


Challenges and Opportunities for Preservice Teachers in 2020

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What will this session cover?

- ▶ The challenges COVID-19 has placed on professional experience
- ▶ The opportunities COVID-19 has given preservice teachers (yes these exist!)
- ▶ The social and emotional wellbeing challenges all teachers need to be aware of now
- ▶ How teachers (and preservice teachers) can survive and thrive in this profession, even with everything life throws at us

Who am I?



A secondary Music and Maths teacher in Queensland



Secondary Convenor for the Bachelor of Education and Master of Learning and Teaching degrees at University of Southern Queensland (Toowoomba)



Lecturer in Social and Emotional Wellbeing in Secondary Schools (which includes a 15 day professional experience)

Challenges COVID-19 has placed on preservice teachers

- Uncertainty!
- Trying to balance increased expectations personally, while still aiming to achieve your best on professional experience
- Working with teachers who are experiencing significantly more stress and may not be as patient or available as normal
- Learning to teach in a way that has not necessarily been observed or taught

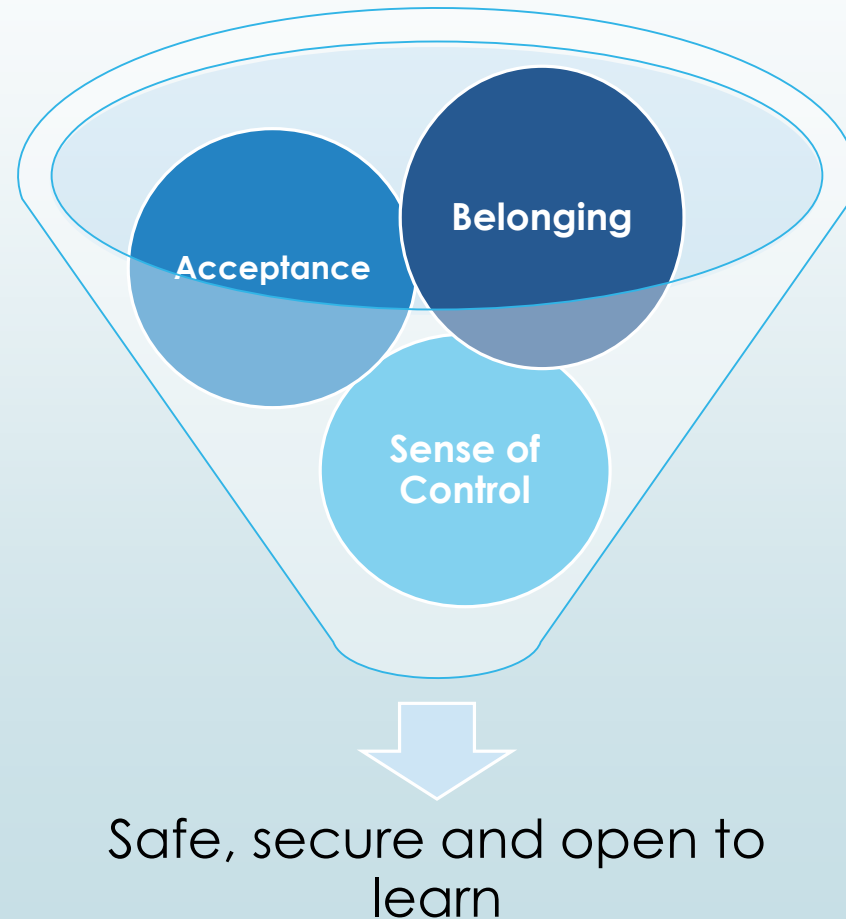
Opportunities COVID-19 has given preservice teachers

- ▶ You are so useful to teachers as they are still struggling with the extra demands that have been placed on them (this gives you an opportunity to demonstrate APST 6.3)
- ▶ Experience the passion and dedication of teachers
- ▶ Baptism of fire!
 - ▶ Resilience
 - ▶ Flexibility
- ▶ Observe how a school performs under pressure, including how much they prioritise wellbeing (both student and staff)

Social and emotional wellbeing challenges pre-pandemic

- ▶ People are hard-wired to connect through relationships. We were not made to be alone.
- ▶ APST Standard 1 - “Know students and how they learn” (AITSL, 2010). It is first for a reason!
- ▶ By having a knowledge of human development (physical, cognitive, psychosocial), you will have more understanding and therefore empathy for where your students are ‘at’ and what they can learn.
- ▶ We are not able to retain new information when we are in a state of stress

What does this mean for teachers?



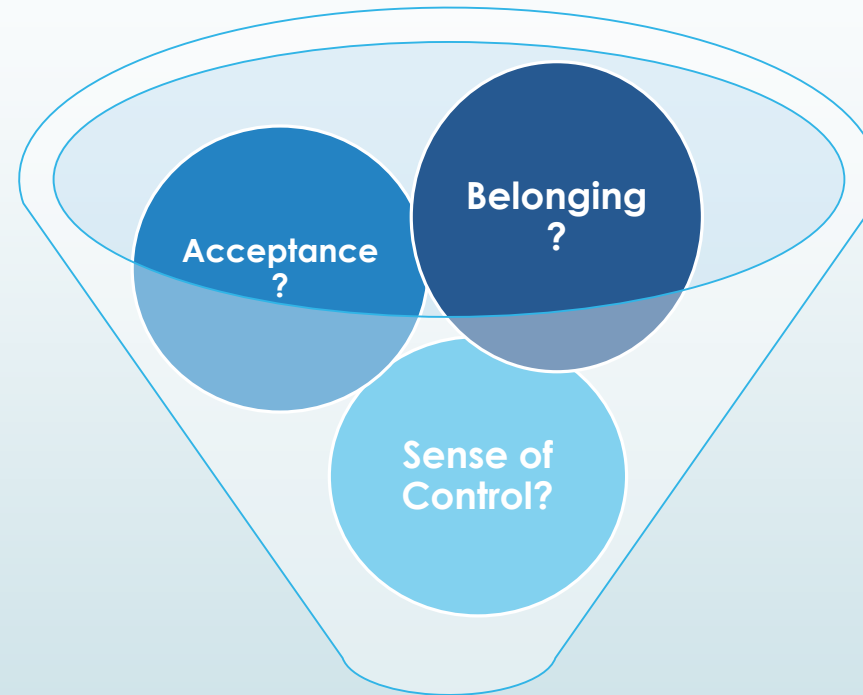
What does this mean for teachers?

- ▶ No matter what is happening *outside*, if we can make our classroom a safe space for our students where they feel accepted, that they belong and have a sense of control, we tend to see:
 - ▶ Better academic performance;
 - ▶ Improved attitudes and behaviours including higher motivation and commitment to studies;
 - ▶ Fewer negative behaviours; and
 - ▶ Reduced emotional distress

How to support students' social and emotional wellbeing

- ▶ Support for students' social and emotional wellbeing is not an 'added extra' to our lessons. This can be embedded easily in any subject. Good teachers tend to even do this instinctively
 - ▶ Get to know your students
 - ▶ Build trust and rapport
 - ▶ Be consistent
 - ▶ Be aware
 - ▶ Be authentic

...and then 2020 hits...



Safe and secure?
What happens to learning?

What are we dealing with now?

- ▶ Months of stress, uncertainty and loss of routine
- ▶ Parents may have lost their job
- ▶ Older students may be required to support younger siblings
- ▶ Lack of IT resources (all children sharing one device)
- ▶ Children taking on extra responsibility
- ▶ Higher risk of domestic violence, abuse
- ▶ Higher risk of poor mental health or mental illness

...and this is just our students...

But teachers are not counsellors...

- ▶ Support for our students' social emotional wellbeing is more important than ever
- ▶ This is everyone's responsibility (APST 4.4)
- ▶ Whether our students are back in the classroom, still learning from a distance or back in a time of uncertainty, we can still make our classrooms a safe space
- ▶ Our job is not to provide guidance, or even necessarily solutions but we can support our students

Some practical ideas

- Check in with your students individually
- Show an interest in them
- Keep your routine as consistent as possible
- Keep your expectations
- Be prepared to be flexible
- Be you. Be authentic. Share as much as you are willing to share.

How to survive and thrive in 2020

- Take care of yourself
- Find a support
- Find a way to switch off at the end of the school day
- Continue to do things that you enjoy (even in a different format!)
- Acknowledge your achievements, however small
- Be kind



Questions?

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