TEACHERS' DISTRESS TOLERANCE EXPERIENCES ASSOCIATED WITH TEACHING DILEMMAS: A HERMENEUTIC PHENOMENOLOGICAL EXPLORATION

A Thesis submitted by

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ABSTRACT

School teaching today occurs within extraordinarily complex contexts with increasing pressures influencing teaching practice. The present research explores experienced teachers' lived experiences of distress tolerance associated with their teaching dilemmas. Teaching dilemmas are inherent within teaching contexts. They represent situations where the teacher is faced with two or more competing values or commitments and actions are required in the knowledge that there is no "right" solution and that the consequences will disadvantage some involved. These dilemmas are associated with psychological discomfort for teachers and have negative associations with teachers' wellbeing. The extant literature lacks sufficient research into experiential knowledge relevant to coping with this discomfort in teaching practice. The present research involved two studies with the first involving individual interviewing of experienced teachers. Two phases of interviews provided opportunities for participants to present additional experiences of distress tolerance and to check my interpretations of their data. The second study utilized synectics protocols to elicit teachers' conceptual metaphors within a focus group context. The hermeneutic phenomenological methodology of Max van Manen provided a suitable framework for this exploratory research. Data was interpreted through the existential lenses of corporeality, spatiality, relationality, and temporality. Themes were identified that represented commonalities within the data. Findings indicated that distress tolerance provided an embodied means of sustaining teaching practice.
The present research suggested that the concept of distress overtolerance may provide a useful explanatory concept for the discomfort articulated by the experienced teacher participants. Future research may explore possible relationships between the embodiment of teachers' coping and their implicit knowledge, given that coping within complex contexts such as teachers' dilemmatic spaces can involve the use of implicit strategies. Conceptual metaphors may provide a research method of value in exploring these hypothesized connections. Exploration and development of this understanding may have ramifications for wellbeing practices, not only within teaching, but also other contexts of high complexity.

CERTIFICATION OF THESIS

I, Lorette Hargreaves declare that the Doctor of Education Thesis entitled Teachers' distress tolerance experiences associated with teaching dilemmas is not more than 100 000 words in length including quotes and exclusive tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references, and footnotes. The thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree of diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Wellbeing is of concern across professions. Teacher wellbeing presents uniquely and is of global research interest. There is a well-documented link between teacher and student wellbeing, with each argued to influence the wellbeing of the other (Cross & Falconer, 2021). Teacher wellbeing also has associations with numerous other issues affecting teaching practice such as poor teacher retention or teachers leaving the profession (Brill & McCartney, 2008; Dick & Wagner, 2001). Teacher wellbeing is especially pertinent at present with teacher retention presenting a challenge within the global teacher shortage (Viac & Fraser, 2020). Many teachers currently leaving the profession with associated wellbeing issues has contributed significantly towards this current shortage (See, Morris, Gorard, & El Soufi, 2020). Cross and Falconer (2021) presented aspects of teachers' work that have contributed towards high rates of attrition such as the stress and associated wellbeing impacts teachers experience within their everyday practice.

(Bellingrath, Weigl, & Kudielka, 2020; Bottiani, Duran, Pas, & Bradshaw, 2019; Capone & Petrillo, 2020); Carroll et al. (2022); (Gilbert, 2006); Heffernan, Bright, Kim, Longmuir, and Magyar (2022, p. 202); (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2020a; Papastylianou, Kaila, & Polychronopoulos, 2009; Riley, 2019; Schonfeld & Bianchi, 2016; Stapleton, Garby, & Sabot, 2020; Tak & Rosmalen, 2010; Toker & Biron, 2012; Viac & Fraser, 2020)As a schoolteacher of nearly thirty years, my own wellbeing has been significantly impacted by my work over this time. My own personal experience, together with limited teacher wellbeing initiatives being made available to me through my work, led me to exploring this field in the hope of developing knowledge to contribute within this field of burgeoning professional interest. Limits within the literature were evident.

Rather than focussing upon the sources of illbeing and its effects, what is needed is development of the literature on enhancement of wellbeing (McCallum, Price, Graham, & Morrison, 2021). With practicing teachers often sceptical about educational research (Hennessy & Lynch, 2019), knowledge that could resonate with teachers and break through the theory-practice divide was sought.

1.1 The Problem

In my quest for further knowledge to enhance my own and potentially other teachers' wellbeing, I was confronted with limited, relevant information that drew upon the real life or lived experiences of teachers working within the messiness or "swamp" of real-life practice where issues are messy, complex, and not necessarily solved through technical analysis (Schon, 1992). Many issues within the swamp require learning from experience to address them (Schon, 1992). Within my own teaching practice, significant learning has come from my own practical experiences within the complexities of practice. Within the relevant literature, experiential knowledge that considered the complexities of context in relation to teachers' wellbeing was extremely limited to non-existent. Teachers' wellbeing research appeared to give limited attention to teachers' lived experiences with due cognizance of the complexities of teaching contexts today. The complexities of teaching today require consideration within research for it to have relevance and meaning for teachers and to contribute towards lessening the bridge between theory and practice.

Teachers' work occurs within complex and rapidly changing contexts (Kannen & Acker, 2008). Societal changes such as globalisation, technological advancements, and economic volatility influence the contexts in which teachers work. Schools can be thought of as reflections of society, are influenced by social issues, and are required to adapt to them. Within this rapidly changing landscape, there has been considerable international restructuring of educational systems in the attempt to improve teaching quality (Grimmett, Flemming, & Trotter, 2009). New ideologies, curricula, strategies, political, community pressures, and increasing administration requirements require teachers and teaching to change and regularly adapt to sustain "the bread and butter" of everyday teaching. For example, recent marketisation of teaching where schools are expected to provide the highest quality teaching at the lowest cost within a competitive education market, requires schools to appear both attractive and successful in order to secure and maintain customers (students) (Fransson & Grannas, 2013).

Within this environment of market thinking and accompanying standardized teaching practice, teachers' accountability is pressured where they are required to demonstrate technical rationalist standards deemed to facilitate quality teaching at a low cost (Biesta, 2004). Accompanying this culture of accountability is decentralisation of decision making within many education systems. Principals have

now assumed more responsibility for decision making, taking some decisions away from centralised governing bodies. Standardised testing regimes such as Australia's National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) represent additional influences upon teaching practice within Australia. Teachers may experience pressures to teach to the test at the expense of other outcomes and some students experience these testing regimes as stressful. Teachers can also experience additional pressures from parents and the community to ensure students achieve well within these tests. With published results, this can place additional pressures upon schools.

Further influences include the incorporation of technologies within education to respond to the digitisation of society. This has occurred within the context of globalisation where digital communications have contributed towards connecting the world. These influences accompany the widespread use of social media amongst young people and its associated and influential pressures upon them. Such issues, amongst a myriad of others have contributed toward the understanding that teaching occurs within rapidly changing contexts of complexity (Biesta, 2004; Fransson & Grannas, 2013).

These varied pressures and influence upon teachers give rise to dilemmas within practice where teachers are required to make decisions and act in full knowledge that one party may be disadvantaged as a result. Such thoughts and actions are associated with psychological discomfort or distress for teachers (Delaney, 2015). As a teacher, I have been required to deliver a unit of work within a specified time with full knowledge that the low intellectual levels of my students and teaching/learning adjustments required for them meant that more time was required. Rather than act in the best interests of my students, I was required to continue to the next unit with full knowledge that my students needed more time. I valued student interests and could not act in accordance with what I valued and felt conflicted! I was required to tolerate this psychological distress to continue teaching. This teaching dilemma represented only one of countless that I have been required to act upon over my 27-year teaching career. Teaching dilemmas are representative of the complexities of teaching contexts and provide a boundary or focus for investigation of teachers' wellbeing. As such, "we should not underestimate the complexity of this immediate situatedness of teaching as practical action" (van Manen, 1995, p. 3). "The recurring theme in teacher testimonials is that

the life of teaching is hectic" (van Manen, 1995, p. 4). As a practicing teacher of nearly thirty years, I fully concur.

Schon (1992) acknowledged that learning from experiences within the swamp was relevant for the swamp. The knowledge gained from experiential learning within a certain context can be applied to that context. The commonly held notion that experience is our best teacher is relevant here. Tapping into the experiences of other teachers within the swamp may be useful for others negotiating the same terrain. The lived experiences of teachers, interpreted by another could illuminate contextually based knowledge, relevant to wellbeing.

1.2 Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research is to explore and to interpret lived experiences of practicing teachers to obtain their experienced-based knowledge of how they tolerated the distress associated with teaching dilemmas. *Distress tolerance* (DT) presented a concept of interest and relevance within this context, due to its potential to allow those who are tolerant to continue in pursuit of goals despite distress (Kashdan, Disabato, & Goodman, 2020). As a practicing teacher, DT presented with an intuitive appeal, given the challenges associated with working within the swamp of teaching and wanting to teach with quality within it, despite the challenges experienced. Distress tolerance provided a focus of potential relevance to practicing teachers, given the nature of the context of their work.

The present research argues that experienced teachers or those with more than ten years of teaching would have significant experience of teaching dilemmas and potentially provide a rich source of relevant knowledge. To obtain knowledge with potential to resonate with teachers, the meaning of that knowledge was interpreted. To provide focus for the present research, two primary research questions were used. They provided the focus for Study One and were:

1. What are the lived experiences of experienced teachers' distress tolerance associated with teaching dilemmas?
2. What are the meanings of the lived experiences of experienced teachers' distress tolerance associated with teaching dilemmas?

Following Study One, Study Two was undertaken to obtain further data to supplement and to provide additional depth to that elicited in Study One. The second study aimed to provide additional data to assist in answering the second

research question. It was anticipated that further depth of meaning of participants' lived experiences could be facilitated through the collection of additional data obtained through different research methods. Subsidiary questions were developed to provide direction for this. Two subsidiary research questions were:

a) What are experienced teachers' conceptual metaphors for their distress tolerance associated with teaching dilemmas?
b) What are the meanings inherent within these metaphors?

To both obtain and interpret experienced-based knowledge of practicing teachers, suitable methods were required.

1.3 Methods

The philosophies and methods of hermeneutic phenomenology provided a methodology with utility for answering the research questions. Hermeneutic phenomenology can produce findings with the potential to reach and to resonate with others which can encourage reflection and agency (van Manen, 2017b). Van Manen's adaptation of hermeneutic phenomenology provided a relevant means of obtaining the required knowledge due its development having occurred through application in his research within education and its suitability for use within the present research. Methods accessed personal accounts of aspects of the everyday which were considered as valid representations of experience, suitable for social scientific research. It was assumed that participants' contributions were accurate representations of their experiences and thoughts at the time data was obtained. They presented their experiences and themselves as they were. This authenticity in data also aimed to assist in ensuring that findings were accessible and relatable to other teachers as potential consumers of this research's findings. Van Manen's methods served the purposes of the present research and provided broad guidance on how to conduct hermeneutic phenomenological research which could be adapted for my research purposes.

The present research accessed experienced teacher participants to participate within two studies, one of which obtained experiential accounts of distress tolerance through interviewing and another which elicited teachers' metaphors through a focus group. These metaphors helped to further understand the meanings of their distress tolerance experiences. Interviews elicited, real-life experiential accounts and metaphors provided a deeper level of intrinsic participant knowledge of distress

tolerance. All findings were interpreted within the framework of van Manen's methodology as it provided a flexible means of understanding the meanings of participants' experiences. Efforts were made to ensure that my own biases and views were acknowledged and limited at varying stages of the research process. Further reflexive research practices and methods were employed, aiming to adhere to quality standards. Despite efforts made, the present research presented with delimitations and limitations.

Delimitations and Limitations

To focus the scope of this research boundaries were required to ensure depth of knowledge was obtained on specific phenomena and relationships between them. Teacher wellbeing literature encompasses a myriad of phenomena and to contribute towards the literature in a meaningful way that resonated with teachers, depth of knowledge was required within a specific field. In the interests of teaching practice, distress tolerance was a targeted phenomenon for research as relevant literature indicated its potential positive influence upon wellbeing (Linehan, 1993) and contribution towards continued goal-directed behaviours (Kashdan et al., 2020). Teaching dilemmas was targeted as it represents an experience that is common to teachers and the associated *dilemmatic space* in which they occur and is representative of the context in which teaching currently occurs (Fransson & Grannas, 2013). This space represented the complex teaching contexts in which teachers work and constantly deal with the dilemmas of teaching. These phenomena frame the limits of this research.

Further limitations within this framework included the small number of participants (10) who were involved. While this number was acceptable within this in-depth research methodology (van Manen, 2016) it limits the potential for generalizability of results. Generalizability was not the intention of this research though. The participant samples were limited in their heterogeneity with only two males and eight females participating and all but two, teaching within regional New South Wales, Australia. All though, had experiences of the targeted phenomena. Despite these limitations, results presented with potential significance.

1.4 Research Significance

Despite their being a plethora of qualitative articles on teachers' mental health, at the time of writing I found no qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological

explorations of teachers' distress tolerance associated with their teaching dilemmas. There was also a very limited literature base on distress tolerance as a coping strategy for teachers. Distress tolerance as a personal resource presented with potential value for teachers to assist them in coping with the stress associated with practice. With experienced teachers representing a population that is relatively untapped within the literature, they provided a group with significant experiential data. The context of the dilemmatic space within teaching has not been extensively explored and provided a true-to-life contextual frame for this research. This unique combination of targeted phenomenon for exploration and use of hermeneutic phenomenology to explore them had the potential to produce knowledge with potential to resonate with teachers but to also provide evidence on usefulness of methods employed. Using experienced teachers as sources of experiential knowledge may prove to be a fruitful sample group for this and additional teacher research. Eliciting metaphors may also prove effective in eliciting useful knowledge and prove to be a method useful for others within the field.

Potentially, findings may also be of relevance to therapeutic interventions which employ distress tolerance and pragmatically for teachers currently struggling with the conditions within their "swamps" of practice. In view of the uniqueness of methods combined within this research, knowledge produced will be new and present with potential relevance within varied therapeutic and research fields and to targeted teacher consumers of this research. This exploration of teachers' lived experiences of distress tolerance associated with teaching dilemmas provided an interpretation of the meanings of these experiences, aiming to potentially resonate with teacher consumers of these findings and to contribute towards the extant literature.

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

The present research is structured in chapter formats. Chapter One has discussed the problem within a brief background discussion and aimed to demonstrate how the research questions developed from this. Methods employed to answer the research questions were briefly presented. Chapter Two builds upon this to define the targeted phenomena and synthesize the relevant extant literature. This serves to further illuminate where new knowledge is required and where the present research may potentially contribute. The methodology employed to answer the

research questions is discussed within Chapter Three. These chapters provide the foundation for the presentation of the results and discussion for Study One within Chapter Four. Chapter Five then builds upon this, articulating the results and discussion for Study Two. Chapter Six, the final chapter, provides a final discussion, synthesizing the results of both Study One and Study Two. Findings are reflected upon to identify implications, recommendations for future research and final conclusions.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Within their recent international review of teacher wellbeing research, research by McCallum et al. (2021) articulated a need for more research on positive wellbeing interventions for teachers, interventions that promote wellbeing rather than address the consequences for illbeing. McCallum et al. (2021) support previous arguments from researchers such as Dodge, Daly, Huyton, and Sanders (2012) and Fava (2012) in calling for further research into teacher wellbeing interventions. In the interests of contributing further to the therapeutic teacher wellbeing literature, the present research focusses upon specific phenomena within this field. The current state of relevant teacher wellbeing literature will be synthesized to provide a foundation for discussion of the targeted phenomena of distress tolerance and teaching dilemmas and elements implicated within the relationship between them.

Schon (1992) and Delaney (2015) acknowledged the complexities inherent within educational teaching contexts and coined the term "swamp" to articulate the messiness, unpredictability, and convolutions which influence teaching. As a practicing teacher, this raises images of a struggle required to negotiate the muddy terrain and I believe it relates well to the struggles and pressures facing teachers today. To explore teachers' wellbeing strategies to elicit findings with potential relevance to teachers, such research needs to consider not only the individual but also his or her mutual influence on contexts (Johns, 2001). Acknowledgement of the messiness of context aims to resonate with those negotiating the terrain of their own workplace swamps.

This chapter provides a synthesis of contemporary teacher wellbeing literature and then narrows focus on the targeted phenomena. In the process, it aims to explicate the relevance and utility of these phenomena to teaching today. While this present research focusses upon specific concepts, extant literatures from varied fields are examined to offer explanation of why the targeted phenomena were chosen for exploration within this research. This present research can be encompassed within the broad label of wellbeing.

2.1 Wellbeing: General

It is documented that teachers, within the school environment are the most important factors contributing towards student achievement (Centre for Education Statstics and Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, 2014; Howe, Hennessy,

Mercer, Vrikki, & Wheatley, 2019). The wellbeing of teachers influences the quality of teachers' work (Carroll et al., 2021; Fransson & Grannas, 2013) and as such, provides an important focus for education research and practice. In consideration of the complex nature of teaching contexts, teachers' wellbeing warrants research attention. Teacher wellbeing within the literature represents a broad area in which definitions of the concept vary considerably with no single definition agreed upon. This discussion first reviews wellbeing in general and then provides a conceptualisation of teacher wellbeing thought to be most relevant to answering the research questions.

With their being "little clarity and agreement" (Disabato, Goodman, & Kashdan, 2019, p. 3) and the concept itself being "undeniably complex" (Dodge et al., 2012, p. 229), there is though, some agreement amongst researchers that it is a multidimensional construct (Disabato et al., 2019; Dodge et al., 2012; Fava, 2012), encompassing varied and mutually influencing social, emotional, health, behavioural, and contextual elements (Carroll et al., 2021). Two broad traditions have contributed towards this view. These are subjective and eudemonic wellbeing.

Ryff (2014) argued that *subjective wellbeing* (SWB) refers to Socrates' concept of pleasure and happiness of the individual. This hedonic perspective refers to frequent experiences of positive feelings like happiness, joy, or hope. It is a positive evaluation of experiences resulting in positive affect for the individual (McCallum et al., 2021). Aristotle's concept of *eudemonic wellbeing* represented psychological wellbeing (PWB) which focussed upon what is required to live a "good" or meaningful and satisfying life. This approach to wellbeing refers to the meaningfulness or ethics and practice of what represents a way of being where people live their lives in a way that actualizes their potential resulting in the perception of what is a "good life" (Ryff, 2014). This perspective encompasses more than just feeling. These traditional perspectives have evolved over time.

Contemporary wellbeing research builds upon these traditions and focusses upon *objective wellbeing* and *subjective wellbeing* (McCallum et al., 2021). Objective wellbeing refers to dimensions external to the individual such as economic resources, goods or living circumstances (Western & Tomaszewski, 2016) while subjective wellbeing presents as the dimension most relevant to this research.

Subjective and psychological wellbeing represent different things to different people. What may be more relevant is a conceptualisation that takes a more

holistic view and acknowledges the complexity of context and its myriad of influences upon wellbeing. Chen et al. (2020) argued that a suitable definition needs to explicate the dynamic and fluctuating state or nature of wellbeing. Their research supported a holistic, dynamic, and multidimensional conceptualisation, where individuals are responsible for their own wellbeing within the complexities of their contexts. This perspective reflects the practicalities of teacher wellbeing within my own and others' teaching contexts where the focus is upon teachers performing in accordance with technical rationalist standards (Biesta, 2004), rather than their wellbeing in doing so. Within these standards focussed, complex context, practical experiences have indicated that individual teacher wellbeing depends a great deal upon the agency of the individual. While it is acknowledged that workplace health and safety initiatives provide some contextual support, wellbeing requires individual agency (Chen, 2020). In accordance with this view that there is individual responsibility for wellbeing, , a conceptualisation of wellbeing is needed for the present research that focusses upon individual agency that acknowledges the mutual influence of the individual and a complex and highly variable context.

The literature provides varied definitions of wellbeing, relevant to teachers. The definition utilised within the present research represents what is thought to be most relevant to the swamp in which teachers currently practice. The extant literature encompasses varying conceptualisations of the meaning of wellbeing (Disabato et al., 2019; Dodge et al., 2012). Numerous constructs and associated measures have been developed which has resulted in confusion within the literature as indicated within the review of Linton, Dieppe, and Medina (2016) which identified 196 different wellbeing constructs and 99 associated measures. With their being "little clarity and agreement" (Disabato et al., 2019, p. 3) and its conceptualisation being "undeniably complex" (Dodge et al., 2012, p. 229), there is some agreement though amongst researchers that it is a multidimensional construct (Disabato et al., 2019; Dodge et al., 2012; Fava, 2012). Two broad traditions have contributed to the view that wellbeing is multidimensional, encompassing various contributing elements. Chen et al. (2020) argued that these traditions were useful for measuring peoples' perception of wellbeing but did little to explicate the dynamic and fluctuating state of nature of wellbeing. This research acknowledges wellbeing's dynamism and multidimensionality, acknowledging contextual influences and agency of the individual for its development and maintenance. This influence of

context and the individual can be conceptualized within a model of wellbeing that acknowledges challenges within the context and the individual and the individual's role in meeting those challenges to create a balance, which is viewed as a form of wellbeing. Such a model presents with utility for the present research.

2.2 Wellbeing as Resources Challenges Equilibrium

Wellbeing can be considered to represent a "dynamic dance" between an individual's personal resources and the challenges experienced (Dodge et al., 2012). This "dance" requires the individual to utilise or integrate personal resources to adaptively cope with challenges experienced and when this occurs, the result can be a state of wellbeing (Chen et al., 2020; Dodge et al., 2012; Fava, 2012). Dodge et al. (2012) coined the term *resources challenges equilibrium (RCE)* to represent this framework.

Kloep, Hendry, and Saunders (2009) argued that when people experience a challenge, the interconnections between personal resources in relation to challenges becomes imbalanced which is a non-preferred state. It is experienced as discomforting. This imbalance or disequilibrium has been associated with lack of wellbeing (Healey-Ogden & Watson, 2011). Ryff and Singer (2008) suggested that wellbeing as balance represented an empirical reality and can be likened to a dance between individuals' inner selves and their contexts. Fava (2012) built upon this view in stating that the balance conceptualisation acknowledges SWB and PWB research traditions and its associated variables. People can adapt their resources to meet this challenge and return to the preferred state of equilibrium (RCE) (Dodge et al., 2012). To achieve this dynamic state, people are required to reduce or manage their psychological, social, and physical challenges and integrate their psychological, social, and physical resources (Chen et al., 2020). The present research focusses upon this integration of personal resources by teachers. Prior to discussion of personal resources for wellbeing, an understanding of the status of teachers' illbeing is required. This provides a background context to illustrate the need for enhancement of their wellbeing.

2.3 Teachers' Illbeing

Teachers experience increasing rates of mental health issues associated with stress (Viac & Fraser, 2020) when compared to similar social, helping professions (Riley, 2019). High rates of teacher stress have been indicated on a global scale

(Bottiani et al., 2019) and within Australia (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2020a). The level of stress experienced by one Australian teacher respondent was conveyed within the research of Heffernan et al. (2022, p. 202).

> I am an extremely hardworking person, but excessive workload, constant emotional and mental fatigue plus a young family at home have all brought me crashing down this year. […] We are being knocked down one brick at a time and it's taking its toll on me. Being actors all day long, supressing emotions and not having any time to ourselves; as teachers, we are often lost.

Stress is considered as a catalyst for mental health disorders (Stapleton et al., 2020), with chronic or long-term exposure to stress associated with structural changes within the brain (Tak & Rosmalen, 2010) and multi body system indicators of physiological risk (Bellingrath et al., 2020). Such chronic exposure to stress may be associated with unresolvable stress (Gilbert, 2006). The present research suggests that teaching dilemmas may be associated with and/or contribute towards chronic stress experienced by some teachers within their practice. This level of stress is distinguished from *eustress* which can be perceived as a beneficial form of stress such as that associated with excitement or anticipation (Krohne, 1989). Stress within the context of the present research is considered to be that experienced as distressful. Chronic stress is persistent. This level of stress has been related to depression within occupational settings (Gilbert, 2006). A considerable literature base also supports the association between chronic or unsolvable stress and teachers' burnout.

Burnout has been defined as a long-term negative affective state characterized by physical fatigue, cognitive weariness, and emotional exhaustion (Toker & Biron, 2012) where chronic stress is implicit in its development (Gilbert, 2006). Within teachers, this can express itself as depersonalization involving negative feelings and a cynical attitude towards others. Emotional exhaustion is generally associated with physical exhaustion, low energy, and fatigue (Capone & Petrillo, 2020). Carroll et al. (2022) found that within a survey of 746 Australian teachers, respondents' perceived stress was the most significant predictor of occupational burnout. Associations with teacher stress and other mental health issues are evident.

Stapleton et al. (2020) examined stress and symptoms of wellbeing within an Australian teaching sample, finding that 20% of respondents met the clinical criteria

for severe anxiety, 25% for severe somatoform disorder, and 18% for moderate to severe depression. This supported previous research indicating high psychological distress in teachers (Papastylianou et al., 2009; Schonfeld & Bianchi, 2016). Carroll et al. (2022) argued that the pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic have heightened the stress and associated mental health issues of teachers world-wide. Teachers not only experience the stressors of everyday practice but also have been required to develop new ways of teaching and have needed to engage with and administer infection protective behaviours for their students and themselves.

Given that stress and the associated wellbeing impacts have contributed towards high rates of teacher attrition and the associated teacher shortage, enhancement of teachers' abilities to cope with work stress is of value. "Teachers need a set of personal psychological resources to cope with the grave emotional demands placed on them by the school context" (Capone & Petrillo, 2020, p. 1763). This statement illustrates the challenges posed by teachers' contexts and the need for teachers' actions within them to cope, supporting the conceptualisation of this in terms of the resources, equilibrium model (Dodge, et al., 2012). Given that there is a strong association with maladaptive coping and negative psychological outcomes such as depression and anxiety (Stapleton et al., 2020), there is a need for teachers to develop their adaptive skills. . These skills aim to contribute towards the wellbeing of teachers, reducing rates of attrition due to illbeing. The development of personal adaptive coping skills is suggested, supporting the evidence-based concept that variation in teacher reported stress was accounted for by individual differences within schools rather than between different schools (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2020a).

2.4 Teacher Wellbeing

With teacher wellbeing argued to involve an integration of personal resources in response to contextual challenges, the extant literature provides some relevant evidence, such as it being a positive emotional state resulting from harmony between environmental influences and the needs and expectations of teachers (Aelterman, Engels, van Petegem, & Verhaeghe, 2007). An alternate definition provided by McCallum and Price (2016) views teacher wellbeing as underpinned by positive notions and being fluid or flexible in relation to individuals and their contexts. In view of the limited definitions of teacher wellbeing within the literature

that acknowledges the complexities of teaching contexts (McCallum et al., 2021), an amalgam of those provided by Aelterman et al. (2007) and McCallum and Price (2016), , , framed within the RCE model of (Dodge et al., 2012) provides a conceptualisation with relevance to both practising teachers and the extant literature, acknowledging the interconnectedness of context and peoples' personal resources or skills used in coping with the challenges presented The recent systematic review of Hascher and Waber (2021) acknowledged the myriad of variables impacting wellbeing and concluded with a call for researchers to explicitly acknowledge their conceptualization of teacher wellbeing. The present research has done so in utilising the RCE model.

This discussion identifies teacher wellbeing as a fluid and positive emotional state of balance or equilibrium that occurs when psychological, social, and emotional resources that are sufficient for dealing with challenges experienced within teaching. It is an experience of positivity and balance that fluctuates, dependent upon teachers' personal resources and the contexts in which they work. This concept makes no reference to negativity but instead focusses upon the positive balance state experienced where teachers' challenges are dealt with by teachers' personal resources This resources challenges equilibrium conceptualization of wellbeing provides a framework for the targeted phenomena explored within the present research. Distress tolerance which will be later discussed, represents a personal resource and teaching dilemmas provide challenges. It is posited that distress tolerance may act as a resource to facilitate a return to equilibrium in response to the challenge of a teaching dilemma.

2.5 Teaching Dilemmas

Conceptualizations of teaching dilemmas vary within the literature. Teaching dilemmas within the practice of school teaching were first investigated and defined in the 1970s. Berlak and Berlak (1975) utilised early social behaviourism theory to identify conflicting ideas in teachers' minds about such issues as views about learning, values, social justice, and childhood development. These conflicting thoughts were associated with negative, discomforting influences upon teachers (Berlak & Berlak, 1975). These conflicting ideas were not internally consistent, nor did they relate to patterns of behaviour. Berlack and Berlack (1975) wanted to understand the relationship between these inconsistent thoughts and behaviour and

found that teachers verbalised situations within their classrooms where situations required them to behave in ways which were inconsistent with their beliefs or values, which gave rise to psychological discomfort in the form of cognitive dissonance. It was suggested that "in the mind of the teacher are conflicting tendencies to act - - differing (sic) and sometimes mutually contradictory ideas about how an act is to be completed" (Berlak & Berlak, 1975, p. 19). These competing tendencies arise from a conflict between the *me* (teachers' thoughts), the *generalized other* (thoughts/expectations from other influences such as training or policies), and the demands of the teaching situation. This early conceptualization acknowledges both the individual and the context of practice, applicable to the needs of the present research.

Berlak and Berlak's conflicting teaching situations were labelled as dilemmas and 14 were identified such as extrinsic vs intrinsic motivation of students and holistic vs molecular ways of learning. Referring to the first example; certain ways of motivating students may be externally recommended but the teacher maybe required to act in a way which is contrary to these recommendations to serve the best interest of students. Action contradicts knowledge and a dilemma is created within the teacher's mind as a result.

Teaching dilemmas require a choice between competing values, options, commitments, obligations, loyalties, or positions (Honig, 1994) in the undertaking of teaching behaviours. These are competing in that they represent opposing or mutually exclusive perspectives (Berlak & Berlak, 1975; S. Khan, 2018; Lampert, 1985b) of what is "right" or in the best needs of students. Teachers may act contrarily to what is considered by the self or others to be right to address unique situations within the classroom or school. In this process the needs of some may be sacrificed at the expense of others, for example, a teacher may have to sacrifice helping one student in need to address the inappropriate behaviour of another. The teacher is responsible for this decision making, related action, and the consequences of actions taken (Husu, 2003; Lampert, 1985a). Many believe that dilemmas generally result in unsatisfactory compromises (S. Khan, 2018) while others believe that they can be satisfactorily resolved (Chee, Mehrotra, & Ong, 2015; S. Khan, 2018; Lampert, 1985a).

Helsing (2007) argued that dilemmas represent situations where the teacher is faced with two or more competing values or commitments and relevant action is

required. Teachers are required to make a choice, knowing that consequences may disadvantage some involved, including themselves. In such situations there is not strictly a correct or "right" solution due to competing interests. . Scager, Akkerman, Pilot, and Wubgels (2017) suggested that teaching dilemmas are conflicts with equally viable alternatives that cannot be fully resolved without some form of loss. Teachers are required to live with the resulting loss and psychological discomfort of having to make the action choice, often cognizant of the disadvantage that will result. Husu (2003) claimed that such dilemmas were practical questions with an inherent uncertainty due to conflicts between the teacher's values and what is required of the situation. The contextual influences on the teacher make predicting the outcomes of these decisions difficult. Teaching dilemmas are globally experienced (Tillema & Kremer-Hayon, 2005) and are "part and parcel of everyday practice" (Tillema & Kremer-Hayon, 2005, p. 215). As such, the present research views teaching dilemmas as elements of the teaching context which contribute towards the complexities of current teaching practice.

Further research supports the prevalence of dilemmas within teaching. Lampert (1985a) suggested that dilemmas represent common situations where the teacher is required to deliberate over alternative solutions to situations that are influenced by competing goals of the teacher. As an example, the teacher may aim to teach specific content within a lesson, but a student's social problem may require intervention which will take time away from teaching that content. Here there is a conflict between the teacher's goals of teaching content and caring for students. The teacher must act with regards to such a situation, knowing that one goal will be disadvantaged. Lampert (1985) considered these situations to represent arguments with oneself where no aspect of the self will "win" and that some form of action is required to address the associated psychological discomfort by restoring perceived balance within cognitions. Lampert argued that teaching dilemmas are inherent within practice with many unable to be resolved, resulting in a sustained psychological discomfort (Lampert, 1985). Delaney (2015) supported this notion that dilemmas with the associated psychological discomfort (challenge) are inherent within teaching and are a certainty within practice. In view of this identified certainty of teaching dilemmas within teaching, this notion was further supported by the positioning of teaching dilemmas within the *dilemmatic space* (Fransson & Grannas, 2013; Honig, 1994).

2.6 Dilemmatic Space

This concept was originally developed by (Honig, 1994) who suggested that the theoretical frame of the dilemmatic space encompasses the complexities of workspaces where workers do not face isolated dilemmas but experience them on an ongoing basis, consistently dealing with the tensions involved. Honig (1994) suggested that dilemmas are not isolated or rarely occurring events bur rather ever-present aspects of work experiences across varied settings. This framework argues that dilemmas and associated tensions or discomfort are inherent within some workplaces, rather than isolated events. The later research of Fransson and Grannas (2013) argued that teachers operate in *dilemmatic spaces* or contexts in which teaching dilemmas regularly occur.

The dilemmatic space concept that has only recently been adopted within international education research. Previously, Hogget (2006) identified dilemmatic spaces within the public service and within social work (Hoggett, Mayo, & Miller, 2006). It has also been used as a theoretical frame for investigation of research students' supervisors' practices (Vereijken, van der Rijst, van Driel, & Dekker, 2018) and exploration of primary health care workers' risk of burnout (Fremman, Baum, Labonte, Javanparast, & Lawless, 2018). Within teaching, Rydberg, Olander, and Sjostrom (2017) utilised the dilemmatic space framework within an investigation of teachers' use of reflexive and interdisciplinary teaching in Sweden. This framework was also effectively applied in a narrative inquiry into Chinese teachers' thinking and actions in dilemmatic spaces (Chen, Wei, & Jiang, 2016). In Germany, Wegner, Anders, and Nuckles (2014) utilised the dilemmatic space concept and suggested that views of knowledge influence perceptions of dilemmas within these spaces. Epistemological influence on the conceptualisation of dilemmatic spaces was also evident within the well-cited research ofFransson and Grannas (2013) on teachers' work.

Fransson and Grannas (2013) argued that the dilemmatic space framework facilitates a deepening of understanding of the complexities of teaching as it takes into consideration the myriad of influences upon teaching practice. They argued that existential elements that consider the social relations within the space and experiences of the space itself require consideration in understanding the framework. The space in which dilemmas occur, generally involve experiences with others and within the space itself. These existential elements can facilitate a deeper

understanding of how dilemmas develop within the complex contexts of teachers' work.

Teachers interact with, are influenced by and in turn; influence their dilemmatic spaces through their own actions. Teachers' lived experiences in relating with others and their spaces are mutually influential and this discussion suggests that teachers' experiences with time and their own bodies may add to our understanding of their actions within the dilemmatic space. Heidegger (1953) suggested that understanding of others requires consideration of their experiences of time and their bodies within their interactions within their lives. This existential understanding of the worlds in which people live or in this case, dilemmatic space in which teachers work is supported by others within the philosophical school of thought of hermeneutic phenomenology (Gulmond-Plourde, 2009b; van Manen, 2014, 2016). Delaney (2015) built upon the dilemmatic space concept, offering more of a focus upon the relationship between dilemmas and cognitive dissonance. She provided a focus upon the bodily experience of cognitive dissonance within this space and offered the label of *borderlands of practice* to explicate the connection between teaching dilemmas and cognitive dissonance.

Borderlands of practice represent teaching situations where the teacher's notion of what constitutes best practice conflicts with theoretical and professional knowledge which can cause *psychological disequilibrium* which requires activation of personal resources to return to the equilibrium state (Delaney, 2015). These borderlands represent specific or more targeted elements of the dilemmatic space where competing approaches, research or constructs compete with teachers' notions of best practice within their teaching contexts. This psychological disequilibrium associated with dilemmatic decision making and relevant equilibrium restoring agency is understood through the theoretical lens of cognitive dissonance (Delaney, 2015; Ghasemi, 2018; Jarcho, Berkman, & Lieberman, 2011; Mulholland, McKinlay, & Sproule, 2016; Wall, 2018) and its associated strategies for reduction of this dissonance.

2.7 Cognitive Dissonance

Cognitive dissonance theory was originally developed by Festinger (1957) , arguing that people strive towards consistency within themselves. Festinger (1957, p. 1) proposed that "individuals' opinions and attitudes tend to exist in clusters that

are internally consistent" and that "there is the same kind of consistency between what a person knows or believes and what he does." It was posited that people strive for this consistency or *consonance* between cognitions or "the things a person knows about himself, about his behaviour, and about his surroundings" (Festinger, 1957, p. 9). Personal cognitions are formed within interactions with our physical, psychological, and social realities. Festinger (1957) considered that our experiential realities influence or pressure our cognitions to correspond to facilitate a preferred state of consonance. Festinger highlighted what can occur when peoples' cognitions "lose touch" with their realities as presented within those with certain psychological or psychiatric conditions. Their thoughts, beliefs, actions, and emotions may not correspond with what is occurring around them. The preferred state of consonance, consistency or equilibrium between inner selves and realities may not be occurring for these people. On the other hand, when cognitions are consistent within and in relation to our realities, the preferred state of equilibrium or balance may occur, that is; wellbeing as argued by the resources challenges equilibrium model (Dodge et al., 2012; Healey-Ogden & Austin, 2011; Ryff, 2014). This balance between cognitions and corresponding absence of discomfort contributes to our perceived wellbeing (Dodge et al., 2012).

Festinger (1957, p. 2) stated that such "consistency is the usual thing, perhaps overwhelmingly so." This need for consistency was thought to be a preferred motivational state (Festinger, 1957). Like hunger and thirst, individuals feel satiated or comfort when cognitive consonance is achieved. For this satisfying state of consonance to be achieved certain conditions must be met.

Festinger (1957) proposed a logical relationship between relevant cognitions within our realities and suggested that when *y* cognition follows from *x*, these cognitions are *consonant*. An example might be that in the morning when people logically expect the sun come up (*x)* and then observe it occurring (*y).* Thoughts in this case reflect realities and may therefore be consonant and at some level, felt as experienced as satiating rather than discomforting. When *y* does not follow *x,* the need for consonance is not met and is experienced as discomforting (Festinger, 1957).

Within peoples' realities when there is inconsistency between two or more relevant cognitions this can result in a state of psychological discomfort that people aim to resolve through their own thoughts or actions (Festinger, 1957). This

psychological discomfort is generally experienced as some form of negative affect, tension, and heightened physiological arousal and motivates people to reduce the dissonance to achieve consonance to eliminate the tension and associated negative affect (Harmon-Jones, Amodio, & Harmon-Jones, 2009). Cognitive dissonance theory "elegantly describes a phenomenon that people regularly experience" (McGrath, 2017, p. 1), such as a conflict between one's desire to smoke and one's awareness of the negative effects on health.

Within experimental studies, researchers have identified situations in which dissonance can occur. Research is commonly undertaken within common paradigms or views of what constitutes cognitive dissonance which influence how cognitive dissonance is understood. Harmon-Jones and Mills (2019) identified major paradigms pervading the extant literature. They included the *free choice paradigm* (Chen & Risen, 2010), where people make a decision on their own accord and dissonance is likely to be aroused following the making of the decision. After the decision is made, the positive aspects of the rejected alternative and negative aspects of the chosen alternative can be dissonant with the decision. Also, negative aspects of the rejected alternative and positive aspects of the chosen alternative can be consonant with the decision made. A teaching dilemma example within this free choice paradigm may involve the teacher deciding to spend more teaching time with struggling students rather than those that are very capable and could benefit from extension. A positive aspect of the rejected alternative may be the belief that extension work with the capable students may facilitate higher marks and negative aspects of the chosen alternative may include a feeling of resentment that the students' previous teachers may not have satisfactorily taught the concepts being learned.

Within the *belief-disconfirmation paradigm* (Gawronski & Brannon, 2019), exposure to information that is inconsistent with beliefs can result in dissonance. An example teaching dilemma may involve a new policy or directive which teachers feel may not be in the best interests of their students within their contexts. The *effort justification paradigm* (Harmon-Jones & Mills, 2019) involves people undertaking an un-preferred activity to obtain a desired result. A dilemma example may involve teachers being required to discipline a student who is known to be struggling with some significant family issues and at the same time, being aware that the student is suffering but the discipline is required for classroom management. The *induced*

compliance paradigm (Harmon-Jones et al., 2009*)* occurs when people say or do something that is contrary to their attitudes or beliefs. Within teaching dilemmas this paradigm could be illustrated by situations where teachers are required to teach content which is not relevant to students' needs. Varied teaching dilemmas can exemplify these paradigms, supporting their associations with cognitive dissonance (Delaney, 2015; Helsing, 2007; Husu, 2003; Scager et al., 2017). Despite this association, not all teachers experience dissonance similarly due to individual and contextual differences (Cancino-Montecinos, Bjorklund, & Lindholm, 2018; Martinie, Milland, & Olive, 2013b).

The experience of dissonance varies in magnitude or degrees of intensity with recent research suggesting this is due to such factors as self-esteem with varying degrees determining different dissonance responses (Harmon-Jones et al., 2009). Gibbons, Eggleston, and Benthin (1997) indicated that individuals with high self-esteem would engage in greater cognitive effort to reduce dissonance following a dissonance-related decision. People with a high preference for consistency were found to experience greater negative affect when their dissonant cognitions were made accessible to them (Newby-Clark, McGregor, & Zanna, 2002). King and Hicks (2007) found individual differences in the capacity to tolerate inconsistent thoughts about lost goals. An important and under-researched aspect of the dissonance experience is the individual variation in the intensity of psychological discomfort experienced (Harmon-Jones & Mills, 2019).

The period since Festinger's original theory has seen considerable research refining or challenging his original conceptualisation. The motivational nature of dissonance has been previously questioned with current findings indicating that dissonance is indeed motivational with activation of the sympathetic nervous system (Harmon-Jones, Brehen, Greenberg, Simon, & Nelson, 1996) and associations with increased negative affect (Elliot & Devine, 1994). Aronson (1999) posited that dissonance occurs when people act in ways that are inconsistent with their self-concepts. The self-affirmation theory of Steele (1988) argued that people are motivated to maintain an overall image of themselves being morally and adaptively adequate and that dissonance occurs when that overall positive self-image is threatened. Alternatively, Cooper and Fazio (1984) proposed that dissonance is due to people feeling personally responsible for producing aversive consequences.

Festinger's original theory and many adaptations of it make limited reference to the characteristics of psychological discomfort associated with cognitive dissonance with the focus instead on how to reduce cognitive dissonance through psychological work. The present research will be presented with an acknowledgement that the resolution or management of the psychological discomfort generally occurs through human agency. This can be broadly encapsulated within the RCE wellbeing model of Dodge et al. (2012) where the individual's personal resources are employed in response to perceived challenges, aiming to return to a state of equilibrium. Within the extant literature, questions are raised regarding the nature of the associations between psychological and physiological discomfort, and the specific psychological work or action required for its management or resolution.

2.7.1 Physiological discomfort.

Croyle and Cooper (1983) found that physiological markers of stress are activated within the psychological discomfort of cognitive dissonance. Other evidence based physiological reactions to dissonance situations include the startle eye-blink response (Hajcak & Foti, 2008) and an increase in skin conductance (Harmon-Jones et al., 1996). Within neurobiological studies, Harmon-Jones et al. (2009) implicated the anterior cingulate cortex of the brain as being involved in the generation of the psychological discomfort and region of the prefrontal cortex as being involved in the reduction of the dissonance state. The involvement of two different areas of the brain in both dissonance arousal and reduction, suggests underlying variation in the processes of arousal and reduction and the involvement of the body within the processes described.

Given that neurobiological investigations have suggested differences in the cognitive processes involved in firstly arousal (psychological discomfort) and secondly, its reduction, this raises the question as to what other factors are involved. The seminal work of Elliot and Devine (1994) identified that the arousal facilitated by the cognitive inconstancy may be an undifferentiated physiological arousal that is then labelled or appraised as either positive or negative by the individual. This conclusion was also replicated by (Martinie, Joule, Milland, Olive, & Capa, 2013a) where negative affect did not appear immediately after participants' writing of counter-attitudinal essays but later during the experiment. Gross (2014) and Cancino-Montecinos et al. (2018) provided emotional regulation theoretical models

that expanded upon Elliot and Devine's (1994) suggestion that cognitive appraisals may mediate between psychological discomfort and its resolution.

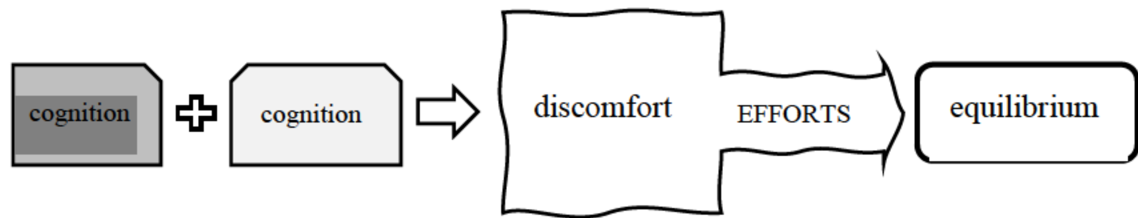
2.7.2 Cognitive appraisals and emotions.

Within the induced compliance paradigm framework of cognitive dissonance, Elliot and Devine (1994) found a dynamic relationship where individuals experience the generalised state of arousal, cognitively appraise it, and then give it an emotional label. This process is articulated within the *process model of emotion regulation* (Gross, 2014). Gross (2014) suggested that emotions are whole-body phenomena that involve subjective experiences of physiology and behaviour within contexts that compel attention. The bodily involvement within the discomfort experienced within cognitive dissonance is once again, highlighted. The emotions experienced have meaning in relation to current goals in relation to their contexts.

According to Gross' (2014) model, emotions occur when people pay attention to and appraise a situation as relevant to a current goal. The appraisals represent what the situation means in relation to the goal. The response or emotion generated involves changes in action, neurobiological, and behavioural systems. This emotional response can in turn, feedback and influence the situation that facilitated the emotion (Gross, 2014). Within this model the term emotion is subsumed under the umbrella term of *affect.* The terms, negative affect and psychological discomfort are frequently used interchangeably within the cognitive dissonance literature. The term, psychological discomfort will be used within the present research to indicate the generally negatively perceived arousal state associated with cognitive dissonance (Delaney, 2015).

This model of emotion proposes that people experience psychological discomfort when inconsistent cognitions are experienced and aim to reduce their discomfort to regain a sense of equilibrium or balance, contributing towards wellbeing (Cancino-Montecinos et al., 2018), providing further support for the RCE wellbeing model of Dodge et al. (2012) Efforts undertaken to reduce this discomfort and to restore equilibrium are of interest due to their contributions towards wellbeing (Dodge et al., 2012). This hypothetical dynamic is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Relationship of inconsistent cognitions to psychological discomfort and efforts to reduce it to restore equilibrium



Rather than focussing upon cognisance for wellbeing, the literature has focussed primarily upon the reduction of dissonance. The present research based focus on dissonance reduction rather than cognisance is of relevance, given the prevalence of dissonance within the dilemmatic space and potential for distress tolerance as a means of coping (Linehan, 1993).

2.8 Dissonance Reduction

The present research explores *distress tolerance* as a tool used by teachers to reduce the psychological discomfort associated with the dissonance experienced in relation to teaching dilemmas within this space. Prior to explication of the concept of distress tolerance, an explication of its positioning within the dissonance reduction processes is required.

Gawronski and Brannon (2019) provided a framework deemed relevant to practice. Within this, cognitions are "labelled" or categorized by individuals as being true or false for dissonance to occur (Gawronski & Brannon, 2019). To illustrate this, if a teacher believes that research within a policy is true and remembers this policy as he or she acts contrarily to it, an inconsistency between cognitions may be identified. This inconsistency facilitates what is experienced as an arousal state of tension that can be perceived as psychologically negative or discomforting. The magnitude of this feeling is determined by the subjective importance of the cognitions (Festinger, 1957) in relation to the task at hand or goals of the task (Harmon-Jones et al., 2009). If the cognitions are perceived as important and relevant to the immediate context, the psychological discomfort elicited would be higher than if they were perceived as unimportant and not immediately relevant. The level of psychological discomfort experienced in turn influences the actions taken to resolve the inconsistency and associated psychological discomfort (Gawronski & Brannon, 2019). If the psychological discomfort is experienced as

aversive, it can motivate the individual to alleviate it by taking action which targets the psychological discomfort and/or the inconsistent cognitions (Harmon-Jones et al., 2009), aiming to return to a perceived state of equilibrium

Distress tolerance is a personal resource employed to target the psychological discomfort. Research tends to separate targeting psychological discomfort and the inconsistent cognitions but. they can co-exist with mutual influence (Harmon-Jones, 2000) . The present research is interested in the reduction of cognitive dissonance for teachers as a contributing factor towards wellbeing and has identified *distress tolerance* as a personal strategy or resource with potential efficacy in doing so.

2.9 Distress Tolerance

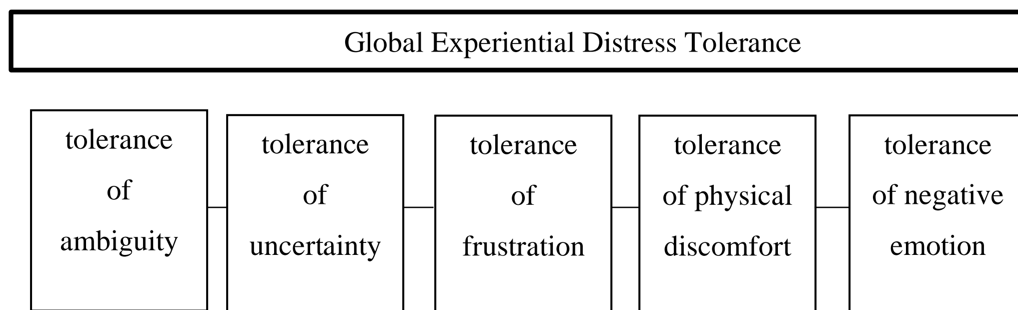
Distress tolerance (DT) is a concept of interest to both scientific and therapeutic research literatures. The term *tolerance* refers to "the capacity to endure pain or hardship (Linehan, 2014, p. 315). This definition explicates an ability or personal resource which enable us to withstand adversity over time. The term "endure" insinuates a temporal aspect to this in that it is sustained over time. D*istress* refers to "pain or suffering affecting the body, a bodily part or, the mind" (Linehan, 2014, p. 365). From the layperson's perspective, distress tolerance could be understood as endurance of bodily suffering. What is of relevance for this research is a conceptualisation of distress tolerance, relevant within the dilemmatic space of teaching.

The extant scientific literature has focussed upon two conceptually different forms of distress tolerance; either the perceived capacity to tolerate aversive emotional states or the behavioural act of tolerating such states (Zvolensky, Vujanovic, Bernstein, & Leyro, 2010). The literature focussed upon perceived capacity tends to focus on distinct conceptualizations or aspects of distress tolerance without recognition of the overlap or interconnectedness of each aspect. It breaks down the concept into tolerance of uncertainty, frustration, ambiguity, physical sensations, and negative emotional states (Leyro, Zvolensky, & Bernstein, 2010), with no overarching connection between them. Research into the behavioural acts of distress tolerance focusses primarily upon laboratory measurement of withstanding exposure to aversive stimuli which infers tolerance to these stimuli. Despite the laboratory focussed research on behavioural acts of distress tolerance, this aspect of

it can pertain to lived experiences (Bernstein, Vujanovic, Leyro, & Zvolensky, 2009). People tolerate distress within their experiences both inside and outside the laboratory. The behavioural acts of distress tolerance are lived within the contexts of life. Much research within this aspect of distress tolerance is devoid of acknowledgement of the complexities of the contexts in which the tolerance occurs and includes considerable variation in conceptualization.

In their efforts to unify the literature, Leyro et al. (2010) argued for a hierarchical, experiential, and global concept of DT, which encompasses the lower-order facets and suggested that the global model of Bernstein et al, (2009) could fulfill that role. This global concept of *experiential distress tolerance* encompasses these related, yet distinct domain specific elements of distress tolerance. These variations in conceptualization of distress tolerance share the link of all relating to tolerance of distress experienced in life–experiential distress. Within this shared construct, all variations are included within the experiential distress tolerance label. This umbrella term incorporates the behavioural acts of withstanding discomforting emotional states and perceived capacity to do so. This global concept's strengths revolve around its ability to encapsulate experiential phenomena, which is of relevance to the present research. It presents with utility in that it can refer to varied actions in response to distress eliciting triggers which in turn, can be applied to teaching dilemmas as potential triggers for distress and tolerance actions taken. It is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Experiential Distress Tolerance



This framework, developed from the latent structural modelling of (Bernstein, Zvolensky, Vujanovic, & Moos, 2009) provides a means of integrating the field as suggested by (Leyro et al., 2010). This framework is integrative and

suitable for practical application, having been tested by (Bardeen et al., 2013) who indicated that the five lower-order constructs were significantly correlated and all belonged to the same higher order domain of DT. The higher order DT construct accounted for interrelations amongst the lower-order dimensions, indicating that they share tolerance of experiential distress. Experiential distress tolerance represents what the name indicates in that it is lived tolerance, experienced within our lives (Zvolensky et al., 2010).

Each element may be mutually affected by varied processes of self-regulation such as cognitive appraisals, attention, emotions, behaviour and physical states with distress responses varying between individuals (Zvolensky et al., 2010). One of the earliest identified constructs is *tolerance of ambiguity* (TOA) (Frenkel-Brunswik, 1948) which refers to a tendency to interpret ambiguous situations as a source of discomfort or threat. Ambiguous situations involve complexity, unpredictability, novelty, and/or uncertainty, and are responded to with a set of emotional, cognitive, and behavioural reactions (McLain, 1993). Teaching dilemmas can be situations of ambiguity and the associated cognitive dissonance may be associated with thoughts and or behaviours that avoid the ambiguous situation. Emotional reactions include expressions of dislike, anger, or uneasiness. This original concept of TOA evolved over the years to produce the concept of *tolerance of uncertainty* (TOU) (Krohne, 1989).

Krohne (1989) argued that ambiguity referred to characteristics of the aversive stimulus and uncertainty referred to the emotional state that is invoked by such stimuli. His work focussed more so on intolerance of uncertainty characterised by peoples' vigilant processing of threatening stimuli and avoidance of the emotional uncertainty state. Those who were more tolerant of uncertainty tended to be less focussed on the discomfort and less avoidant (Krohne, 1989). Both TOA and TOU share some similarities and vary in certain elements.

Both concepts identify intolerance as a tendency to perceive contexts of situations as a threat of source of discomfort (Grenier, Barrette, & Ladouceur, 2005). Both TOA and TOU focus primarily on cognitive interpretation of the context or situation and respond with sets of emotional, cognitive, and behavioural reactions. A person who is intolerant of ambiguity and uncertainty would tend to experience discomfort when confronted with situations perceived as threatening and behaviourally respond by avoiding or rejecting the situation. While these two

concepts share similarities, Grenier et al. (2005) argued that they should be considered to represent distinct phenomena.

Tolerance of ambiguity is argued to represent a present-focussed concept in that people are able to tolerate ambiguous situation in the "here and now." Grenier et al. (2005) suggested that TOU relates more so to the future in that people who are tolerant will consider potential uncertainty as acceptable and not feel the associated discomfort. These conclusion were based upon research on anxiety which features TOU with much more prevalence than TOA (Ladouceur, Gosselin, & Duga, 2000). Teaching dilemmas themselves are situations of uncertainty, illustrating the relevance of this lower order domain.

Additional postulated lower order concepts include *tolerance of physical discomfort* (TOPD), *tolerance of frustration* (TOF)*;* and *tolerance of negative emotion* (TONE). Firstly, TOPD represents a person's capacity to withstand uncomfortable physical/bodily sensations (Schmidt, Richey, & Fitzpatrick, 2006). This relates to bodily sensations that may be uncomfortable but not necessarily painful such as physical tension. The core premise with this concept is that those less tolerant to physical discomfort will be less able to bear such stimuli and be highly motivated to escape or to avoid them. Leyro et al. (2010) acknowledged work in this area that identified perceptions of anxiety attributable to physical cues. Marshall et al. (2008) found that people with higher TOPD were able to persist for longer in a discomforting task. While this sub-domain of DT focusses primarily on tolerance to physical cues, tolerance of frustration (TOF) refers to a withstanding of frustration emanating from reality not matching one's wishes, desires, or demands (Harrington, 2005) and an acceptance of the reality and continued pursuit of one's goals despite the frustration experienced (Harrington, 2011).

Tolerance of frustration, developed within Rational Emotive Therapy (Strickland, 2019) holds that the frustration is not only a result of a mismatch between one's desires and reality but also from holding the belief that reality must match our desires. Frustration presents as discomforting to people, like the aversive somatic sensations experienced within TOPD. Both involving cognitive, emotional, and behavioural actions. Tolerance of negative emotion (TONE) is the final sub-domain within this global model.

Tolerance of negative emotion originated within the work of Simons and Gaher (2005) and refers to the tolerance of specifically, negative emotions resulting

from either physical or cognitive processes and is relevant to the discomfort associated with teaching dilemmas. It was argued that tolerance of negative emotions was a meta-cognitive construct representing expectations and evaluations of ones' negative emotional states in relation to four factors which include tolerability and aversiveness, appraisal and acceptability, attention absorption, disruption to functioning, and regulation of emotions. This dimension of DT indicates that those with low TONE appraise negative distress as unacceptable and perceive their coping abilities to be inferior to others. Great efforts may be exerted to avoid and alleviate these negative emotions. People may be absorbed by the discomforting emotions, disrupting their functioning in the process. Simons and Gaher's (2005) model incorporated a range of cognitive processes and actions within its conceptualisation, particularly referencing individual agency in regulation of the discomfort.

Once again, all sub-elements or domains share some form of tolerance of distress but vary in terms of the context of eliciting stimuli and/or actions involved in tolerance. This global model presents with potential utility given its encapsulation of varied forms of psychological discomfort which may be associated with teaching dilemmas. Within DT research associated with psychological wellbeing (Lenger, Roberson, & Bluth, 2020) and with application to therapeutic intervention such as (Hayes et al, 2006; Linehan, 1993) it presents as a concept with potential utility for teachers' wellbeing. What requires consideration is variation in one's tolerance of distress and in particular, *distress intolerance* which warrants considerable research attention.

Those with low distress tolerance tend to maladaptively respond to distress by an avoidance of the associated discomfort and/or quick responses to alleviate it (Leyro et al., 2010; Linehan, 1993). People in this state tend to experience a form of negative reinforcement by avoiding the distress inducing stimuli or the distress itself. In a low distress tolerance state or state of distress intolerance (DI), people tend to be absorbed by the discomfort, to the point that it can disrupt their goal-directed pursuits (Simons & Gaher, 2005). They tend to act quickly to restore a sense of equilibrium through their avoidant behaviours. Avoidant behaviours may include masking or avoiding aversive emotions and ignoring aggravating events. Distress intolerance has been associated with psychopathologies such as depression (Bruckner, Keough, & Schmidt, 2007), anxiety (Carleton et al., 2012), substance

addictions (Richards, Daughter, Bornovalova, Brown, & Lejuez, 2011), and borderline personality disorder. In view of the association with DI and varying psychopathologies, interventions have been developed to assist people in coping with distress by developing their skills in DT. Therapies such as acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) (Hayes, Luoma, Bond, Masuda, & Lillis, 2006) and Linehan's (1993) treatment for borderline personality disorder are two examples.

Those that are more distress tolerant tend to be more able at continuing functionally in the pursuit of goals, despite the discomfort experienced. They can continue, rather than act to avoid the triggering situation or aversive reaction to it. Simons and Gaher (2005) argued that those who demonstrate DT tend to use more adaptive regulatory strategies in coping with distress, resulting in habituation to the distress inducing stimuli. According to their model, repeated exposure to distress and use of effective coping strategies, results in a diminishing of physiological consequences of the stress exposure. Teachers with distress tolerance may employ varying adaptive strategies which allow them to continue in pursuit of their goals without avoidance of the triggering situations or associated aversive emotions.

Given that distress tolerance is a capability that can be developed through intervention (Hayes et al., 2006; Linehan, 1993), it presents as a potential personal resource for teachers with utility in assisting them to tolerate distress and continue in the pursuit of their teaching goals. Evidence of the therapeutic benefits of DI provide support for its potential utility for teachers and relevance for exploration within the present research.

2.9.1 Therapeutic benefits.

Distress tolerance (DT) may be a personal resource with value in assisting teachers to return to a state of equilibrium following their stress experiences. The present research aims to explore this. The therapeutic literature is founded upon the work of Linehan (1993) where distress tolerance is a skill-based module within her treatment for borderline personality disorder within *dialectical behavioural therapy* (DBT). Linehan developed DBT to assist people with borderline personality disorder to adaptively cope with an emotional crisis rather than to engage in unhealthy avoidance or self-harming behaviours. The DT skills within the module focus upon acute self-care to survive the crisis to allow a return to a relative state of emotional equilibrium where emotional regulation strategies could be employed to

assist with solving the problems being currently experienced. Several skills are incorporated within the distress tolerance module and include recording the pros and cons of acting upon strong emotional urges, distracting oneself from the problem in the short term with a preferred activity, self-soothing by focussing upon our five senses, or improving the moment by such strategies as use of imagery (Linehan, 2014). A "reset" skill includes changing of our body chemistry through such activities as using cold water on the body, paced breathing, or intense exercise. Modern therapeutic treatment also involves a radical acceptance of the present moment rather than attempting to change it (Linehan, Chelsey, & Weks, 2018). People are taught to accept the past, present, and potential future limitations. Within the current module of dialectical behaviour therapy, radical acceptance is taught alongside the other skills previously presented. Certain of the skills aim to assist people to cope with an acute emotional crisis, while others allow the individual to regulate emotions over time. It is noted that the skills within this module require an awareness of body and actions taken by the body. Linehan's (1993) DI is embodied in that the human body is worked upon to facilitate emotional regulation. The distress tolerance module, in accompaniment with others within dialectical behaviour therapy have proved therapeutically efficacious across varied conditions and contexts.

Potter, Vujanovic, Marshall-Berenz, Bernstein, and Bonn-Miller (2011) found that distress tolerance acted as a mediator between *posttraumatic stress* and marijuana use as a coping mechanism. Higher levels of distress tolerance were associated with less posttraumatic stress symptom severity. Distress tolerance as skills-based treatment for substance abuse disorders has been proven as efficacious in reducing substance abuse (Bornovalova, Gratz, Hunt, & Lejuez, 2012). Muhomba, Chugani, Uliaszek, and Kannan (2017) adopted yet another conceptualization of distress tolerance (DT), utilizing that within the dialectical behaviour therapy treatment protocol in their brief therapeutic intervention for college students.

Ameral, Palm Reed, Camerson, and Armonstrong (2014) argued for DT to be a marker of psychological health but recognised the limitations in doing so due to the inconsistencies within the literature. They supported the argument of (Bernstein, Vujanovic, Leyro, & Zvolensky, 2011) to acknowledge the context in which DT is occurring due to the mutually influencing relationship between context and the self.

This view postulates that flexibility in psychologically responding to contextual issues and concerns is characteristic of effective coping (Ameral et al., 2014; Kashdan & Rottenberg, 2010). Flexibility involves the ability to adapt what one is doing in relation to the contextual needs and our own personal resources (Kashdan et al., 2020). Based upon my own teaching experiences, this flexibility and adaptability in action is required in teaching in general to deal with such elements as the unpredictability of students and the myriad of influences impacting upon a classroom. The ability to adapt and be flexible in what one is doing while teaching is a necessity and evidence indicates that this flexibility is relevant in distress tolerance (Bernstein, Trafton, Ilgen, & Zvolensky, 2008).

Researchers who have highlighted the role of context within distress tolerance (DT) have identified that rigidity in application of DT that is insensitive to context can be associated with negative psychological outcomes (Bernstein et al., 2011; Hayes et al., 2006). Ameral et al. (2014) suggested that flexibility in tolerance of distress may be associated with working towards a valued or desired outcome or goal and that ability to recognize the value of this outcome may represent an element of flexible attention to contextual cues. This represents a higher or meta-order concept of distress tolerance in that it considers how distress tolerance is undertaken in response to the context in which it occurs. Kashdan and Rottenberg (2010) argued that those of us with awareness of contextual cues and who respond to them flexibly, that is be able to change our actions in response to contextual cues, are more able to cope effectively. Rather than rigidly adhering to distress tolerance actions without regard to the situation in which one finds oneself, people can demonstrate varying aspects or lower order elements of it to suit their situations. Teachers working within dilemmatic spaces, inherent with complex unpredictability (Delaney, 2015) may benefit from this flexible use of distress tolerance. It presents as a form of functional distress tolerance in that it is in essence, doing what works. This conceptualization presents with utility, given the nature of the complex and ever-changing nature of the dilemmatic spaces of teachers today. Flexibility of DT is encapsulated within the literature on *psychological flexibility.*

2.9.2 Psychological flexibility.

Distress tolerance has also been interpreted as an element of or contributing path towards psychological flexibility (PF) (Gloster, Klotsche, Chaker, Hummel, &

Hoyer, 2011; Zaheer, 2015). As such, an understanding of psychological flexibility appears warranted. Within their scoping review of PF, Cherry, Vander Hoeven, Patterson, and Lumley (2021) identified a myriad of terms, measures, and definitions for this concept, which serves to confound progression within this field. They argued that consensus in definitions that articulate the essential elements of PF are required for continued advancement of the concept. Similar and related concepts have contributed to this heterogeneity within the literature.

Similar, yet distinct constructs have permeated the literature with a number of constructs describing how people adapt thoughts, behaviours, and feelings within their contexts to support their pursuit of what is important to them (Aldao, Sheppes, & Gross, 2015; Doorley, Goodman, Kelso, & Kashdan, 2020; Kashdan & Rottenberg, 2010). Related, concepts include *coping flexibility* (Cheng, 2001), *cognitive flexibility* (Martin & Anderson, 1998), and *explanatory flexibility* (Fresco, Rytwinski, & Craighead, 2007), are each operationalized within distinct literatures with no concerted efforts devoted to exploring similarities and differences between them (Cherry et al., 2021). This has produced further conceptual confusion within the field.

Coping flexibility specifies that people can flexibly discriminate between situations and adjust their thoughts and behaviour in response to their appraisals of them. If people cope flexibly, they experience and perceive variability in perceptual and behavioural patterns across their experiences, utilize coping strategies that fit well with their situations, and perceive a sense of personal effectiveness in achieving their goals (Cherry et al., 2021). This concept also combines both flexibility in choice of coping strategies and appraisals of the situations that coping is required for. Comparisons can be made with the concept of cognitive flexibility.

Cognitive flexibility (CF) represents a willingness to adapt to the situation through making effective communication choices and feeling self-efficacious in one’s ability to do so (Martin & Anderson, 1998). Once again, this concept represents an ability to judge and appraise situations and one’s own ability to respond flexibly to them. The CF concept as articulated by (Fresco et al., 2007) is a cognitive flexibility approach that exemplifies peoples’ flexible manner in which they assign causes to life events, generating multiple perspectives and therefore solutions. These three distinct, yet similar concepts represent cognitive activity involving appraisals or judgements associated with flexibility in thinking in relation

to situations at hand. What is required for this research, is a definition with explanatory power for lived experiences; experiences that are unprocessed, judged, or appraised. Psychological flexibility provides a theoretical frame with relevance to experiential, unprocessed tolerance. Two current conceptualizations of PF feature prominently within the current literature, which are those from Hayes et al., (2006) and Kashdan and Rottenberg (2010).

The construct of psychological flexibility has emerged within the burgeoning interest of 'third wave' psychotherapies such as *acceptance and commitment therapy* (ACT) (Hayes, et al., 2006). It is defined within ACT as the "ability to contact the present moment more fully as a conscious human being, and to change or persist in behaviour when doing so serves valued ends" (Hayes et al., 2006, p. 6). This conceptualization encompasses mindfulness alongside flexible, value-directed behaviour. This varies from other distinct, yet related concepts previously discussed in that it, makes no reference to self-efficacy, and causal explanations but does incorporate variables such as mindfulness and the ability to change and persist in the context of the pursuit of valued goals. Within ACT, it represents a broad, and overarching construct consisting of the six sub processes of cognitive diffusion, acceptance, self-as-context, present moment awareness, committed action, and values clarification (Hayes et al., 2006). These sub-concepts make no reference to judgements or appraisals but do refer to cognitive and behavioural acts. The popularity and efficacy of ACT has seen this conceptualization be used extensively within the literature but recent research has seen this "come under fire" due to the research focus directed toward *psychological inflexibility* and the lack of consideration that psychological flexibility and inflexibility may represent two distinct processes rather than ends of a continuum (Cherry et al., 2021, p. 1).

Psychological inflexibility (PI) refers to a rigidity in choices of psychological strategies within a context and is characterized by an inability to tolerate psychological discomfort (Hayes et al., 2006). This has been linked with a variety of clinical phenomena such as depressive symptoms (Kashdan, Breen, Afram, & Terhar, 2010), social anxiety (Kashdan et al., 2010), sensitivity, stress, and anxiety, (Bardeen, Fergus, & Orcutt, 2013), and post-traumatic stress (Kashdan & Kane, 2011). Some consider PI to represent a generalized transdiagnostic measure of psychopathology (Levin et al., 2004; Spinhoven, Drost, de Rooij, van Hemert, & Pennix, 2014). What is required for this research is a pragmatic conceptualization

with explanatory power and relevance to practicing teachers, rarely exposed to research within this field. Such an approach aims to have more potential for findings resonating with teachers.

2.9.3 Functional within contexts.

Teachers constantly strive in their pursuit of a myriad of goals within their working days and many do so in accordance with their own values and beliefs (Koybasi & Burhanettin, 2012). As such a theoretical concept is required that encapsulates this value driven action towards the pursuit of goals. Kashdan and Rottenberg (2010, p. 2) reviewed psychological flexibility (PF), integrating varying schools of thought to conceptualize PF as processes that present over time and are reflected in how a person "adapts to fluctuating situational demands, reconfigures mental resources, shifts perspective, and balances competing desires, needs and life domains." This encapsulates interactions across contexts with reference to the pursuit of valued goals but also refers to reconfiguration of mental resources. Psychological flexibility is associated with open, approach orientated and non-avoidant actions (Dawson & Goligani-Moghaddam, 2020; Doorley et al., 2020; Kashdan & Rottenberg, 2010). It enables the flexible choice of adaptive coping strategies, acting as a functional-contextual process (Dawson & Goligani-Moghaddam, 2020). It is considered functional if it facilitates desired actions within the context in which the actions occur (Kashdan & Rottenberg, 2010). With researchers such as Gloster et al. (2011) and Zaheer (2015) suggesting that distress tolerance is an element of or contributing path towards psychological flexibility, and this relationship appearing relevant to the nature of dealing with teaching dilemmas, the conceptualization of distress tolerance for the present research is cognizant of this interrelationship of concepts. Further research evidence supports the utility of psychological flexibility for coping within real-life contexts, with distress tolerance as a path towards or contributing factor towards it.

Bonanno, Papa, Lalande, Westphal, and Coifman (2004), in a novel experimental design, found that ability to flexibly cope as required by the situation of September 9/11 contributed to real world adjustment more so than any conventional regulatory coping strategy. Cheng (2001), also researching within a university context found that variability or flexibility in coping strategies was positively related to effective handling of psychological stressors. Subsequent research indicates that

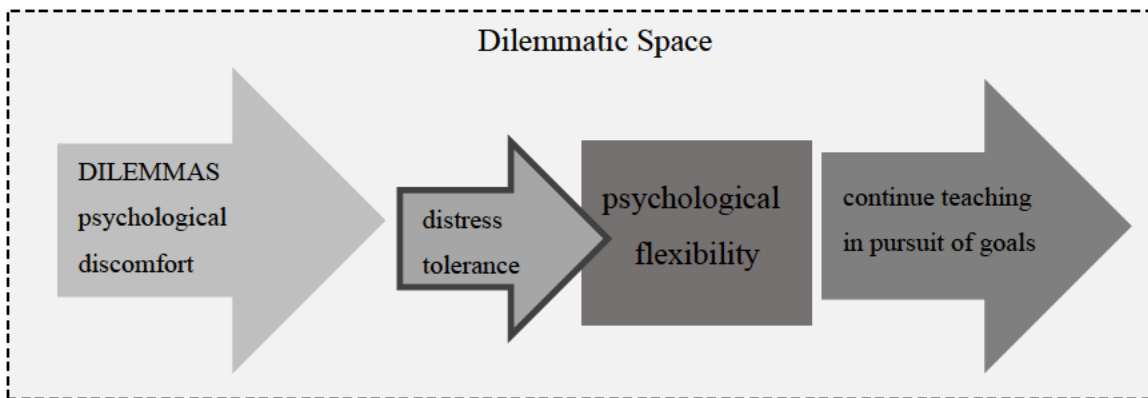
this pattern of psychological benefits of flexibility in coping has established associations with wellbeing whereas inflexibility in coping (psychological inflexibility) has a negative relationship (Doorley et al., 2020; Kashdan et al., 2020; Levin et al., 2004).

The suggested interrelationship with psychological flexibility as a functional contextual process and distress tolerance and positive associations with wellbeing, the present research requires a conceptualization that is cognizant of this and the current disparity in conceptualization within the extant literature. The conceptualization also considers the potential therapeutic value of distress tolerance as a set of skills that may be taught and learned (Linehan, 1993). To accomplish this, a broad conceptualization is required.

The conceptualization of Cherry et al. (2021, p. 9) provides an applicable and broad definition of psychological flexibility with utility. The model includes three essential components of "(a) handling interference or distress, (b) taking action to manage interference or distress, and (c) taking action which occurs in a manner that fits situational demands and facilitates the pursuit of personal goals or values." These broad conceptual accounts take into consideration the arguments of both Hayes et al., (2006) and Kashdan and Rottenberg, (2010) and contributes towards future development of a consensus definition as called for by (Cherry et al., 2021; Doorley et al., 2020; Kashdan et al., 2020). Within this model, distress tolerance can be represented by both points (a) and (b), and if undertaken with flexibility it may also be (c). Distress tolerance can be an element of or a contributing factor towards psychological flexibility, as suggested earlier. The sub-elements or domain levels of DT may be encompassed within this model, and it acknowledges the flexibility required to be adaptive within real world contexts. This model presents with relevance to teaching within the dilemmatic space.

Within the dilemmatic spaces of teaching, rigid adherence to specific strategies may not be conducive to sustaining goal-directed teaching. From my own teaching experiences, teachers are required to constantly adapt to and deal with the myriad of influences upon their teaching. Flexibility within their thinking and actions can be helpful to allow them to continue to pursue their teaching goals, despite the influence of such phenomena as teaching dilemmas. The proposed interrelationships between relevant concepts are presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Concepts within the Dilemmatic Space



This figure shows that teaching dilemmas within this space are associated with the psychological discomfort, addressed by distress tolerance which is considered an element of or contributing path towards psychological flexibility. The ability to be psychologically flexible can enable teachers to continue with their goal directed teaching behaviours. Figure 4 illustrates the relationships between concepts in relation to wellbeing as a return to a state of equilibrium as indicated within the Dodge et al. (2012) framework.

Figure 4. Wellbeing: Distress Tolerance as a Personal Resource for Wellbeing

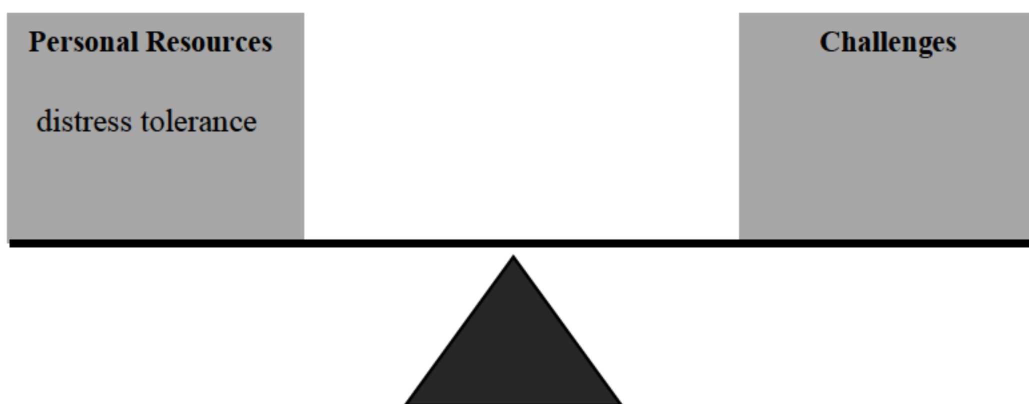


Figure 4 indicates the potential for distress tolerance to act as a personal resource to cope with the challenge of psychological discomfort associated with teaching dilemmas and contribute towards the restoration of equilibrium or wellbeing.

2.10 Summary

The literature on distress tolerance as a potential personal resource to assist teachers in coping with psychological discomfort associated with teaching dilemmas is not currently available. Considerable research indicates the potential therapeutic value of distress tolerance for varied conditions and contexts, warranting exploration of it within the complexities of teaching contexts. The complex nature of teaching today and associated wellbeing of teachers within the profession may benefit from knowledge of adaptive coping strategies such as distress tolerance. The wide variation of this concept within the literature and complexities of teaching may benefit from a conceptualization of distress tolerance that acknowledges the flexibility required by teachers within the dilemmatic spaces of practice. Viewing distress tolerance as a contributing factor or path towards psychological flexibility may be of utility.

Exploring the boundaries provided by these concepts aims to elicit new knowledge which may potentially resonate with teachers and contribute towards the relevant wellbeing literature. To focus the exploration of these concepts within the present study, the following research questions were developed.

- What are the lived experiences of teachers' distress tolerance associated with teaching dilemmas?
- What are the meanings of those experiences?

These primary questions focus upon lived experiences in the hope that knowledge gained from real-life experiences may resonate with teachers and provide them with knowledge with potential for application to their wellbeing within teaching practice.

As an experienced teacher, the voices of other experienced teachers have value. Teachers learn from each other and in my experience, more so than from research. As such, the experiences of other teachers represent a potential treasure of relevant knowledge. What is sought is knowledge about their experiences, rather than theoretical information that may not necessarily be relevant to the complexities of teaching with the dilemmatic space. Knowledge that reflects real life is sought. A suitable methodology is required to access such knowledge of teachers' experiences.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

his chapter presents the methodology employed to answer the questions of the present research. The research plan and its philosophical grounding is discussed with the design aiming to satisfy quality criteria of qualitative research (Levitt, Motulsky, Wertz, Morrow, & Ponterotto, 2017). This chapter explicates the design in association with the rationale for this research, together with an explanation of my role as the researcher within the present research. The methodology presented represents an adaptation of the hermeneutic phenomenology (HP) of Max van Manen to suit the needs of the present research. An absence of a set methodology within van Manen's HP is well-articulated. This allows for flexibility where methods can be creatively employed to suit the research topic and the researcher (Finlay, 2014). With inspiration and guidance from van Manen's (2014) methodology, this unique application of methods aims to answer the research questions with richness and depth. This chapter aims to articulate the relevance and utility of van Manen's (2014) framework for answering the research questions. The answering of these research questions aims to be done so with cognizance of and adherence to research quality criteria.

3.1 Research Quality Framework

Aiming to produce knowledge of value or significance, this research adopts the qualitative research quality criteria of (Levitt et al., 2017). This framework, developed by the American Psychological Association task force aims to provide clarity within its guiding principles and to address the disparities within qualitative research evaluation. Morrow (2005) argued that the quality criteria adopted for research should be suitable for its paradigmatic underpinnings and methodology employed. The principles articulated within the quality criteria are applicable to the hermeneutic phenomenological methodology and grounding paradigm employed for the present research.

Levitt et al., (2017) synthesized the literature to produce theoretical processes indicative of quality which they defined as worthiness or trustworthiness which is methodologically indicated as integrity. Research of methodological integrity encompasses firstly fidelity, represented by an intimate connection with the targeted phenomenon and secondly, utility which is indicative of effective design

and methodology for achieving the research goals (Levitt et al., 2017). The present research aimed to address these issues.

Firstly, fidelity aimed to be addressed through my own positioning as a an *inbetweener* researcher. As an experienced and currently practicing teacher, I have an intimate knowledge of the context in which participants work and an established rapport with most of the participants. This facilitated an articulation of the research context that reflected reality. It also allowed me to elicit thick descriptions from participants which contributed towards richness of data. My immersion within data through repeatedly re-reading and re-listening to audio recordings, my reflexive research notes, and debriefings with supervisors facilitated the closeness of connection with data required. The influence of my own biases at inappropriate times, for example, interviewing, was managed through regular memoing within my reflexive research journal and debriefings with my research supervisors. Utility within the present research was addressed through these actions.

The hermeneutic phenomenological methodology provided a suitable framework and means for answering my research questions. It facilitated participants' descriptions of experiences and interpretations of meanings of them. The processes I engaged in to achieve this are articulated within this chapter and include descriptions of interviewing processes and questions, three phases of research which facilitated additional data, and strategies used for data interpretation. Multiple data sourcing opportunities aimed to elicit a richness and depth of data which aimed to ensure the adequacy of the evidence (Morrow, 2005). Adequacy of interpretation was enhanced through regular memoing, debriefing with supervisors and an additional phase of participant interviewing. This additional phase allowed for participants to not only check my interpretations of their original data but also to add any additional experiences that they may have thought about since their first phase of interviews. The interview phases produced a point of data saturation for me through use of this method. To enhance depth of data, the third focus group phase was undertaken to facilitate a point of data saturation, where no further relevant or new data was elicited. The focus group's use of metaphors provided the additional data source which enabled me to answer the research questions with an enhanced confidence due to the additional rich data obtained.

The central theoretical principles within this framework provided a guide for me as a novice researcher in my efforts to undertake quality research. This

qualitative research aimed to develop a shared understanding of the influence of targeted phenomena within social contexts (Birks, Chapman, & Francis, 2008). Engaging in this type of enquiry involves the use of techniques that acknowledge the subjective influences upon the processes and produces findings of quality. Articulation of a coherent grounding philosophy aims to contribute towards the integrity of this research.

3.2 Grounding Philosophy

Philosophy provides what is considered as the grounding *paradigm* in which hermeneutic phenomenological research is situated (Morse, 2013). A paradigm represents a way of looking at the world and involves a set of assumptions about the nature of reality, what constitutes the nature of knowledge in this reality, and what are appropriate means of obtaining knowledge within it (Punch, 2016). These elements within hermeneutic phenomenology provide the foundation for the methodology employed.

Ontology or the nature of reality within hermeneutic phenomenology "is concerned with what it means to be" (Van Manen, 2016, p. 183). Hermeneutic phenomenology's focus upon real life experiences, makes it a suitable methodology for obtaining participant's real-life experiences within the present study. Van Manen adopts a Heideggerian view of reality in viewing it as what reveals itself to people through hearing, touching, seeing, and being touched by what occurs within our pre-reflective, lived experiences (van Manen, 2014). Being within the world provides people with an embodied reality in that the human body enables experiences to occur. Bodily interactions within peoples' *lifeworlds* or contexts in which living occurs, create what is generally perceived to be reality. Consideration of the meanings inherent within peoples' actions can provide a richness of information, not readily available when using more technical lenses through which to view experiences. The present study aims to facilitate an understanding of the meanings of participants' experiences. Once again, HP presents with utility for doing so. As people exist and mutually influence each other's life-worlds, people cannot be separated from it (van Manen, 2016). This has implications for how knowledge is obtained about realities as perceived by others.

This lack of separation from each other's realities means that within research, the researcher's influence upon the process needs to be acknowledged (van

Manen, 2014). Knowledge of reality therefore represents an amalgam of the individual's experience of the *lifeworld*, as interpreted by the researcher, representing what (Finlay, 2008) labelled as the "dance" between the reduction and reflexivity. The lifeworld term provides a label for the world as consciously perceived through experience within it (Van Manen, 2014). Both Finlay and van Manen utilized this Heideggerian view of knowledge whereby subjective knowledge of individuals is considered to represent their truths or accurate representations of their realities. It is acknowledged that this representation can change over time as new knowledge and or experiences are gained (van Manen, 2014). In adopting this view of reality and knowledge, consideration of what is valued within hermeneutic phenomenology is relevant.

Axiology as a philosophical viewpoint makes reference to the nature of values and value judgements (Peoples, 2021), or in simple terms, the consideration of the worth or goodness of phenomena. In relation to research, it is concerned with what is valued within it. Within hermeneutic phenomenological research the researcher's values cannot be separated from the research process, and such, must be articulated to provide the reader with knowledge of how these values may impact on this subjective style of research. As a novice researcher, articulating my own values is important for contributing to the quality of this research. These will be later articulated within this chapter.

Briefly, as a teacher of nearly thirty years, experience has been a source of knowledge for me within my practice. As such, I value experience. I consider it to be an excellent source of knowledge about teaching practice. I acknowledge that individuals perceive experiences differently as people experience their worlds through their bodies which differ from each other's. Experience is therefore subjective as people hear, feel, touch, act, and think in accordance with the allowances of their bodies. As such, the perspective of the individual is valued as a source of knowledge. This respect and appreciation for individuals has ramifications for how they and their knowledge is treated within this research. To ensure that the individual's knowledge is valued, ethical approval was sought and gained from my supervising university. My own knowledge is also valued within the research process. The interrelationships or connections between my ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions related well to hermeneutic

phenomenology, contributing towards its utility for answering my research questions.

3.3 Phenomenology: Hermeneutics

Phenomenology represents the description of the essence of a phenomenon as it functions within lived experience and presents itself in consciousness to be reflected upon (Peoples, 2021). A rich phenomenological philosophical history exists dating back to Husserl (1859-1938), considered to be the founding father of phenomenology. He argued that the way individuals look at phenomenon or their consciousness of it allows them to access the pure essence of it. If people put aside or *bracket* their own knowledge, assumptions, or biases about an object they can be truly conscious of it as it exists within the world. This allows for an awareness of an object from the perspective of an alien who is unfamiliar with the phenomenon and is viewing it for the first time. No prior knowledge influences the intentional awareness of the object. It is argued that everything has an objective existence but individuals' awareness of it makes it subjective (Peoples, 2021). This individual awareness of experience is sought for the present research. The present research aims to ascertain the meaning of individuals' experiences and Heidegger's framework influenced the work of van Manen, therefore presenting with relevance for the present research. Relevant methods employed within the present research such as interviewing and thematic analysis, sit within HP and can potentially elicit participants' pre-reflective experiential accounts and meanings indicated by themes.

Heidegger (1889-1976) was a student of Husserl's who argued that humans cannot separate themselves from their worlds as they are always within them. Heidegger (1953) suggested that people are both the subject and viewer of themselves, thus; people cannot be separated from their contexts. Humans' *Dasein* or "*being-in-the-world*" refers to this (Peoples, 2021). People have experiences within their worlds, and they are in turn, influenced by them. As such, peoples' lived experiences within the worlds in which they exist provide "windows" for understanding phenomena that are experienced. If one cannot separate the self from the world, the experience within the world provides an opportunity for understanding. The world in which the experience occurs is therefore important in terms of understanding the experience. Hermeneutic processes contribute towards this understanding.

Heidegger sought the essences of experiences and developed what he termed the *hermeneutic circle* as a framework for how this can be achieved. The essence of experiences can be thought of as a consciousness or awareness of them (Heidegger, 1953). Being consciously aware of experiences facilitates a deeper understanding of them (Peoples, 2021). This deeper understanding is facilitated through following processes of the hermeneutic circle. These processes refer to a cyclic means of developing new knowledge where the first understanding of a text which describes the whole of a targeted phenomenon is modified when the constituent parts are understood fully. This understanding of the parts then in turn, can result in changes to the initial understanding of the whole. This new understanding of the whole may then lead to a revised understanding its constituent parts. This process continues until no new understandings are developed (Heidegger, 1953). The hermeneutic circular process will provide a foundational process for analysis within the present research.

He valued this process of interpretation of phenomenon which utilised researcher's prior knowledge or preconceptions defined as *fore-sights* (Peoples, 2021), rather than *bracketing* or separating them from the interpretation process, them as suggested by Husserl. Heidegger argued that foresights should be made explicit within the interpretive processes of the hermeneutic circle as they likely influence the research process. Within this hermeneutic style of phenomenology, the researchers' fore-sights are called for within the hermeneutic interpretive processes. Foresights interact with participants' texts obtained within research and results in an interpretive "dance: between the researcher and the participant. Heidegger's hermeneutic "lens" and associated hermeneutic circle processes focussed upon the interpretation of meaning within texts (van Manen, 2017b).

Many argued that Heidegger was responsible for this cojoining of phenomenological and hermeneutic philosophies where the need for the interpretation of and meaning giving to lived experiences was required (Grondin, 1994). Meaning exists within our being and is inherent within descriptions of our everyday experiences where essences or essential structures are revealed. Meaning is elicited through the interpretation of these structures provided in texts (Mackey, 2005). The interpretation of meaning focusses upon language within texts which are representative of human experiences. Within the present research, participants'

verbal language as elicited through interviews, provide descriptive accounts of their experiences for later interpretation.

Gadamer (1975) positioned language at the centre of inquiry arguing that it represents how we structure our thinking about our world. Within discourse about experiences, language is used to structure thoughts and to articulate those experiences. Language is fundamental within qualitative research as it is "a limitless medium that carries everything within it – not only the "culture" that has been handed down to us through language, but absolutely everything" (Gadamer, 1977, p. 25). Freeman and Vagle (2013, p. 725) stated "there are no nonverbal experiences, only experiences not yet put into words." To understand meanings perceived by others it is best to write down language to facilitate a more thorough and deeper analysis (Lindseth & Norberg, 2004b). The experiences of others may be presented with varied verbal and written texts with (van Manen, 1997, 2014, 2017b) arguing that the interpretation of meaning within texts is indeed language focussed. His grounding framework explicates an associated methodology, relevant to the complexities of professional practices and in particular, teaching. His way of "doing" hermeneutic phenomenology represents an applied framework, developed and influenced by philosophical scholars before him such as Heidegger. Converse (2012) suggested that for philosophically congruent research, the research methodology employed must follow articulated philosophical assumptions. These are articulated within van Manen's evidenced-based methodology.

3.4 van Manen's Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Van Manen provides a framework that espouses that lifeworlds represent our realities and that language representations of experiences within them indicate knowledge of our lifeworlds. Accessing this knowledge can be achieved through talking with people and this experience-based knowledge is considered to represent peoples' truths at that time. While his methodological guide is coherent with the philosophical foundations of hermeneutic phenomenology, his work represents an eclectic representation of it. Its usefulness or relevance lies in that it is a practice-based methodology, developed within his research on teaching practice. His framework developed through his on research into teaching practice and I suggest that its relevance for the present research lies within its coherent philosophical assumptions, its cognizance of the mutual influence of practice contexts with the

individual within them and its ability to produce findings with potential relevance and resonance for those within contexts being explored. Within the present research, this cognizance of context is important, give the dilemmatic space in which teachers currently work. His methodology allows access to the meanings of experiences which can present with relevance to a profession such as teaching which tends to value experiential learning. Such a framework for research can be understood through cognizance of the assumptions that underpin and lie within it.

Levitt et al. (2018) suggested that explicating underlying assumptions contributes towards the transparency of hermeneutic phenomenological methods, aiming to assist in the potential integration of knowledge generated into extant literature. Perhaps the primary assumption is that the conscious awareness within the *phenomenological attitude* is the foundation of understanding an interpretation of meaning, where people perceive an experience as it is through their consciousness of it (van Manen, 2014). To understand something phenomenologically this attitude does not rely upon judgement or labelling of a phenomenon but on an individual's pre-reflective experience of it. This understanding is required when narrating a targeted experience within the lifeworld. The experience can be narrated as it was directly experienced, devoid of any evaluation, categorizing or labelling of it. Within van Manen's (1995; 1997; 2014; 2016) interpretation of hermeneutic phenomenology, interpretation of another's experience will be influenced by the interpreter's foresights.

Researchers' foresights influence the interpretive stages (hermeneutic circle) of the research process (van Manen, 2017a) as such, they require articulation and management within the research. Researchers' own experiences, knowledge, biases, and views influence how meaning is determined and the meaning given to the experiences (Bevan, 2014). My own foresights are presented separately within this chapter. Interpretation within the present research is a product of my own foresights and the data obtained.

Language is assumed to represent how we structure our thinking about our world (Gadamer, 1977). Language is fundamental within HP research as it is "a limitless medium that carries everything within it – not only the "culture" that has been handed down to us through language, but absolutely everything" (Gadamer, 1977, p. 25) To truly understand meanings perceived by others it is best to write down language to facilitate a more thorough and deeper analysis (Lindseth &

Norberg, 2004a). This writing down of participants' language within the present study occurred with interview data transcribed to assist in its interpretation.

Van Manen's early work focussed upon the development of a phenomenological research method that he labelled as the "*phenomenology of practice*" (van Manen, 2014, p. 15). The practices or targeted activities of professional practitioners and those undertaken in everyday life provide the grist for van Manen's phenomenological "mill." He is concerned with the "practical" or the everyday living within personal and professional lives. The language of the practical is evident or visible through lived experience and the methods of hermeneutic phenomenology (van Manen, 1977). Van Manen's broad methodology developed from his own application of hermeneutic phenomenology within his research on teaching. He drew from an eclectic, broad range of philosophers and human science scholars to develop his method that "reflects on and in practice, and prepares for practice" (van Manen, 2014, p. 15). He provides an attitude and means for approaching an experiential phenomenon to understand or interpret its meaning. His method, developed within a teaching context provides pragmatic guidance to research within this field with an implicit acknowledgement of and understanding of the nature of this context.

His phenomenology of practice was itself developed out of his own frustration with European philosophies that lacked in explicit methodology and a need for philosophically based pragmatic methods for his research context of North American teaching. Van Manen provides a method of relevance and utility for answering the questions within the present research that require an articulation of lived experiences and interpretations of their meaning within teaching contexts.

Dowling (2005) describes van Manen's phenomenology as emanating from the Dutch philosophical traditions and argues that it represents an amalgam of the works of primarily Husserl and Heidegger, including elements of both descriptive and interpretive phenomenology. Van Manen aims to both describe experiences, essences, essential characteristics, or structures of them. "What is the lived experience like?" (van Manen, 2017a, p. 776) represents his fundamental question asked when describing and interpreting experiences within his hermeneutic phenomenological research. Actions within lived experience provide indicators of knowledge as understanding (van Manen, 1977). Hermeneutic phenomenology aims to elicit the meaning of this knowledge applied in life, made available through

description and interpretation of human experiences. The present research is designed to do that, using the language of participants' experiential accounts to interpret their meanings through the hermeneutic circle processes. Experience represents an aggregate of such elements as perceptions, appraisals, skills, personality, wellbeing, and prior knowledge. The knowledge applied within experience is "practically relevant" in that it can be utilized in action (van Manen, 1977, p. 220). Van Manen (1977, p. 227), in his early work likened the knowledge inherent within practical action to a "social wisdom."

Van Manen leans more towards an applied phenomenology where he studies concepts in a phenomenological manner within context rather than theorizing philosophically without due consideration to where the phenomenon occurs (Zahavi, 2019). His work is a phenomenology of practice, focussing upon the actual doing of phenomenology on the practice of living (van Manen, 2014). Van Manen believes that we must understand the lifeworld or context in which the targeted phenomenon occurs to understand the phenomenon. As a teacher with nearly 30 years of experience, my contextual knowledge is of value in using this framework. As a novice researcher though, what is needed is a grounding framework that is accessible to practitioners, not philosophically experienced. Van Manen provides just that and is acknowledged within the literature for doing so (Dowling, 2005). To research using van Manen's philosophies and methodology as a framework requires and understanding of his views on the human body in its experiences within our lifeworlds.

Van Manen (2014) suggested that describing and interpreting the essences of practical phenomenon requires people to understand how the body experiences the phenomenon within the context in which it occurs. Practice depends upon the actions of the body which incorporate such elements as the senses, perceptiveness, tact, thought, emotion, and practices. Knowledge utilised within practice is accessed through interpretation of bodily experiences (van Manen, 1977). The human body can be thought of as an object, understood from the vantage point of an observer or as subjectively lived through (Zahavi, 2019). Answering the questions of the present research requires an understanding of how the experience of distress tolerance is lived through the human body. This consciousness awareness or phenomenological attitude towards the human body as the subject of research is required. Our bodies allow us to perceive our experiences within the lifeworlds in which we function.

What is required is a consciousness or awareness of these perceptions of our experiences in order to understand their meanings (van Manen, 2016). Van Manen identified ways in which people perceive their experiences within their lifeworlds such as how they experience time, space, relationships, and the body. Understanding how people experience these or means of relating to existence, provide lenses through which understanding can be achieved. If the present research is to understand the meanings of participants' experiences, existential lenses provide a methodological tool for doing so. They can provide language that may be suitable for grouping participants' data that represent how they relate and exist within their worlds.

Existentialism represents philosophies which suggest that people are personally responsible for making meaning within their lives and that this is achieved through their own agency. People think, feel, and act in subjectively perceiving experiences. The body allows the individual to do a myriad of activities and provides a narrative of those experiences. Bodily experiences, existentially labelled as *corporeality* provide the mind with information that is used to ascertain the meaning or essential structures/elements of experiences (van Manen, 2014). The body also provides a vehicle or tool for experiencing time. Understanding the present research participants' experiences of their bodies as they were tolerating distress can provide a valued depth to understanding the meanings of those experiences.

The existential of *temporality*, or the experience of time, provides people with further information which is used in perceiving experiences. As an example, if time passes very quickly while doing a hobby or sporting activity, an individual may positively experience those experiences and perceive them as favourable. Understanding of the meaning of participants' experiences of time within the present research may assist in depth of understanding. Individuals also can use bodily experiences within the space around us, existentially labelled as *spatiality* to give meaning to actions and phenomena (van Manen, 2014).

If people experience the space around themselves as overcrowded or constricting, perceptions of phenomena occurring within those spaces will be influenced by this. The essences of phenomena occurring within such spaces perceived as constricting may be interpreted as stressful or discomforting. In understanding the meaning of experiences within the present research, participants'

experiences of the spaces around them may be helpful, given the contexts in which teachers are working. Within bodily actions within space, the body may relate to others.

With regards to the existential labelled as *relationality,* van Manen (2016) argued that experiences of relating to others provides an additional lens through which the individual can understand or give meaning to phenomena. It is noted that other philosophers may label these differently or argue for the use of alternate existentials, but in maintaining consistency and coherence within this research, those of van Manen's will be utilised. Use of these existential lenses acknowledges the embodied nature of teaching and coping within contexts. Furthermore, utilizing van Manen's methodological guidelines aim to contribute further towards research coherence.

Van Manen's (2014, p. 26) method or "way or attitude of approaching phenomena"' is driven by a pathos or attitude of wonder about how phenomena "appear, show, present, or give themselves to us." It concerns itself with what is lived through or experienced, prior to reflections upon it. Language used to articulate these experiences is reflected upon.

The meaning of experience is thought not to lie within the dictionary definitions of words or sentences but in the discourse or spoken language that may in turn, be transformed into texts (Masong, 2012). Language can be thought of as a system of symbols which refer to 'things' and when this relationship is understood it can represent meaning (Ricoeur, 2016). Language itself can be thought of as metaphorical in that the symbols used are representative of something else. We interpret these symbols to see what they mean. Van Manen provides a relevant guideline on how to do so.

"The method of phenomenology is that there is no method" (van Manen, 2016, p. 30). Van Manen claimed that the rich philosophical foundations do provide guidelines for human science research that can be adapted to research needs. He reduced this rich phenomenological history to an essential methodological structure that encompassed six research activities. They are:

1. turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world,
2. investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it,

3. reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon,
4. describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting,
5. maintaining a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon, and
6. balancing the research context by considering parts and whole (van Manen, 2016).

Van Manen suggests that these broad guidelines are not necessarily separate procedures but may be undertaken at varying stages and intermittently, as research needs require. They are not definitive or represent a "how to" for this type of research but instead, a guide which I value as an inexperienced researcher. They present with utility for answering my research questions and their use will contribute toward the acceptability and trustworthiness of the research (van Manen, 2014). Van Manen's methodological guide coheres with the exploration of the targeted distress tolerance phenomenon.

With reference to the first of van Manen's suggested activities, my interest in the targeted phenomenon of distress tolerance developed from a short course that I undertook in dialectical behavioural therapy (Linehan, 1993) which focussed upon distress tolerance as a means of coping with emotions for those with borderline personality disorder and dealing with addiction issues. Linehan (1993) provided evidence for the efficacy of distress tolerance, indicating that it assisted patients to both manage impulses within the present and to maintain goal directed behaviour. With teaching being an emotional profession (Hargreaves, 2001) and working towards goals inherent within practice, distress tolerance presented as a concept with potential utility for assisting teachers to continue in pursuit of their teaching goals, despite their experiences of distress

Secondly, distress tolerance as a phenomenon of considerable interest, is a present-focussed, regulation skill (Linehan, 1993), and as such, a methodology that cohered with such a focus was warranted. Hermeneutic phenomenology's focus upon "investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it" (van Manen, 2016, p. 31) encapsulates a deference to pre-reflective or present experience. With experiential knowledge valued both personally and within the teaching profession, exploration of present-focussed, lived experiences of distress tolerance within the present research is of value to understanding of it as it presents within teaching practice. Exploration of relevant lived experiences can elucidate a

conscious awareness of them which is then later reflected upon to ascertain the meaning of the experience.

Thirdly, van Manen suggests that reflection on themes which characterize or describe the phenomena as it is lived is required. Hermeneutic reflection aims to explicate the structural and thematic elements of experiences by firstly describing the pre-reflective experience and then identifying the meaning units of themes within the text of that experience (van Manen, 2016). Themes, structural elements, or essences of experiences are represented by repeated textual chunks that convey a single thought or idea that occur frequently within a text (van Manen, 1995). The researcher then interprets these meaning units and provides them with labels that indicate their meaning. Van Manen's existentials or corporeality, spatiality, relationality, and temporality provide potential thematic labels that will assist in grouping data within the present research. It is within this interpretive process that the researcher's foresights interact with the pre-reflective data to produce findings representing an interaction between the researcher and the experiential accounts of participants. Utilising both researcher-identified themes and van Manen's existentials as research lenses within the present research provide varying, yet complementary vantage points for viewing the data which can facilitate interpretations of meaning. To obtain and interpret relevant data, information gathered is described and interpreted through reading, re-reading, and primarily, writing, illustrating van Manen's fourth guideline.

Phenomenological writing is research according to van Manen (2016). Writing enables researchers to organise thoughts and knowledge. As new knowledge comes to light, re-writing occurs with this process continuing to switch between the two. Our thoughts or schemas are cognitively re-organised until no further interpretations are evident, and themes are identified that do not require alteration at that time. It is noted that within phenomenology, knowledge can continue to develop and that findings may change over time (van Manen, 1995). Research findings therefore represent understandings at that time. With a cycle of writing/rewriting and corresponding developments in understanding, the interpretive research must identify when no further knowledge is gained from rewriting, reaching a *saturation* point for the data (van Manen, 2017a). This writing and rewriting will occur at varying stages within the present research such as within transcription of interview data and the organisation of data into thematic

groups. At this stage, an evocate writing style is used to present findings in the hope that a sense of wonder or considerable interest may be evoked within the reader (Finlay, 2014; van Manen, 2017b). Writing is not only used to interpret but also to resonate with readers. For this to occur, the phenomenological researcher needs to maintain an orientation or wonder towards learning about the targeted phenomenon (van Manen, 2014). This orientation of wonder is characterized by an aim to maintain a sense of constant learning about the targeted phenomenon. The researcher is a student of the phenomenon and is "taught" by the experiential accounts of it. A *pedagogical* or teaching-learning orientation therefore exists between the researcher and phenomenon, illustrating van Manen's fifth guideline. Van Manen's sixth guideline refers to the previously discussed processes of the hermeneutic circle.

Within these broad guidelines, the researcher may move fluidly to satisfy the needs of the research but in doing so, cognizance is required of the researcher's influence upon the research processes. Researchers are required to focus upon lived experiences and be cognizant of potential distractors from this such as others' judgements or interpretations of them and theories which aim to categorize or label them. Van Manen (2016, p. 33) recognized potential for distractibility by these influences which can easily divert the researcher's attention to "superficialities or falsities." This can impair researcher interpretations limiting abilities to identify the essences of phenomenon as they present themselves to researchers. In acknowledgement of the potential for my own distractibility in the interpretation of data, my memoing and supervision sessions will be utilized. My writing and talking about elements of distraction will assist in ensuring that data and interpretations present with integrity.

Van Manen (1995; 2016) argued that throughout the research process, researchers must be cognizant of the overall aim or intent of the research as being to produce findings that may resonate with the reader.

Van Manen (2014, p. 20) claimed that "to write is to reflect; to write is to research." Reflection, writing, and rewriting continues to occur as new understandings develop, cycling through the processes of the hermeneutic circle. Writing with *reflexivity* on behalf of the hermeneutic phenomenological researcher is required for this to occur.

3.5. Reflexivity

The aim of writing about one's own thoughts, emotions and actions occurring within research to assist in transparency within the research process, represents reflexivity (Humphreys, 2005). Reflexivity provides a means of articulation of the mechanics of the research process and researchers' reflections upon their own input and influence on the research. It acted as a form of bracketing tool (Finlay, 2008), enabling me to stand back from my own thoughts, emotions and actions to gain some metaphorical distance to facilitate critical and reflexive interrogation of them. This self-management of one's own preunderstandings coupled with reflection on how they influence the research process (reflexivity) give rise to what (Husserl 1913/1983) termed the phenomenological attitude which represented a way of thinking, experiencing, and theorising that is perceived as above our own natural being and the world in which we live. It is characterized by an openness and sense of wonder about our raw, unprocessed lived experiences. Intentionally or consciously adopting this attitude requires us to move or dance flexibly between our preunderstandings and reflections upon them (Finlay, 2008).

The reflexive research journal provides a valued tool for reflexion (Humphreys, 2005; Koch & Harrington, 1998; Maxwell, Ramsayer, Hanlon, McKendrick, & Fleming, 2020) and elicitation of trust of the research (Levitt et al., 2017). My journal was a digital record of my actions, findings, thoughts, and emotions associated with my research. At regular intervals which varied according to events and circumstances, I wrote freely within a word document table which included the date, my comments and any follow up action required. This document not only provided a detailed record of the research processes, my thoughts, and emotions, but also opportunities to reflect upon my own influences upon the research.

Within this document I firstly recorded my foresights, guided by the autoethnographic work of Humphreys (2005), McIlveen (2008), and Maxwell et al. (2020). This assisted me to be cognizant of the potential influence of my prior knowledge, biases, or preconceptions on all aspects of the research. The journal provided a means of achieving this through regular entries and re-reading of those done prior to further entries. It allowed me to perform the dual role of participator and observer, writing as the inbetweener. Journal entries were often recorded as

thoughts arose, often while doing unrelated activities or taking a break. Most journal entries focussed upon the transformation and interpretation of data.

Reflexive memoing occurred regularly within my research journal, assisting me to bracket foresights in data collection and to enhance my awareness of how my foresights influenced my data interpretation. The following memo within my reflexive journal indicates this awareness. "I'm getting ready for interviews and need to make sure that my comments about participants' experiences are kept neutral" (L. Hargreaves, personal communication, June 29, 2020). Reflexive memoing was of value to me personally, for decision making, and contributing towards the research quality. My use of a reflexive journal supported van Manen's (2016) argument that writing is a primary method within hermeneutic phenomenological research.

Reflexivity requires researchers to reflect upon their own influences upon the research. Within van Manen's phenomenology, this process is especially important in what is referred to as the *ephoce* or bracketing. This represents the suspension of or putting aside of one's own knowledge, judgement, beliefs, and biases to focus upon the world as it is lived (van Manen, 2016). Researchers using his methods are required to consciously put aside these foresights at certain stages of the research. Within van Manen's method, this stage is the collection of participants' experiential accounts. These accounts need to be unfettered by the researcher's influence to obtain accurate and raw experiential accounts. For this to occur, researchers need to be aware of their foresights and to consciously bracket them from data collection (Finlay, 2008; Peoples, 2021). These foresights though play a role within the interpretation processes where meaning of these experiences is ascertained. Finlay (2008) saw this as a 'dance' of reflexivity between the epoche and the *reduction.* The reduction involves an intentional, reflexive, consciousness to produce the pre-reflective, lived experiential account, known as the reduction (van Manen, 2016). The researcher's foresights are bracketed to produce this reduction. Van Manen offers varied terminologies for variations in the reduction, but this understanding is sufficient for the purposes of this research. For me as the researcher undertaking the epoche to produce the reduction, I needed to be cognizant of my own foresights. A brief autoethnographic statement, informed by autoethnography, provided me an opportunity to do so.

3.5.1 Researcher foresights.

"Who I am affects what I observe, what I write, and how others will react to what I say" (Jenks, 2002, p. 184). Humphreys (2005) and McIlveen (2008, p. 7) provided guidance on the use of autoethnography as a "methodological vehicle for a scientist and scientist-practitioner to bring himself or herself into critical view and to reveal a phenomenon with the intellectual objective of a shared disciplinary understanding and empathy." McIlveen considered autoethnography to be a form of writing from a researcher-practitioner, with an intimate connection to the phenomenon of investigation, aiming to critically investigate oneself in the process of research. With the researcher considered "an instrument of my inquiry and the inquiry is inseparable from who I am" (Louis, 1991, p. 365), I felt it necessary to provide a window through which the reader can understand the writer as a contributory source of data at certain stages of the research process.

Enacting this transparency within the hermeneutic phenomenological approach may firstly involve researchers articulating their perspectives and influences upon research processes (Levitt et al., 2017). Humphreys (2005) and McIlveen's (2008) exemplar autoethnographies provided guidance for the structuring of my own foresights. Gadamer (1977) broadly articulated foresights or what he labelled as *pre-understandings* as prejudices, preconceived opinions, thoughts, and perceptions in relation to a specific topic. They represent peoples' range of vision or *horizon* at a particular time in and can be altered and challenged through experiences and learning (Gadamer, 1975). Self-understanding of pre-understandings through self-reflection "influences the depth of the understanding at which one eventually arrives" (Maxwell et al., 2020, p. 2).

This meant that for me to arrive at a deep understanding within the present research, I needed to be aware of my pre-understandings and to challenge and develop them through the experiences of the research processes. "Coming to understand one's prejudices, presuppositions, or preunderstanding and the way in which these and those of others influence the research journey is a difficult and an ongoing challenge" (Spence, 2017, p. 3). How to do this varies within the literature with van Manen (2014, p. 26) arguing that we need to reflect on our research experiences with questioning that abstains from "theoretical, polemical, suppositional, and emotional intoxications."

My telling of my story in text provides a method through which the reader may gain insight into myself as an instrument/collaborative influence within the research. These elements will be discussed with the aim of enhancing transparency to facilitate reader trust in the research outcomes. There is no consensus on structuring of autoethnographic writing, it is though, a theory driven method employed across varied disciplines. (McIlveen, 2008). This is written with the aim of firstly enhancing my own cognizance of foresights to enable them to be bracketed during data collection and secondly, to assist the reader's understanding of influences upon the interpretation of data. This offering is brief and only focusses upon what I perceive to be potentially most influential.

3.5.2 Brief autoethnographic statement.

As a middle-aged schoolteacher with nearly thirty years of teaching experience, my body has felt the effects of teaching practice over this time. With three serious cancer diagnosis and having gone through associated chemotherapies, surgeries, and radiation treatments, I am conscious of my body. This body or corporeal consciousness extends to my interests in playing regular sport, doing yoga, and maintaining my fitness through jogging. This corporeal interest and awareness are evident in my undergraduate degree in psychology and qualifications in counselling and clinical hypnotherapy. Being cognizant of the negative, corporeal effects of varied stressors on the body, I have developed a vested interest in learning about management and coping strategies both for myself and those around me. With teacher friends, I am also exposed to their experiences and coping strategies. Experiencing and witnessing the negative consequences of what could be described as chronic occupational stress resulted in me pursuing post-graduate research within this area.

I value this experiential knowledge, believing that teaching is primarily learned through experience and that coping with the difficulties associated with teaching may be learned similarly. I consider experience as a teacher of teachers – a valued source of knowledge for the profession. With regards to the art of teaching, I learn from observation of others and conversation with teachers. We witness and hear accounts of what works and what doesn't, and we mould this knowledge to gain from it for what is required for the needs of our students and teaching contexts. I

believe that contextual and my own needs provide an impetus, and motivation or driving force for knowledge creation.

With a vested interest in stress and coping, together with an intimate awareness of the impact that teaching has on wellbeing, I position myself as an inbetweener – someone who has shared experiences to those being researched and can move fluidly between this inside position and that of the externally positioned researcher (Milligan, 2016). Positioning oneself as an inbetweener is conducive to the beliefs of (Gadamer, 1975; Heidegger, 1953; van Manen, 2016) in that people cannot really separate or bracket themselves entirely from their lifeworlds because they live within them. Humans have a shared familiarity with others, based upon experiences that individuals are able to discuss or witness (Lindseth & Norberg, 2004a). As an experienced teacher and beginning researcher I have positioned myself in between (Milligan, 2016), rather than either an insider or outsider as previously theorised within the social sciences. Chavez (2008) recognised the objectivity of the outsider positioning and the potential for deeper insights and bias with insider researchers. I personally feel that my positioning as an inbetweener will permit such insights. I believe the socialisation occurring within my post-graduate studies in preparation for this thesis, coupled with socialisation as a teacher contribute towards this positioning. This supports the previous work of Hellawell (2006) and Thomson and Gunter (2010) which argued against the dichotomous nature of researcher identity, actively positioning themselves in between, allowing fluidity in their movement between the insider and outsider positionings.

My positioning or perspective will not be representative of someone solely within the research context or external to the context but someone who is positioned within both, therefore aiming to negate the disadvantages of positioning solely within one perspective. As an inbetweener research, all participants within the present research were known to me either as teaching colleagues or friends. This had both positive and negative aspects associated with it. My knowledge of their teaching experiences allowed me to have insight into some background of their teaching dilemmas.

This aims to facilitate fluidity and the potential to bring new insights (Milligan, 2016). This in between positioning sits comfortably within hermeneutic phenomenology (van Manen, 2014) and allows me to utilise my own knowledge in the interpretation and communication of that gained from the experiences of others.

This anticipated new knowledge aims to contribute towards not only the teacher wellbeing literature but also towards my own wellbeing. The act of writing and sharing this brief auto-ethnographical account with my research supervisors enhanced my cognizance of foresights and the reflexive processes.

CHAPTER FOUR: STUDY ONE

The extant literature has indicated that teaching dilemmas are conflict situations associated with cognitive dissonance which elicits distress within individuals (Delaney, 2015). Within the dilemmatic space of teaching, this distress is a consistent occurrence for teachers. Multiple researchers such as Delaney (2015), Lampert, (1985) and Tillema and Kremer-Hayon (2005) claim that teaching dilemmas are inherent or common within teaching practice. My own teaching experience concurs with the prevalence or chronic nature of dilemmas within practice. It is therefore likely, that participants within the present research experience this similarly. Each participant within the present research shared their dilemmas that were associated with their distress tolerance experiences. While their dilemmas themselves were not the focus of the research questions, some examples included dealing with a support officer who gave a student too much leeway and having to manage that support officer, dealing with a struggling student while organising the remainder of the class for a practical subject, and policy dictating what should be occurring and an alternate action was actually required for the benefit of the student. Some examples of their dilemmas included Distress tolerance presents as a personal resource with potential to assist teachers to maintain their wellbeing. With these concepts in mind, this chapter articulates the methods employed within Study One to answer the following research questions.

1. What are the lived experiences of experienced teachers' distress tolerance associated with teaching dilemmas?
2. What are the meanings of the lived experiences of experienced teachers' distress tolerance associated with teaching dilemmas?

Study One was originally conducted to answer both research questions but following its completion, an additional study was undertaken to provide further depth of information for answering question two. Relevant tools and elements of methods employed within Study One are presented within this chapter.

4.1 Method

4.1.1 Purposive Sampling.

Within interpretive research, samples are selected to serve the purposes of the investigation (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). Hermeneutic phenomenology

(HP) requires purposive sampling for access to participants who have experienced the phenomena under investigation (Smith, 2016). Within purposive sampling, participants are generally chosen with regards to their “possession of the particular characteristics being sought” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018, p. 218). Teachers who had experiences of distress tolerance associated with teaching dilemmas were sought. Selection criteria were developed to identify suitable participants.

It was logical to assume that mature teachers would have extensive experiences of teaching dilemmas and of tolerance of the distress associated with them. Berl (2005) identified mature teachers as those being over 45 years of age with significant teaching experience. Adair, Lourey, and Taylor (2016) concurred in defining mature age Australians as those being over 45 years of age. The developmental stages of teaching model (Katz, 1972) argued that those with a minimum of five years teaching experience are at the highest experiential level, while (Khoshnevisan, 2017) in more contemporary research, it has been suggested that this varies between individuals.

The present research utilized these findings and purposefully sampled teachers with a minimum age of 45 years and increased Katz’ (1972) five-year classification of experienced teachers to ten to allow for Khoshnevisan’s (2017) identified individual differences. Selection criteria for sampling were therefore (a) teachers over 45 years of age with a minimum of ten years teaching experience and (b) those that have experienced teaching dilemmas. It was anticipated that this sample would provide the richness and depth of data required due to participants’ maturity and experience

4.1.2 Participant recruitment.

Enquiries were made to the New South Wales (NSW) State Education Applications Process (SERAP) to ascertain whether a National Application to Conduct Research in Schools was required to conduct my research. I received confirmation that no application was required as I was recruiting outside of any school communication channels. Community communication avenues were employed.

Recruitment occurred through the Australian Collaboratory for Career Employment & Learning for Living (ACCELL) website blog of my supervisor (McIlveen, 2020). See Appendix A for the blog entry. In addition to this, social

media entries were posted onto my personal Facebook page and on to the Facebook page of University of Southern Queensland's Higher Degree Research Department. The post was the same as that posted on the ACCELL page, and is provided in Appendix B. The participant consent form is in Appendix C. The social media releases were posted twice on both sites and the ACCELL post remained within the ACCELL blog. Links on these posts lead participants to further information and the consent form, provided in Appendices B and C. All forms received ethical approval from the University of Southern Queensland prior to their use, as required for the undertaking of the present research. Participants' consent forms were sent directly to my principal supervisor's email address for screening to prevent the possibility of any coercion for participation from myself. Following screening by my principal supervisor, signed forms and contact information were emailed to me. Participants known to me were initially contacted by phone and those that I did not know were emailed. Within this initial contact, relevant information was provided, questions were answered, and interview times were arranged.

It has been argued that sample size within interpretive research is determined by theoretical *saturation.* Cohen et al. (2018) recognized saturation as representing a stage within data analysis where no further insights, relationships or themes can be interpreted when all data is accounted for. Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2016) argued that this varies, dependent upon factors such as expertise of participants and the researcher and depth of themes. The researcher must therefore be flexible in defining the saturation point within the Study. Guest et al. (2016) argued that approximately twelve interviews can yield enough data for saturation in the investigation of experiences of homogeneous participants. Within phenomenological research there is variation in the number of participants considered to be sufficient, ranging typically between eight and 15 (Peoples, 2021). There were 10 participants within Study One.

4.1.3 Participants.

Participants were of a mature age and all currently practicing teachers, primarily working within state education. All satisfied the selection criteria of being over 45 years of age and having taught for 10 years or more. All had experienced teaching dilemmas, as indicated within their interviews. Most participants had been teaching for over 20 years. There were eight females and two males, with nine

currently working within the New South Wales public education system and the tenth within a private school in another state. Eight were working within my local teaching region, one in Sydney and the other within a private school in Melbourne. The present research focusses upon the dilemmatic space as a context for their teaching practice. This contextual concept provides an indication of the complexity and dilemma-laden nature of their work. Dilemmas are inherent within practice and as such, would be the associated psychological distress. While the present research does not provide a measure of the prevalence of dilemmas within the sample, the length of service each participant presented with indicates that each had experienced countless teaching dilemmas within their dilemmatic spaces. It can be logically assumed that they were very familiar with the psychological distress associated with them. Their names within the present research were changed to pseudonyms to protect their privacy.

4.2 Procedure

Hermeneutic phenomenological research, in accordance with that suggested by van Manen is relevant for investigation of practice. His methodology presents with utility for the present research that considers experiential knowledge to be of value to the teaching profession and a potential avenue for eliciting new knowledge of distress tolerance experiences within teaching contexts. Such experienced based knowledge, interpreted and communicated through van Manen's hermeneutic phenomenological methodology aims to produce findings with inherent meaning and potential resonance. Two studies were undertaken in answering the present research questions, with the first discussed within this chapter.

4.2.1 Hermeneutic phenomenological interviewing.

In accepting that language and vocabulary within it is shared and that I am familiar with the vocabulary of the teaching and research professions, interviewing provides an appropriate means of accessing others' experiences (Bevan, 2014). Gadamer (1975) saw conversation as the vehicle for language and a facilitating process for inquiry as it can be used to focus upon the "saying of the thing" or phenomenon under investigation. "Witnesses cannot be heard without narration" (Lindseth & Norberg, 2004a, p. 147).

People are witnesses to their own experiences and for the meaning of those experiences to be understood, they need to be narrated (Finlay, 2014). Individuals tell stories of their experiences and for a full understanding or interpretation of them, can write them down as texts. In the telling of the story or narration, people tend to organise what is said. Retelling an experience involves combining the past with the present to influence the future (Lindseth & Norberg, 2004a). It represents a dialect between the three. Such dialects when recorded and interpreted is the work of phenomenological hermeneutics. With teachers accustomed to and often sharing their experiences through stories (Hooker, 2016), eliciting conversations with teachers through interviews and recording their stories within texts presents with utility for eliciting the data required.

Within hermeneutic phenomenological interviews, language is exchanged and co-created between participants and the researcher. Researchers aim to elicit the participants' experiences of being-in-the world through their subjective accounts of what has been lived (Vandermause & Fleming, 2011). Participants share their consciousness of Being, allowing the researcher to gain access, uncover or to generate meaning inherent within these experiences (Bevan, 2014; Finlay, 2014; van Manen, 2016). The researcher aims to make sense of these accounts and to interpret meaning within them, utilising his or her own foresights to assist in this hermeneutic circular process. The present study therefore aimed to access participants' language and did so within the conversational interviews. Conversation between the researcher and participant aims to uncover experiential accounts through being open and presenting with a sense of wonder about the targeted phenomena. Researchers' preunderstandings are set aside, aiming not to judge or influence participants' experiential accounts. There is variation within the literature regarding how to conduct a hermeneutic phenomenological interview.

Lauterbach (2018) advocated for a structure which allowed participants to reconstruct and reflect upon their experiences within the contexts of their lives. This is achieved through the interviewer asking open-ended and clarification questions, listening more than speaking, avoiding leading questions, and cautiously using an interview guide, if required. An interview guide was utilised within the present research. Gulmond-Pourde (2009, p. 4) provided evidence-based interview questions that will be adapted for Study One such as "how did your body react when you had to face that situation," and "how would you describe the passage of time?"

Such questions aim to elicit responses to van Manen's existential elements of experiences - corporeality, spatiality, temporality, and relationality.

Within this interview process, both the participant and the researcher refrain from making evaluations or judgements and the participant narrates from lived experience perspectives (Lindseth & Norberg, 2004a). Within the present research, this process of restraint of evaluation or judgements was assisted through memoing after each interview. Memos provided opportunities for me to reflect from a metaphorical distance. The distance was provided through a passing of time and not being away from the interview contexts. This distance facilitated an understanding where my own biases and judgements were limited, and participants' experiences were interpreted as how they appeared. When narrating or telling these stories the *natural attitude* where judgements or appraisals of experiences are made (van Manen, 2016) is replaced by the phenomenological attitude which involves participants relating what they have experienced without judgements and researchers avoiding asking theory-laden questions or judging.

When engaged in the phenomenological attitude, interviewers encourage the participant to talk as freely as possible about the lived experience and during this process, remain reflective and conscious of their own bracketed foresights to prevent such things as leading questions (Bevan, 2014). Questioning can be used though to explicate participant knowledge of the context in which the phenomenon occurs, or for providing the participant with a foundation or base from which their experiences may be narrated. Their experiences aim to stand out from their horizons or knowledge at that time (van Manen, 1995. It is essentially a process where the participants' and the researcher's horizons meet in conversation. Descriptive questioning is then directed towards explicating the varying *modes of appearance* or ways the phenomena is experienced (Sokolowski, 2000). Interviewers *imaginatively varying* questioning can allow participants to talk about differing experiences of the same phenomena with this contributing towards dependability and trust of the data (Bevan, 2014). The second interviews were designed to elicit varying appearance modes. Following a summation of my own reflexive memoing, second interviews were conducted.

Contextualising participants' experiences within interviewing is advised as people exist within space, time, relationships, and within their own bodies (Bevan, 2014; Lauterbach, 2018). People cannot isolate experiences from the worlds in

which they occur as they cannot exist outside of them (van Manen, 2017b). As such, interviewing focussed only upon experiences within the boundaries of the "world" of teaching dilemmas within the dilemmatic space to ensure depth of knowledge was obtained on a narrow focus, rather than shallow knowledge focussed more broadly.

Interviews were conducted either through the Zoom online communication platform or through face-to-face interviews. Each were conducted at a time suitable for participants and within safe locations. Two online audio/visual interviews were conducted through the University's Zoom account and participant consent was obtained to record them. These were recorded using the Zoom recording capability. Eight participants resided within my teacher region and were able to be interviewed face-to-face. Interviews took place within in an interview room within my local community library. All were conducted outside of school hours.

Each face-to-face interview was recorded (with participants' permission) using the Smart Recorder application on an Android mobile phone. Participants were contacted 2 – 3 days following the interviews to check for any participant discomfort experienced within the interviews. No participants indicated any discomfort. Interview duration varied between 22 and 48 minutes. These procedures were followed within two phases or rounds of interviews undertaken within Study One of the present research.

4.2.2 Phase 1.

Within the first round of interviews within the present Study (Phase 1), the teaching dilemma acted as a trigger, aiming to stimulate the recall of memories of lived experiences (Bevan, 2014). Questioning to identify what teaching dilemma triggered distress occurred early within each interview. What was recalled by participants were memories of the experiences as interviewing occurred after the participant experiences. Discussion aimed to be in a conversational style to ensure participants felt relaxed, able to recall the memories, and willing to share them openly with me. My questioning aimed to elicit a sense of wonder within participants about their experiences, contributing towards the phenomenological attitude required. Table 1 presents the Phase 1. interview guide. It is noted that this was not strictly adhered to with all participants as the interviews were conversational and followed the lead of the participants. The guide provided a broad reminder of material to be addressed during the interview.

Table 1

Interview Guide for Phase 1

Introduction	• welcome and thanks • invite/answer participant questions • questions on teaching background/school etc to open communication and establish rapport
Body	• define and provide examples of teaching dilemmas • define tolerance and distress • ask participants to visualise their experiences to assist in recall • primary question: What is it like for you to tolerate distress associated with teaching dilemmas? • prompts: van Manen's lifeworld existentials used to prompt to ensure participants' focus is on experiences rather than reflections/evaluations of experiences, framed in present tense • e.g.: • What was your body doing when your being tolerant? • Describe the sensations of how time passed when you were being tolerant? • What was happening in your thinking…? • What was it like in your workspace…? • How you were relating with others…? • Can you share anything else that you recall about your experiences?
Conclusion	• invite/answer participant questions • arrange time to contact in future to check in with • thanks

4.2.3 Data transformation and interpretation: Existential.

Data analysis or transformation and interpretation (Peoples, 2021) within hermeneutic phenomenology requires repeated interaction or immersion within the data with a sense of wonder or high interest by the researcher (van Manen, 2014). I aimed towards this through the following actions. I firstly listened to all interview recordings for immersion in all data to firstly obtain a holistic or *naïve* perspective (Lindseth & Norberg, 2004a). This holistic view was naïve in that it represented an initial view that was anticipated to change through reading and re-reading. Within the hermeneutic circle, researchers focus upon the whole, move to the parts, back to the whole again, and repeat as required. With this holistic view, I then began to examine the parts, represented by the recordings of each interview and my own

reflexive journal entries. To further familiarise and immerse myself within the data, I transcribed one interview, and the remainder were done by a professional transcription service, approved by the university.

Each audio recording was listened to again in accompaniment of the transcription to check for transcription accuracy. Minor omissions by the transcribing service were addressed through my own written additions to the original transcripts. These omissions tended to be what was not heard or misheard by transcribers and corrected through the third listening of the recordings. My understanding of the data deepened with thoughts recorded within my journal as they occurred during my listening to the recordings.

With this deeper understanding of the data, the data was now able to be organised. Evidence suggests that the lifeworld existentials provide a suitable lens through which lived experiences may be explored and organised (Gulmond-Plourde, 2009a; van Manen, 2014). As such they provided an initial broad, coding framework which allowed me to consider the essences of participant experiences from a perspective that aimed to balance the deep knowledge gained from my own immersion within the data. Coding represents a means of defining what data is about (Cohen et al., 2018). The existential coding framework permitted me to focus upon participants' experiential accounts rather than their evaluations of opinions of them. This perspective allowed for emergence of commonalities and differences within the data from a unique perspective representing an amalgam of my own interpretations and the textual representations of the data obtained.

Following the procedure adopted by Rich, Graham, Taket, and Shelley (2013), one life work existential was used a frame for each of the ten initial transcripts and then the next existential provided the next frame for each transcript. It was thought that this permitted each transcript to be examined on an equal basis. All existentials aimed to be addressed without bias or preference and were applied in a random order with an associate blindly picking labelled cards from a box to determine the order of application. The order of analysis was corporeality (lived body), temporality (lived time), and spatiality (lived space), followed by relationality (lived relationships). To apply these theoretical existentials, they required operationalisation for the purposes of the present research.

The evidence-based processes employed by (Rich et al., 2013; van Manen, 2014) provided guidance in defining the existentials for application. Participant data

that were encompassed within the following operationalisations of the lifeworld existentials were included within analysis and interpretation. Each existential provided a frame in which to view and encapsulate data which were later organised into themes. The existentials represented an acknowledgement that peoples' experiences occur through their bodies and that these experiences can be interpreted through these frames or lenses. Data that were relevant corporeality which described their bodily sensations, experiences, and understandings of their own bodies in dealing with teaching dilemmas were grouped within this frame. An example may include comments such as "I felt stressed." This was followed by participant comments that were associated with temporality.

Lived time referred to the way participants experienced time within their tolerance of the distress of teaching dilemmas. Comments were related to how their circumstances and chronological age were experienced in terms of their present, past, and future. Participants' comments may include statements such as "time went really slowly" or, "I felt rushed." Spatiality referred to participants' experiences of their physical and emotional spaces and divisions between both private and public spaces (Rich et al., 2013). Example statements related to this may include such language as "the walls were closing in" or, "I needed my own space." Relationality refers to relationships that were discussed and how they were described by participants. Referring to this existential may involve comments such as "talking with my colleagues really helped." It is noted that existentials are interconnected (van Manen, 2016) and as such, some participant experiences were initially collated within multiple existentials. Only data relevant to the research question which involved participants' experiences of distress tolerance associated with teaching dilemmas were included in the initial data-organisational stage. With no set methodology within HP research, the processes used within the present research were an eclectic combination of tools and strategies suggested by Finlay (2014) and Lindseth and Norberg (2004a) within the broader framework of van Manen (2014). Lindseth and Norberg (2004) suggested the identification of phrases which exemplified single meanings to aid in the later interpretation of them. The following initial means of organising data was simplistic but also presented with utility, enabling me to initially organise and then to use this structure for later processes.

Each participant phrase or sentence relevant to an existential was recorded in a table under each existential heading. These tables are provided in Appendix D. An example of this table for Karla is contained in Table 2.

Table 2

Phase 1: Karla's Comments in Relation to Each Existential

Lived Body	Lived Time	Lived Space	Lived Relationality
• I thought about if for a while • I started to believe it really shouldn't happen • I could rationalise it by saying that's just one person who doesn't see what everyone else is seeing. • in that way, I think I can move past it. • I didn't allow it to upset me too much. • I was quite happy if people were going to say no, you're in the wrong. • Is it me? • if I was in the wrong, I was going to accept that. • I guess I did feel a bit weird bringing it up • it sort of felt like having a whinge but it wasn't really	• I thought about if for a while • then the other thing is that situation won't arise again because the principal is moving on. • In that way I think I can move past it. • I thought, then we can have the conversations next year and make sure it doesn't happen again. • it didn't go on for too long. • so it didn't drag on	• I'm happy to move forward	• I ran it buy a few other people • I probably responded to them more than my own conscience • I booked an appointment with the principal for him to be able to explain his decision to me • I went and spoke to the deputy principal. • we needed to make sure that this should never happen to anyone else because it's not right. • I felt better that other people could see my point of view • the fact that other people could see where I was coming from that made me feel a lot better. • they could see what I was seeing. • we sort of got it sorted • booked an appointment with the boss

This table was read many times within the hermeneutic circle processes, and this resulted in some minor changes which included moving some data to other existentials perceived to be more relevant. Also, some elements that shared commonalities in word meanings were combined into one data unit. Through reading and re-reading, certain commonalities or thematic codes emerged.

4.2.4 Data transformation and interpretation: Themes.

Thematic labels were used within the existential frames to group data which shared features. Commonalities or themes represented similarities in language, indicating comments that were similar in meaning within the text, (Finlay, 2014; Lindseth & Norberg, 2004a). "Insight cultivators" which represented elements of my own foresights (van Manen 2014, p. 324) assisted me to approach the data with an awareness of the concepts and issues within the field. The literature review undertaken for the present research assisted considerably with this. During this interpretive phase, my foresights were utilised considerably in interpretation of the data. My prior knowledge related to the targeted phenomena enabled me to conceptually combine these elements of text into the meaning-based groups that represented the conceptual label or code that I gave them. Codes represented participant's actions or undertakings within their experiences of tolerance of distress that were common to a few participants (3-5) and were used to establish a broad interpreted data set to be further combined into broader, more encompassing conceptual groups or themes with corresponding codes which represented them (Lindseth & Norberg, 2004a). Broader, more encompassing thematic codes or themes subsumed the early developed codes within them. Themes that were first developed were tentative in that they were able to be revised following re-reading and writing.

Tentative themes represented constituent elements of that could be subsumed within each existential frame or lens. As an example, a theme of "emotional labour" could sit within the corporeality frame as the labour represents mind/body experiences. Tentative themes are just that in that they represent initial labels that were later revised through more reading, writing, and immersion within the data. These tentative thematic labels were also repeatedly reflected upon within my research journal as further data immersion occurred through a further rereading of transcriptions and the existentials data organisation. An additional round of coding

followed this. This resulted in some minor adjustments to the tentative themes having identified that some codes represented subthemes within larger, more encompassing codes such as *acceptance* and *reset/recentre* being subsumed within the code of *choosing a helpful mindset or perspective* and *managing emotions* being reinterpreted as *emotional labour*. An additional theme of *taking appropriate action* was also added and seen as separate from *thinking to resolve the dilemma*. *Discuss with colleagues*, *discuss with supervisors* and *communicating with others* was subsumed into *communicating with others to share emotions and/or seek their perspectives*. These minor changes resulted in the revised, yet still tentative themes of

- *a helpful mindset/perspective*
- *respite from the dilemma*
- *emotional awareness*
- *emotional labour*
- *follow your values/beliefs*
- *communicate with colleagues (share emotions and/or seek others' perspectives)*
- *think about how to resolve the dilemma*

Throughout this process it was kept in mind that van Manen's (2014) approach is one of writing and re-writing as information and interpretations change through movements within the hermeneutic circle. Being cognizant of this, my tentative or preliminary themes were articulated, fully aware that they may alter with progression through the present research. The hermeneutic circle interpretive processed continued with a second round of participant interviews within phase 2 of the present research.

4.2.5 Phase 2.

The second round of interviews was undertaken firstly, for *member checking* where participants were given the opportunity to examine my interpretations for their credibility (Peoples, 2021). Debate exists within HP research on this interpretive checking as some would say that interpretations at any time represent an individual's truth which is correct for them but problematically, may not be so for others. I consciously included this interpretive member checking as I am an inexperienced researcher and believed this would provide me with necessary feedback on the

credibility of my conclusions. Second interviews also aimed to allow participants to describe any additional and relevant experiences they may have had an to add any additional information that may have thought of since the first interviews. The interview guide used for this phase of the present research is provided in Table 3.

Table 3

Interview guide for Phase 2

Introduction	• thanks, housekeeping, guide to what will occur, reminder of concepts (including examples) and brief results/tentative themes summary • request to record • reminder of focus upon experiences rather than judgements etc.
Body	• focus upon each tentative theme: example questions • example questions/requests - • "Does…(theme) represent your experiences you've had with tolerating the distress of teaching dilemmas?" • "Tell me about any additional experiences you've had of distress tolerance associated with teaching dilemmas since we first talked." • "How did you experience the passing of time when that occurred?" • "What did your body feel like when that was happening?" • "How did you experience your relationships at that time?" • "What was your experience of the space around you when that was occurring?"

These interviews were conducted in the same style as those undertaken in the first interview round, within phase one. Once again, the guide was not strictly adhered to, given that the interviews were conversational in style, and aimed to elicit participant conversation, rather than to control it. The guide acted as a reminder to myself of the material I aimed to cover within the conversation. As an inexperienced researcher, the guide assisted me to keep focus upon the targeted phenomena.

In organising the phase two interviews, participants were individually emailed information on progress of the research and to invite them to participate in a second interview. Emails contained the tentative themes and invited participants to attend another interview for the opportunity to comment upon their own relevant experiences, relevant to these tentative themes. Participant information and consent

forms were still relevant and current for this second interview phase. If it was not possible for participants to attend a second interview, they were invited to comment in a return email to me. I was very conscious of the time-poor nature of teaching and wished to provide an alternate opportunity for comment through email, if a second interview was not possible for them. Data from both interviews, together with email replies and my own notes within my reflexive journal were considered as relevant data. Six participants agreed to a second interview, one sent an audio response and another an email reply. Two of the ten original participants did not reply or agree to a second interview.

One second round interview was conducted face to face as circumstances permitted and five were conducted through the Zoom online meeting platform. Interview duration was between twenty and thirty-eight minutes and the introductory and conclusion conversations were not recorded due to mounting transcription costs. All interviews were once again recorded with participants' permission, with each undertaken with identical recording methods as were used for the first round of interviews.

4.2.6 Data transformation and interpretation: Existentials.

All sets of participant data were transcribed by the same university approved transcription service. I transcribed the audio message left by one participant who preferred not to be interviewed for a second time. The email reply sent by the additional participant who preferred not to be interviewed again was used as data. To ensure immersion within the data, I listened to each recorded interview, accompanied by the transcripts, and made minor alterations to include any information which was not heard/transcribed by the transcription service. Following this immersion in each participant's data, my emotional and cognitive reactions were recorded in note form within my reflexive journal.

With these reactions in mind, I once again, recorded words, phrases or sentences that were relevant to the lifeworld existential categories within the table used for organising data for the first round of interviews. The additional data from the second round of interviews was recorded in a different colour and below that from the first round of interviews. Phase two data for Karla is presented in Table 4. This table provides Karla's data that was originally recorded in a different colour below that

recorded for her phase one interviews. Other participants' phase two data is provided in Appendix D.

Table 4

Phase 2: Karla's Comments in Relation to Each Existential

Corporeality	Temporality	Spatiality	Relationality
• talk to myself, deliberately remind myself • picked a hard profession and can't expect to just cruise along, we've got to step up and be positive, • deliberately put it out of your head • you do have to push it out for sure • I'm aware of the emotions I'm pushing out • think a lot about how to solve the problem, how to go about it what, needs to happen, come up with a range of things • win to solve problems but prepared to take some backward ground	• second or third time you come back you get a fresh look an issue, it's often a different perspective, when you come back to it the emotions tend to lessen and you get a better perspective	• change jobs or roles a bit when I feel as though I need a change, it refreshes me • leave it all behind when I get home, I don't want to think or talk about it • switch that off when you get home and get back to it the next day • do something to distract yourself, poor a wine, relax, do something fun, • try and make sure I've got a bit of variety, get out of school for sport, make sure I've got different interests to what I do every day, meet people from all over this state and realise we're not so bad	• we're public servants, we serve people, I'm there to assist kids, it's not about us in the end, that's what we signed up for • talk to colleagues, let them know exactly what happened and get their take on it, talking to people that are retired so they might have a different viewpoint, get it all out there and listen to other people • run things by people you respect without the emotion because you don't know them so well • speak to people in other settings so don't get bogged down in the day to day

	• have some different roles, mix it up a bit

Note. Karla's data for phase one interview is presented Table 2.

4.2.7 Data transformation and interpretation: Thematic.

With tentative themes in mind, participant data for both phases were re-read. Within this process, some participant comments were subsumed within others due to varying terminology which had similar meanings such as "talked with," and "chatted with" taken to have similar meanings. In this undertaking, certain sub-elements merged within more overarching concepts which encapsulated the meaning of these sub-elements. Narrowing down of data allowed for further clarity in themes to emerge. The process continued until I felt no further changes could be made to the thematic codes. Changes made represented a refinement of the tentative coding labels, guided by the existential frames Finlay (2014) acknowledged that many iterations and interpretations of the data occur until saturation is reached where no further changes are to be made and/or no additional data is required. This stage of the present research represented a stage of saturation within this thematic analysis. At this stage of saturation, data could be articulated in terms of results and relevant discussion.

4.3 Results

Participants were asked to talk about their lived experiences of distress tolerance associated with teaching dilemmas. With their being no definitive way of identifying phenomenological themes (Isabirye & Makoe, 2018), van Manen's existential experiential frames/lenses of corporeality, temporality, spatiality, and relationality allowed for themes to emerge within these perspectives of experience. In keeping with van Manen's guidance to produce findings which elicit a sense of wonder about targeted phenomenon through evocative text, results aim to be presented in a style that generates the reader's sense of wonder about the nature and meaning of distress tolerance and in the process, possibly reflect upon his or her own experiences of it.

To accomplish this, data from both phases of interviews are combined rather than presented separately, aiming to provide the reader with a relatable sense of meaning of the distress tolerance experience. It is noted that there was some variation within participants' experiences indicated within the second round of

interviews. Variations were encompassed within the interpretations. Emergent interpretations and corresponding themes aim to make the targeted phenomena “come to life” by explicating the phenomena in everyday language. Use of everyday language rather than jargon aims to encourage and facilitate readers’ understanding of what it is like for participants and with reflection, what it may resemble for themselves. Results are presented with themes subsumed under existential headings that most encapsulate each theme. What will be presented within the results is data that are indicative of this theme which is indicative of the theoretical concept within the extant literature. My own interpretive comments presented are associated with relevant quotes from participants to support each thematic label. Prior to this, a *first-person phenomenological account* is provided to provide the reader with a a form of knowing of the experience of distress tolerance for teachers within the “swamp” of professional practice. Finlay (2012) described first person phenomenological accounts as tools or literary forms that can evoke the truthfulness of lived experiences. It is autobiographical writing from a first-person perspective (my own) that communicates an existential understanding of participants’ experiences. Such writing aims to engage the reader while explicating the experiences within a literary-metaphorical sense (Finlay, 2012). Van Manen (1990, p. 130) argues that a “phenomenological text succeeds when it lets us see that which shines through, that which tends to hide itself. My own first-person account aims to communicate the participants’ experiences from my own perspective as an inbetweener researcher and in doing so, provide the reader with a connection between my auto ethnographical account and participants’ data. This aims to contribute towards the transparency of interpretations of participants’ data which follows.

4.3.1 First person phenomenological account.

> The freedom of flight permitted on a seesaw with a companion of an even weight is not permitted to me, being weighed down by the heaviness of my tired, stiff, and aching body, crafted from decades of chronically coping within teaching. The care-free sway and swing of the ride is no longer there, replaced by heavy efforts required to ensure that my companion gets her turn (L. Hargreaves, personal communication, August 1st, 2022).

The seesaw scenario illustrates the fluctuating nature of teaching, while the heaviness of body signifies the embodied nature of practice and possible toll that

practice has upon the teachers' bodies. Students' needs are addressed despite any hardships to myself by illustrated by my ensuring that my companion gets to seesaw.

It is hoped that this first-person account provides an additional means for the reader to gain meaning from my interpretations of participant data. These interpretations are presented in relation to relevant existentials and thematic labels used to convey meaning within these interpretations. It is noted that some themes may be encompassed within varying existentials but are presented within those deemed most relevant.

4.4 Emotional Labor: Corporeality

Participants' experiences thematically labelled as emotional labor were interpreted through the corporeal existential lens. Elements of these experiences were indicative of the corporeal nature of their actions.

Van Manen (2014) suggested that people experience their lives through their bodies. Individuals' lifeworlds are embodied in that they use their senses, physicality, intellect, and emotions as they interact within their worlds. Each bodily aspect can mutually influence the other as people use their bodies within their lifeworlds. Human bodies act both as vehicles for and interpreters of experience. Information obtained through the body's actions is used and reflected upon as individuals go about their lives. The body provides the link to lifeworlds (van Manen, 2014). Meaning can be interpreted from peoples' being within their lifeworlds. People express meaning within their bodily actions within their contexts. As such, participants' accounts of their bodily experiences of distress tolerance provided valuable data which was interpreted to reveal the themes or commonalities within that data. Some related commonalities that emerged within the data can be expressed with the theme of emotional labor. This theme is argued to be indicative of the theoretical concept of emotional labor which features within the extant literature in relation to many helping professions, such as teaching.

Lived experiences of distress tolerance, as indicated within the present research were portrayed as a metaphorical wearing of a cumbersome or heavy emotional mask which depicts not what is within but instead, an external façade of emotional neutrality. Neutrality of emotions was thought of as required of teachers within their working spaces. The "false face" or emotional mask on public display does not mirror what lays behind it. This effortful disguise conceals to not reveal the

true emotional experience of the teacher. Distress is experienced within, but continually hidden behind this veil of dutiful composure.

Composure was required to allow participants to maintain relationships with those around them and to allow them to continue doing what was required of them in their teaching. The term "labor" indicates a laboriousness of the required conscious bodily efforts to acknowledge the distress and then to supress it behind their emotional masks. These facets of the emotional labor experiences were illustrated through participants' comments.

A conscious awareness of the distress was illustrated by Daniel as he was "aware that the frustration was there" and "I felt my blood boil." Karla was "aware of the emotions I was pushing out." Effortful action was demonstrated by participants to not let their emotions show. Anna stated that she "couldn't let the student see how cranky and frustrated I was" and Olivia "put on a smiley-brave face." She "felt like an actress" and clearly, not like herself. Their emotional masks were for those around them rather than the participants themselves, illustrated by Daniel wanting to "show that it doesn't affect me." These actions of emotional labor appeared to also be in service of the participants' purpose of teaching with Maurie reminding himself of why he was there, which was "to teach."

Participants' bodies were very involved in their emotional labor experiences through such actions as feeling the emotions, acknowledging them, and then taking action to mask them. One participant's thoughts, presented with a variation. Deb presented with outlying data, not supporting the emotional labor experiences identified by others. She stated that I didn't ignore or push my emotions away." She instead took action to contribute positively towards her own wellbeing. Deb "took a deep breath in and pushed it out and then used my hands as well to push it out to reset myself so I could start again." Her experiences did not indicate any masking of her emotions. It is noted that most participants' indicated actions that fall within the conceptual label of emotional labor. The theoretical conceptualization of emotional labor will be presented within the discussion for this Study. Further participant experiences illustrated a second theme of *committed action* which can be encompassed within the lived time existential due to committed action due to participants indicating a sensed experience of the passing of time in relation to their actions.

4.5 Committed Action: Temporality

Due to the time conscious nature of participants' committed action, this theme was subsumed within the temporality existential. Participants' committed action appeared to convey a sense of time within them.
Experiences of lived time can be thought of in laymen's term as a form of mental time-travel where and individual can think of the past, present, or future and experience the passing of time in varied ways. Within someone's experience, he or she may perceive time as passing quickly while engaged in a preferred activity or alternatively, time may be perceived as passing slowly in an unpreferred activity. Within the present research, participants tended to focus upon their experiences of the passing of time, in relation to what needed to occur in the present and/or the future.

Each participant had been influenced by the numerous and varied experiences they had lived over their teaching careers. Their experiential background provided them with a foundation of knowledge that accompanied and more than likely, influenced their distress tolerance experiences. This foundation from the past gave form to their present experiences reported within the present research. "The past shapes the present" (Gulmond-Plourde, 2009a, p. 6) in terms of lived experiences. Participants' minimum of ten years teaching experience, with most having considerably more, provided them with a personal data base of information that assisted them to tolerate their present-focussed distress tolerance experiences. Although teaching is temporally located – relying on clock time during the day, participants' experiences of the passing of time illustrated a focus upon a required "quickness' of action within it. Their temporal experiences were demonstrated within their accounts of action in response to their distress, thematically labelled as *committed action*. The theoretical concept of committed action will be explicated within the later discussion. Participants' data that relates to their actions, interpreted as committed, is presented.

Committed action within the present research primarily represented teaching action required of participants in the immediate presence of their tolerance of distress. Action was generally aimed at addressing their teaching dilemmas rather than the distress associated with them. Action was directed primarily towards addressing the dilemmas as the cause of the distress. This represented a form of proactive, rather than reactive agency in their tolerance experiences. Rather than act

to tolerate the distress itself, participants aimed to reduce or to prevent it by addressing their dilemmas as the causes of the distress. Such actions were undertaken quickly, illustrative of the often time-poor nature of teaching. With all participants indicating their commitment to the needs of their students, their action in addressing their dilemmas were labelled as committed due to the high level of commitment to students' needs demonstrated by them.

Participants' high value placed upon students' needs and their commitment to them, combined with the time-poor nature of practice, may have provided an impetus for the quick action demonstrated. Their quick action of addressing the teaching dilemmas allowed participants to return as soon as possible to addressing their students' needs. This could be understood as a dutiful service, acting in the interests of others in accordance with what was valued by participants. Participants' data supports this notion of their actions being indicative of a means of acting within an awareness of the present and their perceived time constraints. These appeared to have contributed towards them addressing their distress at its source, enabling them to continue as soon as possible with their valued directions of addressing students' needs. Illustration of this came within participants' accounts.

This awareness of the present time was exhibited by Anna stating that "in that moment in time where you are trying to sort out the incident you are not seeing the whole school, you are just seeing this space in time." Within our lives in general, many of us experience situations which require all our attention where a focus on the present is required to deal with them. The dilemmatic space is encompassing and requiring of teachers' present-focus upon it to act appropriately with commitment to their students' needs. Imagine if you will, a situation where you are aiming to contain, educate, and motivate twenty-five others according to government regulations, within a small space as you are trying to deal with a dilemma that distresses you. Could you afford to be focussing on how distressed you are within the situation? Maybe you will be focussed on your present situation and trying to do what is required of you as soon as possible.

Committed action by teachers within the present research was focussed on the present (dealing with the teaching dilemma) and shaped by their past experiences. Acting with professionalism in focussing upon students' needs within was evident. "I acted in a responsible adult way – was professional" stated Maureen, while Maurie "figured out the best way to resolve it, trying to be professional."

Anna "did the best for my student while I was with him." The time-poor nature of teaching with the myriad of tasks expected of them, generally requires tasks to be completed quickly. Participants' accounts of their committed actions also evidenced awareness of the time-poor nature of teaching.

Maurie stated "I dealt with it quickly as you couldn't dwell on it when others are impacting you at the same time." Deb "tried to solve the dilemma first, solving it quickly." Daniel stated that he "saw this space in time, dealt with it as quickly as I could - as other situations were impacting me at the same time." This need to act quickly due to what was interpreted as an awareness of their experiences of time passing quickly was counteracted with Kia's outlying experience. Kia's "slow, gradual approach" for dealing with her specific dilemma appeared more illustrative of the specific nature of her dilemma rather than a broadly adopted approach. Her gradual approach still represented dilemma-directed rather than distress-focussed action. Participant's such as Kia's experience of time relates to the sense of space.

4.6 Restorative Mental Break: Spatiality

The thematic label of restorative mental break aims to encapsulate the meaning of experiences which involved experiences of space that served restorative purposes for participants. Their restorative experiences involved a change to their senses of space.

The existential concept of spatiality requires thinking beyond the conceptualisation of physical spaces and more towards other applications of space such as personal, emotional, and public/private spaces. Participants reported a psychological distancing or mental space away from the dilemma and associated distress, involving engagement in preferred alternative activities. This was experienced as cognitively refreshing, hence; participants' reported abilities of a cognitive and felt "renewal" in dealing with their dilemmas and the distress. It could be thought of as a "holiday in your head."

Participants reported creating distance between themselves and their dilemmas to facilitate their own mental restoration and/or to elicit different perspectives on their dilemmas and associated emotions. Conscious cognitive distancing was demonstrated by Karla who stated she was well-practised to "switch that off when I get home and then come back to it the next day." This indicated conscious effort to change both her physical and cognitive personal spaces. Karla's

changing of physical space from school to home was associated with her altered cognitive space in changing her focus from the school context to home. She would consciously do things to distract her attention away from thinking about her dilemma and "do something fun." Such activities were restorative for her. Her attention diverted from her school space to an internal space that she experienced as positive and reinforcing. She also created variety in her work during the year by taking on different roles as it "refreshes me." Her awareness of her own need to facilitate personal spaces for herself that were restorative were evident.

Olivia shared this restorative distancing experience with her comment that she "took a step back to free me from it." While altering or distancing herself from the dilemmatic space, conscious inner or interior space experiences were reported. Olivia commented that she turned inwards (within her personal, cognitive space) in her distress tolerance experience - "I retreated and stayed quiet" while Kia utilised her internal space to "think about it for a while and to talk to myself." Other conscious, inner space experiences were explicated such as Wendy's who stated that she "went through all the pros and cons – what I can control and what I can't." She claimed, "it's about making peace with what is." This retreating or personal distancing from their dilemmatic spaces and associated distress distancing may have enabled the restorative inner work to occur.

Participants' conscious distancing experiences appeared not to be an escape or avoidance of the situation but a temporary retreat or means of refreshing or resetting themselves. Wendy's "take a mental break from it – absolutely" and Anna's "when I'd finished work, I didn't dwell on it and had a different focus" illustrated this. This was interpreted as an opportunity for a mental "holiday" which provided participants with some associated benefits that breaks can bring. Many people may be familiar with breaks away from the everyday workspaces being restorative. Doing something compatible with interests, occupying thoughts, being physically or mentally distanced from everyday pressures, and fascinated or interested in what is occurring within this different space, can assist in recovering from the distress.

Karla's comments provided illustration of this. She saw that distance away from her dilemmatic space provided her with a freshness and lessening of intensity of the emotions she was experiencing – "when you come back you get a fresh look at the issue, it's often a different perspective and the emotions tend to lessen." "I freed

myself from it" was Olivia's opportunity to be within her own personal space, free of the psychological discomfort she was experiencing. Wendy took a step back to "do some mindfulness things to emotionally distance myself from whatever is happening." Anna "let it rest so I could come at it from a different angle." When she finished work for the day, she provided herself with this "holiday" space within her thinking indicated by her comment "I don't dwell on it, I have a different focus." This distancing from the dilemmatic space and work within participants' inner spaces was articulated by Wendy who stated that she "took a step back and chilled a little." Maureen articulated some personal transformation that occurred when she had an extended absence from her dilemma "I discovered a new way of being when I was away from there." This change of space and the associated experiences provided participants with a new focus that appeared restorative for them. Additional experiences reported by participants were indicative of a seeking of collegial support.

4.7 Relationality: Collegial Support

Participant's experiences were all within the social milieu of schools and could be understood in terms of their relationships within it. The theme of collegial social support provided an indication of meaning of those experiences.

Teachers work within social worlds, shared with other people through communicative relationships. Within individuals' lived relationships they can understand themselves and their experiences through these relationships. Relationships can be thought of as providing a metaphorical mirror to our own selves. This self in relation to others concept is considered by Gulmond-Plourde (2009, p. 5) to "constitute our invisible whole." To understand the "whole" or the meaning of lived experiences, others within lived worlds require consideration. Teaching is built upon relationships and as such, relationality or the lived experience of relationships requires consideration for understanding teachers' distress tolerance.

The relationality existential is particularly relevant in that participants sought out supportive relationships with other teachers which provided them with an outlet for emotional release and/or alternative perspectives on the dilemmas they were experiencing. Teachers actively sought communication with other teachers because "only other teachers really understand other teachers" as stated by Maureen. This was shared by Daniel who "talked with other teachers who are in a similar teaching

situation" and Anna who claimed that she "talked to someone I respect who is on the same plain and has similar philosophies – someone who is on the same wavelength as I think we should be." Kia found emotional release in talking with colleagues as demonstrated by her comment "definitely shared emotions with them" and "sought out their opinions – looking if they had similar instances and how they dealt with it." She valued their input to "get a little insight into a different way." Karla "talked to colleagues "to get their take on it" while Wendy "professionally shared emotions to gain other peoples' perspectives, seeking out their wisdom based on their own experiences." She stated that she "gets a range of perspectives and it's reassuring because you know it's not just you…it's validating."
Trusted teachers tended to be sought for support as "they are in a similar situation" as stated by Daniel. Wendy commented that she "took advice from others who have been in the game longer or look at it from a different perspective." She also stated that "you need someone to bring you back to something that's a bit more balanced." Anna talked to respected others within the profession "who are on the same plain and have similar philosophies," commenting that "if you agree with them and you've behaved and managed the situation, that gives you self-respect, importance, and wellbeing." Maureen recognised that colleagues "get what you're going through." Daniel spoke of debriefing with colleagues "they back you up and have your back." Colleagues sought by participants performed the role of resource provider, providing not only an outlet for emotions but also varying perspectives on the issues or dilemmas at hand. They could be thought of as wise friends. Participants' experiences of their relationships within their dilemmatic spaces were valued and presented as being supportive, helping them to deal not only with their dilemmas but also the associated psychological discomfort. In tolerating their distress, participants' experiences were interpreted through existential lenses and commonalities that emerged within them. These commonalities were thematically labelled, and these themes are now addressed in relation to the extant literature.

4.8 Discussion

Study One provided answers to the research questions in that it identified what were participants' experiences of distress tolerance associated with their teaching dilemmas and the meanings of those experiences. Firstly, their experiences of distress tolerance were provided by their texts which represented their actions or

undertakings in their tolerance of distress. These chunks of text represented what participants experienced through their own undertaking. Meaning was given to these text chunks through the processes of interpretation of their data. Meaning was given to text chunks that represented commonalities and these commonalities were in turn, given a label or thematic code that represented what was shared amongst these groups of experiences. The themes themselves are indicative of the meanings given to participants' experiences. The themes of emotional labor, restorative mental break, collegial support, and committed action provide language that conveys what participants' experiences were interpreted as meaning. The extant literature can provide additional understandings to add to the meanings of the interpreted themes within the present research.

4.8.1 Emotional Labor.

Teaching is an intensely emotional profession and frequently requires emotional work, defined as intentional and goal directed behaviours performed to improve emotional wellbeing in others (Hargreaves, 2001). The work undertaken aims to induce positive emotions and/or to repair or regulate others' negative emotions. Such work can involve the expression and/or suppression of and individual's own emotions for organisational or situational requirements, known as emotional labor (Hochschild, 1983). Within teaching situations Yin and Lee (2012) argued that this is a process whereby teachers attempt to create and manage their emotional expressions and feelings based upon the norms of teaching. Emotional work is undertaken in service to both present socially desirable emotions (Isenbarger & Zembylas, 2006) and to elicit those in others (Chang, 2009). Experiences that involved *surface acting* (Hochschild, 1983) involve people creating an outward appearance or "putting on a face" to ensure that their emotional displays were acceptable within their contexts. This surface acting appeared quite evident within participants of the present research. Grandey (2003) suggested that surface acting represented individuals' efforts to display desirable emotions for organizational purposes which was undertaken through varied physiological, cognitive, and external expressions.

Participants within the present research indicated they did not openly display their distress to those around them and instead, chose to mask their true emotions to present socially desirable emotions, relevant for their teaching situations. This

outward facing façade of emotional neutrality was consciously displayed to assist in maintaining a positive context for teaching and learning, satisfying the purposes of the organization. The efforts required of teachers to consistently do this have negative associations with wellbeing.

This dissonance or disconnection between the felt or experienced internal emotions and those expressed is associated with psychological strain (Wang, Hall, & Taxer, 2019). Chang (2009) suggested that emotional labor, involving the expression of positive emotions and hiding of the negative, can elicit an instructional burden that can result in burnout. Greater occupational stress has been associated with surface acting (Hulsheger, Lang, & Maier, 2010). Researchers also have indicated that surface acting has corresponded with exhaustion (Basim, Begenirbas, & Can Yalcin, 2013; Naring, Briet, & Brouwers, 2006). In referring back to the equilibrium model of wellbeing developed by (Dodge et al., 2012), emotional labor (surface acting) is viewed as a challenge, rather than as a personal resource to assist in coping.

It may be that the emotional labor presented by participants within the present research assisted in an acute sense, enabling them to cope with their immediate distress, but in the long term, may elicit further occupational stress, exhaustion, or burnout(Hulsheger et al., 2010). With teachers consistently experiencing teaching dilemmas and the associated distress (Delaney, 2015) and emotional labor challenging teachers' wellbeing equilibrium, emotional labor as a facet of distress tolerance appears questionable as a tool for wellbeing. It may in fact have been a detriment to the bodies of participants within the present research.

Emotional labor is acted out through the body and its consequences are experienced within the body as are the signs of stress, exhaustion, or burnout. Could it be that truthful expressions of teacher emotions, rather than concealment through emotional labor may present with more utility for teachers' wellbeing? Participants' other actions and undertakings within their distress tolerance experiences and encapsulated within the themes of the present research may present with more value to their wellbeing.

4.8.2 Restorative mental break.

Within the present research, a restorative mental break represents a personal resource within the wellbeing equilibrium model, designed to restore equilibrium

following an imbalance caused by a challenge. Silverman (2018) provided a reconsideration of the mechanism of respite or restoration within her work on respite for carers. Her work present with potential relevance for the present research. Teachers within this Study sought a break from their dilemmatic spaces, seeking some form of restoration in wellbeing in doing so. Restoration may be likened to a sense of balance or "re-grounding" as articulated by (Silverman, 2018, p. 522). This re-grounding or restoration of equilibrium represents the outcome of the break taken. Mechanisms postulated within this involve an association with participants' lived space. A space can be imbued with memories of it being calm and peaceful and re-experiencing this space can elicit a reconnection with these feelings. Experiences of space may also invoke engagement with one's own ideas or thoughts in relation to interests and past experiences which are perceived as comforting (Silverman, 2018). Engaging in certain activities of interest within this "comforting" space may act similarly.

Lehto and Leho (2019), working with attention restorative theory (Kaplan, 1995) found that breaks away from the everyday work environment where people do something compatible with their interests which occupies their thoughts, can assist in recovering from directed attention fatigue and emotional regulation tensions experienced within everyday lives. Attention restorative theory argues that an individual's ability to sustain directed attention and to perform cognitive tasks diminishes with tiredness and exhaustion and that restorative breaks can be enhance capacity for cognitive functioning. Watts and Teitelman (2005) argued that mental breaks renew or restore depleted energy resources which can be associated with personal improvements in such things as mental acuity and creativity. Mental breaks represent satisfying and absorbing activities that provide freedom from the everyday, facilitating enjoyment and relaxation. They are situations where skill and challenge level are balanced with concentration focussed upon the task at hand rather than on the self, likened to the concept of *flow* (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). *The effort-recovery model* of Meijman and Mulder (1998) articulated that mental breaks allow psychophysiological systems that have been utilised or taxed during activities to return to their baseline or balance levels. In their application of the effort-recovery theory, Balk, deJonge, van Rijn, and Stubbe (2018) found that a mental break buffered the negative relation between emotional demands and positive affect, indicating the importance of balancing effort and recovery for wellbeing.

Participants' restorative mental breaks within the present research exhibited characteristics which could be encompassed within this literature.

Participants spoke primarily of distancing themselves from their dilemmas and focussing their attention away from them to assist in their recoveries from the emotional demands of their teaching. There were no experiences relayed about undertaking specific pleasurable activities but more so of the distancing facilitating a different sense of space that allowed them a different perspective from the one of engagement with their dilemmas. This change of vantage point appeared to allow for or to facilitate some form of recovery from distress experienced. Rather than tolerating their distress they took a break from it. Breaks may have allowed their personal resources to replenish and in the process, working towards a restoration of equilibrium. Participants' experiences appeared to be encompassed within the effort-recovery literature (Balk et al., 2018; Meijman & Mulder, 1998). Within this literature, breaks provide buffers which allow for recovery from challenges experienced. This positive effect on wellbeing from restorative mental breaks may have potential implications for application to practice. Such implications will be discussed within the final chapter of the present research. Recovery contributes towards a rebalancing of wellbeing equilibrium (Dodge et al., 2012). An additional theme interpreted from participant's data, has wellbeing associations.

4.8.3 Collegial social support.

People generally live within social worlds, shared with other people through communicative relationships (Merleau-Ponty, 2005). This social or relational space encompasses more than the individual and includes relationships within all spaces. Merleau-Ponty (2005) suggested that individuals discover their own presence through mutually influencing interactions with others. The self in relation to others "constitute an invisible whole" (Gulmond-Plourde, 2009a, p. 5). To understand the "whole" relational experiences require understanding.

Social support is relational in that it is idiosyncratic, and influenced by personal factors in conjunction with the contextual (Feeney & Collins, 2015). These relational dynamics occur within interpersonal processes that vary according to characteristics of the individuals and the contexts in which they occur. Woods, Lakey, and Spain (2015) suggested that for enacted, relational social support to be perceived as supportive, the provider elicits positive affect and/or favourable

thoughts within the recipient. Participants within the present research spoke of the relational experiences with colleagues favourably. Collegial relationships within the dilemmatic space appeared to serve the role of a resource for participants, possibly buffering the psychological discomfort experienced.

There is a strong body of evidence associating social support with wellbeing (Stein & Smith, 2015). People who have supportive relationships tend to experience high levels of wellbeing and have better mental health (Feeney & Collins, 2015; Lakey, Coopers, Cronin, & Whitaker, 2014). Participants within this Study sought both an opportunity for emotional catharsis or release, useful information, and guidance or practical assistance. Within the literature, this is referred to as *enacted support* which refers to the receipt of supportive actions (Lakey et al., 2014). This actual supported can be further differentiated into two classifications of *emotional support* and *instrumental support* (Ferguson, Mang, & Frost, 2017). Assistance in dealing with emotions and functional support to deal with situations represent these classifications. Lakey et al. (2014) provided *relational regulation theory* (RRT) which argued that providers of social support assist those in receipt of it through regular or ordinary conversations which have affective consequences for the recipient. Rather than talking about stress and coping with it, positive or supportive social interactions can elicit a positive affect within the recipient, contributing towards emotional wellbeing (Lakey et al., 2014). In the present Study, participants did not talk about the issue of distress, stress or, coping with their colleagues but rather did have what was considered as “ordinary” workplace conversations. Their “ordinariness” related to the sharing of emotions and seeking an additional perspective in dealing with dilemmas, rather than therapeutic conversations on how to cope. Additional theoretical support is provided by coping theory.

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) argued that stress results from a perceived imbalance between demands and perceived personal and social resources to cope with them. This shares similar notions to the equilibrium theory of wellbeing of (Dodge et al., 2012). Both theories support the notion that social support acts as a resource to deal with the challenges associated with teaching dilemmas and the related discomforting emotions. If the support provided is perceived as positive, this can assist in coping. Coping represents efforts to manage demands that are perceived as challenging or exceeding personal resources (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). People cope when their efforts restore the balance between challenges and

resources. With the present research focussing upon enacted social support, it can be encompassed within the coping theory of Lazarus and Folkman (1984). Participants exerted effort to seek and then to obtain social support from colleagues, in what may logically be assumed as serving their own wellbeing. With such strong evidence-based support for social support for wellbeing, implications for teachers' wellbeing are evident. Additional efforts from participants to restore balance and hence wellbeing, were encompassed within the theme of committed action.

4.8.4 Committed action.

Acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) provides a model of committed action which presents with potential relevance to the present research. Hayes (2004) viewed committed action as a way of acting which is true to an individual's values. The commitment within this requires flexibility and persistence to do what is called for to act in accordance with individual values. ACT argues that there is "always an ability to respond" (Luoma, Hayes, & Walser, 2007, p. 158) or the ability to act in accordance with values. It is agentic in this sense, promoting the agency of people to make choices to act in relation to what they believe in. How this hopeful action looks is dependent upon the context and what is deemed to be most effective within that at the time. Action is deemed effective if it works in that specific situation and it is values directed (Harris, 2009). Such actions may be required to change in the service of our values as the situation demands. Within the present research, participants acted in accordance with students' needs as a pervading value. They also acted directly on dealing with their dilemmas to allow themselves to continue teaching in accordance with valued student needs. Their actions were not directed specifically upon dealing with their distress but instead were focussed upon the practicalities of their dilemmas and what was required to support their students. As such, the distress was not directly addressed unless their dilemmas were dealt with. With teaching dilemmas being pervasive and not all solvable (Delaney, 2015) it can be assumed that much of the distress may remain.

4.9 Research quality.

The quality criteria for qualitative research developed by Levitt et al. (2017) and discussed within Chapter Three, were addressed within the present research with fidelity sustained to the targeted phenomenon. Hermeneutic phenomenological methodology allowed for a capturing of the lived experiences of participants. Use of

the conversational interviewing method allowed access to descriptive accounts of experiences. My own positioning as an inbetweener research meant that I had an intimate knowledge of the subject matter and the context in which it occurred. I was already immersed within the culture and shared similar experiences. This enabled interpretation of data to be undertaken with an authenticity not available to researchers positioned outside of the teaching context.

The present research did present with a sound degree of utility in that its research design and methods did allow for answering the research questions. The depth to which the present research answered the second research questions may be enhanced. The degree to which the themes provided meaning to participants' experiences may be further developed to produce more depth of understanding. A depth which provided the reader with access to more intrinsic knowledge of participants' experiences in order to elicit further resonance of findings with potential application to practice. A second study was included as an additional method to enhance both the fidelity, representing an intimacy with the targeted phenomenon (Levitt et al., 2017) and utility of the present research. Levitt et al., (2017) described utility as the effectiveness of the research in achieving its goals. My own immersion within the data would be enhanced with the extra content, obtained through a different method and the second study would deepen the understanding of the meanings of participants' experiences.

4.10 Summary

Study One provided narrative data from experienced teachers which was interpreted through the existential lenses of corporeality, spatiality, temporality, and relationality. Two rounds of participant interviews elicited teacher experiences of distress tolerance which when interpreted through the existential lenses identified themes of emotional labor, restorative mental break, collegial social support, and committed action. These themes represented interpreted meanings of participant's lived experiences which aimed to capture the essences of those experiences. Within hermeneutic phenomenology, essences can be understood as essential meanings which explicate the structure or nature of a phenomenon (Dowling, 2005). These thematic labels were intended to convey the essential characteristics of participants' distress tolerance experiences. They are what have been elicited through my own interactions with the phenomenon as the researcher. While these themes were

supported with relevant extant literature, phenomenological methods can facilitate deeper essences of meaningful structures of experiences. While the themes identified do capture indicators of the essences of distress tolerance, it was thought that additional methods may provide further illumination of them. This enhanced depth of knowledge may also contribute towards potential resonance of findings. In support of phenomenological traditions in capturing true essences within research, I decided to conduct an additional study to do so. The application of additional methods also aimed to enhance the integrity of the present research, in accordance with the quality criteria of Levitt et al. (2017), discussed previously.

Integrity could be enhanced by an in depth answering of research question two which would aim for obtaining a more intimate understanding of the meanings of participants' experiences with the hope of facilitate findings with a greater potential to resonate with readers and in turn, potentially influence their own practices. Research integrity could be enhanced with an additional study. This second study could "dig deeper" into participants' distress tolerance experiences to gain further knowledge that may not have been elicited with the interview method used in Study One. Use of an alternate method may allow for this. Having previously being exposed to the potential of conceptual metaphors for eliciting implicit knowledge (Johnson, 2008) it was thought that participants' implicit knowledge may provide the richness and depth required. Study Two will aim to answer the following subsidiary questions to the original research question two.

1. What are experienced teachers' conceptual metaphors for their distress tolerance experiences associated with teaching dilemmas?
2. What are the meanings inherent within these metaphors?

CHAPTER FIVE: STUDY TWO

Study One provided data on participant's pre-reflective experiences of distress tolerance associated with their teaching dilemmas. My immersion within this data and cycling through the processes of the hermeneutic circle resulted in interpreted themes of emotional labor, restorative mental break, seeking collegial support, and committed action. The themes were interpreted through viewing the data through van Manen's theoretical existential lenses. For findings to both contribute knowledge towards postulations raised within Study, provide enhanced depth to findings with potential resonance and to contribute further to the integrity of the present research, the second study was undertaken. Additional methods were employed to obtain participants' implicit knowledge of their distress tolerance experiences was sought to contribute towards this.

Literature indicates that teachers' implicit knowledge could be accessed through eliciting their conceptual metaphors. Van Manen argued though that people use metaphor as a methodological device to "provide insight into the nature of one phenomenon at the hand of another phenomenon" (van Manen, 1989, p. 37). Van Manen's work on the act of writing within the field stated that "writing distances us from lived experience but by doing so it allows us to discover the existential structures of experience" (van Manen, 1989, p. 29). Van Manen (1989) acknowledged that the act of writing is decontextualized from practice as it represents a reflection upon it, allowing people to garner a deeper understanding of the meaning of it. Writing a metaphor allows individuals to create a distance between themselves and their lifeworlds while at the same time allowing them to observe their own subjective truths within it. It is this subjective truth which was of interest for providing a richer and deeper insight into the structures and meaning inherent within participants' experiences.

The *conceptual metaphor theory* of Lakoff and Johnson (1999, 2003) provides a metaphor conceptualization which acknowledges its embodied elements, contributing towards its utility for application to van Manen's embodied existentialism. Van Manen suggested that people experience their worlds through their bodies and its capabilities, and the conceptual metaphor can provide indicators of these experiences which are *implicit* or pre-reflective (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). Accessing this implicit knowledge can be done so through answering these research questions.

1. What are experienced teachers' conceptual metaphors for their distress tolerance experiences associated with teaching dilemmas?
2. What are the meanings inherent within these metaphors?

5.1 Conceptual Metaphor

The foundational work of Lakoff and Johnson (1980b) and later Lakoff and Johnson (1999) provided theory of metaphor with utility for this research in that it can be used to explain the use of language in the form of conceptual metaphor to articulate peoples' personal, pre-reflective, and/or implicit knowledge. Lakoff and Johnson (1999) argued that people categorize their worlds around them to make sense of them to enable functioning within them. Through experiences and interactions within context people learn commonalities and disparities between phenomena and consciously and unconsciously group them together or categorize them accordingly. This process of categorization develops from an interaction between peoples' minds, bodies, and realities. Individuals process what their senses experience as they physically interact within their lifeworlds, and spaces and this interactive process determines their own personal categories. As an example, a person may categorize all inanimate objects that allow people to be seated upon as chairs or all colours perceived as being of a certain hue to be blue. What is relevant about this explanatory process is that these categories have inferences, implications, or implied relationships between them. These inferences allow people to conceptualize experiences in term of conceptual metaphors.

A conceptual metaphor broadly refers to the understanding of a conceptual domain in terms of another (Lakoff, 1980). A conceptual domain represents a cognitive organization of experience. As an example, an individual may think of a concept of time in relation to how he or she understands money, exemplified within the metaphor "time is money." Certain characteristics of time such as, it can be spent and it can be perceived as valuable, relate familiarly to the concept of money. Lakoff and Johnson (1980a) argued that if conceptual metaphors convey peoples' cognitive organization of their worlds, metaphors can be examined for indications of peoples' thinking or *implicit knowledge.*

Within the extant literature, implicit and *tacit knowledge* are frequently used interchangeably, referring to the same knowledge type (Bowman, 2001) and

alternatively distinguished from each other (Drouillet, Steganiak, Declercq, & Obert, 2018). Drouillet et al. (2018) adopted the conceptualization of Kaufman et al. (2010) which recognized implicit learning as an unconscious and automatic learning of complex regularities from peoples' environments. This notion of implicit learning relates well to metaphor theory.

Metaphors provide a window to such knowledge that may be beyond peoples' conscious awareness and are therefore, difficult to articulate. The metaphor provides a means of bringing such knowledge to conscious awareness. "Our ordinary conceptual system, in the terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature… the way we think , what we experiences, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor" (Lakoff, 1980, p. 454).

Due to these implied relationships between our concepts, we can understand and experience one thing in terms of another (Lakoff, 1980; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Lakoff and Johnson explained these relationships through what they labelled as *entailments.* These are sub-concepts that may mean something to another (Lakoff, 1980). In later work, Johnson (2008) claimed that metaphor represents the structure for human understanding which comes from sensory-motor or bodily experiences. Metaphors therefore represent a form of embodied experience with potential to illuminate further, teachers' experiences of distress tolerance. There are varying types of metaphors.

Primary metaphors represent a literal correspondence between peoples' experiences and the objects or things within their worlds (Johnson, 2008). More subjective or secondary metaphors tend to represent sub-concepts of primary metaphors. Language provides a source of evidence for what metaphoric systems are like. Lakoff (1980) suggested that language is based upon the same systems that people use to cognitively organize themselves and to act. Metaphors on the other hand, may be considered as merely linguistic devices that represent fiction rather than fact (Peloquin, 1990). The present research adopts the conceptual metaphor model of Lakoff and Johnson (2003), which articulates metaphors as a windows through which peoples' cognitive organization can be understood. Metaphoric expressions can therefore be explored to gain insight into the nature of how people think and in particular, teachers.

5.1.1 Conceptual metaphors and teaching.

The analysis of metaphors has been undertaken to understand and to generate knowledge (Ungar, 2016) and its use in education is well documented (Perry & Cooper, 2001). Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) used metaphors to explore how teachers perceive their own professional identities while Connelly, Clandinin, and He (1997) gained insights into teachers' cognitions and emotions through their use of metaphors. Within pre-service teacher education Goldstein (2005) used metaphors to enhance student-teacher thinking and to broaden perceptions of personal capabilities. Ungar's (2016) investigation of teachers' attitudes to educational reform through metaphor analysis provided further indication of the power of metaphors as indicators or articulations of teachers' knowledge. Within their research on pre-service teachers, Seung, Park, and Narayan (2011) utilized metaphors as tools to reveal student-teachers' attitudes towards science teaching. Evidence has indicated the value of metaphors as sources of teachers' knowledge and the need for further investigations of metaphors within education in general (Ungar, 2016). With a well-established value of conceptual metaphors for varying aspects of teaching, metaphors also present with utility within the wellbeing literature.

5.1.2 Conceptual metaphors and wellbeing.

With regards to wellbeing within other populations, Torneke (2020) indicated a broad consensus for the value of conceptual metaphors as therapeutic tools across varying therapeutic modalities within the public. Some examples include the use of conceptual metaphors as heuristic tools for evaluating change in male perpetrators of domestic violence (Buchbinder, 2018) and to promote acceptance of difficult outcomes in medical practice (Langlume, Ecarnot, Capellier, & Piton, 2020). Metaphors are widely used within psychotherapy and have been identified as serving varying purposes such as providing a tool for expressing previously unexplored emotions, a vehicle for shared language, a means of uncovering tacit knowledge, and as a device for enhancing previously unknown aspects of the self (Lyddon, Clay, & Sparks, 2001). Theorists such as Barker (1996) and McMullen (2008) believed that metaphors can also act as tools to motivate people to do things. A small and growing literature has focused upon metaphors within teachers' wellbeing.

Some examples include Goldstein (2005) who utilized a powerful metaphor to support preservice teachers in coping in general, assisting teacher educators in coping with change (Perry & Cooper, 2001), and Kasoutas and Malamitsa (2009) who used metaphors to articulate teachers' beliefs to assist in reflective practices and the associated consequences. Research presented adopts the view that metaphors are representative of peoples' implicit knowledge and therefore their truths. As such they have the potential to resonate when truth is represented by them (Denshire, 2002). When metaphors correspond truthfully to peoples' realities in a "metaphoric correspondence" (Denshire, 2002, p. 32) resonance is said to occur. With the present research aiming to produce findings with potential resonance for teachers, exploration of participants' metaphors for their tolerance of distress can supplement the knowledge obtained within Study One. . Illuminating participants' implicit knowledge of their distress tolerance experiences through their metaphors for their distress tolerance experiences will occur within Study Two.

5.2 Methodological coherence

For methodological coherence with Study One, Study Two will also utilize the philosophy and methodology of van Manen's hermeneutic phenomenology. Maintaining this philosophical and methodological coherence will allow Study Two to occur within identical frameworks, assumptions, and implications, ensuring that new data can be viewed through the same vantage points or lenses. This assists in my own interpretations as an inbetweener researcher to be based upon the same assumptions as used in the first Study. Study Two can provide an additional part to contribute towards the whole representation of participants' truths. It is through the constant revisiting and revising of knowledge that a more wholistic or representative truth may emerge (van Manen, 1997). Truth within this philosophy is individual and grows and changes with experience as do our conceptual metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Participants within Study One were experienced. It was reasonable to assume that their experiences and associated knowledge would enable them to also create relevant conceptual metaphors to articulate their distress tolerance experiences. What was needed is a suitable method to facilitate experienced teachers' creation of metaphors that represented their individual truths. A method was required that could be encompassed within the philosophies of hermeneutic phenomenology and could facilitate the creative development of conceptual

metaphors. Metaphors are an important aspect of *synectics* which is a creative problem-solving tool developed by William Gordon in 1961.

5.3 Synectics as a tool for participant metaphor development

The term synectics was developed from the Greek word, *synecticos* which means joining together of unrelated elements (Wilson, Greer, & Johnson, 1973).

Gordon's methods were originally used in industry within *creativity groups* that aimed to develop creative and innovative solutions to workplace problems. Joining with George Prince, the synectics company continued to research and to train practitioners in the synectics protocols. Synectics has continued its development since its inception with several enhancements, but the original assumptions remain which include that creativity can be enhanced if people understand the psychological process that are inherent within it, that creativity is more emotional than intellectual, and more irrational than rational. These processes must be understood to increase the probability of creativity (Gordon, 1961). Synectics was originally developed by Gordon (1961) and Prince (1970) who argued that the creativity process is dependent upon peoples' unconscious activities being appropriately stimulated by provision of relevant information on the targeted issue/phenomenon and then the establishment of cognitive distance from the issue through conscious participation in metaphoric activities. This allows for an *incubation* period for unconscious cognitive work on the original issue where they believed the creative thoughts occur. The metaphoric activities provide opportunities for establishing new cognitive connections that may not necessarily be available through to traditional academic or intellectual thinking. To maximize the potential for creativity, set procedures were developed that aimed to replicate the processes used by creative people previously observed and documented. These processes presented with value for exploring participants' metaphors within the present research.

Synectics is a set of explicit processes designed to bring the creative processes to awareness (Siddiqui, 2013). Through the explicit, metaphoric activities employed, creativity can become a conscious process. Use of analogies/metaphors creates a conceptual distance between the participant and the targeted phenomenon to facilitate thinking of something familiar in a strange way or something strange in a familiar way (Gordon, 1961). Analogies and metaphors provide the explicit structure to allow participants to free themselves of traditional ways of thinking and

to employ new or divergent ways of thinking (Siddiqui, 2013). Through comparing varying phenomena with each other within these analogy/metaphor activities which require cognitive connections between unrelated phenomena, original thoughts and creativity is required. As an example, participants may be required to articulate how a horse is like a stapler or a stove is like the wind. This metaphoric activity allows participants to view their own knowledge from a fresh or new perspective. It allows them to opportunity to free themselves (Joyce & Weil, 2003, p. 224) from any constraints of their traditional ways of thinking. It can allow them to think creatively in the metaphoric activities required. The creativity used within these processes can then be applied to problems or issues at hand, potentially developing new initiatives, creative ways of solving problems and enhancement of creativity (Burks, 2005).

5.3.1 Application of synectics.

Synectics has been applied broadly within education in diverse fields such as developing school students' creativity through science (Djudin, 2017), developing deep thinking within university students (Walker, 2009), and as a problem solving tool for educational leaders (Georgiou, 1994). A. Khan and Mahmood (2018) revealed that a synectics model of teaching was effective in using analogy to teach mathematical concepts to high school students. An additional application of synectics in teaching was undertaken by Sande and Sharma (2019) who found that the inclusion of synectic's metaphoric activities promoted higher course engagement and positive student feedback. Following Gordon's early adaptations of the problem solving synectics model to the field of education, Joyce & Weil (2003) provided a more contemporary model utilized in schools today. It is noted that Gordon (1961) and others within the field (Bouchard, 1972; Joyce & Weil, 2003; Nolan, 2003) acknowledged that synectics procedures can be applied to varying contexts and are adaptable to cater for participants, the contexts, and the specific focus issues. With the flexibility of application of synectics and its utility in facilitating creativity, it presents with potential for application for eliciting participants' metaphors within the present research. An understanding of common elements within the synectics protocols is helpful prior to explication of the elements to be employed. .

5.3.2 Synectics protocols.

Two procedural models allow for participants to either perceive established ideas and problems in a new light *(creating something new)* or to assist them in

making new and unfamiliar ideas more meaningful (*making the strange familiar).* Both models or protocols involve similar steps but the principles of reactions are designed to vary (Joyce & Weil, 2003). What is most relevant to this research are common elements of each protocol which can be adapted to the needs of the present research. Each protocol requires an initial or introductory articulation of the targeted phenomenon to develop a collective understanding of it. This introductory step also aims to establish group expectations of respect for all participants, positivity in response to others' contributions, and freedom or playfulness in use of language (Gordon, 1961).

5.3.3 Processes within the protocols.

The direct analogy exercise requires participants to compare phenomena that are not identical, requiring identification with a plant, animal, person, or non-living thing (Joyce & Weil, 2003) that ideally has some relationship or commonality with the phenomenon being explored (Gordon, 1961). The function of comparing two phenomena that are conceptually distinct from that targeted, aims to facilitate a freedom in thought or creativity in the act of comparison. This freedom of thought can be later applied to the issue or phenomenon of interest. The compressed conflict exercise generally involves participants describing a phenomenon with a two-word phrase in which words appear contradictory. Gordon (1961) gave examples of *tiredly aggressive* and a *friendly foe* in describing a targeted person. He suggested that the greater the distance between the words employed is indicative of greater mental flexibility and therefore, potential for creativity. In making personal analogies, participants are required to empathize with targeted phenomenon with this empathic identification representing the essence of this activity.

Within the personal analogy activity, participants utilize their own emotions and characteristics to identify themselves with the targeted phenomenon by imagining themselves as it (Gordon, 1961). Participants visualize imagines of themselves as the phenomenon, assuming its characteristics such as the battery of a car, the lid on a container, or a social phenomenon such as love. The analogies developed are then compared with each other and then re-explored in relation to the targeted phenomenon articulated within the introductory step.

In comparing analogies with others within a group the discussion can potentially facilitate additional creativity, building upon the words and creativity of

others. The nurturing, positive nature of the group serves to support any divergent, irrational, or emotive thoughts of those involved which can in turn, stimulate or facilitate the same in others. This can lead to outcomes based upon the creativity of a group rather than an individual. Both models' protocols involve similar steps, but the principles of reactions are designed to vary. Following the comparisons of analogies, the targeted phenomenon is discussed again, utilizing the creativity generated by the analogy activities.

In view of the adaptability of synectics procedures for varying needs (Bouchard, 1972; Joyce & Weil, 2003; Nolan, 2003), certain activities within the protocols can be utilized to achieve the aims of this Study within the present research. The creativity generated by metaphoric activities can be used to assist participants to generate their own metaphors for teaching dilemmas. Bouchard (1972) found that using a personal analogy activity was more effective than a standard brainstorming exercise within a group problem solving exercise. Bouchard's research used a modified version of the synectics protocols in only using the personal analogy exercise. With evidence supporting the efficacy of using the personal analogy aspect of the protocol, it is my belief (based upon my previous experiences with participants) that this activity combined with the introductory stage, analogy comparison, and concluding stages could effectively facilitate creative metaphors from participants. This adapted protocol would facilitate the answering of the research questions within this Study.

5.4 Method

5.4.1 Purposive Sampling.

For methodological coherence with Study One, the sample for Study Two was chosen because of their experiences of the targeted phenomenon of distress tolerance. The same selection criteria as were used within Study One were employed for this Study to ensure that participants had the experiences required to serve the purposes of the present research.

These were (a) teachers over 45 years of age with a minimum of ten years teaching experience and (b) those that have experienced teaching dilemmas. It was anticipated that this sample would provide the richness and depth of data required due to participants' maturity and experience

5.4.2 Participant recruitment process.

With participant contact details already available through the first Study, these were utilised to invite the same participants to participate in Study Two. Previous participants were phoned to extend invitations with four immediately accepting and two additional participants who satisfied the criteria and who indicated interest in participation in the first study who could not later participate for personal reasons, also participated. Their details were available to me, facilitating telephone contact. Identical consent procedures were followed for the additional participants and ethical approval for these participants was obtained from the university. The approved participant information and consent forms used in Study One were adapted and approved by the supervising university for use in this Study. They are provided in Appendix E and Appendix F. The two additional participants were former colleagues whose consent forms were signed prior to participation and sent to my principal supervisor. With consent, all participants were then communicated with through email to establish a mutually suitable time to undertake the focus group interview.

5.4.3 Participants.

Davis (2017) suggested that four to twelve people are sufficient for the purposes of such focus groups. It is believed that six participants would provide enough for a robust discussion within this group and to elicit sufficient metaphors for analysis. With each participant being known to each other, it was anticipated that this would encourage a willingness to share and an open discussion. With teacher participants, the educational protocol was chosen with its structure likely being familiar to those involved.

An additional perspective may add depth and diversity to the investigation (Levitt et al., 2017). This Study aimed to seek further depth or variation within the targeted phenomenon rather than variation within the population and as such, maintained a similar participant group. All participants were female, taught currently within the same teaching region (except for one who was recently retired), and satisfied the sampling criteria. All had greater than twenty years teaching experience and were known to each other prior to participation within the present Study.

5.5 Procedure

5.5.1 Synectics focus group.

This focus group protocol or guide utilized within the present research was more representative of Joyce and Weil's (2003) synectics teaching model rather than the problem-solving models used within the synectics organization. This flexible adaptation of the original protocol was indicative of Gordon's (1961) suggestion that group structure may be altered in accordance with the group, context, and issue at hand. Joyce and Weil's (2003) adaptation, designed for school students, presents with a structure which is familiar to many schoolteachers, which facilitated its utility for application within this Study. In accordance with synectics requirements, a focus group was formed to elicit data for interpretation. The group was conducted face-to-face within a community conference room in a regional town within New South Wales. I led the group, using the focus guide provided in Table 5

Table 5.

Synectics Protocol for Focus Group

Phase	**Description**
Introduction	• welcome and ice-breaker conversations, session goal, research progress to date, group guidelines
issues as given and understood	• revise relevant definitions, define conceptual metaphor, and give examples, summarize activities to be undertaken
warm up	• simile exercise: comparison of teaching with (participant's own choice), participants visualize or imagine they are one phenomenon and then the other and record commonalities in relation to van Manen's existentials on mapping sheet
participants generate own metaphors	• participants choose comparative phenomenon for metaphor for distress tolerance • metaphor(s) generated • mapping sheet completed in relation to van Manen's existentials
share and compare	• participants share own metaphors and compare/contras

opportunity for changes participant thanks and housekeeping	• participants are invited to make any changes to the metaphor(s) considering previous discussion • participant questions are answered, mapping sheets collected, and participants are thanked for participation

The guide was valuable in assisting me to adhere to provided direction to synectics procedures but was used flexibly to respond to needs of participants at the time. With participants known to each other, this worked positively, as a level of mutual respect and support was already evident within the group resulting in a perceived atmosphere of openness and appreciation for each other's company and contributions within the group. Participants were provided with a physical copy of a mapping sheet to record their metaphors and accompanying *entailments.* Entailments represent property correspondences between the targeted and the compared phenomena within conceptual metaphors (Lakoff, 1980). They represent qualities of a metaphor that corresponds with each of the domains within it., indicating the perceived relationship between them. As an example, if time was compared with money, the features or elements shared between them are entailments, such as both representing comfort and value to people.

Entailments within this Study were recorded by participants in groups with each represented by van Manen's lifeworld existentials. Participants recorded their experiences with their bodies, time, space, and relationships that related to the metaphors they had created. These entailments provided an additional source of data for interpretation. The mapping sheet used by participants is provided in Table 6.

Table 6.

Mapping Sheet

Mapping Sheet`

We are really interested in your metaphor(s) for distress tolerance. Here is some information to help you and some space to write your own. There are no right or wrong answers. It is just about what you think.

Examples

Distress tolerance is the plaster cast around a leg required to continue moving out of necessity. Distress tolerance is coping. Distress tolerance is my armour.

Metaphor Example: Distress tolerance is the key that keeps the motor running.

Entailments Examples for the Metaphor

experiences of the body	experiences of time	experiences of space	experiences of relationships
e.g., my thoughts are more focussed, my body feels less tense, I don't see as many obstacles	e.g., I lose track of the passage of time, time seems to pass quickly,	e.g., I feel less crowded in, I notice what's around me more,	e.g., I'm more open in my conversations. I'm fighting less with my partner,

My Metaphor(s)

Distress tolerance is ____

____

____

My Entailments

experiences of the body	experiences of time	experiences of space	experiences of relationships

Providing the initial structure and expectations for the group's anticipated outcomes was valuable in focusing the group on the task at hand. There was a distinct lack of perceived necessity within the group for the warm-up/stretching similes exercise as part of the synectics procedures, possibly due to them knowing each other prior to participation and also due to the clarification of requirements of participants provided at the commencement of the session. The procedures shown within the guide were followed with flexibility to facilitate participants' creation of their metaphors and accompany entailments. There were diversions within this

protocol due to participants' needs for clarification of the conceptual metaphor phenomena and lack of need for the warm-up exercises. Participants were comfortable to share and compare their metaphors and entailments. This discussion was positive, open, and saw all participants contributing. There was no questioning of each other's contribution but more so, an acceptance of each other's perspectives on the issue. Each took turns in sharing their metaphors and associated entailments and responding to any comments given. Positive feedback to each other was prevalent. Following sharing, two participants made minor changes to their entailments, and one added an additional metaphor.

The outcomes were achieved within 45 minutes, with group members expressing appreciation that they were achieved quickly. This allowed them to go about other requirements of their day. All participants approved the audio recording of the group with an Android Smart Phone, Smart Recorder application. This recording provided me with a record of the events of the group to assist in my interpretation of the data. The recording was not transcribed but was listened to as part of my data immersion, required within the hermeneutic circular process of data transformation and interpretation (van Manen, 1996).

5.5.2 Data transformation and interpretation.

The metaphors and entailments generated by participants using the adapted synectics protocol were utilized once again. The lifeworld existential lenses of corporeality, temporality, spatiality, and relationality as philosophical frameworks or lenses through which to understand or interpret meaning inherent within the data were utilized.

Participants' written entailments, recorded under each existential were read and re-read in my own immersion within the data, to identify commonalities in meaning. Words, small phrases, sentences, or more can represent a singular concept (Lindseth & Norberg, 2004) were repeatedly read to identify any shared elements that can be grouped together according to commonalities or shared meaning. This process involved minor semantic alterations in participants' terminologies where variations in terminologies with like meanings were combined. Data that used different jargon, but essentially had similar meaning were grouped under semantic labels that were indicative of the meaning for those groupings.

All entailment data were organized within a summary table, presented, and discussed within the results section of this chapter. This summary was read several times in conjunction with participants' metaphors for full immersion within the data. This hermeneutic circular process was undertaken until no further changes could be made to the interpretations and a saturation point was reached. Reaching this point required reading of the metaphors and associated entailments repeatedly and writing and re-writing of my own interpretations within my reflexive research journal. Interpretations were undertaken from my inbetweener research perspective and represented once again, Finlay's (2006) conceptualization of the interpretation process as a "dance" between the data and the researcher. The results and accompanying discussion represent the outcome of this dance.

5.6 Results: Metaphors

Each conceptual metaphor for distress tolerance created by participants is presented. Each metaphor developed was indicative of participants' implicit knowing, knowledge, or awareness of their distress tolerance experiences. These metaphors represent participants' efforts to compare characteristics of distress tolerance with other phenomena that share similar qualities. Metaphors will firstly be listed and then discussed individually. Participants' metaphors were developed in response to the sentence starter below.

Distress tolerance is:

- "carrying the brick wall that I've hit" (Wendy),
- "rowing against the tide" (Karla),
- "hiking through magpies/plovers protecting their nest" (Maureen),
- "putting on my armour" (Anna),
- "putting on an act" (Kia),
- "putting on a brave face" (Jane), and
- "a temporary change in personality" (Kia).

Hitting and carrying a brick wall may raise the image or sense of a physical impact and continued burden. The continued burden may be representative of the tightness and fatigue. This may be indicative of the teaching dilemma experienced (brick wall) and the need to continue teaching while carrying any emotional or cognitive burdens associated with the dilemma. The act of hitting a wall and then carrying it may also be representative of the sense of spatial constriction or

confinement experienced by a number of participants. It may be difficult to imagine time passing quickly when carrying bricks from a wall recently hit. Also, the effort required in carrying the bricks may be restrictive upon relationships as she may be preoccupied with the effort required to do so. This metaphor represents distress tolerance as an obvious challenge for Wendy and a significant burden on her body that she sustains as she continues teaching in the best interests of her students. The physicality required may also be indicative of the embodied nature of distress tolerance. It appears as though the body is very much involved in her act of tolerance• "rowing against the tide" (Karla)

It may be easy to imagine the discomfort and strain on the body when performing the act of rowing against the tide. Karla conveyed distress tolerance as a discomforting and burdensome task to perform. "Rowing against the tide" conveys an act contrary to the forces of nature and having to row against it has obvious connotations of a strain on her body. Such an act indicated her experiences of time passing slowly and not her best use of time. Rowing against the tide could be representative of a restrictive sense of felt space, confined by the flow of the tide and not available to flow in its natural direction. Once again, bodily involvement and strain upon it is shown.

- "hiking through magpies/plovers protecting their nest" (Maureen)

Within New South Wales, these birds regularly attack humans when they come close to their nests during mating season. These birds swoop from often unseen locations and continue to do so until people leave the locations of the birds' nests. This metaphor raises imagery of the unpredictable nature of these attacks as often these birds swoop from locations not readily visible to people. Such attacks represent a potential threat of injury as stories abound which convey a myriad of possible dangers. This metaphor may raise associations with the unpredictability of and lack of control that teachers have over their dilemmatic spaces. Within this space, teachers experience dilemmas at often unpredictable times. With an awareness of the potential for and actual discomfort associated with them, many may have an associated hypervigilance. The sight of a magpie or plover during mating season can facilitate a similar experience in some people. This unpredictable attack context is not a space in which one would generally be positively experiencing relationships with others or enjoying the passing of the time. This metaphor exemplifies the embodied nature of Maureen's experience. The hypervigilance, fear,

perceived unpredictability and self-protection required requires intense involvement of cognitive, emotional, and physical activity.

- “putting on my amour” (Anna)

Anna’s metaphor which indicates the “putting on” of armour appeared indicative of her perception of a “battle” and the need for protection which comes from armour. Within the focus group, she described the armour as being heavy. Putting on heavy armour can be assumed to be an arduous task which places a burden on the human body and possibly mind, with thoughts upon the impending “battle.” Anna appeared willing to endure the discomfort of armour to benefit from its assistance to her within the “battle” of the teaching dilemma. Putting armour on may involve not only a burden on the human body, but it may also be a time-consuming endeavor and impose restrictions upon a person’s ability to move within space. It could be assumed that the layers of armour would provide a barrier between the self and others which may impose a form of constraint upon relationships. Anna’s involvement of her body is aptly expressed by her need for protecting it and going through physical discomfort to do so.

- “putting on an act” (Kia)

Kia’s metaphor conveys her distress tolerance as an act or performance rather than a natural or authentic action on her behalf. This may be indicative of Kia perceiving that tolerating the distress required her to act contrarily to her natural or innate responses in front of her school “audience.” Acting is generally performed for an audience, suggesting that Kia felt the need to perform rather than be herself within the dilemmatic situation. The energy required of a performance can be draining upon the human body and may influence relationships, given that authenticity may not displayed in the acting performance. Acting in response to teaching dilemmas may be quite laborious, given the regular occurrences of teaching dilemmas. Such acting requires a change in the human body to perform, illustrating the embodied nature of Kia’s distress tolerance.

- “putting on a brave face” (Jane)

Comparing distress tolerance to putting on a brave face was perceived as an extension of acting (as previously indicated in Kia’s metaphor) to having to act specifically “brave” for the benefits of those around her. Having to act bravely indicates an awareness of the needs of her audience. The bravery is not for Kia’s

benefit, but possibly more so for others, to not negatively impact upon them. This can be understood as a pro-social act that requires a certain sense of labor or work from the teacher/actor. Bodily effort is required to portray this bravery which may not be naturally part of Jane's personality. Jane must be aware of actions required to show bravery and put in the effort of relevant language, gestures, or actions over time to create this impression. Such inauthenticity may serve a pragmatic purpose within the teaching context but may not contribute to authenticity in relationships. To be acting bravely Jane may also be considering her dilemmatic space as also a stage and her attention required to perform may detract from that available for her teaching. False bravery as indicated by Jane requires her energy which may present a bodily burden for her.

- "temporary change in personality" (Kia)

This was perceived as another form of acting required in the demonstration of distress tolerance. It represented a conscious change in Kia's being which required bodily effort to demonstrate and to sustain within the dilemmatic space. It was not considered as a positive change by Kia but more of a pragmatic one to deal with the psychological discomfort she was experiencing, associated with her dilemma. This metaphor indicated that she was required to act contrary to her authentic self to tolerate the distress she was experiencing. Altering her personality enabled her to continue in serving the needs of her students. Kia's and other participants' data within the present study conveyed a perspective of distress tolerance as embodied, with associated discomforts to them. The meanings of these metaphors can be further expanded upon with an understanding of entailments.

5.7 Results: Entailments

The entailments represent a characteristic that is common between the subject of the metaphor and the metaphor (Lakoff, 1980). The entailment data obtained from the synectics focus group is presented in Table 7. This information provided data to both supplement and inform understanding of participants' metaphors. Participants' comments which shared semantic meaning are underlined, accompanied by a number indicating how many participants shared that meaning. Their comments are grouped within the lifeworld existentials of van Manen (1996). This same existential data grouping occurred within Study One.

Table 7:

Metaphor Entailments

Corporeality	Temporality	Spatiality	Relationality
• tightness x3 • stressed x 4 • impatient • disappointed • fatigued • anxious • felt lack of control • consciously slowed my breath • shutting down of my mind	• passed slowly x3 • need for quicker action x2 • abandoning of some other planned tasks • time consumed by this x 2 • felt that time devoted to this was trivial use of x 2	• felt closed in x 2 • need for more space • unsure of my boundaries • felt restricted x 3	• felt not myself when relating • temporarily distanced • doubted my perceptions of others • strained x 2 • took advantage of loved-ones x 2 • talked with others about it • put on a brave face for others x 2

5.7.1 Corporeality.

This summary table indicates a predominately negative representation of features of metaphors, except for “talked with others about it’ and “consciously slowed my breath.” Others such as Karla, Wendy, and Maureen “felt stressed” and/or physically burdened in association with their distress tolerance metaphors. The “tightness” indicated by Maureen, Wendy, and Karla may have been indicative of the somatic or corporeal felt sense of their experiences. Their bodies were experienced as feeling tight as they were tolerating their distress. A “shutting down of the mind” and “felt lack of control” demonstrated further corporeal awareness of the effect of distress tolerance on participants’ bodies. The discomforting emotions of “disappointment” and felt anxiety provided further support for distress tolerance as an embodied experience with potential influences upon wellbeing. Participants’ experiences of time as indicated by their entailments associated with their metaphors also were not generally indicative of positive lived experiences.

5.7.2 Temporality.

Some participants' indicators of their perception of time when tolerating distress indicated that time was experienced as passing slowly and was consuming too much of their time, needed for teaching. Jane and Maureen indicated that "time was consumed" by their tolerance and that time devoted to it was "trivial use of their time." No participants indicated that time passed quickly which can often occur when doing pleasurable activities (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Participants' language presented was indicative of what was interpreted as an onerous use of time as indicated by Daniel's "need for abandoning of other planned tasks" to use the time for his tolerance actions. Wendy, Karla, and Daniel indicated that "time passed slowly." Readers may relate to their own experiences of time passing slowly when undertaking certain onerous tasks.

5.7.3 Spatiality.

There appeared to be a general sense of space being felt as "closed in" or "restrictive" with Wendy, Anna, Jane, and Maureen indicating this within their entailments associated with the metaphors for distress tolerance. These common entailment phrases painted a picture of felt confinement within participants' workspaces when tolerating their distress. Rather than experiencing their spaces as open or expansive they were felt as quite the opposite. Within this sense of restriction within workspaces, Jane felt "a need for more space" and Anna was "unsure of her boundaries," indicating a sense of discomfort.

5.7.4 Relationality.

Participants' entailments, relevant to their relationships as expressed within their metaphors, indicated further discomfort with Karla and Maureen indicating that their relationships were "strained" and that they "took advantage of their loved ones." Wendy and Anna "put on a brave for others" supporting Wendy's notion that she "didn't feel herself" when relating to others. With Karla "temporarily distancing" herself from others and "doubting perceptions" of others, her language used within the entailments was interpreted as being indicative of strain, stress, and inauthenticity within some relationships. With Wendy indicating that she "talked with others about it" she provided an adaptive indicator of action taken in her tolerance. These entailments and their interpretations provided a higher order of analysis, aiming to provide information to enhance the understandings of the

meanings of participants' experiences. These findings will be discussed within the context of current literature to answer the questions of the present research.

5.8 Discussion

Lakoff and Johnson (2003) argued that conceptual metaphors can represent how people organize or categorize their thinking which is generally implicit. This difficult to articulate knowledge was made available through the tools of synectics (Gordon, 1961). The elements within the synectics protocols enabled participants to access their own implicit knowledge and to express this information through their metaphors, facilitating a deeper understanding of the meanings of participant's distress tolerance experiences

The interconnectedness of participants' entailments and metaphors is evident. The embodied, onerous nature of most entailments is evident within the physically, cognitively, and emotionally taxing nature of the metaphors. The metaphors explicated what I felt was an implicit sense of hardship or bodily burden associated with participants' distress tolerance. Tolerance appeared to be perceived as an unnatural, or for some, a self-harming set of actions that was undertaken to enable participants to continue acting in accordance with their valued student needs. It was interpreted not solely as a means of reducing discomfort/stress but also as a way of allowing participants to continue teaching, despite their discomfort. Their tolerance itself was interpreted as discomforting, exemplified by such metaphors as "hitting a brick wall and carrying it" or being "attacked by swooping magpies/plovers." From these metaphors and accompanying entailments, it appears that distress tolerance may not be a panacea for participants' wellbeing but an additional challenge to it.

5.8.1 Wellbeing disequilibrium.

The implicit knowledge revealed by these metaphors has indicated that distress tolerance may have been experienced as a challenge and a personal resource according to the return to equilibrium model of wellbeing (Dodge et al., 2012). Distress tolerance appears to cross over this dichotomous interpretation of wellbeing and function as both – an embodied challenge and a resource. The associated themes of emotional labor and committed action exemplified challenges to the participants' bodies, as represented by the discomforting and taxing nature of their representative metaphors. The level of embodied strain indicated by metaphors was not provided

within the themes interpreted from Study One alone. Study Two facilitated this deeper understanding. Participants did though undertake actions that could be interpreted as a personal resource to assist them to restore some level of wellbeing. The themes of restorative mental breaks and collegial support may have performed these roles. In terms of their metaphors, "putting on a brave face," "putting on my armor," or "putting on an act" appeared to have functioned as a resource for participants, enabling them to keep going in pursuit of their teaching goals. What may be questioned is if distress tolerance represents an embodied action, what is the toll on the bodies of participants? Yes, distress tolerance may enable teachers to keep on teaching, but the level of embodied discomfort expressed within the metaphors indicates that distress tolerance does represent a wellbeing challenge.

Distress tolerance appeared to enable participants to continue teaching while dealing with their discomfort where it may have performed a role of maintaining a wellbeing disequilibrium by not only acting as a personal resource for teaching, rather than wellbeing and at the same time, a challenge to wellbeing due to the arduous embodied nature of the distress tolerance experiences. This postulation receives support from the embodied nature of the distress tolerance experience indicated through participants' language used which referred to the embodied nature of their experiences.

5.8.2 Embodiment.

The present research was framed within van Manen's (1995; 1997; 2014; 2016) embodied existentialism where he argued that people experience their worlds through their bodies. Bodies are the "vehicles" that enable people to interact within their contexts. The existential frames used within the present research provided windows through which to understand distress tolerance. Each existential represented an embodied means through which people experience their worlds. Van Manen (2016) suggested that the lifeworld existentials can be differentiated but not separated as people utilize all existential means of experiencing their worlds. Van Manen (2016) suggested that people experience their worlds through their bodies and the body can be thought of as a bridge between experience and the context in which it acts. Todres (2007) articulated this also as embodiment where the human body elicits a *felt sense* of the world and experiences within it. As an example, a tightness within the body can be felt when hearing threatening noises when walking

down a dark alley alone at night. Within the present study, participants' "felt sense" of their experiences were indeed exemplified by the senses of their bodies within their metaphors. As an example, "rowing against the tide" conveys a sense of felt physical hardship while undertaking the activity. "Carrying the brick wall that I just went through" conveys an even stronger sense of embodied discomfort. With metaphors indicating that distress tolerance was experienced and interpreted as a challenge and a resource that enabled continued teaching, additional concepts may enhance understanding.

5.8.3 Psychological flexibility.

Psychological flexibility (PF), as conceptualized by Cherry et al. (2021, p. 9) provides a potentially applicable and broad concept which includes three essential components of "(a) handling interference or distress, (b) taking action to manage interference or distress," and (c) taking action which occurs in a manner that fits situational demands and facilitates the pursuit of personal goals or values." This presents as a possible explanation for participants' experiences within the present research. Metaphors developed within the present Study were indicative of elements of the conceptualization of psychological flexibility according to (Cherry et al., 2021), for example, "putting on a brave face" and "putting on an act" represented actions taken to handle distress in accordance with situational demands and the values and goals being pursued. Others such as "rowing against the tide" and "carrying the brick wall that I just hit" also fit within the PF conceptualization of (Cherry et al., 2021).

What was required to tolerate the distress within this Study was what could be termed as a pragmatic psychological flexibility where teachers did what worked at the time and that context. What was the personal/wellbeing cost though? To act quickly and regularly to deal with the distress associated with their dilemmas in a way that was appropriate for their teaching context and valued student needs, it appeared that distress tolerance was a means of keeping going (teaching) rather than a coping mechanism to restore a sense of equilibrium or wellbeing. Research in *resilience* may provide further explanatory power for this conclusion.

5.8.4 Resilience.

The concept of resilience was not reviewed within the initial literature review, but given the findings of the present research, this concept may provide

explanation. Arici-Ozcan, Cekici, and Arslan (2019), in their research on college students adopted the view that resilience represents a person's ability to go back to a former state following experiences of stressful situations. They found a significant correlation between distress tolerance and resilience. Within this relationship, cognitive flexibility functioned as a mediator between the two. The present research suggested a connection between distress tolerance and psychological flexibility; a broader concept which may incorporate cognitive flexibility (Hayes, 2004). A similar conceptualization was applied by Schussler et al. (2018) in their research on a mindfulness intervention for teachers. Schusler et al. (2018) found distress tolerance to be an enabling capacity for resilience. Even with connections between these concepts, the present study produced no evidence that participants returned to their original states, following their distress tolerance experiences. In the absence of such evidence, this limits the explanatory power of the resilience concept.

The literature has indicated conceptual overlap and variations in relationships within potential explanatory theories. While theoretical explanation is required within the present research, it is not the primary focus within the hermeneutic phenomenological methodology. What are required are phenomenological descriptions, with interpreted meanings that aim to convey what it is like to have experienced distress tolerance associated with teaching dilemmas. Distress tolerance did not present as a panacea for the discomfort associated with teaching dilemmas but an arduous experience of the body, associated with additional discomfort.

5.8.4 Research Quality.

Study Two facilitated an enhanced immersion within the data, enabling a more intimate connection with it. This depth of data produced findings which added to the original interpretation of meanings provided within Study One. This enhancement of research fidelity allowed for a more nuanced perspective of the targeted phenomenon as being overall, discomforting for participants and a potential challenge to their own wellbeing. The use of an additional method (synectics focus group) facilitated this fidelity enhancement. Utility of the present study was also enhanced in that the additional method allowed for the second research question which was in relation to the meanings of participants' distress tolerance experiences, to be answered more fully.

5.9 Summary

Study One provided an exploration of participants' distress tolerance experiences and the meanings inherent within them. The meanings of these experiences were interpreted as themes which aimed to capture the essences of those experiences with potential to resonate with readers. The interpreted themes provided a limited account of meaning. An enhancement of the depth of those meanings was sought with the aims of enhancement of understanding of meaning and contributing further to the integrity of the present research.

Study Two utilized the creative power of a group of experienced teachers to elicit conceptual metaphors and their corresponding entailments. These metaphors and entailments were utilized to answer the research questions of Study Two which were the following.

1. What are experienced teachers' conceptual metaphors for their distress tolerance experiences associated with teaching dilemmas?
2. What are the meanings inherent within these metaphors?

These painted a linguistic picture of distress tolerance as an onerous task depicted by participants' metaphors such as "rowing against the tide" and "getting attacked by plovers." The meanings of the metaphors were interpreted through the framework or lenses of existentials of corporeality, temporality, spatiality, and relationality. Viewing metaphors through these existentials which entailed an embodied perspective of experience (van Manen, 1996), indicated that participants did indeed undertake their tolerance of distress through their own bodies and that in doing so, this impacted on their lived experiences within their teaching contexts, as evidenced through the previously discussed associations of all metaphors within the existential frames.

Participants' metaphors indicated that their distress tolerance experiences were experienced through their bodies which in turn, influenced their felt senses of space, time, and relationships. Their existential experiences appeared to perform the roles of a personal resource in a pragmatic sense, enabling them to keep on teaching but also as a challenge in relation to wellbeing. Participants articulated that they valued teaching in accordance with students' needs and that their tolerance enabled them to continue in a values-led direction. Their tolerance itself presented as an additional discomfort. This added "layer" of discomfort, in addition to the psychological discomfort associated with their teaching dilemmas presents a distinct

challenge to wellbeing in accordance with the return to equilibrium model of Dodge et al. (2012). The metaphors of Study Two conveyed distress tolerance to be more of a wellbeing challenge than that conveyed in Study One by the themes. This enhanced depth of information was not available solely through the first study. Study One conveyed distress tolerance as both a personal resource and a challenge to wellbeing. With an enhanced understanding of the meanings of participants' experiences made available through Study Two, distress tolerance as a tool for teachers' wellbeing may be questionable. The final chapter expands upon findings of both studies to provide tentative conclusions in relation to distress tolerance for teachers' wellbeing.

CHAPTER SIX: FINAL DISCUSSION

The present research has explored teachers' experiences of distress tolerance (DT) associated with teaching dilemmas and the meanings inherent within those experiences. Teaching dilemmas are situations within practice where values or commitments compete, and action is required where consequences will result in disadvantage to an involved party. This can elicit cognitive dissonance and the associated psychological discomfort (Delaney, 2015). Distress tolerance presents as coping actions to deal with this discomfort. Exploration of participants' experiences within both Studies, yielded interpretations of interest.

Study One identified distress tolerance as embodied experiences which were grouped into units of summary meaning, represented by thematic labels. These themes were restorative mental break, emotional labor, collegial social support and committed action. With an understanding of participants' experiences and the meanings inherent within them encompassed within these themes, a deeper level of meaning was sought within Study Two. Study Two elicited participants' conceptual metaphors which portrayed distress tolerance as onerous or discomforting embodied actions which allowed them to continue with teaching in the interests of their students. Metaphors which were provided such as "rowing against the tide" provided indicators of participants' implicit knowledge of their distress tolerance experiences. This implicit knowledge facilitated a deeper understanding of the meanings of their experiences as indicated by the obvious bodily discomfort portrayed within them. The metaphors provided additional support to the embodied nature of participants' experiences within their teaching contexts.

The context in which distress tolerance occurred was represented by the dilemmatic space. This is a space of complexity, rapidity of change and prevalence of varied teaching dilemmas (Delaney, 2015). These findings present with conceptual, practical, and methodological implications.

6.2 Implications: Conceptual

6.2.1 Dilemmatic space.

Utilizing the concept of dilemmatic space within the "swamp" or complexities of teaching practice proved valuable in that it represented the realities of teaching practice. It provided a bounded context for exploration of distress tolerance. It was important to explicate a context as the targeted phenomenon

needed to be explored within the lifeworld in which it is experienced. This social context provided the social environment in which participant's bodies interacted mutually with. Inherent within this context are constant teaching dilemmas (Delaney, 2015). Some teaching dilemmas experienced by participants within their dilemmatic spaces included. Jane was required by her supervisor to split her teaching staff into two staffrooms to meet the room needs of other faculties, knowing full well that it would be to the detriment of her own staff. Kia was directed to work with a student with high needs and believed that firm behavioural boundaries were required for him, but her supervisors operated on a different assumption. Their assumptions were believed to be to the detriment of this student. Anne dealt with what she considered to be a conflict of interest where her supervisor directed her to take certain actions for a senior student to support him to complete his examinations, but she was fully aware that this was not what he would benefit from. Such dilemmas occur frequently and sometimes chronically within teachers' dilemmatic spaces as illustrated by Karla's comment regarding her dilemmas "there's so many of them." Such a context which is associated with a prevalence of dilemmas which are associated with teacher discomfort requires consideration in relation to teachers' wellbeing. The present study suggests that such discomfort is regularly experienced, given the prevalence of dilemmas within the dilemmatic space. Taking the perspective that such discomfort is regularly experienced within teachers' bodies, as indicated by their experiences within the existential frames and the nature of their metaphors, the teachers' bodies require focus with regards to their wellbeing.

6.2.2 Embodiment.

Van Manen (1977, 1995, 2014, 2016) and Todres, Galvin, and Dahlberg (2007) argued that people experience life through their bodies. People sense, feel, think, move, or act within spaces and relationships and through the passing of time. Van Manen (1995) spoke of Merleau-Ponty's conceptualization of embodiment, viewing professional knowledge as embodied where sense making occurs through actions within lifeworlds. Merleau-Ponty (2005) claimed that through peoples' situatedness within contexts they develop habits or tendencies of acting which aim to establish a sense of equilibrium between what people wish to do and what their contexts afford them. This knowledge for action can be stored within the body itself,

not necessarily consciously utilized. Accessing this embodied knowledge was more so obtained within the present research, through participants' metaphors.

Exploration of embodiment through metaphors was fruitful as it provided a tool to access what was not necessarily consciously available to participants within the interviews. Johnson (1989) and Lakoff and Johnson (2003) claimed that all actions assist in the development of cognitions used to categorize or organize human life; supporting the cognizance of the human body in consideration of wellbeing. The deep level, embodied knowledge, access within the present research through participants' metaphors, may represent a realistic or "unsanitized" perspective of wellbeing. With participants within the present research comparing their distress tolerance to such other activities as rowing against the tide, being attacked by magpies, or putting on heavy armour, these provide indicators of obvious bodily discomfort. Anne commented "it's a whole-body thing." If teachers are experiencing such embodied discomfort on a consistent or chronic basis, the effect upon wellbeing must be of concern. With regards to the wellbeing model of Dodge et al. (2012) as depicted in Figure Four within the literature review, distress tolerance appears to be presenting as both a resource to allow teachers to continue teaching, as indicated in Figure Three, but also as a challenge to their bodies. If the challenge presents regularly or chronically the wellbeing equilibrium may be disrupted. This may negatively impact upon the body of the individual.

6.2.3 Embodied wellbeing.

Both the thematic labels and participants' metaphors indicated how participants experienced distress tolerance through their bodies. Participants' actions occurred cognitively, emotionally, and behaviourally for them. Maureen stated, "it's going to be often quick thinking" and she had to physically insert herself between two students to try and reduce the confrontation that was involved in her dilemma. She stated that she was "yeah, feeling anxious." Anne commented "that was pretty frustrating" after she had "the mind shift, I was able to be aware" and made an appointment with the principal to talk about her dilemma. Such comments illustrate participants' whole body involvement in their dilemmas and this was supported by the nature of their metaphors with metaphors such as "put on a brave face" and "carry the bricks from the wall that I just hit." Kinsella (2015) called for an end to the mind/body dualism in wellbeing where the body is seen as distinct from the

mind. Given the whole-body discomforts experienced by participants within the present research, I support this call for conceptualization of wellbeing that considers the vulnerability of the whole human body. This is a body that contains the knowledge needed for cognitively categorizing and organizing human actions within practice. The denial of the suffering of the human body within a teacher wellbeing conceptualization may be ill-advised. In consideration of teachers' bodies, the concept of distress overtolerance is suggested as one with potential explanatory power, given the prevalence of teaching dilemmas the associated discomfort tolerance exhibited by participants.

6.2.4 Distress overtolerance.

Lynch and Mizon (2011) introduced the distress overtolerance (DO) concept for those who demonstrate overly elevated levels of distress tolerant behaviours to their own detriment. DO behaviour occurs in situations where individuals tolerate considerable amounts of distress in a manner that may not serve long term interests and result in adverse long-term consequences. It involves continued persistence in actions that elicit high levels of distress , despite indications that goals may not be achieved and that this persistence may result in adverse consequences (Lynch & Mizon, 2011). Could it be that due to the persistent nature of teaching dilemmas, participants' tolerance was at the point of overtolerance? This was not explored within the boundaries of the present research and is postulated as a concept of potential relevance for these experienced teacher participants. Comments supporting this possibility were provided by Kia who said "you absolutely can't sleep, it causes anxiety, and you feel like you're an actress. You just put on a smiley, brave face, and you just try and be someone." Anne stated

> "emotionally it reached a crescendo where I was have an internal battle between my professional and personal self and second guessing my professional judgement to the extent where I made the decision that this can't continue and sought some professional counselling."

With all participants being experienced teachers and given the prevalence of teaching dilemmas within their dilemmatic spaces, it could be assumed that a high level of tolerance of stress had been experienced over their teaching careers. What is not known is if the level was at the point of overtolerance.

The overtolerance concept presents as a departure from the argument of Simon and Gaher (20052005) which suggests that distress tolerance can result in people habituating to the distress inducing phenomena which results in a lessening of any physiological burdens associated in doing so. The present research also provided no evidence of a lessening of distress due to habituation. This may warrant future investigation. Lynch and Mizon (2011) counter the habituation model with one that suggests that distress tolerance undertaken consistently, or chronically (distress overtolerance), may elicit rather than diminish burdensome consequences. With cognizance of the persistence of teaching dilemmas, the associated cognitive dissonance, and psychological discomfort (Delaney, 2015), the obvious discomfort of participants as indicated by their metaphors, provides tentative support for the presence of distress overtolerance within participants.

Lynch and Mizon (2011, p. 56) indicated that people who experience the most distress "experience the lowest levels of wellbeing." What is of interest within this research is Lynch and Mizon's concept of "the most" distress encompassing an aggregation of distress and its tolerance over time. Lynch and Mizon (2011) drew upon the concept of *learned industriousness* as a possible underlying mechanism of distress overtolerance.

Learned industriousness theory postulates that people who have previously exerted considerable efforts in the past to obtain rewards are likely to continue to do so in the future. Lynch and Mizon (2011) drew upon this to propose that people with elevated levels of learned industriousness are more likely to develop distress overtolerance because of this learning history. It may be likely that participants within the present research may have shared such a learning history. In later work Gorey, Rojas, and Bornovalova (2018) extended the theoretical work of Lynch and Mizon (2011) to develop a scale for the measurement of distress overtolerance.

Within their distress tolerance scale, Gorey et al. (2018) postulated further underlying mechanisms, contributing towards the initial DO literature base and associations with wellbeing. Their scale indicated that high DO was associated with lower wellbeing, negative emotionality, and constraint. High scale scores also showed associations with depression, anxiety, alcohol use, and dependency (Gorey et al., 2018), indicating negative associations with wellbeing. With such associations with wellbeing, overtolerance within teachers may warrant as an issue for further

investigation. Alternatively, other theoretical concepts may be of value for the targeted phenomenon.

6.2.5 Emotional regulation.

Alternate explanations for the present research findings are also available within the emotional regulation literature. Despite conceptual confusion within the literature, Naragon-Gainey, McMahon, and Chacko (2017) found a common definitional element that referred to emotional regulation as attempts to influence emotions. Such efforts may be automatic and beyond one's conscious control or also be consciously undertaken. An event can be defined as emotional regulation if it represents an act undertaken to influence emotions (Naragon-Gainey et al., 2017). Investigations have indicated that people commonly use multiple emotional regulation strategies (Aldao & Nolen-Hoeksema, 2013). Given the lack of clarity in conceptual definition and multiple strategies used by participants within the present study, it could also be argued that distress tolerance may be an example of emotional regulation, that is, attempts to influence emotions.

The previously discussed temporal process model of emotion regulation (Gross, 2014) unfolds within four stages involving the triggering situation, attention to it, appraisal of meaning of it in relation to one's goals, followed by the emotional response. Keeping in mind that these processes can occur consciously and unconsciously, Maureen stated that after being triggered by her dilemma, she had "lots and lots and lots of conversations in my head" (paying attention to it) and was "disappointed" and "fearful" (emotional response) knowing that it would have a deleterious effect (appraisal of meaning in relation to goals). Alternatively, Aldao et al. (2015) suggested that emotional regulation strategies such as distress tolerance may not necessarily be dichotomously understood as either adaptive or maladaptive.

This lack of dichotomous distinction relates to the return to equilibrium model of wellbeing of Dodge et al. (2012). Findings of the present research indicated that participants' distress tolerance experiences acted both as a resource to facilitate the continued pursuit of teaching goals and also as a challenge to their wellbeing. With regards to emotional regulation strategies, they may by labelled as adaptive or maladaptive dependent upon the effect of emotional influence in relation to the person, goals, and context (Aldao et al., 2015). The needs of the person, goals, and context must be considered for emotional regulation to be adaptive (Cherry et

al., 2021). Within the present research, actions undertaken by participants such as those represented by the themes “seeking social support”” and “committed action” can be considered as adaptive as they allowed teachers to continue teaching in pursuit of their teaching goals. “I was able to talk to family and friends about it” and that she was “very much about the students” illustrated what Anne did which was encompassed within these themes. Keeping in mind the complexity of participants’ teaching contexts, the emotional regulation literature appears relevant.

Jeon, Hur, and Buettner (2016) in researching teachers’ emotional regulation for coping found that teachers within a chaotic environment, comparable to the dilemmatic space, would firstly need to control and to regulate their own emotions prior to taking appropriate action. A negative association was identified between the chaotic environment and teachers’ responsiveness. Teachers’ stress, increased levels of fatigue, and the excessive stimulation inherent within the environment limited their ability to respond in accordance with students’ emotional states and their creativity in solving problems. In controlling their emotions within these situations, the teachers tended to use more emotionally suppressive strategies. Chang (2013) argued that teachers’ coping through regulation of emotions was relational to context. Teachers’ emotions were elicited by appraisals of events where appraisals of the situations being incongruent with their own goals elicited unpleasant emotions or discomfort. Where the situation for example, teaching dilemma was perceived as one where the teacher has not control over the event and a low sense of ability to control the problem, emotional intensity increased. When teachers felt close to their students, as did participants within the present research, intensity of emotions can further increase. This closeness to students within the present research was illustrated by Anne who stated, “I love the students.” Such intensity of emotion and suppression of this emotion, as occurred within the present research, encompassed by the theme of emotional labour, was related to burnout (Chang, 2013). Within the present research, participants’ efforts to suppress their emotions through emotional labor as depicted by Jane’s comment that she “faked it a little bit that I was happy” illustrated a coping tactic of suppression that may contribute towards burnout. Emotional suppression would be considered as a challenge to wellbeing within the return to equilibrium wellbeing model of Dodge et al. (2012). What may have acted more so as a personal resource for the present research participants was their flexibility of actions. Participants used varied actions and did not adhere to one or

two within their tolerance experiences, indicating a flexibility of acting, indicating potential relevance for the explanatory power of the psychological flexibility concept.

6.2.6 Psychological flexibility.

Findings within the present research may be explained by the previous work of Ameral et al. (2014) and Kashdan and Rottenberg (2010) which focused upon flexibility within distress tolerance. They suggested that effective distress tolerance was responsive to context and involved agency relevant to context, rather than generalized across contexts. Participants' action within the present study were encapsulated within thematic labels which indicated variability or flexibility of action with relevance to their teaching contexts, for example, "seeking collegial support" and "emotional labor." Maureen "talked to colleagues because they have a different perspective on it" and Kia felt the need to "put on a good act", amongst varied other actions she undertook within her tolerance of distress. Due to the constantly changing and time-poor context in which teachers work, such flexibility is necessary to cope. Teachers need a vast repertoire of skills to be able to apply quickly to situations as the need arises. In my own teaching experience, a standard skill applied widely to varied situations may not necessarily be most effective, but rather a vast array of skills that are flexibly applied may more so serve the needs of teachers today. This may also be applicable to distress tolerance. Such flexible and context specific actions encapsulated within these thematic labels provide tentative evidence for psychological flexibility.

This conceptualization can be encompassed within the broad psychological flexibility framework of Cherry et al., (2021) which viewed distress tolerance as an element of psychological flexibility. Adaptive distress tolerance actions satisfy contextual requirements and facilitate the pursuit of values within those contexts. This relates well to participants within the present research who continued teaching in pursuit of valued student needs and acted in consideration of their specific teaching dilemmas. Kia was "being proactive in a difficult situation" supporting this view of the requirements of flexibility in action. In dealing with his teaching dilemma, Daniel reminded himself of why he was at school, later sought collegial support, and kept working to assist his students, despite his psychological discomfort and teaching dilemma that he was dealing with. Within this example, distress

tolerance appears to be an element of the psychological flexibility demonstrated by him. This conceptualization situates distress tolerance as a functional, contextual process whereby people cope with their distress in a way that satisfied the needs of their contexts and the values inherent within them. "I have to go, that's it" stated by Anne, illustrated the need to keep going in teaching, despite the issues at hand and Jane's comment of "just get one with it" revealed the perceived need to continue on teaching with the association that tolerance contributed to this occurring. While the concept of psychological flexibility may be a concept with explanatory potential, the present research did not provide convincing evidence supporting the therapeutic benefits of distress tolerance as suggested within the model of Linehan (1993, 2014, 2015).

6.2.7 Therapeutic.

Linehan (1993, 2014, 2015) provided a skills-based conceptualization of distress tolerance within her therapy for people with borderline personality disorder. Evidence obtained within the present research bares little similarities with Linehan's model. The "restorative mental break" theme interpreted within the present research may be comparable to the distraction skills within Linehan's therapy, while other interpretations shared no commonalities. Kia, "on the weekends did healthful things" and "took a step back" which did convey a sense of distraction from the psychological discomfort within her work. Other themes and metaphors were not generally encompassed within Linehan's distress tolerance conceptualization. This lack of commonality may be explained by Linehan's distress tolerance being intended for acute, crisis emotional management and that participants within the present study were likely using distress tolerance regularly for non-critical purposes, that is, their teaching dilemmas. Rather than acute events, the present research considers them to be at a sub-acute level. Findings do though, have implications for teaching practice.

6.3 Implications: Practice

With the present research positioned within the dilemmatic space (Fransson & Grannas, 2013), the context for teaching practice is complex, unpredictable, influenced by a myriad of factors, and features consistent or even chronic teaching dilemmas (Delaney, 2015). Finding of the present research indicate that distress tolerance allows teacher to continue teaching within this chaotic context, despite the

psychological discomforts experienced. Distress tolerance, rather than acting as a panacea for psychological discomfort, was interpreted as performing a functional role in allowing the continuation of practice, in the interest of students' needs, Daniel's comments "I just kept on teaching" and "I reminded myself why I'm here" illustrated his continued practice despite the discomfort of distress and his tolerance of it. Distress tolerance within the present study appeared as its name implies – a means of tolerating rather than alleviating distress. With tolerance of rather than alleviation of distress the challenge to participants' wellbeing requires attention. What requires consideration is the often "invisible" teacher's body.

The body of the teacher appears virtually neglected within practice and much of the research on teacher wellbeing. With the technical, rationalist nature of contemporary teaching, consideration of teachers' bodies within their wellbeing is lacking. Many organisations including those within teaching view employees as "objects" rather than as embodied people (Kupers, 2005, p. 225). Embodiment encompasses not only the physical body but the interactions of the body, thoughts, and actions within experience (van Manen, 2016). The present research provides support for the effect of distress tolerance on participants' bodies, illustrated with the themes "carrying the brick wall that I just hit" and "rowing against the tide." These metaphors depicted arduous perceptions of the nature of coping with distress within teaching, illustrating the truly embodiment of coping. Participants presented with varied cognitive, emotional, and behavioural actions within their tolerance, illustrating the whole-body nature of it. "It certainly makes clear that bodies matter and without a doubt the time for a "corporeal turn in professional practice scholarship has arrived" (Kinsella, 2015, p. 258).

Teachers' awareness of and actions to care for their own bodies within teaching when tolerating distress appears warranted. Corporeal care may function as a personal resource, contributing towards a return to wellbeing equilibrium. Restoration and maintenance of wellbeing through coping that considers the embodied nature of practice may provide a worthwhile direction for reducing teacher attrition due to wellbeing issues.

What may be required for this to occur is a consciousness raising of teachers' bodies within practice. Within my own teacher practice, consciousness is focused upon the students and tasks at hand, rather than myself in the performance of the actions required. My body receives little to no attention when teaching, despite

my body being the most vital tool for teaching. Could it be that the current wellbeing models applied within school teaching do not sufficiently acknowledge the body of the teacher? What may be needed is a wellbeing framework that incorporates consciousness of the body in action with consideration of the nature of the context in which the individual works. Kupers (2005) provides such a model within the *pheno-practice* explanatory framework. It is a multi-level perspective which offers more than the somewhat simplistic wellbeing model of Dodge et al. (2012), applied within the present research. Such a model would acknowledge the complexity of teachers' dilemmatic spaces, and teachers' cognizance or awareness of their own bodies in working within it.

Kupers (2005) called for this implicit knowledge of the body of the employee to be made explicit within practice. This framework with potential relevance to teaching practice and professional development of teachers.

6.3.1 Teacher professional development.

A multi-level wellbeing framework such as that suggested by Kupers (2005) may facilitate an awareness raising of the embodied effects of teaching upon the teacher and the incorporation of therapeutic embodied self-care into practice. Viewing tolerance through an alternate multi-level wellbeing lens or framework which incorporates a consciousness of *practice within practice*, may have the potential to alter wellbeing practices for teachers. Teachers' cognizance of this framework and use of it within wellbeing initiatives where interventions encompassed within this framework may assist. As an example, mindfulness-based interventions would be incorporated within the consciousness element of Kuper's (2005) framework. Teacher wellbeing interventions may also acknowledge the complexity of teaching contexts and flexibility in application of wellbeing strategies required. At present, within my own teaching practice, therapeutic wellbeing professional development initiatives are limited with a focus upon reactive interventions rather than proactive. Teaching teachers within this framework to proactively use varied strategies flexibly appears called for.

Teaching self-care within such a framework as part of initial teacher education may also serve to prevent overtolerance and possible burnout. Teachers receive professional development focused upon students' wellbeing, but the present study indicates that teachers may benefit from considerably more opportunities to

focus upon their own. Such a proactive and multi-levelled framework for teacher wellbeing and further professional development within this framework warrants further investigation.

Workplace Health and Safety wellbeing initiatives within school education may consider the adoption of a multilevel wellbeing framework which acknowledges the influence of the complex contexts of teaching on teachers' wellbeing, rather than the current provision of reactive strategies and general self-care initiatives advice. Such acknowledgement of the embodied and personally taxing nature of teaching may then require some proactive actions to be taken that can genuinely address the human needs of teachers. For such actions to occur, a shift would be required within the current technical rationalist paradigm surrounding teachers and move to a more humanist model that is cognizant of the embodied teacher. A teacher who is emotional, cares for students, and who is likely consistently in discomfort in the act of teaching today. Given the current teaching shortage, enhanced, proactive care for the wellbeing of the embodied teacher would surely be of value in assisting retention of those already in the teaching "swamp."

6.3.2 Implicit knowledge: Made explicit.

Accessing teachers' implicit knowledge through such means as their conceptual metaphors, as used within the present research may allow this to occur. It is plausible that implicit knowledge may contribute significantly towards development of their wellbeing personal resources (Burton, Lydon, D'Alessandro, & Koestner, 2006; Koole, Webb, & Sheeran, 2015) and consciousness of their own practices (Kupers, 2005). The framework of Kupers (2005) or one similar, may provide a relevant tool for doing so. In the "busyness" and complexities of teaching practice, teachers may often ignore their discomfort to focus available energies upon their students' needs. Teachers' practice focus tends to be on the realities occurring in front of them, rather than knowledge held within and often beyond conscious awareness. Burton et al. (2006) and Koole et al. (2015), in their research on implicit emotional regulation concluded that within busy and complex contexts, peoples' choices and use of emotional regulation may not necessarily be explicit. What appears needed is the raised consciousness of implicit knowledge of effective and flexible emotional regulation strategies, as argued for by Kupers (2005). Emotions may be regulated with use of strategies beyond conscious awareness when teachers'

consciousness if focused upon their teaching. The conceptual metaphor as utilized within the present research may have methodological implications for others interested in making implicit knowledge explicit.

6.4 Implications: Methods

6.4.1 Conceptual metaphors.

Conceptual metaphors Lakoff and Johnson (1999) can provide a method for accessing teachers' implicit knowledge, as evidenced within the present research. Accessing this deeper level of knowledge through participants' metaphors can provide an access point for implicit knowledge, which may not necessarily be able through traditional narrative methods such as interviews. Implicit knowledge may not necessarily be consciously available to participants (Kupers, 2005), as such, methods are required to "dig deeper" to access knowledge beyond the ability to consciously articulate. Researchers may use varied means of obtaining participants' metaphors with the present research indicating that some synectics protocols were not necessarily required. Teachers' conceptual metaphors may provide access to skills displayed by competent teachers which they may not be necessarily conscious of doing. Such implicit skills of teaching practice may be invaluable to beginning teachers. Accessing further implicit wellbeing strategies used by teachers who present with high levels of wellbeing may also be of value. The conceptual metaphor may provide access to varied sources of knowledge which can be made explicit to benefit varied issues within practice. Experienced teachers may provide an invaluable source of such knowledge.

6.4.2 Experienced teachers.

Mature (over 45 years of ages) teachers with over ten years of experiences proved to be valuable sources of implicit knowledge within the present research. An assumption within the presents research that this teaching population sample could provide the knowledge required was vindicated. As such, experienced teachers may provide a relatively untapped source of valuable knowledge in varied areas of practice such as wellbeing. As an example, experienced teachers' knowledge of such issues as behaviour management, flexibility in application of strategies within contexts, beliefs and values, amongst a myriad of others could be accessed through their metaphors. Ascertaining how experienced teachers have remained within the profession and prevented burnout may prove valuable within wellbeing research. As

experienced teachers have been very socialized within their teaching contexts and systems, their implicit knowledge of multilevel systems may also contribute towards the application of multi-level wellbeing frameworks such as that of Kupers (2005). . Phenomenology is one methodology that provides utility in accessing this knowledge.

6.4.3 Hermeneutic phenomenological lenses.

Van Manen (1995, 2014, 2016) provided existential lenses of corporeality, temporality, spatiality, and relationality that represented an embodied framework through which the targeted phenomena within the present research were viewed and understood. The existentials provided ways of viewing the teachers' bodies as they interacted within their teaching contexts and contributed towards an enhanced consciousness or awareness of the importance of the teachers' body. Viewing participants' experiences within the present research through these lenses contributed towards this. It allowed for an understanding of the essences of participants' actions as their bodies interacted with their complex contexts. This interrelationship between the body and context requires consideration within the literature as argued for by Kupers (2005) within the multilevel pheno-practice wellbeing framework. Such a framework can facilitate wellbeing as an emergent phenomenon, emanating from peoples' consciousness of their interactions with their contexts. It could be understood as a lifeworld view of wellbeing that represents peoples' Being within their worlds, as represented within phenomenology.

Phenomenology provides a view of lived experience with relevance for teaching and the wellbeing of teachers. Multi-level wellbeing frameworks such as that of Kupers (2005) may also be encompassed within this phenomenology and associated methodology for researchers within the field.

6.5 Recommendations for Future Research

Recommendations discussed refer to both practice based and theoretical research. I concur with Kinsella (2015) and Kupers (2005) who share an interest in and calling for further research on the nature of embodied practices within organisations. Adopting a multilevel wellbeing conceptualization and framework such as that of Kupers (2005) which aims to bring a consciousness to the human body and influence of context within practice may be helpful. Such research is called for to make the human body more visible in relation to teachers' wellbeing, to

break down the body/mind dichotomy, and to open a perspective of the vulnerability of the human body in occupations considered to be stressful and/or associated with psychological discomfort. Enhancing teacher wellbeing through an embodied perspective which recognizes the toll of teaching upon the teacher's body through practice may provide a door to further open the dialogue on the connection of teachers' psychology and connections with their bodies within coping. This may in turn contribute towards more explicit acknowledgement of the emotions and physicality of teaching within professional development and wellbeing initiatives.

In consideration of embodied wellbeing research, research attention may consider evidence on *allostatic load* (Bellingrath et al., 2020; Guidi, Lucente, Sonini, & Fava, 2020) to be helpful. It supports the concept of the human body's vulnerability to the effects of chronic stress.

Allostatic load refers to the embodied cost of chronic exposure and associated responses to stress (Guidi et al., 2020). Within the literature, Bellingrath et al. (2020) found that chronic work stress within female schoolteachers was associated with this multi-sensory indicator of physiological risk. This physiological risk to teachers and other professionals dealing with chronic stress requires additional research attention if organizations wish to truly address workplace health and safety considerations with due care to the wellbeing of workers within known stressful occupations. The burgeoning work on allostatic load may provide an avenue to do so. This burgeoning area of research interest may also have relevance to the concept of distress overtolerance.

Adopting an embodied perspective may be helpful for research exploration of distress overtolerance as an explanatory factor for teachers' levels of embodied discomfort experienced over an extended period. Exploration of distress overtolerance as a potentially relevant explanatory factor for corporeal discomfort may elicit associations with allostatic load, giving attention to the importance of care for the teachers' body within practice. To accomplish an embodied perspective of teacher wellbeing, conceptual clarification is required. With the present state of the literature exhibiting wide variation in conceptualization, an embodied perspective such as that provided by Kupers (2005) may contribute towards unity in conceptualization.

With reference to research methodology, use of metaphors to access implicit knowledge held within the human body is suggested. The present research indicated

that metaphors rather than interviews provided more effective tools for accessing this knowledge. Future researchers may be best served with use of metaphors to access implicit knowledge within teachers. Much of teachers' knowledge may be implicitly held, making metaphors a potentially valued methodological tool for accessing it. The knowledge obtained may have potential for resonance with teachers. The present research suggests situating future teacher research within their complex contexts of work.

The concept of the dilemmatic space may be useful for researchers interested in acknowledging the unpredictability, pressures, and messiness of teaching within schools today. This concept acknowledges the prevalence of teaching dilemmas, presenting a realistic perspective of the chronic nature of issues which teachers are required to deal with on a daily basis. This concept may be incorporated within wellbeing frameworks which are cognizant of contexts for example, that of Kupers (2005). Teachers' research on targeted phenomenon in isolation may not reflect the realities of practice within complex contexts. Concepts cannot be understood in isolation due to the myriad of influences impacting upon teachers within their work. The teacher's body within it can no longer be ignored. Despite the potential value and implications of the present research, they present with certain limitations.

6.6 Limitations

Limitations are firstly discussed in relation to the qualitative research criteria of Levitt et al. (2017). The trustworthiness and therefore fidelity of findings was limited due to the present research being exploratory and as such yielding findings with limited generalizability. Generalization of findings to a larger population was not the intention but potential relevance to and resonance with practicing teachers was. Findings may still present with relevance and resonance to teachers who have shared similar experiences, regardless of years spent within practice. While quality data was obtained from participants, the sample size was small, as is the case for many phenomenological studies (Peoples, 2021). This small sample size contributes to the limited generalizability.

The population was represented by primarily females from regional New South Wales, Australia and subsequently there was limited diversity within the sample. While the number of participants was within recommended ranges, larger

sample sizes may have contributed further towards the fidelity of findings (Levitt et al., 2017).

My own views and biases in relation to the effects of stress upon wellbeing may have influenced the fidelity of findings also, potentially and inadvertently skewing my interpretations towards my own biases, beliefs, and values. Having experienced and witnessed many colleagues suffering from the effects of stress associated with the profession, my experiences have provided evidence which has contributed towards my personally held view that teaching is a stressful occupation with associated deleterious effects on the body of the teacher. My own biases and prior knowledge aimed to only influence the interpretive processes but may have inadvertently influenced data collection through a myriad of research processes such as my adaptations to van Manen's (1995, 2014, 2016) methods, my body language, comments, and questions to participants.

I was conscious of this throughout the present research and numerous entries within my reflexive research journal were indicative of me questioning whether data interpretations were unduly influenced by my views. This process aimed to minimize potential undue influences but awareness of this as a potential limitation is required. While these limitations which may have negatively influenced fidelity of the present research are accompanied by limitations associated with the quality criteria of utility.

While the design of the present research represented an adaption of van Manen's methodology, relevant to this context and the research questions, these adaptations may have contributed towards a lessening of the utility of the present research. Van Manen's (1995) methodology did not promote a strict adherence towards his framework and my interpretations and adapted application of it may have departed from a traditionalist perspective. Traditional hermeneutic phenomenology considers trustworthy data obtained to represent the truth at that time (Heidegger, 1953) and my use of member checking in the second round of interviews within Study One may be seen as unnecessary. This second round of interviews did though provide opportunities for participants to add any additional experiences that they may have recently thought of or gone through, relevant to the research questions. Also, the interpretive processes of the hermeneutic circle may be criticized (Peoples, 2021) as a tool for interpretation, given its reliance upon repeated exposure and immersion within the data rather than a prescriptive and repeatable

means of data interpretation. Despite these limitations, the present study elicited potential explanatory concepts, further researchable questions, and examples of application of methods which yielded data of considerable interest, such as conceptual metaphors within a focus group context.

6.7 Conclusion

. . The present research provided a unique exploration of previously unexplored, related concepts. This combination produced an understanding of the embodied nature of distress tolerance within teaching practice and the toll that it can take upon teachers' bodies. It also provided evidence of the value of conceptual metaphors for eliciting teachers' implicit knowledge. The present research also suggested future use of a multilevel conceptualization of teachers' wellbeing.

Interpretations indicated the targeted phenomenon as being an embodied practice, applied with flexibility to allow teachers to continue teaching in accordance with students' needs. The embodied nature of distress tolerance as indicated within this research has implications for therapeutic interventions in that consideration is required for the human body in its interactions with varying contexts within teaching

Future research, interventions and teacher professional development initiatives may consider explicit instruction on coping to prevent the build- up of the consequences of consistent or chronic stress to enhance teacher wellbeing for the ultimate benefit of their students.

Consideration of contexts within practice is important in considering distress tolerance as a coping strategy applied flexibly in relation to contextual needs. . Despite limitations acknowledged within the present research, findings, implication, and recommendations can contribute towards the extant teacher wellbeing literature. These primarily include acknowledgement of the embodied nature of teaching practice, further exploration of the distress overtolerance within the teaching population, and use of metaphors as tools to elicit rich, truthful data. Sourcing experiential knowledge from those most experienced within the teaching profession provides a means of obtaining knowledge, relevant to teachers. Acknowledgement must be made to teachers who continue to practice in service to their students' needs despite the cost of embodied discomfort they pay.

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Appendix A

Recruitment Message: Supervisor's Website

Teaching! How Do You Cope with the Dilemmas?

ON 25 NOV 2020 BY DR PETER MCILVEENIN BLOGS

Distress tolerance involves skills that can help us to cope with stress and psychological issues. It involves keeping going despite the discomfort of distress. These skills are valuable for people working in stressful jobs like teaching. Mature and experienced teachers could provide colleagues and the next generation of teachers with a potential "gold mine" of knowledge on how they tolerate distress associated with teaching dilemmas.

Teaching dilemmas are not serious or critical incidents but are common decision-making situations within teaching where there are conflicting or competing interests or needs involved. The teacher is required to do something in the dilemma situation, requiring some form of compromise to do what is believed to be "right". Here are two examples.

- "Should I spend more of my teaching time extending a very capable student or doing remediation with a less capable student?
- "Should I finish the unit of work now as instructed by my supervisor or keep going as my students require more time?"

If you are over 45 years of age and have taught in schools for more than ten years, we would really like to hear from you. We wish to invite you to a confidential and relaxed interview, either through Zoom or at a COVID-safe location near you. We expect the interview to be for approximately 30 – 45 minutes and at a time that suits you. You may be asked to join a second interview of a lesser duration. We know your time is valuable and would like to give you a $30 gift voucher after talking to show our appreciation.

This unique research is part of a Doctor of Education degree program and is approved and supervised by the University of Southern Queensland. If you would like to share your experiences with our friendly interviewer, please click on the link below to indicate your interest.

https://surveys.usq.edu.au/index.php/759922?lang=en

If you have any questions, please contact the principal researcher, Lorette Hargreaves by email: [redacted]

We look forward to learning from you and your experiences of teaching dilemmas.

Appendix B

Participant Information for USQ Research Project
Interview(s): Phase one

University of Southern Queensland

Participant Information for USQ Research Project Interviews

Project Details

Title of Project:	**Teachers' experiences of tolerance of distress associated with teaching dilemmas: A hermeneutic phenomenological exploration**
Human Research Ethics Approval Number:	H20REA239

Research Team Contact Details

Principal Investigator Details
Ms Lorette Hargreaves
Email: [redacted]
Telephone: [redacted]

Principal Supervisor Details
Professor Peter McIlveen
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Telephone: 0746312375

Supervisor Details

Doctor Chris Kossen
Email: Chris.Kossen@usq.edu.au
Telephone: 0746311003

Supervisor Details

Doctor Susan Carter
Email: Susan.Carter@usq.edu.au
Telephone: 0746311003

Description

This project is being undertaken as part of a Doctorate in Education through the University of Southern Queensland. Its purpose is to investigate mature and experienced teachers' experiences of tolerance of distress associated with teaching dilemmas. Findings aim to obtain new knowledge which may assist teachers in coping with this distress. The research team requests your assistance because you may provide valuable insight from your experiences which may be of

value to others. Non-identifiable data and outcomes will be published within the researcher's thesis and may be communicated within a peer-reviewed journal and a conference. Summary documents will be available to participants on request from the Principal Investigator (contact details above). A summary will also be communicated through the Principal Supervisor's research group's web page. The project has approval from the university and will be conducted in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research.

Participation

Participation is entirely voluntary and is open only to teachers over 45 years of age with a minimum of ten years teaching experience. You are free to withdraw at any stage of the project and this in no way will impact upon your current or future relationship with the University of Southern Queensland, the New South Wales Department of Education and Communities or members of the research team. If you choose to withdraw you may request that any data collected about you be omitted from the project and be confidentially destroyed. Please contact the Research Team (contact details at the top of this form) should you choose to withdraw.

Your participation will involve contributing within at least one interview that will take approximately 30-45 minutes of your time. Some participants will be asked to participate in an additional one or two interviews of a lesser duration to discuss the researchers' interpretations of data obtained from the interviews or to contribute more data. Most interviews will be undertaken by teleconference (Zoom) at a date and time that is convenient to you. Some undertaken within the local area can occur at a time and venue at your convenience.

Interviews will be within a friendly atmosphere where research concepts will be explained and discussed prior to questioning. Questions will focus on your experiences of dealing with teaching dilemmas at work. Teaching dilemmas are common decision-making situations that are impacted by competing influences and require you to decide on action that you believe is 'right.' This action may involve some form of compromise. Example questions about your experiences in dealing with specific dilemmas may include those below.

- What is an example of a teaching dilemma that stands out for you?
- How did you feel when you made that decision?

With your consent, interview(s) will be recorded with an audio device. If you do not wish this to occur, please advise the researcher as it will not be possible to participate in the research without being recorded.

Expected Benefits

It is expected that this research will not directly benefit you. However, it may produce new knowledge to assist teachers in coping with the distress associated

with teaching dilemmas. This knowledge may also be relevant to others within helping professionals to assist them in developing tolerance to distress associated with their professional dilemmas.

As a token of appreciation for your participation you will receive a $30 gift card at the conclusion of all interviews, estimated to occur within mid-2022. This will be posted to you.

Risks

In participating in the interview, there are no anticipated risks beyond normal day-to-day living. You may though experience some inconvenience due to the time required for interviewing. There may also be potential for you to experience discomfort in talking about common teaching dilemmas. Sometimes talking about the issues raised may create some uncomfortable or distressing feelings. The researcher will contact you through email or phone approximately two working days after interview(s) for debriefing if required. If you need to talk to someone immediately, please contact:

- Lifeline on 131114 (24/7),
- University Psychology and Counselling Services on 0738126163 or 0746311763,
- NSW DEC Employee Assistance Program on 1800060650, or
- Beyond Blue on 1300224636 (24/7).

You may also wish to consider consulting your General Practitioner (GP) for additional support.

Privacy and Confidentiality

All participants' comments and responses will be treated confidentially unless required by law. Audio recordings will be transcribed by an independent firm (approved by the university) who will not have access to any of your personal information. Interview transcripts will be used by the researcher for data analysis and in accordance with 2.5.2 of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research. Research data should be made available for use by other researchers unless this is prevented by ethical, privacy or confidentiality matters. No personal information will accompany interview data and instead pseudonyms will be used to identify individuals, that is; your data will be non-identifiable.

Non-identifiable data will be stored electronically on password protected storage services. Any data collected as a part of this project will be stored securely as per University of Southern Queensland's Research Data Management policy.

Data will be available for future research following ethical approval for and completion of this research. You may choose to opt out of having your data made available for future research and continue to participate within the project.

Consent to Participate

We would like to ask you to sign a written consent form (enclosed) to confirm your agreement to participate in this project. Please return your signed consent form to Lorette Hargreaves at [redacted] prior to participating in your interview.

Questions or Further Information about the Project

Please refer to the Research Team Contact Details at the top of the form to have any questions answered or to request further information about this project.

Concerns or Complaints Regarding the Conduct of the Project

If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project, you may contact the University of Southern Queensland Manager of Research Integrity and Ethics on +61 7 4631 1839 or email researchintegrity@usq.edu.au. The Manager of Research Integrity and Ethics is not connected with the research project and can facilitate a resolution to your concern in an unbiased manner.

Thank you for taking the time to help with this research project. Please keep this sheet for your information.

Appendix C

Participant Consent Form for Interviews: Phase one

Project Details

University of Southern

Participant Consent for USQ Research Project Interviews

Project title:	**Teachers' experiences of distress tolerance associated with teaching dilemmas: A hermeneutic phenomenological exploration**
Human Research Ethics Approval Number:	H20REA239

Research Team Contact Details

Principal Investigator Details
Ms Lorette Hargreaves
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Supervisor Details
Doctor Susan Carter
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Telephone: 0746311003

Statement of Consent

By signing below, you are indicating that you:

• have read and understood the information document regarding this project.	☐Yes / ☐No
• have had any questions answered to your satisfaction.	☐Yes / ☐No
• understand that if you have any additional questions, you can contact the research team.	☐Yes / ☐No
• are over 18 years of age.	☐Yes / ☐No

• provide consent for any data (non-identifiable) collected to be used in future research activities related to this field ***only respond to the next statement if applicable*** • do not want any data collected to be used in future research activities but do want to participate in the research	☐Yes / ☐No ☐Yes / ☐No
• **voluntarily** agree to participate in the project	☐Yes / ☐No

Participant Consent

Participant Name	Participant Signature	Date

Please return this form to the Principal Investigator prior to interviewing.

Appendix D

Participant Comments from Interview Phases

V.N.: First Interview

Corporeality (purple)	Temporality (pink)	Spatiality (blue)	Relationality (green)
• I thought about if for a while • I started to believe it really shouldn't happen • I could rationalise it by saying that's just one person who doesn't see what everyone else is seeing. • in that way, I think I can move past it. • I didn't allow it to upset me too much. • I was quite happy if people were going to say no, you're in the wrong. • Is it me? • if I was in the wrong, I was going to accept that. • I guess I did feel a bit weird bringing it up	• I thought about if for a while • then the other thing is that situation won't arise again because the principal is moving on • in that way I think I can move past it • I thought, then we can have the conversations next year and make sure it doesn't happen again • it didn't go on for too long. • so it didn't drag on	• I'm happy to move forward	• I ran it buy a few other people • I probably responded to them more than my own conscience • I booked an appointment with the principal for him to be able to explain his decision to me • I went and spoke to the deputy principal. • we needed to make sure that this should never happen to anyone else because it's not right. • I felt better that other people could (*see my point of view)* • the fact that other people could see where I was coming from - that made me feel a lot better. • they could see what I was seeing • we sort of got it sorted • I booked an appointment with the principal, so it didn't drag on • I did talk to a few people

• it sort of felt like having a whinge but it wasn’t really •			
• V.N. Second Interview			
• talk to myself, deliberately remind myself • picked a hard profession and can’t expect to just cruise along, we’ve got to step up and be positive, • deliberately put it out of your head • you do have to push it out for sure • I’m aware of the emotions I’m pushing out • think a lot about how to solve the problem, how to go about it what, needs to happen, come up with a range of things • win-win to solve problems but prepared to take some backward ground	• second or third time you come back you get a fresh look at an issue, it’s often a different perspective, when you come back to it, the emotions tend to lessen, and you get a better perspective	• change jobs or roles a bit when I feel as though I need a change, it refreshes me • leave it all behind when I get home, I don’t want to think or talk about it • switch that off when you get home and get back to it the next day • do something to distract yourself, poor a wine, relax, do something fun, • try and make sure I’ve got a bit of variety, get out of school for sport, make sure I’ve got different interests to what I do every day, meet people from all over the state and realise we’re not so bad • have some different roles, mix it up a bit	• we’re public servants, we serve people, I’m there to assist kids, it’s not about is in the end, that’s what we signed up for • talk to colleagues, let them know exactly what happened and get their take on it, talking to people that are retired so they might have a different viewpoint, get it all out there and listen to other people • run things by people you respect without the emotion because you don’t know them so well • speak to people in other settings so don’t get bogged down in the day to day,

MD: First Interview			
• Corporeality	• Temporality	• Spatiality	• Relationality
• I was thinking of having a chat with the inclusion leader • • I decided to take things into my hands • I was probably tolerating them *(emotions)* • I think I decided when I walked to the door of the class that it's nothing • I couldn't really let my emotions dictate	• I did do some tossing and turning about it at night and the night went really slowly	• I think I decided when I walked to the door of the class that it's nothing • I'm here *(door of the class)* to teach these kids and I couldn't really let my emotions dictate	• I discussed it with some other colleagues. • they had different ideas •
• CBL: First Interview			
• Corporeality	• Temporality	• Spatiality	• Relationality
• I felt I was very limited in how much I could actually express - you know my views • it made it tricker being a casual • I think I had talked about my frustration but not on a formal basis • I didn't want it to sound like a whinge	•	• I actually incorporated part of my personality whilst also doing her work • I coupled that with interactive type stuff as well	• there was always this underlying tone of we get what you're going through *(colleagues)* • I was about to talk to family and friends about the situation. however, they weren't teachers • I didn't think they actually were able to really understand where I was coming from • it was like a compromise • we'll get the work done the way you want it but I'll actually

• I felt it was like a justified concern • *(stress)* it was definitely much less once I sort of accepted that this was you know, going to have to be, or this was the situation • so it was a matter of accepting that yes this was her personality and her teaching style and her class so her responsibility • so it was a matter of accepting that yes this was her personality and her teaching style and her class so her responsibility • it was like asserting my personality style into the situation as well • a whole-body type experience • it was kind of a bit rebellious in a sense that I was kind of sneakily putting my	inject some of you know my sort of teaching strategies in amongst that • make it more of a win-win situation • so it was a matter of accepting that yes this was her personality and her teaching style and her class so her responsibility • but also to give the students an additional experience with a teaching style and hopefully get the best of both worlds

sort of spin on things in the classroom but in the end, it ended up being the solution • being proactive in a difficult situation but in a respectful way			
• N.C. First Interview			
• Corporeality	• Temporality	• Spatiality	• Relationality
• you've got to weigh up that you know, decision, it happens all the time • in the back of my mind, I'm trying to you know, be easy and going • put the frustration in the back of my head and show it doesn't' affect me • you are professional • you're aware that the frustration's there • you are aware of it 100% • thinking I'm frustrated and taking it back a notch	• weigh up the decision, it happens all the time	• get away from the kids	• show it doesn't affect me • I got the behaviour under control and set expectations • talked to my teachers' aides – that's my real debrief here • I got away from the kids • I didn't show it • they back you up, have your back

• try and get back on track • because of my experience • feel your blood boil but I guess you’ve got to get over that • I didn’t show it • build the bridge and get over it • realise that it’s there but not act upon it			
• NC Second Interview			
• choose to be calm • mindset choosing is situational • don’t think that I’m the only one that can help	•	• no control over what happens outside of school	• debriefing and support was important • find a different perspective and other options • talk with other teachers who are in a similar teaching situation
• T.O. First Interview			
• Corporeality	• Temporality	• Spatiality	• Relationality
• I sent an email and backed it up verbally • I asked three to four questions • I asked her to come to our faculty meeting to let our faculty know • feel like an actress • put on a smiley, brave face	• pause all the time before I speak • spent a lot of time chatting • took two days off • it’s just hour by hour	• I retreated and stayed quiet • go over and chat to everyone • took two days off • take a step back • free myself from it	• develop relationships with other faculties • go over and chat to everyone – this is what we’ve been told, this is what I’ve got to do, how can I help, how can I help us all come up with a solution/ • buttered them up • just visiting and nicety • put on a pretty good act

• try and pause all the time before you speak or say anything because you can’t really be honest • goodwill, tr4ust, honesty, integrity, ethics were the basis of every move • careful not to let emotion be a part of it all • had a massage • just get on with the job • reset • I took a reality check • put on a pretty good act • tried to hold on to old world values of ethics, integrity, and honesty • treat it with directness, how it is • be honest			• reach out and care • do what’s best for the kids
• NW First Interview			
• Corporeality	• Temporality	• Spatiality	• Relationality
• tried to get as much information as I could to understand what was going on because maybe there was		• realising that in the education system, you’re limited in what you can do and what you can push back against • finding the right way to push	• let people know I was concerned about what was happening • just do the best for him while I was with him

something I wasn't aware of that would it explain it and make it okay

- try and manage my thoughts and feelings about what was going on
- accept that this situation was out of my control
- actively process and potentially over process
- don't ignore or push emotions away
- quite aware of them (emotions) and the impact they have
- work through it in my head
- go through all the pros and cons – what I can control but what I can't control, what I can do and what I can't do, then it's about making peace with what is
- accepting the situation for what it is

• actively doing what you can, that you can control, what you can do to make change • true to my values and concerns • balance what I can control and what I can’t • make peace			
• NW Second Interview			
• made sure my perspective or way of interpreting what’s happening was not kind of flooding into being unhelpful • making sure I had balance so my coping was productive and useful rather than unproductive • learnt that you can only do what you can do • accepting that I will do my best every time but I can’t solve everything for everyone	•	• take a mental break from it absolutely • take a step back and do some mindfulness things , the fly on the wall, so I am emotionally distancing myself a little bit from whatever is happening • it’s a space for everyone to have their beliefs and have them respected	• taking advice from others who have been in the game longer or are looking at it from another perspective and taking that on board as well into my own interpretation of what’s happening and what I can do and can’t do • professionalism by seeing things from other perspectives • professionally share your emotions about a situation so that you can gain other people’s perspectives so that you are seeking out their wisdom based on their own experience of their take on whatever has happened

• I can only do what I can do • remind myself with self-talk • I do have to verbally remind myself that I can only do what I can do and that might be self-talk, or I might actually have to say it out loud • recognised no point in dwelling on something that I can't change and making peace with it and accepting that this is just the way it is and you have to make the best of it • it took me time to teach myself that and come to the realisation that that's the only way to maintain your sanity and your professionalism • coached myself into calming down, not taking things personally, not being defensive		• you need someone to bring you back to something that's a bit more balanced • other staff – sharing your emotions and experiences with them and getting their feedback around that • get a range of perspectives and its reassuring because you know it's not just you, it's validating • made sure the right people are aware of the concerns, putting into their court • it a plan needs to be done it's done by someone who can do it

- recognised what I can and can't do around emotional regulation and practicing it
- do some deep breathing, take a big breath in and then I push it out and then I use my hands as well as to push out
- to reset myself a bit so I can start again
- stand by my beliefs and values and be very careful not to push those onto students or staff
- help them within their values and beliefs
- putting it my head where it belongs in terms of what can be done and making peace with it
- radical acceptance - it's about thinking I might not like this and I might not agree with this but there is nothing I can do so I need to make the best

of it and that might be just taking a step back and it might mean just doing what I can and hoping that has some impact • be self-aware enough to realise where your vulnerabilities and where your strengths are and try to manage both so that when you are challenged you don’t resort to being reactive or don’t resort to kind of poking the bear unnecessarily\ • take a breath, step back and chill a little			
• JH First Interview			
• Corporeality	• Temporality	• Spatiality	• Relationality
• made the decision that this can’t continue • soul-searching • realised I had been misdirected • tried to be professional in the way I handled it • it was the situation itself that should never	• counselling enabled me to move forward to a degree • this too shall pass • allow time, space, distance, and perspective to slot in at their level where you can come to some comfortable agreement or acceptance that sometimes	• allow time, space, distance, and perspective to slot in at their level where you can come to some comfortable agreement or acceptance that sometimes situations occur without any fault of your own • got perspective on it	• sort professional counselling • spoke of the position I’d been placed in

have come about in the first place • it’s a systemic problem •	situations occur without any fault of your own • in the course of time, better level of peace	• being the observer rather than the participator	
• JF First Interview			
• Corporeality	• Temporality	• Spatiality	• Relationality
• figure out the best way to resolve this conflict of interest • try and be professional • there was a heap of thoughts • try and deal with it so it was a win/win and not having people angry at you – satisfied with the outcome • trying to deal with the problem • I thought I have to keep a calm front because it was in a professional situation • however, in my head I was thinking unkind thoughts about that person • I couldn’t let the student see how cranky and frustrated I was	• debrief and talk to other people at the current time, gets brain back into normal perspective • rethinking what you can do, how you could do it differently, what you can do in the future and try to put in your head, strategies that will work, not things that don’t • in that moment in time, where you are trying to sort out the incident you are not seeing the whole school, you are just seeing this space in time • deal with it as quickly as you can • couldn’t dwell on that situation when others impacting you at same time • let it rest so you can come at it from a different angle • respite	• follow school behaviours and act in a responsible, adult way, not how some people might resolve conflict by unprofessional ways • in that moment in time, where you are trying to sort out the incident you are not seeing the whole school, you are just seeing this space in time	• speak to other people to make sure I was perceiving the problem as I thought and not from the other person’s perception • trying to communicate this is the right way to deal with these things in a group situation with a lot of different people, not just singling out the person • however, in my head I was thinking unkind thoughts about that person • telling them and swearing in my head, saying what are you doing this for • I didn’t swear at the person or punch them out • I couldn’t let the student see how cranky and frustrated I was • debrief and talk to other people at the current time • depending on the people involved as to what way to go,

• not showing it yeah (emotions) • rethinking what you can do, how you could do it differently, what you can do in the future and try to put in your head, strategies that will work, not things that don't, depending on the people involved as to what way to go, which strategy to use and which outcome • deal with it as quickly as you can			which strategy to use and which outcome • seek advice
• JF Second Interview			
• look at each dilemma individually • you need to be aware of your emotions because if you're not you may not deal with them in a manner that is professional and how it should be dealt with • I was doing the right thing, so it wasn't a dilemma for me, it was	• use your previous experiences to better cope with the new situation • has to happen quickly in a situation • draw on past experiences and then the more situations that you have you instinctively go to the one that you think is going to resolve the situation first • I think it's all past learning and stuff you don't think about its	• finished work for the day and don't dwell on it, have a different focus • deal with it in a professional way, so you can be seen as someone that is doing the correct thing	• look at whole picture from everyone's perspective • seek guidance • listen to other people's values (that you value) • if others disagree, you are still going to deal with it the way you think it should be death with • talk to someone you respect who is on the same plane and has similar philosophies • if you agree with them and you've behaved and managed

how it needs to be done so that wasn't a dilemma • I knew I was doing the right thing • put your own values and beliefs on those guidelines • choose to behave you I think the situation should be dealt with • follow through with what you think	just reactive because you have had that exposure before • the more experiences you have the more that you will be able to weight up the situation more quickly and more effectively • more exposure and experience you have you can be more proactive in your reactions and dealings • you can see how the problem has been solved before and if emotions overwhelmed you, it's a learned experience • coping is there because we've had the experience and know how to react, you know how to deal with it because you don't think about the different s5eps you just go and do it, because of your experiences		the situation that gives you some kind of self-respect, importance and wellbeing • chat to someone for a different perspective • person that you trust and who is on the same wavelength as you think we should be • other teachers because they would be more aware of the situation • someone with a good relationship on the same kind of team you can understand their thought patterns • someone from outside the workplace could give you different strategies
• NB			
• Corporeality	• Temporality	• Spatiality	• Relationality
• move towards the door • went over and actually put my hands up • I looked at him, you know, direct eye contact so I was trying to get his attention	• situation was solved fairly quickly • it's a process to go through	• I'm very conscious of safety • move towards where the issue is	• I looked at him, you know, direct eye contact so I was trying to get his attention • reduce the confrontation • talk to the one that's most wound up • face them • talk to others

• solving the situation first • very conscious of safety • solve the problem and hopefully solve it quickly rather than escalating into something major			• talk to your family to get things out • talk to your colleagues because they have a different perspective on it
• M1 First Interview			
• Corporeality	• Temporality	• Spatiality	• Relationality
• know my values and I'm quite strong • strong sense of what I stand for • speak up • start to think • I have a choice, ether don't advocate for the student, don't go in and explain my thinking, accept that ultimately, it's the student's decision and the parents;' decision and that's OK • explain that this is another way of looking at it and then I have to go, my work is done • I have to go, that's it		• sew where decisions are made from a systems-based issues • see what's at stake • (lockdown – absent from school) discovered a new way of being when I was away from there	• very much about the students • explain that this is another way of looking at it and then I have to go, my work is done • advocate for the individual • love my students • only other teachers really understand other teachers

• emotionally invested in this and believe in what I'm talking about			
• M1 Second			
• remind myself I'm here for the kids through self-talk • tried hard to be mindful – not let my imagination go and try and concentrate on the present • frame things in the lens of I was there for the kids • let other things go that weren't helpful in terms of what I'm doing with the kids	•	•	•
• CBL! First Interview			
• I felt I was very limited in how much I could actually express you know my views • it made it tricker being a casual • I think I had talked about my frustration		• I actually incorporated part of my personality whilst also doing her work • I coupled that with interactive type stuff as well	• there was always this underlying tone of we get what you're going through *(colleagues)* • I was about to talk to family and friends about the situation. however, they weren't teachers • I didn't think they actually were able to really understand where I was coming from • it was like a compromise

but not on a formal type basis • I didn't want it to sound like a whinge • I felt it was like a justified concern • *(stress)* it was definitely much less once I sort of accepted that this was you know, going to have to be, or this was the situation • so it was a matter of accepting that yes this was her personality and her teaching style and her class so her responsibility • so it was a matter of accepting that yes this was her personality and her teaching style and her class so her responsibility • it was like asserting my personality style	• we'll get the work done the way you want it but I'll actually inject some of you know my sort of teaching strategies in amongst that • make it more of a win-win situation • so it was a matter of accepting that yes this was her personality and her teaching style and her class so her responsibility • but also to give the students an additional experience with a teaching style and hopefully get the best of both worlds

into the situation as well • a whole-body type experience • it was kind of a bit rebellious in a sense that I was kind of sneakily putting my sort of spin on things in the classroom but in the end, it ended up being the solution • being proactive in a difficult situation but in a respectful way •			
• **CBL2 Second**			
• chose to stop thinking so much and looked at this issue as more of a working cooperatively situation and as a team • not taking it as a personal attack, but taking it as just purely a different perspective • taking the mindset of look, it’s not that	• slow, gradual type approach where I sort of put my input in	• on the weekends do healthful things, downtime, having a health work-life balance where you out doing a bit of sport, a bit of fresh air, that kind of stuff • take a step back from overthinking and how you may be contributing to the situation and how you may benefit from not going down a certain	• how if felt the student would benefit best from my teaching • spoke with other friends who were casual teachers in the same position talk to them about what I was going through, people who knew what the situation was, familiar with the environment of teaching and stressors and conflicts, like-minded friends

they’re purposefully trying to make things difficult • fake it a little bit that I was happy • mindset of a win-win kind of situation • I couldn’t let on that that was how I was feeling • pull your head in and just go with it • weight it up – is it worth saying what I need to say • lots and lots and lots of conversations in my heads • trying to think of as many different scenarios that could come around • mind shift of the purpose of the other person’s behaviour • once I had the mind shift, I was able to be aware of that and make the choice to not overthin to that extent		pathway, slowly and peacefully work towards something	who knew the situation, new the field • definitely sharing emotions with them, it was a debrief as far as a purging for want of a better word of the frustration and the emotions, also seeking out their opinions and looking at it they had similar instances and how they death with that situation, • get a little bit of insight as to maybe different way that I could approach a similar situation based on looking at it from a different perspective

Appendix E

Participant Information for USQ Research Project
Interview(s): Phase two

University of Southern Queensland

Participant Information for USQ Research Project Interview(s)

Project Details

Title of Project:	**Teachers' experiences of tolerance of distress associated with teaching dilemmas: A hermeneutic phenomenological exploration**
Human Research Ethics Approval Number:	H20REA239

Research Team Contact Details

Principal Investigator Details
Ms Lorette Hargreaves
Email: [redacted]
Telephone: [redacted]

Principal Supervisor Details
Professor Peter McIlveen
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Supervisor Details

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Supervisor Details

Doctor Susan Carter
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Telephone: 0746311003

Description

This project is being undertaken as part of a Doctorate in Education through the University of Southern Queensland. Its purpose is to investigate mature and experienced teachers' experiences of tolerance of distress associated with teaching dilemmas. Findings aim to obtain new knowledge which may assist teachers in coping with this distress. The research team requests your assistance because you

may provide valuable insight from your experiences which may be of value to others. Non-identifiable data and outcomes will be published within the researcher's thesis and may be communicated within a peer-reviewed journal and a conference. Summary documents will be available to participants on request from the Principal Investigator (contact details above). A summary will also be communicated through the Principal Supervisor's research group's web page.

The project has approval from the university and will be conducted in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research.

Participation

Participation is entirely voluntary and is open only to teachers over 45 years of age with a minimum of ten years teaching experience. You are free to withdraw at any stage of the project and this in no way will impact upon your current or future relationship with the University of Southern Queensland, the New South Wales Department of Education and Communities or members of the research team. If you choose to withdraw you may request that any data collected about you be omitted from the project and be confidentially destroyed. Please contact the Research Team (contact details at the top of this form) should you choose to withdraw.

Your participation will involve contributing within a small focus group for approximately 30 minutes of your time. Should circumstances permit, this will be conducted face-to-face at a COVID safe location. Should this not be permissible, the focus group will be conducted through a teleconference (Zoom). The group will be scheduled at a date and time that is convenient to you.

This stage is the third within this research and aims to continue to explore distress tolerance through participant's metaphorical expressions. Metaphors represent how we have compared one targeted phenomenon to another to convey our thoughts about that phenomenon, for example, within Romeo and Julie, Romeo stated that Juliet is the sun. Metaphors briefly or within story form convey how one phenomenon is another, rather than how one phenomenon is like another.

The group will be conducted within a friendly atmosphere where research concepts will be explained and discussed prior to the activities. The activities will revolve around the generation of metaphors which are indicative of what you perceive distress tolerance to be. Participants will be guided through the processes

of metaphor development and be encouraged to think freely in doing so. Example questions used to promote metaphor development may include those below.

- If you were the phenomena of distress tolerance, what would you look like?
- If you were the phenomena of distress tolerance, what would you do?

With your consent, interview(s) will be recorded with an audio device. If you do not wish this to occur, please advise the researcher as it will not be possible to participate in the research without being recorded.

Expected Benefits

It is expected that this research will not directly benefit you. However, it may produce new knowledge to assist teachers in coping with the distress associated with teaching dilemmas. This knowledge may also be relevant to others within helping professionals to assist them in developing tolerance to distress associated with their professional dilemmas.

As a token of appreciation for your participation you will receive complimentary food and refreshments at the conclusion of the face-to-face focus group. Should a Zoom meeting be required, a $30 gift card will be posted to you, estimated to occur towards the end of 2021.

Risks

In participation, there are no anticipated risks beyond normal day-to-day living. You may though experience some inconvenience due to the time required for the activities. There may also be potential for you to experience some discomfort in talking about common teaching dilemmas. Sometimes talking about the issues raised may create some uncomfortable or distressing feelings. The researcher will contact you through email or phone approximately two working days after interview(s) for debriefing if required. If you need to talk to someone immediately, please contact:

- Lifeline on 131114 (24/7),
- University Psychology and Counselling Services on 0738126163 or 0746311763,
- NSW DEC Employee Assistance Program on 1800060650, or
- Beyond Blue on 1300224636 (24/7).

You may also wish to consider consulting your General Practitioner (GP) for additional support.

Privacy and Confidentiality

All participants' comments and responses will be treated confidentially unless required by law. Audio recordings will be transcribed by the researcher. Interview transcripts will be used by the researcher for data analysis and in accordance with 2.5.2 of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research. Research data should be made available for use by other researchers unless this is prevented by ethical, privacy or confidentiality matters. No personal information will accompany interview data and instead pseudonyms will be used to identify individuals, that is; your data will be non-identifiable.

Non-identifiable data will be stored electronically on password protected storage services. Any data collected as a part of this project will be stored securely as per University of Southern Queensland's Research Data Management policy.

Data will be available for future research following ethical approval for and completion of this research. You may choose to opt out of having your data made available for future research and continue to participate within the project.

Consent to Participate

We would like to ask you to sign a written consent form (enclosed) to confirm your agreement to participate in this project. Please return your signed consent form to Lorette Hargreaves at [redacted] prior to participating in the group.

Questions or Further Information about the Project

Please refer to the Research Team Contact Details at the top of the form to have any questions answered or to request further information about this project.

Concerns or Complaints Regarding the Conduct of the Project

If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project, you may contact the University of Southern Queensland Manager of Research Integrity and Ethics on +61 7 4631 1839 or email researchintegrity@usq.edu.au. The Manager of Research Integrity and Ethics is

not connected with the research project and can facilitate a resolution to your concern in an unbiased manner.

Thank you for taking the time to help with this research project. Please keep this sheet for your information.

Appendix F

Participant Consent for USQ Research Project
Interview(s): Phase two

University of Southern Queensland

Participant Consent for USQ Research Project Interview(s)

Project Details

Title of Project:	**Teachers' experiences of tolerance of distress associated with teaching dilemmas: A hermeneutic phenomenological exploration**
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Statement of Consent

By signing below, you are indicating that you:

• have read and understood the information document regarding this project.	☐Yes / ☐No
• have had any questions answered to your satisfaction.	☐Yes / ☐No
• understand that if you have any additional questions, you can contact the research team.	☐Yes / ☐No

• are over 18 years of age.	☐Yes / ☐No
• provide consent for any data (non-identifiable) collected to be used in future research activities related to this field ***only respond to the next statement if applicable*** • do not want any data collected to be used in future research activities but do want to participate in the research	☐Yes / ☐No ☐Yes / ☐No
• **voluntarily** agree to participate in the project	☐Yes / ☐No

Participant Consent

Participant Name	Participant Signature	Date

Please return this form to the Principal Investigator prior to interviewing.