Triads, third spaces and the activity of school-based mentoring

by

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Statement of Originality

This is to certify that to the best of my knowledge, the content of this thesis is my own work.

This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or other purposes.

I certify that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work and that all
the assistance received in preparing this thesis and sources have been acknowledged.

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Abstract

Traditionally pre-service and supervising teachers and tertiary educators have considered professional experience to be an invaluable component of teacher preparation. However, little has changed over the years in terms of the acknowledgement of, or provision of support structures for this process. Even though effective teaching has long been associated with effective mentoring, professional experience continues to be a highly variable event for its participants. Mentoring of pre-service teachers demands a specific skill set that must be developed over time and is best situated in a community of practice and this professional work of educative mentoring is both an opportunity and a challenge for supervising teachers.

This case study examines the influence of a mentoring course which was concurrently delivered on-site during a professional experience placement. Activity theory with its focus on contradictions and tensions, has been used to analyse the mentoring practices, perceptions and attitudes of the supervising teachers. Carefully selected artefacts including a weekly reflective diary, the final professional experience report and a semi-structured post placement interview, have been examined and coded to identify key mentoring practices. Five key themes emerged from the data with the opportunity for collegial sharing and peer mentoring being the most significant overall.
Acknowledgements

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Chapter 1: The role of professional experience in initial teacher education

Professional experience is a mandatory component of all initial teacher education courses in Australia. Pre-service teachers in New South Wales must complete a minimum of 80 days of professional experience across their teacher preparation courses, with a minimum of 90% or 72 days being undertaken in traditional school settings (Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW, 2012). Sourcing quality placements for pre-service teachers is becoming increasingly difficult for both initial teacher providers and schools, as the demand for places exceeds the availability of these places particularly in certain stages of learning and for specific subjects. When pre-service teachers are placed into schools for their professional experience blocks, of varying duration, a supervising teacher must be provided to support and assess them for this component of their teacher preparation. Initial teacher education providers have also traditionally been expected to provide tertiary-based support for these placements, usually in the form of a tertiary mentor to liaise with the supervising teacher to support the administrative and assessment practices of the professional experience placement.

Until recently very little formal training or professional development has been available for either supervising teachers or tertiary mentors of pre-service teachers. This has led to
extremely variable experiences for both pre-service teachers and their supervising teachers, not always positive. Issues around assessment, workloads, understanding of the professional teaching standards, and a general disconnect between the coursework of teacher preparation courses and the fieldwork of school professional experience placements has led to confusion, anxiety and frustration for many participants (Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010; Hudson & Hudson, 2012).

The third space of mentoring

Mentoring of pre-service teachers during a professional experience placement in schools can be an invaluable opportunity for learning the practice of teaching for both the pre-service teacher and the supervising teacher, but the traditional triadic mentoring model that includes a tertiary mentor and a supervising teacher poses many challenges in which power struggles can develop (Cartaut & Bertone, 2009), and this suggests the need for more collaborative models of pre-service teacher supervision. Martin, Snow and Torrez (2011) discuss the possibility of a hybrid or third space as a site for collaboration and innovation to reconcile academic and practitioner knowledge. The provisions for mentoring practice in Schools have meant that supervising teachers are generally working in isolation from their colleagues, university staff and other support structures, and some research suggests that building
mentoring capacity is best situated in a community of practice (Bakhurst, 2009).

This study will examine the influence a mentoring course has for participants who are concurrently supervising pre-service teachers undertaking a professional experience placement. An effective teacher is not always an effective mentor but supervising teachers are invaluable resources who can offer unique opportunities to promote professional learning and there is a need to increase both the quality and quantity of supervising teachers as reported in a review of a training program for mentoring conversations (Timperley, 2001). The professional practice of mentoring and the need for supervising teachers to implement differentiated educative mentoring practices with their pre-service teachers emphasises the need for effective mentoring practices to be rehearsed and learned, and reinforces the belief that good teachers do not automatically become good mentors (Schwille, 2008).

**Significance and background of the study**

There has been sustained and longstanding debate and discussion (Marshall, Cole & Zbar, 2012; Hanushek, 2011; Jensen, 2011; Wood & Stanulis, 2009; Vescio, Ross, & Adams,
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2008; OECD, 2005; Ramsey, 2000; Wade, 1985; Meyer & French, 1965) about teacher quality and more specifically, the role of initial teacher education in developing quality teachers for the future. In 2012, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) which provides national leadership for the Australian, State and Territory Governments in promoting excellence in the profession of teaching and school leadership, released The Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework (AITSL, 2012). It explains that performance and development is about creating a culture of teacher quality, feedback and growth for all teachers within all schools. It outlines the characteristics of a successful system and the culture that needs to be in place for sustained improvements to occur in schools. It describes the elements of an effective performance and development cycle which include: reflection and goal setting, professional practice and learning, feedback and review. It provides a structure for appraising, developing and improving teaching practice as well as recognising the entitlement of teachers to meaningful feedback and support.

In 2013 the NSW Government released ‘Great Teaching, Inspired Learning – A blueprint for action’ (NSWDEC, 2013). A key issue raised was the quality of professional
experience placements and their assessment. “Effective teacher education programs focus attention on the quality of professional experience with emphasis on practice and learning in schools with high quality, experienced teachers as mentors and supervisors” (p.7). The paper outlines five outcomes and eight associated actions to improve Teacher Quality in NSW (NSWDEC, 2013). Five of the eight actions specifically relate to mentoring including:

Outcome 4.4 – Teachers supervising professional experience placements will be required to undertake professional learning and Outcome 4.7 - The assessment of professional experience will be rigorous and consistent across teacher education programs.

“Protocols, instruments and other support material, including an evidence guide, will be developed to ensure that there is clarity, rigour and greater consistency in the assessment of professional experience” (NSWDEC p.10).

This study examines whether or not the provision of an on-site concurrent mentoring course has any influence over the mentoring practices of supervising teachers during a three or four-week professional experience block at a government primary school in Sydney, New South Wales. The participants were four in-service teachers with varying experience who were supervising five pre-service teachers during a professional experience placement. All five pre-service teachers were enrolled in a four-year Bachelor of Education Primary undergraduate degree at a University located in Sydney, New South Wales. Three of the pre-service teachers were undertaking their second year placement of three-weeks duration, and
two pre-service teachers were undertaking a third year placement of four-weeks duration. Each of the supervising teachers were invited and agreed to concurrently participate in a weekly two-hour mentoring course which was conducted over five weeks on-site after school. For the two participants who supervised the three second year pre-service teachers, the placement coincided with the first three weeks of the five-week course. One participant supervised two pre-service teachers concurrently. For the two participants who supervised the two third year pre-service teachers, the placement coincided with the first four weeks of the five-week course. Please see Table 1 for an overview of the participants. The mentoring course was taught by an academic from the same university where the pre-service teachers were enrolled. The mentoring course was designed by academics from the university, had been taught previously by various academics including the course presenter, in both primary and secondary settings and both government and non-government school systems, and was accredited with the Board of Teaching and Educational Standards, NSW (BOSTES). The host school and university had a long-standing partnership.
Table 1: An overview of the participants in the case study

<table>
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<th>Supervising teachers (Participants) including years of teaching experience</th>
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<th>Alignment of the professional experience placement with the 5 week mentoring course</th>
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<td>One third year pre-service teacher</td>
<td>Weeks 1-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hannah – 14 years</td>
<td>Two second year pre-service teachers</td>
<td>Weeks 1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaclyn – 4 years</td>
<td>One third year pre-service teacher</td>
<td>Weeks 1-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molly – 9 years</td>
<td>One second year pre-service teacher</td>
<td>Weeks 1-3</td>
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This research employed a single-case study design in order to provide an in-depth examination of an extensive amount of information about one case for a defined period of time (Neuman, 2011). In order to define the case, a profile was developed for each participant using the following data: gender, years teaching, position at the school, mentoring experience, experience with the BOSTES accreditation process, and other relevant data. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the supervising teachers after the professional experience placement and all interviews were recorded to assist with building
the necessary detail. Data were collected and analysed from three main sources: the weekly reflective diaries completed by the supervising teachers each week after the two-hour mentoring course meeting, the final reports for the professional experience placement completed by the supervising teachers at the conclusion of the placement, and the semi-structured interviews which were conducted up to two weeks after the conclusion of the mentoring course.

The analysis highlights the influence a mentoring course may have when conducted concurrently with a professional experience placement. There were four supervising teachers who mentored five pre-service teachers across either a three or four-week placement. The analysis provides a critical discussion of the data collected during the professional experience placement, specifically: the weekly reflective diaries, the final reports for the pre-service teachers, and the semi-structured interviews. The discussion is framed by five key themes that emerged during the coding of the data collected, for both the weekly reflective diaries and the semi-structured interviews. These key themes are the opportunity for collegial sharing and peer mentoring, the enhanced role of self-reflection for mentors, the importance of the weekly readings in supporting the mentoring process, an enhanced understanding of and confidence with applying the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL,
and the application of a range of specific mentoring strategies as a result of completing the mentoring course. The analysis will also attempt to interpret comments made in the final professional experience reports by the supervising teachers and to align these with the professional teaching standards, and try to establish links between the patterns of comments made, and subsequently the focus on specific teaching standards within these comments. The possible influence of the mentoring course in the construction of these comments will be examined and discussed.

Building the mentoring capacity of supervising teachers through participation in a concurrent mentoring course may increase the effectiveness of the professional experience placement, as the establishment of a locally based community of practice which supports initial teacher education may refine the support and assessment of pre-service teachers, improving the outcomes for all stakeholders (pre-service teachers, supervising teachers and universities).

**Research question**

“How are the mentoring practices of supervising teachers influenced by participation in a concurrent mentoring course during a professional experience placement?”
Key terms

**AITSL** – Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership

**Australian Professional Standards for Teachers** - define the knowledge, practice and professional engagement needed for high quality, effective teaching that improves student learning outcomes. The Standards use nationally agreed indicators of teacher quality to guide the preparation, support and development of teachers throughout their careers from Graduate to Proficient Teachers, to Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers (BOSTES, 2012).

**BOSTES** – Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW - is responsible for school curriculum, assessment, and teaching and regulatory standards in NSW schools.

**Initial teacher educator** – supervising teacher, school-based; lecturer or tertiary mentor, university-based

**Mentee** – pre-service or novice (early career) teacher

**Mentor** – school-based or tertiary-based educator, guide, supervising teacher

**Mentoring** – the process of guiding and supporting professional practice
**Pre-service teacher** – student teacher, practicum student, teacher education student

**Professional experience** – school based placement, of varying duration, to be completed by all pre-service teachers. It can be in the form of a practicum which is fully supervised, or an internship which is partially supervised for final year pre-service teachers.

**Student** – school student

**Supervising teacher** – cooperating teacher, field or school-based teacher educator, mentor teacher

**Tertiary supervisor** – tertiary mentor, university advisor or teacher educator
Chapter 2: Literature Review and theoretical framework

Introduction

In this chapter I will discuss the challenges of mentoring pre-service teachers using the traditional structure of supervision in school settings. I will outline the key principles of Activity Theory as a theoretical framework for this study and make explicit links with professional experience as a unique activity ‘system’. Finally, I will present mentoring as an educational intervention and consider how the opportunities for building mentoring capacity could be built through professional development.

Teaching and mentoring – the challenges

Three areas of concern include: inequities or variability in the quality of mentoring experiences for pre-service teachers, the overall quality of placements, and a lack of understanding of the mentoring process (Hudson, Spooner-Lane & Murray, 2012). Some of the more common challenges supervising teachers are confronted with when mentoring pre-service teachers are outlined by Martin, Snow & Torrez (2011) and include: the theoretical focus of the university courses versus the practical concerns of schools; issues of
time and power; lack of status or identity for mentors; poorly defined roles and support structures within tertiary settings and the inherent conflicts of the evaluative and educative aspects of supervision. The university-based initial teacher educator’s desire to be less intrusive and regulatory has also caused confusion and increased the tensions and hidden labour of mentoring (Hamel & Jaasko-Fisher, 2010).

Supervising teachers play a significant role as teacher educators, yet remain unrecognized as a distinct professional group (Murray as cited in Leshem, 2014). Currently, there is no distinction between the role of the teacher and the role of the mentor in schools (Timperley, 2001), and this is complicated by the fact that it is widely accepted that a good teacher will make a good mentor (Schwille, 2008). This situation may have arisen from the assumption that pre-service teacher education is the sole responsibility of initial teacher educators, where in reality both schools and initial teacher educators are in fact economic partners with the state based authorities in the production of teachers, the wider public are the consumers who desire quality teachers at low cost, and quality teaching is the commodity or economic product (Leshem, 2014). Current structures supporting professional experience in schools means that mentoring is a bargain for teacher education in that so much of the mentor’s work manifests as “hidden labour” (Hamel & Jaasko-Fisher,
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2010). With an increasing accountability to regulatory authorities, new performance and
development frameworks, and more high stakes testing of students across schools, the labour
of supervising teachers becomes hidden or obscured.

Hamel & Jaasko-Fisher (2010) reviewed the effectiveness of a mentor teacher advisory
council for pre-service teachers undertaking internships, and their research revealed that
sophisticated communicative labour was required during any given placement; and that
various tensions existed including confusion around workloads and the amount of feedback
to be offered, which was inconsistent and exacerbated by the fact that mentor teachers were
generally unsure of their role in internships in relation to providing feedback. They proposed
that as mentors, in-school work has intensified over time and that a lower quality of
mentoring was being offered to pre-service teachers. They found that there is currently an
imbalance in discussions of mentoring and that there is a need to look at the substantive
communication of mentoring more closely.

A recent study by Leonard (2012) reviewed the application and use of the AITSL
Standards (2011) against the professional experience reports of pre-service teachers in the
Australian Capital Territory. Leonard (2012) found that the use of the professional teaching
standards have led to a restricted understanding of professional practice due to the technical focus of the standards, meaning that the type of feedback offered combined *Professional Knowledge* and *Professional Practice* together, and narrowed the feedback offered to the management of a classroom at the expense of intellectual quality and depth in relation to pedagogy and curriculum:

*The current Australian National standards for teachers, for example, make no reference to the social context of teaching, expecting only that teachers will have teaching strategies responsive to the strengths and needs of students from diverse backgrounds. Similarly, the National Standards do not articulate a role for teachers in forming, critiquing and investigating the appropriateness of curriculum. Rather they are to use curriculum and assessment knowledge in a technical sense to design learning and teaching programs” (Leonard, 2012, p.59).*

It could be argued that the teaching standards should be used as a developmental tool rather than a regulatory framework and Hattie’s (2009) meta-analysis work shows that a supervising teacher who develops and communicates clear understandings of what counts as good student performance will have a far greater impact on student learning than one who can implement outstanding classroom management strategies. Supervising teachers more commonly provide descriptive rather than analytical feedback to pre-service teachers (Edwards & Ogden, 1998).
When constructing feedback for their pre-service teachers, supervising teachers are primarily concerned with the pace of curriculum coverage, how pre-service teachers are managing children through the curriculum and the students’ performances rather than focusing on pre-service teachers as learners (Edwards & Protheroe, 2004).

**The ‘activity’ of mentoring**

Activity Theory, specifically Third Generation Activity Theory, was chosen to provide a theoretical framework for this study. It is a general conceptual system, described as a socially based critical theory, which originated in the Soviet Union in the 1920’s and 1930’s, and has been defined by four basic principles: the hierarchical structure of activity which includes a subject, object, tools, rules and tensions; object-orientedness that binds subjects together through any given shared activity; internalisation/externalisation which represents the interaction between the individuals or subjects and the new work activity that is created; and finally, tool mediation and development which highlights the importance of resourcing in any study of human activity (Holzman, 2006).

Third Generation activity theory (Engestrom, 2001) has been defined by five key
principles. They are firstly the prime unit of analysis which is a collective, artefact-mediated and object-orientated activity system, which is to be seen in terms of network relations to other activity systems. In this case study the prime unit of analysis was the mentoring practices of the supervising teachers. With sustained interaction, participants in separate activity settings have the potential to reach general agreement over the purposes and meanings of significant tools and artefacts, as well as shared and new objects and outcomes of their shared activity (p.7). In this case study, this was facilitated and supported through participation in the concurrent mentoring course. Secondly, the ‘multi-voicedness’ or hybrid discourses of individual and intersecting activity systems arises from the diverse histories of the participants, moderated in response to the divisions of labour as well as the rules and forms of community. In this case study the diverse profiles of the supervising teachers, including both teaching and mentoring experience were given a forum through the mentoring course to support hybrid discourses. This leads to requirements for negotiation and translation – but also reveals contradictions that provide impetus for change in the system and its participants (p.7). Thirdly, historicity acknowledges that any activity setting has a sustained cultural history and thus cultural embeddedness or inertia. The process of change needs to acknowledge and work with the threads of on-going influence arising from such histories
Fourthly, contradictions which are defined as “historically accumulating structural tensions within and between activity systems” (Engestrom, 2001, p.137), have a central role in providing the catalyst for change and development of the central activity. To reach stability, activity systems need to be assisted to move through contradiction to consensus (p.7). The fifth principle is that of “expansive transformation” through which new patterns of activity are produced. This requires the object(s) and the motive(s) of the activity to be reconceptualised through collective activity to forge new forms and meanings (p.7). This process was supported by the collaborative activities provided through the weekly mentoring course.

Activity Theory provides a valid model for complex activity systems involving rich human texture, such as the mentoring relationship defined between the pre-service teacher and the supervising teacher during a professional experience placement (Bakhurst, 2009). Further to this, Third Generation Activity Theory provides a valuable theoretical base on which to develop an understanding of professional experience as it connects the university and school as two distinct communities of learning and activity systems by providing a framework to examine the different actions of the participants (Bloomfield and Nguyen, 2015). It often adopts a case study approach towards institutional improvement due to the
The traditional mentoring triad (Cartaut & Bertone, 2009) in a professional experience placement operates as an activity system with the following identifiable components: an object, subject, tools/mediations, contradictions/tensions, rules for participation and the division of labour (Engestrom, 2000). For the purpose of this research the activity system operating was defined by all components of both the professional experience placement and the mentoring course. The object of study was the mentoring practice of the supervising teachers as demonstrated through their responsibilities as a supervising teacher and through their participation in the mentoring course. The subject(s) were the supervising teachers who were responsible for both mentoring of the pre-service teachers and participating in the mentoring course. The tools/mediations were bound by the mentoring course and the supervisory responsibilities across the professional experience placement which included all professional conversations; the pedagogical content knowledge that the participants drew upon; the observational frameworks completed as a requirement of the placement such as the lesson observation proformas and the final professional experience report; and the use of the teaching standards as both a developmental instrument to construct formative feedback and as a summative instrument during completion of the final report.
There was a division of labour between the supervising teachers and tertiary mentors; and between the individual supervising teachers and the collective group formed through the provision of the mentoring course. The rules for participation included tertiary expectations, the BOSTES (NSW) requirements for a professional experience placement and school policies and expectations. The division of labour within an activity system creates different positions and therefore, may give rise to various contradictions or tensions. These contradictions provide the mechanism by which an activity system transforms over time (Avis, 2009). The focus of this research was situated within the division of labour, within a school based activity system. The proposed study altered the processes of the traditional mentoring triad (supervising teacher, pre-service teacher and tertiary mentor) as an activity system by adding another dimension to the process through the provision of a concurrent mentoring course for supervising teachers, which facilitated opportunities for peer mentoring and collaboration. The mentoring course occurred in a third or hybrid space (Martin, Snow & Torrez, 2011).

Activity Theory focuses on the interactions between an individual, systems of artefacts and other individuals in historically developing institutional settings (Holzman, 2006). Activity theory allows us to view individuals within a cultural setting and to observe the work
in which they are engaged as mediating behavior. The activity they produce is seen to create
the world in which it is situated (Stuart, 2012). Activity Theory has evolved through three
generations of research and the third generation of activity theory, known as expansive
learning, aims to develop conceptual tools to understand dialogue, multiple perspectives, and
networks of interacting activity systems (Engestrom, 2001). These conceptual tools provided
a framework for analysing the mentoring practices observed across the professional
experience placement and during the mentoring course.

Third Generation Activity Theory with the help of four questions, five central principles
and its concept of expansive learning has been used to examine and challenge the traditional
view of learning and development as a vertical process, aimed at elevating supervising
teachers upward, to higher levels of competence (Engestrom, 2001). The object of expansive
learning activity is the entire activity system in which the learners are engaged, in this case
the professional experience placement and the mentoring practices that develop as a result of
participation in the concurrent mentoring course. Expansive learning at work produces new
forms of work activity, and new forms of activity are learnt as they are being created, in this
case mentoring practice (Engestrom, 2001).
Expansive learning increasingly involves the horizontal widening of collective expertise by means of debating and negotiating different perspectives. Institutions, communities and their subjects become the units of analysis and produce specific types of activity through interactions and collaborative work (Engestrom, 2000). It is these separate threads of activity that create the tensions or contradictions in an activity system. These contradictions have been referred to as “knots” which require constant tying, untying and retying together – more specifically, “knotworking” (Engestrom, 2000). The tying and dissolution of a knot of collaborative work is not reducible to any specific individual or fixed organizational entity as the centre of control – the centre does not hold. The development of any “knot” will change from time to time within a knotworking sequence. The unstable knot or contradiction needs to be made the focus of analysis which will enable the supervising teachers to focus their efforts on the root causes of problems (Engestrom, 2000).

Activity theory can provide a lens with which to view multiple perspectives and this can support complex understandings of collaboration (Stuart, 2012). The mentoring course may have helped to create and share meaning across communities of practice that did not currently share practice, such as universities and schools who share the common responsibility of pre-service teacher education. Coombs, Goodwin and Storm (2013) looked at the role of dialogue
in mentoring relationships and concluded that through dialogue mentors better understand the relationships with each other, but that they must dialogue and communicate strategically. The dialogic, narrative, performative, collaborative and relational character of language, within a specific mentoring practice, has been explored as an instrument of the mentoring course (Holzman, 2006).

Supervising teachers are narrowing their feedback to pre-service teachers in response to regulatory processes such as the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2011) as shown in a study by Leonard (2012). Activity theory with its focus on mediations and tools can promote reflection and critical thinking through a dialogue about practice and in this way mentoring conversations serve a dual function in professional experience both as a tool or practice and as a reflective artifact (Stuart, 2012). In this way it is possible that peer mentoring or collaboration through the provision of a mentoring course, may have transformed the type of feedback produced from something that was descriptive to something more analytical and interpretive (Coombs, Goodwin & Storm, 2013). This could enrich the information available to the pre-service teacher and assist in refining reflections on professional practice (Timperley, 2001).
Mentoring as an educational intervention and the role of professional conversations

Mentoring has been defined as a forum for learning the practice of teaching which needs to include differentiated support and feedback and therefore, must be acknowledged as a professional practice or skill set which is developed and refined over time - there is no one right way to mentor (Schwille, 2008). Mentors need to draw on different skills of mentoring across any professional experience placement. Supervising teachers need to know their pre-service teachers as learners. They need to possess knowledge of the relevant subject matter, of how to teach it and they must also have specific learning goals in mind for their pre-service teachers (Schwille, 2008). In the case of mentored learning to teach, the novice is the learner whom the mentor must get to know, the subject matter is teaching, and the goal is helping the novice learn to teach – Schwille (2008) refers to this as “Educative Mentoring”. A good mentor should be an expert in the specific subject matter that they mentor. Expert teachers should have robust knowledge of content as well as practical and pedagogical content knowledge, and be able to provide a balance of challenge and support (Daloz, 1983). This is important as there are many shared features between good mentoring and good teaching practice. Supervising teachers should acknowledge and facilitate the following transformative processes through their mentoring: diversity, the need for academic or
scholarly dialogues, reflective questioning and the modelling of best pedagogical practice (Orland-Barak & Hasin, 2010).

The traditional triadic mentoring model that includes a tertiary mentor and a supervising teacher poses many challenges including power struggles that can develop through co-supervision, and hence there is a need for more collaborative models of pre-service teacher mentoring (Cartaut & Bertone, 2009). Traditionally tertiary mentors have been seen as gatekeepers with supervising teachers playing a secondary role. It is reasonable to expect that more collective and mediated support for pre-service teachers, which draws upon the respective skills of both the tertiary mentors and the supervising teachers, may generate more effective professional experience placements (Tsui, Lopez-Real, Law Tang, & Shum, 2001; Beck & Kosnik, 2000; Bruner, 1991). It is generally accepted that supervising teachers will focus on teaching programs, pedagogy and classroom management; and that tertiary mentors will focus more on the general techniques of teaching and theories or methodologies of learning (Cartaut & Bertone, 2009). A quality professional experience placement depends on collaboration and transparent communication between all
participants of the mentoring triad, which reinforces the need for a group effort with shared
goals and expectations, including a commitment by the supervising teacher to accept the pre-
service teacher as a learning partner and not feel afraid to learn from them (Johnson, 2011).

Mentoring has been referred to as an educational intervention or ‘cognitive
apprenticeship’ in which mentors must know their pre-service teachers as learners and
possess knowledge of learning to teach (Schwille, 2008). Mentoring is a highly complex
process which requires a differentiated approach, depending on subject matter, grade
level and context. This requires supervising teachers to draw on different skills within
any given mentoring event which relies on strategic knowledge and judgement (Schwille,
2008). In this way, the pre-service teachers are the learners, the supervising teachers are the
teachers and the teaching itself is the subject matter. Both the pre-service teacher and the
supervising teacher need an explicit role, and new mentors particularly need supported
practice and a structure for both observing and assessing – specifically, with initiating
constructive or professional conversations (Schneider, 2008). An effective supervising
teacher will also be an ongoing learner who is transparent in their expectations and has a
clear vision of best practice and is willing to learn from others (Orland-Barak & Hasin, 2010).

Supervising teachers need to be seen as capacity builders for implementing reform as they simultaneously enrich their own practices in both mentoring and teaching, and the pre-service teacher’s practice (Hudson, 2010). Sayeski & Paulsen (2012) examined over 380 evaluations of supervising teachers by pre-service teachers and found that effective mentors share common characteristics. They set time aside for one-on-one mentoring discussions, provide concrete feedback on a regular basis, provide multi-modal feedback especially written and allow pre-service teachers to experiment and explore. They also include the pre-service teacher in all aspects of their job. ‘Facilitative mentoring’ is a concept described by Sayeski & Paulsen (2012) in which the mentor provides a balance of ‘in-the-moment’ explicit feedback, which promotes pre-service teacher reflection and introspection. Transformation over transmission is advocated through the use of Graham’s (2006) analogy of maestros who lead by example, versus mentors who guide to co-construct the knowledge of teaching (as cited in Sayeski & Paulsen, 2012). Johnson (2011) outlines characteristics of a quality supervising teacher including the ability to model appropriate practices such as the
ability to actively listen and make suggestions and the ability to collaborate. Having the confidence and willingness to use a variety of observational tools is also considered important, as is the ability to mentor or guide the pre-service teacher into the profession.

We learn, grow and change through sustained practice or situated activity in communities of practice (Lave & Wenger as cited in Niesz, 2010). It is the differences between these communities, and the subsequent bridges built between them that hold the most promise for generating change and growth during professional experience. Through collegial dialogue which is informed by ideas, theory, inquiry and reflection, this co-participation in joint activity makes the professional experience a community of practice (Niesz, 2010). Networks and partnerships serve as contexts for teacher learning and with teacher educators belonging to multiple communities of practice or networks, the competing demands from various networks help to shape new practices and identities, and in this way, reconcile their differences (Niesz, 2010). Supervising teachers need practice with observing and assessing pre-service teachers, and they also need support with professional conversations (Schneider, 2007). Whilst feedback is a major influence in learning and development, the nature and timing of the feedback offered, and how it is delivered is critical
to effect change (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Supervising teachers generally feel unable to perform their duties properly due to lack of time and subsequently they feel the need to provide feedback and conduct debriefing sessions with pre-service teachers in corridors, or during lesson breaks (Leshem, 2014). Mentoring is more likely to be effective when supervising teachers are provided with additional release time (Abell et al., 1995; Lee & Feng, 2007; Robinson & Robinson, 1999). Mentoring outcomes will therefore be further enhanced when timetabling allows supervising and pre-service teachers to meet together during the school day (Bullough, 2005).

Talk can serve as a tool for substantive communication and in this way serve to mediate some of the contradictions in mentoring, in this case through explicit feedback (Avis, 2009). Talk can be transformative and Avis (2009) explores the concept of co-configuration, an emerging type of work in which customers, pre-service teachers and the producers, supervising teachers, become partners. There is interdependency between multiple producers, in this case peer mentoring, through the provision of a concurrent mentoring course. Mentoring practice needs to be situated in a community (Bakhurst, 2009) and a mentoring course provides this community of practice. Mentors need to find openings
for discussion through targetted questioning (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999). Learning to teach is a process of learning to respond in increasingly informed ways while working in classrooms, and the process of mentoring provides a mediation of the knowledge of teaching and an induction into a community of practice with language being the key tool of mentoring (Edwards & Protheroe, 2004). Given the way in which supervising teachers use their expertise as mentors to develop pre-service teachers, mentoring practice itself can be seen as the second language of teaching (Orland-Barak & Hasin, 2010).

Language can be a blockage or a channel (Niesz, 2010) for communities that do not share practice, and participants need to learn to talk within a community of practice during professional experience placements to establish a common language for mentoring conversations to keep communication flowing smoothly. Providing a mentoring course for supervising teachers may have facilitated collegial conversations and establish a common language through the creation of a new community of practice. Communities of practice provide resources for meaning making, the opportunity to establish common goals, identity construction and the generation of new cultural forms discourses. Any discontent in participants can serve as motivation for change (Niesz, 2010) and there is wide agreement that mentors need a forum to problem-solve and share ideas with other mentors and that this
helps to build confidence and expertise over time (Parise & Forret, 2008).

**Building mentoring capacity through professional development**

Professional experience can be viewed as an opportunity for professional learning by all stakeholders including pre-service teachers, supervising teachers and tertiary mentors (Hagger & McIntyre 2006), and until recently there has been limited professional development available to in-service teachers who undertake the mentoring of pre-service teachers. In Leonard’s (2012) study which looked at professional conversations and the discourse of mentoring, it was found that due to the technical focus of the standards, supervising teachers are narrowing their feedback for pre-service teachers to managing a classroom rather than examining intellectual quality and depth of student performance and assessment practices. Leonard’s (2012) research went on to propose the need for professional conversation prompts for both supervising teachers and pre-service teachers, and the critical need for continuing collaborative work between employers, universities, regulatory authorities, school leaders, and most importantly mentor teachers in schools. This finding reinforces that the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2011) need to be used as developmental tools rather than just as a regulatory framework (Leonard, 2012).
Educator networks provide a different sort of shared practice than do the institutional communities they are seeking to change, and it is the interaction between the participants of these networks which holds the promise for change (Niesz, 2010).

A longstanding tension between schools and universities has been the perceived disconnect between coursework and fieldwork in relation to teacher education, and the possibility of a hybrid or third space as a site for collaboration and innovation could help to reconcile academic and practitioner knowledge (Martin, Snow & Torrez, 2011). Graham (2006) argues that professional development (mentoring) courses provide a site of inquiry where mentors can review their long-standing practices and assumptions. The mentors in Leshem’s (2014) study expressed the need for sharing and learning and this is supported by Wenger’s (1998) proposal that identity is shaped through participation in various communities of practice, and that having a sense of identity is a crucial aspect of learning. This third space (Martin, Snow & Torrez, 2011) may be framed by school-university based partnerships that acknowledge the evaluative and educative roles of supervision, and that aim to distribute both workload (and power) to create equity for pre-
service teacher educators (Leshem, 2014). There is a need to focus on new roles for tertiary-based educators, and for both tertiary-based and school-based teacher educators to understand the complex nature of liaison work (Martin, Snow & Torrez, 2011).

Mentoring preparation helps supervising teachers provide specific and objective feedback which prevents them from having unrealistic expectations of their pre-service teachers. It can be argued that most challenges are the result of poor communication. In a US study of 287 supervising teachers, 118 of whom had completed a graduate level course in mentoring, it was found that those who had completed the training improved their practice, and adopted new practice as a direct result of their mentoring experience (Spencer, 2007). In this particular US district there has been a move away from traditional professional development that is disconnected from the classroom to engagement in problem solving over an extended period of time that specifically relates to student learning, content and instruction. This approach also provides access to a broader professional community of learners (Spencer, 2007). Supervising teachers have reported significant benefits from mentoring their pre-service teachers when they participate in mentor training courses, especially when these courses are associated with a university-school partnership program which provides them with opportunities to work collaboratively with others to discuss the
progress of their pre-service teachers or their own teaching (Hagger & McIntyre 2006; Lopez-Real & Kwan, 2005).

A recent study of 43 supervising teachers and 41 pre-service teachers conducted in the United States highlighted the disconnect that exists between what supervising teachers and pre-service teachers view as valuable attributes in a mentoring partnership. The participants were interviewed via an online survey to examine their attitudes towards mentoring practice during a yearlong mentorship program. It was found that supervising teachers saw the ability to reflect as the greatest benefit, and that pre-service teachers saw knowledge of classroom and school assessment practices as more valuable (Mathur, Gehrke & Kim, 2012). This is another tension that makes the practice of mentoring a complex and challenging experience. It also highlights the need for supervising teachers and pre-service teachers to be clear about the purpose, structure and goals of any mentoring program or partnership. Indeed, there is a need for an explicit pedagogy for teacher preparation to be incorporated into schools (Edwards & Protheroe, 2004).

There is also a need for a specific mentoring vocabulary to be used as a tool for both school based and tertiary based teacher mentors to develop and continue the mentoring
TRIADS, THIRD SPACES AND THE ACTIVITY OF MENTORING

dialogue. An effective mentor has been defined as one who could learn a new language
(Orland-Barak as cited in Paulsen, DaFonte & Barton-Arwood, 2015). Mentoring attributes
and practices are critical to the success of any placement. Research into the mentoring
practice of primary teachers found that developing a desirable mentor-mentee rapport relied
not solely on personalities but also professional attributes including making the mentee feel
successful with teaching through confidence building, modelling of practice, and effective
feedback which is linked to observation and self-reflection (Hudson, 2010).

A five factor model of mentoring outlined by Hudson (2010) addresses the current
deficient practice in schools whereby the quantity of mentoring is random and the quality
of mentoring is variable. This model includes personal attributes, system requirements,
pedagogical knowledge, modelling and feedback. The personal relationship between the
mentor and mentee, and timely interventions such as feedback and substantive conversations
are pivotal to the mentoring process. Hudson (2010) proposes that we would enhance the
mentoring skills of supervising teachers through the provision of targeted and effective
professional development, which focuses on specific training in mentoring skills, and that
this must be supported through collaboration with colleagues and academics. Mentoring will
be more effective where both supervising and pre-service teachers have access to support
outside of the mentoring relationship, specifically from other teachers in the school or from external networks of peers (Whisnant, Elliott, & Pynchon, 2005). Another model later developed by Hudson, Spooner-Lane and Murray (2013) focuses specifically on pedagogical knowledge which identifies eleven specific practices including planning, preparation, classroom management and assessment to make mentoring more explicit. A checklist was also developed by Johnson (2011) which describes four essential areas of quality mentoring including content knowledge, instructional practice, assessment, feedback and communication. It has been suggested that developing a set of mentoring standards may help to build mentoring capacity in supervising teachers by providing a common discourse for them to articulate their feedback (Hudson, 2010).

Trained mentors provide more feedback and sustain higher levels of interaction with early career teachers than those mentors without training (Gagen & Bowie as cited in Paulsen, DaFonte & Barton-Arwood, 2015). In their review of a five year mentoring training program provided by an initial teacher education provider Paulsen, DaFonte & Barton-Arwood (2015) found positive outcomes in multiple areas including mentor ratings and Comments which indicated improved mentoring skills and professional knowledge. This enhanced the pre-service teacher experience and university-school relationships. Mentor
involvement and collaboration increased leading to programmatic changes which were made to strengthen the initial teacher programs. A case study from a French university institute of teacher training by Cartaut & Bertone (2009) suggests a need to provide joint training opportunities for school-based and university-based teacher mentors to combine their respective skills, with a focus on dialogue or language. Supervising teachers can improve their mentoring practices, specifically the quality of their mentoring conversations and feedback with pre-service teachers when given the training through in-services and targetted courses (Timperley, 2001). Orland (2000) suggests that these are structured as learning conversations, whereby supervising teachers are encouraged to reflect on their roles with other mentors, mediated by an experienced mentor of mentors.

Orland (2000) conducted a single case study report profiling the effectiveness of one mentor in her first year of induction to mentoring, who worked across several schools with 14 participants. These were in-service teachers, both novice and experienced, in Israel which has an extensive induction program for teacher mentors in schools. She found that in order for a mentor to be able to read a mentoring situation and manage it effectively, five developmental themes emerged. Firstly, the ability of the mentor to transfer their assumptions as a supervising teacher to the mentoring context and in this way consider the learning needs of
the pre-service teacher. Secondly, the ability to compare and respond to different mentoring contexts and in this way be able to differentiate the mentoring they provide. Thirdly, the ability to analyse how systematic conditions affect the practice of mentoring including resources available to assist them and their pre-service teacher. Fourthly, the ability to develop self-awareness of how their own educational views influence their mentoring agenda and in this way reflect on their own experience of mentoring as both a mentor and a mentee. Finally, the ability to analyse how the interpersonal, organizational and professional aspects of any mentoring context operate integratively and in this way be aware of the tensions that exist for mentoring with all of the competing demands (Orland, 2000).

Formal accredited professional development courses have been initiated by the Ministry of Education in Israel since the early 2000’s (Leshem, 2014). The participants are in-service teachers in both primary and secondary education and it is a two-year course of 120 hours. Those who participate are responsible for mentoring both pre-service and novice or early career teachers. The aims of the courses are to develop role perceptions of the mentor as guide, counsellor and assessor and to nurture mentoring skills and promote critical and didactic dialogue; equip teachers with tools for interpersonal communication; and to enrich teachers with different evaluation tools for learning and professional development (Leshem,
The key topics addressed were mentoring skills and styles of mentoring, analysis of mentoring situations, formative and summative assessment, professional ethics, and interpersonal communication skills. Leshem’s (2014) study investigated two groups of mentors; one group who received professional training and one group who received no professional training. The mentors who participated in the course felt that the professional development enhancement courses were critical in improving their mentoring practice and in professionalising mentoring; emphasised the complexity of the mentoring role; and agreed that mentoring should gain recognition as a professionalised role with appropriate workshops and time allocation (Leshem, 2014, p.269).

The only way to reform an education system and at the same time build capacity in the teaching profession, both supervising and pre-service teachers must undertake professional development (Hudson, 2010). This reinforces the importance of professional attributes in establishing mentoring rapport, especially given that approximately 20% of initial teacher education occurs in a school based setting. Leonard (2012) reiterates the importance of continuing collaborative work between employers, universities, regulatory authorities, school leaders, and most importantly supervising teacher.
Summary

In this chapter I have discussed the challenges of mentoring pre-service teachers using the traditional structure of supervision in school settings. This includes the lack of acknowledgement for mentoring work as a professional skill, and the narrowing use of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2011) by supervising teachers as a regulatory framework. I have also considered the limited professional development available to in-service teachers who undertake the mentoring of pre-service teachers.

The key principles of Activity Theory have been outlined as a theoretical framework for this study and explicit links have been made with professional experience as a unique activity ‘system’. This framework connects the university and school as two distinct communities of learning and activity systems to examine the different actions of the participants and therefore enhance our understanding of professional experience (Bloomfield and Nguyen, 2015).

Finally, mentoring as an educational intervention has been presented and the opportunities for building mentoring capacity through professional development have been considered. I have explored Schwille’s (2008) concept of “Educative Mentoring” which
positions the pre-service teacher as the learner, the supervising teacher as the teacher and the

teaching as the subject matter. I have also considered the need for differentiated mentoring

for pre-service teachers. In order for supervising teachers to undertake this specialised

practice, mentoring needs to be situated in a community (Bakhurst, 2009). The transformative

nature of talk as a mentoring tool (Avis, 2009) has been discussed and examined the need for

a specific mentoring vocabulary to guide supervising teachers.

In Chapter 3, I will detail case study as a methodology and examine Activity Theory

more closely as a theoretical framework for this research. Activity Theory often adopts a case

study approach towards institutional improvement due to the detailed analysis it facilitates

and supports (Avis, 2009).
Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter I define the nature, and discuss the suitability of case study methodology as a strategy for conducting research into the mentoring practices of four in-service teachers. The case is defined in terms of the context in which the research was undertaken and through detailed profiles that are provided for each of the participants which further contains the case. The structure and details of the mentoring course as an educational intervention are provided, which was designed to facilitate the educative mentoring practices as outlined by Schwille (2008). Data collection methods are explained and the unit of analysis is clearly defined as the mentoring practices of the supervising teachers. Activity Theory (Engestrom, 2000) provides a focussed theoretical and organisational framework to examine and possibly explain relationships between the mentoring practices, the variables and the context of this specific case (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). The ethical considerations related to this case study are outlined. Finally, the anticipated problems and limitations of this study are considered and a summary is provided.

Research question

“How are the mentoring practices of supervising teachers influenced by participation in a concurrent mentoring course during a professional experience placement?”
Research strategy – Case study

A Case Study provides an in-depth examination of an extensive amount of information about very few units or cases for one period or across multiple periods of time (Neuman, 2011). The intent of a case study is to thoroughly understand a single case, not necessarily to compare it with other cases in order to generalise (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). Case study research has been defined as an investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life setting (Yin, 2003). Many researchers (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2003) acknowledge that a case study is appropriate when investigating what is happening with a social context. In this study a thorough and detailed examination of the contemporary issue of mentoring practice was undertaken, within a real life setting, that being the context of a professional experience placement in New South Wales, Australia.

This research used a single-case study to explore and examine the mentoring practices of four primary teachers who supervised five pre-service teachers during a three or four-week professional experience placement. Participants were mentoring across two different placements and concurrently participated in an on-site mentoring course. The research site was a government primary school in New South Wales, and the mentoring course was presented by an academic from the same university that facilitated the professional experience placements for the five pre-service teachers. Supervising teachers attended and participated in the on-site mentoring course once a week after school for two hours each week, whilst concurrently supervising a pre-service teacher during the professional experience placement. Case studies allow us to link the actions of individuals to large-scale structures and processes (Vaughan, 1992). This research linked the mentoring practices of
four primary teachers to several large-scale structures or processes including university, state and national reporting requirements, the interpretation and application of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2011) and the regulatory requirements of the NSW Board of Teaching and Educational Standards. Case-study research also helps to clarify thinking and link abstract ideas in specific ways with the concrete details of cases we observe in detail (Neuman, 2011).

This single-case study was bounded by the mentoring practices of four supervising teachers during a professional experience placement at a government primary school in Sydney, and their concurrent participation in a mentoring course. There were five pre-service teachers who were all enrolled in a four-year Bachelor of Education Primary undergraduate degree at a University located in Sydney. Three of the pre-service teachers were undertaking their second year placement of three weeks, and two of the pre-service teachers were undertaking a third year placement of four weeks.

The supervising teachers were invited and agreed to participate in a weekly two-hour mentoring course on-site after school, which was conducted over five weeks. For the three participants who supervised the four second year pre-service teachers, the placement coincided with the first three weeks of the five-week course. One participant supervised two pre-service teachers concurrently. For the single participant who supervised a third year pre-service teacher, the placement coincided with the first four weeks of the five-week course.
The mentoring course was taught by an academic from the same University where the pre-service teachers were enrolled. The host school and University had a long-standing partnership. The mentoring course was designed by academics from the University, had been taught previously by various academics including the course presenter, in both primary and secondary settings and both government and non-government school systems, and was accredited with the Board of Teaching and Educational Standards, NSW (BOSTES).

During each weekly session, the supervising teachers reviewed the written feedback that they’d individually constructed based on their lesson observations (see Appendix C) for their allocated pre-service teacher during the week. They were asked to have completed a minimum of one detailed lesson observation per day to review, critique and discuss at each session. They were given time to self and peer review the written feedback for their pre-service teachers. There were weekly readings allocated and these were discussed and analysed during each session against their mentoring experiences, lesson observations and debriefing sessions, and the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2011). Participants were asked direct questions by the course presenter in relation to the readings, and they were also asked to lead a component of the group discussion from time to time. They had to participate in both individual and collaborative activities related to the mentoring
experiences. They were asked where possible to make links between the readings, the activity and their mentoring experiences, highlighting with specific examples. At the end of each two-hour session across the five weeks of the mentoring course, they were asked to complete a reflective diary (see Appendix A) with guiding questions.

The unit of analysis for this case study was the mentoring practices of the four supervising teachers who concurrently participated in the mentoring course. In a case study the aim is to understand the relationship between the phenomenon, the variables and the context within a specific case (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). Activity Theory as defined by Engestrom (2000) provides a focussed theoretical and organisational framework to examine and possibly explain relationships between the phenomenon, the variables and the context of this specific case (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). Activity theory has the potential to provide a lens to support multiple perspectives and complex understandings of collaboration (Stuart, 2012). To understand the analytical compatibility between this specific case and the activity system which was created by the establishment of a professional experience placement and the facilitation of a concurrent mentoring course for the supervising teachers, a comparison of the organisational components of both were necessary.
In this particular case, the phenomenon was the mentoring practices of the supervising teachers, which translates as the object in activity theory. The variables of this case included the supervising teachers who are referred to as subjects in activity theory. The contextual details for this case were identified through activity theory as the professional experience placement, the concurrent mentoring course was conducted in a ‘third space’ (Martin, Snow & Torrez, 2011), and the research site was a government primary school in Sydney. Additionally, activity theory provides an organisational framework to examine the components of any case including tools or mediations, contradictions or tensions, rules for participation and the division of labour (see Figure 1).

The tools or mediations included the concurrent mentoring course conducted for supervising teachers, the professional conversations between both the supervising teachers and between the supervising teachers and the pre-service teachers; the pedagogical content knowledge; the observational frameworks used for assessment; the teaching and mentoring experience of the supervising teachers, and the mandatory implementation of the teaching standards (see Figure 1).
There was a distinct division of labour in relation to supervision, in this case between the school and tertiary-based mentor educators and between the individual supervising teachers and the collective group formed through the provision of the mentoring course. The rules for participation in this professional experience placement included the tertiary expectations as well as the BOSTES requirements for a professional experience placement and the school-based policies and expectations. The division of labour within any activity system creates different positions and therefore, may give rise to various contradictions or tensions (Avis, 2009). The focus of this study was situated within the division of labour, within a school based professional experience activity system (see Figure 1).

![The structure of a human activity system (Engestrom, 1987, p. 78).](image)

This study altered the traditional structure and function of supervision in a professional experience placement as an activity system which usually includes the supervising teacher, the pre-service teacher and the tertiary mentor by adding another dimension to the process.
through the provision of a concurrent mentoring course for supervising teachers. This
addition facilitated opportunities for peer mentoring and collaboration and these opportunities
were unique as they occurred in a third or hybrid space (Martin, Snow & Torrez, 2011).

Third Generation Activity theory (Engestrom, 2001) and its concept of expansive
learning has been used to examine and challenge the traditional view of learning and
development as a vertical process, aimed at improving the mentoring practice of the
supervising teachers. The four questions used to examine the data were: “Who is learning?
Why do they learn? What do they learn?” and “How do they learn?” The object of
expansive learning activity is the entire activity system in which the learners are engaged. In
this case the professional experience placement and the associated concurrent mentoring
course. The five guiding principles used to frame the analysis were the need to use the entire
activity system as a unit of analysis and the role of multi-voicedness which includes the
existence of multiple points of view. Also considered were the traditions and interests and the
historicity of professional experience placements and the potential of contradictions or
tensions as opportunities for change and development. This can also lead to the creation of
expansive learning cycles where new work or activity is produced.
**Sampling/participants.**

Non-probable purposive sampling, was used to select the participants with a specific purpose in mind, which was to select a unique case of mentoring practice which is especially informative (Neuman, 2011, p.268). A profile was developed for each participant incorporating data such as: gender, qualifications attained, years teaching and position at the school. Also considered were mentoring experience and experience with the BOSTES accreditation process. The four supervising teachers were interviewed after the professional experience placement and all interviews were recorded to assist with building the necessary detail.

**Amanda.**

Amanda was a female teacher in her third year of teaching. She had only taught at her current school after completing her Internship at this same school. She was in a permanent position at her current school. She had completed her accreditation with BOSTES in NSW and had been granted proficient status. She had mentored previously, four pre-service teachers over the last two years. She completed her four-year undergraduate degree, Bachelor of Education – Primary, in New South Wales, Australia.
Hannah.

Hannah was a female teacher in her 14th year of teaching, who had also previous taught in the United Kingdom. She was in a temporary position at her current school. She completed her accreditation with BOSTES in NSW and had been granted proficient status. She had mentored previously, four pre-service teachers in the United Kingdom and two in Australia. She completed her four-year undergraduate degree in the United Kingdom which was a Bachelor of Education – Primary.

Jaclyn.

Jaclyn was a female teacher in her fourth year of teaching. She had taught at her current school for three years and another Sydney government primary school for one year. She was in a permanent position at her current school. She had completed her accreditation with BOSTES in NSW and had been granted proficient status. She had mentored one pre-service teacher previously in the last year. She completed two undergraduate degrees, one in journalism via distance education and one in dramatic arts at a dramatic arts school, and then completed a postgraduate degree - Master of Teaching, Primary. All degrees were completed in New South Wales or Queensland, Australia. She had also previously taught drama to young children prior to commencing her teaching degree.
Molly.

Molly was a female teacher in her ninth year of teaching. She had taught at her current school for four years and another Sydney government primary school for one year. She had completed a lot of casual work at her current school and estimated that she had completed casual work at 15 schools in New South Wales. She was in a permanent position at her current school. She had completed her accreditation with BOSTES in NSW and had been granted proficient status. She had mentored previously, six pre-service teachers over the last two years. She completed an undergraduate degree – Bachelor of Arts, and then completed a Postgraduate Diploma of Education. She had completed further study in special education. All study was completed in New South Wales, Australia. After completing her initial teacher training she took leave from the profession and worked as a human resources manager.

As a sample group of primary teachers they were all females who had completed their accreditation with BOSTES at the Proficiency level. Three of the four participants were in a permanent position at the host school which was a well-resourced government school in a location that drew students from high SES backgrounds. They ranged in teaching experience from three to 14 years and all had previously mentored pre-service teachers.
Data collection

Data were collected from three main sources: the weekly reflective diaries (see Appendix A), the final professional experience placement reports (see Appendix B) and the semi-structured interviews (see Appendix D). Both qualitative and quantitative data have been used to assess the influence of the mentoring course on the mentoring practice of the supervising teachers. The weekly reflective diaries and semi-structured interviews framed the perceptions and reflections of the supervising teachers. The final professional experience reports and the lesson observations (see Appendix C) demonstrated their practice, specifically, the understanding and application of the professional teaching standards through the feedback they constructed. To establish and enhance both the construct validity and reliability of the data, three important principles were applied including the use of multiple sources of evidence and documentation, post course interviews and direct observations. From this a case study database was created and a chain of evidence was maintained throughout the study (Yin, 2013). As the researcher I also observed all five of the two-hour weekly mentoring sessions.
Weekly reflective diaries.

Each week at the end of the session, participants were given up to 20 minutes to complete a weekly reflective diary with the same guiding questions (see Appendix A). The diaries were collected and retained by the researcher each week. These diaries consisted of two parts. Part one asked them to record their thoughts and feelings about their participation in the mentoring course activities and engagement with the scholarly readings. Part two asked them to record their thoughts and feelings about their developing mentoring practice. To support this reflection, mentoring discussions between the supervising teachers and the allocated pre-service teachers during debriefing sessions were self-recorded and supported by reference to the lesson observation feedback sheet (see Appendix C). Participants were asked to have undertaken and recorded a minimum of two debriefings per week.

Final professional experience placement reports.

All pre-service teachers must receive a final report upon completion of their professional experience placement. This requirement is mandated by the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW in accordance with initial teacher educator providers across the country. A proforma (see Appendix B) was provided by the University at the commencement
of the placement with an expectation that a summative judgement would be made by the supervising teacher in relation to the specified standard descriptors upon completion of the placement. This version of a Final report included 25 of the 37 Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2011). As it was not to be the final placement for these pre-service teachers, not all standard descriptors had to be represented in the report. There were four supervising teachers who reported on five pre-service teachers completing the placement across these 25 standard descriptors. The final professional experience placement reports were collected for all five pre-service teachers. Whilst the nominated standard descriptors had to be assessed as not developed, partially developed or developed; it was the comment section of the report that yielded valuable detail in terms of the type of feedback the supervising teachers were providing, or more importantly, not providing to their pre-service teachers given their interpretation, understanding of and confidence with the teaching standards (Leonard, 2012).

Semi-structured interviews.

Two weeks after the completion of the three or four-week block placement and the mentoring course, semi-structured interviews of 60 minutes duration were conducted and recorded with all four of the supervising teachers. The questions (see Appendix D) were
emailed to the participating staff prior to the interviews. These interviews consisted of two parts: part one focused on a self-assessment of their mentoring capacity; and part two focused on an evaluation of the concurrent mentoring course they participated in during the block placement, and how this may have influenced their mentoring practice.

Interviews are a valuable source of case study data because most case studies reflect human affairs or actions (Yin, 2013), and provide the following advantages: greater depth than a questionnaire, the establishment of rapport and trust and an opportunity for elaboration and clarification where relevant or necessary (Turner, Ireland, Krenus & Pointon, 2011).

**Data analysis**

The results were organised into categories based on themes or concepts related to the mentoring practices which have emerged from the responses extracted from the data (Neuman, 2011). Possible relationships between these themes or concepts are also examined. Open coding (Neuman, 2011) was used, which involved the careful review of all documents and the transcripts from the semi-structured interviews. The identification of critical themes and the application of activity theory as a theoretical framework supported the organization of the data into categories (Strauss, 1987). The data was then analysed.
using a special type of pattern matching technique referred to as explanation building which aims to identify a set of causal links about how or why something has happened and has been presented in narrative form (Yin, 2013). The explanation has attempted to interpret and discuss the key findings of the study in relation to existing literature using the framework of Third Generation Activity Theory (Engeström, 2001).

**Weekly reflective diaries.**

The reflective diaries were read carefully, conceptualized and highlighted across the five week mentoring course for all four supervising teachers. The data was then coded according to the specific language and terminology used in response to the guiding questions which were consistently used across the five weeks. After coding was applied common themes emerging from the raw data were organized into categories, and then tallied to highlight the frequency of the theme or concept (Neuman, 2011), and possibly indicate the level of importance for the supervising teacher. As documentary evidence these weekly reflective diaries were used in two ways, firstly, to draw inferences from the specific detail and secondly, to corroborate the evidence extracted from the final professional experience placement reports and the semi-structured interviews (Yin, 2013).
Final professional experience placement reports.

All five final professional experience reports were carefully read, conceptualized and highlighted for all four supervising teachers. Firstly, the written feedback provided within the comments section for each standard was reviewed against the specific language of the descriptors listed on the report. Secondly, alignment was sought between the written feedback and the descriptors listed under each standard. Thirdly, the written feedback was coded according to alignment with the detail of the standards i.e. those descriptors most frequently represented or aligned through the written feedback, those least frequently represented or aligned through the written feedback, and those not represented at all. After coding was applied, common descriptors emerging from the raw data were organized into categories, and then tallied to highlight frequency of application. This also indicates the supervising teachers’ understanding and confidence with the standards. It could also support or challenge the compromised use of the teaching standards by the supervising teacher, as represented in the literature (Leonard, 2012; Edwards & Ogden, 1998). As documentary evidence the final professional experience placement reports were used in two ways, firstly, to draw inferences from the specific detail and secondly, to corroborate the evidence
extracted from the weekly reflective diaries and the semi-structured interviews (Yin, 2013).

**Semi-structured interviews.**

The semi-structured interviews were transcribed for all four supervising teachers. The transcripts were then carefully reviewed, conceptualized and highlighted. The data were coded according to the specific language and terminology used in response to the guiding questions which were consistently used for all interviews. After coding was applied common themes emerging from the raw data were organized into categories, and then tallied to highlight frequency of the theme or concept, and possibly indicate the level of importance for the supervising teacher. As evidence these interviews were used in two ways, firstly, to draw inferences from the specific detail and secondly, to corroborate the evidence extracted from the final professional experience placement reports and the weekly reflective diaries (Yin, 2013). They also provided an avenue for unexpected insights to be collected (O'Toole & Beckett, 2010).

**Ethical considerations**

This research complies with the general principles as outlined by the National Health and Medical Research Council (2011) including: integrity, respect for persons, beneficence,
TRIADS, THIRD SPACES AND THE ACTIVITY OF MENTORING

and justice. Given that the research was conducted in a NSW DEC School an application was lodged with the State Education Research Applications Process (SERAP). An application was also lodged with the University of Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). Active consent was required from the participants. Approval was required from the school Principal to work with the participants directly in the mentoring course and to use the school as a research site. The participants and school shall remain anonymous and confidentiality has been maintained by presenting the data in an aggregate form (Neuman, 2011).

**Anticipated problems and limitations**

As a school which traditionally worked closely with the University who provided both the pre-service teachers, and the delivery of the mentoring course, some bias is to be expected. This focus school regularly takes larger numbers of pre-service teachers and hence is more familiar with the policies, expectations and practices of the partnership university. A benefit that this particular university has offered in the past has been access to reciprocal professional learning opportunities conducted by the University. There has been an agreement that the University and the School will collaborate in research, and it can be
reasonably assumed that teachers at these schools were more willing to mentor a pre-service teacher and engage in professional learning.

Summary

In this chapter I have effectively defined the case in terms of the context in which the research was undertaken and through the construction of detailed profiles that have been provided for each of the participants. The mentoring course structure and details have been provided and its function as an educational intervention has been discussed (Schwille, 2008).

Data collection methods have been explained and drawn from three main sources the weekly reflective diaries, the final professional experience placement reports and the semi-structured interviews. To establish and enhance both the construct validity and reliability of the data, three important principles were applied including the use of multiple sources of evidence and documentation, post course interviews and direct observations (Neuman, 2011). From this a case study database was created and a chain of evidence was maintained throughout the study (Yin, 2013).
The unit of analysis has been clearly defined as the mentoring practices of the supervising teachers, and open coding (Neuman, 2011) has been used to identify critical themes about the mentoring practices of these participants, emerging from the data collected. Activity theory (Engestrom, 2000) has been applied as an organisational framework to support the classification of data into categories (Strauss, 1987), and has provided a theoretical framework to examine and possibly explain the relationships between the mentoring practices, the variables and the context of this specific case (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). The ethical considerations have been discussed and the main issues have been addressed.

In the following chapter, after applying open coding (Neuman, 2011) and explanation building (Yin, 2013) to the data collected in the weekly reflective diaries, the semi-structured interviews and the final professional experience reports; I will present the results in terms of specific themes or patterns that emerged through the data analysis.
Chapter 4 Results and Analysis

Introduction

This chapter will present an overview of the data from three sources including the weekly reflective diaries, the final reports for the professional experience placement and the semi-structured interviews. The data represents the influence a mentoring course had, when conducted concurrently with a professional experience placement.

When analysing both the weekly reflective diaries (see Appendix A) and the semi-structured interviews (see Appendix D), five themes emerged, they were, in no particular order of importance: the opportunity for collegial sharing and peer mentoring, the enhanced role of self-reflection for mentors, the importance of the weekly readings in supporting the mentoring process, an enhanced understanding of and confidence with applying the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2011), and the development and application of a range of specific mentoring strategies as a result of completing the course.

Coding the responses according to the five themes across the five weeks of the mentoring course, and then tallying the number of times each theme appeared across both data sets collated the data in Table 2, the weekly reflective diaries and Table 3, the semi-structured
interviews.

Table 2: A summary of the five themes that emerged from the coding and analysis process as demonstrated through the weekly reflective diaries.

The numbers indicate the frequency of each of the five themes as interpreted through the language of the diaries. The bolded numbers provide a tally of thematic frequency for each supervising teacher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week of mentoring course</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Amanda</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>Hannah</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Jaclyn</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>Molly</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>Total of thematic references across the five weeks of the mentoring course by theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collegial sharing/peer mentoring</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-reflection</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Influence of readings</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding and confidence with the standards</td>
<td>Amanda</td>
<td>Hannah</td>
<td>Jaclyn</td>
<td>Molly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific mentoring strategies</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Overall Totals</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall number of thematic references (as interpreted through the language of the diaries)</td>
<td>26 (Amanda)</td>
<td>17 (Hannah)</td>
<td>18 (Jaclyn)</td>
<td>11 (Molly)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special note: Molly was absent from the mentoring course in week 4 and therefore did not complete a diary entry for Week 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most Influential Theme by Supervising Teacher</td>
<td>Amanda</td>
<td>Hannah</td>
<td>Jaclyn</td>
<td>Molly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence of Readings and Specific mentoring strategies</td>
<td>Influence of Readings and Collegial sharing/peer mentoring</td>
<td>Collegial sharing/peer mentoring</td>
<td>Collegial sharing/peer mentoring</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3: A summary of the five themes that emerged from the coding and analysis process as demonstrated through the semi-structured interviews conducted after the mentoring course and the professional experience placement.

The numbers indicate the frequency of each of the five themes as interpreted through the language of the responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Amanda</th>
<th>Hannah</th>
<th>Jaclyn</th>
<th>Molly</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collegial sharing/peer mentoring</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-reflection</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence of readings</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding and confidence with the standards</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific mentoring strategies</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most Influential Theme by Supervising Teacher</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collegial sharing/peer mentoring and Self-reflection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-reflection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collegial sharing/peer mentoring and Specific mentoring strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence of Readings and Collegial sharing/peer mentoring and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Totals</th>
<th>Amanda</th>
<th>Hannah</th>
<th>Jaclyn</th>
<th>Molly</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>103</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The opportunity for collegial sharing and peer mentoring was the most significant thematic influence for all four supervising teachers at least once when analysing data collected from both the weekly reflective diaries and the semi-structured interviews. This was most relevant to Jaclyn and Molly who identified it through their comments in both the weekly reflective diaries and the semi-structured interviews. This finding is consistent with Niesz’s (2010) study which concluded that providing a mentoring course for supervising teachers could facilitate collegial conversations and establish a common language through the creation of a new community of practice. Communities of practice provide resources for meaning making, the opportunity to establish common goals, identity construction and the generation of new cultural forms discourses. Any discontent in participants can serve as motivation for change (Niesz, 2010) and there is wide agreement that mentors need a forum to problem-solve and share ideas with other mentors and that this helps to build confidence and expertise over time (Parise & Forret, 2008). Graham (2006) argues that professional development, mentoring, courses provide a site of inquiry where mentors can review their long-standing practices and assumptions. The mentors in Leshem’s (2014) study expressed the need for sharing and learning and this is supported by Wenger’s (1998) proposal that
identity is shaped through participation in various communities of practice, and that having a sense of identity is a crucial aspect of learning. This third space (Martin, Snow & Torrez, 2011) may be framed by school-university based partnerships that acknowledge the evaluative and educative roles of supervision, and that aim to distribute both workload, and power, to create equity for pre-service teacher educators (Leshem, 2014). It has been suggested that mentoring will be more effective where both supervising and pre-service teachers have access to support outside of the mentoring relationship, specifically from other teachers in the school or from external networks of peers (Whisnant, Elliott, & Pynchon, 2005).

The results have been organised into categories based on themes or concepts related to mentoring practices which emerged from the data. Open coding (Neuman, 2011) was used, which involved the careful review of all documentation and the transcripts from the semi-structured interviews. The identification of critical themes supports the organization of the data into categories (Strauss, 1987). The data was then analysed using a special type of pattern matching technique referred to as explanation building which aims to identify a set of causal links about how or why something happened and this has been presented in narrative
form (Yin, 2013).

The opportunity for collegial sharing and peer mentoring

The opportunity for collegial sharing and peer mentoring was the most influential theme overall as reported by all four supervising teachers. The weekly reflective diary data (see Table 2) showed that being able to collaborate was the most significant influence overall. Additionally, three of the four supervising teachers demonstrated this influence as most significant through their comments, both Jaclyn and Molly, and equally important along with the influence of the weekly readings for Hannah. The data from the semi-structured interviews (see Table 3) showed that being able to collaborate was the third most significant influence overall. Additionally, two of the four supervising teachers demonstrated this influence as most significant through their comments, Jaclyn, and equally important along with the enhanced role of self-reflection for Amanda.

The enhanced role of self-reflection

The enhanced role of self-reflection was the third most influential theme overall as reported by all four supervising teachers. The weekly reflective diary data (see Table 2)
showed that the enhanced role of self-reflection was the second least significant influence overall. Interestingly, the data from the semi-structured interviews (see Table 3) showed that the enhanced role of self-reflection was the second most significant influence overall. Additionally, two of the four supervising teachers demonstrated this influence as most significant through their comments; Amanda equally important along with the opportunity to collaborate; and Hannah equally important along with the influence of the readings.

The importance of the weekly readings in supporting the mentoring process

The importance of the weekly readings in supporting the mentoring process was the second most influential theme overall as reported by all four supervising teachers. The weekly reflective diary data (see Table 2) showed that the importance of the weekly readings in supporting the mentoring process was the second most significant influence overall. Additionally, two of the four supervising teachers demonstrated this influence as most significant through their comments, both Amanda and Hannah. The data from the semi-structured interviews (see Table 3) showed that the enhanced role of self-reflection was the most significant influence overall. Additionally, two of the four supervising teachers
demonstrated this influence as most significant through their comments, Molly, and equally important along with the enhanced role of self-reflection for Hannah.

### The development and application of specific mentoring strategies

The development and application of specific mentoring strategies was the second least influential theme overall as reported by all four supervising teachers. The weekly reflective diary data (see Table 2) showed that the development and application of specific mentoring strategies was the third most significant influence overall. The data from the semi-structured interviews (see Table 3) showed that the development and application of specific mentoring strategies was the second least significant influence overall. Interestingly, one of the four supervising teachers, Jaclyn, demonstrated this influence as most significant through her comments.

### An enhanced understanding of and confidence with applying the professional teaching standards

Developing an enhanced understanding of and confidence with applying the professional teaching standards was the least influential theme overall as reported by all four supervising
teachers. The weekly reflective diary data (see Table 2) showed that an enhanced understanding of and confidence with applying the professional teaching standards was the least significant influence overall. The data from the semi-structured interviews (see Table 3) showed that an enhanced understanding of and confidence with applying the professional teaching standards was the least significant influence overall.

**Additional comments about the influence of the mentoring course made by individual participants**

Additional specific comments were made through both the weekly reflective diaries (see Appendix F), and the semi-structured interviews (see Appendix G) by individual supervising teachers in reference to the mentoring course. Whilst these provide insight into the influence of the mentoring course they did not align with the five themes that emerged from the coding and analysis process.
Table 4: A comparison of the most significant thematic influences between the weekly reflective diaries and the semi-structured interviews by the supervising teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Amanda</th>
<th>Hannah</th>
<th>Jaclyn</th>
<th>Molly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weekly Reflective Diaries</strong></td>
<td>Influence of Readings and Specific mentoring strategies</td>
<td>Influence of Readings and Collegial sharing/peer mentoring</td>
<td>Collegial sharing/peer mentoring and Self-reflection and Influence of readings</td>
<td>Collegial sharing/peer mentoring and Self-reflection and Influence of readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Semi-structured interviews</strong></td>
<td>Collegial sharing/peer mentoring and Self-reflection</td>
<td>Self-reflection and Influence of readings</td>
<td>Collegial sharing/peer mentoring and Specific mentoring strategies</td>
<td>Collegial sharing/peer mentoring and Self-reflection and Influence of readings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Final report for the professional experience placement: influence of the mentoring course

It is a mandatory requirement for all pre-service teachers in New South Wales to receive a final report upon completion of their professional experience placement. This requirement is mandated by BOSTES and implemented by the Universities and Initial Teacher Educator providers across the country. A proforma (see Appendix B) was provided by the University at the commencement of the placement with an expectation that a summative judgement would be made by the supervising teacher in relation to the nominated standards/descriptors upon completion of the placement. As documentary evidence the final professional experience placement reports were used in two ways, firstly, to draw inferences from the specific detail and secondly, to corroborate the evidence extracted from the weekly reflective diaries and the semi-structured post interviews (Yin, 2013).

This version of a final report included 25 of the 37 Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2011). As it was not to be the final placement for these pre-service teachers, not all descriptors had to be represented in the report. There were four supervising teachers who reported on five pre-service teachers completing their placement across these
25 descriptors. All supervising teachers had completed their accreditation with BOSTES in NSW and had been granted Proficient status. Coding the language used in the comments made by the supervising teachers in the final report using the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2011), and then tallying the number of times each standard appeared across the comments collated the data in Table 5.

Table 5: A summary of the standards/descriptors identified through the comments included in the final report for the professional experience placement.

The tally represents the standards identified through the comments constructed by each of the supervising teachers in the final report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard/Descriptor</th>
<th>Jaclyn (Mentee 1)</th>
<th>Hannah (Mentee 1)</th>
<th>Hannah (Mentee 2)</th>
<th>Molly</th>
<th>Amanda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>2.5</td>
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### Standard/Descriptor

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<th>Jaclyn (Mentee 1)</th>
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<th>Hannah (Mentee 2)</th>
<th>Molly</th>
<th>Amanda</th>
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<td><strong>Standard descriptors referenced in this version of the final report (Out of the 25 possible standard descriptors)</strong></td>
<td>19 (76%)</td>
<td>9 (36%)</td>
<td>12 (48%)</td>
<td>15 (60%)</td>
<td>14 (56%)</td>
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**Note.** The blackened rows in the table indicate that the standard has not been referenced through the comments included in the final report for the professional experience placement.

The standards identified and discussed by all four supervising teachers for all five pre-service teachers through the language of their comments in the final report were: 1.5, 2.2,
4.3, 5.1 and 6.3 (AITSL, 2011). The supervising teachers made reference to the pre-service teachers’ capacity to differentiate their teaching to meet the learning needs of students of varying abilities (1.5). Content selection and organisation (2.2) were addressed through the specific language of the comments. The ability to manage challenging behavior was extensively addressed. The pre-service teacher’s ability to assess student learning (5.1) was highlighted in the reports. Finally, all four supervising teachers made reference to the pre-service teacher’s ability to engage with colleagues and improve teaching practice (6.3).

The standards identified and discussed by all four supervising teachers for four of the five pre-service teachers through the language of their comments in the final report were: 2.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, and 7.1 (AITSL, 2011). These standards assess the pre-service teachers’ capacity to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the content and teaching strategies of the teaching area (2.1). The ability to plan, structure and sequence learning programs (3.2) for students was evident in the language of the comments. The supervising teachers made reference to the pre-service teacher’s ability to include a range of teaching strategies (3.3). The ability to identify inclusive teaching strategies and support student participation (4.1) was referenced by all four supervising teachers. Finally, three of the supervising teachers made specific reference to the pre-service teacher’s ability to understand and apply the key
principles described in codes of ethics and conduct for teaching (7.1).

The standards identified and discussed by the supervising teachers for three of the pre-service teachers through the language of their comments in the final report were: 1.3, 3.4, 4.2 and 5.4 (AITSL, 2011). Three of the supervising teachers, Jaclyn, Molly and Amanda, explicitly assessed the pre-service teachers’ capacity to demonstrate knowledge of teaching strategies that are responsive to the learning strengths and needs of students from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds (1.3). The pre-service teacher’s ability to demonstrate knowledge of a range of resources, including ICT, that engage students in their learning (3.4) was discussed by two of the supervising teachers, Jaclyn and Hannah. The ability to demonstrate the capacity to organise classroom activities and provide clear directions (4.2) were referenced by two of the supervising teachers, Jaclyn and Hannah. Finally, three of the supervising teachers, Jaclyn, Molly and Amanda, discussed their pre-service teacher’s capacity to interpret student assessment data to evaluate student learning and modify teaching practice (5.4).

The standards identified and discussed by the supervising teachers for two pre-service teachers through the language of their comments in the final report were: 1.1, 4.4 and 5.2.
TRIADS, THIRD SPACES AND THE ACTIVITY OF MENTORING

(AITSL, 2011). Two of the supervising teachers, Jaclyn and Hannah, assessed the pre-service teachers’ capacity to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students and how these may affect learning (1.1). Two of the supervising teachers, Jaclyn and Amanda, described strategies that support students’ well-being and safety working within school and/or system, curriculum and legislative requirements (4.4). Finally, two of the four supervising teachers, Jaclyn and Molly, reported on the pre-service teachers’ capacity to demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of providing timely and appropriate feedback to students about their learning (5.2).

The standards identified and discussed by the supervising teachers through the language of their general comments at the end of the final report were: 2.5, 2.6, 3.1, 3.5, 6.1 and 7.2 (AITSL, 2011). Jaclyn referenced her pre-service teachers’ capacity to understand and apply literacy and numeracy teaching strategies (2.5). Molly discussed her pre-service teacher’s ability to implement teaching strategies for using ICT to expand curriculum learning opportunities for students (2.6); and to set learning goals that provided achievable challenges for students of varying abilities and characteristics (3.1). Amanda made reference to her student’s ability to demonstrate a range of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to support student engagement (3.5); and to demonstrate an understanding of the
role of the National Professional Standards for Teachers in identifying professional learning needs (6.1). Jaclyn made reference to her pre-service teacher’s ability to understand the relevant legislative, administrative and organisational policies and processes required for teachers according to school stage (7.2).

The standards not identified nor discussed by any of the four supervising teachers through the language of their comments in the final report were: 2.3 and 4.5 (AITSL, 2011). These standards assess the pre-service teachers’ capacity to use curriculum, assessment and reporting knowledge to plan (2.3); and demonstrate an understanding of the relevant issues and the strategies available to support the safe, responsible and ethical use of ICT in learning and teaching (4.5).

The following descriptors were reflected most frequently in the language of the comments constructed by the supervising teachers: 1.5, 2.1, 2.2, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.3, 5.1, 6.3 and 7.1 (AITSL, 2011). This judgement is based on having the descriptor detailed in the language of their comments constructed by at least three of the four supervising teachers for four or more of the five pre-service teachers. Standard 1 which focuses on knowing students and how they learn; specifically, differentiation strategies (1.5) was referenced by all four supervising
teachers for all five pre-service teachers. Standard 2 focuses on knowing your content and how to teach it; specifically, the ability to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of content and teaching strategies (2.1) and the capacity to organise content into an effective learning and teaching sequence (2.2) was referenced by three supervising teachers. Standard 3 focuses on planning for and implementing effective teaching and learning; specifically, the ability to plan, structure and sequence learning programs (3.2) and the inclusion of a range of teaching strategies (3.3) was referenced by three supervising teachers. Standard 4 is concerned with the creation and maintenance of a supportive and safe learning environment; specifically, the ability to support student participation (4.1) and the demonstration of practical approaches to manage challenging behavior (4.3) was referenced by three supervising teachers. Standard 5.1 which is the ability to assess student learning was referenced by all four supervising teachers for all five pre-service teachers. Standard 6 which focuses on engagement in professional learning; specifically, the ability to engage with colleagues and improve teaching practice (6.3) was referenced by three supervising teachers. Finally, Standard 7.1 was referenced by all four supervising teachers for all five pre-service teachers and relates to the ability to meet professional ethics and responsibilities.
The following descriptors were reflected least frequently in the language of the comments constructed by the supervising teachers: 2.5, 2.6, 3.1, 3.5, 6.1 and 7.2 (AITSL, 2011). This judgement is based on having the descriptor detailed in the language of the comments constructed by only one of the four supervising teachers for only one of the five pre-service teachers. These standards least frequently represented in the language of the comments included descriptors for standard 2 which focuses on knowing your content and how to teach it; specifically, literacy and numeracy strategies (2.5); and information and communication technology (2.6). When considering standard 3 which focuses on planning for and implementing effective teaching and learning, the ability to establish challenging goals (3.1) and the ability to use effective classroom communication (3.5) were deficient. Standard 6 which focuses on engagement in professional learning was only referenced once by Amanda for descriptor 6.1, which is concerned with the ability to identify and plan professional learning needs. Finally, standard 7.2 was only referenced once by Jaclyn, and relates to the ability to comply with legislative, administrative and organizational requirements of schools.

Amanda specifically referenced 14/25 or 56% of the standards possible, which represented the second least alignment with the language of the standards for all four
supervising teachers. She was in her third year of teaching and had previously mentored four pre-service teachers over the last two years.

Hannah mentored two pre-service teachers, both who were completing their second year professional experience placement who will be referred to as mentee one and two. She was in her 14th year of teaching and had taught in both the United Kingdom and in Australia. She had mentored previously, four pre-service teachers in the United Kingdom and two in Australia. She referenced 9/25 or 36% of the standards possible for mentee 1 and 12/25 or 48% of the standards possible for mentee 2. On average she made specific reference to 10.5/25 or 42% of the standards possible in, which represented the least alignment with the language of the standards for all four supervising teachers.

Jaclyn made reference to 19/25 or 76% of the standards, which represented the most alignment with the language of the standards for all four supervising teachers. She was in her fourth year of teaching and had mentored previously, one pre-service teacher over the last year.
Molly made reference to 15/25 or 60% of the standards possible, which represented the second most alignment with the language of the standards for all four supervising teachers. She was in her ninth year of teaching and had mentored previously, six pre-service teachers over the last two years.

The following Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2011) were not represented in this version of final report for the professional experience placement: 1.2, 1.4, 1.6, 2.4, 3.6, 3.7, 5.3, 5.5, 6.2, 6.4, 7.3 and 7.4 (see Appendix E). These standards which weren’t represented focus on understanding how students learn (1.2), strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (1.4), strategies to support the full participation of students with disability (1.6) and understanding and respecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians (2.4). In terms of planning and assessment, the ability to evaluate and improve teaching programs (3.6), the engagement of parents/carers in the educative process (3.7), the ability to make consistent and comparable judgements (5.3) and reporting on student achievement (5.5) were not included. Engagement in professional learning to improve practice (6.2), the ability to apply professional learning to improve student learning (6.4), engaging with parents and carers (7.3) and the ability to understand the role of external
professionals and community representatives in broadening teachers’ professional knowledge and practice (7.4) were not assessed in this version of final report.

**Summary of overall thematic influences**

The importance of the weekly readings as provided through the mentoring course was the most significant influence for two of the four supervising teachers, Amanda and Hannah, at least once when analysing data collected from both the weekly reflective diaries and the semi-structured interviews. This was most relevant to Hannah who identified it through her comments in both the weekly reflective diaries and the semi-structured interviews. This finding is consistent with Orland-Barak & Hasin’s (2010) research which concluded that supervising teachers should acknowledge and facilitate the following transformative processes through their mentoring: diversity, the need for academic or scholarly dialogues, reflective questioning and the modelling of best pedagogical practice.

The opportunity for enhanced self-reflection as provided through the mentoring course was the most significant influence for three of the four supervising teachers, Amanda, Hannah and Molly, at least once when analysing data collected from both the weekly reflective diaries and the semi-structured interviews. This finding is consistent with Mathur,
Gehrke & Kim’s (2012) study which found that supervising teachers saw the ability to reflect as the greatest benefit of a mentoring partnership and program.

Two of the four supervising teachers, Amanda and Jaclyn, demonstrated that the opportunity to develop and implement specific mentoring strategies as provided through the mentoring course, was the most significant influence at least once when analysing their data collected from both the weekly reflective diaries and the semi-structured interviews. This finding is consistent with Hudson’s (2010) research which found that mentoring attributes and practices are critical to the success of any placement and that developing a desirable mentor-mentee rapport relied not solely on personalities but also professional attributes including making the mentee feel successful with teaching through confidence building, modelling of practice, and effective feedback which is linked to observation and self-reflection. The personal relationship between the mentor and mentee, and timely interventions such as feedback and substantive conversations are pivotal to the mentoring process. Hudson (2010) proposes that we would enhance the mentoring skills of supervising teachers through the provision of targeted and effective professional development, which focuses on specific training in mentoring skills, and that this must be supported through collaboration with colleagues and academics. It has been suggested that there is also a need
for a specific mentoring vocabulary to be used as a tool for both school based and tertiary based teacher mentors to develop and continue the mentoring dialogue. An effective mentor has been defined as one who could learn a new language (Orland-Barak as cited in Paulsen, DaFonte & Barton-Arwood, 2015). Hudson (2010) goes further to suggest that developing a set of mentoring standards may help to build mentoring capacity in supervising teachers by providing a common discourse for them to articulate their feedback.

The provision of opportunities to develop understanding of and confidence with the teaching standards through the mentoring course were not identified as the most significant influence for any of the four supervising teachers. This finding is consistent with Leonard’s (2012) recent study which reviewed the application and use of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2011) against the professional experience reports of pre-service teachers in the Australian Capital Territory; and found that the use of the professional teaching standards has led to a restricted understanding of professional practice due to the technical focus of the standards including the narrowing of the feedback offered to the management of a classroom at the expense of intellectual quality and depth in relation to pedagogy and curriculum.
Chapter 5 Discussion

Introduction

This chapter provides a critical discussion of the data collected during the professional experience placement including the weekly reflective diaries completed by the supervising teachers, the final reports for the pre-service teachers completed by the supervising teachers, and the semi-structured interviews conducted two-weeks after the conclusion of the mentoring course. The discussion will be framed by five key themes that emerged during the coding of the data collected for both the weekly reflective diaries and the semi-structured interviews: the opportunity for collegial sharing and peer mentoring, the enhanced role of self-reflection for mentors, the importance of the weekly readings in supporting the mentoring process, an enhanced understanding of and confidence with applying the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2011), and the application of a range of specific mentoring strategies as a result of completing the mentoring course.

The discussion will also attempt to interpret specific comments made in the final professional experience reports by the supervising teachers, align these with the professional teaching standards, and try to establish links between the patterns of comments made, and
subsequently the focus on specific teaching standards within these comments, and the possible influence of the mentoring course in the construction of these comments. Ultimately, the discussion will attempt to answer the following question: “How are the mentoring practices of supervising teachers influenced by participation in a concurrent mentoring course during a professional experience placement?” Through analysing the results, this chapter also aims to interpret and explain the key findings of the study in relation to existing literature.

The opportunity for collegial sharing and peer mentoring

The opportunity for collegial sharing and peer mentoring was the most significant outcome overall for all participants with a total of 25 specific references made in the weekly reflective diaries (see Table 2) across the five weeks. It was also the most significant influence overall for three of the four participants (Hannah, Jaclyn and Molly). It was most significant for Jaclyn with nine references across the five weeks. When reviewing the data for the semi-structured interviews (see Table 3), 22 references were made in relation to collaboration which made it the third most significant outcome overall for all participants. It was also the most significant influence overall for three of the four participants (Amanda, Jaclyn and Molly) as demonstrated through the interview responses. Statistically it was
equally important for all four participants with five or six specific references made by each participant during interviews (see Table 3). The most significant outcome of the mentoring course overall for all participants were the opportunity for collegial sharing and peer mentoring, as referenced either through the weekly reflective diaries or the semi-structured interviews. For Jaclyn and Molly, it was most significant influence overall, being referenced through their responses in both the weekly reflective diaries and the semi-structured interviews.

It is somewhat interesting that collegial sharing and peer mentoring was ranked the most significant outcome overall as referenced in the weekly reflective diaries, but ranked third overall as referenced in the semi-structured interviews. This could be explained by the fact that the weekly reflective diaries were completed by the supervising teachers individually, but in the same physical space as a group each week, immediately after participating in the mentoring course with their colleagues and undertaking collaborative and interactive discussions and activities. Hence the role of collegial sharing and peer mentoring would have appeared more obvious to the participants as they completed the diary entries in a formative, collective sense.
We learn, grow and change through sustained practice or situated activity in communities of practice (Lave and Wenger in Niesz, 2010). Niesz (2010) found that it was the differences between the communities, in both practice and identities, and the subsequent bridges built between them that held the most promise for generating change and growth; and argues that collegial dialogue informed by ideas, theory, inquiry and reflection on professional experience is the practice of educator networks generally and that it is the co-participation in joint activity that makes any network a community of practice.

Networks and partnerships can serve as contexts for teacher learning. Coombs, Goodwin and Storm (2013) looked at the role of dialogue in mentoring relationships and concluded that through dialogue we better understand our relationships with each other but we must dialogue and communicate strategically. Mentoring courses provide a site of inquiry where mentors can review their long-standing practices and assumptions (Graham 1997 in Leshem, 2014). The mentors in Leshem’s (2014) study expressed the need for sharing and learning and this is supported by Wenger’s (1998) proposal that identity is shaped through participation in various communities of practice, and that having a sense of identity is a
crucial aspect of learning.

The mentoring course helped to create and share meaning across communities of practice, in this case four supervising teachers, who do not usually share practice. Providing a mentoring course for supervising teachers did facilitate collegial conversations and helped to establish a common language through the creation of a new community of practice. Language can serve as a barrier or a channel, and the establishment of a common language for mentoring conversations can help to transverse communication boundaries by establishing a community of practice. This community of practice helped to provide resources for meaning making, common goals, identity construction and the generation of new cultural forms and discourses (Niesz, 2010). Mentors were able to implement change through this community of practice which simultaneously enriched their own practices in both mentoring and teaching, and their pre-service teacher’s practice (Hudson, 2010).

**The importance of the weekly readings in supporting the mentoring process**

The importance of the weekly readings in supporting the mentoring process was the second most significant outcome overall for all participants, close behind the opportunity for
collegial sharing and peer-mentoring, with 21 specific references made in the weekly reflective diaries (see Table 2) across the five weeks. It was also the most significant influence overall for two of the four participants, Hannah and Amanda. Amanda made eight specific references across the five weeks. It was the least influential outcome as reported by Molly with only one reference made across the five weeks. There were 27 references made during the semi-structured interviews (see Table 3), which made the academic support the most significant outcome overall for all participants. It was also the most significant influence overall for two of the four participants, Hannah and Molly who made nine and eight specific references respectively during the interviews. It was the least influential outcome as reported by both Amanda and Jaclyn with (equally) five references made during the interviews. The importance of the weekly readings in supporting the mentoring process was the second most significant outcome of the mentoring course overall for all participants. It was the most significant influence overall referenced by three of the four supervising teachers, Amanda, Hannah and Molly either through the weekly reflective diaries or the semi-structured interviews. For Hannah it was most significant influence overall, being referenced through both the weekly reflective diaries and the semi-structured interviews.
A longstanding tension between schools and universities has been the perceived disconnect between coursework and fieldwork (Leonard, 2012). The provision of this mentoring course provided a hybrid or third space as a site for collaboration and innovation to reconcile academic and practitioner knowledge (Martin, Snow and Torrez, 2011). The mentoring course provided a site of inquiry where mentors could share and review their long-standing practices and assumptions (Graham 1997 in Leshem, 2014). The Mentors in Leshem’s (2014) study expressed the need for sharing and learning and this is supported by Wenger’s (1998) proposal that identity is shaped through participation in various communities of practice, and that having a sense of identity is a crucial aspect of learning.

The provision of this mentoring course supported the need to focus on new roles for university based educators, and highlighted the need for both university-based and school-based teacher educators to understand the complex nature of liaison work (Martin, Snow and Torrez, 2011).

Mentoring has been referred to as an educational intervention, is highly complex and differentiated work that is dependent upon on the subject matter, grade or stage level and
context; and which requires that mentors know their pre-service teacher as a learner, possess a knowledge of learning how to teach, and possess an ability to draw upon different skills across varying mentoring events, which relies on strategic knowledge and judgement (Schwille, 2008). The mentoring course provided a supported structure for both observing and assessing pre-service teacher practice (Schneider, 2008), and an opportunity to establish an explicit pedagogy for school-based teacher training as proposed by Edwards and Protheroe (2004). It also provided the supervising teachers with an opportunity to explore and develop a specific mentoring vocabulary through collaborative discussions and activities that could be used as a tool for their mentoring practice (Hamel and Jaasko-Fisher, 2010). Orland-Barak (2005) defined an effective mentor as one who could learn a new language (in Paulsen, DaFonte and Barton-Arwood, 2015). In this way, the mentoring course more broadly provided in-servicing for the supervising teachers and Hudson (2010) proposes that the only way to reform an education system is through the provision of professional development for both supervising and pre-service teachers, especially given that approximately 20% of initial teacher education occurs in a school based setting. Leonard (2012) reiterates the importance of continuing collaborative work between employers, universities, regulatory authorities,
school leaders, and most importantly supervising teachers.

The enhanced role of self-reflection for mentors

The role of self-reflection for mentors was the second least significant outcome overall for all participants with only nine references in total made through the weekly reflective diaries (see Table 2) across the five weeks. It was most significant for Hannah with four references across the five weeks. It was the least influential outcome as reported by Jaclyn with only one specific reference made across the five weeks. Interestingly, it was the second most significant outcome overall for all supervising teachers with 24 references made during the semi-structured interviews (see Table 3). It was most significant overall for Amanda, Hannah and Molly as referenced during the interviews. It was most significant for Hannah with nine references made during her interview. It was the least influential outcome as reported by Jaclyn with only four specific references made during her interview. Providing support for an enhanced role of self-reflection was the third most significant outcome of the mentoring course overall for all participants. It was the most significant influence overall referenced by three of the four of the supervising teachers including Amanda, Hannah and Molly, either through the weekly reflective diaries or the semi-structured interviews.
It is also interesting that the role of self-reflection was ranked as the second least significant outcome overall as referenced in the weekly reflective diaries, but ranked as the second most significant outcome overall as referenced in the semi-structured interviews. This could be the result of a combination of factors including the fact that the supervising teachers completed the post-placement semi-structured interviews up to two weeks after the mentoring course and had time to better process the experience and influence of the mentoring course; and/or the requirement that all participants must complete a mentoring journal task which included a self-reflective component as a component of the mentoring course, and this was due after the completion of the course. Hence the role of self-reflection may have appeared more obvious and relevant to the supervising teachers at this time.

Supervising teachers need specific training for mentoring through targeted courses. The mentoring course provided an opportunity for the supervising teachers to engage in learning conversations with their peers and to reflect on their roles with other mentors, and this was mediated by the course presenter who was also an experienced mentor of mentors (Orland, 2001). The act of mentoring itself increases both the opportunity to and ability for reflection as discussed in a recent study of a teacher mentorship program by Mathur, Gehrke and Kim
Orland (2001) found that in order for a mentor to be able to read a mentoring situation and manage it effectively, five developmental themes were necessary starting with the ability of the mentor to transfer their assumptions as a teacher to the mentoring context and see the pre-service teacher as a learner or student. An effective mentor will also possess the ability to compare and respond to different mentoring contexts drawing upon previous experience. The ability to analyse and compare how systematic conditions affect the practice of mentoring will enable mentors to differentiate their practice as necessary. The ability to develop self-awareness of how their own educational views influence their mentoring agenda will enable them to support their pre-service teachers in a more objective way. Finally, the ability to analyse how the interpersonal, organizational and professional aspects of any mentoring context operate integratively will equip the mentor with the skills to manage this highly complex and challenging task. The mentoring course provided these opportunities for learning conversations and explains why the enhanced role of self-reflection was ranked as the second most significant influence of the mentoring course through the semi-structured interviews conducted up to two weeks after completion of the mentoring course.
The development and application of specific mentoring strategies

The application of a range of specific mentoring strategies as a result of completing the course was a moderately significant outcome overall for all participants with a total of 12 references made through the weekly reflective diaries (see Table 2) across the five weeks from all four participants. It was most significant for Amanda who made seven specific references. It was least significant for Hannah who only made one specific reference. There were 19 references made during the semi-structured interviews (see Table 3), which made it the second least significant outcome overall for all participants. It was the most significant influence overall for one of the four participants, Jaclyn, with seven references made during the interview. It was also significant for Hannah with six references made during the interview. It was the least influential outcome as reported by Molly with only two specific references made during the interview. Developing and implementing a range of specific mentoring strategies were the second least significant outcome of the mentoring course overall for all participants. It was the most significant influence overall referenced by two of the four of the supervising teachers including Amanda and Jaclyn, either through the weekly reflective diaries or the interviews.
Teachers must know their learners and the subject matter and have learning goals in mind. In the case of mentored learning to teach, the novice is the learner whom the mentor must get to know, the subject matter is teaching, and the goal is helping the novice learn to teach - Schwille (2008) refers to this as educative mentoring. Educative mentoring means mentors purposefully and intentionally shape learning opportunities for novices that lead toward better understanding of teaching, learning, and learning to teach and is a powerful strategy for early career teachers (Achinstein and Athanases 2006; Feiman-Nemser et al. 1999).

An enhanced understanding of and confidence with applying the Teaching Standards

Having an enhanced understanding of and confidence with applying the professional teaching standards was the least significant outcome overall for all participants with a total of only five references made through the weekly reflective diaries (see Table 2) across the five weeks. It was also the least significant influence for three of the four participants, Hannah, Jaclyn and Molly. It was most significant for Amanda who made four references. During the semi-structured interviews (see Table 3), 11 references were made, making professional
development with the teaching standards the least significant outcome overall for all participants. It was the least significant influence for two of the four participants, Hannah and Amanda. It was most significant for Jaclyn with five references made during the interview. It was the least influential outcome as reported by Amanda who only made one specific reference. Enhancement of professional practice with the teaching standards was the least significant outcome of the mentoring course overall for all participants.

An interesting result from the data was that given the requirement for daily observations to be completed using a standards referenced framework (see Appendix C) by each supervising teacher, and that these feedback sheets were discussed during some of the mentoring course meetings, greater understanding and confidence with the standards should have been expected. It was also mandatory that all supervising teachers complete a final professional experience report (see Appendix B) at the completion of the professional experience placement, which also used a standards referenced framework. It could be argued that the design of the mentoring course and the specific strengths of the presenter, in this case an academic, influenced the outcomes of the course for the participants. Given the profile of the presenter it could be assumed that scholarly research and literature would feature prominently throughout the design and implementation of the course. This is supported by
the fact that the importance of the weekly readings in supporting the mentoring process was ranked by all supervising teachers as the second most significant outcome of the mentoring course.

Mentors need practice with observing and assessing, and a structure for professional conversations (Schneider, 2008). It is argued by Hattie and Timperley (2007) that whilst feedback is a major influence in learning and development, the nature and timing of the feedback offered, and how it is delivered is critical to effect change. Hudson (2010) proposes that we would enhance the mentoring skills of supervising teachers through the provision of targeted and effective professional development, which focuses on specific training in mentoring skills, and that this must be supported through collaboration with colleagues and academics. He also suggests that developing a set of mentoring standards would help to build mentoring capacity.

**Final report for the professional experience placement**

Supervising teachers were asked to complete daily observations and provide written feedback after each observation using the standards referenced framework or proforma (see Appendix C) provided by the university. It is reasonable to assume that the formative
feedback provided through these daily observations and accompanying written feedback would inform the construction and substance of the final professional experience report (see Appendix B). Even though an enhanced understanding of and confidence with applying the professional teaching standards was the least significant outcome of the mentoring course overall as reported by all participants through the weekly reflective diaries and the semi-structured interviews; given that the construction of the final report is such an important outcome, and legal requirement of the placement, it is relevant to examine the summative feedback.

When the comments constructed for the final professional experience reports were analysed for alignment with the language of the professional teaching standards, patterns emerged in relation to the frequency and detail of specific standards and their associated descriptors. The patterns indicate how participation in the mentoring course may have influenced the feedback and assessment focus of the supervising teachers in this study. A recent study investigated two groups of mentors, one group who received professional training and one group who did not. The mentors who participated in the course felt that the professional development enhancement courses were critical in improving their mentoring practice and in professionalising mentoring; emphasised the complexity of the mentoring
role; and agreed that mentoring should gain recognition as a professionalised role with appropriate workshops and time allocation (Leshem, 2014, p.269).

**Pattern One: Standards most frequently reflected in the language of the comments.**

There were ten out of the 25 possible descriptors, that were most frequently and explicitly reflected in the comments of the supervising teachers. These ten descriptors were identified by at least three of the four supervising teachers for four or more of the five pre-service teachers. The descriptors were drawn from all seven standards, with standards two, three and four most represented. The comments focused on strategies for differentiation, content structure, teaching strategies, lesson planning and sequencing and strategies to support inclusion. Behaviour management, assessment and feedback strategies and professional ethics and conduct were also frequently referenced in the comments constructed. This pattern is to be expected as supervising teachers are responsible for assessing the practitioner work of pre-service teachers, who are completing a professional experience placement, with a specific focus on the planning and implementation of lessons. Standards two, three and four are concerned with subject content, planning and the creation of a safe,
challenging and inclusive learning environment respectively (AITSL, 2011).

A recent study by Leonard (2012) reviewed the application and use of the AITSL Standards against the professional experience reports of pre-service teachers in the Australian Capital Territory and found that the use of the professional teaching standards has led to a restricted understanding of professional practice due to the technical focus of the standards, meaning that the type of feedback offered combined Professional Knowledge (Standards 1-2) and Professional Practice (Standards 3-5) together, and narrowed the feedback offered to the management of a classroom at the expense of intellectual quality and depth in relation to pedagogy and curriculum. Leonard (2012) goes on to argue that the teaching standards should be used a developmental tool rather than a regulatory framework citing Hattie’s meta-analysis work, that shows that a mentor teacher who develops and communicates clear understandings of what counts as good student performance will have a greater impact on student learning than one who can implement outstanding classroom management strategies (Hattie, 2009).
**Pattern Two: Standards least frequently reflected in the language of the comments.**

There were six out of the 25 possible descriptors which were least frequently reflected in the language of the comments constructed by the supervising teachers and these were only represented by one of the four supervising teachers for one of the five pre-service teachers. The descriptors were drawn from standards two, three, six and seven, with standards two and three most represented. The comments least represented focused on: literacy and numeracy teaching strategies, the implementation of ICT teaching strategies, the establishment of learning goals for students of varying abilities, the demonstration of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies, an understanding of the role of the teaching standards in identifying professional learning needs, and the understanding of legislative, administrative and organisational policies and processes required for teachers.

This pattern is interesting in that there appears to be some contradiction in relation to current educational emphases within schools. Since 2009 in Australia there has been a targetted focus on literacy and numeracy in terms of high stakes testing such as NAPLAN and in relation to school funding programs. It seems counter-productive that the frequency of literacy and numeracy feedback to pre-service teachers is so low, when there are mandated
policies in schools to improve the literacy and numeracy capacities of students. The lack of detail provided in relation to ICT teaching strategies is also surprising as this school is considered to be innovative, places a high value on the professional development of its staff, is located in a high SES location, has a relatively young staff, including the participants, and hence could be expected to show more confidence with ICT applications.

The lack of feedback in relation to learning goals for students of varying ability is not surprising as this particular school has a fairly homogenous student cohort from a high SES location, and the school performs consistently well on external testing such as NAPLAN, which means that there probably was less opportunity for pre-service teachers to be assessed in this area; however, this does contradict with the previous reporting pattern which indicated that the participants were giving frequent detail in relation to differentiation. This may also indicate that the issue lies with the skill of developing learning goals for students rather than the varying ability of students. The lack of detail provided to pre-service teachers in relation to the demonstration of both verbal and non-verbal skills is to be expected, as this aspect of teaching is generally considered to reflect more of a personal capacity, and supervising teachers generally do not feel comfortable making personal judgements on pre-service teachers. It is equally not surprising to see inconsistency around the application of the professional teaching standards as even now, more than 10 years since the introduction of the
NSW based standards framework (NSWIT, 2004), much confusion generally still exists in schools with the implementation and assessment of the teaching standards. Finally, it is not surprising to see a lack of detail in feedback around an understanding of the legislative, administrative and organisational policies and processes required for teachers, as generally schools prefer to maintain a distance between compliance areas as outlined above and the work of pre-service teachers. This is especially true in the case of practicum students as opposed to interns.

Mentor teachers provide descriptive rather than analytical feedback to pre-service teachers (Leonard, 2012). Edwards and Protheroe (2004) looked at the deficiencies in the type of feedback offered to mentees and found that mentors were primarily concerned with the pace of curriculum coverage and how pre-service teachers were managing students through the curriculum. They argue that the focus needs to be more on teachers as learners than on the students’ performances and the pace at which the curriculum is covered. They concluded that the process of mentoring provides a mediation of the knowledge of teaching and induction into a community of practice and they see language as the tool of mentoring (Edwards and Protheroe, 2004).
Pattern Three: Standards not represented in the language of the comments.

Of the 25 standards nominated for assessment by this instrument, the final professional experience report, there were only two descriptors that were not represented at all in the language of the comments constructed by the supervising teachers. The descriptors were drawn from standards two and four and focused on the use of curriculum, assessment and reporting knowledge to design lesson planning and sequencing; and the demonstration of an understanding of the issues and strategies to support the safe, responsible and ethical use of ICT in learning and teaching.

This pattern of reporting is not surprising and reflects the general focus of supervising teachers when working with pre-service teachers (Leonard, 2012). Professional experience placements are generally short in duration, the current study had placements ranging from three to four weeks, and this affords little time for meaningful assessment practice, implementation or interpretation of student data. These placements were also conducted during Term Four when student reports were being written and the supervising teachers would have had little time to share these learning profiles with the pre-service teachers. Some
schools are also restricted with how much of a student’s learning profile can be shared with pre-service teachers. Hence, having a lack of knowledge about a student’s ability restricts the pre-service teacher’s ability to demonstrate targeted lesson planning or sequencing based on assessment and reporting knowledge. The use of ICT in schools is still a challenging task for most teachers who face issues around access and resourcing, hardware failure and timetabling, not to mention the speed of change in relation to technology generally. Even in a well-resourced and progressive school, such as the host school, the implementation of ICT can be problematic and hence many teachers will avoid using this pedagogy especially at particularly busy times such as the final school term of the year during a reporting period. This would make it difficult for a supervising teacher to effectively assess the ability of a pre-service teacher to demonstrate an understanding of the issues and strategies to support the safe, responsible and ethical use of ICT in learning and teaching.

**Pattern Four: Feedback that aligned with the language of the**

**Professional Teaching Standards.**

On average the supervising teachers constructed feedback that aligned specifically with the language of 13.8 or 55.2% of the 25 descriptors possible from this version of the final professional experience report (see Appendix B). Jaclyn provided the most aligned feedback
by addressing 19 of the 25 of the standards and their associated descriptors. Hannah who mentored two pre-service teachers concurrently for this placement study, provided the least aligned feedback by addressing nine and 12 respectively of the 25 standards and the associated descriptors, giving her an average of 10.5. Despite her wider experience with both teaching and mentoring, it could be argued that Hannah was at a disadvantage as she had two pre-service teachers to mentor and hence was not able to provide the specific detail that Jaclyn could, having only one pre-service teacher to assess.

Research by Gagen and Bowie (2005) in Paulsen, DaFonte and Barton-Arwood (2015) has shown that trained mentors provide more feedback and sustain higher levels of interaction with early career teachers than those mentors without training. In their review of a five year mentoring training program provided by an Initial Teacher Education provider Paulsen, DaFonte and Barton-Arwood (2015) found positive outcomes in multiple areas. Mentor ratings and comments indicated improved mentor skills and professional knowledge which enhanced the pre-service teacher experience. Overall university-school relationships were enhanced, and mentor involvement and collaboration increased leading to programmatic changes which were made to strengthen the Initial Teacher programs. Cartaut and Bertone (2009) go further with their case study from a French university institute of teacher training.
to suggest a need to provide joint training opportunities for school-based and university-based teacher educators to combine their respective skills, with a focus on dialogue or language.

Pattern Five: General comments on the professional experience.

In this final section of the professional experience report, the supervising teachers invariably framed their very positive comments for the pre-service teachers around relational outcomes that were not reflected anywhere in the current professional teaching standards. These outcomes were a result of the necessary interaction between themselves, their pre-service teachers and other staff. The pre-service teacher’s willingness to accept constructive feedback was a common statement from all four supervising teachers. Several iterations of personal comments were made by all four supervising teachers, particularly in relation to future potential, the pre-service teacher’s rapport with the students and their interpersonal skills in general.

Mentoring attributes and practices are critical to the success of any placement. Hudson’s (2010) research into the mentoring practice of primary teachers found that developing a desirable mentor-mentee rapport relied not solely on personalities but also professional
attributes including making the mentee feel successful with teaching through confidence building, modelling of practice, and effective feedback which is linked to observation and self-reflection. He argues that the personal relationship between the mentor and mentee, and timely interventions including feedback and substantive conversations, are pivotal to the mentoring process. Hudson, Spooner-Lane and Murray (2013) later developed a model that focuses specifically on pedagogical knowledge, which identifies eleven specific practices including planning, preparation, classroom management and assessment to make mentoring more explicit. Johnson (2011) provides a checklist for successful supervising teachers and identifies four essential areas of quality mentoring including content knowledge, instructional practice, assessment/feedback and communication.

Summary

The mentoring course provided the supervising teachers with an opportunity for professional conversations with their peers and the time to reflect and discuss their mentoring practice separately from their pre-service teachers and their daily teaching responsibilities. This course supported collaboration between the supervising teachers which required additional time and space for mentors to meet regularly during the professional experience.
placement - a hybrid or third space as discussed by Martin, Snow and Torrez (2011). In this way the mentoring course facilitated and supported a new community of practice (Bakhurst, 2009 and Niesz, 2010). The weekly readings were rated as an important instrument in building their mentoring capacity and highlights the need to acknowledge mentoring as a discreet role or process needing a specific skill set or pedagogy, and the need to provide evidence-based professional development for all supervising teachers who mentor a pre-service teacher (Schwille, 2008).

This iteration of a mentoring course did not significantly enhance an understanding of and confidence with applying the teaching standards. This was reflected by the general misalignment of the language used in the comments of the final professional experience report and the language of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers by three of the four participants (AITSL, 2011). Furthermore, the analysis of the final professional experience reports revealed that the participants of the mentoring course showed a similar level of understanding to those teachers who participated in a recent study in the Australian Capital Territory (Leonard, 2012), which found that the use of the professional teaching standards had led to a restricted understanding of professional practice due to the technical
focus of the standards, meaning that the type of feedback offered combined Professional Knowledge (Standards 1-2) and Professional Practice (Standards 3-5) together, and narrowed the feedback offered to the management of a classroom at the expense of intellectual quality and depth in relation to pedagogy and curriculum.
Chapter 6: Implications for collaboration and expansive learning in professional experience placements

Introduction

This final chapter will summarise the findings of a study which attempted to examine the influence of an on-site concurrent mentoring course may have had over the the mentoring practices of four supervising teachers with varying experience from a government primary school in Sydney who were supervising pre-service teachers during a professional experience placement. The mentoring course which was taught by an academic from the same university where the pre-service teachers were enrolled, was designed by academics from the university and was accredited with the Board of Teaching and Educational Standards, NSW (BOSTES). The host School and University had a long-standing partnership.

Expansive learning in the third space

Activity Theory, specifically, Third Generation Activity Theory (Engestrom, 2001) was chosen to provide a theoretical framework for this research. It is a socially based critical theory, which has the potential to provide a lens to support multiple perspectives and support complex understandings of collaboration (Stuart, 2012). In this study which focused on the
division of labour of the activity system, the supervision and mentoring of the pre-service teachers at the school, the subjects were the supervising teachers, the object was the mentoring practice of the supervising teachers, the mediation was the mentoring course and the tools included the weekly reflective diaries, the final professional experience reports and the semi-structured interviews (see Figure 1). The provision of a concurrent mentoring course altered the processes of the traditional mentoring triad of supervising teacher, pre-service teacher and tertiary mentor as an activity system by adding another dimension to it through the provision of a third or hybrid space (Martin, Snow and Torrez, 2011) for supervising teachers in which the course was conducted.

Activity theory has been described as one of learning and development (Holzman, 2006) and in this way, the mentoring course served as an educational intervention. Third Generation Activity theory and its concept of expansive learning increasingly involves the horizontal widening of collective expertise by means of debating and negotiating different perspectives. Communities and their subjects produce specific types of activity through their interactions and collaborative work, and it is these separate threads of activity that create the tensions or contradictions in an activity system (Engestrom, 2001). The mentoring course provided a forum for the subjects of this expansive learning through professional conversations and
collaborative tasks.

**Summary of findings**

Data were examined from three sources: the weekly reflective diaries, the final reports for the professional experience placement and the semi-structured interviews. The weekly reflective diaries and the semi-structured interviews represented the perceptions and attitudes of the supervising teachers, and the final professional experience reports represented a specific mentoring practice of the teachers. All perceptions, attitudes and specific mentoring practices were influenced by their participation in both the professional experience placement as supervising teachers, and in the concurrent mentoring course.

**Perceptions and attitudes.**

The perceptions and attitudes of the supervising teachers were extracted from comments and responses made through the reflective diaries and during the semi-structured interviews. Open coding (Neuman, 2011) was used to identify critical themes and activity theory has been applied as a theoretical framework to support the organisation of the data into categories (Strauss, 1987).
The opportunity for collegial sharing and peer mentoring was the most significant outcome overall for all supervising teachers as reflected in the comments of the weekly reflective diaries, but only the third most significant outcome overall for all participants as reported through the semi-structured interviews. It was the most significant outcome of the mentoring course overall for all participants being referenced by all four of the supervising teachers either through the weekly reflective diaries or the semi-structured interviews.

The importance of the weekly readings in supporting the mentoring process was the most significant outcome overall for all participants when analysing the responses from the semi-structured interviews, and the second most significant outcome overall for all supervising teachers as reflected in the weekly reflective diary entries, close behind the opportunity for collegial sharing and peer-mentoring. It was the second most significant outcome of the mentoring course overall for all supervising teachers, being referenced by three of the four supervising teachers, either through the weekly reflective diaries or the semi structured interviews including Amanda, Hannah and Molly.

The enhanced role of self-reflection for mentors was the second most significant outcome overall for all participants as reported through the semi-structured interviews, but
was the second least significant outcome overall for all supervising teachers as reported through the weekly reflective diaries. It was the third most significant outcome of the mentoring course overall for all supervising teachers being referenced by three of the four supervising teachers, either through the weekly reflective diaries or the semi-structured interviews including Amanda, Hannah and Molly.

The application of a range of specific mentoring strategies as a result of completing the course was a moderately significant outcome overall for all supervising teachers as reflected in the comments in the weekly reflective diaries, but was the second least significant outcome overall for all participants as reported through the comments extracted from the semi-structured interviews. It was the second least significant outcome of the mentoring course overall for all supervising teachers. Interestingly, it was the most significant influence overall referenced by two of the four of the supervising teachers either through the weekly reflective diaries or the semi-structured interviews including Amanda and Jaclyn.

An enhanced understanding of and confidence with applying the professional teaching standards were the least significant outcome overall for all supervising teachers as reflected in the comments from both the weekly reflective diaries and the semi-structured interviews.
Consequently, it was the least significant outcome of the mentoring course overall for all participants.

**Professional practice – construction of the final report.**

This version of a final report included 25 of the 37 Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2011). As it was not to be the final placement for these pre-service teachers, not all descriptors had to be represented in the report. The four supervising teachers reported on five pre-service teachers completing their placement across these 25 descriptors. The final professional experience reports (see Appendix B) represented a specific mentoring practice of the teachers. Coding the language used in the comments made by the supervising teachers in the final report using the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2011), and then tallying the number of times each standard appeared across the comments collated the data in Table 5. Firstly, the written feedback provided by the supervising teachers within the comments section for each standard was reviewed against the specific language of the descriptors listed on the report. Secondly, alignment was sought between the written feedback and the descriptors listed under each standard. Finally, the written feedback was coded according to alignment with the detail of the standards. When the comments
constructed for the final professional experience reports were analysed for alignment with the language of the teaching standards, patterns emerged in relation to the frequency and detail of specific standards and their associated descriptors. The patterns identified indicate how participation in the mentoring course may have influenced the feedback and assessment focus of the supervising teachers in this study and are discussed below.

There were 10 descriptors that were reflected most frequently in the language of the comments constructed by the supervising teachers by at least three of the four supervising teachers for four or more of the five pre-service teachers. The standards focused on: strategies for differentiation (1.5); content structure and teaching strategies (2.1) and content sequencing (2.2); lesson planning (3.2) and sequencing (3.3); strategies to support inclusion (4.1) and behaviour management (4.3); assessment and feedback strategies (5.1); engagement with colleagues to improve teaching practice (6.3) and professional ethics and conduct (7.1). This means that 75% of the supervising teachers addressed some component of all of the seven standards available for assessment for 80% of the pre-service teachers. This therefore indicates that the pre-service teachers received a balance of feedback in relation to professional knowledge, practice and engagement. It also demonstrates that the supervising teachers were able to effectively interpret and apply their feedback to align with the
Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2011). This is despite not rating an enhanced understanding of the Teaching Standards as a significant outcome of the mentoring course, which could indicate a pre-existing competence with the standards.

There were six descriptors that were only reflected once in the language of the comments constructed and only by one of the supervising teachers in each case. These focused on:
literacy and numeracy teaching strategies (2.5); the implementation of ICT teaching strategies (2.6); the establishment of learning goals for students of varying abilities (3.1); the demonstration of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies (3.5); an understanding of the role of the teaching standards in identifying professional learning needs (6.1); and the understanding of legislative, administrative and organisational policies and processes required for teachers (7.2). While this only represents 24% of the available standards for assessment, 67% of these were related to Standard 2, knowing the content and how to teach it and Standard 3, planning for and implementing effective teaching and learning strategies. These are key professional skills associated with professional knowledge and practice and indicate that generally the feedback to the preservice teachers was deficient and may have influenced the effectiveness of the placement for the pre-service teachers. It also indicates that whilst the supervising teachers are familiar with the breadth of the standards, as is
evidenced with the earlier finding, that their understanding of the standards may be superficial.

There were only two standards that were not represented at all in the language of the comments constructed by the supervising teachers. These focused on the use of curriculum, assessment and reporting knowledge to design lesson planning and sequencing (2.3); and the demonstration of an understanding of the issues and strategies to support the safe, responsible and ethical use of ICT in learning and teaching (4.5).

On average the supervising teachers constructed feedback that aligned specifically with the language of 13.8 or 55.2% of the 25 descriptors possible from this version of the final professional experience report. This means that 45% of the feedback provided did not align with the language of the standards and hence these key professional capacities may not have been effectively assessed by the supervising teachers. Jaclyn provided the most aligned feedback by addressing 19 of the 25 or 76% of the standards and their associated descriptors. Jaclyn was in her fourth year of teaching and had previously mentored one pre-service teacher over the last year. She had completed her Accreditation with BOSTES in NSW and had been granted Proficient status so she was relatively familiar with the standards.
Conclusions

There is a need for collaboration between supervising teachers which requires additional time and space for mentors to meet regularly during a professional experience placement - a hybrid or third space as discussed by Martin, Snow and Torrez (2011). The opportunity for collegial sharing and peer mentoring was the most significant outcome overall for all supervising teachers as reflected in the comments of the weekly reflective diaries, and the most significant outcome of the mentoring course overall for all participants as referenced either through the weekly reflective diaries or during the semi-structured interviews. The mentoring course provided the supervising teachers with an opportunity for professional conversations with their peers and the time to reflect and discuss their mentoring practice separately from their pre-service teachers and their daily teaching responsibilities. In this way the mentoring course facilitated and supported a new community of practice (Bakhurst, 2009 and Niesz, 2010).

The weekly readings were rated as an important instrument in building the mentoring capacity of the supervising teachers being the most significant outcome overall for all
participants when analysing the responses from the semi-structured interviews, and the second most significant outcome overall for all supervising teachers as reflected in the weekly reflective diary entries. It was the second most significant outcome of the mentoring course overall for all supervising teachers. This reinforces the need to acknowledge mentoring as a discreet role or process needing a specific skill set or pedagogy, and the need to provide evidence-based professional development for all supervising teachers who mentor a pre-service teacher.

The mentoring course did not enhance an understanding of and confidence with applying the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2011). This was reflected by the general misalignment of the language used in the comments of the final professional experience report and the language of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers by three of the four or 75% of the participants (AITSL, 2011).

**Implications for future research**

What remains to be examined includes the specific detail about any new types of work or activity, also referred to as expansive learning (Engestrom, 2001), that emerge as a result of a mentoring course. Similarly, the long term effects of any mentoring course on the
mentoring practice of the supervising teachers, remains unknown. Furthermore, it would be useful to compare the specific design of this mentoring course and its associated tools, with other mentoring courses to compare how the design features influence the expansive learning and subsequent mentoring practice of the participants.

Possible areas for future research include how the design, content and type of mentoring course influences the mentoring practices of supervising teachers and how effective the currently available courses are including on-line modules, blended learning and traditional face-to-face courses. The expansive learning that emerges from a mentoring course and how it may influence mentoring practice is unclear. How case studies of mentoring and the inherent contradictions or tensions can be used to develop a mentoring pedagogy or curriculum is still unclear; and is there a need to develop a set of mentoring standards, as proposed by Hudson (2010), to guide the work of supervising teachers? Finally, how can the effectiveness of mentoring courses, and professional development for mentoring more broadly, be measured over time across diverse contexts and systems?
Improving teacher quality through effective mentoring

As we move towards implementing the actions outlined in ‘Great Teaching, Inspired Learning – A blueprint for action’ (NSWDEC, 2013), with its specific focus on mentoring and the need for rigorous and consistent assessment of professional experience across teacher education programs (pg.10), it is critical that we empower supervising teachers as school-based teacher educators. Additionally, The Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework (AITSL, 2012) explains that performance and development is about creating a culture of teacher quality, feedback and growth for all teachers within all schools. It describes the elements of an effective performance and development cycle which include reflection and goal setting, professional practice and learning, feedback and review. This needs to be supported by targeted professional development, such as mentoring courses to acknowledge the professional and highly differentiated work of mentoring in schools.

Essentially, the significant role of supervising teachers in initial teacher education must be acknowledged by a review of the traditional triadic mentoring structure and supported through the establishment of authentic and complementary partnerships with university-based teacher education programs.
References


BOSTES (2012). *Australian professional standards for teachers*. Sydney: Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW


*Ergonomics, 43*, 960-974.


Appendices

Appendix A Weekly reflective diary scaffold

Weekly Reflective Diary (Mentor)

Part 1:

The following questions require responses related to your thoughts and feelings about the mentoring course:

1. What have you learnt this week about mentoring from the course?

2. What activities were useful for you and why/how were the useful for you?

3. What has the course provided you with to improve your mentoring practice?

Part 2:

The following questions require responses related to your thoughts and feelings about your mentoring practice:

4. Using the framework and language of the Australian Teaching Standards to respond, please indicate:

   - What your Pre-service teacher is doing well?

   - What areas of practice your Pre-service teacher needs help with to improve?
5. What mentoring support have you offered your Pre-service teacher this week and how has this been reflected in their practice?

6. What are your mentoring goals for next week and what do you need to achieve your mentoring goals?
Appendix B Final professional experience report template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORK</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BEd Primary</td>
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<tr>
<td>BEd Secondary HMHE</td>
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<tr>
<td>BEd Secondary Combined Degrees</td>
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<td>Master of Teaching Primary/Secondary</td>
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<td>Diploma in Education (Aboriginal)</td>
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<td>BEd Secondary: Aboriginal Studies</td>
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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE REPORT: NON-GRADUATE PRESERVICE TEACHER

NAME: ___________________________ DATES: ___________________________

SCHOOL: ______________________ NO. OF DAYS: ______________________

(including pre-placement days)

☐ SECONDARY: CURRICULUM AREA(S): ______________________

☐ PRIMARY: CLASS/ GRADE: ______________________

SUPERVISING TEACHER(S):

The Non-Graduating Preservice Teacher Report includes selected Standards from the National Professional Standards for Teachers: Graduate (AITSL) that are significant to Preservice Teachers’ early stage development.

Each Standard within the report needs to be assessed as: ND: Not Developed; PD: Partially Developed; D: Developed for this stage.

- Assessment judgment is to be guided by First and Middle Stage indicator statements suggested for each Standard within the Evidence Guide provided in the Handbook.
- The overall grade for assessment of the Professional Experience is either “Satisfied Requirements” [R] or “Fails” [F].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STANDARD 1 - KNOW STUDENTS AND HOW THEY LEARN</th>
<th>ND</th>
<th>PD</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of physical, social and intellectual development and characterisites of students and how these may affect learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.3.1 Demonstrate knowledge of teaching strategies that are responsive to the learning strengths and needs of students from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds;</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.5.1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of strategies for differentiating teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STANDARD 2 - KNOW THE CONTENT AND HOW TO TEACH IT</th>
<th>ND</th>
<th>PD</th>
<th>D</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the concepts, substance and structure of the content and teaching strategies of the teaching area.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.2.1 Organise content into an effective learning and teaching sequence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.3.1 Use curriculum, assessment and reporting knowledge to design learning sequences and lesson plans.</td>
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<td>2.5.1 Know and understand literacy and numeracy teaching strategies and their application in teaching areas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.0.1 Implement teaching strategies for using ICT to expand curriculum learning and opportunities for students.</td>
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ORIGINAL - PRESERVICE TEACHER

COPY - UNIVERSITY
### STANDARD 3 - PLAN FOR AND IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ND</th>
<th>PD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1.1</td>
<td>Set learning goals that provide achievable challenges for students of varying abilities and characteristics.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.2.1</td>
<td>Plan lesson sequences using knowledge of student learning, consent and effective teaching strategies.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.1</td>
<td>Include a range of teaching strategies in teaching.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.1</td>
<td>Demonstrate knowledge of a range of resources, including ICT, that engage students in their learning.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.1</td>
<td>Demonstrate a range of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to support student engagement.</td>
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</table>

**Comments**

### STANDARD 4 - CREATE AND MAINTAIN SUPPORTIVE AND SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1.1</td>
<td>Identify strategies to support inclusive student participation and engagement in classroom activities.</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.2.1</td>
<td>Demonstrate the capacity to organise classroom activities and provide clear directions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.3.1</td>
<td>Demonstrate knowledge of practical approaches to manage challenging behaviour.</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.4.1</td>
<td>Demonstrate the capacity to organise classroom activities and provide clear directions.</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.5.1</td>
<td>Demonstrate an understanding of the relevant issues and the strategies available to support the safe, responsible and ethical use of ICT in learning and teaching.</td>
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**Comments**

### STANDARD 5 - ASSESS, PROVIDE FEEDBACK AND REPORT ON STUDENT LEARNING

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1.1</td>
<td>Demonstrate understanding of assessment strategies, including informal and formal, diagnostic, formative and summative approaches to assess student learning.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.2.1</td>
<td>Demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of providing timely and appropriate feedback to students about their learning.</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.4.1</td>
<td>Demonstrate the capacity to interpret student assessment data to evaluate student learning and modify teaching practices.</td>
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</table>

**Comments**
### STANDARD 6 - ENGAGE IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.1.1 Demonstrate an understanding of the role of the National Professional Standards for Teachers in identifying professional learning needs.</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.1.2 Seek and apply constructive feedback from supervisors and teachers to improve teaching practices.</td>
<td>☐</td>
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</table>

**Comments**

### STANDARD 7 - ENGAGE PROFESSIONALLY WITH COLLEAGUES, PARENTS/CARERS AND THE COMMUNITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.1.1 Understand and apply the key principles described in codes of ethics and conduct for the teaching profession.</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.2.1 Understand the relevant legislative, administrative and organisational policies and processes required for teachers according to school stage.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Comments**

### FINAL GRADE (TICK ONE):  ☐ SATISFIED REQUIREMENTS (R)  ☐ FAIL (F)

### GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

---

**SUPERVISING TEACHER’S SIGNATURE:**

**DATE:**

**PRESERVICE TEACHER’S SIGNATURE:** ________________________________

**DATE:** ________________________________

---

**ORIGINAL - PRESERVICE TEACHER**

**COPY - UNIVERSITY**
Appendix C Lesson observation feedback template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LESSON OBSERVATION NOTES</th>
<th>PLEASE TICK THOSE NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL TEACHING STANDARDS DEMONSTRATED DURING THE LESSON.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Standard 1 – Know students and how they learn:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students and how these may affect learning. (1.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrate knowledge of learning strategies that are responsive to the learning strengths and needs of students from diverse backgrounds, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds. (1.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of strategies for differentiating teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities. (1.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Standard 2 – Know the content and how to teach it:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the concepts, substance and structure of the content and teaching strategies of the teaching area. (2.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organize content into an effective learning and teaching sequence. (2.2.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use curriculum, assessment and reporting knowledge to design learning sequences and lesson plans. (2.3.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Know and understand literacy and numeracy teaching strategies and their application in learning areas. (2.3.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implement teaching strategies for using ICT to expand curriculum learning opportunities for students. (2.8.1)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Standard 3 – Plan and implement effective teaching and learning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Set learning goals that provide achievable challenges for students of varying abilities and characteristics. (3.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plan lesson sequences using knowledge of student learning, content and effective teaching strategies. (3.2.2)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Include a range of teaching strategies in the lesson. (3.5.1)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Demonstrate knowledge of a range of resources, including ICT, that engage students in their learning. (3.4)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrate a range of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to support student engagement. (3.5.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Standard 4 – Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Display strategies to support inclusive student participation and engagement in classroom activities. (4.4.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrate the capacity to organize classroom activities and provide clear directions. (4.2.1)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrate knowledge of practical approaches to manage challenging behavior. (4.3.1)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Describe strategies that support students’ wellbeing and safety within school and for systems, curriculum and legislative requirements. (4.4.1)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Demonstrate an understanding of the relevant issues and the strategies available to support the rights, responsibilities and ethical use of ICT in learning and teaching. (4.4.7)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Standard 5 – Provide feedback and report of student learning</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrate understanding of assessment strategies including, formative and summative, diagnostic, normative and descriptive approaches to assess student learning. (5.1.1)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of providing timely and appropriate feedback to students about their learning. (5.2.1)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Demonstrate the capacity to interpret student assessment data to evaluate student learning and modify teaching practice. (5.3.1)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>GENERAL COMMENTS:</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PRE SERVICE TEACHER’S NAME:**

**OBSERVER:**

**DATE:**

**SCHOOL:**

**CLASS/LESSON:**
Appendix D Semi-structured interview questions

Post placement Interview (Mentor/Supervising Teacher):

Part 1:

1. Were you an effective mentor? Why/Why not?

2. What challenges did you face as a mentor?

3. What support did you access as a mentor?

4. What resources did you use as a mentor?

5. What are your strengths as a mentor?

6. What skills are you still developing as a mentor?

Part 2:

7. What skills, resources or information did the course provide you with?

8. Did the course influence your mentoring work? If so, how?

9. What did you learn from participating in the mentoring course?
   a) How did you use the readings/course literature to inform/support your mentoring?
   b) Did the opportunity for structured peer dialogue during course time influence your mentoring?
c) How did the opportunity for collaborative interaction more widely across the placement influence your mentoring?

d) Did you use the Australian Teaching Standards or any other policy frameworks explored during the course work to inform and guide your mentoring practice?

10. Did the mentoring course influence the placement experience for your Pre-service teacher? If so, how? Please give some examples.

11. Would you mentor another Pre-service teacher? Why/Why not?
Appendix E The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

(AITSL, 2011) – Graduate teacher stage

The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers are a public statement of what constitutes teacher quality. They define the work of teachers and make explicit the elements of high-quality, effective teaching in 21st-century schools that will improve educational outcomes for students. The Standards do this by providing a framework that makes clear the knowledge, practice and professional engagement required across teachers’ careers. They present a common understanding and language for discourse between teachers, teacher educators, teacher organisations, professional associations and the public (BOSTES, 2012 p.2).

The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers comprise seven Standards that outline what teachers should know and be able to do. The Standards are interconnected, interdependent and overlapping. The Standards are grouped into three domains of teaching: Professional Knowledge, Professional Practice and Professional Engagement. In practice, teaching draws on aspects of all three domains. Within each Standard, focus areas provide further illustration of teaching knowledge, practice and professional engagement. These are then separated into Standard Descriptors at four professional
career stages: Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead (BOSTES, 2012, p.4).

Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

Graduate teachers

Professional Knowledge (Graduate teachers)

Standard 1 - Know students and how they learn

Focus areas

1.1 Physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students and how these may affect learning.

1.2 Understand how students learn
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of research into how students learn and the implications for teaching.

1.3 Students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds
Demonstrate knowledge of teaching strategies that are responsive to the learning strengths and needs of students from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds.

1.4 Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
Demonstrate broad knowledge and understanding of the impact of culture, cultural identity and linguistic background on the education of students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.

1.5 Differentiate teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of strategies for differentiating teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities.

1.6 Strategies to support full participation of students with disability
Demonstrate broad knowledge and understanding of legislative requirements and teaching strategies that support participation and learning of students with disability.
Standard 2 - Know the content and how to teach it

Focus areas

2.1 Content and teaching strategies of the teaching area
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the concepts, substance and structure of the content and teaching strategies of the teaching area.

2.2 Content selection and organisation
Organise content into an effective learning and teaching sequence.

2.3 Curriculum, assessment and reporting
Use curriculum, assessment and reporting knowledge to design learning sequences and lesson plans.

2.4 Understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians
Demonstrate broad knowledge of, understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages.

2.5 Literacy and numeracy strategies
Know and understand literacy and numeracy teaching strategies and their application in teaching areas.

2.6 Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
Implement teaching strategies for using ICT to expand curriculum learning opportunities for students.
Professional Practice (Graduate teachers)

Standard 3 - Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning

Focus areas

3.1 Establish challenging learning goals
Set learning goals that provide achievable challenges for students of varying abilities and characteristics.

3.2 Plan, structure and sequence learning programs
Plan lesson sequences using knowledge of student learning, content and effective teaching strategies.

3.3 Use teaching strategies
Include a range of teaching strategies.

3.4 Select and use resources
Demonstrate knowledge of a range of resources, including ICT, that engage students in their learning.

3.5 Use effective classroom communication
Demonstrate a range of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to support student engagement.

3.6 Evaluate and improve teaching programs
Demonstrate broad knowledge of strategies that can be used to evaluate teaching programs to improve student learning.

3.7 Engage parents/carers in the educative process
Describe a broad range of strategies for involving parents/carers in the educative process.

Standard 4 - Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments

Focus areas

4.1 Support student participation
Identify strategies to support inclusive student participation and engagement in classroom activities.

4.2 Manage classroom activities
Demonstrate the capacity to organise classroom activities and provide clear directions.

4.3 Manage challenging behaviour
Demonstrate knowledge of practical approaches to manage challenging behaviour.

4.4 Maintain student safety
Describe strategies that support students' wellbeing and safety within school and/or system, curriculum and legislative requirements.

4.5 Use ICT safely, responsibly and ethically
Demonstrate an understanding of the relevant issues and the strategies available to support the safe, responsible and ethical use of ICT in learning and teaching.
Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

**Standard 5 - Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning**

**Focus areas**

5.1 Assess student learning
Demonstrate understanding of assessment strategies, including informal and formal, diagnostic, formative and summative approaches to assess student learning.

5.2 Provide feedback to students on their learning
Demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of providing timely and appropriate feedback to students about their learning.

5.3 Make consistent and comparable judgements
Demonstrate understanding of assessment moderation and its application to support consistent and comparable judgements of student learning.

5.4 Interpret student data
Demonstrate the capacity to interpret student assessment data to evaluate student learning and modify teaching practice.

5.5 Report on student achievement
Demonstrate understanding of a range of strategies for reporting to students and parents/carers and the purpose of keeping accurate and reliable records of student achievement.
### Professional Engagement (Graduate teachers)

#### Standard 6 - Engage in professional learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus areas</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Identify and plan professional learning needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.2 Engage in professional learning and improve practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.3 Engage with colleagues and improve practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4 Apply professional learning and improve student learning</td>
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</table>

Demonstrate an understanding of the role of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers in identifying professional learning needs. Understand the relevant and appropriate sources of professional learning for teachers. Seek and apply constructive feedback from supervisors and teachers to improve teaching practices. Demonstrate an understanding of the rationale for continued professional learning and the implications for improved student learning.

#### Standard 7 - Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus areas</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.1 Meet professional ethics and responsibilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.2 Comply with legislative, administrative and organisational requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3 Engage with the parents/carers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4 Engage with professional teaching networks and broader communities</td>
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</table>

Understand and apply the key principles described in codes of ethics and conduct for the teaching profession. Understand the relevant legislative, administrative and organisational policies and processes required for teachers according to school stage. Understand strategies for working effectively, sensitively and confidentially with parents/carers. Understand the role of external professionals and community representatives in broadening teachers' professional knowledge and practice.
Appendix F - A summary of additional comments about the influence of the mentoring course made by individual participants through the weekly reflective diary entries

- Just as we use the planning-teaching-assessing cycle in teaching, we also follow a cycle in mentoring
- Mentoring can come in many different forms
- I can apply (the mentoring skills) in the future in leadership roles in the school
- As mentors we should be engaging novices in professional discourse
- I felt that while clarity in critiquing a novice’s lesson is important, it does somewhat undermine the idea of equality in the relationship
- The course has provided me with a focus on myself as well as the student – the journey for both being accountable
- I have learnt that really not everyone is good at mentoring – despite being teachers
- The course has provided me with validation – specifically with a metalanguage (for things I am already doing/have done)
- The course has provided me with transparency (where I go wrong, what I’ve done, parent information, school things)
- I have received greater clarification of the more holistic aspects of mentoring
- I have learned that mentoring is a process with many linkages and which can take many different forms
- The mentor has a responsibility to identify both the needs of the mentee and opportunities to address those needs
The course has provided me with a whole new, more informed and broader outlook! I am excited about my next mentoring opportunity and further exploring my role.
Appendix G – A summary of additional comments about the influence of the mentoring course made by individual participants through the semi-structured interviews

- Having weekly university expectations were helpful
- Looking at a variety of observation instruments were useful – one participant noted that they preferred the Quality Teaching Framework (NSWDET, 2003) observation sheet
- More confidence and validation generally as a mentor
- The course helped to develop me encourage the pre-service teacher to discuss their practice
- The mentoring course facilitated an opportunity for more of a partnership with the pre-service teacher in terms of professional discussions and teaching philosophy
- The ability to apply mentoring skills learnt to future practice and hence improve mentoring ability
- The course will help with leadership responsibilities in the future
- I used the course and the journal to frame conversations with my mentee (pre-service teacher)
- I was a lot more communicative through doing the mentoring course – there were a lot more anecdotal and informal conversations
- I encouraged my mentee to access staff across the school to enhance their experience
- Because I was more confident with my mentoring, my mentee was happy to stay in the classroom with me a lot more and always willing to help (including staying back after school)