Pre-service teachers' understanding of child abuse and their professional role in child protection

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Universities play an integral role in training teachers in the areas of understanding and preparedness to deal with child abuse and neglect while at the same time advocating for the 'rights of the child'. Unfortunately pre-service teachers are at risk of being ill-prepared to meet their mandated and teaching responsibilities if their course content is not approached strategically. While numerous studies have investigated teachers' understandings of child abuse and the barriers in detecting and reporting this abuse, this research investigates pre-service teachers' understandings of child abuse and their preparedness to deal with the signs, symptoms and disclosures of child abuse. This paper reports on findings concerning pre-service teachers' views of their professional role in child protection and their recommendations for content to be included in their undergraduate degrees in teacher education.

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Child abuse is a worldwide problem and pervades all cultural and economic boundaries. Child abuse is also a significant social concern, being described recently as one of the top twelve issues threatening Australian children (Crossman 2006). Current figures released by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare also indicate an alarming trend over the last five years in relation to consistent increases in all indicators, as well as in substantiated reports of child abuse and neglect (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare [AIHW] 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006). In 2002-2003, these figures confirmed that every 13 minutes one child was identified by child protection agencies as being harmed (Brown & Endekov 2004). Further to this, and equally distressing, are the results of a national study, *Out of sight – out of mind* (Tucci, Mitchell & Goddard 2006), which discovered that for many Australians the rising cost of petrol was of greater concern than the rising figures of child abuse.

The significance of this information suggests that not only does abuse have crippling emotional, psychological and social effects on victims and their families, but it also incurs significant long-term social and financial costs for the community. One report, commissioned by the Kids First Foundation (2003), calculated that in one year child abuse costs Australian taxpayers at least $5 billion. These costs included the expenses of investigations and prosecutions, medical bills, treatment of children's physical injuries and mental illness, as well as psychological counselling.

Reliability of statistics and accuracy of figures are questioned by critics because of differences in legislation, definition and reporting requirements (McCallum 2001). Another area of concern relates to the difficulty of obtaining accurate statistics on child abuse and neglect; the available data relating to reported cases only, whilst unreported cased are difficult to determine accurately. Briggs and Heinrich (1985) claimed that earlier figures were only 'the tip of the iceberg' (p.44) and, more than 20 years later, this lack of confidence in measures and statistics remains unchanged.

In most states in Australia, the common ideology in relation to the prevention and treatment of child abuse is that it is a collective responsibility situated within the wider community (Tucci, Mitchell & Goddard 2006). Governments support this collective approach, recently coining the phrase a 'whole of government approach'

(Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian 2006). By virtue of their work, child care workers and teachers occupy a very important position within the framework of 'collective responsibility', not only in identifying maltreatment through their relationship and daily contact with children (Blakester 2005; Layton 2003; Sundell 1997), but also by supporting educational and integrative initiatives (Press 2006). With the majority of abused children being present in our classrooms and early childhood services, it is imperative that those who work in the care and education professions seriously consider their moral, ethical, legal and professional obligation in child protection and reporting of abuse, as well as in engaging in advocacy for children's rights (Briggs 2005; Kenny 2004).

UNDERSTANDINGS OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Along with parents, the police and staff engaged in a number of professional disciplines, teachers are a vital source of reporting child abuse and neglect. They know the children and their families and therefore play a critical role in child protection (Beck, Ogloff & Corishley 1994; Crenshaw, Crenshaw & Lichtenberg 1995; Layton 2003; Lumsden 1992; Walsh et al. 2005). Those who work directly with children and their families should be aware of the possibility of child abuse, be familiar with the main signs of abuse and be vigilant in this pursuit (Stainton-Rogers 1998).

A growing body of knowledge has established that during early childhood, children's environments, their early interactions and their experiences form the foundation on which social, physical, cognitive and emotional development are built (Perry 2001; Shore 1997). Unfortunately, children who are victims of abuse or maltreatment during this critical period not only suffer negative effects that impact on early brain development, but may also experience enduring repercussions that track into adolescence and adulthood (Child Welfare Information Gateway 2001; Kids First Foundation 2003; Lao & Weisz 2003; Teicher 2000). For this reason, education of teachers about the early detection, intervention and issues pertaining to maltreatment, abuse and neglect would contribute to ensuring a child's long and short-term developmental success.

Although most teachers are well placed to identify, detect and report child abuse, and realise that they have a professional obligation to report abuse, there is a growing body of research which indicates that there are significant barriers that impede this process and that teachers under-report due to perceived threats and intimidation (Beck, Ogloff & Corishley 1994; Briggs, Broadhurst & Hawkins 2004; Crenshaw, Crenshaw & Lichtenberg 1995; Walsh et al. 2005). Teachers have also identified a gap between basic training and what they need to know to increase their confidence in dealing with this sensitive issue with children (Hawkins & McCallum 2001; Walsh et al. 2005). Often those who work with children may not be fully aware of their professional responsibilities, the procedures for reporting, or even what constitutes abuse. Moreover, some of those working with children say that they have limited coping skills in responding to children who are abused (Crenshaw, Crenshaw & Lichtenberg 1995; Hinson & Fossey 2000). Educators have highlighted that inadequate education, difficulty in defining abuse, and teachers' fears regarding the consequences of reporting, are among the top five reasons for failing to report (Hawkins & McCallum 2001).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The literature highlighted above provided the impetus for the current research which involved investigating pre-service teachers' recognition of child abuse, knowledge of reporting procedures, and their preparedness to deal with this issue. Additionally, the researchers sought to collect pre-service teachers' recommendations for suggested content and methodology for the development and implementation of more effective and meaningful programs which might address the topic of teachers' professional obligations in relation to responding to child abuse and child protection issues.

The research aimed to determine whether a Queensland teacher preparation program included content that built students' capacities to meet child advocacy obligations (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1990, Article 19), informed them of the legal requirements implicit in the Queensland Education mandates (2004), and ensured they were aware of other legislation (National Safe Schools Framework 2003 & the Queensland Child Protection Strategic Plan 2003) (Department of Education Science and Training [DEST] 2003; Education Queensland 2003). This focus on the tertiary context is an important one, according to Briggs and Hawkins (1997):

> Although governments, through their legislative and guidelines, have long recognized the importance of school and preschool personnel in child protection, tertiary education has been slow to recognize and respond to the pre-service educational needs of professionals who work with children (p. vii).

It was anticipated that the analysis of students' answers to the researchers' questionnaire would contribute to determining:

- pre-service teachers' knowledge (PTK) with regard to recognising signs of abuse, reporting suspicions, and the teaching of protective behaviours to children;
- pre-service teachers' preparedness (PTP) to deal with the complex issues of child abuse and child protection;

- pre-service teachers' recommendations (PTR) on essential information and delivery of content necessary to equip them to deal with child abuse issues;
- pre-service teacher education program that would help student teachers to appreciate their integral role in the defence against child abuse, to develop their confidence in reasonable identification of abuse, and to reinforce the mandatory steps in reporting abuse.

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REVIEW OF TEACHER PREPARATION

Although some pre-service teacher education degrees and teacher induction programs now include training for reporting, identifying and supporting victims of child abuse, there is great diversity and inconsistency in content and delivery. Variations between the states and territories in terms of reporting obligations, legislation and definitions (Farrell 2001, 2004) add another layer of complexity to the provision of clear mandatory reporting expectations.

At the time of this study, most Australian states and territories had in place legislation which provided clear directives to professional groups on their required obligations for reporting child abuse and neglect.

However, in Queensland, amendments to the Education (General Provisions) Act 1989 in response to the findings of the Board of Inquiry into Past Handling of Complaints of Sexual Abuse in the Anglican Church Diocese of Brisbane (O'Callaghan & Briggs 2003) stated that teachers were only legally required to report suspicions of sexual abuse perpetrated by school employees (Education Queensland 2004). According to educational policy directives (Education Queensland 2004), teachers are 'strongly encouraged' – but 'not legally obligated' – to report suspicions of any other types of abuse (for example, abuse taking place in the home or elsewhere outside the school) to statutory authorities through communication with their school principal.

Like many other teacher preparation institutions, the teacher preparation program in this study has a responsibility to equip graduate students to meet both their legal and duty of care obligations (Professional Education Standards - EP4 Legal Obligations). Unfortunately, the university in question was unable to determine any clear guidelines, expectations or strategic scope and sequencing of courses that focused on child abuse and child protection. It is also important to emphasise that there were only two avenues at this university to acquire any information on child protection and intervention, and these were:

a) to participate in the minimum half day training that is endorsed by Education Queensland (this training was only offered at one of the campuses and was of a purely voluntary nature);

b) to acquire information on child abuse and neglect as part of the content that was taught in a range of courses throughout the students' degree.

Education Queensland (the largest employer of teachers in the State) has a child protection policy that outlines protocols for supporting children suspected of being victims of abuse and neglect. It is also a requirement that new teachers employed by this organisation attend mandatory training. However, owing to the nature of their area of study, pre-service teachers, through their contact with children during professional experience, volunteering, working in before or after school care services, as well as a variety of sporting programs and extra curricular activities, may require an understanding of their professional obligations in the detection and reporting of child abuse prior to being 'fully qualified'. Several other studies have suggested that the present method of training pre-service teachers in the area of child abuse and protection is only superficial, with very few programs making any significant impact on teachers' practices or on their confidence in identifying or dealing with child abuse (McCallum 2003; Richardson 1996).

METHODOLOGY

PARTICIPANTS

Purposive (Holstein & Gubrium 1995) and convenience sampling were used to recruit respondents for this study from two campuses at a regional Queensland university. Respondents were final year pre-service teachers enrolled in several different teacher preparation degrees – 76% were enrolled in the Bachelor of Education (Primary/Middle Schooling) and 24 % were enrolled in Early Childhood degree courses. It was anticipated that students in the sample group were close to completing their pre-service education degree and any courses still to be completed would not cover substantial information on this topic.

The majority of students wished to gain employment in the primary school sector. The sample was predominantly female (85%), with over half being between the ages of 21 and 25 years.

PROCEDURE

The research project had full support from the Dean of the Faculty and also approval from the University Ethics Committee. Recognising the risk that pre-service teachers could be adversely affected by this survey, three safeguards were put in place: first, a briefing session was provided during a common lecture time that highlighted the purpose, the objectives and some sample questions of the survey; second, the voluntary nature of the survey was emphasised; and third, a prefatory note was placed as an introduction to the online survey outlining the type of data that the survey would collect and reinforcing the voluntary, anonymous and sensitive nature of this particular study along with links to support websites. Participants were also advised to consult a student counsellor or contact a support hotline if the questionnaire revived memories of their own childhood abuse.

An online questionnaire was determined to be the most suitable, accessible, and cost effective method for surveying students in order to provide optimum flexibility and maximum opportunity for responses. An electronic survey system based on the technology of the 'PHP surveyor' was used as the research tool. Another reason for choosing this data collection tool was that it allowed all data to be gathered in a central storage area.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The questionnaire collected both quantitative and qualitative data through the use of a self-administered questionnaire. The first section of the questionnaire collected quantitative demographic data including gender, age, campus, and program in which each student was enrolled. This data was used to support statistical analysis to determine whether there were any significant differences in responses among groups of students.

The second part of the questionnaire comprised of three different sections, focusing on:

- (PTK) pre-service teachers' recognition of child abuse and protective issues, and knowledge of reporting procedures;
- (PTP) pre-service teachers' feelings about, and attitudes towards, their preparedness to deal with issues of child abuse and protection;
- (PTR) pre-service teachers' recommendations for course content on issues pertaining to child abuse and protection.

Parts of the questionnaire were adapted from research carried out by Hawkins and McCallum (2001), who used similar questions to survey teachers' effectiveness in reporting child abuse cases, as well as teachers' knowledge of symptoms of suspected child abuse. The Hawkins and McCallum (2001) questionnaire was expanded in order to examine pre-service teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and understandings concerning professional responsibility with regard to issues of abuse and child protection.

Pre-service teachers were asked a series of open-ended and forced choice questions to assess their recognition and reporting knowledge on abuse (PTK). The open-ended questions sought to determine their knowledge of indicators of abuse. Five forced choice questions were employed to gauge awareness of reporting responsibilities by requiring either 'yes', 'no' or 'unsure' in each response.

In order to determine pre-service teachers' feelings and attitudes on preparedness to deal with issues pertaining to child abuse (PTP), questions which utilised a five point Likert scale were included, as well as a series of open-ended questions. The final part of the questionnaire collected pre-service teachers' recommendations (PTR) and suggestions for content that they felt should be added to the undergraduate teacher education program. These were acquired using a set of open-ended questions.

Educators have highlighted that inadequate education, difficulty in defining abuse, and teachers' fears regarding the consequences of reporting, are among the top five reasons for failing to report (child abuse).

ANALYSIS AND MEASUREMENT

Although the researchers reviewed the literature for relevant current and past work in this field, they were conscious of the need to maintain an open mind during the data collection and analysis phase to allow concepts to emerge. As the data collected was a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data, multiple analysis tools were used.

Responses to qualitative data were analysed using a combination of grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss 1990; Glaser & Strauss 1967) and thematic analysis (Patton 2002). This was necessary to identify emerging themes in the responses (Coffey & Atkinson 1996). The process of data analysis involved respondents' data being sorted and re-sorted into similar themes, ideas and patterns. This enabled the researchers to develop labels and categories, and to code data that could be further converted into quantitative terms for input into SPSS 14.0 Data Editor (Hunter et al. 2005). The process included clustering emerging themes and terms used by participants to describe their understandings, feelings and opinions, e.g. professional obligations, reporting procedures, definitions of abuse and methods of

investigating abuse. Terms and common phrases were highlighted and researchers then conferred to test for internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity (Patton 2002).

In some cases, in which students were asked to identify major types of child abuse, open coding was used and, instead of discovering emerging themes, data was driven by theoretical orientations or 'pre-determined themes' borrowed from associated research (Merriam 1988). For example, the types of child abuse identified by the pre-service teachers fit into the four major types indicated in the Child Abuse Prevention Services (CAPS) website (www.childabuseprevention.com.au) and the Help guide website (www.helpguide.org). These types were physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. In the same way, the terms 'omission' and 'commission' were borrowed from Glaser (2002) to classify pre-service teachers' definition of child abuse. These categories were then entered into SPSS14.0 Data Editor. A binary coding of the categories was employed, thus being assigned a value of '1' if a pre-service teacher mentioned a concept that fits in the category, and a value of '0' if not. The data was then ready for statistical analyses. Quantitative data was analysed initially from the whole sample (n=84) and, secondly, from frequency of scores.

RESULTS/FINDINGS IN KEY THEMES

(PTK) Pre-service teachers' knowledge with regard to recognising signs of abuse, reporting suspicions, and the teaching of protective behaviours

There are many different definitions of child abuse, one definition being that 'child abuse consists of any act or failure to act that endangers a child's physical or emotional health and development' (Health Guide: Mental Health Issues 2006). The actual behaviour of abuse can be further defined as 'commission' and the failure to act as a behaviour of 'omission' (Glaser 2002). The majority of pre-service teachers (87.8%) defined child abuse as a form of behaviour (commission + omission or both) that leads to unfavourable results in a child's development. This was further broken down into 63% considering child abuse as an act of commission, 10% believing that it was an act of omission (failure to act) and only 15% suggesting that it was both of these. Of those respondents (63%) who defined abuse as an act of commission or harmful behaviour, 20% referred to it as criminal behaviour and 80% suggested it was a form of maltreatment.

When students were asked to identify the types of child abuse, 29% identified the four main types of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual and neglect) correctly, 48% were aware of three types, while 21% were aware of two types. Among the types of abuse identified by students, physical (31%) and emotional abuse (32%) were the most common. Neglect (12%) was the least known type of child abuse, with some other forms or types of abuse mentioned being domestic, self abuse, human rights, and exploitation.

Figure 1.
Suggested processes for reporting suspected abuse

Involve others	96.5%
Support child and investigate	39.3%
Document	20.0%
Follow guidelines	3.6%

Although students rated the most common indicator of child abuse being changes to a child's physical state (84%) (e.g. obvious and unexplained physical injuries such as marks, bumps, burns, cuts and fractures), students also identified that noticeable changes to a child's relationships with peers (72%) (e.g. withdrawal, aggression, and abnormal attachment/fear toward a person) were significant and key indicators of abuse. Changes to behaviour (including unusual behaviour, overreaction, attention seeking, excessive clothing, self-harm, avoiding eye contact, refusing physical contact or going home, eating disorders, sitting difficulties, toileting problems, nightmares, swearing, and dislike of loud noises) were also mentioned by a high percentage (70%) of students as an indicator of abuse. A limited number were aware of the following child abuse indicators: sexualised behaviour (24%), academic performance (17%), neglect (16%), and child's report (5%).

(PTP) Pre-service teachers' feelings about, and attitudes towards, their preparedness to deal with issues of child abuse and protection

In this study, 67% of the pre-service teachers believed that they knew their professional obligations regarding suspicions or evidence of a child being abused. When students were asked what process they would follow if a child confided in them that he/she had been abused, 96.5 % suggested that they would involve 'others' ('others' primarily being the principal, the guidance counsellor or a senior member of staff) (see Figure 1).

A large number of students also suggested that 'others' involved reporting the abuse to the police or the Department of Communities. Many of the students' responses were vague or generalised. For example, comments consisted of some of the following: 'I would follow the appropriate guidelines of the teaching setting', 'seek support from the deputy or principal', 'work with the appropriate professional', or 'report to the appropriate authorities'. Seldom in these examples was a step by step process identified. It is interesting to note that quite often the 'guidance officer/counsellor' and 'principal' were used interchangeably with no distinction in the order of priority for reporting. It is important to note, however, that not all

Figure 2.
Perceived barriers to reporting suspected abuse

1. LACK OF INFORMATION (57%)
   - Lack of understanding of/knowledge about the matter
   - Lack of understanding of family background and culture (including family situation)
   - Lack of evidence (uncertainty)
   - Negative image of children – as liars
2. FEAR FOR SELF (54%)
   - Lack of support from school and government authorities – both real and perceived
   - Fear of unfavourable reaction by colleagues, parents, and community – protecting self
   - Fear of risking relationships – child is related to a colleague, knowing the perpetrator
   - Fear of the perpetrator – threats
3. FEAR FOR THE VICTIM (18%)
   - Endangering child
4. RESPECT FOR FAMILY PRIVACY (7%) AND DIFFERENCES
   - Fear of consequences (especially legal) – causing trouble for the family
   - Effects on parents
   - Differences in parenting style

Figure 3.
Suggested essential course content

A. PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH THE SITUATION
   1. How to investigate – questioning techniques, dealing with uncertainty
   2. How to handle children's report and validate authenticity
   3. What to do and where to go
   4. What to report, where and how
   5. How to deal with the situation in remote and isolated communities
   6. What happens after reporting
   7. Case studies

B. BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT CHILD ABUSE
   1. What constitutes child abuse (definition)
   2. The types of child abuse including indicators
   3. Guidelines for identifying victims and procedures for dealing with child abuse cases
   4. Factual information (e.g. statistics)

C. GUIDELINES FOR SUPPORTING AND EDUCATING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
   1. How children can protect self and how teachers can protect the child
   2. Support for the child and family during investigation
   3. Teaching and dealing with an abused child
   4. Dealing with the families of abused children

D. TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL AND LEGAL OBLIGATIONS
   1. Roles and responsibilities – obligations and limitations
   2. Legislation (relevant laws and regulations)
   3. Consequences of teachers' actions and inactions
   4. Confidentiality issues

E. TEACHERS' SUPPORT NETWORKS
   1. What kind of supports are available?
   2. Organisations and professionals providing support and information to beginning teachers

schools in Queensland have a guidance counsellor, although this position is becoming increasingly common.

Based on this chi-square test and the result of independence (significance level of 5%), it was determined that there was no reason to suspect that pre-service teachers' knowledge of their professional obligations was associated with the type of program in which they were enrolled (i.e. primary or early childhood degree).

Barriers to reporting

Although 12% of the pre-service teachers did not feel any barrier would stop them from reporting suspected abuse, the majority (88%) identified one or more barriers as existing. The main barriers identified were lack of information (57%), fear for self (54%), fear for the victim (18%), and respect for family privacy and differences (7%). Figure 2 outlines additional details about perceived barriers.

Feelings of preparedness

Although 67% of the pre-service teachers believed that they knew their professional obligations regarding suspicions of abuse, more than half (58%) reported that they could probably recognise some signs of abuse, but would need to verify this with other professionals ('unsure'). Forty per cent felt they could recognise most signs of abuse ('moderately confident'). Two per cent felt they would find it hard to differentiate between an accident and abuse ('not confident'). Only 15% believed that their undergraduate degree prepared them to deal with issues of child abuse, with the remainder reporting that, although their courses at university covered some content addressing abuse, this information was disparate and spread throughout a variety of courses.

Pre-service teachers' recommendations for course content on issues of child abuse and protection (PTR)

Only 15% of the pre-service teachers agree that their undergraduate degree prepared them to deal with issues of child abuse while 62% disagree. The remaining 23% are somewhat undecided. Pre-service teachers suggested a number of ways in which content about child abuse might be disseminated. These included: integrating content into existing courses; providing seminars, workshops, and information sessions; creating a new and separate course; and integrating content and procedures into professional experience courses. Other valuable ideas suggested by students included the use of case studies – preferably with video scenarios, having a major assignment and/or exam that focuses on child abuse, and attending compulsory seminars with resource speakers (visiting professionals who are experts on matters about child abuse).

When asked to define the essential content they felt was necessary to include in their degree to better equip them for dealing with issues pertaining to child abuse and child protection, five main areas were identified (see Figure 3).

DISCUSSION

Although some education degrees try to integrate information on child abuse and child protection into their programs and courses, it is the author's belief that many universities would have similar trends to those identified in this study in which lack of internal procedures and strategic scope and sequencing is inadequately preparing students to manage issues pertaining to child abuse and child protection. The findings in this study identified that, although pre-service teachers confirmed their need to be informed and skilled in the area of identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect, and highlighted a variety of courses where some content on this topic was covered, collectively less than half the students believed their undergraduate teacher education degree adequately prepared them in terms of knowledge, skills and competencies required to detect or respond to child abuse and neglect.

These results reinforce those of other studies (Levin 1983; Walsh et al. 2005) which found that teachers in the field identify the need for more specific and applicable training on detecting and reporting child abuse. Berson, Berson and Ralston (1998) pointed out that 'child abuse necessitates appropriate training of pre-service teachers to fulfill their legal and ethical responsibilities' (1998, p. 333). Failure to prepare pre-service teachers for correct reporting procedures or managing risk to self, may in fact limit the amount of reporting that occurs and the amount of neglect that is identified and followed up. Taken together, these findings clearly highlight the need for more systematic and mandated expectation in pre-service courses on preparation of students for carrying out their role in the protection of children.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Acknowledging that this study is confined to one institution and involves a relatively small sample, nevertheless there is , reason to believe that responses and feedback from students represent the broader student teacher population. This lack of child protection education in university courses was recognised by the Federal Government in 2004 with the allocation of $10m in Federal funding to the University of South Australia to set up a national child protection research centre for ten years (DEST 2004).

This study recommends several changes to teacher education. To begin with, universities and teacher preparation courses require strategic and systematic protocols outlining the necessary content that students need to study before completing their degree. It is critically important that this be done prior to them graduating to ensure that all pre-service teachers enter the school system with a strong knowledge of reporting procedures and confidence in their ability to identify abuse.

Second, this content needs to be delivered by qualified child protection educators who have expertise in training methods. Content must reflect current thinking, practices, protocols and mandates, and should avoid variations in information in relation to the courses that students choose. Moreover, there need to be safeguards against the varying levels of advocacy and commitment to studying child abuse and child protection by the examiners of undergraduate pre-service courses. Training should include reporting procedures and should be relevant to teachers who choose to teach not only locally, but also inter-state or in other countries.

Although in Queensland teachers are mandated only to report suspicions of abuse or neglect to the school principal, it is still vital that specific training for pre-service teachers is provided to increase their effectiveness and confidence in this role (Hawkins & McCallum 2001; McCallum 2003; Orelove, Hollahan & Myles 2000). This research resonates with Walsh et al.'s (2005) findings which suggest that topics on child abuse and child protection should form part of the compulsory content of a student's undergraduate education degree, as well as being integrated in relevant courses. There are definite shortcomings with regard to addressing this issue in the teacher preparation course at this particular university. Further discussions and planning are now required. ■

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