

Note. N = the number of stakeholders; M = mean score; SD = standard deviation.

Table K2

Stakeholders' perceptions of the capacities of EC ITE students to plan and implement effective learning and teaching (professional practice sub-domain 1)

Group	Item	N	M	SD
4th-year students	1. Select appropriate teaching strategies to support the learning of children	13	4.08	.47
Graduates		4	4.25	.83
Academics		3	4.67	.47
Employers		3	4.67	.47
Overall		23	4.42	.56
4th-year students	6. Design lessons and activities that meet the requirements of the *Belonging, being and becoming: Early years learning framework for Australia*	13	4.62	.62
Graduates		4	3.75	1.09
Academics		3	3.33	.47
Employers		3	4	.82
Overall		23	3.93	.88
4th-year students	9. Integrate music, visual art and dance in curriculum activities	13	4.23	.69
Graduates		4	4.25	.43
Academics		3	4.33	.47
Employers		3	4.33	.47
Overall		23	4.29	.61
4th-year students	10. Integrate ICT into teaching practice	13	3.92	.47
Graduates		4	4.25	.43
Academics		3	3.67	.47
Employers		3	3.67	.47
Overall		23	3.88	.50

Group	Item	N	M	SD
4th-year students	11. Plan appropriate learning activities/ experiences for children.	13	4.46	.63
Graduates		4	4.5	.5
Academics		3	4	.82
Employers		3	4.33	.47
Overall		23	4.32	.64
4th-year students	18. Support children in their transition between year levels from kindergartens/preschools to primary school	13	3.85	1.03
Graduates		4	4.25	.83
Academics		3	4.33	.47
Employers		3	4	.82
Overall		23	4.11	.93
4th-year students	19. Implement learning programs that demonstrate real-world connections	13	4.23	.58
Graduates		4	4.5	.5
Academics		3	4	0
Employers		3	4.67	.47
Overall		23	4.35	.55
4th-year students	20. Select relevant and appropriate sources of professional learning develop to support children's learning	13	4.08	.62
Graduates		4	4.5	.5
Academics		3	4.67	.47
Employers		3	5	0
Overall		23	4.56	.63
Total			4.21	.67

Note. N = the number of stakeholders; M = mean score; SD = standard deviation.

Table K3

Stakeholders' perceptions of the capacities of EC ITE students to create and maintain
supportive learning environment (professional practice sub-domain 2)

Group	Item	N	M	SD
4th-year students		13	4.31	.82
Graduates		4	4.75	.43
Academics	12. Create rapport with children	3	4.33	.47
Employers		3	4.67	.47
Overall		23	4.52	.71
4th-year students		13	4.15	.86
Graduates		4	4.75	.43
Academics	13. Implement appropriate behaviour management strategies	3	3.67	.47
Employers		3	5	0
Overall		23	4.39	.8
4th-year students		13	4.38	.49
Graduates		4	4.25	.43
Academics	14. Create a secure learning setting to promote children's health and well-being	3	4.67	.47
Employers		3	4.67	.47
Overall		23	4.49	.49
Total			4.47	.69

Note. N = the number of stakeholders; M = mean score; SD = standard
deviation.

Table K4

Stakeholders' perceptions of the capacities of EC ITE students to assess and report on children's performance (professional practice sub-domain 3)

Group	Item	N	M	SD
4th year student		13	4.38	.49
Graduates	15. Record children's daily learning and	4	4.25	.43
Academics	activities in portfolios for parents and	3	4.67	.47
Employers	external authorities	3	4.67	.47
Overall		23	4.49	.49
4th year student		13	4.15	.66
Graduates		4	4.5	.5
Academics	16. Provide regular feedback to parents	3	4.67	.47
Employers		3	5	0
Overall		23	4.58	.67
4th year student		13	4.23	.58
Graduates		4	4.5	.5
Academics	17. Select and apply appropriate comments	3	4	0
Employers	and feedback to promote children's learning.	3	4.67	.47
Overall		23	4.35	.55
Total			4.47	.58

Note. N = the number of stakeholders; M = mean score; SD = standard deviation.

Table K5

Stakeholders' perceptions of the capacities of EC ITE students in professional engagement

Group	Item	N	M	SD
4th-year students		13	3.92	.62
Graduates	21. Explain a variety of assessment tasks for children in order to modify initial early childhood teachers' teaching practice	4	4.75	.43
Academics		3	4	0
Employers		3	3.33	1.7
Overall		23	4	.89
4th-year students		13	4.54	.49
Graduates	22. Reflect on initial early childhood teachers' teaching practices and learning outcomes.	4	4.75	.43
Academics		3	4.33	.47
Employers		3	4.67	.47
Overall		23	4.57	.49
4th-year students		13	4.23	.69
Graduates	23. Create rapport with children's parents and external experts to support initial early childhood teachers' professional development	4	4.75	.43
Academics		3	4.33	.47
Employers		3	4.67	.47
Overall		23	4.50	.64
Total			4.36	.73

Note. N = the number of stakeholders; M = mean score; SD = standard deviation.

APPENDIX L

Australian Stakeholders' Perceptions of the Results of the Early Childhood Initial Teacher Education Course

Table L1

Stakeholders' perceptions of the students' supports during the EC ITE course

Group	Item	N	M	SD
4th-year students		13	3.69	.91
Graduates	24. Had appropriate instruction, suggestions and feedback from Academics in the Faculty of Education	4	4.25	.43
Academics		3	4	.82
Employers		3	4.33	.94
Overall		23	4.07	.88
4th-year students		13	3.69	.61
Graduates	26. Had many opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge and understandings	4	3.75	1.09
Academics		3	4	0
Employers		3	4.67	.47
Overall		23	4.03	.74
Total			4.05	.81

Note. N = the number of stakeholders; M = mean score; SD = standard deviation.

Table L2

Stakeholders' perceptions of the outcomes of the EC ITE course

Group	Item	N	M	SD
4th-year students	25. Developed theoretical knowledge for teaching in the early childhood education setting	13	4.08	.73
Graduates		4	4	.71
Academics		3	4.67	.47
Employers		3	4.67	.47
Overall		23	4.36	.72
4th-year students	27. Been effectively prepared to teach in early childhood settings	13	3.92	.61
Graduates		4	3.75	1.09
Academics		3	4.67	.47
Employers		3	4	0
Overall		23	4.09	.74
Total			4.23	.76

Note. N = the number of stakeholders; M = mean score; SD = standard deviation.

APPENDIX M

Australian Stakeholders' Perceptions of Early Childhood Teachers' Professional Dispositions

Table M1

Stakeholders' perceptions of the professional dispositions of EC teachers listed by the researcher (frequency and percentage)

Item	Group												Overall		
	4th-year students			Graduates			Academics			Employers					
	N	R	%	N	R	%	N	R	%	N	R	%	N	R	%
Adaptable	13	10	76.9	4	4	100	3	2	66.6	3	3	100	23	19	82.6
Accessible	13	7	53.4	4	3	75	3	2	66.6	3	2	66.6	23	14	60.9
Cooperative	13	8	61.5	4	3	75	3	2	66.6	3	1	33.3	23	14	60.9
Warm	13	9	69.2	4	2	50	3	2	66.6	3	1	33.3	23	14	60.9
Creative	13	11	84.6	4	3	75	3	2	66.6	3	2	66.6	23	19	82.6
Humble	13	4	30.8	4	3	75	3	2	66.6	3	1	33.3	23	10	52.2
Passionate	13	10	76.9	4	3	75	3	2	66.6	3	2	66.6	23	17	73.9
Patient	13	10	76.9	4	4	100	3	2	66.6	3	2	66.6	23	18	82.6
Accountable	13	8	61.5	4	3	75	3	3	100	3	2	66.6	23	16	69.6
Respectful	13	9	69.2	4	4	100	3	2	66.6	3	3	100	23	18	82.6
Compassionate	13	9	69.2	4	2	50	3	1	33.3	3	2	66.6	23	14	60.9
Kind	13	10	76.9	4	2	50	3	3	100	3	2	66.6	23	17	73.9
Caring	13	12	92.3	4	3	75	3	2	66.6	3	3	100	23	20	86.9
Enthusiastic	13	11	84.6	4	3	75	3	1	33.3	3	2	66.6	23	17	73.9
Positive	13	11	84.6	4	4	100	3	3	100	3	2	66.6	23	20	86.9

Note. N = the number of stakeholders; R = the number of stakeholders who ticked the item.

Table M2

Stakeholders listed additional professional dispositions (not listed by the researcher)

Group	Item				
4th-year students	knowledgeable ×3	humour	friendly	prepared	organised ×3
	effective communicator	inspired	motivated	open to change	reflective ×3
	good listener×3	loving×2	resilient	supportive ×4	Flexible ×3
	understanding	Inclusive ×2	confident ×2	trustworthy	Fun
	fair	consistent	Disciplined	welcoming	Honest
	risk-taker	eye over everywhere	Engaging ×2	big heart	
Graduates	fun	Loving ×2	Energetic	innovative	Learner
	open minded ×3	approachable	Understanding	humour	good listener
	Empathetic	Flexible			
	Resilient	Organised	Confident	being alert	
Employers	Flexible				

Note. The number below the items identifies how many times they were mentioned by stakeholders.

APPENDIX N

Chinese Stakeholders' Demographic Information

Table N1

4th-year students

	4th-year students	
Total	63	%
Gender		
Male	5	7.9
Female	58	92.1
Age group (years)		
17-21	63	100
22-26		
27-31		
32-36		

Table N2

Graduates

	Graduates	
Total	8	%
Gender		
Male	1	12.5
Female	7	87.5
Age group (years)		
17-21		
22-26	6	75
27-31	2	25
32-36		

Table N3

Academics

	Academics	
Total	11	%
Gender		
Male	1	9.1
Female	10	90.9
Age group (years)		
≤30	1	9.1
30-39	5	45.5
40-49	3	27.3
50-59	2	18.2
Education Qualification		
BA	2	18.2
Med	7	63.6
PhD	2	18.2
Academic rank		
Lecturer	6	54.5
Senior lecturer	1	9.1
Associate professor	3	27.3
Professor	1	9.1
University teaching experience (years)		
1-3	1	9.1
4-9	3	27.3
10-15	2	18.2
16-19	3	27.3
≥20	2	18.2

Table N4

Employers

	Employers	
Total	4	%
Gender		
Male		
Female	4	100
Age group		
≤30	1	25
40-49	2	50
50-59	1	25
Education Qualification		
BA	4	100
Years as an employer		
4-9	1	25
10-15	1	25
16-20	2	50

APPENDIX O

Chinese Stakeholders' Perception of the Early Childhood Initial Teacher Education Course

Table O1

Stakeholders' perceptions on the capacities of EC ITE students in the professional knowledge domain

Group	Item	N	M	SD
4th-year students		63	4.25	.72
Graduates	2. Understand children's characteristics and physical, social and intellectual progress	8	4.38	.43
Academics		11	4.18	.83
Employers		4	3.5	.87
Overall		86	4.08	.74
4th-year students		63	3.81	1.09
Graduates	3. Demonstrate knowledge of teaching strategies that will support learning strengths and demands of children from various families' background	8	3.88	.60
Academics		11	3.82	.83
Employers		4	3.5	.87
Overall		86	3.75	.88
4th-year students		63	3.80	1.07
Graduates	4. Use different kinds of teaching strategies to meet the specific learning needs of children across the full range of abilities	8	4	.71
Academics		11	3.73	.75
Employers		4	3.5	1.12
Overall		86	3.76	.84
4th-year students		63	4.00	1.18
Graduates	5. Demonstrate knowledge of content and requirements of *Early learning and development guidelines for children aged 3 to 6 years*	8	4.13	.60
Academics		11	3.91	.67
Employers		4	3.75	1.09
Overall		86	3.95	.78
4th-year students		63	3.69	1.16
Graduates	7. Incorporate literacy strategies in planning and teaching	8	3.88	.78
Academics		11	2.90	.51
Employers		4	2.5	.87
Overall		86	3.24	.98
4th-year students		63	3.63	1.14
Graduates	8. Incorporate numeracy strategies in planning and teaching	8	3.75	.66
Academics		11	3.64	.77
Employers		4	2.5	.87
Overall		86	3.38	.84
Total			3.69	.89

Note. N = the number of stakeholders; M = mean score; SD = standard deviation.

Table O2

Stakeholders' perceptions of the capacities of EC ITE students to plan and implement effective learning and teaching (professional practice sub-domain 1)

Group	Item	N	M	SD
4th-year students		63	3.85	1.10
Graduates	1. Select appropriate teaching strategies to support the learning of children	8	4.25	.43
Academics		11	4.09	.67
Employers		4	3.5	1.12
Overall		86	3.97	.75
4th-year students		63	3.91	1.22
Graduates	6. Design lessons and activities that meet the requirements of the *Early learning and development guidelines for children aged 3 to 6 years*	8	4.38	.70
Academics		11	4.09	.51
Employers		4	3.5	1.12
Overall		86	3.97	.73
4th-year students		63	3.92	1.11
Graduates	9. Integrate music, visual art and dance in curriculum activities	8	4.25	.43
Academics		11	4.18	.83
Employers		4	3.75	.83
Overall		86	4.03	.75
4th-year students		63	3.77	1.06
Graduates	10. Integrate ICT into teaching practice	8	4.25	.43
Academics		11	4.18	.83
Employers		4	4.25	.43
Overall		86	4.11	.65
4th-year students		63	4.03	1.18
Graduates	11. Plan appropriate learning activities/ experiences for children.	8	4.5	.5
Academics		11	3.91	.67
Employers		4	3.5	1.12
Overall		86	3.99	.70
4th-year students		63	3.70	1.17
Graduates	18. Support children in their transition between year levels from kindergartens/preschools to primary school	8	4	.5
Academics		11	3.55	.50
Employers		4	3.5	1.12
Overall		86	3.69	.77

Group	Item	N	M	SD
4th-year students	19. Implement learning programs that demonstrate real-world connections	63	3.91	1.12
Graduates		8	4.25	.43
Academics		11	3.63	.48
Employers		4	3.5	.5
Overall		86	3.82	.73
4th-year students	20. Select relevant and appropriate sources of professional learning develop to support children's learning	63	3.99	1.17
Graduates		8	4.5	.5
Academics		11	4	.43
Employers		4	3.5	.5
Overall		86	3.99	.61
Total			3.94	.72

Note. N = the number of stakeholders; M = mean score; SD = standard deviation.

Table O3

Stakeholders' perceptions of the capacities of EC ITE students to create and maintain supportive learning environment (professional practice sub-domain 2)

Group	Item	N	M	SD
4th-year students	12. Create rapport with children	63	4.03	1.16
Graduates		8	4.13	.6
Academics		11	4.27	.75
Employers		4	4	.71
Overall		86	4.11	.64
4th-year students	13. Implement appropriate behaviour management strategies	63	3.91	1.18
Graduates		8	4	.71
Academics		11	3.82	.57
Employers		4	3.75	1.09
Overall		86	3.87	.71
4th-year students	14. Create a secure learning setting to promote children's health and well-being	63	4.10	1.17
Graduates		8	4.5	.5
Academics		11	4.27	.62
Employers		4	3.5	1.12
Overall		86	4.09	.69
Total			4.02	.69

Note. N = the number of stakeholders; M = mean score; SD = standard deviation.

Table O4

Stakeholders' perceptions of the capacities of EC ITE students to assess and report on children's performance (professional practice sub-domain 3)

Group	Item	N	M	SD
4th-year students	15. Record children's daily learning and activities in portfolios for parents and external authorities	63	3.97	1.13
Graduates		8	4.13	.59
Academics		11	3.73	.62
Employers		4	3.5	1.12
Overall		86	3.83	.67
4th-year students	16. Provide regular feedback to parents	63	3.84	1.14
Graduates		8	4.13	.59
Academics		11	4.09	.79
Employers		4	3.25	.83
Overall		86	3.83	.73
4th-year students	17. Select and apply appropriate comments and feedback to promote children's learning.	63	3.85	1.12
Graduates		8	4.13	.33
Academics		11	3.73	.49
Employers		4	3.25	.83
Overall		86	3.74	.73
Total			3.8	.71

Note. N = the number of stakeholders; M = mean score; SD = standard deviation.

Table O5

Stakeholders' perceptions of the capacities of EC ITE students in professional

engagement

Group	Item	N	M	SD
4th-year students		63	3.72	1.16
Graduates	21. Explain a variety of assessment tasks for	8	4.13	.59
Academics	children in order to modify initial early	11	3.55	.66
Employers	childhood teachers' teaching practice	4	3.5	.87
Overall		86	3.73	.69
4th-year students		63	4.24	1.16
Graduates		8	4.5	.5
Academics	22. Reflect on initial early childhood teachers'	11	4.23	.62
Employers	teaching practices and learning outcomes.	4	4.5	.5
Overall		86	4.37	.65
4th-year students		63	4.05	1.15
Graduates	23. Create rapport with children's parents and	8	4.25	.43
Academics	external experts to support initial early	11	3.82	.94
Employers	childhood teachers' professional development	4	4.25	.43
Overall		86	4.09	.67
Total			4.05	.69

Note. N = the number of stakeholders; M = mean score; SD = standard deviation.

APPENDIX P

Chinese stakeholders' Perceptions of the Results of the Early Childhood Initial Teacher Education Course

Table P1

Stakeholders' perceptions of the students' supports during the EC ITE course

Group	Item	N	M	SD
4th-year students	24. Had appropriate instruction, suggestions and feedback from Academics in the Faculty of Education	63	3.82	1.17
Graduates		8	4.38	.49
Academics		11	4.36	.48
Employers		4	4.25	.83
Overall		86	4.20	.66
4th-year students	26. Had many opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge and understandings	63	3.87	1.18
Graduates		8	4.5	.5
Academics		11	4	.60
Employers		4	4.75	.43
Overall		86	4.28	.91
Total			4.24	.81

Note. N = the number of stakeholders; M = mean score; SD = standard deviation.

Table P2

Stakeholders' perceptions of the outcomes of the EC ITE course

Group	Item	N	M	SD
4th-year students	25. Developed theoretical knowledge for teaching in the early childhood education setting	63	4.10	1.19
Graduates		8	4.63	.48
Academics		11	4.46	.48
Employers		4	4.75	.43
Overall		86	4.49	.61
4th-year students	27. Been effectively prepared to teach in early childhood settings	63	3.89	1.17
Graduates		8	4.5	.5
Academics		11	4	.60
Employers		4	4.25	.83
Overall		86	4.16	.91
Total			4.33	.80

Note. N = the number of stakeholders; M = mean score; SD = standard deviation.

APPENDIX Q

Chinese Stakeholders' Perceptions of Early Childhood Teachers' Professional Dispositions

Table Q1

Stakeholders' perceptions of the professional dispositions of EC teachers listed by the researcher (frequency and percentage)

| Item | Group | | | | | | | | | | | | Overall | | |
| | 4th-year students | | | Graduates | | | Academics | | | Employers | | | | | |
	N	R	%	N	R	%	N	R	%	N	R	%	N	R	%
Adaptable	63	47	74.6	8	5	62.5	11	7	63.6	4	4	100	86	63	73.3
Accessible	63	51	80.9	8	7	87.5	11	7	63.6	4	4	100	86	69	80.2
Cooperative	63	36	57.1	8	6	75	11	4	36.3	4	4	100	86	50	58.1
Warm	63	33	52.4	8	5	62.5	11	7	63.6	4	2	50	86	47	54.7
Creative	63	43	68.3	8	7	87.5	11	5	45.5	4	4	100	86	59	68.6
Humble	63	25	39.7	8	5	62.5	11	7	63.6	4	3	75	86	40	46.5
Passionate	63	45	71.2	8	7	87.5	11	9	81.8	4	3	75	86	64	74.4
Patient	63	53	84.1	8	7	87.5	11	8	72.7	4	4	100	86	72	83.7
Accountable	63	55	87.3	8	8	100	11	8	72.7	4	3	78	86	74	86.0
Respectful	63	33	52.4	8	7	87.5	11	4	36.3	4	2	50	86	46	53.5
Compassionate	63	23	36.5	8	5	62.5	11	8	72.7	4	3	75	86	39	45.3
Kind	63	48	76.2	8	7	87.5	11	8	72.7	4	4	100	86	67	77.9
Caring	63	20	31.7	8	5	62.5	11	5	45.5	4	3	75	86	53	61.2
Enthusiastic	63	38	60.3	8	7	87.5	11	2	18.2	4	3	75	86	50	58.1
Positive	63	41	65.1	8	8	100	11	9	81.8	4	3	75	86	61	70.9

Note. N = the number of stakeholders; R = the number of stakeholders who ticked the item.

APPENDIX R

Official Schedule of the UTAS Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood)

Year	Semester	Units			
year 1	1	ESH102 Foundations of Teaching	ESH106 Academic Literacies	ESH 110 Foundations of English	ESH 120 Personal & Professional Numeracy
	2	ESH 103 Curriculum & Pedagogy in Early Childhood	ESP160 Growth & Motor Development Across the Lifespan	ESH 130 Arts Education: Music & Visual Arts	ESH 150 Introduction to Primary and Early Childhood Science Education
		Professional Experience 1 (birth to 2 years, in an early childhood centre)(10 days)			
year 2	1	ESH 202 Planning for Positive Behaviour	ESH 240 Introduction to HEP	ESH 241 Early Childhood Theories of Teaching and Learning	ESH 270 Design and Technologies
		Professional Experience 2 (3-5 years, in an early childhood education setting) (15 days)			
	2	ESH 203 Assessment for Learning	ESH 210 Developing Understandings of English	ESH 220 Primary and Early Childhood Mathematics Pedagogy	ESH 260 Introduction to Humanities and Social Sciences Education
year 3	1	ESH 303 Inclusive Practices in Education Settings	ESH 340 Advanced HPE	ESH 360 Advanced Humanities and Social Sciences Education	ESH 380 Digital Technologies
		Professional Experience 3 (4 years, in a school setting) (30 days)			
	2	ESH 302 Education, Ethics and Professional Practice	ESH 304 Teachers as Reflective Practitioners and Action Researchers	ESH 330 Arts Education: Drama & Dance	ESH 390 Cultural Awareness: The Non-indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Interface
year 4	1	ESH 215 Languages and Language Acquisition	ESH 310 Critical Approaches to English	ESH 320 Pedagogical Content Knowledge for Teaching Mathematics	ESH 350 Planning and Assessing in Primary and Early Childhood Science
	2	ESH 306 Preparing for the Profession	ESH 345 Play, Pedagogy and Learning	ESH 347 Documenting Learning and Portfolios for Young Children	ESH 348 Leadership and Management in Early Childhood Services
		Professional Experience 4 (5-8 years, in a school setting) (35 days)			

Note. Units at Introductory level are in yellow font; units at Intermediate level are in red font, and units at Advanced level are in blue font. Blue box=Professional studies units; purple box=Curriculum units; and green box=Core Specialist Early Childhood Education focus.

APPENDIX S

Official Schedule of the YNNU Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood)

		Compulsory units											Elective RP	C/P
year 1	1	National Defence Education and Army training[a]	Chinese Situation and current Policies	Moral Education and Foundation of Law	Basic Principles of Marxism	Career Planning and Employment Guide	Physical Education[b] (1)	Foundations of English (1)	Music Theories and Practice (1)	Fine Arts (1)				
	2	Maoism & An Introduction to Socialism with Chinese Characteristics	Foundation of Chinese	Foundations of English (2)	Physical Education (2)	Outline of Modern History of China			Music Theories and Practice (2)	Fine Arts (2)	Dance (1)	Playing Piano (1)	1	2
		Professional Experience placement 1 One-week Kindergarten Visit												
year 2	1	Foundations of English (3)	Physical Education (3)	Early Childhood Theories of Teaching and Learning	Early Childhood hygiene	Early Childhood Psychology	Early Childhood Education Principles				Dance (2)	Playing Piano (2)	1	2
		Professional Experience placement 2 Two- week Kindergarten Observation												
	2	Foundations of English (4)	Physical Education (4)	Kindergarten's Curriculum	Kindergarten's Playing and Guide								1	4
year 3	1	Research Methods of Early Childhood Education	Health Education for children	Language Education for Children	Music Education for Children	Mathematics Education for Children							1	3
		Professional Experience placement 3 University-based Micro-Teaching												
	2	Social Education for Children	Science Education for Children	Fine Arts Education for Children									1	3
year 4	1	Professional Experience placement 4 Real-setting Placement and Education Research												1
	2	Completion of a graduation thesis												

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Note. Units in comprehensive knowledge domain shown in blue box, units in professional knowledge in red box, and units in professional experience in green box. Seven practical units that fully align with the five areas of the early childhood education curriculum (marked in purple). Comprehensive knowledge is regarded as comprehensive education with extensive subjects; while the professional areas have an ECEC focus with content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and necessary practice. Additionally, the two right-hand columns, P = Free elective units from professional knowledge areas provided by the Faculty (see Appendix T); RP = Restricted elective units from the professional knowledge areas. As their attributes are equivalent to compulsory units, students are required to complete under suggestions from the course coordinators. C = Free elective units from comprehensive knowledge area provided by the university, students can undertake based on their preference. As the elective units regrading comprehensive knowledge area are coordinated and provided by the university, the course coordinators interpret released units from the six dominant fields at the beginning of each semester for students to select. The six fields consist of (i) educational philosophy, (ii) social science, (iii) science, (iv) arts and sports, (v) foreign language learning, and (vi) advanced mathematics study. The superscripts refer to the sequence of Units.

[a]National Defence Education and Army training is compulsory for all university students in China, and it is implemented in a university-based pattern of two-week theory study and physical training. Most universities conduct this project in summer break: either at the beginning of a new semester starts or after the completion of the first-year academic study. Usually, YNNU organizes a military education for the first-year students before their study. [b]Physical Education is an educational class related to maintaining the human body through physical exercises (e.g., playing basketball, Taichi). Generally, the inclusion of physical education in the school curriculum is compulsory in China from kindergarten to university. Activities and games are often taken place outdoors, and this class provides students with a better opportunity to maintain their physical and mental health and may relieve tension and stress regarding their learning

APPENDIX T

Elective units in the Professional Knowledge Area of the YNNU BEd (Early Childhood)

Domains	Units				
Professional disposition and development	Early Childhood Teachers' Professional Ethics	Literature of children	Early Childhood Teachers' Etiquette and Behaviours	Early Childhood Teachers' Professional Development	Early Childhood Teachers' Language Skill
	Vocal Music	Children Dance	Piano Performance	Children's Chorus	Piano Accompaniment of Children's Song
	Advanced Fine Arts				
Professional capabilities	Introduction of Psychology	China and Foreign Countries' Education History	Early Childhood Education History	Creation and Application of Multimedia Courseware	Sociology of Education
	SPSS for Education Psychology	Appreciation of Children's Fine Arts	Education Psychology	Kindergarten's Regional Activity and Guide	Kindergarten's Class Teaching Strategy
	Kindergarten's Education Assessment	Children's Psychological Health Education	Psychology of Children with Disabilities	Creation of Kindergarten's Educational Setting	
Professional engagement	Education Philosophy	Parenting Education	Policies and Laws applicable to Early Childhood Education	Children's Family and Community's Education	Early Childhood Comparative Education
	Leadership and management in early childhood services	Arts and the creative process	Women's Psychology Health Education	Research Training (for Undergraduates)	Appreciation of Chinese and Foreign Countries' Music

Note. Restricted elective units, as their attributes are equivalent to compulsory units, as well as these five units are required to students to take (marked in red) under suggestions from course coordinators. Students should complete one restricted elective unit per semester from the second semester of the first year to the second semester of the third year. Other units listed in this table are allowed to students to complete because their attributes are equivalent to free elective units in comprehensive knowledge areas. The number of the free elective units students undertake varies depending on the course schedule (see Appendix S).

APPENDIX U

Professional Experience at the UTAS

UNIVERSITY of TASMANIA

Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood)
ESH107 Professional Experience 1
A Guide to Expectations

Professional Experience 1 (PE1) in the Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) course is designed to enable pre-service teachers to become familiar with childcare and education contexts. PE1 involves active observation, participation and engagement in teaching and learning experiences in a birth to 2 years setting. It is conducted on a full-time basis over two consecutive weeks (10 days). Throughout the placement, pre-service teachers are required to maintain a professional file, which must include policy documents; resources for teaching and learning; observations and daily reflections on the teaching and their own learning.

Expectations for Placement
You are required to: • Assist with daily routines   • Develop positive relationships with all children, relative staff and families   • Attend staff meetings, and other professional learning opportunities, where possible   ***Maintain a professional planning file to be shared daily with your supervising educator.***   ***The folder must include:***   • Copies of relevant Centre policies and the University PE1 Assessment Report   • Daily reflections – at least half a page each day of the placement   • Daily observations of the teaching and learning (see below Week 1 and 2 expectations)   • A section for filing resources i.e. recipes, games, nursery rhymes and songs

Week 1 – Becoming familiar with the setting	Week 2 – Observations of teaching and learning
In addition to the expectations above, you are expected to: • Write observations which document: Children's arrival/departure, meals, rest, toileting Strategies used for maintaining/providing safe environments Interactions between adults, children and families • Write observations which demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which children's emotional, social and physical wellbeing are met • Towards the end of Week 1, increase active participation by managing small group learning/teaching experiences planned and prepared by your supervising educator • Share and discuss your observations with your supervising educator	*Continue as for Week 1, and in addition:* • Document and reflect on ways in which learning is differentiated to meet individual learning/development • Reflect on teaching experiences you have delivered. Write about and discuss ideas relative to children's learning/development and subsequent experiences with your supervising educator • Write observations which document the teaching/learning and assessment strategies used within the room/setting • Engage in conversations with your supervising educator relative to planning, teaching children's learning and use of curriculum documents • Share and discus your observations with your supervising educator

Please note:

- Throughout PE1, pre-service teachers should undertake extracurricular experiences pertinent to the group and centre including where appropriate, attendance at staff meetings and professional development workshops, etc.
- Pre-service teachers must ensure confidentiality regarding information about the centre, its children, families and staff
- Centre staff maintain full responsibility for the group always and should not leave the pre-service teacher unattended for any period
- Ideally, pre-service teachers should have an opportunity to complete each of the tasks listed above at a mutually convenience time within the two-week placement
- All absences, including illness and public holidays must be made up to ensure the full 10 days of placement is completed

Documentation:

Throughout PE1, pre-service teachers are expected to maintain a comprehensive observation file and a reflection journal in a format that best meets their individual needs. These documents should provide a foundation for routine discussion with the supervising educator and for assessment of the pre-service teacher. In addition, pre-service teachers are expected to maintain a resource file including centre policies and learning resources. The maintenance and use of the files is assessed by the supervising educator. Pre-service teachers are not required to submit planning to the University. At this time, it is expected that the supervising educator provide oral and written feedback. Files and documentation may be viewed if/when professional experience visits are conducted by the University mentor.

Assessment:

Pre-service teachers will be assessed against selected focus areas within the Australian standards.
The Assessment Report Form must be completed in full and returned to the Professional Experience Office via email on the final day of placement, or as soon as possible after the placement is completed. A copy of the report is included in the documentation pack that is emailed to the centre prior to the commencement of the placement. Report forms should be completed in digital form, keeping a copy for school files, and providing a copy to the pre-Service teacher. The report should be emailed to the Professional Experience Office on the final day of placement.

Cautionary Advice Notice:

If at any point the supervising educator, university mentor or pre-service teacher has concerns that one or more of the standards in the assessment report would not be met by the end of the placement, it is vital that the Cautionary Advice Notice (CAN) be completed in collaboration with the above parties, and returned to the Coordinator, Professional Experience as soon as possible *within* the placement. Doing so will ensure that appropriate support is provided by University staff for both the pre-service teacher and supervising educator. The CAN is also included in the initial documentation that is emailed to the Centre.

Contacts:

Designation/Campus	Contact details
General Enquiries:	Professional Experience Office Professional.Experience@educ.utas.edu.au 03 6324 3794
Coordinator, Professional Experience	Kate Garratt kate.garratt@utas.edu.au 03 6324 3386
Professional Experience Leader – Early Childhood	Helen Yost Helen.Yost@utas.edu.au 03 6324 3054
Academic Director, Professional Experience	Christopher Rayner Christopher.Rayner@utas.edu.au 03 6226 2559

Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood)
ESH207 Professional Experience 2
A Guide to Expectations

Professional Experience 2 in the Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) course provides pre-service teachers with the opportunity to increase their familiarity with early childhood contexts with children aged 3 to 5 years, and to further develop their understanding of teaching practice. PE2 involves active observation and increased engagement in teaching and learning activities, building upon pre-service teachers' first Professional Experience. PE2 is conducted over the course of three consecutive weeks (15 days) on a full-time basis. Throughout the placement pre-service teachers are required to maintain a professional file, which must include planning; policy documents; resources for teaching and learning; and reflection on their own teaching and learning.

Expectations for Placement
You are required to:

You are required to:
- Source the Centre policies directly relating to best practices and Workplace Health and Safety Standards
- Source other policies, procedures and guidelines relevant to your placement
- Develop and sustain positive relationships with all children, relevant staff and families
- Assist with daily tasks (e.g. setting up/packing up activities/experiences
- Ensure that regular discussion and/or feedback opportunities about your progress in all aspects of the PE expectations are created with the supervising educator (at least once every other day)

Maintain a professional planning file, which includes:
- Your observations, planning and evaluations
- Copies of relevant Centre policies, University PE2 report, and University PE Guidelines
- Reflections – at least half a page each day of the placement
- A section for filing resources i.e. recipes, games, nursery rhymes and songs

Prior to delivery, all planning must be shared with your supervising educator for feedback at least one day before implementation and approved.

Week 1 – Observations/Collaborative teaching and planning	Week 2 – Collaborative teaching and planning

In addition to the expectations above, and in consultation with your supervising educator:
 	
• Complete two daily whole group and two small group observations which document teaching and learning within the room/setting. These observations should be used in conversation with your supervising educator
• By the end of this week use your observations, and the conversations with the supervising educator to plan:
• Two whole group, and
• Five small group activities that is, one activity for each EYLF outcome
	In addition to the above expectations and in consultation with your supervising educator:
	
	• Implement and evaluate two whole group and five small group activities (1 per day) that were planned in Week 1
	• Reflect on the activities from a pedagogical perspective. By the end of this week use your evaluations, and conversations with your supervising educator to plan subsequent activities, specifically:
	  ○ Two whole group, and
	  ○ Five small group activities
	• Observe and evaluate an outdoor activity, By the end of this week use your evaluations and conversations with your supervising educator to plan another outdoor activity

Week 3 – Independent Teaching
In addition to the expectations for placement, and in consultation with your supervising educator: • Implement and evaluate two whole group and five small group activities (1 per day) that were planned in Week 2 • Implement and evaluate the outdoor activity planned in Week 2

Pease note:

- Throughout PE2, pre-service teachers should undertake extracurricular experiences pertinent to the group and centre including where appropriate, attendance at staff meetings and professional development workshops, etc.
- Pre-service teachers must ensure confidentiality regarding information about the centre, its children, families and staff
- Centre staff maintain full responsibility for the group always and should not leave the pre-service teacher unattended for any period
- There is some flexibility around the timing of these expectations, depending on the pre-service teacher's capacity to undertake increased responsibility in the room and the supervising educator's/pre-service teacher's needs at that time. Ideally though, pre-service teachers will have an opportunity to complete each of the tasks listed at a mutually convenient time within the three-week placement.
- All absences, including illness and public holidays must be made up to ensure the full 15 days of placement is completed

Documentation:

Throughout PE2, pre-service teachers are expected to maintain a comprehensive observation file and a reflection journal in a format that best meets their individual needs. These documents should provide a foundation for routine discussion with the supervising educator

and for assessment of the pre-service teacher. In addition, pre-service teachers are expected to maintain a resource file including centre policies and learning resources. The maintenance and use of the files is assessed by the supervising educator. Pre-service teachers are not required to submit planning to the University. At this time, it is expected that the supervising educator provide oral and written feedback. Files and documentation may be viewed if/when professional experience visits are conducted by the University mentor.

Assessment by a tertiary qualified educator:
- In accordance with national accreditation requirements, documentation must be assessed by the centre tertiary qualified educator.
- In the absence of a tertiary qualified educator the assessment must be conducted by a University mentor or representative in consultation with the supervising educator.
- Pre-service teachers will be assessed against selected focus areas within the Australian Teaching standards.
- A copy of the assessment report (inclusive of developmental indicators designed to assist pre-service teacher and supervising educator to understand the desired levels of achievement for a PE2 placement) is included in the documentation emailed to the Centre.
- The Assessment Report should be completed in digital form and emailed to the Professional Experience Office on the final day of placement. A copy should be retained for the centre files and a copy provided to the pre-service teacher.

Cautionary Advice Notice:

If at any point the supervising educator, university mentor or pre-service teacher has concerns that one or more of the standards in the assessment report would not be met by the end of the placement, it is vital that the Cautionary Advice Notice (CAN) be completed in collaboration with the above parties, and returned to the Coordinator, Professional Experience as soon as possible *within* the placement. Doing so will ensure that appropriate support is provided by University staff for both the pre-service teacher and supervising educator. The CAN is also included in the initial documentation that is emailed to the Centre. **Contacts:**

Designation/Campus	Contact details
General Enquiries:	Professional Experience Office Professional.Experience@educ.utas.edu.au 03 6324 3794
Coordinator, Professional Experience	Kate Garratt kate.garratt@utas.edu.au 03 6324 3386
Professional Experience Leader – Early Childhood	Helen Yost Helen.Yost@utas.edu.au 03 6324 3283
Academic Director, Professional Experience	Christopher Rayner Christopher.Rayner@utas.edu.au 03 6226 2559

Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood)
ESH307 Professional Experience 3
A Guide to Expectations

Professional Experience 3 in the Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) course provides pre-service teachers with the opportunity to increase their familiarity with early childhood contexts, and to further develop their understanding of teaching practice. PE3 involves active observation and increased engagement in teaching and learning activities, building upon pre-service teachers' previous Professional Experience placements.

PE3 is conducted over the course of six consecutive weeks (30 days) on a full-time basis. There is an expectation that by the end of PE3, pre-service teachers will demonstrate the capacity to assume responsibility for approximately 75% of a full-time teaching load across English, Mathematics and ICT learning areas.

Kindergarten placement: Pre-service teachers undertaking a Kindergarten placement in a school that is approx. 15 – 18 hours per week or the equivalent of 3 days may spend one day in a Preparatory classroom, the remaining day may be used for the purpose of planning, or undertaking duties associated with the Kindergarten teacher role (i.e., *Launching into Learning* etc.).

Throughout the placement pre-service teachers are required to maintain a professional file, which must include planning; policy documents; resources for teaching and learning; and reflection on their own teaching and learning.

Expectations for Placement

• Prior to commencing their PE3 pre-service teachers are to identify and discuss with their supervising teacher a learning sequence for development from Week 3. This sequence must have an English and Mathematics focus, relevant to the group of learners emerging skills, with ICT incorporated into the teaching.
• Source the School policies directly relating to best practices, classroom management policy, and Workplace Health and Safety Standards.
• Source other policies, procedures and guidelines relevant to your placement.
• Develop and sustain positive relationships with all students, relevant staff and families.
• Maintain a professional planning file, which includes:
    ○ *Your observations, planning and evaluations*
    ○ *Copies of relevant School policies, University PE3 Interim and Final Reports, and University PE Guidelines*
    ○ *A section for resources i.e., recipes, games, nursery rhymes and songs*
    ○ *Reflections – at least half a page each day of the placement*
    ○ *Assist with daily tasks (e.g. setting up/packing up activities/experiences).*
• **Prior to delivery, all planning must be shared with your supervising teacher for feedback at least one day before implementation and approved.**

Week 1 – Observations/Collaborative teaching	Week 2 – Planning and independent teaching
In addition to the above expectations and in consultation with your supervising teacher: • Complete two daily whole group and two small group observations which document teaching and learning within the classroom. These observations should be used in conversation with your supervising teacher. • Take responsibility for a daily routine (such as roll all, monitor duties, etc.). • Observe and become familiar with the teacher/ school's behaviour support plan. • Observe and become familiar with the teacher's weekly routines (i.e. specialist timetables, events, support learning/teaching staff etc.). • Observe and become familiar with student support and services within the wider school community (i.e. school psychologist, chaplain, etc.). • Mid-week, in collaboration with your supervising teacher plan, implement, and evaluate at least two small group experiences/lessons each day.	*In addition to the above expectations and week 1 (where applicable) in consultation with your supervising teacher:* • Each day, plan, implement, and evaluate at least one whole class lesson/experience (1 per day) of 20- 30 minutes duration. • Submit detailed *draft* plans for the teaching tasks to be undertaken during Week 3 to the supervising teacher for review, discussion and final approval. These plans should be detailed and record specific, outcomes, clear directions for the teaching/learning and assessment processes with an English, Mathematics and ICT focus. **Provide your supervising teacher with a copy of the Interim report ready for completion and submission to the University by Friday, end of Week 2.**
Week 3 – Planning and independent teaching	**Week 4 – Planning and independent teaching**
Continue as for week 2, and in addition: • As previously discussed and approved by the supervising teacher in weeks 1 and 2, implement and evaluate a sequence of whole-class lesson/experience sequence in English, Mathematics and ICT including formal assessment and documentation of student's work/progress. • Plan, implement, manage, and evaluate at least one whole-class lesson/experience each day. • Plan, implement, manage, and evaluate at least one block of whole-class teaching time (which may include the whole-class lesson mentioned above). • Action the school's behaviour support plan for all students in the class. ***Working towards teaching equivalent of 1 day per week.***	*Continue as for week 3, and in addition:* • Plan, implement, manage, evaluate, and assess at least three blocks of whole-class teaching time. • Reflect upon and review as necessary, implementation of the school's behaviour support plan. ***Working towards teaching equivalent of 2 days per week, or 6 teaching blocks.***
Week 5 – Planning and independent teaching	**Week 6 – Planning and independent teaching**
Continue as for week 4, and in addition: • Identify goals, specific learning needs and other particular preparation areas for planning for teaching, classroom organisation and the support of student behaviour during week 5. ***Working towards teaching equivalent of 2-3 days per week.***	Continue as for week 5, and in addition: • Plan, implement, manage and evaluate at least three whole teaching days, ensuring that learning experiences are provided in at least four of the key learning areas. • **Provide your supervising teacher with a copy of the Final report ready for completion and submission to the University by Friday, end of Week 6.** ***Working towards teaching equivalent of 3-4 days per week.***

Please note:

- Throughout PE3, pre-service teachers should undertake extracurricular activities pertinent to the class group and school including where appropriate attendance at staff meetings and professional development workshops, etc.
- Pre-service teachers must ensure confidentiality regarding information about the school, its students, families and staff.
- Supervising teachers maintain full responsibility for the class group at all times and should not leave the pre-service teacher unattended for any period of time.
- There is some flexibility around the timing of these expectations, depending upon the pre-service teacher's capacity to undertake increased responsibility in the classroom and the supervising teacher's /pre-service teacher's needs at that time. Ideally though, pre-service teachers will have an opportunity to complete each of the tasks listed above at a mutually convenient time within the six-week placement.
- Absences due to illness, or public holidays must be completed to ensure the full 30-day placement requirement is met.

Documentation:

Throughout PE3 pre-service teachers are expected to maintain a comprehensive professional planning file. This document should provide a foundation for routine discussions with the supervising teacher and for assessment of the pre-service teacher's placement. The file will be viewed if/when placement visits are conducted by University staff or a representative. *Pre-service teachers are not required to submit these files to the University.*

Cautionary Advice Notice:

If at any point the supervising teacher, university mentor or pre-service teacher has concerns that one or more of the standards in the assessment report would not be met by the end of the placement, it is vital that the Cautionary Advice Notice (CAN) be completed in collaboration with the above parties, and returned to the Coordinator, Professional Experience as soon as possible *within* the placement. Doing so will ensure that appropriate support is provided by University staff for both the pre-service teacher and supervising educator. The CAN is also included in the initial documentation that is emailed to the Centre.

Contacts:

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General Enquiries:	Professional Experience Office Professional.Experience@educ.utas.edu.au 03 6324 3794
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Professional Experience 4 (5 – 8 years)
Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood)

Professional Experience 4 in the Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) course provides pre-service teachers with the opportunity to increase their familiarity with early childhood contexts, and to further develop their understanding of teaching practice. PE4 involves active observation and increased engagement in teaching and learning activities, building upon pre-service teachers' previous Professional Experience placements. PE4 is the final placement. Evidence to support the completion of the Graduate Teacher Performance Assessment (GTPA) will be gathered during Phase 2 of this placement.

PE4 is conducted over the course of seven consecutive weeks (35 days) on a full-time basis and consists of two phases. There is an expectation that by the end of PE4, pre-service teachers should demonstrate the capacity to assume responsibility for approximately 80% of a full-time independent teaching load across all key learning areas.

> **Phase 1 – Orientation/Observation/Collaborative teaching** involves a full-time continuous two-week block (10 day). This phase is designed to allow the pre-service teacher to orientate themselves to the overall operation of the class and school.

> **Phase 2 – Collaborative/Independent Block Teaching Phase** also full-time involves five consecutive weeks (25 days) and is designed to allow the pre-service teacher to be actively involved in class operation by undertaking increased teaching responsibilities (i.e., planning, implementing, managing and evaluating). Towards the end of Phase 2 independent teaching is equivalent to an 80% teaching load across the full range of key learning areas.

Throughout the placement pre-service teachers are required to maintain a professional file, which must include planning; policy documents; resources for teaching and learning; and reflection on their own teaching and learning.

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EXPECTATIONS FOR PLACEMENT
• **Complete the PE4 MyLO module, which is a requirement for your placement preparation**
• Source the School policies directly relating to best practices, classroom management policy, and Workplace Health and Safety Standards.
• Source other policies, procedures and guidelines relevant to your placement.
• Develop and sustain positive relationships with all students, relevant staff and families.
• Maintain a professional planning file, which includes:
• Your observations, planning and evaluations.
• Copy of relevant School policies, University PE4 Interim and Final Reports, and University PE Guidelines
• A section for resources i.e., recipes, games, nursery rhymes and songs.
• Prior to delivery, all planning must be shared with your supervising teacher for feedback at least one day before implementation and approved.
• Ensure that regular discussion and/or feedback opportunities about your progress in all aspects of the PE expectations are created with the supervising teacher (at least every other day).
• Pre-service teachers will not be able to proceed to Phase 2 until their detailed plans have been approved by the supervising teacher.

PHASE 1 - ORIENTATION/OBSERVATION/COLLABORATIVE TEACHING
Weeks 1 and 2
• **This phase involves a two-week continuous full-time placement (10 days in total).**
• **Phase 1 must be successfully completed prior to commencing Phase 2.**
• **Delays in undertaking Phase 1 may jeopardise confirmation of degree for potential graduates.**
Week 1
In addition to the above expectations for placement and in consultation with your supervising teacher:
• Complete two daily whole group and two small group observations which document teaching and learning within the classroom. These observations should be used in conversation with your supervising teacher.
• Take responsibility for a daily routine (such as roll call, monitor duties, etc.).
• Observe and become familiar with the teacher/school's behaviour support plan.
• Observe and become familiar with the teacher's weekly routines (i.e. specialist timetables, events, support learning/teaching staff etc.)
• Observe and become familiar with student support and services within the wider school community (i.e. school psychologist, chaplain, etc.)
• In collaboration with your supervising teacher plan, implement, and evaluate at least one learning activity for an individual student.
Week 2
• Continue with week 1 and
• In collaboration with your supervising teacher plan, implement, and evaluate at least two small group experiences/lessons each day.
• **END OF Week 2 Provide your supervising teacher with a copy of the Interim report ready for completion and submission to the University by Friday**

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PHASE 2 – Collaborative/Independent Block Teaching Phase

Week 3

In addition to the expectations for placement and in consultation with your supervising teacher:

- Plan, implement, evaluate, and manage *up to* three whole teaching days, with reduced levels of direct supervision from the supervising teacher
- Identify goals, specific learning needs and other particular preparation areas for planning, classroom organisation and the support of student behaviour during weeks 4-7.
- Prior to delivery submit *draft plans* for the teaching tasks to be undertaken to the supervising teacher for review, discussion and approval. These plans should be detailed and record specific outcomes, clear directions for the teaching/learning and assessment processes relative to all key learning areas.

Weeks 4 and 5 Independent teaching	Weeks 6 and 7 Independent teaching
- Implement strategies previously developed to meet goals, specific learning needs and other particular preparation areas for planning for teaching, classroom organisation and the support of student behaviour during weeks 6 and 7. - Continue to refine planning for each week. - Maintain detailed observation, planning, reflection, resource and policy files as detailed above in the placement expectations. - Submit detailed *draft* plans for the teaching tasks to be undertaken during the remaining weeks of the Block Teaching Phase to the supervising teacher for review, discussion, and final approval. These plans should be detailed and record specific outcomes, clear directions for the teaching/learning process and assessment processes relative to all key learning areas. - Plan, implement, manage, and evaluate at least three whole teaching days, or equivalent, with decreasing levels of direct supervision from the supervising teacher. - Ensure that regular discussion and/or feedback opportunities about your progress in all aspects of the PE expectations are created with the supervising teacher (at least every other day). ***Working towards teaching equivalent of 3-4 days per week.***	- Plan, implement, manage, and evaluate up to at least four whole teaching days per week, with decreasing levels of direct supervision from the supervising teacher. - Undertake written formative and summative assessment (as appropriate) of student learning/progress. - Reflect upon and review as necessary, your implementation of the school's behaviour support plan. - Continue to refine planning for each week. - Maintain detailed observation, planning, reflection, resource and policy files as detailed above in the placement expectations. - Ensure that regular discussion and/or feedback opportunities about your progress in all aspects of the PE expectations are created with the supervising teacher (at least every other day). **END OF Week 7 Provide your supervising teacher with a copy of the Final report ready for completion and submission to the University by Friday.** ***Working towards teaching equivalent of 4 – 5 days per week.***

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Please note:

- Throughout PE4, pre-service teachers should undertake extracurricular activities pertinent to the class group and school including where appropriate attendance at staff meetings and professional development workshops, etc.
- Pre-service teachers must ensure confidentiality regarding information about the school, its students, families and staff.
- Supervising teachers maintain full responsibility for the class group at all times and should not leave the pre-service teacher unattended for any period of time.
- There is some flexibility around the timing of these expectations, depending upon the pre-service teacher's capacity to undertake increased responsibility in the classroom and the supervising teacher's /pre-service teacher's needs at that time. Ideally though, pre-service teachers will have an opportunity to complete each of the tasks listed above at a mutually convenient time within the seven-week placement.
- Absences due to illness, or public holidays must be completed to ensure the full 35-day placement requirement is met.

Documentation:

Throughout PE4 pre-service teachers are expected to maintain a comprehensive professional planning file. This document should provide a foundation for routine discussions with the supervising teacher and for assessment of the pre-service teacher's placement. The file will be viewed if/when placement visits are conducted by University staff or a representative.

Pre-service teachers are not required to submit these files to the University.

Assessment:

- In accordance with national accreditation requirements, documentation must be assessed by the supervising teacher.
- Pre-service teachers will be assessed against selected focus areas within the Australian Teaching standards.
- A copy of the assessment report (inclusive of developmental indicators designed to assist pre-service teacher and supervising teacher to understand the desired levels of achievement for a PE4 placement) is included in the documentation provided to the school.

- **IMPORTANT:** If at any point the supervising teacher, university mentor or pre-service teacher has concerns that one or more of the standards in the assessment report cannot be met, it is critical that the *Cautionary Advice Notice* (CAN) form be completed in collaboration with the above parties.
- **Completed *CAN* Forms** must be emailed to the Professional Experience Coordinator (contact details see below) as soon as possible *within* the placement. Doing so will ensure that appropriate support is provided by School of Education staff for both the pre-service teacher and supervising teacher.

Returning Assessment Reports to the University:
- Please email the Interim and Final assessment reports to the University, Professional.Experience@educ.utas.edu.au
- A copy of each report should remain at the School, and
- One copy should be provided to the pre-service teacher

Contacts:
If you require any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact one of the following staff.

Designation/Campus	Contact Details
For General Enquiries: Professional Experience Office	Ph: (03) 6324 3794 Professional.Experience@educ.utas.edu.au
Coordinator, Professional Experience	Kate Garratt Kate.Garratt@utas.edu.au Ph: (03) 6324 3386
Professional Experience Leader, Early Childhood	Helen Yost Helen.Yost@utas.edu.au Ph: (03) 6324 3283

Key Terms:

Pre-service teacher	A current student of University of Tasmania undertaking study through the School of Education.
Supervising Teacher	Classroom teacher who is responsible for mentoring and supporting the pre-service teacher throughout the duration of the PE placement.
School-based Placement Coordinator	An employee of the school who oversees the organisation and implementation of PE placements within that context.
University Mentor Representative	A member of the School of Education academic staff who provides assistance, advice and support to both the pre-service teacher and relevant School staff.
Professional Experience, Leader	A member of the School of Education academic staff who is responsible for overseeing PE placements in their relevant area, and providing support as required.
Professional Experience Coordinator	A member of the School of Education professional staff who oversees the organisation and daily running of the professional experience office.
Active observation	Active observation during PE is more than viewing what happens on a daily basis (though that is important). Active observations include note taking, reflecting, using initiative, interacting, questioning, communicating, assisting the supervising teacher, and requesting feedback and responding to same.
Professional Planning File	This file should contain written planning documents prepared by the pre-service teacher. It should also include evaluations of experiences/activities that have been implemented. Planning proformas/examples gathered during the PE placement should also be added to the file. This file should contain: • Written planning documents prepared by the pre-service teacher. It should also include evaluations of experiences/activities that have been implemented. Planning proformas/examples gathered during the PE placement should also be added to the file. • Extensive daily observation notes to be used as the basis of routine discussions between the pre-service teacher and relevant school staff. • Daily, in-depth reflections written by the pre-service teacher in relation to what s/he has observed and/or any teaching experiences implemented by the pre-service teacher during the PE placement – reflections are also used as a basis for routine discussion with the relevant school staff. • Copies of School policy documents and additional resources gathered by the pre-service teacher during the PE placement. Policy documents should be read and discussed with the supervising teacher early on in the PE placement.
CAN Form	If during the PE placement there are concerns about the pre-service teacher's ability to successfully complete the placement, then the supervising teacher needs to advise the pre-service teacher, the School Principal, and the University Professional Experience Leader/University Mentor of the situation using the *CAN* Form.
Leave of Absence	If during the PE placement the pre-service teacher requires leave of absence from placement then the *Leave of Absence /Negotiated days* Form must be completed and returned to the PE office.

APPENDIX V

Assessment for Professional Experience at the UTAS

**Faculty of Education
Professional Experience**

Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) – *ESH107 PE1*

Pre-service teacher:	
Total number of days:	/ 10
Grade/Age:	Birth - 2 years
Supervising Educator:	
Child Care & Education Centre:	
Centre Director:	

KEY FOR ASSESSMENT

A - *Achieved* and exceeded expected standard   **D** - *Developing* towards expected standard
C - *Competently* demonstrated expected standard   **F** - *Failed* to demonstrate expected standard

Australian Professional Standards for Teachers: Domains of Teaching

Professional Knowledge
Demonstrates developing professional knowledge and skills to be able to plan for and manage learning programs   F ☐   D ☐   C ☐   A ☐

Professional Practice
Demonstrates a developing capacity to plan, implement and assess for effective teaching and learning as well as maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment   F ☐   D ☐   C ☐   A ☐

Professional Engagement
Demonstrates a developing capacity to develop effective relationships with the school community to enhance learning opportunities   F ☐   D ☐   C ☐   A ☐

Please note
- *In order to successfully pass PE1 pre-service teachers (PSTs) must not receive **F** for any Focus or more than one **D** for any one Standard*
- *When completing the above summary of achievement, please make a judgement based upon the PST's overall achievement across the standards specifically relating to each of the above Domains of Teaching, and as indicated by your reporting on the following pages.*

On the basis of these assessments and in the context of the overall expectations of PSTs undertaking Professional Experience 1, the following overall assessment is recommended:

SATISFACTORY ☐
           OR
UNSATISFACTORY ☐

Signatures	Pre-service teacher:	
	Supervising Educator:	
	Centre Director:	
	Date:	/ /

1/8

503

Professional Knowledge

Demonstrates developing professional knowledge and skills to be able to plan for and manage learning programs

STANDARD 1: KNOW STUDENTS AND HOW THEY LEARN

Focus & Evidence	F	D	C	A
1.1 Physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of children *Developmental indicator:* Through observation and discussion with the supervising educator, the PST demonstrates a developing understanding of the physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of children and how this informs teaching of individuals or groups	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.2 Understands how children learn *Developmental indicator:* Through observation and discussion with the supervising educator, the PST demonstrates a developing understanding of how children learn and how this informs teaching of individuals or groups	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.3 Children with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious, and socio economic backgrounds *Developmental indicator:* Through observation and discussion with the supervising educator, the PST demonstrates a developing understanding of children with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socio economic backgrounds and how this informs teaching of individuals or groups	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.5 Differentiate teaching to meet specific learning needs of children across the full range of abilities *Developmental indicator:* Through observation and discussion with the supervising educator/teacher, the PST demonstrates a developing understanding of the need to differentiate teaching and how this informs teaching of individuals or groups	☐	☐	☐	☐

Tertiary Qualified Educator comments:
(box will expand as you type if using an electronic form. If required, please attach additional pages)

*In order to successfully pass PE1, PSTs must not receive **F** for any Focus or more than one **D** for any one Standard*

504

Professional Knowledge

Demonstrates developing professional knowledge and skills to be able to plan for and manage learning programs

STANDARD 2: KNOW THE CONTENT AND HOW TO TEACH IT

Focus & Evidence	F	D	C	A
2.1 Content and teaching strategies of the teaching area *Developmental indicator:* Demonstrates a developing understanding of teaching strategies commensurate with specific content/focus areas and is able to apply same in practice	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.2 Content selection and organisation *Developmental indicator:* Demonstrates a developing understanding and familiarity with relevant curriculum documents, and is able to discuss curricula relative to planning	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.3 Curriculum, assessment and reporting *Developmental indicator:* Demonstrates a developing awareness and some familiarity with relevant curriculum documents and how they are used to inform assessment and reporting processes	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.5 Literacy and numeracy strategies *Developmental indicator:* Collects a range of strategies and resources for teaching emergent literacy and emergent numeracy, and discusses their appropriate use with the supervising educator	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.6 Information and Communication Technology (ICT) *Developmental indicators:* • Investigates and discusses with supervising educator the ways of incorporating ICT into teaching/practice • Uses ICT to support teaching/practice (as appropriate to context)	☐	☐	☐	☐

Tertiary Qualified Educator comments:
(box will expand as you type if using an electronic form. If required, please attach additional pages)

*In order to successfully pass PE1, PSTs must not receive **F** for any Focus or more than one **D** for any one Standard*

Professional Practice

Demonstrates a developing capacity to plan, implement and assess for effective teaching and learning as well as maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment

STANDARD 3: PLAN FOR AND IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Focus & Evidence	F	D	C	A
3.1 Establish challenging teaching and learning goals *Developmental indicator:* Demonstrates an understanding of how educators/teachers set obtainable learning goals with reference to children's needs and relevant curriculum documents	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.2 Plan, structure and sequence learning programs *Developmental indicator:* Reflects on the teaching session and considers the planning and learning implications for the next learning experience	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.3 Use teaching strategies *Developmental indicators:* • A variety of teaching strategies are identified within planning to address individual learning preferences • Use of open and closed questioning techniques are observed and discussed	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.4 Select and use resources *Developmental indicator:* Effectively uses resources relevant to the learning environment and context	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.5 Use effective communication in the learning environment *Developmental indicators:* • Is able to communicate using grammatically correct language in both oral and written situations (where appropriate to context) • Uses appropriate language with staff and children • Uses appropriate pitch, pace, volume and projection of voice • Gives instructions/directions/explanations clearly, and follows up when necessary • Uses a consistent approach when communication with children	☐	☐	☐	☐

Tertiary Qualified Educator comments:
(box will expand as you type if using an electronic form. If required, please attach additional pages)

*In order to successfully pass PE1, PSTs must not receive **F** for any Focus or more than one **D** for any one Standard*

506

Professional Practice

Demonstrates a developing capacity to plan, implement and assess for effective teaching and learning as well as maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment

STANDARD 4: CREATE AND MAINTAIN SUPPORTIVE AND SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Focus & Evidence	F	D	C	A
4.1 Support children's participation *Development indicator:* Uses the knowledge from Standard 1 to identify and discuss strategies to support children's participation in learning activities	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.2 Manage learning activities *Development indicators:* • Prior to implementation, demonstrate the capacity to organise learning space and prepare for learning experiences/activities • Uses initiative when packing up the learning space	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.3 Manage challenging behaviour *Development indicator:* Assists supervising educator in implementing routines and guidelines when necessary and appropriate	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.4 Maintain learner/children's safety *Development indicator:* Identifies strategies that promote children's emotional, social and physical wellbeing	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.5 Uses ICT safely, responsibly and ethically *Development indicator:* Demonstrates an understanding of the ethical issues related to ICT use	☐	☐	☐	☐

Tertiary Qualified Educator comments:
(box will expand as you type if using an electronic form. If required, please attach additional pages)

*In order to successfully pass PE1, PSTs must not receive **F** for any Focus or more than one **D** for any one Standard*

Professional Practice

Demonstrates a developing capacity to plan, implement and assess for effective teaching and learning as well as maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment

STANDARD 5: ASSESS, PROVIDE FEEDBACK AND REPORT ON STUDENT LEARNING

Focus & Evidence	F	D	C	A
5.1 Assess children's learning *Development indicator:* Through conversations with supervising educator, demonstrates an understanding of how and why educators / teachers select assessment strategies	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.2 Provide feedback to children on their learning *Developmental indicators:* • Communicates constructively to children • Identifies children's strengths and capabilities	☐	☐	☐	☐
Tertiary Qualified Educator comments: *(box will expand as you type if using an electronic form. If required, please attach additional pages)*				

*In order to successfully pass PE1, PSTs must not receive **F** for any Focus or more than one **D** for any one Standard*

Professional Engagement

Demonstrates a developing capacity to develop effective relationships with the school community to enhance learning

STANDARD 6: ENGAGE IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Focus & Evidence	F	D	C	A
6.1 Identify and plan professional learning needs *Developmental indicator:* Is able to reflect on the expectations for PE1 and plan for further learning where a need is identified	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.2 Engage in professional learning and improve practice *Developmental indicator:* Attends and shows interest in staff meetings and actively engages in other professional learning opportunities, for instance, collaborative planning	☐	☐	☐	☐

Standard 6 continues on next page

6.3 Engage with colleagues and improve practice				
Developmental indicator: Actively seeks collegial feedback on own practice and acts on identified areas for improvement	☐	☐	☐	☐

Tertiary Qualified Educator comments:
(box will expand as you type if using an electronic form. If required, please attach additional pages)

*In order to successfully pass PE1, PSTs must not receive **F** for any Focus or more than one **D** for any one Standard*

Professional Engagement

Demonstrates a developing capacity to develop effective relationships with the school community to enhance learning

STANDARD 7: ENGAGE PROFESSIONALLY WITH COLLEAGUES, PARENTS / CARERS AND THE COMMUNITY

Focus & Evidence	F	D	C	A
7.1 Meet professional ethics and responsibilities *Developmental indicators:* Holds conversations with Director and / or supervising educators, and conducts him / herself in a manner that demonstrates an understanding of • The importance of confidentiality • Ethical considerations • Conduct for the teaching profession • The importance of maintaining a dress code consistent with centre expectations • Centre professional codes of conduct	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.2 Comply with legislative, administrative and organisational requirements *Developmental indicators:* Holds conversations with Director and / or supervising educators, and conducts him / herself in a manner that demonstrates an understanding of • Duty of care • Legislative and organisational requirements	☐	☐	☐	☐

Standard 7 continues on next page

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7.3 Engage with parents/carers and centre community

Developmental indicator: Demonstrates an approachable respectful and professional demeanour when talking with parents / carers and members of the centre community

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Tertiary Qualified Educator comments:
(box will expand as you type if using an electronic form. If required, please attach additional pages)

*In order to successfully pass PE1, PSTs must not receive **F** for any Focus or more than one **D** for any one Standard*

Overall comments regarding Pre-service Teacher performance

Tertiary Qualified Educator comments:
(box will expand as you type if using an electronic form. If required, please attach additional pages)

Please email completed assessment form to Professional.Experience@educ.utas.edu.au

510

Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) - *ESH207 PE2*

Pre-service teacher:	
Total number of days:	/ 15
Grade/Age:	3 – 5 years
Tertiary Qualified Educator:	
School/Child Care Centre:	
Principal/Centre Director:	

KEY FOR ASSESSMENT

A - *Achieved* and exceeded expected standard   **D** - *Developing* towards expected standard
C - *Competently* demonstrated expected standard   **F** - *Failed* to demonstrate expected standard

Australian Professional Standards for Teachers: Domains of Teaching

Professional Knowledge
Demonstrates developing professional knowledge and skills to be able to plan for and manage learning programs

F ☐   D ☐   C ☐   A ☐

Professional Practice
Demonstrates a developing capacity to plan, implement and assess for effective teaching and learning as well as maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment

F ☐   D ☐   C ☐   A ☐

Professional Engagement
Demonstrates a developing capacity to develop effective relationships with the school community to enhance learning opportunities

F ☐   D ☐   C ☐   A ☐

Please note
- *In order to successfully pass PE2 pre-service teachers (PSTs) must not receive **F** for any Focus or more than one **D** for any one Standard*
- *When completing the above summary of achievement, please make a judgement based upon the PST's overall achievement across the standards specifically relating to each of the above Domains of Teaching, and as indicated by your reporting on the following pages.*

On the basis of these assessments and in the context of the overall expectations of PSTs undertaking Professional Experience 2, the following overall assessment is recommended:

SATISFACTORY ☐

OR

UNSATISFACTORY ☐

Signatures	Pre-service teacher:	
	Tertiary Qualified Educator:	
	Principal/Centre Director:	
	Date:	/ /

Professional Knowledge

Demonstrates developing professional knowledge and skills to be able to plan for and manage learning programs

STANDARD 1: KNOW STUDENTS AND HOW THEY LEARN

Focus & Evidence	F	D	C	A
1.1 Physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students/children *Developmental indicator:* Through observation and discussion with the supervising educator/teacher, the PST demonstrates a developing understanding of the physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of learners and how this informs teaching of individuals or groups	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.2 Understands how students/children learn *Developmental indicator:* Through observation and discussion with the supervising educator/teacher the PST demonstrates a developing understanding of how students/children learn and how this informs teaching of individuals or groups	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.3 Students/children with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious, and socio economic backgrounds *Developmental indicator:* Through observation and discussion with the supervising educator/teacher, the PST demonstrates a developing understanding of students/children with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socio economic backgrounds and how this informs teaching of individuals or groups	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.5 Differentiate teaching to meet specific learning needs of students/children across the full range of abilities *Developmental indicator:* Through observation and discussion with the supervising educator/teacher, the PST demonstrates a developing understanding of the need to differentiate teaching and how this informs teaching of individuals or groups	☐	☐	☐	☐

Tertiary Qualified Educator comments:
(box will expand as you type if using an electronic form. If required, please attach additional pages)

*In order to successfully pass PE2, PSTs must not receive **F** for any Focus or more than one **D** for any one Standard*

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Professional Knowledge

Demonstrates developing professional knowledge and skills to be able to plan for and manage learning programs

STANDARD 2: KNOW THE CONTENT AND HOW TO TEACH IT

Focus & Evidence	F	D	C	A
2.1 Content and teaching strategies of the teaching area *Developmental indicator:* Demonstrates a developing understanding of teaching strategies commensurate with specific content/focus areas and is able to apply same in practice	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.2 Content selection and organisation *Developmental indicator:* Demonstrates a developing understanding and familiarity with relevant curriculum documents, and is able to use curricula to inform planning	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.3 Curriculum, assessment and reporting *Developmental indicator:* Demonstrates a developing awareness and some familiarity with relevant curriculum documents and how they are used to inform assessment and reporting processes	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.5 Literacy and numeracy strategies *Developmental indicator:* Collects a range of strategies and resources for teaching emergent literacy and emergent numeracy, and discusses their appropriate use with the supervising educator/teacher	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.6 Information and Communication Technology (ICT) *Developmental indicators:* • Investigates and discusses with supervising educator/teacher the ways of incorporating ICT into teaching/practice • Uses ICT to support teaching/practice (as appropriate to context)	☐	☐	☐	☐

Tertiary Qualified Educator comments:
(box will expand as you type if using an electronic form. If required, please attach additional pages)

*In order to successfully pass PE2, PSTs must not receive **F** for any Focus or more than one **D** for any one Standard*

513

Professional Practice

Demonstrates a developing capacity to plan, implement and assess for effective teaching and learning as well as maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment

STANDARD 3: PLAN FOR AND IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Focus & Evidence	F	D	C	A
3.1 Establish challenging teaching and learning goals *Developmental indicator:* Demonstrates an understanding of how educators/teachers set obtainable learning goals with reference to learner needs and relevant curriculum documents	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.2 Plan, structure and sequence learning programs *Developmental indicators:* • In collaboration with supervising educator/teacher, plans short lesson/learning experiences using an appropriate proforma and submits for supervising educator/teacher approval prior to teaching • Effectively applies developing knowledge of prior learning, content and effective teaching strategies when planning • Reflects on the teaching session and considers the planning and learning implications for the next learning experience	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.3 Use teaching strategies *Developmental indicators:* • A variety of teaching strategies are identified within planning to address individual learning preferences • Reflects on the use of open and closed questioning techniques	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.4 Select and use resources *Developmental indicator:* Effectively selects and uses resources relevant to the learning environment and context	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.5 Use effective communication in the classroom/learning environment *Developmental indicators:* • Is able to communicate using grammatically correct language in both oral and written situations (where appropriate to context) • Uses appropriate language with staff and students/children • Uses appropriate pitch, pace, volume and projection of voice • Gives instructions/directions/explanations clearly • Demonstrate a capacity to follow up with learners when and if required	☐	☐	☐	☐
Tertiary Qualified Educator comments: *(box will expand as you type if using an electronic form. If required, please attach additional pages)*				

*In order to successfully pass PE2, PSTs must not receive **F** for any Focus or more than one **D** for any one Standard*

Professional Practice

Demonstrates a developing capacity to plan, implement and assess for effective teaching and learning as well as maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment

STANDARD 4: CREATE AND MAINTAIN SUPPORTIVE AND SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Focus & Evidence	F	D	C	A
4.1 Support learner participation *Development indicator:* Uses the knowledge from Standard 1 to identify strategies to support learners participation in learning activities	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.2 Manage learning activities *Development indicators:* • Prior to implementation, demonstrate the capacity to organise learning space and prepare for learning experiences/activities • Uses initiative when packing up the learning space	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.3 Manage challenging behaviour *Development indicator:* Assists supervising educator/teacher in implementing routines and guidelines when necessary and appropriate	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.4 Maintain learner safety *Development indicator:* Identifies strategies that promote individual emotional, social and physical wellbeing	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.5 Uses ICT safely, responsibly and ethically *Development indicator:* Demonstrates an understanding of the ethical issues related to ICT use	☐	☐	☐	☐

Tertiary Qualified Educator comments:
(box will expand as you type if using an electronic form. If required, please attach additional pages)

*In order to successfully pass PE2, PSTs must not receive **F** for any Focus or more than one **D** for any one Standard*

515

Professional Practice

Demonstrates a developing capacity to plan, implement and assess for effective teaching and learning as well as maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment

STANDARD 5: ASSESS, PROVIDE FEEDBACK AND REPORT ON STUDENT LEARNING

Focus & Evidence	F	D	C	A
5.1 Assess learning *Development indicator:* Through conversations with supervising educator / teacher demonstrates an understanding of how and why educators / teachers select assessment strategies	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.2 Provide feedback to students/children on their learning *Developmental indicators:* • As relevant to context, in collaboration with the supervising educator/teacher discuss formative/summative assessment strategies for a lesson/learning experience • Communicates feedback constructively to students • Identifies children's strengths and capabilities	☐	☐	☐	☐

Tertiary Qualified Educator comments:
(box will expand as you type if using an electronic form. If required, please attach additional pages)

*In order to successfully pass PE2, PSTs must not receive **F** for any Focus or more than one **D** for any one Standard*

Professional Engagement

Demonstrates a developing capacity to develop effective relationships with the school community to enhance learning

STANDARD 6: ENGAGE IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Focus & Evidence	F	D	C	A
6.1 Identify and plan professional learning needs *Developmental indicator:* Is able to reflect on the expectations for PE2 and plan for further learning where a need is identified	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.2 Engage in professional learning and improve practice *Developmental indicator:* Attends and shows interest in staff meetings and actively engages in other professional learning opportunities, for instance, collaborative planning	☐	☐	☐	☐

Standard 6 continues on next page

516

6.3 Engage with colleagues and improve practice				
Developmental indicator: Actively seeks collegial feedback on own practice and acts on identified areas for improvement	☐	☐	☐	☐

Tertiary Qualified Educator comments:
(box will expand as you type if using an electronic form. If required, please attach additional pages)

*In order to successfully pass PE2, PSTs must not receive **F** for any Focus or more than one **D** for any one Standard*

Professional Engagement

Demonstrates a developing capacity to develop effective relationships with the school community to enhance learning

STANDARD 7: ENGAGE PROFESSIONALLY WITH COLLEAGUES, PARENTS / CARERS AND THE COMMUNITY

Focus & Evidence	F	D	C	A
7.1 Meet professional ethics and responsibilities *Developmental indicators:* Holds conversations with supervising educators / teachers and conducts him/herself in a manner that demonstrates an understanding of • The importance of confidentiality • Ethical considerations • Conduct for the teaching profession • The importance of maintaining a dress code consistent with centre/school expectations • Centre/school professional codes of conduct	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.2 Comply with legislative, administrative and organisational requirements *Developmental indicators*: Holds conversations with supervising educators / teachers and conducts him/herself in a manner that demonstrates an understanding of • Duty of care • Legislative and organisational requirements	☐	☐	☐	☐

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7.3 Engage with parents/carers and centre/school community

Developmental indicator: Demonstrates an approachable respectful and professional demeanour when talking with parents/carers and members of the centre/school community

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Tertiary Qualified Educator comments:
(box will expand as you type if using an electronic form. If required, please attach additional pages)

*In order to successfully pass PE2, PSTs must not receive **F** for any Focus or more than one **D** for any one Standard*

Overall comments regarding Pre-service Teacher performance

Tertiary Qualified Educator comments:
(box will expand as you type if using an electronic form. If required, please attach additional pages)

Please email completed assessment form to Professional.Experience@educ.utas.edu.au

518

Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) – *ESH307 PE3*

Pre-service teacher:	
Total number of days:	/ 30
Grade:	
Supervising Teacher:	
School:	
Principal:	

KEY FOR ASSESSMENT

A - *Achieved* and exceeded expected standard   **D** - *Developing* towards expected standard
C - *Competently* demonstrated expected standard   **F** - *Failed* to demonstrate expected standard

Australian Professional Standards for Teachers: Domains of Teaching

Professional Knowledge
Demonstrates developing professional knowledge and skills to be able to plan for and manage learning programs

F ☐   D ☐   C ☐   A ☐

Professional Practice
Demonstrates a developing capacity to plan, implement and assess for effective teaching and learning as well as maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment

F ☐   D ☐   C ☐   A ☐

Professional Engagement
Demonstrates a developing capacity to develop effective relationships with the school community to enhance learning opportunities

F ☐   D ☐   C ☐   A ☐

Please note
- *In order to successfully pass PE3 pre-service teachers (PSTs) must not receive **F** for any Focus or more than one **D** for any one Standard*
- *When completing the above summary of achievement, please make a judgement based upon the PST's overall achievement across the standards specifically relating to each of the above Domains of Teaching, and as indicated by your reporting on the following pages.*

On the basis of these assessments and in the context of the overall expectations of PSTs undertaking Professional Experience 3, the following overall assessment is recommended:

SATISFACTORY ☐	OR	
UNSATISFACTORY ☐		

Signatures	Pre-service teacher:	
	Supervising Teacher:	
	Principal:	
	Date: / /	

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Professional Knowledge

Demonstrates developing professional knowledge and skills to be able to plan for and manage learning programs

STANDARD 1: KNOW STUDENTS AND HOW THEY LEARN

Focus & Evidence	F	D	C	A
1.1 Physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students *Developmental indicator:* Through observation and discussion with the supervising teacher, the PST demonstrates a developing understanding of the physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of learners and how this informs teaching of individuals or groups	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.2 Understands how students learn *Developmental indicator:* Through observation and discussion with the supervising teacher the PST demonstrates a developing understanding of how students learn and how this informs teaching of individuals or groups	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.3 Students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious, and socio economic backgrounds *Developmental indicator:* Through observation and discussion with the supervising teacher, the PST demonstrates a developing understanding of students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socio economic backgrounds and how this informs teaching of individuals or groups	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.5 Differentiate teaching to meet specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities *Developmental indicator:* Through observation and discussion with the supervising teacher, the PST demonstrates a developing understanding of the need to differentiate teaching and how this informs teaching of individuals or groups	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.6 Strategies to support full participation of students with disabilities *Developmental indicators :* • Demonstrates a developing understanding of learning theories that inform planning for students with disabilities • Begins to plan appropriate learning experiences for individual students with disabilities • Begins to work with relevant support staff in providing appropriate experiences for students with disabilities	☐	☐	☐	☐

Supervising Teacher comments:
(box will expand as you type if using an electronic form. If required, please attach additional pages)

*In order to successfully pass PE3, PSTs must not receive **F** for any Focus or more than one **D** for any one Standard*

Professional Knowledge

Demonstrates developing professional knowledge and skills to be able to plan for and manage learning programs

STANDARD 2: KNOW THE CONTENT AND HOW TO TEACH IT

Focus & Evidence	F	D	C	A
2.1 Content and teaching strategies of the teaching area *Developmental indicator:* Demonstrates a developing understanding of teaching strategies commensurate with specific content/focus areas and is able to apply same in practice	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.2 Content selection and organisation *Developmental indicator:* Demonstrates a developing understanding and familiarity with relevant curriculum documents, and is able to use curricula to inform planning	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.3 Curriculum, assessment and reporting *Developmental indicator:* Demonstrates a developing awareness and some familiarity with relevant curriculum documents and how they are used to inform assessment and reporting processes	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.5 Literacy and numeracy strategies *Developmental indicator:* Collects a range of strategies and resources for teaching emergent literacy and emergent numeracy, and discusses their appropriate use with the supervising teacher	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.6 Information and Communication Technology (ICT) *Developmental indicators:* • Investigates and discusses with supervising educator / teacher the ways of incorporating ICT into teaching / practice • Uses ICT to support teaching/practice (as appropriate to context)	☐	☐	☐	☐

Supervising Teacher comments:
(box will expand as you type if using an electronic form. If required, please attach additional pages)

*In order to successfully pass PE3, PSTs must not receive **F** for any Focus or more than one **D** for any one Standard*

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Professional Practice

Demonstrates a developing capacity to plan, implement and assess for effective teaching and learning as well as maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment

STANDARD 3: PLAN FOR AND IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Focus & Evidence	F	D	C	A
3.1 Establish challenging teaching and learning goals *Developmental indicator:* Demonstrates an understanding of how educators/teachers set obtainable learning goals with reference to learner needs and relevant curriculum documents	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.2 Plan, structure and sequence learning programs *Developmental indicators:* • In collaboration with supervising educator / teacher, plans short lesson / learning experiences using an appropriate proforma and submits for supervising educator / teacher approval prior to teaching • Effectively applies developing knowledge of prior learning, content and effective teaching strategies when planning • Reflects on the teaching session and considers the planning and learning implications for the next learning experience	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.3 Use teaching strategies *Developmental indicators:* • A variety of teaching strategies are identified within planning to address individual learning preferences • Reflects on the use of open and closed questioning techniques	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.4 Select and use resources *Developmental indicator:* Effectively selects and uses resources relevant to the learning environment and context	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.5 Use effective communication in the classroom / learning environment *Developmental indicators:* • Is able to communicate using grammatically correct language in both oral and written situations (where appropriate to context) • Uses appropriate language with staff and students • Uses appropriate pitch, pace, volume and projection of voice • Gives instructions / directions / explanations clearly • Demonstrate a capacity to follow up with learners when and if required	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.6 Evaluate and improve teaching programs *Developmental indicator:* In collaboration with the supervising teacher, begins developing evaluative tools and strategies aimed at improving teaching practice and student learning	☐	☐	☐	☐

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| 3.7 Engage parents / carers in the educative process

Developmental indicators:
- In collaboration with the supervising teacher, develops strategies for involving parents / carers
- Demonstrates an ability to communicate with parents / carers in ways that support student learning | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

Supervising Teacher comments:
(box will expand as you type if using an electronic form. If required, please attach additional pages)

*In order to successfully pass PE3, PSTs must not receive **F** for any Focus or more than one **D** for any one Standard*

Professional Practice

Demonstrates a developing capacity to plan, implement and assess for effective teaching and learning as well as maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment

STANDARD 4: CREATE AND MAINTAIN SUPPORTIVE AND SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Focus & Evidence	F	D	C	A
4.1 Support learner participation *Development indicator:* Through discussion with supervising teacher, identifies and implements appropriate and effective strategies to support - Student involvement - Student engagement - Student motivation	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.2 Manage classroom activities *Development indicators:* - Prior to implementation, demonstrate the capacity to organise learning space and prepare for learning experiences / activities - Demonstrates the ability to create and maintain a positive classroom environment that is conducive to learning	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.3 Manage challenging behaviour *Development indicator:* Assists supervising teacher in implementing routines and guidelines when necessary and appropriate	☐	☐	☐	☐

Standard 4 continues on next page

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4.4 Maintain learner safety				
Development indicator: Identifies strategies that promote individual emotional, social and physical wellbeing	☐	☐	☐	☐

4.5 Uses ICT safely, responsibly and ethically				
Development indicator: Demonstrates an understanding of the ethical issues related to ICT use	☐	☐	☐	☐

Supervising Teacher comments:
(box will expand as you type if using an electronic form. If required, please attach additional pages)

*In order to successfully pass PE3, PSTs must not receive **F** for any Focus or more than one **D** for any one Standard*

Professional Practice

Demonstrates a developing capacity to plan, implement and assess for effective teaching and learning as well as maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment

STANDARD 5: ASSESS, PROVIDE FEEDBACK AND REPORT ON STUDENT LEARNING

Focus & Evidence	F	D	C	A
5.1 Assess learning *Development indicator:* Through discussion and negotiation with the supervising teacher, identifies and implements authentic strategies to assess student learning	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.2 Provide feedback to students on their learning *Developmental indicators:* Through discussion and negotiation with supervising teacher: • Provides timely feedback to students • Provides feedback which clearly describes ways in which students can improve • Identifies children's strengths and capabilities	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.3 Make consistent and comparable judgements *Developmental indicators:* As appropriate to the placement context • Participate in moderation of student work • Reflect upon moderation processes with supervising teacher	☐	☐	☐	☐

Standard 5 continues on next page

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5.4 Interpret student data
 	
Developmental indicators: Through discussion and negotiation with supervising teacher, uses assessment data to
 	
   • Evaluate teaching practices
   • Modify teaching practices where appropriate
	☐	☐	☐	☐

5.5 Report on student achievement *Developmental indicator:* Through discussion and negotiation with supervising teacher, determines a course of action for reporting on student progress to relevant stakeholders	☐	☐	☐	☐

Supervising Teacher comments:
(box will expand as you type if using an electronic form. If required, please attach additional pages)

*In order to successfully pass PE3, PSTs must not receive **F** for any Focus or more than one **D** for any one Standard*

Professional Engagement

Demonstrates a developing capacity to develop effective relationships with the school community to enhance learning

STANDARD 6: ENGAGE IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Focus & Evidence	F	D	C	A

6.1 Identify and plan professional learning needs
 	
Developmental indicators: In collaboration with the supervising teacher
   • Critically reflect on teaching performance throughout the PE3 placement and recognise areas needing improvement
   • Takes positive action to improve student learning (e.g. adjusting teaching practices or attending professional learning opportunities)
	☐	☐	☐	☐

6.2 Engage in professional learning and improve practice *Developmental indicator:* Participates in and begins to contribute to professional learning activities and staff meetings	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.3 Engage with colleagues and improve practice *Developmental indicator:* Actively seeks and critically reflects upon collegial feedback on own practice, and acts on identified areas for improvement	☐	☐	☐	☐

Standard 6 continues on next page

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6.4 Apply professional learning and improve student learning				
Developmental indicator: In discussion with supervising teacher, critically reflects upon the rationale for continued professional learning and the implications for student learning	☐	☐	☐	☐

Supervising Teacher comments:
(box will expand as you type if using an electronic form. If required, please attach additional pages)

*In order to successfully pass PE3, PSTs must not receive **F** for any Focus or more than one **D** for any one Standard*

Professional Engagement

Demonstrates a developing capacity to develop effective relationships with the school community to enhance learning

STANDARD 7: ENGAGE PROFESSIONALLY WITH COLLEAGUES, PARENTS / CARERS AND THE COMMUNITY

Focus & Evidence	F	D	C	A
7.1 Meet professional ethics and responsibilities *Developmental indicators:* Holds conversations with supervising educators / teachers and conducts him / herself in a manner that demonstrates an understanding of • The importance of confidentiality • Ethical considerations • Conduct for the teaching profession • The importance of maintaining a dress code consistent with school expectations • School professional codes of conduct	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.2 Comply with legislative, administrative and organisational requirements *Developmental indicators:* Holds conversations with supervising educators / teachers and conducts him / herself in a manner that demonstrates an understanding of • Duty of care • Legislative and organisational requirements	☐	☐	☐	☐

Standard 7 continues on next page

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| 7.3 Engage with parents / carers and school community

Developmental indicator: Demonstrates an approachable respectful and professional demeanour when talking with parents / carers and members of the school community | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

| 7.4 Engage with professional teaching networks and broader communities

Developmental indicator: Demonstrates an understanding of the roles of external professionals | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

Supervising Teacher comments:
(box will expand as you type if using an electronic form. If required, please attach additional pages)

*In order to successfully pass PE3, PSTs must not receive **F** for any Focus or more than one **D** for any one Standard*

Overall comments regarding Pre-service Teacher performance

Supervising Teacher comments:
(box will expand as you type if using an electronic form. If required, please attach additional pages)

Please email completed assessment form to **Professional.Experience@educ.utas.edu.au**

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Final Professional Experience Placement: *Assessment Report Form*

Pre-service teacher:		Course:
Total number of days:		School:
Specialisation/Grade:		Principal:
Supervising Teacher:		

KEY FOR ASSESSMENT

A - *Achieved* and exceeded expected standard
C - *Competently* demonstrated expected standard
F - *Failed* to demonstrate expected standard

Australian Professional Standards for Teachers: Domains of Teaching

Professional Knowledge
Demonstrates developing professional knowledge and skills to be able to plan for and manage learning programs   F ☐   C ☐   A ☐

Professional Practice
Demonstrates a developing capacity to plan, implement and assess for effective teaching and learning as well as maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment   F ☐   C ☐   A ☐

Professional Engagement
Demonstrates a developing capacity to develop effective relationships with the school community to enhance learning opportunities   F ☐   C ☐   A ☐

Please note
- *In order to successfully pass this placement, pre-service teachers (PSTs) must not receive **F** for any Focus or Standard*
- *When completing the above summary of achievement, please make a judgement based upon the PST's overall achievement across the standards specifically relating to each of the above Domains of Teaching, and as indicated by your reporting on the following pages.*

On the basis of these assessments and in the context of the overall expectations of PSTs undertaking this Professional Experience placement, the following overall assessment is recommended:

SATISFACTORY ☐
OR
UNSATISFACTORY ☐

Signatures	Supervising Teacher:	
	Principal:	
	Pre-service teacher:	
	Date:	/ /

Professional Knowledge

Demonstrates developing professional knowledge and skills to be able to plan for and manage learning programs

STANDARD 1: KNOW STUDENTS AND HOW THEY LEARN

Focus & Evidence	F	C	A
1.1 Physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students *Developmental indicator:* Develops learning experiences that take into account children's/students' physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics	☐	☐	☐
1.2 Understands how children/students learn *Developmental indicator:* • Demonstrates knowledge of the research that informs teaching practice • Demonstrates an understanding of this research through planning for individuals, small groups and the whole class (e.g. understanding human development, school policy, Australian Curriculum documents)	☐	☐	☐
1.3 Students/children with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds *Developmental indicator:* In collaboration with the Supervising Teacher, provides learning experiences that are responsive to the strengths and needs of children/students from diverse backgrounds	☐	☐	☐
1.4 Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students *Developmental indicator:* Demonstrate broad knowledge and understanding of the impact of culture, cultural identity and linguistic background on the education of children/students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.	☐	☐	☐
1.5 Differentiate teaching to meet specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities *Developmental indicator:* Provide learning experiences that are responsive to a range of children's/students' abilities	☐	☐	☐
1.6 Strategies to support full participation of students with disabilities *Developmental indicators:* • Demonstrates an understanding of learning theories and legislation that inform planning for children/students with disabilities • Plans appropriate learning experiences for individual children/students with disabilities • Works effectively with relevant support staff in providing appropriate experiences for children/students with disabilities	☐	☐	☐
Supervising Teacher comments: *(This box will expand as you type if using an electronic form. If required, please attach additional pages)*			

Professional Knowledge

Demonstrates developing professional knowledge and skills to be able to plan for and manage learning programs

STANDARD 2: KNOW THE CONTENT AND HOW TO TEACH IT

Focus & Evidence	F	C	A
2.1 Content and teaching strategies of the teaching area *Developmental indicator:* • Demonstrates appropriate knowledge and understanding of content • Able to use this content knowledge and understanding to inform pedagogy	☐	☐	☐
2.2 Content selection and organisation *Developmental indicator:* Selects and organises content into effective teaching and learning sequences	☐	☐	☐
2.3 Curriculum, assessment and reporting *Developmental indicator:* Develops learning sequences and lesson plans which demonstrate knowledge and understanding of relevant • Curriculum documents • Assessment procedures • Reporting requirements	☐	☐	☐
2.4 Understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians *Developmental indicator:* Demonstrate broad knowledge of, understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages	☐	☐	☐
2.5 Literacy and numeracy strategies *Developmental indicator:* As appropriate to the context • Develops learning sequences and lesson plans that demonstrate an understanding of literacy and numeracy curricula • Develops learning sequences and lesson plans that demonstrate an understanding of teaching strategies designed to develop children's/students' literacy and numeracy capabilities	☐	☐	☐
2.6 Information and Communication Technology (ICT) *Developmental indicators:* • Develops learning sequences and lesson plans that incorporate ICT to expand learning opportunities for children/students • Incorporates ICT in teaching/ planning across a range of contexts	☐	☐	☐

Supervising Teacher comments:
(These comment boxes will expand as you type if using an electronic form. If required, please attach additional pages)

Professional Practice

Demonstrates a developing capacity to plan, implement and assess for effective teaching and learning as well as maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment

STANDARD 3: PLAN FOR AND IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Focus & Evidence	F	C	A
3.1 Establish challenging teaching and learning goals *Developmental indicator:* • Establishes learning goals that are achievable for individuals, groups and the whole class • Ensures learning goals reflect relevant curriculum documents	☐	☐	☐
3.2 Plan, structure and sequence learning programs *Developmental indicators:* • having written or typed lessons planned (on an agreed proforma • planning discussed with and approved by the Supervising Teacher prior to delivery • planning demonstrates a sound knowledge of content, student learning and effective teaching strategies • consistently reflects on teaching sessions and, where relevant, implements necessary changes for subsequent learning experiences	☐	☐	☐
3.3 Use teaching strategies *Developmental indicators:* • Demonstrates the ability to explore, trial and reflect on the use of open and closed questioning techniques • Effectively engages a range of teaching strategies	☐	☐	☐
3.4 Select and use resources *Developmental indicator:* Selects and uses resources, including ICT, that promote children's/students' learning	☐	☐	☐
3.5 Use effective communication in the classroom *Developmental indicators:* • Communicates using grammatically correct oral and written language • Uses respectful and age appropriate language • Uses appropriate pitch, pace, volume and projection of voice • Shows an awareness of non-verbal communication strategies and body-language to promote engagement and learning • Gives clear instructions, directions, and explanations • Employs effective, age-appropriate questioning techniques to promote learning	☐	☐	☐
3.6 Evaluate and improve teaching programs *Developmental indicator:* In collaboration with the Supervising Teacher, begins developing evaluative tools and strategies aimed at improving teaching practice and student learning	☐	☐	☐

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3.7 Engage parents / carers in the educative process

Developmental indicators:
- Develops strategies for involving parents / carers
- Demonstrates an ability to communicate with parents / carers in ways that support student learning

☐ ☐ ☐

Supervising Teacher comments:

Professional Practice

Demonstrates a developing capacity to plan, implement and assess for effective teaching and learning as well as maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment

STANDARD 4: CREATE AND MAINTAIN SUPPORTIVE AND SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Focus & Evidence	F	C	A
4.1 Support learner participation *Development indicator:* Identifies and implements strategies to safely and inclusively support learners' participation, engagement, and motivation.	☐	☐	☐
4.2 Manage classroom activities *Development indicators:* Demonstrates the capacity to maintain a well-organised, well-functioning classroom	☐	☐	☐
4.3 Manage challenging behaviour *Development indicator:* Demonstrates the ability to: • implement practical approaches to manage challenging behaviour • implement the class and/or school policy relevant to the management of challenging child/student behaviour	☐	☐	☐
4.4 Maintain learner safety *Development indicator:* Demonstrates an ability to identify and implement strategies that: • promote child/student emotional, social and physical wellbeing • ensure and maintain student safety	☐	☐	☐
4.5 Uses ICT safely, responsibly and ethically *Development indicator:* Identifies and implements effective strategies to promote the responsible and ethical use of ICT	☐	☐	☐

Supervising Teacher comments:

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Professional Practice

Demonstrates a developing capacity to plan, implement and assess for effective teaching and learning as well as maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment

STANDARD 5: ASSESS, PROVIDE FEEDBACK AND REPORT ON STUDENT LEARNING

Focus & Evidence	F	C	A
5.1 Assess student learning *Development indicator:* Identifies and implements strategies to assess student learning including: • informal • formal • diagnostic • formative • summative	☐	☐	☐
5.2 Provide feedback to students on their learning *Developmental indicators:* • Identifies and communicates children's/students' strengths and capabilities • Provides timely, objective feedback to children/students • Provides feedback which clearly describes ways in which children/students can improve	☐	☐	☐
5.3 Make consistent and comparable judgements *Developmental indicators:* As appropriate to the placement context: • Participate in moderation of student work • Reflect upon moderation processes with Supervising Teacher	☐	☐	☐
5.4 Interpret student data *Developmental indicators:* Uses assessment data to: • Evaluate student learning • Evaluate teaching practices • Modify teaching practices where appropriate	☐	☐	☐
5.5 Report on student achievement *Developmental indicator:* Keeps accurate, professional, and reliable records of student achievement and use these to report to students, parents/carers and other stakeholders	☐	☐	☐
Supervising Teacher comments:			

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Professional Engagement

Demonstrates a developing capacity to develop effective relationships with the school community to enhance learning

STANDARD 6: ENGAGE IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Focus & Evidence	F	C	A
6.1 Identify and plan professional learning needs *Developmental indicators:* In collaboration with the Supervising Teacher: • critically reflect on teaching performance throughout this PE placement and recognise areas needing improvement • takes positive action to improve student learning (e.g. adjusting teaching practices or attending professional learning opportunities)	☐	☐	☐
6.2 Engage in professional learning and improve practice *Developmental indicator:* Identifies and actively participates in appropriate professional learning opportunities for educators. Note: Professional learning opportunities include, but are not limited to, participation in regular staff meetings at the placement site.	☐	☐	☐
6.3 Engage with colleagues and improve practice *Developmental indicator:* Actively seeks and critically reflects upon collegial feedback on own practice, and acts on identified areas for improvement	☐	☐	☐
6.4 Apply professional learning and improve student learning *Developmental indicator:* Critically reflects upon the rationale for continued professional learning and the implications for student learning	☐	☐	☐

Supervising Teacher comments:

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Professional Engagement

Demonstrates a developing capacity to develop effective relationships with the school community to enhance learning

STANDARD 7: ENGAGE PROFESSIONALLY WITH COLLEAGUES, PARENTS / CARERS AND THE COMMUNITY

Focus & Evidence	F	C	A
7.1 Meet professional ethics and responsibilities *Developmental indicator:* Holds conversations with supervising teachers and/or senior staff and conducts him/herself in a manner that demonstrates an understanding of: • the code of conduct for the teaching profession and for the specific site • the importance of maintaining a dress code consistent with placement site expectations • the importance of confidentiality • ethical considerations	☐	☐	☐
7.2 Comply with legislative, administrative and organisational requirements Developmental indicator: Holds conversations with Supervising teachers and/or senior staff conducts him/herself in a manner that demonstrates an understanding of: • duty of care • mandatory reporting • legislative requirements and organisational policies	☐	☐	☐
7.3 Engage with parents / carers and school community *Developmental indicator:* Understands and uses strategies for working effectively, sensitively and confidentially with parents/carers and the school community	☐	☐	☐
7.4 Engage with professional teaching networks and broader communities *Developmental indicator:* Demonstrates an understanding of the roles of external professionals and community representatives in broadening teachers' in professional knowledge and practice	☐	☐	☐
Supervising Teacher comments:			

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Overall comments regarding Pre-service Teacher performance
Supervising Teacher comments:

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APPENDIX W

Professional Experience at the YNNU and

Assessment for Professional Experience at the YNNU

见习鉴定表

Observation logbook

学　　院　**Faculty**：＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

学　　号　**Student ID**：＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

姓　　名　**Student name**：＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

专　　业　**Course**：＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

班　　级　**Class**：＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

指导教师　**Supervisor**：＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

训练时间:＿＿＿年＿＿月＿＿＿日至＿＿＿月＿＿＿＿日

Date of the observation: from＿＿＿＿＿＿ to＿＿＿＿＿

见习记录（1）-（4）

Record of observation

学科 subject of observation		授课教师 instructor		职称 Qualification of the instructor	
时间 date		地点 place			

见习内容：

Content of the observation:

收获与体会：

Reflection and achievement

指导教师评定成绩：

Comments and summative result of the observation from supervisor:

<div align="right">

指导教师签名：signature of the supervisor

年　月　日

Date

</div>

见习记录（1）-（4）

模拟教学讲习训练手册

Micro-teaching learning booklet

学　　院 **Faculty**：＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

学　　号 **Student ID**：＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

姓　　名 **Student name**：＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

专　　业 **Course**：＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

班　　级 **Class**：＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

指导教师 **Supervisor**：＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

训练时间:＿＿＿年＿＿月＿＿＿日至＿＿＿月＿＿＿＿日

Date of the observation: from＿＿＿＿＿＿　to＿＿＿＿＿＿

教 学 教 案（1）-(4)
Teaching plan (4 plans)

授课班级 class		授课 时间 time		课型 type of class	
课题 Name of the class					
教学 目标 Aims					
重点 significances					
难点 difficulties					
教具 Teaching instruments					
教学 方法 Teaching methods					

板书设计：
Blackboard-writing:

教 学 教 案（1）-(4)
Teaching plan (4 plans)

教学环节 Teaching process	教学内容 Teaching content	教师活动 Teacher's instructions	学生活动 Student's activities	设计说明 explanation of the design

指导教师意见及建议：

Supervisor's comments and suggestions:

教案 teaching plan：　通过 pass　or 修改 revised
试讲 teaching demonstration：　通过 pass　or 重讲 re-try
指导教师签名 signature of the supervisor：

学生课后自我评价与反思：
Student's self-assessment and reflection

教学环节 Teaching process	教学内容 Teaching content	教师活动 Teacher's instructions	学生活动 Student's activities	设计说明 explanation of the design

说　课　教　案（1）-(4)

Explanation of the teaching plan (4 times)

	说教学课题： Explanation of this teaching topic
说 教 材 分 析 explanation of the curriculum	说教学目标： Explanation of the teaching aims:
	说教学重点与难点： Explanation of the teaching significance and difficulties:

说教学课题：

说 教 学 程 序 设 计 分 析 Explanation of the teaching process	说教学过程： Explanation of the teaching procedure:

说教学过程：

	说板书设计： Explanation of the blackboard-writing:
说 教 学 程 序 设 计 分 析 Explanation of the teaching process	说教学媒体使用： Explanation of the use of ICT:
	说教学方法： Explanation of the teaching methods:
	说学生学法指导： Explanation of the instructions of students:
	说板书设计： Explanation of the blackboard-writing:

教育实习记录本

Placement logbook

学 院 **Faculty**：_____

学 号 **Student ID**：_____

姓 名 **Student name**：_____

专 业 **Course**：_____

班 级 **Class**：_____

指导教师 **Supervisor**：_____

训练时间:_____年_____月___日至_____月_____日

Date of the observation: from_____ to_____

云南师范大学教务处

班主任工作实习计划 **classroom management**

班级 class		学生人数 the number of children	男 boy
			女 girl

工作任务（目的、措施、内容）：
Tasks planning (aims, strategies and content)

班主任工作实习计划 **classroom management**

班级 class		学生人数 the number of children	男 boy
			女 girl

具 体 安 排（周 次、内 容）：**Weekly details**	
周 次	**主 要 内 容 main content**
第一周 First week	
第二周 Second week	
第三周 Third week	
第四周 Fourth week	
第五周 Fifth week	
第六周 Sixth week	

原班主任指导意见（含是否同意及建议）：
Comments and approval from the classroom teacher

签名 signature：
年　　月　　日 date

学院指导教师意见（含是否同意及建议）：
Comments and approval from university-based supervisor

签名 signature：
年　　月　　日 date

主 题 班 会 活 动
theme-centered classroom activity (two times)

活动计划（含主题、目的、意义、内容、时间、地点）：

Activity planning, including theme, aims, significance, content, time and location)

活动反思：

Reflection of the activity

听课记录 records of classes (4 times)

<div align="center">

听　课　记　录（1）-（4）

</div>

教学科目 Subject		授课人 Instructor	
课　　型 Type of the class		班　级 Class	
时间 Time		教学内容 Content of the class	
课　堂　实　录 Record of the class			

评析与反思 Analysis and reflection of the class

教学实习教案 **Teaching planning (6 times)**

授课班级 Class		授课 时间 Time		课型 Type of the class	
课题 Title of the class					
教学 目标 Aims					
重点 Significances					
难点 Difficulties					
教具 Teaching instrument					
教学 方法 Teaching methods					
板书设计： Blackboard-writing					

教学实习教案 **Teaching planning (6 times)**

教 学 实 习 教 案 Teaching planning
教案设计 Teaching planning

教学内容及过程 Teaching content and process	教师活动 Teacher's activities	学生活动 Children's activities	设计说明 Explanation of the design

指导教师意见及建议：

Supervisor's comments and suggestions:

教案 teaching plan：   通过 pass   修改 revise

试讲 teaching demonstration：   通过 pass 重讲 re-try

<div align="right">指导教师签名：
Signature   of</div>

supervisor

学生课后自我评价与反思： Student's self-assessment and reflection
班主任工作总结 Conclusion of the classroom management
教学工作总结 Conclusion of teaching activity
个人实习总结 Conclusion of the teaching placement

学生课后自我评价与反思：
Student's self-assessment and reflection

实习学校评定意见 Suggestions from kindergarten	（教学实习工作评语） Comments of students regarding the teaching capability from kindergarten 指导教师签名　　　　　　年　　月　　日 Signature of the supervisor Date
	（班主任实习工作评语） Comments of students regarding the classroom management capability from kindergarten 指导教师签名　　　　　　年　　月　　日 Signature of the supervisor　　　　　Date
	（实习单位对实习生综合能力的评定·按"强、较强、一般、较弱、弱"五种程度计） **综合能力：** Overall professional capabilities of a student:　A　C　N　D　F 学校领导签名 Signature of the Leader of the kindergarten 学　校　签　章　　　年　　月　　日 Stamp of the kindergarten　　Date
学院指导教师评语及实习成绩评定 Comments from university-based supervisor and summative result of this teaching placement	(实习成绩按"优秀、良好、中等、及格、不及格"五种程度计） 实习成绩 summative result：　　A　　C　　S　　D　　F 指导教师签名　　　　　　年　　月　　日 Signature of the university-based supervisor　　Date
学院审核意见 Summative comment from the faculty	通过 Pass　　　　　不通过 Failed 学院领导签名 Signature of the Dead of the faculty 学　院　签　章　　　年　　月 日 Stamp of the faculty　　　Date

Note. A = Achieved expected aim; C = Competently demonstrated expected aim; S = Slightly demonstrated expected aim; D = Developing towards expected aim; F = Failed to demonstrate expected aim.

云南师范大学

YUNNAN NORMAL UNIVERSITY

调 查 报 告 鉴 定 表

Investigation Report

学　　院 **Faculty**：_____

学　　号 **Student ID**：_____

姓　　名 **Student name**：_____

专　　业 **Course**：_____

班　　级 **Class**：_____

指导教师 **Supervisor**：_____

训练时间:___年___月____日至____月____日

Date of the observation: from_____ to_____

题 目 Title		字 数 the number of word
调 查 对 象 简 况 The brief of the investigated target		
调 查 报 告 内 容 摘 要 Abstract of the investigation	调查人（学生）签名： 年 月 日 Student investigator: Date	

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学院指导教师评语及成绩评定 Comments from the faculty	**成绩评定**:　优秀(HD)、良好(D)、中等(C)、及格(P)、不及格(F) 指导教师签名 supervisor：　　　　年　　月　　日 Date: *Note*. HD = high distinction; D = Distinction; C = credit; P = Pass; F = failed
学院审核意见 Result from the faculty	学院负责人签名： Signature of the Dean of the faculty 学　院　签　章：　　　　年　　月　　日 Stamp of the faculty:　　　　Date