An Examination of How Different Components of a Teacher Education Program Influence Preservice Teachers' Attitudes

Dr Jessica Zanuttini, Dr Cathy Little, A/Prof Ilektra Spandagou, & Prof David Evans

Presenters
Dr Jessica Zanuttini
Professor David Evans

THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

We acknowledge that we are meeting on the traditional Country of the Kaurna people of the Adelaide Plains and pay our respect to the Elders, past, present, and emerging.

Funded by the 2019 Australian Association of Special Education's Research Award
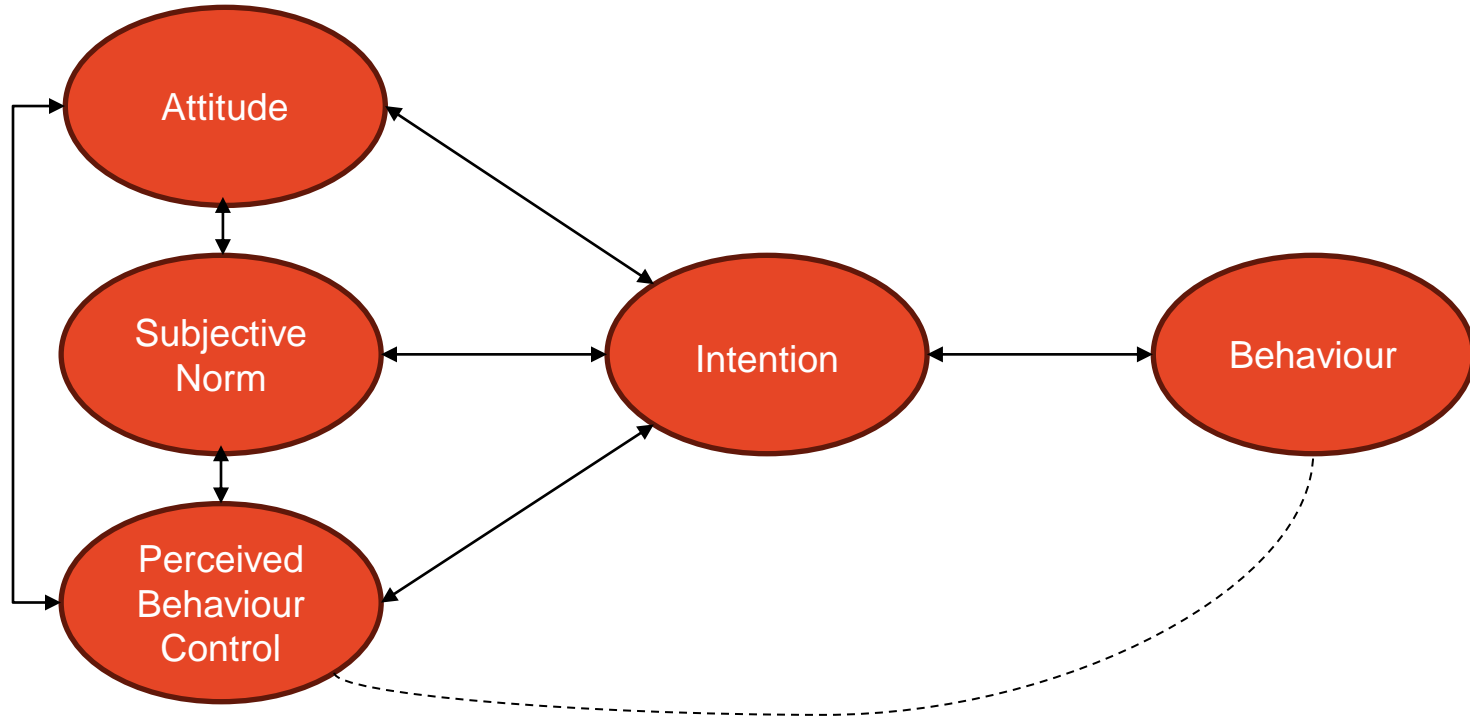
Objectives

- Develop an understanding of the challenges that preservice teachers face in addressing the needs of students with disabilities in the regular classroom

- Frame further discussion about approaches that equip preservice teachers to understand and implement inclusive practice

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the development of preservice teachers during their initial teacher education program using the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), by examining how their attitudes, knowledge, and skills evolved and influences intentions to be inclusive.

Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991)

Methods

Evolution of attitudes, knowledge, and skills

Influences on attitudes, knowledge, and skills (e.g., training components, subjective norm)

Relationship between evolution and intentions

Mixed-methods design

Surveys (Qualtrics)

Interviews

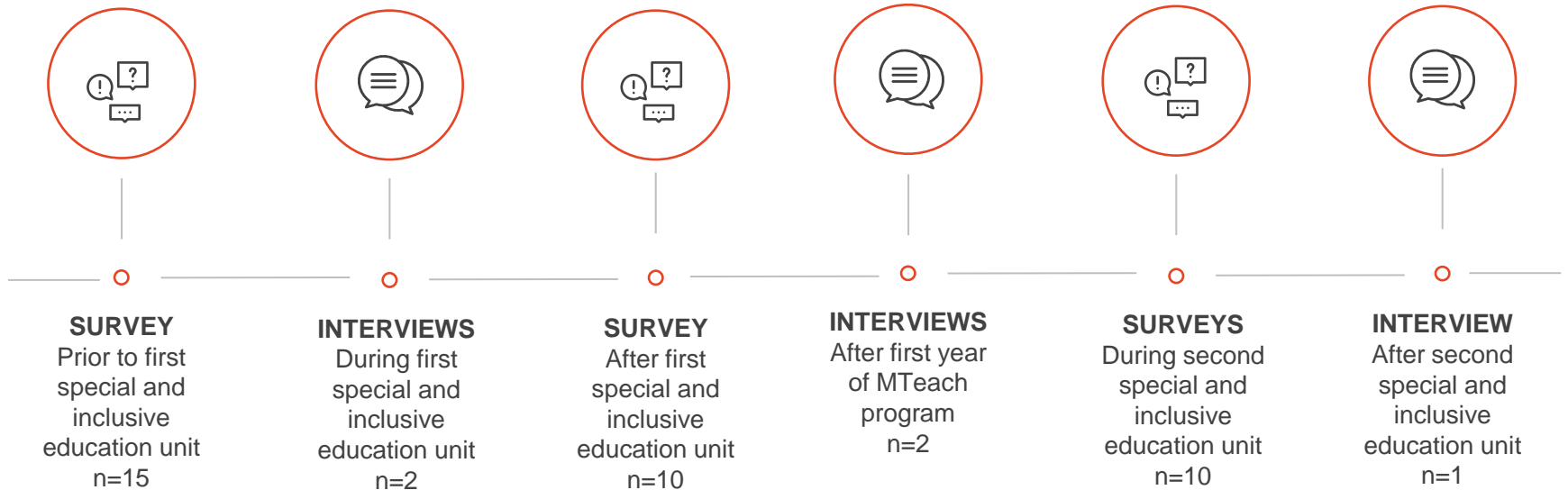Thematic analysis (Knott et al., 2022)

2020–2021 MTeach cohort

Impacted by COVID lockdowns (e.g., observations, participant numbers, final interview)

Two interviewees (Science major and English major)

Structure

SURVEY	INTERVIEWS	SURVEY	INTERVIEWS	SURVEYS	INTERVIEW
Prior to first special and inclusive education unit n=15	During first special and inclusive education unit n=2	After first special and inclusive education unit n=10	After first year of MTeach program n=2	During second special and inclusive education unit n=10	After second special and inclusive education unit n=1

Survey 1 & 2 (Knowledge)

Survey 1

KNOWLEDGE OF LEGISLATION
64% poor
27% average
9% good

KNOWLEDGE OF POLICY
64% poor
27% average
9% good

KNOWLEDGE OF UDL
55% poor or v poor
33% average
9% good

KNOWLEDGE OF PERSONALISED LEARNING
33% poor
55% average
9% good

KNOWLEDGE OF IMPLEMENTING ADJUSTMENTS
60% poor
40% average

Survey 2

KNOWLEDGE OF LEGISLATION
50% poor v poor
50% average

KNOWLEDGE OF POLICY
50% poor
50% average

KNOWLEDGE OF UDL
17% poor
33% average
50% good

KNOWLEDGE OF PERSONALISED LEARNING
33% poor
17% average
50% good

KNOWLEDGE OF IMPLEMENTING ADJUSTMENTS
33% poor
33% average
33% good

Survey 1 & 2 (Attitudes)

100%
It is important for me to include students with disability

100%
It is important for me to make adjustments to ensure all students can access and participate in education on the same basis

100%
It is important for me to comply with legislation and policy as it pertains to students with disability

Survey 2 (Self Efficacy)

40%

I believe that I can easily plan and implement practices that include students with disability

20%

I believe that I can easily provide students with disability with equal access to education

60%

I believe that I can easily ensure the achievement of all students within my classroom

60%

I believe that I can easily support the behaviour of all students in my classroom

Survey 3 (Knowledge)

KNOWLEDGE OF LEGISLATION
50% poor v poor
50% average

KNOWLEDGE OF POLICY
50% poor
50% average

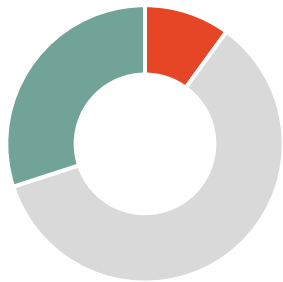**KNOWLEDGE OF UDL**
17% poor
33% average
50% good

KNOWLEDGE OF PERSONALISED LEARNING
33% poor
17% average
50% good

KNOWLEDGE OF IMPLEMENTING ADJUSTMENTS
33% poor
33% average
33% good

KNOWLEDGE OF LEGISLATION
10% poor
60% average
30% good

KNOWLEDGE OF POLICY
60% average
40% good

KNOWLEDGE OF UDL
30% average
70% good or v good

KNOWLEDGE OF PERSONALISED LEARNING
50% average
50% good or v good

KNOWLEDGE OF IMPLEMENTING ADJUSTMENTS
40% average
60% good

The University of Sydney

Survey 3 (Attitudes)

90%

It is important for me to include students with disability

90%

It is important for me to make adjustments to ensure all students can access and participate in education on the same basis

90%

It is important for me to comply with legislation and policy as it pertains to students with disability

Survey 3 (Self Efficacy)

90%

I believe that I can easily plan and implement practices that include students with disability

70%

I believe that I can easily provide students with disability with equal access to education

90%

I believe that I can easily ensure the achievement of all students within my classroom

80%

I believe that I can easily support the behaviour of all students in my classroom

The University of Sydney

Interview Themes

Q1 Attitudes: negative, positive

Q2 Implement practices with ease: what, why

Q3 Difficulty implementing: what, why

Q4 Subjective norm – who: policy & legislation, whole-setting, self

Q5 Subjective norm – how: attitudes, actions

Participant 1

- All attitude content was coded as negative in first and second interview

- Across all interviews, believed they could implement sensory adjustments with ease

- Across all interviews, noted the persistent difficulties of being responsive and flexible

- In first interview, identified policy, principals, and parents as influences but in interview 2 and 3 identified school policies and themselves

Participant 2

- All attitude content was coded as positive in first and second interview

- In first interview, believed they could simplify written and spoken language but in interview 2 believed they could use UDL, collaboration, consultation, and professional learning

- In first interview, identified legislation, policy, and families as influences but in interview 2 added their peers, colleagues, community members, their students, and themselves

- Believed that others expected them to be professional, flexible, responsive, and committed to professional learning

Conclusions

- Impact of COVID

- Students value the content of special and inclusive education units.

- After each special and inclusive education unit, students' knowledge in the discipline improved.

- After fieldwork, students demonstrated a greater sense of self efficacy and reported having a more realistic view of general education settings.

- Persistent challenges for students included dealing with challenging behaviour and mental health conditions (Strong Beginnings, 2023).

Insert team/discipline area
Name Surname Title
+61 2 1234 5678

sydney.edu.au/xxxx